Editorial

#instantmessaging and the Unbearable Distress of Being Online

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In recent years, instant messaging has become more and more popular. A broad range of instant messaging services has been integrated in the digital lives of most of us: Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media messaging services grow rapidly and especially young people are using this form of communication extensively. Therefore, it is not surprising that digital media and instant messaging are becoming the paramount communication channel, where interpersonal interaction and interactions of the future generation take place. It is easy to join different groups of peers, built new friendships online and stay in contact easily around the world. This is the optimistic experience, which instant messaging services transport in their advertisements. This is partially correct according to current research, which shows that social media and digital social interactions can be protective and buffer distress or help to recover from acute stress (e.g. Humer et al., 2021; Pieh et al., 2021). Furthermore, the ongoing war in Ukraine following the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential for a worldwide economic crisis that will also affect many of the younger generation. Two more contributions in this issue tackle the transformation of social interaction – be it with regards to participation at school or with regards to the therapeutic relationship. We have a case report about the use of an avatar-based telepresence system for a pediatric patient for social participation and maintain school (Pletschko et al., 2022),

In recent years, instant messaging has become more and more popular. A broad range of instant messaging services has been integrated in the digital lives of most of us: Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media messaging services grow rapidly and especially young people are using this form of communication extensively. Therefore, it is not surprising that digital media and instant messaging are becoming the paramount communication channel, where interpersonal interaction and interactions of the future generation take place. It is easy to join different groups of peers, built new friendships online and stay in contact easily around the world. This is the optimistic experience, which instant messaging services transport in their advertisements. This is partially correct according to current research, which shows that social media and digital social interactions can be protective and buffer distress or help to recover from acute stress (e.g. Humer et al., 2021; Pieh et al., 2021). Furthermore, the ongoing war in Ukraine following the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential for a worldwide economic crisis that will also affect many of the younger generation. Two more contributions in this issue tackle the transformation of social interaction – be it with regards to participation at school or with regards to the therapeutic relationship. We have a case report about the use of an avatar-based telepresence system for a pediatric patient for social participation and maintain school (Pletschko et al., 2022),

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as well as a full article about psychotherapy during the times of the COVID-19 crisis (Shklarski et al., 2022).

According to these developments, the team of Digital Psychology launches a call for papers for a special collection on “Digital interventions”. Furthermore, we invite researchers to send proposals for special issues that will be reviewed by the editors and the editorial board. Also, we are looking for two more Associate Editors for Digital Psychology. We welcome all persons holding a PhD degree and a track record with a strong emphasis on digital media and psychology to apply for this position. Please contact the editors or the editorial office for further information.

We wish you a pleasant read!

Oswald D. Kothgassner & Anna Felnhofer
Editors-in-Chief

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Conflict of interest

The Editors-in-Chief declare no conflict of interest.