Internet Compulsions

Young & Nabuco de Abreu's "Internet addiction: A handbook and guide to evaluation and treatment, 2011.

Productive & Recreational Use: Nearly 75% of the entire North American continent has access to the Internet. One study showed that the Internet population grew 380% from 2008 to 2009. (Delmonico & Griffin, 2011)

Abuse and Full-Blown Compulsion:

"*A rose by any other name . . .*"

- *Problematic Internet Use* (Caplan, 2010)
- *Internet abuse* (Morahan – Martin, 2008)
- *Internet addiction* (Young, 1988; Young & Rogers, 1998)
- *Pathological Internet Use* (Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2000)
- *Excessive Internet Use* (Wallace, 1999)
- *Compulsive Internet Use* (Van Den Eijnden, Meerkerk, Vermulst, & Engels, 2008)
- *Internet Dependence* (Scherer, 1997; Young, 1996)

Internet Compulsion Prevalence

- First researched in 1996 and presented at the American Psychological Association annual meeting. This study examined over 600 cases of heavy Internet users who exhibited clinical signs of addiction as measured through an adapted version of the DSM-IV for pathological gambling. (Young, 1996).
- 13% of campus students at the University of Texas exhibited signs of Internet dependency. (Shearer, 1997).
- 14% of students at a college in Rhode Island met the criteria. (Morahan-Martin, 1999)
- ABC news.com surveyed Internet users. From 17,000 responses the study estimated that 6% of Internet users fit the profile for Internet addiction. (Greenfield, 1999)
- A virtual mental health clinic had online visitors answer questions about mental problems. 15% met criteria for Internet addiction disorder. (Bai, 2001)
- 9% of Internet users fit the signs of addiction related to sexually explicit material on the Internet. (Cooper, A., 2002).
- Stanford University medical center found that one in eight Americans suffered from one or more signs of Internet addiction. (Aboujaoude, 2006)

"*Generally, we can say that it seems that the prevalence of Internet addiction is the lowest among adolescents, with ranges of 4.6 to 4.7%. That number goes up among the general population of Internet users, with ranges of 6 to 15% of the general population fitting the signs of addiction; and that goes up to 13 to 18.4% among college students, who appeared to be the most at risk.*" (Young, K.S., 2011, p. 5-6)

Cybersex Compulsions

Scope of the Problem:

- 20 to 30% of online users visit sites and engage in online sexual activities. Nearly 80% could be considered "recreational users" and did not report any significant problems related to their online behavior. However, 20% of individuals struggle with some degree with problematic online sexual behavior. (Cooper, Delmonico, and Berg, 2000)
- 172 million Americans reported using the internet for sexual purposes (Cooper, 2004)
- 9% of internet users spent over 11 hours a week viewing sexual materials. Almost 9 million people in the United States need intervention for their sexually compulsive use of cybersex. There are an additional 15 million who are using cybersex moderately and show beginning signs of sexual compulsivity. (Cooper, Delmonico, and Burg, 2004)
- One out of eight American internet users have signs of compulsion. (Aboujaoude, 2006)

- 42.7% of internet users view pornography. (Ropelato, 2006)

Some interesting Statistics:

- Worldwide, consumers in South Africa are most likely to search for the word "porn."
- In the United States Internet users in Elmhurst, Illinois are most likely to enter the word "porn" into the search field.
- 4.2 million websites contain pornography. (12% of the total number of websites).
- Each day there are 68 million pornographic search engine requests (25% of total search engine requests).
- 2.5 billion daily pornographic emails (8% of total).
- 1.5 billion porn peer-to-peer downloads each month (35% of all downloads).
  (see Ropelato, 2006, Aboujaoude, 2006, Greenfield, 2002, Cooper, 1999, 2000, 2004, and Schwartz and Southern, 2000)

Follow the money:

- Sex on the Internet constituted the third largest economic sector on the web. (Cooper, 2000)
- 70% of online purchases were for sexually explicit materials (Cooper, 2002)
- Some of the greatest innovations on the web were developed by the sex industry (video streaming) (Cooper, 2000)
- In 2006 worldwide pornography revenues were $97.06 billion. That's larger revenues than Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo, Apple and Netflix combined. (Ropelato, 2006)

How are Men and Women different when it comes to Cybersex?

- The term "sex" was searched for as often by female consumers as it was by males. However, men performed 97 percent of the searches for the term "free porn." (Ropelato, 2006)
- The majority of pornography consumers and those dealing with internet addictions are married, male heterosexuals. (Buzzell, 2005)
- Men prefer cybersex because it removes performance anxiety (Young, 2000)
- Historically men were more likely to view online pornography, while women are more likely to engage in erotic chat. (Young, 2000)
- However, more recent research shows one of every three visitors to pornography websites is likely to be female and nearly 60% of those who use the search term *adult sex* on Internet search engines are female (Family Safe Media, 2010).

Cybersex and Adolescents

Teens spend an average of seven hours per day exposed to various technologies (cell phone, Internet, gaming, etc.) (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). Research by Family Safe Media (2010) and Wolak (2007) shows:

- 90% of kids age 8-16 have been exposed to porn (most while doing homework).
- 42% of adolescents have seen online porn in the past year.
- 35% of teen boys and 8% of teen girls have intentionally visited porn sites.
- The top search terms used by teens online include *teen sex* and *cybersex*.
- 20% of teens have sent or posted nude or semi-nude pictures / videos of themselves.
- Nearly ½ of adolescents have sent sexually suggestive text messages or e-mails to someone.
- 35% of all teen peer-to-peer texting is pornographic.
- The prevalence of sexting amongst adolescents is 1% (Wolak, Finkelhor, and Mitchell, 2012)
- 2.5% of youths (Mitchell et al. 2011)
- 4% of youths (Pew Internet Survey – Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010) experienced solicitation online.
- 6% of youth reported experiencing solicitation over two assessments. (Growing Up With Media Survey, 2006)

Mitchell & Ybarra (2007) found that certain online behaviors place youth at higher risk for sexual exploitation.

- 1. Interacting with unknown people.
- 2. Having unknown people on buddies or friends lists.
- 3. Using the Internet to make rude or nasty comments.
- 4. Sending personal information to unknown people met online.
- 5. Downloading images from file-sharing programs.
- 6. Visiting X-rated sites on purpose.
- 7. Using the Internet to embarrass or harass people.
- 8. Talking online to unknown people about sex.

Research by Family Safe Media (2010) shows:

- 1-in-7 adolescents have received unwanted sexual solicitations in the past year.
- "*Gnutella*" (peer-to-peer site) has 116,000 requests for "child pornography" every day.
- Top 20 internet search terms include "*teen sex*" &"*teen porn*."
- 100,000 websites offer child pornography.
- Of those arrested for possessing child porn:
    - 83% of images were ages 6-12
    - 43% were of children ages 3-6
    - 19% were of children 3 years and younger