

THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ON THE EXPERIENCE OF ADVENTURE AMONG OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS IN CROATIA

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This article investigates the influence of digital technologies on the experience of adventure in outdoor activities at a time when outdoor activities are becoming increasingly popular in Croatia. Based on ethnographic research conducted among outdoor enthusiasts and new adventurers, adventure tour guides, and adventure sports practitioners in Croatia, this paper aims to show some of the ways in which the widespread use of digital media and technologies, from social networks to smart watches, affects us and the perception, concepts, and practices of adventure in Croatia.

Keywords: digital technologies, social networks, adventure, Croatia

1. INTRODUCTION

For the last 10 years in Croatia, we have witnessed an increasing number of outdoor and adventure practitioners and the popularisation of adventure experiences in different ways: in the form of individual initiatives and outdoor activities, from one-day (family) trips to challenging adventures; within the tourism sector in the form of active vacations and adrenaline experiences; and through organised races, from adventure and trail races to family running or cycling races, both for charity and sponsored events, etc.¹ An additional boom in outdoor activities and the desire for adventure happened during the Covid-19

¹ The insights and reflections from this article emerged through designing the research project *Digital Aestheticization of Fragile Environments* (DigiFREN). The DigiFREN project is supported by MIZŠ Slovenia, NCN Poland, AKA Finland, HRZZ Croatia, and RCN Norway under the CHANSE ERA-NET co-funded programme, which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation

pandemic, when a large number of those who formerly had not spent their free time being active started participating in outdoor activities, which meant that in the post-Covid-19 period the number of outdoor practitioners has continued to grow (cf. Đurin 2021). Such activities increasingly involve the use of digital media and technologies. Digital technologies invite us to think “how we are human” (Hayles 1999) in a different way and thereby create new experiential configurations in our lives (Pink et al. 2016). While I have been dealing with topics related to adventure and the outdoors for some time, only in the last year have I been thinking about how, in a short time, digital technologies have become an important factor in our lives – even in our leisure time that we may spend taking part in outdoor and adventure activities. My interest is also due to the formation of an international group of researchers that gathered around the *Digital Aestheticization of Fragile Environments* project, of which I am a part.² Guided by the idea that adventure is not a constant and clear construction but is shaped by cultural and social circumstances (Lynch et al. 2012: 139), that is, it is constructed discursively, it was clear that the social conditions in which we live, which are characterised by digital technologies, are one of the key factors in building an adventure experience today. Guided by this thought, I started conducting research among my outdoor interlocutors on whether they use digital technologies for their activities (and if they do, how much), what the technologies mean to them, and how they change their experiences of adventure in the activities they engage in outdoors. For this purpose, I conducted semi-structured interviews as well as numerous informal conversations with outdoor enthusiasts of different generations and ages (from 18 to 80-year-olds) and both genders. Since I am engaged in the outdoor activities that I mention in this paper and have belonged to the outdoor community in Croatia for more than twenty years, I dare say that I have epic (and not just emic) insight into the topics I am talking about here. My outdoor activities allowed me to conduct my field research in a very relaxed atmosphere and to talk with outdoor practitioners in authentic circumstances in which associations, ideas, and answers related to the topic they talked about, which is the subject of my research, flowed very spontaneously, in a relaxed way, and without restraint. It is clear that in such circumstances it is important to keep in mind the advantages and disadvantages of each method, which I constantly think about during each of my field research periods. In this sense, I agree with John Law and John Urry (2004), who believe that no research method is innocent because all methods are performative, so it is important to be aware of your research position and how you will present the results of your research. I wrote down the information I received in informal conversations in my mobile phone immediately after the conversation so that it would remain preserved for the research without the distortion brought by a subsequent attempt to remember what one of the interlocutors had told me, which also shows how digital technologies have become an indispensable

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² You can find out more about the project, the research group, and the partners here: <https://www.ief.hr/en/research/projects/digital-aestheticization-of-fragile-environments/>.

part of ethnographic research (see Pink et al. 2016). Furthermore, I gained information and numerous insights for the assumptions and conclusions presented in this paper by following social networks and web portals related to outdoor activities in Croatia as an insider and active member.

Given the fact that I am writing about the experience of adventure, I considered it necessary to provide the broader historical and social context through an overview of the discursive construction of adventure in order to make the changes in the adventurous nature of adventure that are caused by digital technologies more understandable, and this is what the first part of my paper is about. As James Clifford (1986) states, there is no universal truth that we could discover about something through ethnographic research. In this sense, in the second part of the paper, my ambition was not to provide one final, irrefutable truth about digital technologies and their impact on the outdoor community in Croatia, but to indicate some of the influences and effects that digital technologies have or can have on our subjectivity and the experience of adventure. Of course, this influence, with some local specificities, is basically similar everywhere where digital technologies are used. But considering that this research was done in Croatia, I mentioned the locale in the title of my paper.

2. DISCURSIVE PRODUCTION OF ADVENTURE

If we look into the past, we will see that the meaning of the word “adventure” has changed and that the various meanings have been discursively produced; they are the creation of culture, as Cronon (1995) noted for “wilderness”. The meaning of “adventure” is deeply shaped by the wider cultural and social context and, as cultural patterns have changed, its meaning has also changed. Lynch, Moore, and Minchington (2012) suggest that we view adventure as a culture. This makes particular sense in today’s society, which often emphasises that we live in risky times, so the ability to deal with risk and manage it is a desirable human trait. In fact, even the curriculum of the educational system lists the development of students’ ability to “recognize potentially risky situations in society and develop strategies for protection” as one of its fundamental tasks (Lukić and Maslov 2018: 310). Moreover, today’s neoliberal social order teaches us that humans are by nature prone to adventure, that is, to risk, and that they have complete freedom to choose and make decisions for themselves (Salecl 2011: 1).

The word “adventure” was originally used in France in the Middle Ages, at the end of the 12th century, as part of a “chivalric” ideology. According to Michael Nerlich (1987), knights embarked on adventures to earn a living, to create good living conditions, and to become attractive marriage prospects. It was a big risk for a knight not to go on an adventure (Nerlich 1987: 5) because this would be seen as a social failure.

In the 15th century, adventurous merchants sailed the seas, went into the unknown, and discovered new cultures and territories, and the meaning of adventure from then on

has implied going into the unknown or into uncertainty, discovery but also risk. Thus, the first ventures that carried today's connotations of adventure were long ocean voyages in sailing ships. Adventure then meant going on conquest and research expeditions, sailing unknown seas, and searching for new goods, riches, spices, and ores; in other words, adventure became intertwined with the economic interest of merchants, who were later joined by entire kingdoms that supported and encouraged expeditions to new areas in order to "explore, conquer and exploit" them (Nerlich 1987: 129). And only a middle-class white European man went on such an adventure, either as a soldier and conqueror or as a humanist, scientist, biologist, or anthropologist. In this sense, we can say that adventure carries colonialist features (Humberstone et al. 2016; Duda 2012; Bartoluci and Čavlek 2007) that have crept under our skin without us even being aware of them. An example of this are those who even today go to mountain peaks in order to "conquer" them – unconsciously repeating the colonising, conquering discourse. Nerlich (1987) thinks that, since the modern period, the adventure narrative has contributed to the development of Western culture as it is today.

Even today, when talking about adventure in outdoor activities, adventurous endeavours remain marked by colonialist, but also gendered, racialised, and class-related connotations. Even today, adventure sports are mostly practised and represented by young white men of the middle class, while women have long been excluded from this world of adventure (Warren 2016; Beames et al. 2019; Humberstone et al. 2016). Contemporary theorists of adventure activities (Beames et al. 2019: 7) state that adventure "has elements of challenge, excitement and (in most cases) risk; takes place in demanding natural or artificially created environments; in terms of organization, it is significantly more relaxed than popular mainstream sports; represents freedom from or opposition to the dominant sports culture; it is individualistic but tends to create a group or subculture". Despite such a clear definition, we cannot say that adventure is a clear and constant construction, so we will not conclusively define it in this text either. In conversations with numerous lovers of the outdoor lifestyle, I realised that some of them equate outdoor activities with adventure:

when you say "adventure" or "outdoor" in the English-speaking world, people know what it means. These are activities outside in nature. In our case, it is only descriptive. (D. L.)

For others, however, the line between outdoor activities and adventure is blurred. This is because adventure is a subjective and relative term (Beames et al. 2019: 4; Buckley 2006: 7). Therefore, the same outdoor activity experience for one person can be the ultimate adventure, while for another person it can be considered as something ordinary. This was especially evident in my conversations with rock climbers,³ among whom there was no agreement on whether climbing is an adventurous sport. For some climbers, it includes elements of adventure, such as uncertainty, going into the unknown, and being left to

³ When I talk about rock climbing, I mean climbing vertical rocks. It is an activity that requires knowledge of climbing equipment and techniques and certain physical and mental qualities so that a person can safely progress up the rock, finish the climb, and return home.

yourself and your partner, while for others it was just an outdoor activity. Ralf Buckley (2010: 7) interprets that “[d]ifferent individuals, however, or even the same individual at different ages, may have widely different perceptions of how adventurous a particular activity may be, depending on prior experience, skills and interests”.

To this day, there are different definitions of adventure – from unusual and exciting experiences that may necessitate bravery to uncertainty and unpredictability. Adventures can be physically challenging, but they can also challenge our intellect or spirit – the latter is the case when we expose our being to new experiences that will change the way we think about the world, people, and ourselves (see D’Ammassa 2008: vii; Miles and Wattchow 2015). Quite often, physically challenging adventures lead to an inner adventure that transforms us as people. Lynch, Moore, and Minchington (2012: 239) concluded that different interests use the term adventure for a number of purposes “so that it becomes a slippery, contested notion, disaggregated rather than a singular whole”. Today during the fourth industrial revolution, we can say that our experience of outdoor activities and adventure are significantly shaped and influenced by digital technologies, which I will try to show below.

3. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND ADVENTURE

When we talk about adventure, we have to keep in mind that the meaning of adventure is created locally through local stories and travelogues, as Miles and Wattchow argue (2015: 17). Lynch, Moore, and Minchington (2012) suggest that we view adventure as a culture. Narratives in adventure magazines and books, and today increasingly through digital media such as online blogs, feeds, and tweets that are a combination of image and text, “instill how ‘adventure as culture’ looks and reads” (Miles and Wattchow 2015: 18) locally. In addition, the mentioned media, which enable the publication of personal stories and experiences, as well as selfies in which we are smiling, active, and satisfied, have contributed to adventure and outdoor activities being represented as a pleasure that is longed for. In this regard, today digital technologies and internet communication enable easier navigation of the outdoor environment for newcomers and are beginning to dominate how adventure as a culture in the Western world is shaped. I have written about this topic in more detail elsewhere (Đurin 2022), while here I will address the issues pertaining to digital technologies and their impact on people and their experiences of adventure.

3.1. FROM COUCH NATION TO ADVENTURERS IN A DECADE

The digital age is the age of the information boom, an age in which all necessary information can be reached in a matter of seconds. Digital technologies enable the rapid expansion

of outdoor lifestyles and the representation of adventure in the form of posts, comments, photos, and videos in virtual social spaces. After going virtual, posts and videos arouse the desire in many viewers for the same adventurous pleasure. The use of digital technologies and social networks is one of the reasons why outdoor activities are becoming more and more popular in the Western world (Buckley 2006, 2010), including in Croatia.

My interlocutors share the opinion that Croatia, although a very suitable country for outdoor activities, does not have a tradition and culture of a mass outdoor lifestyle:

Unlike many other countries, such as Slovenia, Austria, France, the English, the Americans, who are really outdoor nations, we Croats are not exactly an outdoor nation... We are a shopping nation, although that is changing now, which I am happy about. But it has only been like that recently, maybe for the last ten years there has been a kind of boom or growth that is still not like it is in Slovenia. In Slovenia, I think that 90% of people engage in some outdoor activity over the weekend, go somewhere, and here it is 15–20%, in this boom, and before that it was 2–5%, if at all that much. (Ž. Ž.)

In Croatia, we have the sea and rivers, but we have only a few kayakers; we have hills and mountains, but cross-country skiing or ski touring is practised by a very small number of people. Hiking is somewhat more popular, but in percentages it is still a small number of practitioners. For a long time, runners were considered freaks, so that trail running has become popular only recently. Borko Prvan, one of the first triathletes in Croatia, recalls in his blog:

As for training, I must say that in the 1980s there was almost no information about recreational running. Recreational running was in its infancy. Today, when people in leggings can be seen running at every turn, it is difficult to understand that then recreational runners were at least WEIRDOS. They used to ask me in Split, where am I running when no one is chasing me? My answer was always “to the ferry”. [...] The internet was not even in my dreams. Here and there, an article would appear in SN about world marathons as world wonders, where several thousand runners of all ages gather and run 42 kilometres, not dying in the end.⁴

As can be seen in the interlocutor's quote (Ž. Ž.), my interviewees detected a significant turning point in the popularity of outdoor activities in Croatia after the global economic crisis in 2008, when it began to gain momentum. Digital technologies are only one of the factors that created this momentum.⁵ Besides a new, commodifying approach to the outdoor lifestyle at the national level in the last ten years in Croatia and during the recent pandemic, digital technologies – from various gadgets, smartphones, smartwatches, ap-

⁴ <https://www.trcanje.hr/kako-smo-trenirali-prije-tri-desetljeća/14264/> (accessed 5 June 2022).

⁵ The advertisement of adventure sport activities is also one of these factors. It has helped in the commodification of adventure and the increase in the popularity of the outdoor lifestyle at the national level. Ralf Buckley writes in 2006: “For the past 5 or 10 years the term ‘adventure’, and images of adventure activities, have been used worldwide to advertise holidays, equipment, clothing, lifestyles, property and more” (Buckley 2006: xvij). More about the factors that have made outdoor activities popular is written in Božić and Đurin 2021.

plications, to social networks (such as Facebook, Instagram, Strava, Suunto, and Garmin) – have stimulated the interest of the masses to practise various outdoor activities and adventures. Digital feeds and tweets, including digitally edited photos of the landscape where some adventure activity takes place, awaken the desire of readers to go to that place and experience that adventure. On the one hand, people are constantly bombarded with other people's experiences and pleasure, which may make them appear as tempting but, on the other hand, the experience doesn't sit well with everyone. Some people have told me that this is why they deleted their Facebook profile:

I felt like a fool when I saw all those beautiful photos, everyone is somewhere in the hills, enjoying, climbing in the Dolomites, and I have to be in Zagreb and work. I really felt like a fool, that's why I deleted my Facebook profile. (T. M.)

Yes, I'm jealous when I see what people are doing and where they're going on my Facebook profile or on Instagram, and I instantly want that too. I mean "jealous" not in a negative sense, I'm not sorry that they are there somewhere in a nice place, but I'm sorry that I'm not there as well. (N. D.)

Sometimes, we need to remain unaware to avoid the anxiety that some information can produce, or, as Renata Salecl puts it: "The internet has opened vast new possibilities for acquiring information; but it has also reduced our ability to endure the anxiety" (Salecl 2020: 29) that can come with it.

Digital technologies have made once inaccessible terrain accessible to the masses. There are many applications offering navigation in different terrains, such as mountains, in different seasons. Many novice adventurers think that it is enough to download some trail maps to go to the mountains, though they do not have the other knowledge needed to spend time there safely. In fact, they are not even aware that they need some knowledge or skills. This has especially been the case in the last few years, when a noticeably larger number of people have begun to spend their free time outdoors, as I mentioned earlier. Numerous people went to the mountains for the first time by following the GPS trail drawn in an application, and that gave them the feeling of safety. One person told me:

Out of a desire for adventure, my partner and I got lost once, while once my partner almost got injured because we went off a marked trail to combine two different routes into one larger one. We got off the trail into unmarked terrain, and we found ourselves in the "jungle", among fallen trees. When she was jumping over one such tree, her leg slipped and she almost impaled herself on the edge of a branch. (S. G.)

The number of tour skiers also increased. A large number of people who, until recently, skied in ski resorts were looking for something new, different, and exciting. They might follow tour-skiing groups on Facebook, on which ski tours are published. Such tours usually pass through really beautiful landscapes. Tour skiers often look for places where it has just snowed, so the atmosphere on the tours is really special, because you pass landscapes where no human footprint can be seen, everything is clean, quiet, and white, wrapped in a coat of snow that absorbs sounds, while the terrain configuration, skiing through the

woods or couloirs, really guarantees quite a dose of excitement. All this, shared on social media, is attracting newcomers every season. But few are aware of the dangers, and many go on tours with no avalanche rescue kit, no snow and avalanche skill training, and many are unfamiliar with the ethics of mountain behaviour.

Although it is nice to see that, thanks to digital technologies, an increasing number of people in Croatia are living an outdoor lifestyle, it is worrying that there is a lack of precautionary measures or even a general awareness of the risks that these new outdoor practitioners are taking. Digital technologies can actually increase safety if we look at them as a source of one piece of information needed for a safe stay outdoors and by no means the only one. Numerous theoreticians (see, for example, Beames, Mackie and Atencio 2019: 86) agree that, in addition to the many positive aspects that digital technologies have brought to the outdoors, an individual does not develop or lose their skills, creativity, ability to make decisions, and specific knowledge by relying on technology. However, digital technologies can lead a person into a situation of unrealistic expectations and dangerous practices.

3.2. ALGORITHMIC PERSONALISATION AND IDENTITY PERFORMANCE IN THE OUTDOORS

Daniel Miller and Heather Horst (2012: 11–15) note that the pervasive use of digital technologies has produced an illusion that non-digital, or pre-digital, experiences are less mediated and somehow more real and authentic than those relying on digital technology. But this does not seem to be the case. For example, younger people today haven't even had pre-digital experiences. Besides, for adventure practitioners, digital technologies have made it possible to relive the adventure through shots taken with a drone or mini camera and to plan safer and more intense adventure experiences. According to David M. Berry, digitalisation has already become so pervasive that we have entered a “post-digital world”, where the digital is “completely bound up with and constitutive of everyday life” and it “infuses the everyday environment with a computational overlay” (Berry 2015: 3, 47).

In the 1990s, at the beginning of its creation and massification, the web was celebrated as a space that would connect the population at a global level but also create new forms of freedom and anonymity for online visitors. But this was the case only at the beginning of the web revolution. Soon, web service providers created customer profiles through their customers' personal information collected through cookies. These profiles make up the algorithmic self of each individual user. Algorithmic personalisation techniques and the individual adaptation of web content make it possible to get to know each person, their individual tastes and preferences, habits, and desires and create an algorithmic self or algorithmic identity of the user in order to deliver content, services, or something else that, it is assumed, could be interesting to that user as a purchasable product.

Tanya Kant (2020) warns of the negative effects of such a personalised approach to the subject in the digital world. In addition to causing problems due to the easy misuse of personal data, “personal assistants paradoxically promise to make the best choices for us, while simultaneously offering to action the choices we make, thus leading to the everyday yet complex entanglement of human and non-human agency that [she argues] throws the sovereignty of selfhood into question” (Kant 2020: 5). Furthermore, the subject’s activity on social networks is not only a mirror image of the subject, because the algorithms that often speak on behalf of the subject have performative power, that is, they sometimes constitute the subject against their will or without their knowledge, warns Kant (2020).

As Sarah Pink et al. (2016) emphasise, digital media have created new forms and modes of interconnection, presence, and ways for people to be together. Digital technology is connecting us globally through social networks into interest groups, creating new types of imagined communities (Anderson 1990) and a *significant other* in our adventurous endeavours. For individuals and sub-cultures at the global level, digital technologies and social networks are a new way of being. Meyrowitz (2005: 28) notes that, as a result of the possibilities associated with digital communication, we no longer live locally, but inhabit glocalities:

The media-networked glocality also affords the possibility of having multiple, multi-layered, fluid, and endlessly adjustable senses of identity. Rather than needing to choose between local, place defined identities and more distant ones, we can have them all, not just in rapid sequence but in overlapping experiences. We can attend a local zoning board meeting, embodying the role of local concerned citizen, as we cruise the Internet on a wireless-enabled laptop enacting other, non-local identities.

But glocality sometimes means more pressure on the individual and their sense of self and identity. Although consisting of human and non-human agents, digital imagined communities formed in the way of social networks influence our behaviour, feelings, and sense of self in the same way as non-digital communities. Sherry Turkle (2011) believes that, on the one hand, digital technologies have allowed us to be better connected, that we are available to each other at any time, but, on the other hand, the neoliberal ideology that encourages individualism and competitiveness makes us feel more alone than ever before. This loneliness forces us more and more into the virtual world, to social networks, where we often look for the meaningful relationships that we lack in the physical world and confirmation of our value and importance. As Tanya Kant (2020: 64) observes, digital technologies and algorithms turn our results and our numerical values into algorithmic capital and force us to use that capital to legitimise our own actions online. In the outdoors, good examples are applications like Strava, Suunto, and Garmin, which have also stimulated the interest of the masses to practise various outdoor activities and go on adventures in Croatia. In rock climbing, it is the 8a.nu climbing community website with national and global rankings of climbers based on their climbing results.⁶ My interlocutors

⁶ <https://www.8a.nu/crags/sportclimbing/croatia> (accessed 5 June 2022).

are members of the 8a.nu community and, from their statements, it is obvious that it plays an important role in their lives:

For example, there is this site 8a.nu... let's say, when I started climbing, I didn't immediately know it existed. But the moment I opened my profile on that page, I realised that I wanted those points, I wanted those points, and that the fact that I wanted those points made me fight more on the real rock, that I wouldn't say "take" at first. So, I have some kind of competitive moment in me that maybe I didn't even know I had until then, but I figured it out by opening my profile on that page. And yes, I'm looking at that page and I'm saying now I'm going to overtake this one, now I'm going to overtake that one, you calculate, you calculate all the time. I mean, to me it is, I look at it like a game. It's fun for me, but I know that somewhere in it there is some psychological background where it's not just fun, where you want to overtake someone, and you want to beat someone and bye. (A. P.)

Another person answered my question about how much she thinks 8a.nu generally gives status to climbers like this:

Yes, it gives them status, definitely. It is actually a form of confirmation of their climbing status. Yes, it gives it to them. Because it is talked about at the climbing spots that this one climbed this, that one climbed that, and you say to him: respect, yes... good job, look at him... (S. Z.)

In other words, the results that are achieved and become visible through such sites become cultural capital within the climbing community and place climbers in hierarchical relationships by giving them different amounts of status within that subculture, which is one of the reasons why the results are so important to them.⁷

Working in a similar way as Facebook and other social networks, on this website and in sport applications more generally, users' profiles are based on measurements and results from their sports activities. For example, the Strava app (see fig. 1) records your activities and results, compares you with other members of the network in a competitive style, and informs you when someone achieves better results than you, which, as Renata Salecl (2011: 140) warns, can make us euphoric but also anxious. The example below from the Strava application (see fig. 1) shows how you become "the queen of the track" based on your results, and the example below (see fig. 2) that is the notification you receive when someone "steals" your record, "dethrones" you, and becomes "the new queen of the track" or "new local legend".

⁷ For an excellent interpretation of outdoor activities, or more precisely alpinism and climbing through the prism of cultural capital, see Telford and Beames 2013, 2016.

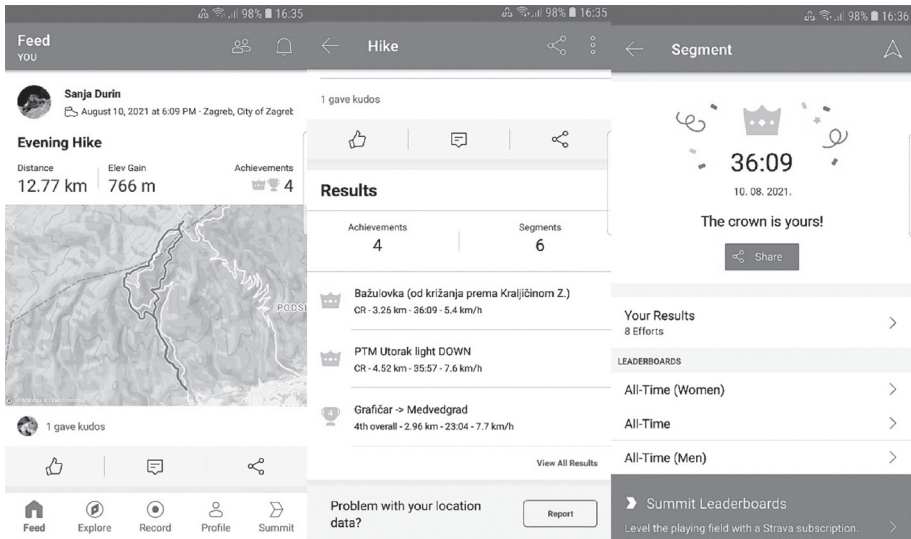


Figure 1. The Strava app records and compares your activities and results and proclaims you a queen.

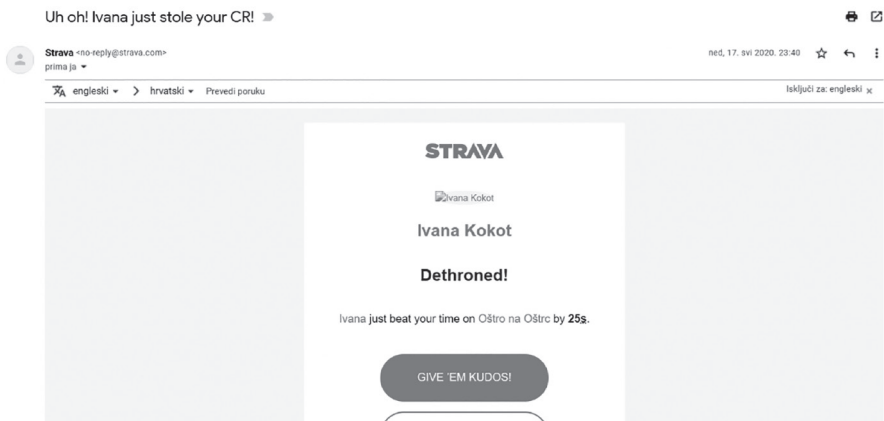


Figure 2. “Uh oh! Ivana just stole your CR!” The notification one gets via e-mail when one’s result is beaten by someone else.

If we take this into account, we see how many applications, in addition to commercial interests, have the intention of actually encouraging users, via notifications, to be active and to be better at what they do but also often induce anxiety, distress, and pain:

Yes, it’s very easy to fall into that progression trap that the application provides. Everything starts like a game, but when you achieve some results, you mind losing your ranking. I remember that P immediately started following it obsessively and couldn’t stop for a long time. (A. P.)

Sherry Turkle (2011: 195) warns that such applications can lead to an increase in narcissism, “not narcissism in the form of a self that loves only itself, but in the form of a self that is so fragile that it needs constant support and constant confirmation of the value of its results” and achievements in the form of “likes”.

Besides, many applications or social network sites, such as Facebook or the aforementioned Strava app, share the subject’s personal preferences and information with third parties and make it hard or impossible for the person to control what information about her will be shared in the digital world: “apps can thus be considered not just as tools for self-expression, but as actors that, when performatively ‘entangled’ with the identities of those they seek to express, have the potential to intervene and disrupt individual identity performance” (Barad 2007 according to Kant 2020: 136). The same goes for the Strava example above – in posting the information about one’s activities, successful or unsuccessful, the app can perform an “unwanted utterance of selfhood”, being in this way “a powerful algorithmic socio-technical actor” that actively reshapes someone’s “intentional representations of identity” (Kant 2020: 136). The following example shows how algorithms affect our perception and understanding of ourselves:

Once I got a comment that I was very active on a social network, even though I didn’t think so myself. When I asked the friend who commented on my activity, he said that he constantly receives email notifications about my activities and that of all his online friends, I am definitely the most active. Notifications alert him to my every like, comment, forwarded notification.... This seriously worried me and every time I’m online, I remember it and feel uneasy about who will actually get a notification about my activity. And you can’t turn it off on your profile. You can turn it off so you can’t see it, but not so your friends can’t see it. (K. K.)

Exploring personalised web services, Tanya Kant noted that the “algorithmic self” that we create through our stay and activity in the digital world has a performative effect on our everyday experiences, identities, and selfhoods. This means that “users may shift their worldviews to accommodate the underlying logics and implicit presumptions of the algorithms they use regularly” (2020: 7). This certainly happens in the outdoors as well. As Stuart Hall (1996) states, our identities are not fixed but are rather fluid and changing. Many outdoor beginners, such as those who run trail races or rock climb, have gone from being amateurs to semi-professional athletes thanks to apps and social networks. This generally happens in two ways. Firstly, apps and social networks gather individuals into a global outdoor subculture, where they find support and inspiration for their activities, training, and lifestyle. Secondly, applications such as Strava, Suunto, and Garmin confirm what Btihaj observes, that digital technologies have led to the creation of a metric culture (2018). Today we live in a culture in which we measure, evaluate, and record various parameters of our adventurous and other experiences. Renata Salecl claims that “[s]ociologists researching postindustrial capitalism and its insistence on increased productivity link the obsession with measurement to new forms of social control and the monitoring of factory workers’ every move. Keeping track of productivity in the workplace has now extended to people’s

private lives and their homes” (2011: 140; cf. Bell 2016). But on the other hand, metrics and measurable results motivate many outdoor practitioners, as the quotes from my interviewees show. The possibility to post their results online and publicly on the 8a.nu website has motivated them to train more, to fight more for better results, and to overcome their fears, such as the fear of falling while rock climbing.⁸

4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, let's return to the question from the beginning of this text: how do digital technologies affect the experience of adventure among outdoor enthusiasts in Croatia? Digital technologies have greatly facilitated the first adventure experiences of new outdoor enthusiasts. Social networks facilitate access to information about interesting places to visit, and users can also get the GPS coordinates of trails online. Smartphones and applications have made it easier to plan tours and find your way around unfamiliar terrain. They are also used for taking photos and recording and sharing adventure experiences with friends, family, and the wider public on social networks. In addition to the positive effects of increased physical activity for a larger proportion of the population, this has also had potentially negative effects. Namely, many people eager for adventure have gone on tours without the necessary knowledge to safely engage in outdoor activities such as hiking or ski touring.

During the popularisation and increasingly mass use of digital media in the last ten years, the personalisation of the user experience has developed as a fundamental market practice upon which the entire online economy rests, as noted by Tanya Kant (2020). The collection of consumers' personal data through cookies creates an algorithmic profile for each user, which has numerous implications. Algorithms that choose, on our behalf, what information will be delivered to us during our stay in the digital and virtual world pose questions about the subject's sovereignty. In addition, algorithms have the performative power to constitute the subject without their knowledge or against their will, which was shown by using examples from the interaction between social networks or applications and the algorithmic self of outdoor adventure enthusiasts in Croatia.

⁸ Only in rare cases is falling while rock climbing fatal. Most climbing styles involve climbing with a rope that the climber attaches to intermediate belays during the climb, and these exist precisely to stop the climber on the rock after a few meters in the event of a fall and before he or she hits the ground.

LITERATURE AND SOURCES

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UTJECAJ DIGITALNIH TEHNOLOGIJA NA ISKUSTVO AVANTURE MEĐU ZALJUBLJENICIMA U OUTDOOR AKTIVNOSTI U HRVATSKOJ

Ovaj članak istražuje utjecaj digitalnih tehnologija na iskustvo avanture u aktivnostima na otvorenom u vrijeme porasta popularizacije *outdoor* aktivnosti u Hrvatskoj. Na temelju etnografskog istraživanja provedenog među ljubiteljima *outdoora* i novopečenim avanturistima, pustolovnim turističkim vodičima i praktičarima avanturističkih sportova u Hrvatskoj, ovaj rad ima za cilj prikazati neke od načina na koje raširena uporaba digitalnih medija i tehnologija, od društvenih mreža do pametnih satova, utječe na nas i na percepciju, koncepcije i prakse avanture u Hrvatskoj.

Ključne riječi: digitalne tehnologije, društvene mreže, avantura, Hrvatska