

Investigative report of internet addiction essay



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Investigative Report Of Internet Addiction

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ABSTRACT

The problem of Internet addiction is not very noticeable now and that's why not

many people are taking it seriously, but what these people are failing to see is

the connection between the very rapid growth of the Internet and the addiction

problem. It is really simple logic the bigger the Internet get the more users

will be which will lead to a bigger number of addicts that can have their lives

as well as others corrupted by this behavior. The main objective of this paper

is to make sure that all reader know and understand what Internet addiction is

and how it can be solved or avoided. I can not offer a professional psychiatric solution but I believe if a person knows more about the addiction, the better chance they have to help themselves as well as others; that's why I have included a short summary of the elements of addiction.

I hope that by the time you read my paper you will have a better understanding

about this issue to keep yourself as well as others of taking Internet addiction

lightly.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to make you, the reader, alert and more aware of

the newest type of addiction, Internet addiction. Many people would call it exaggeration to classify spending a lot of time on the Internet as an addiction,

but since the subject is a fairly new not everybody is taking it as serious as

they should be.

Growth of the Internet

I am sure that everybody knows what the Internet and used it at least a couple

of times so there is no need for me to tell you what the Internet is. However, the incredible growth of the size and technology of the Internet is a fact well worth mentioning.

Ever since the Internet was commercially introduced to the public late in 1989

the number of the networks that form the Internet have been increasing exponentially. As you can see in figure 1 in the United States there is a new network connected to the Internet every 30 minutes.

Figure 1 Number of Networks connected (Source:

<ftp://nic.merit.edu/statistics/nsfnet>)

Not all these networks are commercial, some are educational some are for organizations and some are simply networks that provide Internet services.

All

these different kind of networks can be identified on the Internet by their

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domain extension, or in other words the last three letters in the address -e.g.

<http://www.arabia.com> is a commercial site because of the .com- in figure 2 the

percentage of all four major domains is shown, and it is obvious that the big share goes to the commercial domains. It does not take a genius to figure out

that since the Internet attracted that much commercial interest that means that

more and more people are using the Internet, and even more are willing to spend

time and money on it.

Figure 2 (Source of data: <http://www.nw.com>)

THE ADDICTION

With such vast growth of the Internet what is considered as a small problem can

grow along with the Internet to cause an even bigger problem. In a recent publication in the Los Angeles Times Mathew McAlleseter reported on a survey

conducted on the Internet by Victor Brenner who came up with the following <https://assignbuster.com/investigative-report-of-internet-addiction-essay/>

results: “ 17% said that they spend more than 40 hours a week online, 31% said

that their work performance had deteriorated since they started using the Internet, 7% got “ into hot water” with their employers or schools for Internet related activities” (LA Times, 5/5/1996, pp A-18). However, Brenner acknowledges

that his survey is unscientific in many ways; respondents are self-selected and

many may be Internet researchers. On the other hand, Dr. Kimberly Young from the

University of Pittsburg-Bradford conducted a more accurate survey that included

396 men and women. In her point of view heavy on-line users in her study all met

psychiatric criteria for clinical dependence applied to alcoholics and drug addicts. They had lost control over their Net usage and couldn't end it despite

harmful effects on their personal and professional lives. What Causes It

Finding a reason for Internet addiction can be as hard as finding a reason for

smoking addiction, however, there are a couple of reasons that are obvious for

some addicts: * The power of instant access to all sorts of information and all kinds of people is a positive that can be overused. * A different kind of community that can draw people who tend to “ shy out” in the real world because

this new virtual community does not require the social skill that real life does,

all you have to do is be good on the keyboard. * Adopting new personas and playing your favorite kind of personality is not hard when others can not see or

hear you. * Last but not least is the fascination with technology. This might be

the best excuse -if there such a thing- to be addicted to the Internet, the information super highway, or cyber space.

Symptoms

When I was trying to collect more information about the symptoms of Internet

addiction, I was surprised to find out that almost one half of the sites I

visited took Internet addiction as a joke. So as a part of the research I

decided to give you the top ten signs you may be addicted to the Internet :

10. You wake up at 3 a. m. to go to the bathroom and stop and check your e-mail on the way back to bed.

9. You get a tattoo that reads “ This body best viewed with Netscape Navigator 2. 0 or higher.”

8. . You write down your URL when asked for your Home Address.

7. You turn off your modem and get this awful empty feeling, like you just pulled the plug on a loved one.

6. You spend half of the plane trip with your laptop on your lap...and your child in the overhead compartment.

5. Your home page sees more action than you do.

4. You start to notice how much this list describes you.

3. People ask why you turn your head to the side when you smile, i. e. ????

.

2. The last girl you picked up was a JPEG image.

1. Your modem burns up. You haven't logged in for two hours. You start to

twitch. You pick up the phone and manually dial your service provider access number. You try to hum to communicate with the network. You succeed !!

On the more serious side, an Internet based support group for people who suffer

from Internet addiction called the Internet Addiction Support Group (IASG) has

established the Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) to be the following:

A maladaptive pattern of Internet use, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress as manifested by three (or more) of the following, occurring at any time in the same 12-month period:

(I) tolerance, as defined by either of the following:

(A) A need for markedly increased amounts of time on Internet to achieve satisfaction.

(B) markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of time on Internet.

(II) withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following :

(A) the characteristic withdrawal syndrome

(1) Cessation of (or reduction) in Internet use that has been heavy and

prolonged.

(2) Two (or more) of the following, developing within several days to a

month after Criterion 1:

(a) psychomotor agitation.

(b) anxiety.

(c) obsessive thinking about what is happening on Internet.

(d) fantasies or dreams about Internet.

(e) voluntary or involuntary typing movements of the fingers.

(3) The symptoms in Criterion 2 cause distress or impairment in social, occupational or another important area of functioning.

(B) Use of Internet or a similar on-line service is engaged in to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms.

(III) Internet is often accessed more often or for longer periods of time than was intended.

(IV) There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control Internet use.

(V) A great deal of time is spent in activities related to Internet use

(e. g., buying Internet books, trying out new WWW browsers, researching Internet

vendors, organizing files of downloaded materials.)

(VI) Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of Internet use.

(VII) Internet use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical, social, occupational, or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by Internet use (sleep deprivation,

marital difficulties, lateness for early morning appointments, neglect of occupational duties, or feelings of abandonment in significant others.)

(Source: John Suler, Ph. D. – Rider University May 1996

<http://www1.rider.edu/suler/psycyber/SUPPORTGP.HTML>)

How To Overcome The Addiction

Now that the problem has been established and given a fancy abbreviation (IAD),

the next question is what to do about it. Several groups of people created support groups dedicated to help people who suffer from IAD. Some of the most

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famous support groups is the IASG which can be reached by a-mail at
emailprotected and the Webaholics support group which can be reached on
<http://www.webaholics.com> . However, the main key to getting rid of , or
even

avoiding, any type of addiction is to understand the basic elements of the
addiction. Once you understand these elements you will have a better
chance of

overcoming the addiction or even not getting it at all.

The elements of addiction are : (I) Denial

All people who are addicted (to anything) have some degree of denial.

Without

denial, most addictions would not have become established in the first place.

Denial can take many forms. At the milder extremes, a person may believe “

I can

handle this problem whenever I decide to do so.” The fact that one has a
problem

is at least acknowledged. At the other extreme, denial often takes the form
of:

“ What problem? I don't have a problem. You've got the problem, Dude. And
besides,

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you're beginning to tick me off!"

(II) Failing to Ask for Help

The second trademark of most addictions is that people affected are very reluctant to ask for help. The mindset of most addicts is: "I can beat this myself." Not only are they reluctant to ask other people for help, but even when

they do, they don't accept the advice of others easily. The best thing to do is to look for individuals or professionals who know how to cure addicted people.

While these resource people are rare, you should keep looking for them. If you

hook up with someone who claims to have this ability, look at your results and

don't hang around too long with this person if you don't see yourself making progress. Keep looking for the right experienced helper and you will eventually

find one that works well with you.

(III) Lack of Other Pleasures In Other Activities

One thing that is true about most addictions is they are often either the only or the strongest source of

pleasure and satisfaction in a person's life. People who become addicted often

do so because their lives are not fulfilling. They can't seem to find passion, enjoyment, adventure, or pleasure from life itself, so they have to get these pleasures in other ways. This becomes important when you try to end your addiction. If you try to eliminate your main source of pleasure in life without being able to replace it immediately with other sources of pleasure, it is doubtful you will be able to stay away from your addictive behaviour very long.

(IV) Underlying Deficiencies in Other Aspects of Life Addiction should never be viewed as a problem in and of itself. Addictions are much better viewed as a

symptom of other underlying problems and deficiencies. This is why most addiction therapies are so universally unsuccessful. To cure most addictions, you must look beyond the addiction itself and deal with underlying deficiencies

in coping and life management skills that have given rise to it. For example, people who become addicted to alcohol and other drugs usually have serious deficiencies in their life management, stress management, and interpersonal

skills. Early on in life, they experience a great deal of pain and personal suffering that they can't figure out how to deal with effectively. This drives them to seek external relief and comfort in the form of alcohol or other substances. As this pattern of behaviour gets repeated over time, their bodies become physically addicted to the chemical substance, and the addiction then becomes even more difficult to end. The same is true for cigarette addiction. Many people find that smoking helps them cope with stress or keep their weight under control. Even if they are successful at beating the physical part of cigarette addiction, they often quickly return to smoking because they fail to improve their repertoire of coping skills. So if you are trying to deal with the problem of Internet Addiction, or any addiction for that matter, you should ask

yourself the following questions:

1. What stress management skills or life management skills do I lack that led me to become addicted?

2. What problems in life do I have that my addiction helps me to avoid or

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to “ solve.”

3. What would I need to learn how to do in order to let go of my

addictive behaviour?

4. What “ benefits” or payoffs am I getting from my addictive behaviour?

(V) Giving in to Temptation

Once you decide to eliminate an established addiction, there are certain

requirements and pitfalls you must be prepared for. One of these is dealing with

temptation. Whenever you try to stay away from something that previously gave

you great pleasure, you’re going to be tempted to return to that behaviour.

Sometimes, the temptation may be very strong. But even if it is, you must be

prepared to resist it. Temptation, in truth, is nothing more than a powerful

internal feeling state , i. e. a desire. It is often accompanied by thoughts as

well, that are designed to make you “ cave in” and satisfy your intense

internal

cravings. You, however, are always much stronger than any of your internal

thoughts, feelings, or other internal states. You have the power to

consistently

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ignore or to choose not to respond to your thoughts and demanding feelings.

Thoughts and feelings have very little power at all (even though many people

mistakenly “ feel” that their thoughts and feelings are much more powerful than

they). Once you take on the challenge of dealing with any addiction, you will

need to marshal your ability to successfully deal with temptation. If you don't

have a sense that you have this power to succeed, you can use your addiction as

an opportunity to discover that you really do have this important capability.

(VI) Failing to Keep Your Word In order to change any established habit, be it

an addiction or not, you must be able to give your word to yourself and KEEP

YOUR WORD NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS. All behaviour change involves deciding what

actions are needed to break the established pattern and then taking those

actions on a consistent basis over time. This is just another way of saying “ you

must give your word to yourself every day that you will do this or that or not

do this or that. Then you must keep your word, no matter what happens around you

or what temptations or seductive excuses you encounter.” Many addiction treatment programs fail because addicts are not empowered to rehabilitate their

ability to give and keep their word. Many addicts, experience has shown, are very accomplished liars. Their promises and statements to others often can't be

trusted. And their ability to keep promises to themselves is similarly impaired.

Without the ability to give and keep your word, especially to yourself, you've got very little chance of curing any addiction. On the other hand, if you make this goal part of your overall game plan, you may be able to emerge from your

addiction a stronger, healthier, and more trustworthy human being.

(VII) Failing to Do What May Be Necessary Be very clear about this one important

point: ALL ADDICTIONS CAN BE CURED AS LONG AS THEY AGREE TO DO WHATEVER MIGHT BE

NECESSARY. One reason most addictions appear to be “incurable” is because people

shy away from the types of actions that are often necessary. What types of actions are these? Well, they can be numerous, diverse, and highly specific for

any individual. They might include any or all of the following (using Internet Addiction as an example):

1. Setting an absolute schedule or time limit for how much time you spend on the Internet.

2. Forcing yourself to stay away from the Internet for several days at a time.

3. Placing self-imposed computer “blocks” on certain types of recreational programs, which include the web browser.

4. Setting an absolute policy for yourself of never signing on to the net at work (unless this is required for your study).

5. Establishing meaningful (but not harmful) consequences for yourself for failing to keep your word.

6. Applying these self-imposed consequences until you do regain your

ability to keep your word consistently.

7. Forcing yourself to do other things instead of spending time on the net.

8. Resolving to learn how to derive other more healthy sources of pleasure in life to replace or even exceed the pleasure you got from being on the Internet.

9. Asking for help whenever you feel you are not being successful.

10. Avoiding people or environments that might encourage you to return to your addictive behaviour, this might be impossible in college but it still is a good point.

These are not the only actions that can be taken, many of them will work for a

majority of individuals. The point is that in order to cure an addiction, you've got to be willing to do things that may seem drastic or outrageous but not harmful to yourself or others. So if you have a history of failing to make any type of desired behaviour change, all this may mean is that you weren't willing

to do what is necessary. All addictions (and other dysfunctional behaviours) can

ultimately be cured. It's just a matter of figuring out what specific actions will work (and will not cause you or others harm) and then executing those actions despite any thoughts or feelings you might have to the contrary.

(VIII) Failing to Anticipate and Deal With Relapses No matter how much initial success you have in eliminating an addiction, unintended relapses are just around the corner. Something unexpected might happen in your life or you might

otherwise succumb to a moment of weakness. Good addiction treatment plans

anticipate that such relapses commonly occur and prepare individuals to deal

with them successfully. A relapse does not mean that you have failed in your efforts to cure yourself of an addiction. If you stay away from cigarettes for 3 months and then smoke again for two days in a row, you can view this as a "failure" if you want, or you can focus on the fact that of the last 92 days, you successfully abstained for 97% of them. That's pretty good. The trick is to

keep 2 days from becoming 5 days, or 5 days from becoming 10 days, etc.

Here you

will need a game plan to keep an occasional relapse from triggering a return to

the addiction. Once you understand these elements, chances are you will not be

and addict for long. And for those who were close, I don't think that you are smart enough not to get sucked in.

CONCLUSION

Internet addiction is a serious addiction that should not be taken lightly, it might not be life threatening like some drug addiction, but it can very harmful

to the person professional and personal life. The key to staying away from this

addiction is to understand its elements and have a strong will power to control

one's self from all the temptations that the Internet might provide.

One Last Interesting Question

We all know that more and more people are gaining access to the Internet some

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way or another, but not every body had the chance of looking at figure 3 !

Figure 3. Will the equation people = Internet Users be true in 2001? (Source:

<ftp://nic.merit.edu/statistics/nsfnet>)

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