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The Impact of New Technologies on Leisure Activities in Developed and Emerging Economies

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Abstract

This paper is a cross-cultural exploration of the impact of the widespread adoption of digital technologies on contemporary leisure activities. In the last two decades there has been an exponential increase in worldwide computer use, followed by a similar expansion in mobile phone usage. There are a number of factors caused this increase: technological advances in functionality, the migration of computer use from work to the home environment, increased accessibility of data through the increased capacity of search engines and the rapid growth in popularity of social media websites after 2004. The exponential growth of mobile phone use followed a similar but more rapid trajectory and the user base expanded in emerging economies when 3G mobile phone technologies provided internet access. There has been a major shift in the way people communicate particularly the exponential increase in the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Skype and Baibu. Sites such as iTunes and YouTube have changed the way music and video are accessed, listened to and used. Changing patterns of technology use have had a major impact on the way people conduct their lives and have impacted significantly on leisure activities in both developed and emerging economies: the types of activities and the way those activities are pursued in both at home and when people travel.

Keywords: leisure, mobile technologies, social media

El Impacto de las Nuevas Tecnologías en el Ocio en las Economías Desarrolladas y Emergentes

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Resumen

Recurriendo al Foro Social Mundial como un estudio de caso ejemplar, este artículo muestra como la emergencia de una forma de visión cosmopolita (transversalismo) se puede explicar en términos de experiencias de los activistas, a partir de la complejidad y las contradicciones en sus redes. El artículo cuestiona la idea que la transnacionalización de las redes de solidaridad y las interconexiones pueden estimular de forma sencilla el aumento del cosmopolitismo entre los activistas de la justicia global. Las experiencias de los activistas de disonancias entre sus ideales, la complejidad de las relaciones de poder y las incertidumbres estructurales en sus redes de justicia global puede proporcionarles una base de pensamiento y deliberación auto-reflexiva, y de esta manera estimular las agendas a adaptar las diferencias. El respaldo a las medidas de adaptación que aparecen al manejarse con tales disonancias cognitivo-prácticas aparece como un nuevo modo de cosmopolitismo, acuñado aquí como ‘transversalismo’. El artículo propone un nuevo marco conceptual y un modelo analítico para investigar la complejidad de este proceso de forma más inclusiva y sistemática.

Palabras clave: ocio, tecnologías móviles, medios sociales

Prior to the industrial revolution the pursuit of leisure activities was the prerogative of the elite and wealthy. The contemporary concept of leisure as ‘time spent not working’ is a product of social and economic changes in the 19th century associated with the industrial revolution in Europe and North America (Roberts, 2006, p.32). The combination of political emancipation and the expansion of the franchise, the reduction of both the working day and the length of the working week, along with rising standards of living, enabled greater numbers of people to engage in other activities, including leisure activities. The way leisure is defined is highly ‘context-dependent’, especially in Western industrialized societies where leisure is influenced by the wider economy, the way work is organized, the political system and the decline of community in the 20th century (Roberts, 2006, p.2). There was a further expansion of this leisure time, accompanied by rising standards of living, in the second half of the 20th century.

What people did with leisure time was influenced by technological changes in the media and the entertainment sectors. During the 19th century the mechanization of print expanded the production of newspapers, books and magazines. A rise in literacy levels meant reading in the home increased. In the 20th century there was an evolution in new forms of media—cinema, radio and television and a merging of some aspects of those media. The expansion of cinema at the turn of the century was part of the transition to increasingly visual forms of communication. In the 1920s radio became more widespread, and in the next decade sound and image merged in films. The introduction of radio increased the amount of entertainment available in the home in the 1920s, a trend that intensified with the rapid uptake of television in the 1960s. During the 1990s the migration of the computer from work to personal use also had an impact on leisure. A decade later mobile phones and tablets made media more available for personal use. In contemporary emerging societies a rapid social transition, similar to that which occurred in Western industrialized societies in the 19th and 20th centuries, took place from the 1970s. Today, with the globalization of the media and technology, it is possible for these groups to leapfrog stages of technological development and engage with the latest media technologies

available. These technological changes are completely revolutionizing how people spend their leisure time in all societies.

Time

Because leisure has social and economic implications, it became an important area of research in the 20th century, and of interest to governments. Leisure is an important economic activity. In Britain leisure accounted for between 25% and 38% of consumer spending and is an important form of employment (Roberts, 2006, p. 5-6). The OECD report measuring leisure has identified three key criteria for defining leisure: time, activities and states of mind. The economic determinants of leisure focus on 'residual time not spent in paid work'. Leisure is also defined in terms of the allocation of time in the adult life cycle, and time-use studies are used to document activities when people are in work and away from work (2009, p.20).

Trends in all OECD countries from 1970-2005 indicated that, contrary to general perceptions, time spent working was not increasing except for certain groups (OECD, 2009, p.22). The greatest reduction in work hours in recent decades occurred in the 1970s (Roberts, 2006, pp.46–47). Average hours in paid work in OECD countries were 1595 hours a year, though averages differed considerably between countries. The reduction in work hours has not translated into an increase in leisure hours (OECD, 2009, p. 25). The OECD study used four criteria for defining time: 1. leisure (using the 'narrow' definition –low levels' of personal care– 45% of time) (OECD, 2009, p. 27) 2. paid work 3. unpaid work 4. personal care (including sleep) and 5. 'other'. Gender, age, social class, race/ethnicity and employment status are all important influences on the time available for leisure and how people engage with technology in their leisure. Older age groups have more leisure time once taking care of young children ceases, and in almost all countries men have more leisure time than women, whether using a 'broad' definition (factors in a high level of personal care) or the narrow definition (OECD, 2009, p. 27). Employed married women with dependent children have the least time for leisure. Those with lower incomes may have to work longer hours or have more than one job which may decrease leisure time (Freysinger & Kelly, 2000, p. 154).

Roberts (2006, p.40), citing Gershuny's survey (2000) of 35 time budget studies in 20 countries, concluded that convergence in leisure activities was taking place between countries, classes and gender. Roberts also included age groups. Hours of work do vary from country to country, even between economically advanced countries. The UK 2000 Time Use Survey found that leisure activities took up 22% of people's time—which translates into five hours and 17 minutes a day—and of that figure watching television accounted for 10% and social life and entertainment for 6%, sport was 1%, hobbies and games 1% and 'other' 4% (Roberts, 2006, p.11). The OECD data for 2006 revealed that in the UK 23.4% of the day (five hours 14 minutes) was leisure time, while in the US that number was 21.7% (five hours five minutes) (2009).

Expenditure

According to Roberts, since the 1970s leisure has become more commoditized (2006, p. 49). The pace of spending on leisure activities has increased dramatically since the 1970s in Britain (citing the Family Expenditure Survey Great Britain 1974-2000/1 and 2002/3 and the General Household Survey 2006, Table 1.5, 2006, p.17). Out-of-home eating and drinking dominated leisure spending in 2002/3, followed by tourism and media (2006, p.18). Increasingly, what we do with our leisure time is defined by 'buying, possessing and displaying' purchased products (Freysinger & Kelly, 2000, p. 278), and this clearly applies to expenditure on new technologies. Though use of media may not dominate leisure spending it is increasingly coming to dominate use of leisure time.

User Profiles: Technology

The nature of technological changes has also influenced what people do with that technology, often in unanticipated ways. People tend to spend most of their leisure time at home, and use of mass media came to dominate leisure activities with the advent of television which first brought moving images into the home in the 1950s. For the next decades families watched television together. Watching television has been the most common form of leisure

activity since the 1960s. British people have watched over 20 hours of television per week since the 1970s (Roberts, 2006, p. 18). The introduction of satellite communications, the expansion of satellite television and an increase in the number of channels in 1990s began to fracture television audiences. As multiple niche audiences evolved, the number of household television sets increased. Unfortunately the OECD data is not useful in identifying specific technology use in leisure time, as television and radio are grouped together, while 'other' activities include computer games, recreational internet use, telephone conversations as well as activities like walking pets and doing arts and crafts (OECD, 2009, p. 35).

According to Nielsen, fragmentation of the media in recent years has happened across all formats. The explosion of platforms and formats has provided more content than ever before but the idea of television viewing has been reconfigured as video programming, defined as 'any type of content, such as TV, cable shows, professional video or user-generated content, that is watched on your TV, PC, mobile phone, tablet or e-reader'. The Nielsen Global Digital Landscape Survey found 55% of 30,000 respondents worldwide saying that video programming was an important part of their lives (Nielsen, 2015).

Computers

At the same period that satellite communications changed the television sector there was an increase in the use of computers for leisure activities. The expansion of computer use, as well as the migration of computers from work to the home was based on decades of research and development. The silicon chip was invented by Jack Kirby in 1959, and by the 1970s led to the development of the personal computer. Satellite communication networks had already made computers an essential part of the business and financial sectors when computers began a migration from the workplace to education and entertainment. The first personal use of computers in the 1980s was the playing of offline games. These early games required quite a high level of technical knowledge and were relatively clumsy and difficult to use. The first wave of personal users tended to be young males. Email communication and information searching attracted a wider audience of

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personal users in the next decade. A number of changes in the 1990s widened the appeal of computers by increasing the range of capabilities. Information searching improved when Microsoft launched Internet Explorer and popularized the World Wide Web in 1996. In 1999 Google expanded search capacities and Napster enabled database access. Sharing music via the internet became possible and music piracy went global. As 99% of music exchanged this way is not paid for, the music industry was changed forever. Control was wrenched from traditional owners of the media ([British Broadcasting Company, 2010](#)). In 2004 the social networking site Facebook was set up and by 2010 it had logged its 500 millionth active user. A quarter of the people with an active account had logged into the site in the in the previous 30 days ([Fletcher, 2010](#)). The first video was posted in 2005 on YouTube, and its user base has also expanded exponentially. Trends in online activities have also evolved including ‘blogging’, the setting up of personal web posts. This trend became ‘mainstream’ when major media organizations started establishing blogs. An estimated 60–80% of blogs started by people were abandoned within a month ([Worldwatch, 2009, p. 32](#)).

Further modifications such as wireless accessibility and the introduction of the laptop meant that computers could be more portable. The introduction of the iPad computer tablet in 2010—a cheaper, more basic computer with internet access—was instantly a great success and changed the computer user profile again. By 2012 tablets were being used as playmate, teacher and child minder ([Nielsen, 2012](#)), in much the same way television was used after it became widespread in the 1960s.

Mobile phones

In the same decade that computer usage increased—the 1990s—the mobile phone became a common accessory. Phone prices went down as competition increased and production levels went up. The GfK Roper Report, ‘Worldwide Study 2006’, which surveyed only the top 75% of income earners in countries, found 71% of participants used a mobile phone ([Salles, 2006](#)). Uptake of mobile phones has been very rapid in emerging economies. The percentage of mobile phone ownership can easily rise over 100% when

people have multiple SIM cards or multiple phones. Brazilians have recently embraced the mobile phone, and uptake has been rapid. In 2007 ownership levels were at 133 million phones, over 70% of the population (Meirelles, 2009), and three years later numbers had reached 202.9 million, 99.7% of the population (CIA, 2012a). Levels of mobile phone ownership are even higher in Russia, reaching 238 million (164% of the population) in 2010 (CIA, 2012e), an increase from 5.1% in 2001). By 2010 numbers of mobile phones in India had reached 752 million—64% of the population (CIA, 2012c). Within 10 years of mobile phones being introduced into China in 1987, China had the most mobile phone users in the world. In 2010 there were 859 million mobile phones (64% ownership) (CIA, 2012b). In the same year US ownership was 279 million (90%) (CIA, 2012g) and UK ownership was 80.8 million (128%) (CIA, 2012f). As mobile phones do not have internet access, in many countries mobile phone ownership was supplanted by smartphones when they became available.

Smartphones

The most significant innovation in mobile phone technology was the launch of the ‘smartphone’ in 2006, offering texting, talking plus ‘advanced data’, which led to a media convergence with the internet, television, email, voice and text all delivered in one device. The internet was no longer tied to computers. The smartphone, because it is much cheaper than a computer and transportable, will enable millions of people to leapfrog landline and computer technologies and access the internet with wireless handheld devices. One of the attractions of smartphones for young people is the ‘anywhere anytime access’. Smartphone uptake has been rapid. The 24.1 million sold in China from January to June 2010 exceeded sales for all of 2009 (WARC, 2010c). The smartphone has tended to intensify patterns that were established with computer use earlier in the decade. Smartphone ownership levels are, however, still much smaller than those of mobile phones.

User profiles

With each change in technology and with the introduction of each new media device different user profiles are generated. User profiles tend to vary with age and gender, and different age groups show preferences for certain products and services and those profiles evolve over time. Different societies exhibit different cultural preferences, and in all societies men and women have different patterns of using technology in their leisure time.

Computer User Profiles

In the 1990s the number of internet users was still a small percentage of the total population in most countries and email communication was one of the first popular activities for personal computer users. Before 1995 British computer ownership levels were higher than the United States; then the United States overtook Britain. Ownership levels were about 25% in 1995 (Schmitt & Wadsworth, 2002). Not until the late 1990s in the UK did the number of homes with computers begin to rise steeply, and by 2004 over 50% were connected to the web (Roberts, 2006, pp. 38-39). By then two thirds of young people were experienced internet users (Russell & Drew, 2001, and Russell & Stafford, 2002 cited in Roberts, 2006, pp.38–39). According to the TGI 1999/2000 survey, the rate of usage in Britain, France, Germany and Spain averaged 14.4% with Britain having the highest level of users at 23% and the others varying between 7.6% and 14.4%. By 2001 levels in these four countries had reached 19.5% (Ware & de Montigny, 2001). At the end of the decade, in 2009, internet user numbers had reached 51.4 million (83%) in the UK (CIA, 2012f) and 245 million (80%) in the US (CIA, 2012fg).

Computer uptake in key emerging economies has been uneven and ownership levels began expanding in the last decade, a few years after expansion in industrialized countries. In Latin America, user levels in a 1999/2000 survey were 12.5%, increasing to 19.6% by 2001. Five percent of the users in Latin America were men (Ware & de Montigny, 2001). In Brazil personal computer ownership grew to 76 million (38%) in 2009 (CIA, 2012a). In Russia internet users expanded to 40.8 million (29%) in 2009

(CIA, 2012e), the same level as in China in 2009 389 million – or 29% (CIA 2012b). In India by 2009 the number of internet users was 61 million, 5.5% of the population (CIA, 2012c).

Children

A recent study of children's use of the internet—for leisure or learning—in the OECD countries found the key influences to be family, cultural values and socio-economic status. One of the important social changes that occurred in the 1990s in these countries was the growth of a 'wired generation' of children (also known as 'digital natives') who had computers at school and in their homes, and who grew up with the internet, mobile phones and video games. In 21 of the 30 OECD countries over 86% of children over 15 used a computer at home, and in five countries the level was over 95%. It was easy for children to use computers for play or entertainment as the internet complemented and extended activities they were already engaged with (2008).

Since then children have been engaging with computers from a very early age. A decade ago computer use by children aged six months to six years in the United States was increasing (Calvert, Ridout, Woolard, Barr & Strouse, 2004 cited in OECD, 2008). On average children start learning to use computers on their parent's laps, sometimes as young as two and a half years, but had moved to independent use within a year. There is a strong trend towards universal use amongst OECD teenagers. There is also evidence of a gender gap in the use of technology. Boys use computers and the internet more than girls; they have wider computer experience and spend more time online. Girls seem to use computers for communicating, word processing, text messaging, email and blogging more than boys (Lenhart, 2007, OECD, 2007 cited in OECD, 2008).

Research into the effects of new technology on children builds on existing research into effects of television on children. There is evidence of positive benefits for the development of cognitive skills, but the effects on other aspects like critical thinking and creativity have not been researched. Time spent on digital technologies adds to time devoted to other media and reduces time interacting with families and friends, but there is an increase in

virtual communication, less supervised by adults. There is no conclusive evidence through longitudinal studies of effects on educational performance (OECD, 2008). One of the major effects of increasing use of technologies for leisure is the displacement of other activities, especially the physical activities of young people and children.

Smartphone Uptake

Smartphone ownership has rapidly increased in recent years. In December 2010 media research company Nielsen published a report on mobile phone behavior in 10 countries. In Europe 47% of mobile phone users aged 15-24 – henceforth ‘youth’–owned a smartphone (as a percentage of mobile phone owners), and the group over 25 averaged 31% ownership. In the USA the overall average was 28% and the youth average was 33%. In all the countries surveyed smartphone ownership by males exceeded that of females, except in the United States where 55% of owners aged 15-24 were female. In the US overall, 55% of users were male (Nielsen, 2010). By 2012 most young adults in the United States had a smartphone, according to the *New York Times* (cited in Nielsen, 2012). A 2011 UK survey by Ofcom–the independent regulator and competition authority for the communications industry–found that by 2011 27% of adults in the UK and 47% of teenagers owned a smartphone and that most of those smartphones had been purchased in the last year (2011).

User Activities

Mobile Phones: Texting and Talking (MSM)

Texting and making calls remain the main uses of mobile phones, even on smartphones. Women tend to use messaging more in most markets except India. In the UK and US women use messaging 10% more than men do. In the US, where plans were much cheaper, at first texting (TMS) was less popular than making calls, but this trend has changed in recent years. The same Nielsen study found in the late 2000s that mobile phones and texting had become an obsession with young people. Their main conclusion was

that this generation of young people around the world is more immersed in mobile technology than any previous generation, though the same would have been said about computers a decade earlier. Nielsen's analysis of American mobile phone usage data in April-June 2010 also found that US teens' main reason for getting a mobile phone had changed between 2008 and 2010, from safety to texting. American teenagers aged 13-17 years were the highest users of mobile phones, averaging 3339 sent and received messages in a month, more than six every hour they are awake—and this was an 8% increase from the year before. Teen girls sent and received more messages than boys, 4050 compared to 2539 messages per month. Young adults (18-24) sent 1630 texts per month, less than three an hour. Though teens preferred texting to phoning, they still averaged 646 minutes talking on the phone per month. The level of phone call use peaks at age 24. The over 55 group is the only sector that talks less than 646 minutes, the average for teens (2010).

Online activity: Computers and Smartphones

As marketers are keen to make use of new technology to target consumers, a new market research field has emerged—MROC—market research into online communities. More data has recently become available about behavior and patterns of use. Patterns of behavior online and on mobile phones vary among different cultures and among age groups in those cultures. Older age groups are seen as a key demographic because they often have more time and disposable income. Data on patterns of technology use often blur the distinctions between cellphones and smartphones. In the GfK Roper Report Worldwide Study 2006, texting, emailing and web browsing were all increasing rapidly (Salles, 2006). One of the most noticeable trends in the last decade has been people's simultaneous use of multiple media. The introduction of computers and the web has not reduced exposure to other media, and in fact increases overall time spent with media (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 2004 cited in OECD, 2008). Multiple simultaneous uses of media raises questions about levels of engagement with any one form of media. Daily time spent online has increased in most societies in the last decade, and part of that growth is due to the increasing

use of smartphones to access the internet. A British study by Ofcom found (though it is too soon to know if these patterns are temporary or permanent), that patterns of behaviour of smartphone users differ from patterns of earlier mobile phone users. In Britain 37% of smartphone users admitted they were ‘almost addicted’ to their phones and used them at restaurants, while eating and in the bedroom and bathroom. Users are also making more calls and sending more messages. There appeared to be a trend that smartphone use among young people meant they were watching less television (23%) and reading fewer books (5%) (2011).

Internet Searching and Games

Computer games were some of the first attractions of computers in leisure time and are especially popular in Asian countries. China is one of the leading nations in the emerging world in technology uptake. Research in China by Analysys International found access to the internet by smartphone growing rapidly: 205 million people at the end of 2009 logged onto the web with wireless handsets, rising to 214 million in the first half of 2010. A CTR survey of 1000 mobile internet users in 10 cities found that the major reason for use was the demand for ‘anytime anywhere’ content (WARC, 2010c). The most popular uses of the internet in China in 2013 were instant messaging and searching (GO-Globe, 2013).

Smartphone Activities

The highest percentage of young people (15-24) in the world who use ‘advanced data’ (beyond text and voice) were in China (70%) and the US (83%). Average adult usage was 47% in China and 51% in the US (Nielsen, 2010). The behavior of users of mobile phones has evolved rapidly since smartphones came on the market. One of the unforeseen parallel developments that accompanied the smartphone was the exponential growth of applications that could be downloaded to add specific functionality, for both computers and smartphones. There are currently around 400,000 applications (apps) available from Apple, 37% of them free. An international study by Oracle Communications of 3000 mobile phone users (acknowledged as slightly skewed towards younger men), found 69% used a

smartphone, and 47% of the people using smartphones used more mobile data services than they did a year ago. Key activities were that they were used as MP3 players, GPS navigation and as replacements for digital cameras. Seventy-five percent of those aged 19-34 (Gen Y) had downloaded free apps versus 41% of those 47-65 (baby boomers). Sixteen percent of interviewees had a tablet and 41% planned to get one soon. Sixty-eight percent said the apps they most liked to use on phones were games, while other preferences were: social networking 67%, music 64%, banking 55% and video 51% (WARC, 2011).

Social Networking

The immense popularity and uptake of social networking since it first appeared in 2004 has been a major surprise to the sector. Also not predicted was that Facebook would outdo its competitors in Western markets. The profile of these Facebook users has also evolved rapidly. By 2010 28% of Facebook users were over 34, and this group was the fastest growing (Fletcher, 2010). The use of social networks in older age groups in the United States has almost doubled in 2011 to 42% (over 47% in the age-group 50-64 and 26% in the over 64 age-group), according to PEW Internet (cited by Willems, 2012). This group is searching for products and information that fits a functional need rather than emotional needs, while the younger age group, 16-24 years, is mainly interested in social interaction with their peers. They also have shorter attention spans (segmented attention) so they like cool new tools and working on multiple tasks (Willems, 2012).

E-commerce and E-banking

E-commerce has expanded as people become more familiar and comfortable with using technology. Patterns of online shopping vary considerably between countries, and e-commerce is more common in high-income countries where credit card ownership is more widespread and among young adults and the older age groups who have credit cards. The mass uptake of smartphones is predicted to change consumer behaviour as more people shop

online (WARC, 2010d). The growth in advertising on mobile phones has accompanied the expansion of the numbers of smartphone users, as it did with expansion of computer ownership. Security of data continues to be an issue for some groups.

There are marked differences in e-commerce uptake between emerging economies, for example India and China. Only a small number of Indian internet users shop online (WARC, 2009) while a third of those interviewed for a McKinsey survey of the Chinese internet population had purchased products online. The groups in China quickest to show interest in purchasing or who actually purchased products tended to be younger, better educated and wealthier. One of the main uses of the internet was to check out products before purchasing (WARC, 2010b). The percentage of the population who use credit cards is low in China (estimated at two million on internetworldstats.com/asia/cn, 2012), though according to WARC the rate of e-commerce purchasing is 28% in China, the highest of the BRICs (WARC, 2010a). Credit card users in India were estimated at 18.3 million in 2009-10, a minute percentage of the total population of 1.1 billion (Phalghunan, 2010). Customers in both India and China are concerned about security and fraud, which is cited as a key reason e-commerce was a relatively small sector in China (Nanjing Marketing Group, 2012).

Electronic banking has been expanding in high-income countries as people became more confident about the security of their data. In emerging economies electronic banking is still fairly small scale. Thirty-two percent of internet users in India used internet banking according to IAMAI (Internet World Stats, 2012).

Smartphones have also offered e-banking opportunities to people in countries where infrastructure is poor and there are no landlines. In Kenya, where the population is estimated to be 41 million in July 2012, there were 24.9 million mobile phones in 2010 (CIA, 2012d). As banking services are poor or non-existent in many areas of Kenya, the ability to access services such as mobile banking is a very important. In Kenya these banking is done by mobile phones, not smartphones. Mobile banking is especially beneficial to migrant workers who want to send money home to their families.

Pornography

One of the areas of computer use that tends to be ‘under the radar’, but obviously an important for leisure activity—and work time, is using the internet to access pornography. An estimated 42.7% of internet users viewed pornography in 2006 and there were 68 million daily pornography search engine requests, 25% of the total requests. Forty million American internet users frequently visit pornography websites. In the United States in 2006 internet porn sales (\$2.84 billion) were worth less than video sales and rentals, which were valued at \$3.62 billion (Ropelato, 2006).

Travel

Most expenditure on leisure occurs away from the home. Out-of-home eating and drinking dominated leisure spending in Britain 2002-3, followed by tourism and media (Roberts, 2006, p.18). Leisure activities have become more polarized as inequality in society increases and trends in growing inequality and growing affluence for certain sectors are reflected in the way people travel. Travel in the form of a holiday is usually people’s largest leisure expenditure. Approximately 60% of the British population has at least one holiday a year away from home (Roberts, 2006, p.19). As the better off became more affluent they began taking more holidays and travelled further. As travel prices became more competitive in the 1990s people also travelled more.

Innovations in technology have also changed the way people travel at every stage of the process. People are using computers and smartphones to research and access leisure information and to plan their travel. In the UK research has shown that the internet plays a greater role in planning than booking. Booking a full holiday on a mobile device is still too complicated (TravelSupermarket Travel Trends Tracker, cited by TravelMole, February 2012 in NewMedia Trend Watch UK, 2012). Technology is used at most stages of the travel process as the sector becomes increasingly accessible to those working outside the travel sector. The internet is used to search for airline tickets, last minute bookings, bargains, insurance, and hotel accommodation and to find information about destinations. Once at

destinations GPS maps can be used to navigate round cities. Airports are beginning to provide information in the form of apps for airport maps. Ticket confirmations and reminders are sent to cellphones and computers.

Effects of Changing Patterns of Leisure

In the last two decades patterns of leisure activities have changed dramatically with the expansion of the use of computers, mobile phones and smartphones. While time spent using technology has increased, communication may have increased, but there has been a decline in interpersonal interaction. In some countries this decline in personal interaction has created new social problems including increased social isolation and ‘internet addiction’. In Korea— one of the ‘most wired’ nations—clinics have been established to deal with the growth of internet addiction. Numbers reached more than a million in 2007, but after the government established counseling programmes the number declined to 938,000 in 2009 (Sang-Hun, 2010). In countries where children and young people are spending more time using technology there is a decline in physical activity that is contributing, along with changes in diet, to a rise in child obesity, especially in industrialized countries. For adults the fact that technology now enables 24-hour availability means the boundaries between work and leisure or personal time are being eroded.

Conclusion

The migration of computer technology to personal use in the home in the last two decades has had a major impact on what people do in their leisure time. The expansion of the internet and the increasing leisure options available—games, www, searching, social networking and e-commerce—first impacted on people’s leisure, modifying former patterns of behavior rather than introducing completely new tasks. The other complementary technology was the mobile phone which stimulated an expansion in interpersonal communication, much the way email did in the late 1980s/early 1990s. Texting has become almost an obsession among young people. With the advent of the smartphone, services previously accessed by computer could

now be accessed anywhere at anytime. The multiple technological options available means technology has migrated into most aspects of daily life. As technology use is sedentary, other types of activities, especially physical activities, have been displaced especially among the young. Among older users there has been an erosion of the differentiation between work and leisure. Technological changes and convergences are still occurring, so it is too soon to say whether patterns of leisure will evolve and change further, or whether current behavior patterns are here to stay. Will there be a reaction and rejection to this invasion of technology in daily life, and a rejection in favour of simpler pleasures? However, the popularity of social networking reinforces the fact that interpersonal communication remains people's main source of pleasure and enrichment in daily life.

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