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INTERNET ADDICTION

Nowadays more and more human work is being given to machines and computers. This is called “mechanization” – the replacing of manual work with machine work, especially in difficult and laborious processes. It is a part of the scientific and technological progress – a forward movement of science and technology, all elements of evolutionary development of the productive forces of social production based on extensive knowledge and development of the external forces of nature [1].

It is obvious that not only human work is replaced by automatic one, but also the ways people spend their free time. For example, before the age of computers, to have fun people gathered together, listened to rumors, shared gossips, got to know each other and just communicated. Today all we need to make some new friends is just to double-click a button. Entertaining is also changing. It has become more online and individual. Most of the entertainment now is happening on the Internet.

Internet is the place where a big load of information is situated. All this information is supposed to give people a chance to get any data they need, to let them learn more and more, to improve their intellect, and to satiate the thirst for knowledge so typical for human race. It is really easy to get any information now, but most of the time we spend on the Internet is not searching for some new info – it is the time spent entertaining and chatting online. So called “surfing the Internet” is taking more and more time. Especially it is visible on children.

Statistics gathered in Greece shows that students of secondary and high school devote a lot of time downloading music from the Internet, downloading photos, games, and communicating with friends in social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Percentage increases depending on age: 14.1% - 11 year-old, 25.8% - 13 year-old, 33.7% - 15 year-old. The results are different and depend on gender: 26.8% - boys, 21.9% - girls. From 2006 to 2010, the number of teens using the computer at least three hours each day quadrupled (from 5.7% to 21.7%). Furthermore, at least one of the six fifteen-year-old adolescents showed the signs of addiction to the use of the Internet. 5.5% of adolescents, especially boys, exhibit symptoms of video game addiction. Three of five fifteen-year-old students (59.4%) spend more time on the Internet than they originally planned. Two of five teenagers (42.3%) admit that they are constantly thinking about the Internet, one of three (30.8%) uses the Internet as a way of escaping their problems and letting out negative emotions such as hopelessness, guilt, stress, depression, etc. [2].

Now people spend most of their time in their own little worlds – they use laptops and smartphones, PC’s and lots of other electronic devices, but they communicate with each other much less in real life. People now have a lot of devices to live alone and to handle all the situations on their own without any help of other people. We study to live alone, unsocial, unconnected in reality.

Modern technologies are used for great purposes – fast building, space discovering, medicine and cure, saving people’s life. But the way entertainment is developing doesn’t lead us to bright future; it has made the very life pretty much colorless. We live in the world where young people prefer to play online games to going outside and having some fun with their friends in the open air.

A research made in Russia investigated free time of the university students. The respondents had to answer two questions: “How much free time do you have?” and “How do you mainly spend your free time?”.

Answering the first question 47% said that the free time they have is from 2 to 5 hours, 24% of the respondents have 1 - 2 hours of free time, 18% can boast the possibility to deal with personal matters for more than 5 hours. And only 6% have less than 1 hour of free time. 1% of the respondents noted that they do not have free time at all.

And here are the answers to the question "How do you mainly spend your free time?" (Respondents could select an unlimited number of options):

- I sit on the Internet - 79%
- I communicate with my friends - 58%
- I read art books, newspapers, magazines - 39%
- I watch TV - 38%
- I am engaged in sports - 32%
- I go to the movies - 32%
- I read textbooks - 21%
- I go to the theaters, museums - 11%
- Other - 3% (without specifying the variants)[3].

As we can see from these two researches there is a risk of increasing of the Internet addiction among adolescents. Active research on the impact of excessive and uncontrolled use of the Internet leads us to the conclusion that this problem is becoming more and more urgent. The consequences can be terrible and will not keep society waiting.

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