

"Life in a Digital Environment" (Panel)

Dr. Michelle Colder Carras

Dr. Antonius J. van Rooij

Dr. Nicholas Bowman

Mental Health Symposium 2019

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[2019/04/26 10:45] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): <<transcription begins>>

[2019/04/26 10:45] Gentle Heron: Welcome audience.

For this session, three of our presenters have graciously accepted an invitation to be part of a panel to discuss "Life in a Digital Environment." (I hope they won't mention their sore elbows.)

We are talking about online presences today. That may mean social media, virtual worlds, video games, any sort of virtual embodiment.

Our panelists are Dr. Antonius van Rooij, who just finished his session, and is from the Netherlands Institute of Mental Health and Addiction.

Dr. Michelle Colder Carras, who is a public mental health researcher and informaticist.

Dr. Nicholas Bowman is at the Interaction Lab of West Virginia University.

All three of our panelists are active gamers.

I'd like ask our panelists to respond to some general questions before we open the discussion up to typed questions from the audience.

[2019/04/26 10:46] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): GH: I think the word GAMBLING had to come out of Tony's presentation description

[2019/04/26 10:47] Gentle Heron: First question for all panelists to respond to: Please tell the audience a bit about your online presence, to set the context. For instance, although I do email and rarely Skype, the only other thing I do online is Second Life. I admit I'm a Luddite! Or maybe I just am not social.

[2019/04/26 10:47] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): GH: who would like to start?

NB: I will

I am Nick Bowman

This is my 3rd or 4th hour in SL. I have been using the internet for a long time, so this is embarrassing

As Tony and Michelle can tell you, there is rarely an hour goes by without me posting something online

This is exciting

[2019/04/26 10:47] iSkye Silverweb: Heavily involved in several communities within SL, active in OpenSim, dabbling in Sansar, love playing Myst and similar games

[2019/04/26 10:50] Seafore Perl: SL, Facebook, Kately, Sansar, Sinespace. Educational sites such as Udemy and Coursera. Also various forums such as for Blender, Unity, Unreal, Substance Painter, etc.
Kuma War where first realized I could speak with people around the world.
[2019/04/26 10:51] Gentle Heron: nods to Seafore

[2019/04/26 10:49] Elektra Panthar: AVR: I'm Tony, I'm active on everything on social media
I play games and talk to people when I meet them there
I'm a bit wary of competitive games from the amount of yelling involved
[2019/04/26 10:48] SunTzu (Joey Aboma): We all have different needs for which we use virtual worlds or games
[2019/04/26 10:49] Rhiannon Chatnoir: yes - whether here in a virtual world, in another online space, it is all real

[2019/04/26 10:50] Elektra Panthar: MCC: I'm older than them, I'm 53, my dad was an early adopter
I played in the 80s but I stopped for many years
I came back when depression worsened about 2005
I started playing WoW and being in online communities and found them great, but in the last few months the demands have become too much so I withdrew from it a little
[2019/04/26 10:52] SunTzu (Joey Aboma): Yeah I don't need a 5th grader in WoW to keep me safe
PvP not as much throughout WoW like before

[2019/04/26 10:52] Gentle Heron: What are some examples of healthy uses of online presence you have come across?
[2019/04/26 10:52] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): GH: panelists are asked to speak a bit slower for the transcriptionist

[2019/04/26 10:52] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: We have all talked about the importance of social bonding
I remind my students of this
We assume that we will approach our digital spaces differently than physical spaces
Yet I see the same behaviours
I see the exact same healthy behaviours online as I do when walking to work
[2019/04/26 10:54] Elektra Panthar: MCC: I agree
Not just healthy behaviours offline, but online environment is beneficial to those of us with limitations and problems

[2019/04/26 10:56] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): GH: Tony is going to type
[2019/04/26 10:55] AntoniusJ: I'll just type i guess
No clue
PokemonGo

Playing with my brother (league)
Learning to manage groups online
That's it
For now
Back to figuring out my mic

[2019/04/26 10:56] Gentle Heron: What are some examples of unhealthy uses of online presence you have come across?

[2019/04/26 10:57] Linn Darkwatch: Griefing?

[2019/04/26 10:57] Catseye Tennen (Katsii Tennen): griefers are even organized they make videos

[2019/04/26 10:57] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: I do see an incredible amount of inhumane behaviour

Competitiveness

Up to bullying

I will talk about griefing in my presentations

You get these situations where people accept the environment as a fantasy and so suspend the appropriate behaviours

[2019/04/26 11:01] Rhiannon Chatnoir: although, even personal interactions in physical spaces can still have folks exhibiting varying 'personas' based on the specific environment they are in.. say work versus at home with family versus out with friends. So you see variations in person too.. not just online

[2019/04/26 10:59] Elektra Panthar: MCC: I think mostly about excessive use
It can be hard to self regulate; we don't know how they do it it's left out of literature
It's not considered, which is ridiculous to me

[2019/04/26 11:00] Elektra Panthar: AVR: People wish death on me when I make mistakes in games

Playing too much, to their own detriment

We have limited amount of info about physical effects given by screen time especially on youths

They stress not to overdo it

[2019/04/26 11:02] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): W.H.O. stresses this

[2019/04/26 11:02] Elektra Panthar: AVR: It does affect you (light, position etc)

[2019/04/26 11:02] SunTzu (Joey Aboma): I recently found ways to play games on my iPad with game controls via GameVice. Lets me play from anywhere instead of just in front of my PlayStation or computers

Sitting in a chair for hours can cause unhealthy habits over time

[2019/04/26 11:02] Gentle Heron: We talk about balancing uses of physical and online interactions. Does the healthy balance between use of various online and offline presences differ for different people?

[2019/04/26 11:03] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: that is a fascinating question

The scope of what we mean when we say unhealthy online behaviours

Online and physical spaces seem to be different

So the answer has to be yes

I study digital games. I spend a lot of time online
Is it healthy? Perhaps not but it pays the bills
Sometimes we spend too much time online without moving
There is never a formula - if this then that
We have to find our own balance
Depending upon what we do and what we get from the digital spaces
What are the potential outcomes?
[2019/04/26 11:03] Sandar Gausman: yes
[2019/04/26 11:03] Eme Capalini: My watch reminds me to stand and move every hour
[2019/04/26 11:04] Catseye Tennen (Katsii Tennen): yes, if you're limited to a chair to begin with..then activity online can be beneficial...so there are differences
[2019/04/26 11:06] Elektra Panthar: MCC: I agree with Nick about concept of decision based on personal circumstance
I'm conscious of the benefits of online presence, but finding the right boundaries is difficult
I want to know how to help people develop a balance in their life, especially those with disabilities
Someone studying for an exam - he subscribed to the game so he didn't have to log in as often- That was his self regulation

[2019/04/26 11:07] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): 11:05] Seafore Perl: What defines "unhealthy"? An isolated artist or inventor working around the clock on projects in their studio even though not online? And would the world (or they) be better off if they were more sociable and not as isolated?
[2019/04/26 11:08] Elektra Panthar: AVR: Replying to Seafore, the issue is that it's hard to quantify
It differs from person to person
It depends on circumstance, health, the way your brain functions best
For kids it's different, especially finding the balance between outside play / games and traditional versus online learning
[2019/04/26 11:09] Sandar Gausman: if you are wheelchair bound SL can be a way to socialize
[2019/04/26 11:09] Gentle Heron: Yes Sandar!
[2019/04/26 11:11] SunTzu (Joey Aboma): Yeah like the comment about people needing a Second Life because of something missing in their life. Sometimes people see gaming as an escapist thing
But it could be for good reasons
[2019/04/26 11:10] Elektra Panthar: MCC: I'd love to hear what you feel about this
We still tend to think of kids with challenges
The challenges are associated with negative outcomes
But a child with ADHD might find playing beneficial

[2019/04/26 11:11] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: There is a fundamental attribution error that what we are doing right now is abnormal
[2019/04/26 11:11] Sandar Gausman: not abnormal these days
[2019/04/26 11:11] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: it is not treated as real by the majority of the population

If it is different it must be unhealthy

[2019/04/26 11:11] bowmanspartan: A good summary of SDT:

<http://selfdeterminationtheory.org/>

[2019/04/26 11:11] Seafore Perl: "Reality" is being redefined.

[2019/04/26 11:12] Gentle Heron: oh my Seafore what an insight

[2019/04/26 11:12] Linn Darkwatch: I've seen folks thinking stuff like WoW is fine, but SL is weird.

[2019/04/26 11:12] SunTzu (Joey Aboma): It's much like Web 2.0's magic. We like to feel like we have created things and are part of something bigger than ourselves

[2019/04/26 11:12] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: if we look at psychological well being

Why some people balance out the digital engagement is that the abilities balance out

I am 5'8". I am not good at basketball but I like it

The balance is important between healthy and unhealthy

It is individual

What are the benefits? And which benefits are they missing out on?

[2019/04/26 11:14] Eme Capalini: wants to see the championship rings that Nick must be wearing on his toes!

[2019/04/26 11:15] Seafore Perl: Thinking of the "physical" (and the context of history) as a teen in the 60's my mother felt my addiction was working on my old jalopies (cars)!

[2019/04/26 11:13] Mook Wheeler: OBSERVATION: I think there is one key difference between doing something 'physically' and 'digitally'. I've think people find it 'easier' to be *both* mean and nice online, because it takes so little out of them -- there's less involvement, less entanglement, less attachment. You're not 'there' in someone's actual presence, so it's both less stressful to be kind, and distant and anonymous enough to be nasty. I think this is one reason 'digitalised reality' has seemed to bring out the 'best' and the 'worst' in humans -- it is an easy dichotomy encouraged/fueled by the medium.

[2019/04/26 11:14] Linn Darkwatch: Good thought, Mook.

[2019/04/26 11:15] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: the notion of social presence is so important

When we don't feel that way, the behaviours Mook talked about are seen

It depends on whether the individual is engaging in the space as an authentic space

[2019/04/26 11:16] Linn Darkwatch: stayed in SL because of finding social spaces

[2019/04/26 11:16] Elektra Panthar: AVR: Personally I'm not nice in WoW, if I don't know the person I don't feel friendly but more competitive

If you're playing competitive games you don't get to know those people so it's 'easier' to be detached

[2019/04/26 11:17] bowmanspartan: That's a REALLY good point re: permanence of the group.

[2019/04/26 11:17] Elektra Panthar: AVR: On social media there's another behaviour, you are more scrutinized

The social media are driving the polarization I think

[2019/04/26 11:18] Mook Wheeler: @Tony: I agree about the platform driving polarisation: look at how people are only allowed to click 'Like' or 'Dislike', but nothing in between (FB, YouTube, etc)

[2019/04/26 11:18] Elektra Panthar: MCC: These online environments make things easier but we also slipping in a culture that could be good or bad

If you see Twitter there's a lot of racism for example

There can be both beneficial and toxic aspects of these cultures

[2019/04/26 11:19] SunTzu (Joey Aboma): Anonymity is a black box that transcends cultural limits

[2019/04/26 11:19] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: One takeaway. We know how physical spaces work. The shape of the environment does affect the behaviours seen there

Behaviours in digital spaces are new to us

Is it a new song? Or just a new verse?

Think of the behaviours you see at sporting events now

[2019/04/26 11:20] Elektra Panthar: AVR: Adding to that

There are differences in behaviour

For example sexting - now you can go viral in 5 mins and have your reputation ruined for years

Gambling too - if people can gamble at home the behavior is different

Easier access to alcohol

It could be more difficult if you have to leave the house

It's disconcerting

[2019/04/26 11:21] Seafore Perl: And words and images in the digital world have an uncanny habit of floating around for eternity.

[2019/04/26 11:22] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: the scope and consequences of behaviours are magnified

If we continue to approach digital spaces as not real, then the behaviours can be more extreme

[2019/04/26 11:22] Jady Firehawk: very good point

cost, consequences, accountability

[2019/04/26 11:23] Elektra Panthar: MCC: It sounds like you're saying people who are not involved have to 'suspend their disbelief' to understand the virtual world

[2019/04/26 11:23] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: I think so Michelle. To not conflate the aspects that are new with different

We get caught up in pathologizing behaviours

If I send a sex message to someone in SL, suddenly I have lost my job!

[2019/04/26 11:23] Gentle Heron: How could someone tell if their own online activity was unhealthy or out of balance?

[2019/04/26 11:24] Jady Firehawk: wearable health meter ;)

[2019/04/26 11:24] bowmanspartan: [11:24] Jady Firehawk: wearable health meter ;) *giggle*

[2019/04/26 11:25] Gentle Heron: One mental health support group in SL used to wear those kinds of health meters during their meetings. The meeting facilitator kept track and could change topics if needed.

[2019/04/26 11:26] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): GH: I am aware of a wearable health meter. A group I belong to used to use these to monitor how participants were dealing with the topic under discussion.

[2019/04/26 11:24] Elektra Panthar: AVR: from a clinical perspective as soon as things start suffering in your life (job problems, missing out on opportunities) Others had a positive experience but once older they regret not doing other things like socializing
It's a problem when you don't have anything left other than gaming (no social life outside the games)

[2019/04/26 11:25] Gentle Heron: [11:24] Catseye Tennen (katsii.tennen): I knew a couple young kids that came in to grief and then got intrigued by building...I got to know one and learned he was caretaking his grandmother and developing alcohol problems...building in SL helped with both. He wasn't banned when he stopped drinking and started building. Relationships?

[2019/04/26 11:26] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: It goes back to the relatedness concept

Even the most misanthropic of us all needs some connection

It is not shocking that people can find refuge in a space as long as they connect with the person

Or even with inanimate objects

I spend time with friends at work, at home, online

It comes down to what do you get out of it?

We need to get away from the subject scales of unhealthy online behaviours.

We need to help people to learn how to self-reflect and find their own balance

[2019/04/26 11:27] Catseye Tennen (Katsii Tennen): but if you're messing up first life relationships...so two different effects

[2019/04/26 11:28] iSkye Silverweb: some people come into VWs sitting in a dark place in our real lives and someone virtual finds us and coaxes us out of those dark places

[2019/04/26 11:28] Seafore Perl: Conversing in text is like learning a new language, in a way. Over time you seem to develop a feel for the nuances of how written phrases are strung together.

[2019/04/26 11:30] Mook Wheeler: agrees with Nick on his point about 'communication cues' not being totally necessary for meaningful relationships. As an ASD person, I find these so-called 'communication cues' to be a bane rather than a help in RL. So being in SL actually helps me build relationships, whereas the 'comm cues' in RL actually push me away from them.

[2019/04/26 11:29] Elektra Panthar: AVR: Iceland model to address substance abuse - self destructive activities come out of boredom sometimes, so they offered free sports activities

It was very successful and lowered alcohol and substance abuse

We see that if some people are active in games they are not as focused on drinking or smoking

[2019/04/26 11:29] Catseye Tennen (Katsii Tennen): :)...iceland rocks

[2019/04/26 11:30] Lays (laysfarbonelima): Ajudar a se aceitar, se amar como é e entender que preconceito, ou racismo, não deve deixar abate-los, ajudando na auto estima, com palavras de apoio e meditação encontrando seu eu interior na sociedade, sair do casúlo..

pt>en: To help oneself to accept oneself, to love oneself as one is and to understand that prejudice, or racism, should not let them down, helping in self-esteem, with words of support and meditation, finding their inner self in society, leaving the casu ..

[2019/04/26 11:30] Elektra Panthar: MCC: It depends on what you're doing with your online time

If they do something they consider a time waster they feel bad, if they have a business they feel realized

Some stream on Twitch for hours building a business / revenue

It depends on whether what you're doing is meaningful to you

[2019/04/26 11:32] Seafore Perl: Building in SL was as therapeutic for me as RL painting and writing (Vietnam era combat medic with chronic PTSD).

[2019/04/26 11:33] Elektra Panthar: MCC: One of the organizations I work with was developed by a veteran

He couldn't leave the house but he created an organization dedicated to help people with mental health problems

[2019/04/26 11:31] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: there is research on the notion of the guilty couch potato

If you are made to feel guilty about a behaviour, which may indeed be stress releasing, then you lose the benefit

[2019/04/26 11:33] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): GH: there is a lot to think about here.

[2019/04/26 11:34] Catseye Tennen (Katsii Tennen): is reading addictive?? sometimes. TV? FB? etc.

[2019/04/26 11:34] Gentle Heron: exactly Catseye

[2019/04/26 11:39] Elektra Panthar: AVR: about reading, I think tech has changed and this endlessness is not present in reading (a book is finite)

[2019/04/26 11:39] bowmanspartan: Related to Tony's chat:

<https://jetpress.org/v20/verdoux.htm>

[2019/04/26 11:36] AntoniusJ: I think I'm stealing text from Nick Bowman with the rate he's mentioning me ;-)

[2019/04/26 11:36] bowmanspartan: "[11:36] AntoniusJ: I think I'm stealing text from Nick Bowman with the rate he's mentioning me ;-)" *hahaha*

[2019/04/26 11:32] Gentle Heron: Has this balance between healthy and unhealthy digital tech usage changed in our times? What evidence do we have?

[2019/04/26 11:33] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: it has too Gentle

Technologies evolve so quickly

This article is about the cyborg's dilemma

Technologies are disruptive and artificial

[2019/04/26 11:34] bowmanspartan:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1083-6101.1997.tb00070.x>

[2019/04/26 11:34] Mook Wheeler: nods at Nick. The trajectory of cultural lag.
[2019/04/26 11:35] Catseye Tennen (Katsii Tennen): one problem may be the increased speed of tech change
[2019/04/26 11:36] Lays (laysfarbonelima): exatamente
pt>en: exactly
[2019/04/26 11:35] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: Once we become comfortable with these, they are no longer strange
As we integrate the technolgies, they become less weird
We are able to exist in lots of different spaces
Think about in the early 2000s -- MySpace was radical!
Now the idea of having a personal webpage is commonplace
[2019/04/26 11:36] Elektra Panthar: MCC: I like the idea of how we have gone from not having mobile phones to being constantly connected
I've visited Tony and he has a box where we put phones during meals
The temptation is very strong to constantly check it
[2019/04/26 11:38] Gentle Heron: That is Ms Rezaee's research topic!
[2019/04/26 11:38] Mook Wheeler: We're evolving into these 5 limbed creatures, see, four limbs plus a new fifth Phone Limb ;)
[2019/04/26 11:38] DrMCsquared: Phone limb; I love it!
[2019/04/26 11:37] SunTzu (Joey Aboma): Technology can so easily run our lives rather than the other way around

[2019/04/26 11:38] Elektra Panthar: AVR: It's mportant to realize companies who develop certain products want you to spend as much time as possible on it and don't have your best interest in mind
[2019/04/26 11:38] iSkye Silverweb: I do have issues with playing games on mobile phones. I don't see using phones even for augmented reality activities as 'immersive' when you have to squint at an itty bitty screen.
[2019/04/26 11:39] Eme Capalini: Companies keep their workers tethered to work as well. You can go on vacation but the emails don't stop.
[2019/04/26 11:39] Seafore Perl: One of sad effects can be seen on those occasions at bars and other places where lonely people seem to be sitting around with others next to them but everyone is buried in the smartphone screens as the world slips by them.
[2019/04/26 11:39] bowmanspartan: (new problems, or old ones?)
[2019/04/26 11:39] Elektra Panthar: AVR: We need to be careful with personal preference and habits
Example, autoplay in Netflix or automatic new campaign in games
[2019/04/26 11:40] Elektra Panthar: MCC: Ethical game design is putting these pauses in
[2019/04/26 11:39] Marly (Marly Milena): I actually live without using a phone. I tell all service people, friends, organizations that if they want to reach me they will need to email, provide an online communication feature or use regular mail! It works!
[2019/04/26 11:39] SunTzu (Joey Aboma): or what if life becomes a part of the game
Reality is broken

[2019/04/26 11:40] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): GH: we have some good audience questions

[2019/04/26 11:40] Gentle Heron: Brena's RL employer provides addiction recovery support through virtual worlds.

[11:35] Brena Benoir: In my experience in my field, technology can reduce barriers to access and provide people with resources that they would not otherwise have access to. It's helped reduce transportation barriers and overall access to treatment, helps those with disabilities, etc.

Brena's employer provides virtual world supports for their clients

Could we talk about access?

[2019/04/26 11:41] Elektra Panthar: MCC: A few years ago Medicare reimbursed telehealth visits because there was not enough access

It paved the way to be supported by insurance companies and other payers

My daughter had a panic attack right before her appt, she texted her healthcare provider and they did the session online

[2019/04/26 11:42] Seafore Perl: VA is also providing tele-health for isolated communities.

[2019/04/26 11:42] Gentle Heron: VA = Veterans Administration per Seafore

[2019/04/26 11:42] DrMCsquared: Yes!

[2019/04/26 11:42] Brena Benoir: Yes, I work with clients with mental health and substance abuse issues and many of our clients don't have a license or reliable transportation to get to a center, so we do real time counselling in a virtual environment to address those things.

[2019/04/26 11:42] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: This is a great example of the motivations and intentions and design of the platforms

This provides a way to get beyond some of the barriers to traditional therapy

The motivations for getting people to use telemedicine vs getting people to play games and see ads

The providers may get into that model at some point

[2019/04/26 11:42] Marly (Marly Milena): Companies want to hold on to their clients.

If you tell them how you need to be contacted and are willing to contact them, they will comply! Most people don't ask

[2019/04/26 11:43] Elektra Panthar: MCC: Good point

You can balance ability to deliver intervention opposed to business models associated with it

[2019/04/26 11:44] iSkye Silverweb: sometimes the motivation is on the provider's part - for example, using online resources that don't cost them additional money like hiring ASL interpreters for deaf clients

[2019/04/26 11:44] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): NB: A comment about gaming: an author says he wishes gaming was mundane

How would our research change if we felt this way

How do we reapproach these things if we call it option B rather than a shiny new alternative?

[2019/04/26 11:43] Seafore Perl: Paper and ink provided materials for books and periodicals that could take humanity to the greatest heights and depths, yet there is nothing inherently good nor evil in the physical materials of which they are composed.

Would we wish books were mundane to prevent people from burying themselves in a great novel?

[2019/04/26 11:44] Gentle Heron: I want to thank all three panelists for an engaging and informative session. I'd like to remind the audience that Dr. Bowman will have a presentation at noon SLT very soon now, and that Dr. Colder Carras' presentation will be at 1pm SLT. You may want to stay to listen to their sessions. Remember that our last session is a social event. We can continue these discussions then, and add in what we learn from this afternoon's presenters. Please show your appreciation for our panelists and the information they have shared.

[2019/04/26 11:45] Eme Capalini: Great job everyone!

[2019/04/26 11:45] Linn Darkwatch: ♪♪♪♪ APPAWS! ♪♪♪♪

[2019/04/26 11:45] Seafore Perl: Thanks all for sharing this with us.

[2019/04/26 11:45] Elektra Panthar: applauds!

[2019/04/26 11:45] Carla (Carla Broek): .-'.-'. APPLAUSE APPLAUSE .-'.-'.

[2019/04/26 11:45] Lays (laysfarbonelima): obrigado ótima matéria bem explicativo pt>en: Thank you, very good explanatory material.

[2019/04/26 11:45] Bixyl Shuftan: Thank you :-)

[2019/04/26 11:45] Jady Firehawk: thank you, excellent discussion

[2019/04/26 11:45] Lays (laysfarbonelima): >>> AAaaaaplllaauuussssee !!! <<<<

[2019/04/26 11:45] laysfarbonelima Resident pt>en: >>> AAaaaaplllaauuussssee !!! <<<<

[2019/04/26 11:45] Linn Darkwatch: *:-,_,.-:*!`*Yayyyyyyy!!!!*:-,_,.-:*!`*`

[2019/04/26 11:46] Elektra Panthar: <<transcription ends>>