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Ageing and Digital Communication

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Demographically, the world is about to enter a new era. As the ageing population is a well documented phenomenon and the older adults are relatively affluent worldwide, ageing has become a major topic of the contemporary academic and public discourses. Once understood only as a disengagement from the active life or as a biological status, ageing is to gain new social meanings. In the meantime, another ubiquitous phenomenon impacts nowadays social interactions and everyday life: the emerging of digital communication. Over the past decade, digitization has made considerable progress and the new ICTs are being rapidly diffused on the large segments of the population.

Related to ageing and digital communication, at least two research directions have been addressed on the communication science research agenda, specifically (1) *How the widespread of new technologies are changing the norms and practices of the later life?* And (2) *How social actors, groups, institutions and mainstream media provide, spread or constrain ways of growing older via digital devices?* These questions shaped novel and interdisciplinary approaches at the convergence of the sociology of ageing, communication and media studies, psychology, gerontology and human computer interaction.

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In the case of using new digital devices, on the one hand older people have been stereotyped according with their age, as a minority with limited agency and increased dependency, as frail and underrepresented compared with their younger counterparts. On the other hand, the constant growth of the *digital seniors* has brought into attention the concept of autonomy, self-efficacy and power of *doing* and *portraying* ageing. In these contexts, a more inclusive and diverse representations of ageing are considered desirable by the seniors' media users, but the attempt to delivery such an age-friendly media content and image remains scarce.

As it is seen, the reflection on these two interconnected spectres – the demographic turn (ageing) and the unprecedented speed of digitalization (digital communication) – gave rise to a controversial debate on the meanings, portrayals and experience of ageing along with the perceived advantages and disadvantages of using digital devices at old age. The ongoing debates on ageing and communication reflect the diversity of the experience of ageing *in* and *within* the new internet-based technologies, whereas it empowers and disempowers older adults to function in society and to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.

This special issue aims to bring together contributions that explore both the challenges and opportunities of using digital communication later in life, and seek to better understand the role of new technologies in shaping the diverse portrayals and meanings of ageing in the network society. We invite you to submit original manuscripts of diverse types: original research, systematic reviews, and theoretical papers, which address the relationship between ageing and digital communication.

Important Deadlines

- **January 2, 2020**: submission of the proposal in the form of an abstract of maximum 2 pages. The proposal must include a list of recent references and 5 keywords;
- February 2, 2020: acceptance of the proposal;
- **June 15, 2020**: full paper submission;
- October 15, 2020: full paper acceptance.

Full papers should be between 6,000-8,000 words in length. Papers can be submitted in English or French. The abstracts should be in English and French (150-200 words) followed by 5 keywords. Please provide the full names, affiliations, and e-mail addresses of all authors, indicating the contact author. Papers, and any queries, should be sent to:

essachess@gmail.com

Authors of the accepted papers will be notified by e-mail. The journal will be published in **December 2020**.