Internet Addiction

The Internet has provided much positive impact on people throughout the world for the last ten years. It can be informative, convenient, resourceful and fun. However, the Internet can also offer harmful influence on human such as pornography, security and privacy. There is another significant issue involved people’s life. These days, there are many people spending too much time on the Internet while they may not realize themselves whether or not it is too much. Therefore, this can be another type of addiction that has invaded the human.

The topic has been debated among psychologists and it is an extremely delicate one. Some point out that it is an “Internet Addiction Disorder” while psychologists are still not confident what to call this type of situation. This is because some people stick with their computers, whereas they do not even care of the Internet. Therefore, perhaps this phenomenon can be called “Computer Addiction” as well. However, this essay will focus on Internet Addiction Disorder, and provide possible solutions to this problem.

Addiction and Internet Addiction Disorder

Suler (1999) points out that “Addictions” are not actually defined very clearly. This is because it can be unhealthy or even healthy and also a combination of both. It is clear that when people are satisfied by some activities such as hobbies, they would like to spend their times on these activities as much as possible. In addition, it can also be creativity, learning and self-expression. Despite of this, some psychologists define addiction as a behavior pattern of compulsive drug use characterized by overwhelming involvement with the use of a drug and securing of the supply, as well as the tendency to relapse after completion of withdrawal.

Internet Addiction Disorder is the term first proposed by Dr. Ivan Goldberg for pathological, compulsive Internet usage. Internet Addiction Disorder is said that it is closest to pathological
gambling. This is because some Internet users cannot control themselves when they should access or disconnect the Internet. Many medical doctors and psychologists attempt to elucidate Internet Addiction Disorder. These explanations consist of psychodynamic and personality, sociocultural, behavioral and biomedical explanations. Notwithstanding, Ferris (2002) points out that during this time the term Internet Addiction Disorder is still difficult to define. Not all can perfectly elucidate any addiction and some are better than the others at explaining Internet Addiction Disorder. So far, researchers can only focus on defining the symptoms that lead into Internet addiction.

Why do people addict to the Internet?

Becoming addicted to the Internet can be caused by several reasons. However, there are still the most considerable reasons why many Internet users become addicted. These reasons are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, Internet addiction behavior compensates for a lack of satisfaction in other areas of life, such as friendship problems or any depression. When people feel dissatisfied in life, they have the possibility to develop an Internet addiction. In addition, the behavior of accessing the Internet is going to be seriously intensive if they are pleasurable while using the Internet. Therefore, it can lead to the beginning of a serious Internet addiction. This is because they do something that may take some effort to change their lives.

Next, the Internet is so reinforcing, stimulating and rewarding. According to Young (2003), online content is immediate, constant, uncensored, and unregulated. He also notes that anything people require is on the Internet. People can certainly have freedom of expressing their opinions by posting anything they wish, while it is not censored or suppressed. Individuals can also interact with one another, and download or upload information independently. Consequently, it can be clearly seen that these kinds of factors are so appealing to participants.

The last significant reason is that Internet addicts often had psychiatric disorders before they are addicted to the Internet. These people may be suffering from manic depression or had abused alcohol or drugs at sometimes in their lives. These mental disorders that accompany most addiction disorders can intensify the trauma. As a result, they cannot control themselves whenever they access the Internet.

Who are the most likely candidates for Internet addiction?

In point of fact, there are many kinds of people that can be addicted to the Internet. Many psychologists believe anyone who accesses the Internet has the possibility to be addicted. Internet Addiction Disorder can happen to people who are depressed, lonely or high family conflicts. Therefore, there is no exactly particular group affected by Internet Addiction Disorder. However, some specialists mention that age and education seem to impact the demographic profile of people with Internet Addiction Disorder. Especially,
students and homemakers who are young or well educated are the major players.

A longitudinal study of Internet use for ninety-three families notes that teenagers access the Internet much more often than their parents. The Internet users between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five are negatively influenced by the Internet. This is due to the fact that these people in this group having the huge opportunities to access the Internet.

Additionally, there is the most popular question from the millions of people that is “where do Internet users go when they are using the Internet?” The answer is that those people who are online addicts are often attracted by these kinds of website listed below.
1. Day trading
2. Adult sex chat
3. Online pornography
4. Playing computer games
5. Gambling in virtual casinos
6. Chatting with online strangers
7. Obsessively checking stock quotes
8. Searching for information not relevant to work

How about children? They are the most vulnerable candidates that everyone is concerned. The most popular place children always go is online game websites. Those can spend several hours on playing online games such as Counter Strike, Ragnarok and so on. Some do not go to their schools but go to an internet cafe or their friends’ houses so as to play those online games. Now the further question is not only about Internet addiction but it is about negative impacts on those children, particularly violence in the online games

Violence in online games

Children usually like to imitate what they see, so the Internet as medium can bring about violence to children as same as movies and television programs. It can be seen that Internet games can be a cause of violence because these games could invite players to engage with the action, disengage the critical faculties and take pleasure in the substitute experiences of gratuitous violence. According to Olivier (2000), Internet games send the following false messages to the players. The computer industry becomes more sophisticated in its productions. It can do the games more realistic version of events. Gaming texts therefore promote the idea of full sensory embodiment.

Mortal Combat, for instead, is embedded in violence. The challenge of the game is for players to identify with a screen character and to fight and win another in the exercise of violent action. In the game, all the character is violent. Additionally, media violence has a strong effect on children because they lack the real life experiences to judge whether something they see on screen is realistic (Reed, 1999). An example of this is that the Columbine tragedy in USA in 1999. Both two shooters, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold enjoyed playing the game Doom. Doom is licensed by the United States Military that aims to train soldiers to effectively kill. In this game, there are two shooters with extra weapons and unlimited ammunition. There
are no other characters in this game who can fight back against these shooters. Eric and Dylan were imitating the characters they played on their home computers. It can be said that this is the susceptibility of young people to violent portrayals in the electronic media (Klobas, 2001). The games like Doom could make children more likely to commit violent acts in real life. They may think violence is a useful and appropriate way to solving any problem.

What are Internet addiction warning signs?

As a matter of fact, Internet users are able to know themselves if they devote their times to access the Internet too much. There are several characteristics of Internet addicts identified by many psychologists. Consequently, this part will offer the most significant warning signs of Internet addiction.

Stonecypher (2001) says that if the following are responded four or more, Internet users may be suffering from Internet Addiction Disorder.

1. Feel preoccupied with the Internet while offline
2. Feel a need to use the Internet with increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction
3. Feel restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop Internet use
4. Use the Internet as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving a poor mood (feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety or depression)
5. Lie to family members or friends to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet
6. Jeopardize or risk the loss of a significant relationship, job, education or career opportunity because of the Internet
7. Keep returning even after spending an excessive amount of money on on-line fees
8. Go through withdrawal when offline (increased depression, anxiety)
9. Have an inability to control the Internet usage
10. Stay online longer than originally intended

What are the solutions?

To deal with Internet addiction is certainly difficult thing to do. It is the same as facing with any other type of addiction. It can be said that although all addictions can be cured, as long as people agree to do whatever might be necessary. Definitely, this is not an easy procedure or practice. The objective of this section is to provide the major possible solutions to solve the problem. There are many potential solutions; however, the most important thing is that people who are or may be addicted have to concentrate on resolving seriously.

The first solution is to refrain. This is the most important matter for any kind of addiction. Greenfield (1999) affirms that after Internet addicts decide to resolve the problem, they must have stable mind and always realize that they will not turn to become addicted to the Internet for a second time. An example of this is that if online addicts find themselves hooked on chat
rooms, they must exclude this attractive Internet activity by saying no and refrain from chat rooms altogether.

Family therapy can be necessary among addicts whose marriages and family relationships are negatively impacted by Internet addiction (Schuman, 2000). The family should be involved so as to cure the Internet addicts. It should concentrate on several main areas. For example, family members should reduce blame on the addict for behaviors; the members should listen to the addict’s feeling and help him or her by finding new hobbies or take a long vacation; and member should improve open communication relating to the addictive problems in the family.

Furthermore, Internet addicts should set their goals in order to stop using the Internet too much. Many Internet addicts attempt to limit the Internet usage but unfortunately they are frequently failed. This is because these often rely on an ambiguous plan to stop accessing the Internet without determining whether or not they can do it. Online addicts commonly rely on the plan too much. They suppose the addiction will disappear soon, whereas they will not pursue this plan strictly or sometimes they do not set a goal that is potential to practice. Therefore, they should set a reasonable goal that they realize they can follow it seriously.

Time management is another significant solution. Young (2003) suggests that Internet addicts should stick to a schedule. This tangible schedule of Internet usage can make the participants being in control. Internet addicts can also use external stoppers such as an alarm clock in order to set definite time to log off the computers each day. Particularly, these people should learn to set reasonable time with the purpose of limiting computer use. They do not have to decrease online time dramatically but they should reduce it little by little. Internet addicts must keep this regulation strictly as well as avoid future relapse.

Effective treatment programs can be developed for Internet Addiction Disorder. Internet addicts should join a group such as individual therapy that support or encourage them to stop spending too much time on the Internet (Young, 2003). More and more hospitals and clinics are offering treatment programs and support groups for Net addicts. Psychologists or mental health professionals can certainly offer the existence of the problem and suggest any possible resolution to online addicts. As a consequent, online addicts will not be addicted any longer if they follow the recommendations from these professionals.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, this essay discusses on the subject of Internet Addiction Disorder and provides the potential solutions of this issue. The Internet offers many considerable and necessary benefits. It makes people’s lives much easier and simpler. On the other hand, the Internet makes human more complex as well. The worst matter is that those benefits become a serious problem when people cannot control themselves to log off the Internet. This can certainly lead to neglect their health, jobs, friendship and other
responsibilities.

As a result, these people are pathologically addicted. This issue is caused by many reasons such as a lack of satisfaction, the appealing of the Internet and mental problems of people. Even though there are many ways to solve this problem and cure these Internet addicts, the most important solution is they have to control themselves austerely. It is recommended that online users should remember that preventing the problem is better and easier than solving the problem.

References:


