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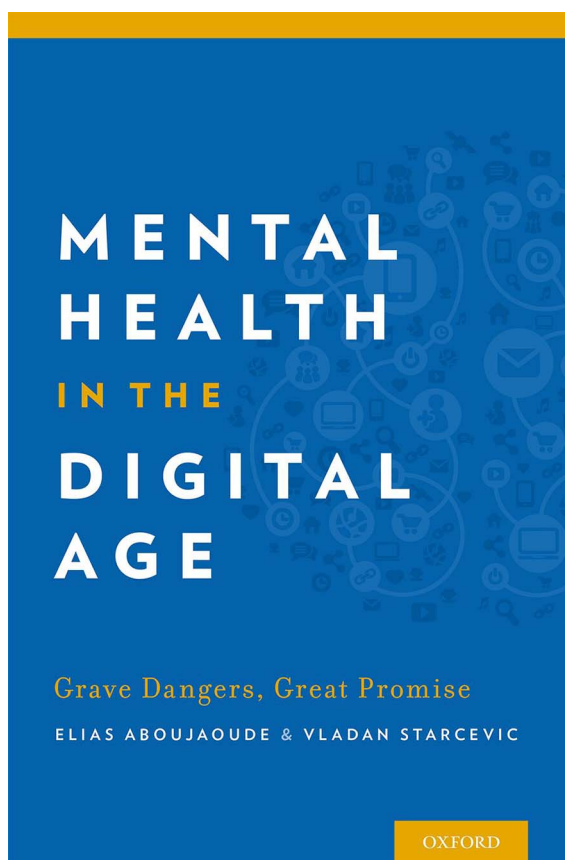
**BOOK REVIEW**


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**Elias Aboujaoude and Vladan Starcevic (Eds.)**  
***Mental Health in the Digital Age: Grave Dangers, Great Promise***  
 Oxford University Press: New York, NY, 2015, 277 pp.  
 ISBN: 978-0-19-938018-3

Technological innovations of the 21st century may entertain you, assist your work, or help to preserve your physical and mental health. Revolutionary it may sound, mobile devices can be easily reconfigured to match the user's psychological needs. For instance, there is an application that helps reduce your fear of bugs and insects, provided you allow a virtual, hairy spider to take a glance at you sometimes. However, you do not have to suffer from specific phobias to benefit from a program designed to maintain your psychological balance. The preparation for a business presentation or a job interview is stressful, and a virtual audience that rewards your presentation with a standing ovation may give you some courage. This book summarizes the most innovative technical and methodological solutions to enable better understanding of the intersection between digital devices and mental health.

*Mental Health in the Digital Age: Grave Dangers, Great Promise*, edited by Elias Aboujaoude and Vladan Starcevic, is an insightful and engaging collection of essays on the computer-assisted mental health care. The book consists of two sections: "Challenges" and "Opportunities." The first section provides a comprehensive overview of risks related to the use of digital technology, whereas the second section is devoted to the pro-mental effects of computerized health services. Dangers and promises are discussed through 14 chapters written by 28 authors. By creating an international discourse on the most innovative approaches of an emerging field, this book provides a wireless guide to explore the darker and the



brighter sides of the expansive digital landscape of modern health care.

Chapter 1, written by Aviv Weinstein and Elias Aboujaoude, provides a thorough overview of the misuse of technology. The authors present the diagnostic definition and causes of problematic Internet use, and place this knowledge in the context of psychiatric disorders. Personal, social, and cognitive factors associated with problematic Internet use are also discussed in detail.

Mark D. Griffiths and colleagues focus on a more specific Internet-related disorder in Chapter 2. The definition of game addiction has been reconsidered since the first release of observation-based reports about adolescents addicted to computer games in the 1980s. However, there is still no consensus on whether pathologies related to the use of video games are underlying the same phenomenon. The authors provide a nuanced picture of terminology, history, and treatment of problematic gaming that brings closer to the understanding of this phenomenon.

In Chapter 3, Orsolya Király and colleagues offer a wide array of measurement instruments to assess problematic Internet use and problematic online gaming. These tools are described in the context of theoretical considerations and psychometric properties, based on previous data collections. Furthermore, the authors emphasize the advantages and disadvantages of existing scales, providing a useful guide for future research.

Sun Mi Kim and Doug Hyun Han demonstrate that long-term persistent Internet and video game use habits lead to

structural and functional brain changes, and track these changes using modern neuroimaging technologies. The authors of Chapter 4 provide an exciting insight into the neurobiological background of healthy and problematic video game uses.

Chapter 5, authored by Christopher L. Groves and Craig A. Anderson, is dedicated to the effects of violent media content on the behavior of the younger generation. This chapter provides a systematic overview of classic and modern theories of aggression. Focusing on the role of media in reproducing aggressive behaviors, theoretical frameworks such as the script theory, the attraction hypothesis, or the excitation transfer are discussed in detail.

Vladan Starcevic and David Berle introduce the concept of cyberchondria in Chapter 6, which refers to the anxiety about health as a result of excessive or repeated search for online medical information. According to a recent study, 75% of the respondents reported using the Internet to find information about health issues, which raises particular concerns in relation to the reliability of accessible information. Alongside with the theoretical basis, prevention and treatment of cyberchondria are also described in this chapter.

Online aggression has gained much attention in the popular media. In Chapter 7, Matthew W. Savage, Sarah E. Jones, and Robert S. Tokunaga present the definition, prevalence, and demographic characteristics of perpetrators and victims of cyberbullying. Furthermore, the authors provide a comparison of traditional bullying with cyberbullying and offer a thorough overview of the existing prevention programs.

Following the structure of this book, the dark side of the digital age ends with the phantom menace of cybersuicide. In Chapter 8, Keith M. Harris offers a deep insight into pro-suicide websites, webcam suicides, and the progress from suicide ideation toward completed self-harming behaviors assisted by information circulating among youths with suicidal thoughts. However, the end of this chapter shifts the attention from pro-suicide web pages to online help sites, which provide information about the types of help sources, and offer direct access to online mental health professionals.

The exploration of the brighter side of the digital world begins with Chapter 9, written by Nicola J. Reavley and Anthony F. Jorm. The authors raise a data-driven argument on the quality of information found online regarding psychiatric disorders, and provide a profoundly useful list of top-rated, currently available websites offering information about depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, and other psychiatric disorders.

Chapter 10, written by Gerhard Andersson, is focused on the benefits of Internet-delivered psychotherapy. The author discusses the role of the therapist, the possible treatment outcomes, and the efficacy of computerized cognitive-behavioral therapy. The individual differences are emphasized in this thoughtful argument, which helps to draw a more nuanced picture of the role of modern technology in mental health at an individual level.

In Chapter 11, Lina Gega and Simon Gilbody analyze the human–computer interaction in software-based psychotherapy. Computer-assisted interventions are flexible and economic contacts, providing autonomy for the patients, who take responsibility for their progress. The advantages and disadvantages of this self-help system, the possible outcomes, and patients' perspectives are also described in detail.

Eric Malbos presents a wealth of exciting examples regarding the therapeutic use of virtual reality in a variety of psychological disorders. Accordingly, Chapter 12 is devoted to the virtual solution of real-life problems, illustrated with several pictures of the presented virtual environments. The author provides a glimpse into the virtual treatment of claustrophobia, driving phobia, arachnophobia, and other specific and general phobias, including a short description of the devices used for this purpose, the virtual environments, and the clinical effects.

Chapter 13, authored by Sylvia Kauer and Sophie C. Reid, discusses the therapeutic use of mobile devices. Indeed, empirical evidence suggests that health-related telephone calls, text messaging, and tracking applications increase self-awareness, and facilitate the coping with stress for those with mild mental health concerns. This chapter also introduces a wide range of therapeutic games, mobile applications available to general users, and the effects of narrative recordings.

In Chapter 14, David J. Peterson and Jeffrey G. Miller provide a straightforward presentation of the current efforts to digitalize the medical records. Therefore, this chapter is focused on the debates surrounding patients' mental health information, including privacy and confidentiality concerns. Technical knowledge and financial resources are also required in this process to modernize mental health services, as it is further discussed in this chapter.

Overall, this book provides a thorough and profoundly useful account of knowledge on the emerging field of mental health and modern technology. Scholars, clinicians, health care workers, students, and health policy makers will probably find this volume on the modern digital technology integrated into mental health care refreshing, which sometimes reminds us of the most astonishing inventions found mostly in science fiction novels. This book may serve as well as a good reference source for future research, which is particularly helpful to extend the knowledge about recent approaches toward the integration of mental health and digital innovations.

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