

## **Negative effects of Computers And The Internet On Society**

Nowadays, computer is praised as an incredible intellectual tool in our society. It play such a big role in our everyday life and give the workplace, education, entertainment, healthcare, and communication a complete change. Allow us to do things faster, more efficiently and more professionally than ever before. However, there is cost comes along with all these advantages. Although computer has the potential to enhance the equality of human life; it is, at the same time, the cause of many society's problems. Computer addiction has resulted in changing our lifestyles and social value. Numbers of computer crimes are countless; which is threatening many of our privacy protections. Many jobs permanently eliminated, millions of people become unemployed. Health risks increased as the overuse of computers. Computer has influenced every aspect of people's lives. It can directly affect our life, our behavior and our thinking in a very negative way.

The Internet is the largest global network and database where anyone can access limitless information at anytime and anywhere. It is the greatest invention in the century and it has grown in a very rapid rate. This information highway has taken us into the information age and gives us the power of knowledge. Allow us to exposure the things that we might have never seen. We can use internet to perform incredible variety of tasks. We can find out information about weather, road

conditions, news or anything that can help with dairy life. We can manage our personal banking account online, gamble in casinos, watch movies, and even do shopping. We can do all of these activities in the comfort of our own home.

However, the problem is some people become highly compulsive and addictive in the use of the computers and internet. The internet has become more popular and it is an exciting way of relating to the world. There are currently hundred million people being online worldwide. This number is growing by ten thousand new subscribers everyday in United States alone.<sup>1</sup> With one click of a bottom, countless numbers of things can be explored on the net. It is so excited to be online and for this reason; some people cannot control their usage and lost the balance. Computer addicts spend most of their time on the net; they neglect other important activities such as time spends with their friend and family, and even forget to sleep and eat. For them, internet has become the means of escaping boredom, fear, reality and responsibility. There are new study indicating that heavy Internet use increases depression, social isolation, family separation, marital problems, and reduced job performance.<sup>2</sup> Some people lose in the “Cyber Community” and forgetting the real world. In the virtual world, they can hide or modify their social identity. They addicted to the “online interaction”, like ICQ, e-mail and chat room. People who

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<sup>1</sup> Greenfield, David N, Virtual Addiction, New Harbinger Publications, Inc, 1999, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p.8

with low self-esteem can create false identity in the electronic communication.. They prefer to chat with people online rather than talk to people in face to face. After a long period, without a sense of identity, they may have difficulty to communicate with others in the real world. This can negatively affect marriages, families and relationship.

The youth and children who become addicted to online game can directly affect their academic and working performance. There is research indicate that some children spend 30 hours per week on computer game. Once they start, they are unable to stop playing. Moreover, we cannot control the youth and children to watch the violence and pornographic web sites. There is no universal set of rules and restricted laws to guideline these things happen. In addition, not only youth and children, some parents neglect their kids for spending most of the time on the net. Some may addicted to online gambling which can cause financial problem. “Cyber Sexual” offered in the chat room can result in the divorce in marriage. However, not many people take computer addiction seriously. With the number of benefits that computer bring us, they do not believe that the over use of computer can be dangerous to a person’s life. Therefore, we do not deal with this problem in need and the societies have not taken any action to stop this problem. But the fact is that computer addiction can be very harmful and affect human life in a negative way. It

is something that really is an issue in this society.

Privacy is another societal issue that comes along with the computers and internet. Privacy is defined as the use, release and availability of personal information linked to an individual's identity. Most of the data on the computers are not protected. Everyone can read and copy our files even in our own computers. The e-mail we sent may read by someone else before the receiver can get it. On the internet, people are easily to give out their personal information for gaining an access, entering a contest, joining a membership and making a purchase, etc. This information includes your name, address, birth date, gender, phone number and e-mail address. Sometime credit card information is required for purchasing products and services on line. The information that we given out on the internet can be accessed by the servers, private industries and even by some hackers. Our name and any other information about us may have become a saleable item. For example, when we open our e-mail account, we often received some junk mail, such as commercial advertising and campaign mailing. These things can happen because our e-mail address had been sold to some companies for advertising use. In some cases, people may want to keep some aspect of his life private simply. However, the huge amount of information in the database can be easily stolen or read by someone else. People can hack into or secretly monitoring our computer activities. We cannot prevent

someone else from forging something in our names and it is hard to prove it was not us. When people apply for credit, their information is often investigated. But not only their financial reliability, their other personal information such as the applicant's sex life, can also influence their application. Privacy does result in embarrassment or some specific harm. For example, passing out information on venereal disease can wreck a marriage. Revealing a pattern of alcoholism or drug abuse can result in a man's losing his job or make it impossible for him to obtain insurance protection.<sup>3</sup> State governments for marketing and investigative purposes routinely sell motor vehicle information.<sup>4</sup> Privacy remains one of the most important societal issues and it is necessary if we are to maintain the social relationships with other people, such as employer to employee, doctor to patient, parent to child, husband to wife, and so on.

Computer crime is another serious problem we have to deal with. Computer crime defines as a wide variety of criminal offenses, activities, or issues. These include embezzling, breaking into other computers, cyber porn, spying, cracking password, spoofing, mail booming, credit card frauds and various other crimes that have a drastic affect on the society. The one who commit computer crime believe that the computerized data is free and can be accessible to anyone. They usually are hackers who hack in other computers to gain information, steal data and plant viruses.

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<sup>3</sup> Ermann, Williams, Shauf, Computers, ethics and society, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990, p.70.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* p.89.

The worst is they think this is a harmless fun and do not see what they have done is criminal. Although some hackers may just break into a program for challenging, it can be dangerous if they use this skill to commit fraud, destroy data, plant virus and steal commercial secrets. Half a billion dollars may be lost annually by consumers who have credit card and calling card numbers stolen from on-line databases.<sup>5</sup> Spoofing and password sniffing can threaten our privacy. It is not difficult for the hackers to intercept the password through email and cracker program. They can also see what we are doing on the net by web spoofing. This web spoofing is caused by an intermediary who can redirect information from your page, to his page, to the page you were sending the information to. Then they can get the information they want very easily, such as our credit card numbers. There is no safety way to prevent the hacking. What we can do to secure is to change our password often and back up our files. Unfortunately, computer crime can never be end. The government and many companies spend millions and millions each year but cannot help to solve the problem. Even though new security system is created, there is always a new way to hack.

The introduction of computers had eliminated many jobs opportunities. The main benefit that we use computers instead of human labors is the increase productivity and higher quality. They give the business a more effective control over all inventories, orders and sales. Computer networks make greater efficiency,

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<sup>5</sup> Cybercrime on the Internet <<http://www.digitalcentury.com/encyclo/update/crime.html>>

smaller inventories and better coordination of operations in the industries.<sup>6</sup> With the automation replacement, it is the end of the traditional job. The automation has displaced some occupations like factory workers, bank tellers, librarians etc. There is argue that even new technology may reduce the numbers of job in some form of industries, on the other hand, it does create new jobs in support areas. However, the new jobs most likely require a good command of computer and network knowledge. Different areas rely greatly on computerized equipment. Even those professional like teachers, doctors and lawyers are necessary to learn the computer skill. Teachers need to store the class data, student information all accessible by computers. Doctors use computers to examine and evaluate a patient's problem quicker and more efficiently. For people who do not know much about computers, they lose their jobs due to innovative new technologies. Machines do not create job, not all of the mechanized systems dependent on human assistance. Machines are constructed to work faster, cheaper and more reliable than human, and it is the meant of mass unemployment.<sup>7</sup>

Another negative influence on computers is the health risk. Overuse of the computers may increase the risk of health problems such as visual fatigue, headaches, repetitive strain injuries, eyestrain and back pain. We do not notify the harm that

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<sup>6</sup> Ermann, Williams, Shauf, Computers, ethics and society, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990, p.163.

<sup>7</sup> Technology making it worse <<http://www.ourcivilisation.com/signs/chap7.htm>>

computers bring us because we think computer work only require a little force to operate. It appears to be an easy job, just sitting, looking at the monitor and do some typing. What we do not know is the repetitive movements or prolonged awkward postures can lead to localized pain and injury. For example, we may just move a few small muscles of the hand hundreds or even thousands of times per hour when we using the mouse. This can lead to localized fatigue, wear and tear, and injury in those small localized areas.<sup>8</sup> Looking at the monitor for a long period can result in eyestrain. We can see that the numbers of people who need to wear glasses keep on increasing and even happen on children in their young age. Many people would rather stay at their comfort home to do the shopping, office work and ignore the importance of doing exercise. Sleep less in order to spend more time on surfing the internet. This can lead to a great harm of health

With no doubt, computer is making enormous positive contributions in many form of work today. It is an incredible invention that changed nearly every aspect of manage, work, and our lives for the better. This new technology creates new opportunities for people and societies but it also generates new problems for them. Computer can have both positive and negative impact on human life. It can be force for good or harm, and it is depend on how the new technologies are used and abused. Addiction, crimes and health risk are the negative effects due to the abused of

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<sup>8</sup>Computer workstations <[http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/computerworkstations\\_ecat/work\\_process.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/computerworkstations_ecat/work_process.html)>



computers. Therefore, we should not rely too much on this technology. We should use computers as a tool and steer toward the positive effects for the maximum benefits.

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3. Greenfield, David N, Virtual Addiction, New Harbinger Publications, Inc, California, 1999.

4. Gay, Martin k., The New Information Revolution, ABC-CLIO, Inc., California, 1996.

5. Johnson, Steven, Interface Culture, HarperEdge, New York, 1997.

6. Young, Kimberly S., Caught in the Net, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1998.

## **INTERNET RESOURCES**

1. Anonymity and privacy on the Internet

<<http://www.stack.nl/~galactus/remailers/>>

2. Computer Addiction

<<http://www-cse.stanford.edu/classes/cs201/projects-95-96/computer-addiction/>>

3. Computer workstations

<[http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/computerworkstations\\_ecat/work\\_process.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/computerworkstations_ecat/work_process.html)>

4. Internet and Computer Addiction – Warning Signs

<[http://www.warningsigns.info/computer\\_addiction.htm](http://www.warningsigns.info/computer_addiction.htm)>

5. Technology making it worse <<http://www.ourcivilisation.com/signs/chap7.htm>>