

Video games and the internet are addictive media essay

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Introduction There has always been an argument that video games and the internet are addictive, ever since these have arrived and been introduced into the general public in the 1970s and 1980s. As a recovering online gaming addict I do understand the temptation these games present, how addictive and time consuming they can be. These games offer a simple reward system that not only humans thrive on but can also be seen in animals, such as an ape completing tests by pushing different buttons in different sequences which the end result will be a reward. The more times the animal is subjected to these tasks the more they become addicted and want to try it again." I think people don't necessarily understand how powerful some game mechanics can be. It's one thing to think okay I'm playing too much, but it's another thing to just stop playing. Some games are designed in a manner you just don't want to leave. There are many different powerful techniques used, the first one is by using the veritable rate of reinforcement which is basically like a jackpot from a slot machine." The idea was developed after they discovered rats taught to feed themselves by pushing a button, but would push it obsessively when the food would appear randomly." People have found that this works on humans as well, if you go get people a lever to pull and give them random rewards they will do it all the time." In computer games you get a random gift, experience or extra lives and they do this in a loop which makes the user want to get more gifts, more experience and the want best looking character and strongest than everyone else's. For most people this will not affect them but for people who have addictive personality they would be classed in my opinion as high risk candidates to develop addiction to videos games. At Pamplona Bull Run in

Spain every year many bulls are released into the street and the audiences have to run as they are chased. This may sound pointless but during this event your adrenalin levels double and your heart beat triples, all the excitement and danger this brings unleashes all different chemicals in your body giving you a massive natural high. It's the same as the old story of when the caveman runs from the saber tooth tiger and when humans get that high they will go looking for it again. This is very much the same human behaviour what is seen in games when battling through monster filled caverns, fiery dungeons and finally slaying that evil dragon you have been strategizing over for weeks. By offer a reward for doing this, even something as little as a sword, although not actually worth nothing unleashes these chemicals again making you want more and more. Into the world of Addiction. When I first started researching into game addiction I thought people where just the same as me, people just basically spent too much time playing on these games but how I was wrong. The deeper I dug the more it become apparent that this is a real problem and it affects families a lot further than I first had thought. Video gaming addiction in not recognized as a real condition by any medical association but is easily a noticeable growing problem as more stories are coming to surface all the time. Keeping this in mind and being not recognized as a real disorder it is quite hard to find a reputable body of research." A self-selecting sample of 119 online gamers ranging from 18 to 69 years (mean = 28.5 years) completed the questionnaire. The results showed that 41% of gamers played online to escape and 7% of gamers were classified as 'dependent' individuals who were at risk of developing a psychological and behavioural dependence for

online gaming using an adapted 'addiction' scale. Further analysis showed that excessive online gaming was significantly correlated with psychological and behavioural 'dependence'." In the national media museum in Bradford a video artist by the name Robbie Cooper has taken photos of all different children and adults using a high resolution camera playing video and watching television. He has spent the last seven years taking these pictures of their expression and the results are astonishing. The difference between people watching and people playing videos games are the people playing video games are much closer and pulling in more rapidly than the television. There is a young boy who is so engaged into the video game he loses the ability to blink and his eyes water as if he was crying. Viewing these photos has been a real eye opener because actually seeing their expressions on a still image really helps me examine them giving me a greater understanding and knowledge. In these images their minds look black, they are thinking of nothing else but what's in front of them not having a care for anything else happening around them but what happening on that video game and that present time. Even most therapists say they are not convinced that it is a condition. Some fifty years ago alcoholism was not recognized as a registered addiction just how gaming addiction is now, it took thirty years to even get alcoholism recognized and taken seriously. At the moment people just think that it is not a problem and is not socially accepted. I think we are at the same stage as what alcoholism was all these years ago and I think something really bad will have to happen to make people notice the dangers of gaming. I think people will start recognizing the dangers within the next few years, the reason for this is because the increase of broadband internet

speed coming to Europe. Places like Korea the internet is very fast and there are many more extreme cases. Gamers are treated like rock stars here and are very well paid so the temptations of getting into this career are great, but sadly only a handful of people are lucky enough to achieve this leaving hundreds of thousands addicted and without a job. These people are usually taken advantage of by being made to work twenty hours a day collecting digital gold so it can be sold online for real money and would usually live where they work in a small room shared with many more people barely making enough money to eat. In game slang for these workers are called Chinese gold farmers, when a character in game would be acting strangely do very repetitive movements you would often hear someone accuse them as a gold farmer. Half of the whole population in Korea play online games and the government has said it has created addicts. Kim Seong-Byuk of the Korean Youth Protection Division believes computer game addiction is a growing problem." I believe without proper counter measures the United Kingdom will also face the same problems that Korea is facing, when games become more accessible when high speed internet throughout your country" Like South Korea we have a professional gaming league which is funded by big companies such as Intel, the gamers here also know about the risks involved when playing game excessively." Everyone can have a laugh and say you can't get addicted to games, but it's obvious that some people do."" Several people on my friends list online have racked up maybe one hundred and fifty hours a week."" The more you play and the less interaction you have with the outside world, the more you get sucked into it and the harder it is then to get out of it." Video game addiction I picked my first video game

controller up when I was three, I put the game cartridge into my Nintendo, pushed start and I was away. I can remember the excitement I felt unwrapping my first gaming system, I had played these computer games before but only at my friend and this would be the first time I would have full access to my own. From here on I remember playing the game Mario 3 more and more, I went from being quite an active kid to dwelling more in my own room. I would get up extra early play an hour, get ready and go to school. When I was at school all I could remember was the bright colours and the amazing noises and was counting down the hours to once again I could be home fighting the enemy and rescuing the princess. Even from a young boy I think the foundations were there and would build to becoming very addictive. Gaming continued like this for quite a time, having completed the games I have several time each. My mother started to notice I was spending excessive amounts of time playing so she make me cut down, making me go outside more and that was that. This continued through infant, junior and secondary school just playing part time maybe just spending an hour a day on games. It wasn't too I when to college the real addiction began. When I started college I met all kinds of different people and made new friends. This is how I was introduced to the game World of Warcraft. I brought this game half way through my first year at college popped it into the cd drive installed the game and I was away, I was amazing how big the game was and how much there was to do. I designed my character just how I wanted him, picked up my first quest and that was it, I was off the fight bore. I handed in this quest I had slain the creatures and I was reward with a new sword. The simple reward system and game mechanic had cast its line and yes, I was

hooked. The first gaming session lasted from the time I got back from college to the time I went to bed, this continued for the next few months. I noticed my friends at college were at higher levels and had much better items than me and I wanted to do something about it. So I started taking time off of college to increase my inventory and skill in the game, I was slowly drifting away from my education being dragged into this digital world. I think the main reason for doing this was to get away from the problems and worries of my life, where I could be Adam the Orc Warrior, completing quests and achieving a feeling of accomplishment, when in fact I was accomplishing nothing. My addiction got worse and worse until finally I had quit college to play the game which was now taking up to 14 hours a day of my time. I became a recluse and my only interaction with anyone was through the microphone in my computer screen. I later did end up deleting my character and restarting college and am now in my final year of university, but my honest opinion is this game is evil and wouldn't wish it upon my worst nightmare. For people who are addicted to computer games usually have no real purpose in life and I feel they have to find this to overcome the addiction itself, the reason that they get addicted to these games is because in these fantasy worlds they have a true purpose and they are more importantly a somebody. They can be a hero saving the damsel in distress, clearing a dungeon of monsters, casting magical spells, protecting and even healing people giving you a right sense of accomplishment. It may be they are unable to get a job in real life and feel unwanted and useless but even simple games like Farmville let you tend your own farm looking after animals and growing crops. This is again a prime example of the reward

system and keep them coming back for more as it did for me, the whole sensation of winning these items feel your whole body will a great sense of accomplishment. I think it is a lot more easier to find this happiness on the internet than real life you can put all your inequalities behind your and create yourself in a perfect image. Even though, as I mentioned there is not yet official medical diagnoses for video game addiction but there are some symptoms I know of. These are from my own experiences and those from an online gamer's Anonymous website ([http. olganon. org/](http://olganon.org/)). Unable to estimate time spent gaming. Unable to control gaming for an extended period of time. Sense of euphoria while playing. Craving more game time. Neglecting family and friends. Restless, irritable, or discontented when not gaming. Lying about the amount of time gaming. Experiencing problems with school or job preferment's. Feeling guilt, shame, anxiety, or depression as a result of gaming. Change in sleep pattern. Withdrawing from and neglecting real-life hobbies. Extreme stories of addiction. Video games not just make you become a recluse there is a much darker and dangerous side to it, there are all different types of video games and they can make people act in very extreme ways. These different behaviours can be triggered by all different things such as jealousy, anger and embarrassment. These following stories are from all kinds of people from all different countries even though these are very extreme cases I thought it was vital to include them because I wanted to get addicted from both end of the scales to improve my research. I'm going to find stories from all different sources such as new reports, books newspapers and generally from the internet. In London a newlywed man was put in prison for four months because he was playing a video game on him

mobile phone on the way back, on a plane from his honeymoon. The man Faiz Chopdat, 23 who lives in Blackburn, Lancashire was on his way home from a holiday in Egypt flying to Manchester airport on September the 10th and was sitting next to his wife. The man was using his mobile phone on the aircraft which it not aloud and must be turned off at all times. He was said the be playing the old school game Tetris and was told several times to turn his phone of by the cabin crew and even by other passengers on the same flight. When he refused to turn the game off the cabin crew insisted which caused Faiz Chopdats to become quite hostile. He began to shout the staff arguing that he would not turn it off and this continued until the end of the flight. The police was informed while still in the air and was waiting for the man soon as they landed, he was then later summoned to court and a jury found him guilty on September 11, 2002 for the conversion of endangering the safety of an aircraft and got sentenced to four months in prison. The judge Timothy Mort said" Potentially, the consequences could be fatal. It seems to me that anyone who leaves a mobile phone switched on creates some risk and maybe the situation has been reached when we have to consider if mobile phones should be confiscated before transit. You turned the mobile on three times and you were given clear warnings from the cabin crew, the consequences were potentially very serious. I think this offence is so serious that only a custodial sentence can be justified the consequences were potentially very serious. I think this offence is so serious that only a custodial sentence can be justified. It must be in order to deter people from turning on their mobile phones while on a plane. It's a `clang of the gate' sentence." Even a very basic game like Tetris can be addictive, even Tetris

has good game mechanics and involves the risk and reward system that human find so addictive. I bet the man isn't even a computer game addicted up he must have been so absorbed by if wanting to achieve a new high score nothing else mattered, he wanted to win that reward and the satisfaction from the natural high of finally beating it. I think if I was to speak to speak to this guy he would regret every minute and say it was defiantly not worth spending four months in prison but in that moment he was so caught up in the game he didn't think of any repercussions. This next story really shows the dark side and the true reality of video game addiction and inevitably showing it doesn't just affect the individual but everyone one around them. A mother neglects and kills her three year old daughter while playing World of Warcraft. Rebecca Christie deprived her own three year old daughter of food and drink because she was so addicted to World of Warcraft. She would play the game day in and day out, it was reported that she would spend up to fifteen hours a day playing. This continued for so long, her abandoned child slowly died of starvation she was forced to feed herself cat food as there wasn't anything else in the house. Rebecca Christle was sentenced to twenty five years in prison for the neglect, which led to the starvation which led to the daughter's death and there are many tragic stories like this. A couple who was obsessed with online games let baby starve in Korea, Suweon City. The couple left the child in there house while they spent all day everyday just across the street in an internet café. The couple had a very low IQ and was not very intellectual and was sent to a mental hospital at UG's universities department of addiction where they were treated with symptoms like depression and bipolar disorder. The thing that makes this story even

more terrible was the game they played Prius online was based around looking after a virtual child. The parents were so engrossed into this digital world they totally forgot about their own and I wonder if they actually got both digital and reality mixed up which led to their babies untimely death. There are even stories that have been reported of people going out and killing each other due to being so addictive to games. There is another popular massive multiple online role playing game called Legend of Mir that provoked a murder over a virtual sword item. In this game there are basic evil and good that use all different types of magical swords and claims to have over 120 million players worldwide. A young man called Qiu Chengwei found out that one of the enemy's team members Zhu Caoyuan had stolen his magical virtual dragon sabre. As soon as he found this he was furious and went to his local police station and reported the incident as a theft of a virtual item but the police basically laughed at him and did not take any further action. Qiu Chengwei kept sending messages asking for the return of his beloved sword but to no success, this made him very angry. Later that night he crept round to his competitor's home and stabbed him repeatedly in the chest and took the law into his own hand which led to a guilty verdict of intentional injury over an item which doesn't even exist." The actual items in the games, be they property or tools, become valuable because of the time people have spent building them up,"" In a lot of games people might have to forage for the raw materials and then take them to a smelter [if they were making a sword or sabre, for example], otherwise the item might be a reward for completing a difficult quest."" All of that means the item will be difficult to get, and the popularity of these games among certain groups

means that these items then become very valuable." When I used to play the game World of Warcraft I remember trying for weeks upon weeks to redoing the same boss fight trying to get a legendary item and one day it dropped. I was in a group of another nine people so we had to roll a digital dice, the highest number wins. I rolled a ninety eight, I had won, the rush I got felt amazing, I was so happy. Once I had won this I received loads of messages congratulating and offering to buy the item from me, this was not with online gold but real money of up to two hundred pound through a PayPal account of some sort. I didn't sell the item in the end because I was so addicted to the game and wanted to look the best and be the most powerful, which when I think about it now was stupid as it was real money being offered to me for something that doesn't even exist. It is reported in the Australian Financial Review, David Story who is twenty two and studies at the University of Sydney actually paid someone thirty five thousand dollars for a virtual island not even a real bit of land. The game that he played on was called Project Entropia and yet again is another online game. I think this is a very extreme thing to do and would have to be so addicted, it would have to be your life, but this is an example how much computer-generated items are actually worth. In South Korean there are a lot more stories like this than anywhere this is due to the extremely fast broadband internet speed they have and the popularity of gaming in general, gaming there is like football is here in England. A twenty eight year old from Korea collapsed after playing more than fifty hours of the game StarCraft. The man had lost his job recently for having too much time off, this was due to what you could probably guess, playing computer games. During this massive gaming binge he hardly

stopped, barely ate and only dragged himself away from the computer for use the toilet. This all happened in an internet café and noting was said to him about the extensive amount of time he had been on it. I think this is due the cafes being open twenty four hours a day in Korea and different staff members would have been starting and finishing work knowing none the less. At the end of this binge the man collapsed and was rushed into hospital, he later died. The autopsy showed that had a major heart failure due to exhaustion." It does seem to be the case that online gaming addiction for a small minority is a real phenomenon and people suffer the same symptoms as traditional addictions. Psychologist Professor Mark Griffiths, author of several in-depth studies into online gaming and gambling addiction, told the BBC News website that, according to his research, playing excessively was not problematic in any shape or form for the majority of gamers." " They are the types of games that completely engross the player, they are not games that you can play for 20 minutes and stop. If you are going to take it seriously, you have to spend time doing it. But he warned there was a difference between healthy enthusiasm and unhealthy addiction. People who sacrificed jobs, partners and loved ones were considered extreme players". This is a prime example of the reward system and the chemical released into the brain is called dopamine and is a feel good neurotransmitter. If a person does not have enough of this chemical they become very depressed and when you have loads you will become much happier. The man from Korea was receiving a lot of dopamine into his brain while playing the computer game, in the extreme example he lost all thought of eating and sleeping, his brain just wanted keep feeding on the game because it felt good. This man

was so addicted to playing computer games he did not release his whole body was shutting down and he was slowly dying. The efficiency of games for educational determinations. Even though games didn't affect me in these extreme ways, they did play a big part of my life, I lost my part time job and messed my first go at education up. Even with all this games has still helped me. I used to be quite dyslectic and had trouble reading and also writing, but were I had spent so much time playing and interacting with other people on line my reading and spelling skills improved drastically, I would now go as far as saying I'm no longer am dyslectic. This has made my life my easier and has actually helped me achieve greater things such as high grades in university, having experienced this first hand I wondered if anyone else had been helped by using game for educational reasons. Here are the finding researched by Josephine M. Randel, Barbara A. Morris, C. Douglas Wetzel and Betty V. Whitehill." Examined 68 studies directly or indirectly (in reviews conducted before 1984) on the difference between simulations/games and conventional instruction in student performance." 36 (56%) found no difference 22 (32%) found differences favouring simulations/games 5 (7%) favoured simulations/games, but their controls were questionable 3 (5%) found differences favouring conventional instruction Seven out of eight studies involving math found that the use of games is superior to traditional classroom instruction for improving math achievement. Subject matter areas where very specific content can be targeted and objectives precisely defined are more likely to show beneficial effects for gaming. The greatest number of studies on simulation/gaming is in the area of social sciences. The majority of these studies (33 out of 46) showed no difference

in student performance between games/simulations and conventional instruction. Five out of six studies demonstrated that games cannot teach language arts effectively, particularly when specific objectives are targeted. Social science games tend not to use a computer, while math, physics, and language arts games tend to use a computer. Simulations/games show greater retention over time than conventional classroom instruction. In 12 of 14 studies, students reported more interest in simulation and game activities than in more conventional activities." Even though most games are quite addictive there are many that offer exclusive learning features. Some people have learning disabilities and find education life hard, I also think games can help these people keep concentration and improve their intelligents making learning fun. The thing that makes games such a good learning tool is the reward system, every correct question the participant will win a prize wherever it's digital gold or points. Even games that are not aimed to learning still have learning capability you may be saving up for a new weapon which involves counting money that will improve your mathematics skills. When you are taking instructions such as quests you will need to read and write when asking for help, doing this will enhance your literacy skills without even knowing it. Does computer game addiction exist? Even though there is loads of evidence proving game addiction does exist and is a growing worry there are those who disagree. Around eight years ago, the American Association made the decision of not recognising video game addiction as a proper addiction such as alcoholism and gambling. They made this decision because when this investication was taken place there was a lack of evidence and very limited research about video game addiction itself.

Since this judgement was made there have been continuous arguments and disagreements that it is where the wrong decision. Some experts believe it is a growing concern but the problem is it's not really in the public eye and the research will not be paid to fund it. There are many arguments against computer game addiction and a lot of people believe it should never be recognized as a true addiction. Even though people do play videogames to escape from reality and to replace real life problems and issues, this doesn't actually mean you are addicted to them. For some people this may be a way that helps them deal with the stresses of life and actually help them achieve life skills. Playing computer games for a long period of time doesn't actually mean that you have an addiction you could be doing this for all kinds of different reasons, you may suffer from depression, poor self-esteem, relation difficulties or anxiety. Keeping this in mind it makes it really hard to interact with the outside world which makes the idea of a virtual world so much appealing. Here you don't have to worry about anything not even dying, in the computer game you can die and be reincarnated and start over again. People argue that it cannot be compared to a proper addiction such as alcoholism because it doesn't involve that physical dependency. These proper addictions usually lead to much serious repercussions like losing your job, criminal record, family/relationship feuds and may lead to serious health issues. Playing video game dose hardly ever lead to these consequences only in extreme cases where the individual already had mental health problems first place, but with the majority of people it mostly ends in wasting a lot of time. The only reason that people even consider that this is an actually addiction because of the media only publicises the rare cases such

as murders, suicides and neglecting other than that there is nothing. Logging onto the computer and playing computer game getting away from the stresses of life could actually help your health and allowing you to relax and distress. Some video games are completely designed for you to keep healthy and fit even telling you how to eat and, this is achieved by making you the controller keeping you active at all times. Kohn, David. " Addictive: Suicide over Everquest?", CBS News. February 11, 2009. Available at: [Http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/10/17/48hours/main525965.shtml](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/10/17/48hours/main525965.shtml). Accessed, 19/01/2013

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