

September 24, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- Your online life can impact your real-world divorce

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An estimated 66 percent of divorce cases involve evidence gathered from online sources, particularly from common sites like Facebook, Twitter and Google+. Not all of the evidence is negative, but it is vitally important to keep in mind that, if you are going through a divorce, you need to keep a tight rein on both "real" life and your virtual one.

What sort of evidence are we talking about?

Virtual evidence can consist of anything that appears online, including status updates, comments, posts, pictures, websites, blogs, RSS feeds, videos, emails and "tweets," regardless of whether they were posted by you or by another party. An important note: online evidence might be found even if it is deleted. It is possible for screen shots to be snapped in an instant, preserving that content even if you later decide it shouldn't have been posted. It is also sometimes possible to retrieve a cached version of a web page from a computer's temporary files or from a search engine.

Evidence doesn't have to be posted by you, or even directly reference you to be harmful. Here is a practical example: you agree to attend a work happy hour as a team-building exercise. You find a relative to babysit your children and meet co-workers after the work day is done. You aren't much of a drinker, so you nurse a single glass of wine for the duration just to spend some time with your colleagues in a social setting. An innocent picture of you sitting and talking with co-workers posted on one of their social networking pages - even if you are not identified in the photo - at a local bar could be "spun" to make it seem like you are drinking to excess and neglecting your children to go out and party.

Rules to live by

Many legal experts proffer a single rule of thumb for your virtual social life when you are involved in a divorce, custody dispute or other contested family law matter: if you wouldn't want the judge reading it, don't post it online. There are variations on that rule, replacing the reading

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Written by Australian Business

judge with a nun, small child, your mom, your grandma, etc. The message is the same: think long and hard before posting an online rant about your ex, the judge's most recent ruling in your case or even your displeasure with your attorney.

Some evidence may not be admitted against you, but it can be used by an opposing attorney when preparing to cross-examine you on the witness stand. If you post things about your own attorney, you could easily ruin the rapport you had with him (or her).

Proceeding with caution

Social networking has many benefits, primary among them the ability to connect with friends and family across the miles. When you are going through a divorce or dealing with a contested family law issue like a child support dispute or property division disagreement, you need the support of loved ones more than ever before, but reaching out for that support in the wrong way can come back to haunt you. For guidance and information about how your social network fits in to your divorce, seek the advice of an experienced family law attorney in your area.