The Journal of Technology in Human Services turns a new page

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Turning A New Page in the Digital Age

It is our great honor and privilege to be appointed as the new Editor-in-Chief and Associate Editor in Chief of the Journal of Technology in Human Services. We expect that the journal will continue to lead the field in many of the exciting and new areas of technology in human services. We aspire to support the journal's turning a new page, scaling new heights, making it even more commonly referenced by researchers.

The expertise of the JTHS editorial board is situated at the intersection of three core domains: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), human services, and social development. As leaders and explorers in the state of the art and edges of the field, we hope to bring forward technology-related research and conceptual papers that manuscript that reviewers in many other social science journals may find them difficult to understand. In addition, we are also supported by an excellent group of reviewers and copy editors. Articles reviewed by JTHS are reviewed promptly and receive high quality feedback.

This is an exciting time for our field. As Ballantyne, Wong, and Morgan (2017) noted, technology development has been driven by different waves, and the world is now entering a new industrial revolution powered by cyber-physical systems. This new era is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the boundaries across almost all disciplines. As with the effects of the previous eras, the impact of this new iteration is difficult to forecast. New technology brings new opportunities for human services, and it also "disrupts" human services (Goldkind & Wolf, 2015). "Disruptive" does not mean "destructive", it refers to the possibility that new technology may create a new value network, and eventually disrupt the existing value network. Yet, this is where the mission of researchers plays out – we explore possibilities, and create new knowledge.

<center>**What Types of Articles Are We Looking for?**</center>

We are looking for inspiring scholarly works addressing issues ahead of their time. Here are some of the fast-changing domains that will disrupt the human services and research in no small measure:

Changing Human Services

- Compared with the business sector, social work has had slower adoption to technology (Berzin, Singer, & Chan, 2015), there are emerging uses of technology in diverse settings, including social enterprises, and commercial activities serving human needs (e.g., online dating and matching). What is the scope of "technology in human services"? How can we timely update the state of the art of technology in human services without compromising academic rigor?

- When we imagine an amplification of technology and human services are we really envisioning greater managerial efficiencies (Goldkind, 2015, 2016) or truly something visionary in service improvement and innovation?

- E-advocacy offer cost effective approaches for engaging constituents to create social change. Providers of human services may face challenges when trying to implement these tools. While many electronic tools have low barriers for entry, other factors, including social service users' competencies, may inhibit their use in agencies(Goldkind, 2014; McNutt & Goldkind, 2015). What specialized skill and knowledge does human services retain for the most mobile and functional well and who are left at the bottom of the social strata who require an increased capacity in social services?

Changing Practice

- Some ICT interventions just required minimal professional intervention in the actual implementation process, such as content-driven e-learning, or mutual-aid online

community (Chan & Holosko, 2016b). To what extent does such ICT-enhanced professional practice really need a professional? What is their role? Will this practitioner versus programmer become an issue?

- Social media has potentially contributed to various social work processes, including service user engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation (Chan, 2016b; Chan & Ho, 2017; Chan & Holosko, 2016c). Are we aiming at some all-rounded service programs or some powerful technical platforms? Or do we expect human service practitioners acquire a conceptual roadmap supporting them to identify, adapt, and develop technologies/resources relevant to their practice processes?

- As a result of the proliferation of mobile devices new models of delivering counseling, case management and other mental health therapies are being developed that exploit the best of these technologies, and these technologies also "disrupt" social work practice. (Chan & Holosko, forthcoming; Goldkind & Wolf, 2015). For example, telehealth, SMS-based crisis intervention and prevention and sessions delivered by video conference. Most recently hybrid machine learning and chat-bot enhanced therapeutic models are being explored across a range of client populations and treatment modalities as well as a range of provider types. How will new practitioners keep abreast of these new strategies?

Changing Methodologies

- Many technology-enhanced social work interventions present a type of "black box" design (Chan, 2016b; Chan & Holosko, 2016b), in which they usually present what outcomes are achieved, but do not elaborate on the processes or skills. This is partly because many of them are bundled with specific commercial products or computer programs, and they are not freely accessible (Chan, 2016a). Moreover, some application packages basically do not require human operation, the skill aspect is minimal, and there is indeed not much skillset that can be transferred (Chan & Holosko, 2016b). Can we

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have research designs which can more effectively explore and evaluate the role of ICT in interventions?

- Social media has been increasingly used in human services, but the level of evidence of many of these studies is consistently low, in which many of the assertions about the pros and cons of social media are mainly based on researchers' inferences rather than empirical findings (Chan, 2016b). Can we have research designs providing higher level of evidence? Is evidence-based practice research applicable in researching ICT-enhanced human service interventions?

- Self-reporting surveys using fully online methods are becoming common place from subject recruitment and data collection to respondent identity verification, and scale development (Chan, Fung, Choi, & Ross, 2017; Chan & Holosko, 2016a). How can we fully exploit the potential of technology in human service research?

- Big data and data science cannot be overlooked as both a modality and mechanism for conducting research in all sectors related to human services (Chan, 2013; Goldkind & Wolf, 2015). In fact, predictive analytics and other big data tools are now becoming part of the conversation in social service sectors such as child welfare, juvenile justice and public education. Even more relevant for most agency based practitioners is a movement to make data more relevant to administrators in the form of outcome measurement or "small data". What sorts of data can we have? How can we make data available to researchers?

- Technology has even infused the qualitative arena, with browser based qualitative analysis tools such as Dedoose as well as AI enhanced qualitative tools like Leximancer, Ravens Eye and others allow uses to make use of sophisticated data reduction strategies enhanced by natural language processing to dramatically enhance the ability of researchers to manage the vast quantities of text based data generated by social media.

How can these text based methods be adopted for social and human services? How can we use them to improve human services?

Changing Education

- The fast-changing technology landscape has posed a challenge to human service education. Some of the popular platforms used just a few years ago are no longer popular right now. The gap between different technology generations raises questions about to what extent education and practice can keep pace with the fast changing technological development (Chan, 2016a; Wolf & Goldkind, 2016). What sort of technological training is required to be competitive in a rapidly changing landscape and what are the most high leverage tools of digital literacy that educators can equip students with?? Shall we look for a more "endurable" mind-set, such as a kind of ICT literacy competence?

- Models of e-competence and e-accessibility are in use or have been devised in regions such as Finland, Australia, the UK and elsewhere (Goldkind, Wolf, & Jones, 2016; Pardasani, Goldkind, Heyman, & Cross-Denny, 2012). What models of e-competence can educators look to within social work and the allied health professions?

Changing Ethics

- Different countries and jurisdiction tend to imply different approaches to social work ethics. Social work accreditation bodies and professional bodies across the globe have developed standards or guidelines to ensure social workers' to use ICT ethically (AASW, 2013; ASWB, 2015; BASW, 2013). In some countries, social work has a set of mandatory standards; in some countries there is only guidelines, in some others, there is no regulation at all. What sort of "guideline" do we need?

- In addition, some scholars advocate a "virtue-based approach" which emphasizes more on practitioners' moral reasoning competence than external guidelines. Some others

advocate a "principle-based approach" which emphasizes more on clear guidelines than individuals' virtues, some just made decisions on a case-by-case basis, and cannot strictly follow agencies' rules or supervisors' advice (Chan & Holosko, 2016c; Chan, Leung, Cheng, & Wong, forthcoming). How do/can human service practitioners' reason morally in online contexts? How to comprehend human service practitioners' moral reasoning in online contexts?

Concluding Remarks

We are very excited about the unique opportunity that was given to us to serve as the Editor-in-Chief of the JTHS. In our new role, we plan to dedicate our time to develop proper directions for the Journal. We strongly encourage all those in the field to submit your high-quality publications to our Journal. We invite you to join us in this exciting conversation and look forward to engaging in the discourse. We await your contribution.

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