

**Committee: Youth Assembly**

**Issue: Action paper on net addiction**

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**Position: Co-Head**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Net addiction is part of our agenda because firstly, it is an issue that has to do with the majority of our peers and secondly, it is a very interesting issue and a topic that everyone should be informed about as well as a topic one should know how to deal with. It can be seen as problem both psychologically and mentally. Its interest is increased should one consider that all have met a “compiler freak” in their daily life. It’s certainly something that needs our attention and our efforts to limit it as much as we can. Furthermore, teenagers need help even if they don’t realize it. It’s a problem that isolates our friends and classmates or if an adult is addicted then it can destroy one’s life and career. Of course, it can destroy also their personalities and behaviors to their parents or a friend.

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

### **Net addiction**

Internet addiction is described as an impulse control disorder, which does not involve use of an intoxicating drug and is very similar to pathological gambling. Some Internet users may develop an emotional attachment to on-line friends and activities they create on their computer screens. Internet users may enjoy aspects of the Internet that allow them to meet, socialize, and exchange ideas through the use of chat rooms, social networking websites, or "virtual communities."

### **Psychological health**

Psychosocial health is the result of complex interaction between a person’s history and his or her thoughts about and interpretations of the past and what the past means. Psychological health is the ability of humans to think and feel in order to achieve their goals for the future such as effectively perform in our work environment and/or personal lives.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### Why net addiction began

Nowadays, children often spend a long time in front of a computer screen or their mobile phones. So, because of the fast pace of life, children can often stay alone in their house and have only a way out of that life in their electronic game. This situation is repeatedly restrained, having as a result that the child believes that this is a correct behavior. Children find shelter in social media and video games; that however becomes a habit and results in net addiction.

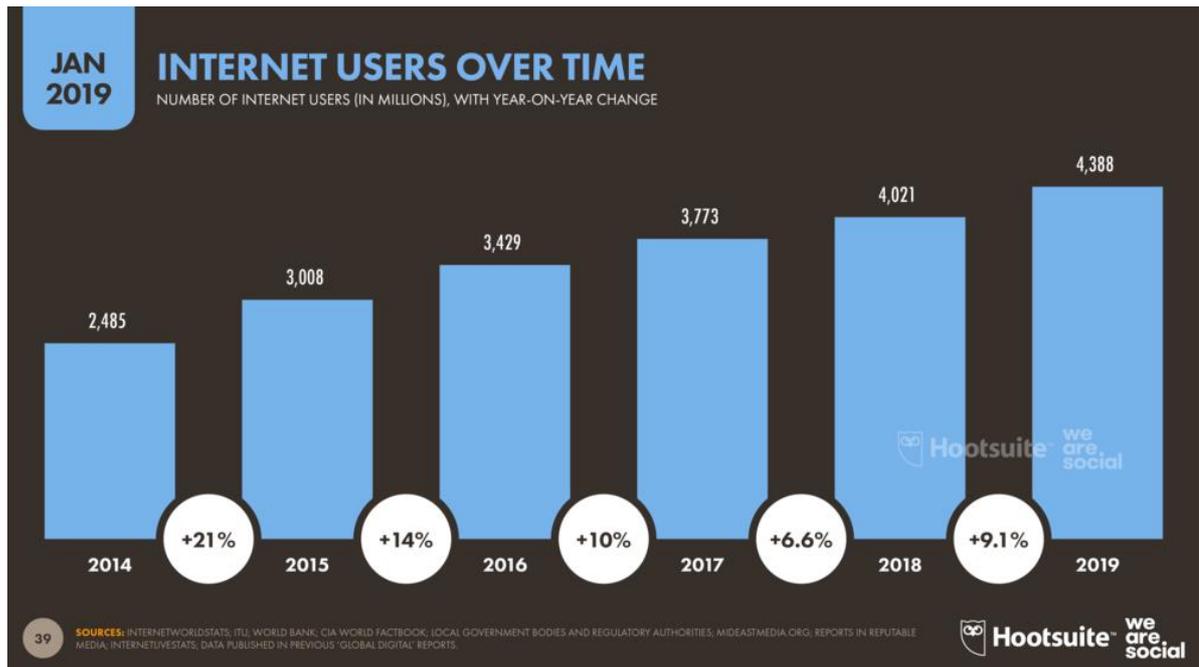


Figure 1: Internet users over time

### When it appeared

Internet addiction is a relatively new form of addiction, proposed as a first-time term by Goldberg (1995), and became popular with Young's innovative research (1996). It refers to "forced, excessive internet use and irritation or dysthymic behavior that occurs during her deprivation "(Mitchell, 2000). Despite its current formation, it is a situation that causes a significant reduction in the social and professional or academic functioning of the individual and can cause crucial problems to the person suffering.

## How do you feel about the internet?



Source: Ofcom

BBC

Figure 2: How do you feel about the internet

### How it is crucial and why it should be tackled

It is very crucial because every teenager, and not only, has to spend its time doing other more interesting activities that will offer him a wider range of development of its personality. In addition, the causes in health and spirit are so big, that will probably bring very negative effects in one's future life. Moreover, the interests of a teenager must vary in order to be able to make decisions, to participate in conversations and to be part of a society that demands a lot of things from its members. Tackling the problem will improve and save the individual but also help increase productivity in the economy, since net addiction affects it negatively due to distraction.

### What causes net addiction

Internet Addiction Disorder, in addition to other dependency disorders, seem to affect the pleasure center of the brain. The addictive behavior triggers, a release of dopamine to promote the pleasurable experience activating the release of this chemical. Over time, more and more of the activity is needed to induce the same pleasurable response, creating a dependency. If you find online gaming or online shopping a pleasurable activity and you suffer from an addiction to the Internet, you will need to engage in more and more of that behavior to institute the same pleasurable feeling prior to your dependency.

The reason why people are so vulnerable and might be so addicted to Internet activity (e.g., gaming, gambling, shopping, pornography, etc.), is because it provides multiple layers of rewards. For example, addiction on a very famous video game can originate from the fact that the children feel a sentiment of reward of a good player and in most cases the feeling of being part of a team and being accepted.

Predispositions of Internet addiction are also related to anxiety and depression. Oftentimes, if you are already suffering from anxiety or depression, you may turn to the

Internet to relieve your suffering from these conditions. Similarly, shy individuals and those with social awkwardness might also be at a higher risk of suffering from Internet addiction. This means that the teenager and the adult turn to the looking for what they lack, believing that the internet can help them in both aforementioned situations.

### **What are the effects and the warning signs**

Net addiction can have many warning signs, such as using the internet in increased amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction. Users turn to the Internet as a way to escape from problems or to relieve a dysphoric mood. Further conditions that could serve as signs for a potential net addiction include are the feeling of hopelessness, guilt, anxiety or euphoria when using the computer, inability to prioritize or keep schedules, isolation, no sense of time defensiveness, avoidance of work, agitation, mood swings, fear, loneliness, boredom with routine tasks, procrastination, depression, dishonesty etc.

In detail, this disorder might be affecting one's personal relationships, work life, finances, or school life. Individuals suffering from this condition may be isolating themselves from others, spending a long time in social isolation and negatively impacting their personal relationships. Distrust and dishonesty issues may also arise due to Internet addicts trying to hide or deny the amount of time they spend online. In addition, these individuals may create alternate personas online in an attempt to alter their identities, pretend to be someone other than himself or herself and mask their online activities. Those at highest risk for creation of a secret life are those who suffer from low-self-esteem feelings of inadequacy, and fear of disapproval.

Serious financial troubles may also result from avoidance of work, bankruptcy due to continued online shopping, online gaming, or online gambling. Jeopardized or risked loss of significant relationships, job, educational or career opportunities because of Internet use can also be observed. Internet addicts may also have trouble developing new relationships and socially withdraw – as they feel more at ease in an online environment than in a physical one.

Internet addiction results furthermore in personal, family, academic, financial, and occupational problems that are also characteristic of other addictions. Impairments of real-life relationships are disrupted as a result of excessive use of the Internet. Individuals suffering from Internet addiction spend more time in solitary seclusion, spend less time with real people in their lives, and are often viewed as socially awkward.

Last but not least, the addict can suffer from body pains including neck pain, the Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, as well as headaches, insomnia, poor nutrition (failing to eat or

eating in excessively to avoid being away from the computer) and personal hygiene (not bathing to stay online).

Many persons who attempt to quit their Internet use experience withdrawal including: anger, depression, relief, mood swings, anxiety, fear, irritability, sadness, loneliness, boredom, restlessness, procrastination, and upset stomach. Being addicted to the Internet can also cause physical discomfort or medical problems such as: dry eyes, severe headaches, eating irregularities, (such as skipping meals), failure to attend to personal hygiene, and sleep disturbance.

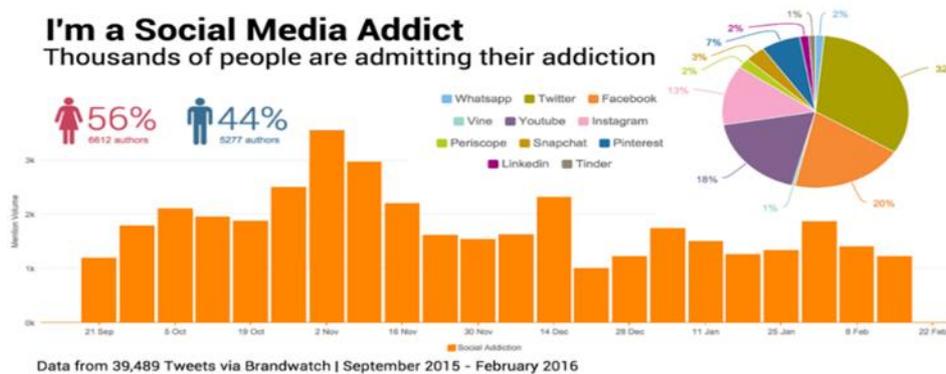


Figure 3: I'm a social media addict

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

### Italy

The first internet congress on internet addiction disorders was held in Milan in 2014. Italy has treatment centers in Rome and Milan.

### Australia

Australia has developed the first in patient treatment programs for adolescents. and

### France

France uses early education to prevent technology addictions.

### China

It estimated that 24 million young people in China are addicted to the Internet. The country was the first to recognize Internet addiction as a serious psychological disorder

### United States of America

The Americans are the most internet addicted nation with 76% of the population using the internet regularly, 1.23 mobile subscriptions per person and over half a million free WIFI locations.

**Bahrain, Luxembourg, Denmark, United Kingdom, Japan, Republic of Korea and United Arab Emirates**

Bahrain and Luxembourg both have 98% of their population connected to the digital world. In the final analysis countries with the highest percentage of Digital users: Middle Eastern, Asian and European cities all take top spots as the countries with the highest number of digital users, including Denmark (97%), United Kingdom (95%), Japan (93%), South Korea (93%) and United Arab Emirates (91%).

**TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

Date	Description of Event
6 November 2008	A Comparative Study of Internet Addiction between the United States and China. The study compared Chinese students and American students. The internet addiction proportion of Chinese students is larger than that of American students. Authors also list some of symptoms caused by internet addiction.
1 October 2009	Factors Associated with Internet Addiction among Adolescents.  A survey to examine the internet users among students from 13 to 18 years old. They collect the information about health behavior to classify if they are addicted to internet and also compare the data from females and males. These teenagers may have kinds of pressure during the age period.
11 November, 2011	Hostility in the Real World and Online: The Effect of Internet Addiction, Depression, and Online Activity.
1 Mar 2012	Associations between online friendship and Internet addiction among adolescents and emerging adults.
1 June 2014	Investigating the effect of Internet Addiction on Social Skills and in High School Students' Achievement.

## **UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS**

The United Nations have not managed to find a way to solve the problem of Net Addition yet, because its popularity.

## **PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE**

The Korean government has taken action to combat the serious problems arising from Internet addiction. Seven related ministries and offices including the Ministry of Public Administration and Security have announced a “Comprehensive Plan to Resolve and Prevent Internet Addiction” also known as the “i-ACTION 2012”. It is a group of differently designed measures, aiming to combat the extensive growth of internet addicts. The term ACTION stands for Attention, Counselling, Training, Institution, Outcome and Networks.

The plan was designed by the government, acknowledging for the first time the seriousness of Internet addiction and its effects on society. The primary goal of the campaign was to reduce the number of internet addicts below 5% by the year 2012. This was tried to be achieved by helping establishing a life-long and comprehensive coping structure for all ages. The first step that the government followed was the extension of preventive educational programs to 10 million Internet users over the next three years.

Educational programs on Internet addiction prevention have so far only been conducted on 470,000 people aged 9 to 32 (only 2% of Internet users) annually. The plan had as its main target specific groups of children and adults among whom Internet addiction is rapidly spreading. Additionally, preventive educational programs specifically designed for groups, such as kindergarten students’ soldiers and office workers were also launched. The plan included strengthening consultation and therapy sessions, aiming the provision of systematic counselling for 300,000 people in need. The scale of free counselling services was expanded by nearly ten-fold from 25,000 annually (1.3% of target counselee) to 200,000 (10% of target counselee) for 2012, and divided addicts into three segments depending on their level of addiction. This means that appropriate services will be offered, since dividing the addicts allows understanding where basic, professional or clinic treatments are necessary. For isolated segments of society, including the unemployed, single-parent families, low-income families and physically-challenged people, counsellors will visit their households to offer them hands-on aid and care.

The Korean government has made various actions to combat the issue of net addiction, acknowledging it as a crucial problem and calling for the international community to do the same. Many governments could adopt similar measures, in order to combat net addiction, following the example of Korea.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

The first step in treatment is the recognition that a problem exists. If one does not believe he/she has a problem, one is not likely to seek treatment. One of the overarching problems with the Internet is that there is often no accountability and no limits. Studies have shown that self-corrective behavior can be achieved and be successful. Corrective behaviors include software that controls the Internet use and types of sites that can be visited – with the majority of professionals in agreement that total abstinence from the computer is not an effective method of correction.

Also, the user that is net addicted can be part of individual groups of family therapy in order to solve the issue with his/her family. Also, the art therapy is a good idea because through the art the user can spend time with something interesting. Self-control is very important to the people who suffer from net addiction. They should be distracted and keep distance -in specific cases- from the devices and web pages that have caused this particular problem for a specific time in order to overcome the problem.

Moreover, the users have to set some timelines in specific means (e.g Instagram Facebook or games). Finally, some media campaigns can also be added in the possible solutions in order to inform the citizens and especially the parents for the rising threat of net addiction and how they can help their children avoid it.

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