

# The Couple and Family Technology Framework: Evidence and Future Directions

Das Paar- und Familientechnologien-Rahmenmodell: Nachweis und Zukunft

Katherine M. Hertlein

Themenschwerpunkt Psychologische Aspekte von Automation...

## Abstract

---

Technology is a central part of one's daily experiences for half of the world's population. Advances in technology help us increase our social capital, entertain us, and help us work more effectively. With these advances, however, also come some unintended consequences: technology introduces new risks into relationships and alters couple dynamics. The Couple and Family Technology Framework is, to date, the only theoretical framework that explains the effect of the Internet and social networking, both beneficial and detrimental, on couple and family relationships. The purpose of this article is to: 1) provide a brief overview of the Couple and Technology Framework, and; 2) summarize evidence from six recent studies whose findings align with the framework. This article will specifically focus on the framework's application to couples, particularly as to how technology influences both the structure and processes of their couple relationship. The studies presented will reflect both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Implications and future research is presented.

## Zusammenfassung

---

Technologie ist ein zentraler Bestandteil im täglichen Leben für die Hälfte der Weltbevölkerung. Fortschritte in der Technologie helfen uns, unser soziales Kapital zu erhöhen, unterhalten uns und helfen uns auch, effizienter zu arbeiten. Mit diesen Fortschritten kommen jedoch auch einige unerwartete Konsequenzen: Technologie bringt neue Risiken in die Beziehungen und ändert die Dynamiken bei Paaren. Das Paar- und Familientechnologien-Rahmenmodell ist bislang das einzige theoretische Rahmenmodell, das die Auswirkungen des Internets und sozialer Netzwerke, ob nützlich oder nachteilig, auf Paar- und Familienbeziehungen erklärt. Das Ziel dieses Artikels ist es, erstens einen kurzen Überblick über

das Rahmenmodell zu geben und zweitens, die Ergebnisse von sechs neuen Studien zusammenzufassen, welche sich am Rahmenmodell orientieren. Dieser Artikel fokussiert sich auf die Anwendung des Rahmenmodells auf Paare, insbesondere wie Technologie die Struktur und die Prozesse in der Paarbeziehung beeinflusst. Die präsentierten Studien geben qualitative und quantitative Methoden wieder. Schlussfolgerungen und weitere Untersuchungen werden präsentiert.

## 1. Introduction

---

Technology has a profound effect on our daily lives. Evidence of its impact in our lives is all around us. To date, there are a billion users that own cell/smartphones across the world. The penetration of mobile phones is at a very high percentage across the world (90% in most of the industrialized countries). Some estimates report that we check our emails an average of 15 times a day (Social Media Week, 2016). With 7.5 billion people in the world, at least half report that they use the Internet, and the proportion of Internet users is much higher in developed countries (at 75%), such as Europe and the U.S. For example, 88% of people in North America identify themselves as Internet users (PEW Research Center, 2018). In Austria, for example, there are 7.2 million users of the Internet, and 84.6% of the entire population of Austria.

As technology changes, it will continue to have both individual and relational psychological effects on our lives. Given all of these changes and the way in which technology was appearing in our practices, there has to be a way to develop a framework for the treatment of technology in couple and family life. The purpose of this article is to review the development and salient elements of the Couple and Family Technology Framework, to alert readers to the salient elements of the framework,