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Technology plays a drastic role in the lives of all people no matter what race, sex, or ethnic background. People today rely on computers to do almost everything, even to flush the toilet. It seems like there is always a way to make something easier by making a computer to do the job a human would normally do. With such a reliance on these machines, no wonder people have become entranced in the world of computers. The Internet is a huge advancement in this world. A single person can be connected to the world by just sitting at their computer desk with an Internet connection. Although computer technology and the Internet have advanced our economy, there are many underlying negative effects such as: isolation, irresponsibility, and unhealthiness do to excessive Internet use.

Isolation can be caused by an addiction to the Internet. It occurs when a person has become so involved in the usage of the Internet that they stop going out with friends and family. Isolated people spend less time with family and more time on the computer. David N. Greenfield, psychologist and author of *Virtual Addiction*, states in his book, “Any revolution in the way we communicate is likely to have social and psychological implications. The fact that the Internet can be so addictive creates an even more powerful impact on both a personal and social level. Any technology that can isolate its user, such as the Internet, must have significant implications for our society”(12). The internet affects our lives socially and psychologically too. Today it is even possible to work from home using the Internet, thus isolating people even more from each other. Not only can the internet be used for communication, it is also very interactive which catches the user’s attention. People can involve themselves in games, shopping, chat rooms, and many other forms of entertainment. When it comes to isolation, the isolated one tends to

stay hooked to the Internet than seek out real people and entertainment. Since there is so much to do, many hours can be spent on the Internet and the user may not even notice how much time has went by. This can leave the user with many responsibilities left undone.

When a person stays connected to the virtual world too long, they tend to let other real things in life slip away, meaning they become irresponsible. “Web surfing, e-mailing, instant messaging, gaming, shopping, downloading music, and visiting chat rooms become troublesome when they interfere with someone’s job or social life, said Dr. Nathan Shapira of University of Florida Evelyn F. and William L. McKnight Brain Institute”(Biotech). Students tend to stay up too late on school nights, which results in one to sleep through class, thus missing important information to do homework. Internet addicted students prefer to stay online then to do homework. These factors result in poor grades by the student. Students aren’t the only ones that can be addicted to the Internet. Many working adults use the Internet in excess.

A 1999 Harris poll showed that almost two-thirds of all adult Americans use a computer at work or at home an average of 15 hours a week. Those who used the Internet spend, on average, six hours a week on the Web (Biotech). Adults have more responsibilities and most cannot afford to spend that much time on the Internet. If that is the case, then some responsibilities are being neglected. Is it their children, job performance, or do they even go to work? A recent study by the Journal of the American Medical Association estimates that 44 billion dollars are lost each year in productivity because of work related depression – NEDS could cause a larger segment of that loss(PR).Tim Sanders and HeartMath ® released new findings of a national study that

links depression and symptoms of depression with the always-on-economy. Sanders has heard many stories from people who are struggling with what he calls NEDS- New Economy Depression Syndrome. NEDS is a self- reinforcing depression brought on by information overload and frequent interruption leading to an erosion of close personal relationships (PR). Employees are lacking interaction with each other. E-mail seems to be the better alternative instead of walking to the next room to talk to a coworker. This lack of personal communication can be emotionally and physically devastating. Depression is a major health problem resulting from overusing the Internet. Many other health problems have been reported from Internet usage.

Weight-gain and weight-loss are common when Internet users tend to spend large amounts of time online. People, who are always on never get the daily exercise needed to stay healthy but still eat regular meals, tend to gain weight. The ones who lose weight snack on foods and don't engage in a healthy well balanced meal A health and life-style appraisal, based on such factors as regular meals, human relationships and personal hygiene, showed that the heavy Internet users are less healthy than the ones who occasionally or rarely use the Internet. Another major health problem is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is caused when something (fluid, bone, or tight tendons) presses on the nerve within the carpal tunnel of the wrist. This results in wrist pain and numbness to the thumb and first two fingers (Simons). The most common cause of CTS is the jobs that require repetitive motion in the wrist. A great example is the people who work on computers all day and are constantly typing. Not forgetting that staring at the computer screen for long periods of time may damage your eyes? Computer Vision Syndrome is a condition that includes eye fatigue, blurred vision,

increased effort while focusing, dry eyes, transient ghosting/doubling of images, light sensitivity, possible increase in nearsightedness, and even head, neck, and backaches. These symptoms occur largely because the eyes were not designed to stare at, and perform "visual acrobatics," with a computer monitor all day (Visions). With all the problems the Internet can cause, it can also benefit many people's lives.

The Internet is not the worst thing to come into most peoples lives. In some cases it is the best thing for people who have disabilities. Internet access has opened the doors of communication for people with Spinal Cord Injuries. "The Internet is an empowering resource, and even more so for people with disabilities who often experience more barriers to communications and to finding information," said Bethlyn Houlihan, MSW, MPH, lead author of *The Impact of Internet access for People with Spinal Cord Injuries: a Descriptive Analysis of a Pilot Study*. "This pilot study suggests that the Internet could improve emotional health and reduce social isolation not only for patients with SCI, but for those with other disabilities at risk of being socially isolated (Business)."

The Internet can cause negative effects in the lives of people who don't have physical disabilities. These negative effects caused by being addicted to the internet all seem to tie together, almost as if it's a never ending circle. People who are depressed are more likely to be addicted to the internet, or as people who are addicted to the Internet tend to develop signs of depression. Not being around real people and friends and family eventually results in depression. Slacking off from responsibilities can cause an overload thus bringing on symptoms of depression. The Internet is excellent for the economy, but can be abused and made dire. One should use the Internet effectively, instead of

demeaning its capabilities. Internet users today should regulate the time they spend connected to the virtual world, and make sure all of their responsibilities are taken care of before engaging in the Internet.

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