



# HEALTH BEAT

CSULB  
Division of Student Services  
Student Health Services  
Health Resource Center  
Room 268

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## Internet Usage Contradictions

By: Tanya Payne

The old guard media in the United States, for the most part, do not embrace new technological 'upstarts.' For instance, newspaper publishers once resented the importance of radio to the American public; while television viewers slashed radio broadcast ratings. It seems today newspaper, radio, and television might fear the Internet will make them all obsolete. Fear may be what lies at the root of all the contradictory evidence presented about the positive and negative aspects of computer use.



Television broadcasts and newspaper headlines constantly remind the American public, especially college students, that the more we use the computer the more depressed, isolated and lonely we become. Don't forget to consider how the computer monitor ruins eyesight and gives off radiation. Others warn all this typing is giving us carpal tunnel syndrome! It's almost enough to scare us off our computer. Almost...

Since the Internet is a relatively young technology, there has not been adequate time to study its various affects on society. Often study

results are contradictory. For example, in the year 2000, a study was conducted to determine whether high Internet use (two or more hours daily) has any relation to social isolation and depression among adolescents. The study indicated high users had worse relationships with their mothers and smaller circles of friends, resulting in social isolation. Yet the same study also inferred these same high Internet users did not show any increased symptoms of depression when compared to low Internet users.<sup>1</sup>

Gender and personality also play a role in determining one's overall Internet experience as well. In an Australian study affiliated with Swinburne University, higher lev-

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### Highlights in the Health Resource Center

- **Free and confidential HIV Testing.** Call HRC for an appointment.
- **Free Nutrition Counseling.** Discover the best way to fuel your body with food.
- **Want to get on birth control? Sexual Health Awareness Workshops on Monday & Tuesdays 2:00-4:00 pm**
- **Alcoholics Anonymous meetings on Wednesdays 12-1 pm**

## Internet Addiction

By: Jennifer Aguilera

Have you ever found yourself spending hours at a time in front of the computer and then wondering afterwards where in the world did the time go? A student can easily spend hours at a time sitting in front of their computer because the Internet provides so much information and is so easily accessible. The Internet can become addictive, especially for college students because they can find the answers to so many of their needs. Often a student finds one Internet source leads to another and then another. Suddenly instead of only minutes having passed, a student realizes they have been on the Internet for hours. Many individuals may not be aware, but this type of situation can lead to a serious problem. It is possible for people to become addicted to the Internet. It is estimated that five to ten percent of the population is addicted to the Internet. This addiction is known as Inter-

net Addiction Disorder (IAD). Internet addiction is a compulsive behavior that literally takes complete control of a person's life. The Internet tends to be the most prized possession to an addict, in which nothing else matters, even family, friends, school, and work.

According to the American Psychological Association, to be diagnosed with IAD. This criterion consists of "developing a tolerance to the Internet and increasing Internet usage on a daily basis, developing withdrawal symptoms, surfing the Internet longer than was intended, and socially isolating oneself from friends and family members".<sup>1</sup> College students vulnerable to IAD can be those who are away from home for the first time. They might experience problems such as: depression, anxiety, or simply being overwhelmed with their whole new lifestyle. Another factor for students developing IAD is free Internet access and computers offered on-campus.<sup>2</sup>

The three main categories of Internet addiction for college students are cybersexual, cyber-relational, and net compulsions. Cybersexual addiction involves individuals who are overly occupied with viewing, downloading, and trading online pornography or drawn into adult fantasy role-play chat rooms. Cyber-relational addiction is more of the interactive aspect of the Internet. This is where individuals may become over-involved in online relationships or may engage in virtual adultery. Online friends quickly become more important to the individual often at the expense of real life

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## Contradictions Continued...

els of social anxiety and immaturity were only associated with frequent use of the Internet for chat-rooms and pornography among males (gaming demonstrated a small increase in isolation and immaturity). No issues with anxiety or immaturity for either gender when the Internet was used primarily for email, studying, reading the news or shopping.<sup>2</sup>

Recent evidence suggests the fears of physical health deterioration were also exaggerated. Ohio State Office of Environmental Health and Safety published a guide for computer usage in which they

note the radiation computers produce is mostly absorbed by the monitor, any waves escaping the monitor are too weak to pass through paper.<sup>3</sup> Those fears of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome were also misdirected, turns out it is the mouse, not the keyboard, which may increase the chance of developing this condition.

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3. *Computer workstations: A survival guide to computer workstations*. Retrieved 2.13.06 from <http://www.ehs.ohio-state.edu/index.asp?PAGE=ohse.computer>.



## The Internet and Your Health

By: Christina Goldpaint

The Internet has the potential to be a valuable resource when used correctly. Unlike textbooks that are only updated every one to five years, information found on the internet is extremely current because it is constantly updated.

Having access to health information online is beneficial to Americans because it is much more convenient and cost-effective than having to call or visit the doctor's office to ask questions about simple ailments. Health websites also provides explanations in simple terms, so it is easy for most Americans to understand.

The most important thing to remember is to always use reputable sites for health information. This will help you avoid an "online-quack." By using reliable information, you will get the best available information and advice in the convenience of your own home. To make sure you are getting reliable information, avoid using websites ending in ".com" for health information because they are not regulated. Reputable sources of health information come from government sites, ending in ".gov" and also from health agencies such as the American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org>.

### WEBSITES FOR PERSONAL HEALTH CONCERNS

- McKinley Health Center is located at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and its website is: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>. When accessing the website, Click on the "Health Information Handouts" link to view over 100 fact sheets on various health topics. There is an abundance of health information relevant to college students. Such topics include sex-

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## Starting to E-Date, Make Sure You're E-Safe!

By: Arianne Stamps



Just a few years ago the thought of conversing or dating someone

through the Internet was considered insane, but today it is happening more and more. Adolescents and young adults are frequently using websites such as myspace.com, facebook.com, and xanga.com to express themselves and expand their social network.<sup>1</sup> Just think how many times you've seen someone take a picture and say, "That's going up on Myspace!" Myspace.com has over 40 million members alone.<sup>2</sup> Young adults also use the Internet to

bolster their love life through social networking websites.

Most people use these social networking sites with good intentions, but you must always be aware that there are people that do not. Although you may feel you have anonymity, certain information you divulge, no matter how innocent, can make you very easy to find.

(Continued on page 3)

## Addiction Continued...

### You may be IAD if you...

1. Have difficulty limiting time spent on the internet
2. Internet use interferes with completing class assignments, work commitments or social obligations.
3. Endlessly surfing the Internet to be entertained.

If you answered YES to any of these, there is a warning that you may be IAD<sup>1</sup>

relationships with family and friends. Net compulsions are addictions relating to online gambling, gaming, and shopping. This is where addicts tend

to lose excessive amounts of money and even disrupt other job-related duties or significant relationships.<sup>3</sup>

Internet addiction is becoming a serious problem that needs to be addressed, especially on college campuses. So the next time you are on the Internet be sure not to get off track with what you intended to search for, be aware of how much time you actually spend, and be careful.

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2. Hansen, S. (June 2002). "Excessive internet usage or 'internet addiction'? The implication of diagnostic categories for student users." *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*. Vol 18/2. Pg 235-236.
3. Texas State University: San Marcos. "Internet Addiction." (2005). Retrieved 2-28-06 from <http://www.counseling.txstate.edu/bro/internet.htm>.



## E-Date E-Safe Continued...

Last fall, Virginia Commonwealth University freshman, Taylor Behl, was allegedly murdered by a man she met and was dating through Myspace.com.<sup>2</sup> Her murder has shed a light of awareness upon the growing numbers of college students logged



into social networking sites and the possible risks that exist if not utilized with caution. This tragic event has prompted many universities to take a pro-active stance on educating current and incoming students about being safe on the internet.<sup>2</sup>

Through online safety education at student orientations, classes, and distributed informational guideline, schools can hopefully prevent tragic events from coming to their campus.

Currently, CSULB is looking into how best to provide this type of online safety education in the near future. So what are some proactive steps that you can take to protect yourself?:

1. **Do not place information on your web page that makes you easy to find** – Exclude information like the company you work for, what courses you are taking and publishing a calendar of where you will be on any given day.
2. **Keep your personal information personal.** Don't post or give out your phone number or address. Make sure your friends don't leave comments that give out your personal information.
3. **Be aware of the pictures that you post.** Don't post pictures that reveal your home, school or place of employment. If you take a picture in front of your car, blur out your license plate number.
4. **If you do want to turn a virtual interaction into a real world one, do it slowly and safely.** Start off talking to the person first. When you decide to meet up, do so in a

public place and preferably with a friend. Have your own transportation to and from your meeting place. Inform a friend where you're going and at what time.

Experience the relationship at a comfortable pace; don't rush it.

Dating and meeting new people is fun and exciting. The Internet allows you to reach out to more people than ever before. But just as you would in every day situations, make sure you put your safety as priority number one!

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### **Editorial Policies**

The Health Resource Center does not except responsibility for views expressed in articles, reviews and other contributions that appear in its pages. The purpose of the HEALTH BEAT newsletter is to serve college students and related professionals with health-related information, which may help understand a diagnosis or treatment, yet cannot serve as a replacement for the services of a licensed health care practitioner. The information and opinions present in the HEALTH BEAT newsletter reflect the views of the authors.

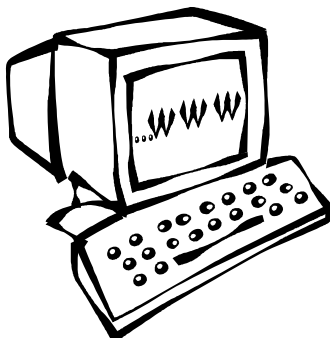
## **Internet Health Continued...**

ual health, women's health, nutrition, body piercing, tattoos, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.<sup>1</sup>

- New York Online Access to Health (NOAH) is a resource that provides information about health topics to the general public, and its website is: <http://www.noah-health.org>. NOAH offers the additional benefit of having all of the information in Spanish as well as English, to educate a larger population. Topics include disorders and conditions, health and wellness, procedures and medicine, information by health groups, and a variety of health resources.<sup>2</sup>

### **WEBSITES FOR CONDUCTING HEALTH RESEARCH**

- The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is an excellent resource for research, including health



facts and statistics. The CDC has health statistics on diseases such as HIV/AIDS, STDs, heart disease, cancer, and many more.<sup>3</sup>

- The United States Department of Health and Human Services, like the CDC is an excellent resource for conducting research on health information. The website is: <http://www.hhs.gov/>.

### **Conclusion**

The internet can provide indi-

viduals with health information on a wide variety of topics. Whether for personal use, or conducting research for school or work, the internet is a valuable source for health information.

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