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Digitalisation of Social Life and Sexuality

Tomáš Hájek**Sexological Society of J.E.P. Czech Medical Society, Czech Republic*

***Corresponding author:** Tomáš Hájek, Sexological Society of J.E.P. Czech Medical Society, Czech Republic

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Definition of The Main Forms of Digitalisation and Their Societal Consequences

The First and The Second Wave of Digital Transformation

Digitalisation of all aspects of life in the society has been deepening rapidly since the beginning of the 21st century. The first major step towards general digital transformation occurred at the beginning of the new millennium with the introduction of high-speed internet and massive use of smartphones, which are seen as the emancipation tool that gave rise to digital communities. The subsequent significant step in digital transformation followed only a few years later – it was the Internet of Things with the potential to change our lives entirely. While it works for us, it can also pose a new threat. While the first wave of digital transformation was associated with smartphones resulting in us being constantly online, the second wave with the Internet of Things will bring items of everyday use, such as cars, refrigerators and vacuum cleaners, to the online world too.

Looming Loss of Control Over Private Information

As we interact with tools such as the Connected and Automated Driving (CAD) as an element of an intelligent transport system or the Domestic Social Robots, we disclose a lot about ourselves, and this information may be stored or even copied. Vast loss of control over private information is possible in this situation. Private information in this context means information that cannot be stored or copied for further use without the knowledge of the original owner. Despite the creation of a useful tool called GDPR, we can only ask ourselves: is it possible that digital transformation

will in the end eliminate the private, confidential, intimate space delineated by private information [1]. As the first and the second waves of digital transformation unfold, we encounter phenomena such as digital paranoia, which represents somewhat excessive expression of otherwise logical concern over the fate of our sensitive personal data.

Digitalisation of Social Life

Digitalisation of social life means external monitoring, surveillance and oversight that expand the public space to the detriment of the private space. Modern technologies used for monitoring, surveillance and oversight of the public space include: biometrics, smart identification cards, electronic devices monitoring and tracking the communication and information. Since 11 September 2001, various types of sophisticated technologies and devices formerly used for security of protected military facilities and government and bank buildings have been used to monitor, supervise and control the public space.

Digital video cameras continuously supervise streets and squares in towns, help to identify vehicle registration plates and when combined with biometrics, they help to identify faces within seconds. As we usually carry our mobile phones with us at all times, they allow for tracking our movements at any time and reveal our network of contacts and encounters. The Automated Socio-Technical Environment (AESTE) is being created; the urban infrastructure system is equipped with monitoring, surveillance and oversight system that automatically responds to various threats including terrorism and epidemics of infectious diseases.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digitalisation of social life significantly [2].

Comparison of Digital Transformation with Digitalisation of Social Life

The two waves of digital transformation are intertwined with digitalisation of social life. The individual private space demarcated by private information, i.e. information about an individual that cannot be stored or copied without their knowledge, is being reduced in both cases. In the case of digital transformation, the private space is eliminated generally from the inside of the world as a whole. However, digitalisation of social life consumes the private space from the outside and more selectively. While there are still places where the traditional freedom of the private space remains, they are disappearing over time. Predictions of future should avoid absolutisation and the view that digitalisation of social life may reach its maximum potential, resulting in monitoring, surveillance and oversight of all space and disappearance of the private space, despite the fact that this development cannot be ruled out [3].

Digitalisation of Social Life and Sexuality

On Potential Consequences of Changing Proportion between the Public and Private Space for the Balance in the Human Sexuality

From the point of view of philosophical anthropology, the ongoing digital transformation gives rise to “digisexuals”, i.e. humans, human beings, whose sexual identity is primarily determined by their interaction with digital technologies [4]. One of the evident facts presented in sexology is that sexuality, which is considered to be healthy (regardless of whether it is directly linked to reproduction or not) is limited to, or normatively should be limited to the private space. Naturally, there are certain officially permitted and tolerated exceptions that make the rule. It would seem that the balance between the public and private space maintains the balance in the human sexuality as a whole, because those symptoms of pathological sexuality that would remain hidden or silent, undefined in their germinal stage in the private space, are revealed in the public space. The dynamics of the relationship between the public and private space seems to be maintaining the balance in human sexuality as a whole by the certain degree of disclosure, development of latent issues.

However, how will human sexuality respond to a shift or even a radical change in the proportion between the public and private space? One can assume that the analysis of this phenomenon will be one of the main tasks of sexology in future. However, the research of this theme will be extremely demanding, as it will have to work through the complex feedback patterns between digital transformation and digitalisation of social life. While digitalisation of social life is derived from digital transformation, it is an independent area, where the elements of digital transformation are limited to monitoring, surveillance and oversight and in this sense give rise to an autonomous technical infrastructure. Smartphone can be seen from two different perspectives. On the one hand, it is a key moment in the first wave of digital transformation that gives

individual digisexuals new options for sexuality in the virtual space and retroactively in real life.

On the other hand, it allows for monitoring, surveillance and oversight of an individual's movement, including monitoring of one's social movement, which was not possible before. Will the balance shift towards boom (or even a certain degree of excitation) of sexuality, or will the development lead to suppressing sexuality with the most extreme scenario involving almost absent spontaneous free sexuality, dominating autoeroticism and weakening link between sexuality and reproduction? Or will sexuality as a whole become exhibition of a certain kind, in the sense of deliberate showing off, since digital transformation and digitalisation of social life essentially eliminates the private space? And what will sexuality transform into after going through this process? The topics we touch on are highly complex and the current sexology and psychiatry may not have the tools or terminology to reflect on these.

On the Impact of Digitalisation of Social Life on Paraphilic Disorders and Gender Incongruence

Understanding of paraphilic disorders and their therapy is based, among other aspects, on clear differentiation between public and private space. For example, it seems that certain paraphilic disorders (Exhibitionistic, Voyeuristic and Frotteuristic Disorder) are demonstrated by inappropriate crossing of the borderline between public and private space. And this borderline is currently in motion quantitatively and qualitatively. The author attempts to introduce the following motif to this issue: digital transformation of the society including digitalisation of social life unavoidably strengthens the self-control of those who actively engage in public space. Optimisation of self-perception for the outside world will strengthen the awareness of the human existence as a role in the theatre of the world. Increasingly absent securities of entitlement to privacy may result in increasing theatricality of the human existence and this may destabilise the human existence as such, including sexuality [5]. Scientific literature focusing on the impact of digital transformation and digitalisation of social life on sexuality was researched in preparation with the conclusion that this topic is being gradually covered.

On the other hand, research of international literature focusing on their potential impact on paraphilic disorders or gender incongruence failed to yield significant results. Digital transformation of the society including digitalisation of social life poses a question of an entirely new direction in emancipation of the human existence. In the new, digitalised world, the degree of freedom in the traditional sense may only be commensurate to how much an individual can free themselves from the overall theatricality of being, which is highlighted or even escalated by digital transformation including digitalisation of social life. However, how can we speculate and describe theoretically the potential liberation of the man from the overall theatricality of being when theatricality is undoubtedly an essential attribute of the human existence? Where do we go? At the same time, we have to take into account that the processes of digital transformation

including digitalisation of social life are most likely irreversible. If people as digisexuals manage to shift away from the overall theatricality of being at least partially, what will characterise their new anthropological situation [6].

Expert and Scientific Context of The Study of The Impact of Digitalisation of Social Life on Sexuality

On Addictology Studies of The Relationship between Human Sexual Behaviour and The Internet

It is necessary to reiterate that digitalisation of social life is interconnected with digitalisation of the society as a whole, which relies on the development of the internet. Addictology studies of the topic of behavioural addictions, sexual behaviour and the internet are primarily aimed at the inner world of digisexuals, but also delve into digitalisation of social life in terms of monitoring, surveillance and oversight of the public space in which digisexuals operate. The emerging interest in this topic dates back to the second half of the 1990s; activities such as cybersex and sexting are described and gradually the opinion that the internet is specific in terms of stimulation and implementation of sexual behaviour and that the internet may be the cause of loss of control over sexual life is being asserted. However, it does not seem that experts have reached general agreement regarding the topic of addiction to the internet and various derivatives of this relationship.

This is clearly expressed by Mark Griffith in his terminological dichotomy of addiction on the internet and addiction to the internet. The first term refers to the situation when an individual brings their pathology to the medium, the internet in this case, and the medium only creates an environment for free expression of the existing pathology. The second term suggests that the medium itself is the cause of the pathology. While both terms and principles are often used interchangeably in practice, the presumption that potential addiction to the internet is mostly a symptom of deeper problems dominates in therapeutical settings. Griffith's terminological dichotomy also applies to the relationship between sexual behaviour and the internet [7]. To sum up, we can quote from the study entitled "Cybersex: form of internet communication" by the Czech author Radana Divínová, although this study is almost twenty years old.

According to Young (1999, in Griffith 2001), addiction to the internet is a broad term covering a whole range of behaviours and problems with controlling impulses. This is why addiction to the internet is divided into five specific subcategories:

- a) Cybersexual addiction – usually involving compulsive use of webpages for cybersex and cyberporn.
- b) Cyber-relationship addiction – usually involving excessive engagement in online relationships.
- c) NET compulsions – usually involving obsessive/compulsive activities, such as online gambling, online shopping, trading, etc.
- d) Information overload – involving compulsive webpage surfing and looking up information in databases.

Computer addiction – characterised by obsessive playing of computer games such as Doom, Myst, Solitaire, etc. [8].

On The Study of The Consequences of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Development for The Human Sexuality

Sex with robots, love relationships with robots or the issue of gradual interference of artificial intelligence in the human sexuality is the second topic currently studied in sexology [9] and an initial step towards examining digitalisation of social life from the perspective of sexology. The reason for this has been mentioned in the context of the ability of Domestic Social Robots to gain extensive knowledge of their human client through their interactions. As this information can be stored and copied, Domestic Social Robots become a certain kind of monitoring, surveillance and oversight with regard to digitalisation of social life. As Sex Robots will be able to behave interactively, speak in natural language and create the illusion of social interaction (abilities not available to the conventional Sex Dolls), they will also be able to obtain especially sensitive personal information about their human clients.

While important methodological approaches were discussed already during the 1990s, the breakthrough in this context came in the first two decades of the 21st century, when the core aspects of the discussion at the international level were defined in David Levy's book entitled "Love & sex with robots: the evolution of human-robot relationships", and the book triggered numerous favourable, as well as highly critical responses throughout the second decade of the 21st century. As Levy's work is highly significant, it is suitable to describe its core principles, as evaluated by Viktor Kewenig in his philosophical essay "Intentionality but not Consciousness: Reconsidering Robot Love" [10]. Generally speaking, Levy's approach is based on the notion that humans possess natural tendency to anthropomorphise technological items, as observed in practice in anthropomorphising of the ELIZA computer program. The human tendency to anthropomorphise technology is subsequently strengthened by the inanimate item acting empathically.

Levy assumes that the creation of empathic robots is possible from the technical point of view. And finally, loving robots, meaning highly empathic robots capable of responding to human love, will be created. As every original thinker stands on the shoulders of their predecessors, Levy builds in particular on the media equation theory focusing on interaction of inanimate objects with humans, in which even inanimate objects can automatically trigger spontaneous responses in humans [11]. However, if a certain object displays characteristics of empathic behaviour, it does not necessarily mean that it is capable of being truly empathic. Therefore, other empirical observations leading to the emergence of the Uncanny Valley Phenomenon should be mentioned as a factor limiting the applicability of Levy's non-conformist approach. The more similar to a human a humanoid/robot is, the more positively it is accepted by humans. However, this linear dependence ceases to apply at a certain level and the human acceptance of humanoids declines rapidly after this point [12].

Final Note

This study aimed to define the key issues arising from the impact of digital transformation of the society and digitalisation of social life on sexuality. At the same time, it was an attempt to define the basic contexts preceding and accompanying this influence. The opinion presented by this study is that an inconceivably wide and varied topic is being opened in sexology, addictology, psychology and philosophy.

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