

From technological addiction to benefit, well-being, and health

Ursula Oberst

Editor-in-chief

Ever since 1998 when Kimberley Young published her seminal paper entitled “Internet Addiction: the emergence of a new clinical disorder”, addiction to the Internet, videogames, mobile phones (later smartphones), and even to internet-based communication applications and social networks (like WhatsApp and Facebook) has been a widely discussed phenomenon in the media and in scientific literature. The debate has even given rise to a new field of study in Psychology: technological addictions, although more conservative approaches take exception to the use of the term “addiction” in this context and prefer to talk of “problematic use” of information and communication technologies (ICT). The existence of completely new “i-disorders” described in the scientific literature, with the use of terms like “nomophobia”, “rinxietat” and “Fomo”, has also been a source of controversy. Meanwhile, the detrimental effects of excessive ICT use on attention and learning have also caused concern.

In the Educational Sciences, the use of digital technologies has always had a more enthusiastic reception, because there is widespread appreciation in both homes and schools of the role these devices and applications can play in enhancing learning. However, critical voices have also emerged to call attention to the potential risks involved with the use of ICT; in any case, the massive inroads ICT has made in schools call for a significant change in pedagogy and a “second educational revolution” (Collins & Halverson, 2010).

Coupled with gradual changes in the use of these technologies and in related habits, there has recently been a shift in scientific attention to the issue. Researchers have moved away from the study of the risks and the negative impact of maladaptive use of these technologies, focusing instead on their potential benefits, whether for the improvement or enhancement of physical, mental, and learning capacities, for the stimulation of psychological well-being or for

the promotion of health. In clinical Psychology, for instance, Internet-based applications are being developed and used to improve well-being and to support clinical interventions. Mobile devices are now being used to collect community and clinical health data, to deliver health-care information to practitioners, researchers and patients, to monitor patients’ emotional and mental states, and to provide care, for instance in the form of therapeutic instructions or suggestions. In Sports, so-called e-sports or cyber-sports and fitness-oriented videogames are becoming increasingly popular among the younger generation, blurring the distinction between gaming and exercise (Witkowski, Hutchins, & Carter, 2013).

In view of these developments, the editors of *Aloma* are issuing a *call for papers* on the following topics:

FUTURE CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL INNOVATION IN EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY AND SPORTS (December 2018 issue of *Aloma*).

- **Aloma-Education: COMPUTER-SUPPORTED COLLABORATIVE LEARNING.** Computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) is a pedagogical approach wherein learning takes place via social interaction using a computer or through the Internet. This kind of learning is characterized by the sharing and construction of knowledge among participants using technology as their primary means of communication.
- **Aloma-Psychology: THE ROLE OF e-HEALTH and m-HEALTH IN MENTAL HEALTH.** e-Health is a relatively recent healthcare practice supported by electronic processes and communication. It can include health applications and links on mobile devices, referred to as m-Health; new applications (apps) are constantly being developed and used, and this is increasingly the case in the mental health context. However, this increase must be accompanied by research, as the existence of such a great number of

applications might suggest that many of them are not properly validated and lack sufficient proven efficacy.

- **Aloma-Sports: e-SPORTS AS A NEW MASS PHENOMENON.** e-Sports (also known as electronic sports, competitive (video) gaming, professional (video) gaming, or pro gaming) is a form of competition using video games. Despite its increasing popularity, little research has been done into what exactly individuals do and learn when they compete in non-educational or “unserious” computer games.

Deadline for submission: September 15th 2018

Language of papers: English or Spanish (manuscripts presented in Spanish for this issue will be translated into English at no cost to the authors)

References

- Collins, A., & Halverson, R. (2010). The second educational revolution: Rethinking education in the age of technology. *Journal of computer assisted learning*, 26(1), 18-27.
- Witkowski, E., Hutchins, B., & Carter, M. (2013, September). E-sports on the rise?: Critical considerations on the growth and erosion of organized digital gaming competitions. In *Proceedings of The 9th Australasian Conference on Interactive Entertainment: Matters of Life and Death* (p. 43). ACM.
- Young, K. S. (1998). Internet addiction: The emergence of a new clinical disorder. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, 1(3), 237-244.