

Men's Health

July 6th, 2010

Facebook Can Hurt Divorce Cases

By Carolyn Kylstra



Going through a separation or divorce? Then you'd better separate from your social media accounts.

Eighty-one percent of the country's top divorce attorneys say they've seen an increase in the number of cases that have used social networking interactions as evidence, according to a recent survey of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. The most popular online divorce evidence comes from Facebook—66 percent cite it as the primary source, followed by MySpace (15 percent) and Twitter (5 percent).

[Alan Plevy](#), a family law attorney at the firm [SMOLENPLEVY](#) in Vienna, Virginia, says most

of his clients have at least one of these three accounts—and he's seen the impact they have had firsthand.

“For some reason or another, people seem to think that these sites are private,” he says. “And then they do things on those sites that tend to get them in trouble.”

These include: Posting pictures of a recent trip to Cancun, when they've claimed poverty to avoid paying child support. Or writing sexual messages on other women's walls, proving that they'd been unfaithful.

Plevy recounts a recent story of what happened when one such woman received a phone call from her concerned mother-in-law. The mother-in-law noticed that her son had changed his relationship status from “Married” to “Single,” and left updates about how he was ready to party. But this was the first that the woman had heard of her husband's newfound “singledom”—now she's Plevy's client.

“She and her husband were having issues, and had talked about possibly separating, but he took it to the next level without her knowledge,” Plevy says.

He and his colleagues recommend that anyone going through a [divorce](#) should deactivate all social media accounts, unless they’re used for strictly professional purposes.

“Remember that anybody can access this information,” he says.

Need more convincing? Here’s the kicker: Even if you personally don’t post anything salacious on your wall, other people in your life might not show the same restraint.

“Say you’re going through a divorce, and you say that you’re in a relationship with a new person,” Plevy says. “We can then access that person’s account, and learn even more about your behavior from him or her.”