



SPACE, PLACE and TECHNOLOGY

Presence in
Mediated Experiences

PsychNology Journal

ISSN 1720-7525

Vol. 3 [2]

www.psychnology.org

PSYCHNOLOGY JOURNAL

The Other Side of Technology

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Published online since Summer 2002
 Web Site: <http://www.psychology.org>
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Editorial Preface

This number of PsychNology Journal publishes a second series of papers on 'Space, Place and Technology'. The special issue offers two different yet complementary reviews, a theoretical paper and a research paper.

In '*A Review of How Space Affords Socio-Cognitive Processes during Collaboration*', Nicolas Nova provides us with a comprehensive, up-to-date overview of the ways in which space is experienced by computer users, with a special emphasis on users' interaction. The review synthesizes the results of experimental and ethnographic studies that may be of use to designers; the presentation considers the relation of the user with the artefact, with space/place, with another user and with activity.

Shaleph O'Neill makes an articulated critique of the concept of virtual presence from the viewpoint of Situationist Theory on the one side, and Place/Space Theory on the other. '*Presence, Place and the Virtual Spectacle*' proposes a criterion, rooted into the users' agency, to establish whether an environment can afford a genuine human presence or not. O'Neill maintains that Virtual Spaces hardly satisfy the 'agency' requisite and end up being more a 'represented' than an 'inhabited' Space.

Johanna Pöysä, Joost Lowyck, and Päivi Häkkinen present a work that falls within the area of Computer Supported Cooperative Learning: '*Learning together "There"- Hybrid "place" as a conceptual vantage point for understanding virtual learning communities in higher education context*'. Their contribution aims at investigating the nature of the place in which a web-based learning community operates. Their study includes online diaries, discussions, recordings of chats and videoconferences and suggests

that a valid rendition of this place must include physical as well as virtual resources. An additional value of the article is to introduce the concept of space and place within the research field of communities of learning.

The second review '*Presence and Mediated Spaces: a Review*', authored by Lucia A. Renò, examines the way in which the space/place dichotomy relates to the concept of Presence, and offers the basis to distinguish spatial presence from presence. She translates this dichotomy into a combination of various aspects, namely an individual versus a relational perspective, and Space as a physical rather than a subjective phenomenon.

In the section 'Other contents', the journal contains a paper external to the special issue, but related to the topic of Poysa's et al. The paper, '*Some Reflections on Learning and E-learning*', is the third review in this number. In this review, Cristina Zucchermaglio and Francesca Alby make a detailed journey into the 'theories that are behind' the design of learning environments by dividing them in two categories, which they name 'full' technologies versus 'empty' technologies. Then, they examine virtual learning communities as a case of 'empty' technology and go on summarizing crucial aspects contributing to their effectiveness and usability. The discussion is rich with references to environments easily available on the Internet.

With this number, we are also glad to announce the arrival of two new Editors, Wijnand Ijsselstein from Eindhoven University of Technology (The Netherlands) and Matthew Lombard from Temple University (Philadelphia, USA). Their distinguished work in the neuropsychological and

social aspects of mediated experience respectively represents a precious resource to the Journal. This number also features a new structure of PNJ

website, which besides having several 'back-office' advantages, is hopefully more organized and good-looking to the readers.

Sincerely,

*Luciano Gamberini,
Giuseppe Riva,
Anna Spagnoli*