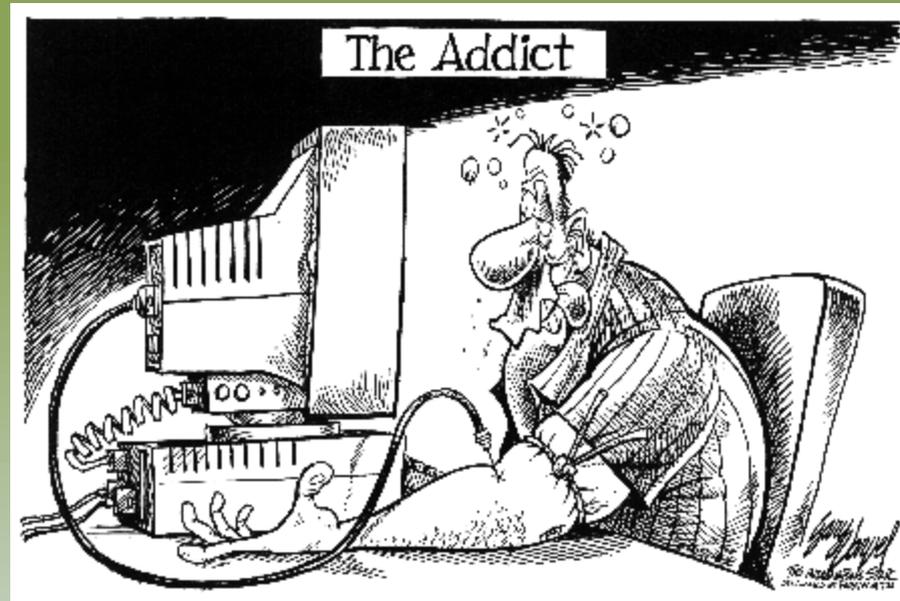


Internet Addiction

By Oscar Navarro



What is Internet Addiction?

Internet addiction is a combination of behaviors that include technological addiction and behavioral addictions.



“I just joined a support group for Internet addicts. We meet every night from 7:00 until midnight on CompuServe.”

How Do You Know You Have It?

- Various tests can assess addictive behaviors with the internet.
- *Young's Internet Addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire*: Five yes/no questions
- Scherer's internet addictions test: Checklist of 10 clinical symptoms
- Brenner's *Internet-Related Addictive Behavior Inventory*: 32 true/false questions



How Do You Know You Have It? (con't)

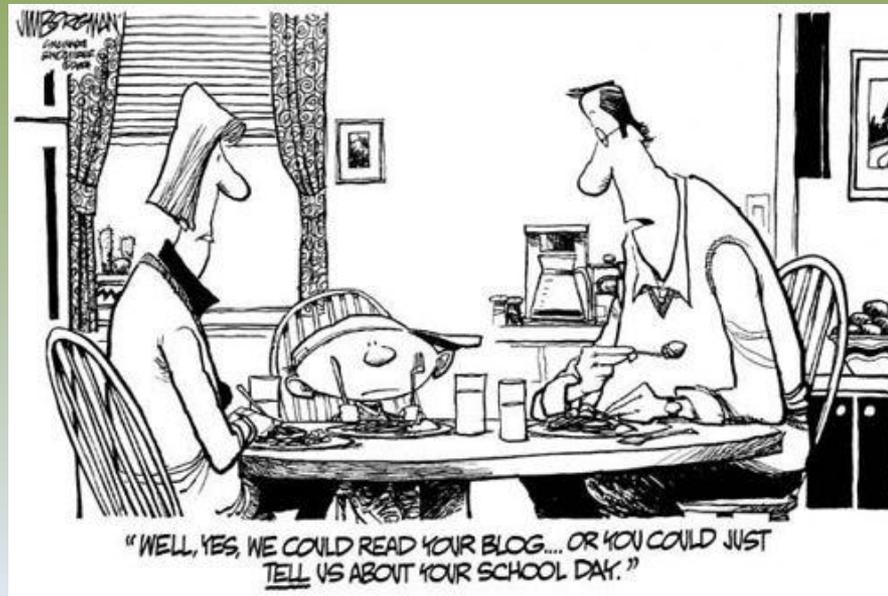
- A study by Chou and Hsai indicated that internet addicts spent about 20-25 hours per week on the internet.
- You are high-risk if you spend close to 20 hours per week online.
- You are low-risk if you spend 9 hours per week online.
- Young defines that you are "internet dependent" if you spend 39 hours per week online.
- 5 hours online per week is considered non-dependent.



*"I'm so happy to see you.
I didn't have internet all weekend!"*

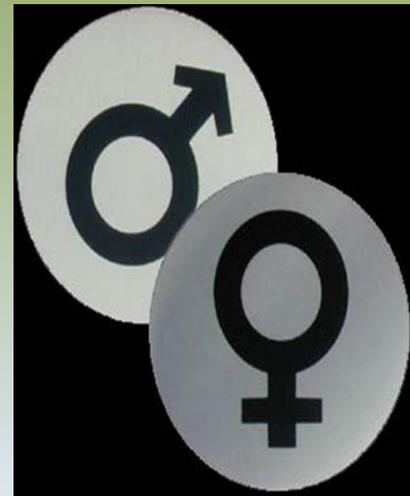
Consequences of Internet Addiction

- Internet addiction can distance people from their academic responsibilities, professional performance, and day-to-day social interactions.
- Overuse of the internet can disrupt marriages, finances, and other relationships (family, friends, romantic).
- The only concrete consequence: Time consumption



Who Uses The Internet The Most?

- In Young's study, those who are dependent internet users (~39 hrs/per week) are mostly men (71%) as opposed to women who are the minority (29%).
- However, when it comes to non-dependent usage (~5 hrs/per week) half are men and half are women.
- Men seek online activities that involve power, control, and violence.
- Women seek online activities that involve close friendships and anonymous communications.

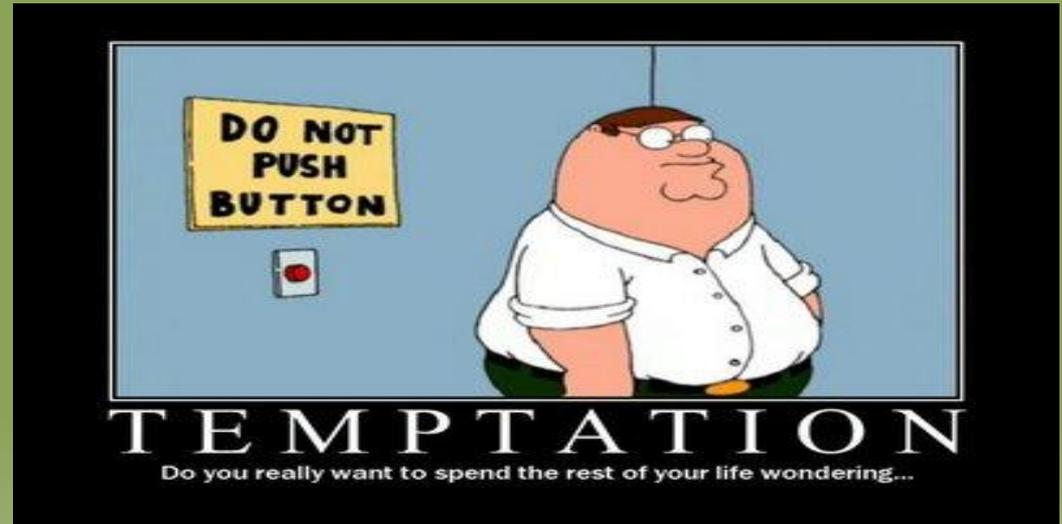


What Makes The Internet Addictive?

- Speed
- Accessibility
- Intensity of Information
- Stimulation
- Cost
- Expanding Bandwidth



What Makes The Internet Addictive? (con't)



The Internet fulfills 6 needs:

- Sex (i.e. cybersex)
- Altered State of Consciousness (i.e. creating online personas)
- Achievement and Mastery (i.e. mastering various software applications)
- Belonging (i.e. social networks)
- Relationships (i.e. online dating)
- Self-actualization (i.e. change how others see you)

Mistaken Identity

- Be mindful that just because a vast amount of time is spent online, does not necessarily mean that you have internet addiction.
- The internet may just be the means for another addiction like gambling, pornography, or games.
- Internet addiction can lead to internet abuse, which takes away time from productivity (i.e. work or school)
- Most popular types of internet abuse are cybesexual, friendship/relationship, activity, criminal, and miscellaneous abuse.

What Makes the Addict an Abuser

- Opportunity and Access
- Affordability
- Anonymity
- Convenience
- Escape
- Disinhibition
- Social Acceptability
- Long Work Hours

How To Treat Internet Addiction

- Treat it like any other addiction (drug or eating disorder)
 1. Take it seriously
 2. Raise awareness at work
 3. Watch out for other internet abusers
 4. Help colleagues notice the signs
 5. Monitor internet use
 6. Check internet bookmarks
 7. Have an "Internet Abuse" policy
 8. Provide support to problem users



References

Chou, C., Condron, L., & Belland, J. C. (2005). A review of the research on internet addiction. *Educational Psychology Review, 17*(4), 363-388.

Griffiths, M. (2003). Internet abuse in the workplace: Issues and concerns for employers and employment counselors. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 40*(2), 87-96.