

**Negative effect  
of the ICTs  
in the daily routine  
of ederly people**

---

*By:*

*Joaquín García Casanova*

*Francisco Oses Nebro*

*Ángel Pulla Díjort*

*Andrés Tello Romero*

Málaga (Spain)

May 2010

## **NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ICTs IN THE DAILY ROUTINE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE**

**Do ICTs cause fear?      Should they cause it?**

One of the manifold factors why many people decide to keep apart from ICTs is certainly the feeling of insecurity, even fear. Or, to be more precise, the various aspects of ICTs that, as they see it, put into a serious risk (a real risk or just an assumed one) their feeling of security, their integrity or their privacy. The key question is:

- Are there reasonable causes for that?

I am of the opinion that the answer should be affirmative

- Yes, there are reasons indeed to feel lack of security!

I will try to justify this viewpoint

- Human beings nowadays have developed an extremely well defined sense of defence of our privacy and we manifest it in one and a thousand different ways: at home, with our families, with our social relationships, etc. Our “me” and “ours” clearly outstand as pillars of our own selves and as our main strength in front of others
- Human beings nowadays have learned how not to rely on others: both our own experience and also that of others, gypping, deceiving practices from different companies and even from individuals lead us to distrust the so-assumed advantages derived from the new discoveries and steps forward everywhere.

And, how do these two attitudes relate to ICTs?

- To Start with, ICTs –and more particularly, the Internet (web sites, blogs, MSN, Facebook, etc.)— demand a great amount of personal data so as to allow us to access them: Identity Card Number,

address, telephone number, e-mail address, passwords, personal likes, hobbies, details of our relatives and, on other occasions even more information such as that regarding our bank accounts or our credit cards, just to give an example.

- These details, on many occasions, are not properly protected and more often than not, they may become known by companies whose sole interest is to fill our telephones, emails and mailing boxes at home with all sorts of services and sales that we have neither requested nor are we willing to receive.
- The use of the Spam, as a massive tool for propaganda and advertising, most of the times intended to hurt, should be mentioned here as well: participation in lotteries, purchases of items such as Viagra, money pretended as a prize, and other thousand of additional ways to lie and confuse us, lead us to the conviction that these kinds of practices mean an intrusion into our privacy, a breach that endangers both our security and also our integrity.
- The massive reception of PPT files in the in-box of our emails, with messages supposed to be conveying love, brotherhood, good feelings, etc., making use of our time and our patience to the stupidity underlying many of them.
- Nowadays, a sense of distrust pervades the vast majority of our relation to the ICTs. We live with an apparent distrust in the systems of telematic purchase: not only for having to pay for good much sooner than we receive it, but also due to the uncountable examples of clear deceive or the occasions on which the received item does not correspond to the one we intended to buy, not to talk of the cases in which we receive nothing.

- To this, we should add the difficulty (in many cases, the impossibility) to be able to make a complaint or to get a refund, as there is no way we can contact the company responsible for the sell of the product or, what is worse, we do contact them but at the expense of phone calls on end until we eventually abandon our idea because of extreme boredom.
- The fright that the information regarding our bank account or our card could be used with uneducated persons, a lot of whom could be found working in the Net.
- Lack of trust that our pictures, our personal profile, can be used by unscrupulous people for illegal purposes.
- Lack of trust that our personal details and/or our PC can be used by hackers or companies pursuing harmful intentions.
- Lack of trust that our passwords, with which we get access to our bank accounts, may be harmed and utilized with illegal aims.
- Lack of trust that our e-mails can be controlled by Secret Services in search of presumed offenders or criminals, thus violating our right to privacy in our communications.
- Lack of trust that if we lose or forget a certain password we may be deprived for good from the pictures or videos that we have logged onto the Net.
- To all these distrusts, we should add the uncountable warnings sent regularly from the Public Administration Services, calling our attention on the multiple risks that are continuously affecting our

intimacy and security, especially those related to the personal information that we share in the social networks.

- Unfortunately, ICTs do not provide us with a completely safe room for our ordinary routine activities.
- To this, we should add the lack of knowledge that our immediate relatives do have as regards our personal information and passwords on the Net, hence the obvious risk that our physical disappearance (due to death or lack of capability) may lead to an absolute loss of whatever information contributed to the Net.

There are no doubts many more aspects to highlight, but some other mates will deal with them.

Andrés Tello Romero "Perchelero"  
Málaga, 06/05/2010

---

## **NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ICTs IN THE DAILY ROUTINE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE**

Finding negative aspects in the use of ICTs is undoubtedly a challenging task, especially if we bear in mind that they are intended to make the different tasks of our daily life easier. Any kind of appliance that we may have at home almost takes for granted that we are already acquainted with them. Particularly, the widespread use of the Internet or that of mobile phones have brought with them a high degree of autonomy (we do not need any more to go physically to the supermarket in order to make food-shopping, or to get an appointment with the doctor, or we can make all the arrangements for our journeys and solve everything as regards booking hotels on the Internet. We can even declare our income and many, many more things. Last, but not least, we should note that with our digital signature we will enjoy even more advantages.

Notwithstanding this, as we are to search for the potential disadvantages of ICTs, we could mention that:

- **BREAK THE IDEAL MODEL FOR COMMUNICATION**
- **THEY POSE A RISK TO THE PROMOTION OF CONSUMPTION**
- **PROVIDES LACK OF STABILITY TO THE STRUCTURE OF THE FAMILY CORE**
- **THEY MAY LEAD TO A LOSS OF CONTROL ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE**

- **THEY LEAD TO ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOURS**
- **PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES COULD BE ABANDONED**

An inadequate use of the PC or the mobile phone may lead us to the points stated above and which will be explained in more detail below.

We start our daily routine by reading the news on the screen of the PC, while we are having our breakfast. We go on surfing the Net for a while, we find an interesting site, and then we find a link that makes us visit another, and then another and so on until, all of a sudden, we don't know why or how, but we are in a site we don't know!

Other days, after reading the press, we revise our e-mail and find hundreds of them, we read them, we forward them, and then we realize that it is lunchtime!

In the afternoon, after our nap, we are happy with watching TV for a while and as almost every TV programme offers the possibility to send a Text Message on the phone, not to say something really relevant, but trivial or just to win a contest game (with the corresponding expensive cost) you make up your mind that you are going to send several texts.

In the evening, we start to miss our PC and then we decide to use it to play cards, and as we have found out that you can play and bet lottery on the internet, we find pleasure in spending some Euros. We have also encountered how easy it is to buy on-line, so we decide to purchase products we may never use.

All the above said, in one way or another, forces us to remain seated in front of the computer until very late at night. I have even heard

of people who end up by stopping all sort of communication in the context of their own family. So ICTs may become an element of isolation, particularly in the homes shared just by the couple (the most ordinary situation if we talk of people over 60) in which one of the members has become a webaholic and, to a certain extent, his/her personality has turned unsociable after a process of losing control of his/her own use of the ICTs.

All in all, we can conclude by insisting once more that communication gets broken, consumption gets promoted, and also loss of control, addictions may appear and last but not least is the fact that physical exercise, so important for elderly people's healthy life, might stop being practiced regularly.

Joaquín García Casanova

Málaga, 06/05/2010

---



## **A DISAGREEABLE EXPERIENCE WITH THE ITCS**

I met a well-organized, hardworking person, really careful about his family's needs, particularly as regards unexpected events concerning their health.

In order to get his aims, despite being about 50 years old, he self-imposed the duty to create a new file in his computer containing a detailed compilation of all his goods and financial (or any other sort of) compliances, that might eventually have an impact on his own properties or those of his family.

In an extremely detailed way, he made a full description of what properties he had, what obligations he should comply with, together with the best way to face his social, banking and treasury duties. He printed everything too and handed in a copy of them to his wife and daughters.

Unexpectedly, my friend suffered from brain damage, and it turned out to be vital for his family the Fac. That he had made all these notes beforehand. Particularly with the printed page, as his wife was absolutely unable to cope with the file where the information was stored. So it was his daughter, by using the printed page, which became responsible for making my friend's will be followed.

Angel Pulla Dijort

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMUNICATION**

People have needed to communicate in all civilizations and all over the world since times out of mind, either to not feel alone or to survive. Once they reached the first goal, they invented how to do it in the distance when they couldn't see or listen to each other.

With the arrival of Telecommunications systems, they had in their hands the most important instruments to enter the Modern Age.

It is hard to explain how a person, who has been in an active or passive way involved in the development of the modern technologies, and who has moved away from these advances in the technology, because of a particular episode of his working life, needs to recover everything lost, related not only to his/her working activity but also to his/her knowledge and social/family presence.

When I was close to my retirement, someone advised me to wide my knowledge in computers. If not, because of the coming times, I would be at a disadvantage against my grandchildren and depend on them.

I understood it perfectly, although without rush, and I can maintain that I had seen to myself handicapped and depending exclusively on the people around me if I hadn't taken steps to join the virtual world.

I think Communications were invented because they represent gates to human relationships. As our physical and intellectual difficulties are increasing, all these possibilities help to keep us in the world of the mobility and the knowledge. They are present in every situation and give us a support that, without a basic knowledge of the use of a computer, would be hard to think of.

Finally, I think that all this represents an incentive to go on learning, to life with a better quality level, to go on existing and specially to go on being considered important by people around you.

Francisco Oses Nebro

May 2010

## A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH ICTS

---

My relation with the computer science began when I was being very young, in the mid-eighties, when I acquired a Spectrum 48K (that compared to the current 4 Mb of RAM memory), was a really beautiful gadget, as you can see. It was necessary to connect it to the television set, as it did not even have a screen and it was programmed in terms of BASIC language, there were hardly any software. At that time, one had to buy magazines on programming and to copy the programmers of games or calculation that appeared in them. There was a fabulous personal exchange of information regarding programmers, tricks, etc.



My Spectrum did not even have hard disk, and I had to keep everything in cassette tapes, using a recorder. If we happened to listen to the tape, all we could hear were more or less harmonic whistles. However, when connected to the Spectrum, those sounds were immediately transformed into wonderful game programmers (nothing to do with today's 3D), ping-pong, tennis, vixens and rabbits, etc. It was particularly challenging for me to try and become able to cope successfully with the possibilities of mathematical calculation that it offered to use them in my ordinary work in the factory of Amoníaco Español, S.A. in Malaga (unfortunately, also disappeared nowadays).

This relation went on after my exit of the factory, already under a process of closing down, when my brother together with me decided to create a company of distribution of laboratory material in 1,986. From the

very beginning, we were clear about the importance of having a sound computing system, of stock controlling, of analyzing the economic development of the company, automatization of the orders to supplier and clients, etc. That period was critical to acquire a vast amount of technical knowledge concerning the functioning of computers, networks, electronic mail, etc.

In October, 1,997 I suffered from an IAM (acute infarct of myocardium) and my brother died shortly after, in February, 1,998 due to a terrible disease. My situation, both personal and professional, underwent a fort upset. My poor health led me to completely abandon the world of work and I was compulsorily retired in August 2,002. In November, 2,005 I was put under heart transplantation due to the negative evolution that the motor organ of my life was undergoing.

In October, 2,006, recovered to a certain extent but still with limitations, I registered in the courses of the Classes for the Elderly, in the University of Málaga (Spain). There I became progressively aware that my previous knowledge was of limited practical use, which the pause (that the disease I suffered brought with it) had taken me back to a position of almost complete “technological illiteracy”. I tried to recover my old knowledge of Computer Science, something which I did with certain easiness. But then I realized that I no longer would need it. In the meantime, new needs were emerging and I found them out and learned about them as long as I made use of the manifold possibilities that the Internet offers, in my attempt to extend the knowledge that the lecturers who came to the University for the Elderly outlined in class. Remarkably, my active participation in the workshop of the Philosophy of the Sciences that so skillfully offered by Professor Antonio Diéguez Lucena.

It was at that point that I discovered the source of information and knowledge that the Internet could mean for me. And, eventually, what

made me crazy about the potential of the Net was the discovery of the Blog as a means of free expression and interpersonal communication.

I succeeded at inculcating this discovery in some of my friends, whose blogs are a very important point of reference nowadays in my daily life. I was equally successful in convincing the director of our association as regards the convenience of developing our association own blog as a means for free expression of the literary aptitudes of the partners and friends, as well as a means of information and communication among them.

Lastly, my active participation in the project Grundtvig E-COM +45 offers me a unique platform to consolidate my ideas, to learn from all the other participants and to acquire tools of work and reflection on the subject really invaluable fruitful for my own personal development.

This walk towards the ITCs during these last years have cleared up all the potential doubts I might have on its possibilities as a most relevant means to improve the quality of life of the people (elderly or not), as an additional aspect of the indications given by the European Community for an Active Aging and as it reads in the White Book that the Junta of Andalusia it has elaborated on this subject takes shape in (and I quote):

- To grow older with CERTAINTY
- To grow older HEALTHFULLY
- To grow older PARTICIPATING AND CONTRIBUTING
- To grow older BEING TRAINED AND BEING EDUCATED.

Málaga, 30th April, 2,010

Andrés Tello Romero “Perchelero”