Editorial: positive technology: designing e-experiences for positive change

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Editorial on the Research Topic

Positive Technology: Designing E-experiences for Positive Change

While there is little doubt that our lives are becoming increasingly digital, whether this change is for the better or for the worse is far from being settled. Rather, over the past years concerns about the personal and social impacts of technologies have been growing, fueled by dystopian Orwellian scenarios that almost on daily basis are generously dispensed by major Western media outlets. According to a recent poll involving some 1, 150 experts, 47% of respondents predict that individuals' well-being will be more helped than harmed by digital life in the next decade, while 32% say people's well-being will be more harmed than helped. Only 21% of those surveyed indicated that the impact of technologies on people well-being will be negligible compared to now (Pew Research Center, 2018).

Although many scientific efforts have been devoted to acknowledging the risks of digital technologies, the question of how computers could be used to improve people's well-being has been much less explored. This was the main motivation for the development of a novel research area—Positive Technology—which aims at investigating how ICT-based applications and services can be used to foster positive growth of individuals, groups and institutions (Botella et al., 2012 ; Riva et al., 2012 ; Gaggioli et al., 2017). This area resulted from the convergence of two main trends. First, the emerging interest in the scientific understanding of conditions and processes that contribute to people happiness and well-being, chiefly represented by the fast-growing movement of Positive Psychology. The second trend was the increasing recognition, in the field of Human-Computer Interaction, of the

central importance that human experience, values, and ethical concerns have in the design, development and use of interactive systems. The integration of these two perspectives has led to new questions and possibilities concerning how digital technologies could help shaping positive human functioning, strengths, personal empowerment at the individual level, and of groups and organizations, from a social/interpersonal point of view (Botella et al., 2012).

In the last 10 years, research in Positive Technology has attracted increasing attention from an interdisciplinary community of scholars, leading to many conference papers, dedicated symposia and workshops, special issues in journals, and edited books. As an emerging area of research, considerable efforts have been spent on developing conceptual pillars and levels of analysis (Villani et al., 2016 ; Gaggioli et al., 2017), as well as on the definition of frameworks for bringing well-being principles into the design of interactive systems (Calvo and Peters, 2014 ; Fleming et al., 2016).

At the methodological and applied level, research on Positive Technology has focused on the design, development, and validation of novel digital experiences that aims at promoting positive change through pleasure, flow, meaning, competence, and positive relationships. These two main facets— theoretical and methodological—of Positive Technology are well reflected by the papers published in this Research Topic, which this editorial aims to briefly summarize.

Conceptual Frameworks for Using Interactive Technologies for Positive Change

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