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Essay #1

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The Internet makes people more isolated. Isolation is to be separated from others. The Internet does not produce the expanded sense of community we think it does. Granted, getting on the Internet connects people to the world in a virtual reality sense, but not in reality. Some people tend to devote most of their time to the computer and not to their families. I know of many people like this, in a way I am one of those persons.

The community the Internet produces consists of chat rooms, instant messaging, e-mail, message boards, games, and many ways of staying in contact with people. Not to mention the many web pages that can be searched at the click of a button. Anything that is worth doing and studying can be found by looking through search engines like Google or Yahoo. These are some of the reasons people have become isolated. Now Instead of asking a family member for advice, people can look up depression or eating habits on the Internet and find ways to help themselves. Websites on depression and eating disorders are not going to be as helpful as talking to a family member about these problems; at least they can be there physically for support. Internet buddies might be there to talk, but not to touch, feel and give hugs when one is needed. Dating services are also a very common thing to come across on the World Wide Web. Another popular aspect of the Internet that can seriously isolate people are multiplayer games.

There are two types of Internet games that I know of: 3D games and Board Games. I am experienced in the isolation that these games can do. Both can be addictive but I prefer to talk about 3D games. I, for one, play a 3D game called Counter- Strike.

This game is team-based and casts players in the role of terrorist or counter-terrorist. It involves talking to people through a microphone and typing on the keyboard. Working with teammates is a must so there is a lot of communication. Some people even take it as far as joining a clan. Being in a clan involves being on the computer even more. Clans play in matches to try to become the best clan in the world. I do mean world, people even play this game in Sweden and Australia. The Cyberathlete Amateur League is the premiere center for online gaming tournaments in North America. They organize tournaments for clans and the winners can win prizes sometimes in the amount of two hundred thousand dollars. This league's tournaments are so popular clans from all over the world come to participate in them for prizes. This shows the seriousness and dedication that some gamers put into this type of gaming. To become the best, practice is important. Requiring at least an hour or two a day of practice, not including all the time spent talking to clan members because making close relationships with clan members is important to have a good solid team. Some clans come together that live in the same regions. Then there are some clans that have members across the world.

This game can be very addicted. The range of people to talk to, the action of the game, the teamwork, and thinking that is required could keep any gamers' interest. This addiction produces more isolation from the outside world. I personally enjoy talking to the people I have met through Counter-Strike. I use the computer a lot more then most people I know, but I don't believe it is a bad thing. As long as I take care of my responsibilities, for example work and school and anything my family needs. When the Internet and all of the great things it can bring, people get in the way of life and responsibilities, then that's when it can cause a problem. I had a distant family member

that this happened to. She stayed on the computer constantly, did not take care of her son and never went to work. She lost many jobs, homes, and even her son because of her addiction and isolation. I don't think people realize the seriousness that isolating all of their time to the Internet can do.

The Internet is a useful tool but it does have its drawbacks. The use of games like Counter-Strike and online chat rooms may not be a good alternative for the real world. Continuous time put into the computer leaves someone isolated from his or her family and friends. People should know their limits and responsibilities and not let Internet interfere with their daily lives. Using the Internet should be a plus in life not a way of life.