Abstract

Technology has had a great impact on reading, from the skills we use when reading electronic texts to our online reading habits and the types of texts we look at. Of particular interest is the nature of digital texts compared with paper texts. Texts developed for the online environment are meant to grab and keep our attention. They must compete with online ads, hyperlinks, and videos. They allow for interaction in new ways and cater to our modern, digital brains that want to process information quickly, filter out the unnecessary, and absorb as much as possible. Texts read online look different and read differently from the texts read on paper. As testing experts, we should ask whether our reading tests reflect these differences. While the STANAG 6001 level descriptors describe the context of our reading passages, all of us must make decisions about what the context looks like in our tests and, consequently, how authentic our reading tests are. Although there are still more questions than answers, this poster aims to provide some “food for thought” on the concept of authenticity in reading texts in the digital world and stimulate discussion so that we may reflect on and possibly reexamine our testing practices.