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YOUTH INTERNET ADDICTION AND THE WAYS TO REDUCE IT

Patiaka T.A., group 21, Accounting and taxation

e-mail: tanushka28599@gmail.com

Zhukova T.V., language adviser

e-mail: zhutet788@gmail.com

Tavria State Agrotechnological University

Modern research has resulted in youth internet addiction being considered a significant mental health issue. The reasons for internet addiction are lighted in the article. Some ways to reduce net use are considered.

Сучасні дослідження підтверджують, що залежність молоді від Інтернету є важливим питанням ментального здоров'я. Основні причини Інтернет залежності висвітлені у статті. Деякі засоби зниження використання Інтернету розглядаються.

Problem setting. A great number of young people demonstrate what appear to be signs of addiction to the digital world. This type of addiction is typically described as an impulse control disorder that means that it does not involve substance abuse but is more similar to a gambling addiction, for example. Young people seem especially vulnerable, with case studies highlighting students as they spend more and more time online.

Some young people suffer health consequences from loss of sleep, as they stay up later to chat online, check for social network status updates or to reach the highest game levels.

Analysis of recent research. Internet addiction youngsters statistics is really shocking: 50 children fall prey to online every week; nearly 70% of the teenagers using the internet are addicted to internet and Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter an Instagram; 63% of the teens have been asked personal question such as the age or location by a stranger; 57% are reposted to have met someone only knew through online communication.

Child psychologist and spokesperson Dr Norharlina Bahar said that the research conducted found that males under the age of twenty-four are most at risk of developing an internet addiction.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the main reasons for youngsters' net addiction and some ways of reducing it.

Basic materials research. Internet addiction among children is a growing concern. Online access is a vital part of the modern world and an important tool in the education of our children. In addition, it is a highly entertaining and informative medium. With the click of a mouse, they can enter a different world where the problems of their real life are no longer present, and all the things one wishes he or she could be or experience are possible.

Like addiction to drugs and alcohol, the Internet offers children and adolescents a way to escape painful feelings or troubling situations. They sacrifice needed hours of sleep to spend time online and withdraw from family and friends to escape into a comfortable online world that they have created and shaped.

As for kids aged 8 to 16 they spend on average 44.5 hours per week in front of screens, and their parents are increasingly concerned that screen time is robbing them of real world experiences. Nearly 23% of youth report that they feel "addicted to video games".

Children who lack rewarding or nurturing relationships or who suffer from poor social and coping skills are at greater risk to developing inappropriate or excessive online habits. Because they feel alone and have problems making new friends, they turn to invisible strangers in online chat rooms looking for the attention and companionship missing in their real lives. They may come from families with significant problems, and they cope with their problems by spending time online.

Socially, they learn to instant message friends rather than develop face-to-face relationships, which can impact their way of relating to peers. The internet is hurting their ability to work in groups. Teachers struggle to get them to participate in any kind of team assignments; instead they would all rather stare at the computer. The Internet is socializing them in ways that emotionally stunts them and makes it difficult for them to deal with others in the real world.

Young people spend more time online due to the use of the internet as a source of support, and a way to develop their identity.

Across the world the rates of problematic use are rising: 1.0-18.3% of adolescences in Western countries and 13.7%-18.4% in Asian countries. In South Korea there has been a spate of deaths relating to unwillingness to stop playing an online game, which has resulted in internet addiction being considered a significant mental health issue. In China this has led the government to pass laws restricting time spent on online games.

An internet addiction can result in a whole host of personal, family, financial, occupational and academic problems. Real life relationships can be severely damaged by an internet addiction as the individual will not show any interest in anything other than the internet. Those who are addicted to the internet may even try to hide the fact that they are spending so much time online.

It is estimated that over 70% children and teenagers who are using the Internet are now addicted. According to research by BeNet Awareness initiative there is a linkage between Internet addiction amongst youngsters to cybercrime and anti-social behavior..

Dr. Douglas Gentile reports that almost one out of every ten youth gamers shows enough symptoms of damage to their school, family, and psychological functioning to merit serious concern. Beyond gaming, kids are filling their free time with other Internet activities: social networking, instant messaging (IM), blogging, downloading etc.

Dr. Kimberly Young, Director of the Center for Internet Addiction Recovery, identified the following potential warning signs for children with pathological Internet use:

- Loses track of time while online
- Sacrifices needed hours of sleep to spend time online
- Becomes agitated or angry when online time is interrupted
- Checks email several times a day
- Becomes irritable and depressed if not allowed access to the Internet or when not online
- Spends time online in place of homework or chores
- Prefers to spend time online rather than with friends or family
- Disobeys time limits that have been set for internet usage
- Lies about amount of time spent online when no one is around
- Forms new relationships with people he or she has met online
- Loses interest in activities that were enjoyable before he or she had online access.

About 21% of youth are defined as heavy media users who spend more than 16 hours with media a day. Another 63% are defined as moderate users who use media 3-16 hours a day. Youth who fall into the light user category are those who consume less than 3 hours of media a day.

For most kids and teens their online use is relatively well managed as they balance media use with school, sports, friends, and other commitments. They should call people instead of sending instant messages or texts, cook or bake something for the family, hang out with friends, plan family evening or get enough exercise.

It sounds cheesy, but spending time with people who care about you is the best antidote to internet addiction. You realize that your absence online does not mean the world will stop turning.

Conclusion. There is no denying that Internet eases our life, but when it affects your mental health capacity and interferes with your day-to-day work, then you need help.

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