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Critical Disability Perspectives on Digital Arenas

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Digital Participation. Critical Disability Perspectives on Digital Arenas.

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Title: Digital Participation. Critical Disability Perspectives on Digital Arenas.

Background: This paper explores how we can develop *digital participation* as a concept to better understand how teenagers and young adults with physical or mental disabilities employ contemporary digital arenas – as for example digital games, internet, new social media – and how they embed them into their everyday Life.

Method: My ethnographic method is focusing on the practical maneuvers, verbal accounts and biographical-narratives in relation to digital arenas. The interviewees switched on their TV or computer, showed their games, played for a while (sometimes together with me) and commented what happened on the screen.

Results/Conclusions: The findings show that new digital arenas provides a social sphere where the gamer can be online and develop and experiment with identities, create social relationships with other people, develop bodily skills that allow control over the games and so on. This online reality can also transform and take place in offline situations. From a critical disability perspective the paper analyze the everyday use of digital arenas and what potentials and barriers for participation the new technology creates. How can the relationship between the *gamers* and digital arenas be studied and described? Which social and cultural processes make digital games and new social media including or excluding? How can a critical disability perspective be developed in digital arenas?