

Editorial

Progress in CyberPsychology

THE SECOND ISSUE of *CyberPsychology & Behavior* contains the proceedings from the Mental Health and Virtual Reality Symposium held on Saturday, January 31, 1998 in San Diego, California. The range of excellent presentations is reflected in the diverse and interesting applications of virtual reality which are demonstrated in this issue. The use of virtual reality to treat specific phobias, post traumatic stress disorder, and as a tool for cognitive and neuropsychological assessment is becoming an established technique and certainly represents the application of this technology to some of the most common and difficult mental health problems today. We look forward to publishing many other interesting clinical studies using virtual reality which are currently in progress at research, academic, and private settings from around the world. There is great interest in expanding the use of this tool to many other applications in the mental health service area. The lack of readily available off the shelf software that is PC compatible continues to pose a barrier to wider implementation for the treatment of more complex disorders such as borderline personality, depression, conduct disorder, addiction, and many others. We will address some of these software constraints in future issues of *CyberPsychology & Behavior*.

Approaching complex mental health issues will probably require rethinking the mechanics of the therapy session so as to identify particular aspects, facets, and processes that could be appropriately created in cyberspace. Some forms of therapy may require the presence and/or interaction of the therapist accompanying the patient in the virtual world.

Successful implementation of these new concepts will require significant interaction by

therapists with those who specialize in computer graphics, computer programming, and hardware and software development. Early attempts with existing software and technology are accruing, and are the subject of intense interest. We are interested in seeking out these efforts so that wider dissemination of this knowledge is possible.

The third issue of the Journal will continue to explore the social and behavioral aspects of the internet, multimedia, and virtual reality. *CyberPsychology & Behavior* will be published six times a year beginning in January 1999, and we are interested in receiving manuscripts as this exciting area continues to expand dramatically. We are also interested in receiving ideas for future theme issues. Some of the topics under consideration include: the use of the internet in the geriatric population, internet use by the hard-of-hearing and late-deafened community, multimedia tools in education, the use of video games for social skills development in adolescents, and tele-mental health.

As the circulation of *CyberPsychology & Behavior* continues to grow, we are becoming increasingly aware of very interesting work that is occurring in all corners of the globe. We encourage and support the participation of our international colleagues. Please continue to contact me with your interest manuscripts and ideas for additional topics for the Journal. The continued support of the editorial board and the excellent assistance of the staff at Mary Ann Liebert, Inc. is greatly appreciated.

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