

Obsessive Consumption Disorder: Tackling the problem of handheld digital addiction

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Abstract

The safety of new technologies are always interrogated in the media upon release, with predictions being made as to their long term effects and impact upon the mental health and wellbeing of users. However, the long term impacts are often unpredictable and difficult to plan for. This paper will draw on the combined experience of the co-authors to highlight the dangers of digital addiction, looking beyond online gambling and into the worlds of gaming, social media and augmented reality. Whether it is the pressure of posting, the time-consuming nature of inhabiting the digital world, the impact of likes, or the purchasing of loot boxes, digital addiction can come in a wide variety of guises which are barely understood and even less accepted. After all, aren't these online worlds just a game? Or a way to chat online? With suicide being one of the biggest killers for men under 50 and addiction being statistically more prevalent in men, this paper questions the role of the digital world in happiness, wellbeing and asks whether it is gendered..



Biography:

Joshua Bluteau is a Lecturer at the University of Manchester in the UK. He completed his PhD in Social Anthropology in 2018 at the University of St Andrews, following a period of fieldwork in London and online with Instagram. His research interests include the anthropology of digital worlds, notions of self, gender, masculinity and clothing. He is currently preparing a monograph, which anthropologically explores bespoke tailors in London and their Instagram followers.



Patricia Bluteau is an Interim Associate Dean in the Faculty of Life Sciences at Coventry University in the UK. Patricia is a mental health nurse, counsellor, psychotherapist and academic. Her research interests include mental health and wellbeing, interprofessional education and integrated care and engaging with quality processes in higher education

Speaker Publications:

1. "Call of interprofessional duty: an ethnographically informed discussion on preparing students to be digitally resilient"; J Interprof Care . 2020 Jul 16;1-6. doi: 10.1080/13561820.2020.1791807. Online ahead of print.

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