

Embracing a balanced approach between ONline engagement and OFFline alternatives



MODULE 1

The Reasons behind constant on-line use

DEVELOPED BY : EMPHASYS CENTRE



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Erasmus+ Programme
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MODULE 1

REASONS BEHIND CONSTANT ONLINE USE

This module will present **how we use the internet**, and explain **why** we choose to use it the way we do, by looking at the problem from two different perspectives: the **traits of online activities** which incline us to use them more, and the **characteristics of humans** which make us susceptible to using the internet in an excessive way.

MODULE 1:

Reasons behind constant on-line use

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Once you have followed this module, you will be able to:

- Understand how adolescents spend their time online.
- Understand the urges that push us to use the internet excessively.
- Think about what type of internet user you are

MODULE 1:

Reasons behind constant on-line use

LIST OF TOPICS

TOPIC 1 How we use the internet and the addictive aspects of online activities

TOPIC 2 Psychological and personality traits of adolescent online users

TOPIC 3 Types of internet users

1

How we use the internet and the addictive aspects of online activities

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This module will demonstrate how we spend our times online, with special focus on teens. The most popular online activities will be shown, followed by an explanation of what makes them so compelling.

Once you have followed this module, you will be able to:

- Identify online activities which promote excessive use.
- Have an insight into how teenagers spend their time online.
- Understand which features of widely used online activities make them addictive.

People globally use the internet for various activities:

- ✓ Email
- ✓ Use search engines
- ✓ Look for health information
- ✓ Get news
- ✓ Buy products
- ✓ Make travel reservations
- ✓ Banking
- ✓ Use classifieds
- ✓ Listen to music



Benefits of internet use for teens:

- ✓ **Maintaining contact** with friends and family
- ✓ Making **new** friends
- ✓ Development of a secure and firm **sense of identity**
- ✓ Development of **sexuality**
- ✓ **Overcoming** shyness and social anxiety
- ✓ **Creative** outlet
- ✓ Source of **health** information
- ✓ Source of support for emotional distress, depression, or suicidal thoughts



Drawbacks of internet use:

- ❖ Display of **risky behaviours** (e.g. sex, substance abuse, violence) on social media can lead to:
- ❖ **Sexting**, which leaves open the possibility of leaked photographs.
- ❖ **Cyberbullying** and internet harassment, which can lead to:
- ❖ **Mental health** consequences (e.g. depression, low self-esteem, even suicide)
- ❖ Excessive use can also lead to **internet addiction**.

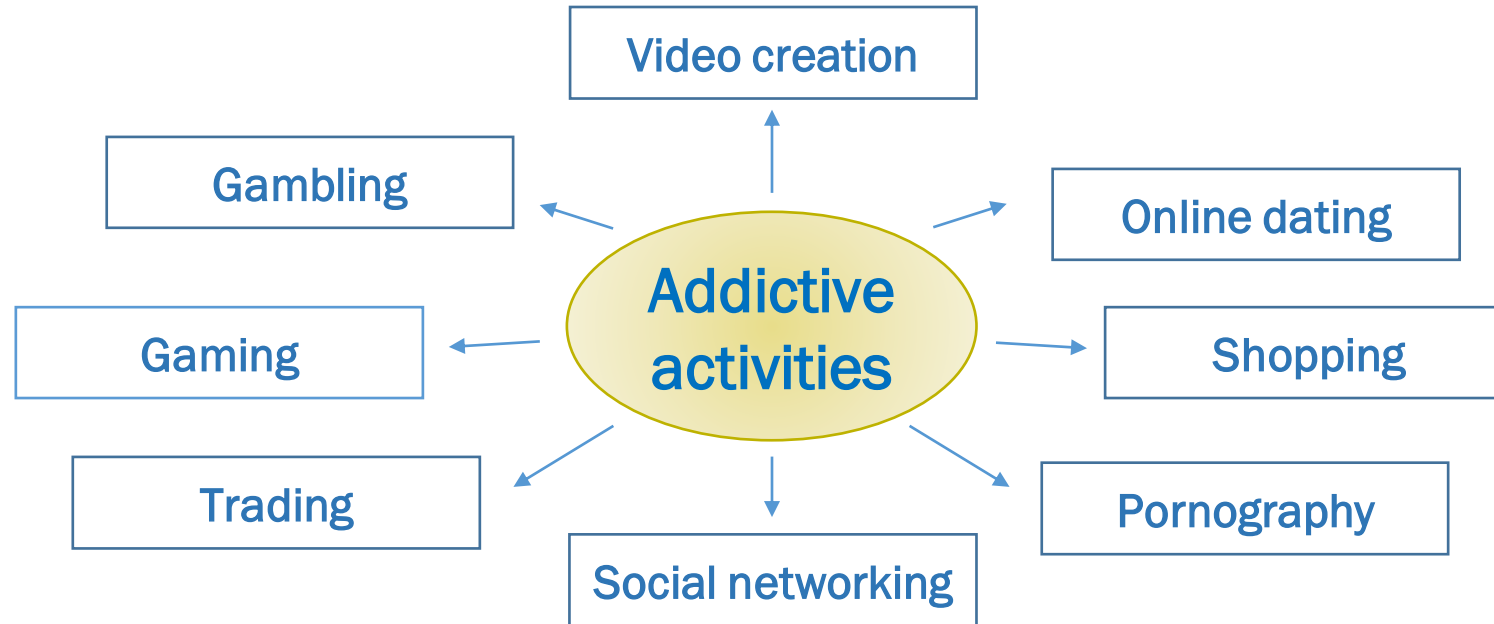


Internet Addictive Behaviour (IAB):

Internet addictive behavior is defined as a behavioral pattern characterized by loss of control over Internet use. This behavior potentially leads to isolation and neglect of social, academic, and recreational activities, and personal health.

Dysfunctional Internet Behaviour (DIB):

Internet use which presents addictive elements, but not to the point where other areas of life suffer.



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How we use the internet and the addictive aspects of online activities



A study carried across 7 European countries showed that about 1.2% of adolescents present Internet Addictive Behaviour (IAB), while Dysfunctional Internet Behaviour (DIB) is at 13.9% (Tsitsika, A. et al., 2014).

Boys tend to spend more time online compared to girls, studies show.

Linked to pathological gambling – correlation between gambling and internet addictive behaviour.

Teens and online use

How do teens/millennials spend their time online?

- ✓ Watch a video
- ✓ Use social networking sites
- ✓ Send instant messages
- ✓ Play online games
- ✓ Read blogs



How much time do teens spend online?

According to Eurostat (2016), 91 % of young people in the EU use the internet daily, compared with 71 % for the whole EU population.

In addition, it was shown that 83% of young people use their phones to access the internet when away from home.

Highest predictors of Internet Addictive Behaviour in Adolescents:

- Social online applications such as:



Facebook



WhatsApp



Instagram



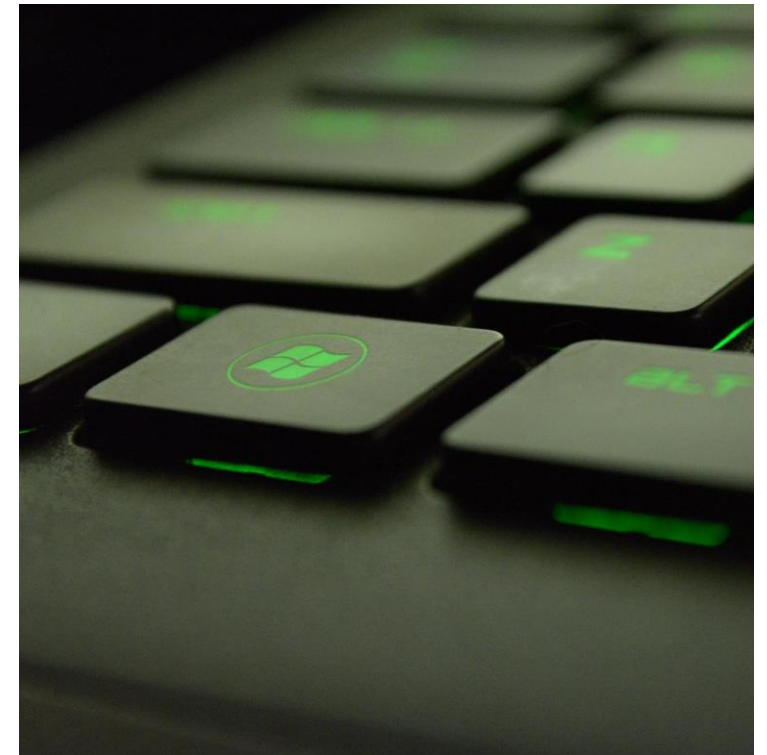
YouTube



Twitter

TikTok has also risen in popularity, but this is a recent phenomenon. This means that we do not yet have relevant measurable data, although it's evident that youngsters are spending a lot of time on TikTok..

- Online gaming, more so than offline gaming, as perceived success in online gaming is more **time-sensitive**. Often, there are in-game **competitive** tasks which, if completed within a certain period of time, they give the player rewards. To succeed in these tasks requires extensive commitment and time investment.



What makes social media addictive?



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMq_MyOFtW8

- Internet addiction is a type of behavioural addiction
- Technology is with us constantly, on our smartphone, which means we receive the addictive feedback all the time, whether it be from social media or online gaming
- Unpredictability of the feedback (keeps us on our toes, waiting to see what will happen next)
- Media and technology are specifically engineered by experts to be addictive.
- It's not the devices that are addictive, it's the content.
- There are psychological reasons for developing addictions, such as feelings of boredom, loneliness and inadequacy.
- The social element is vital to online engagement. Approval from peers gives us confidence.

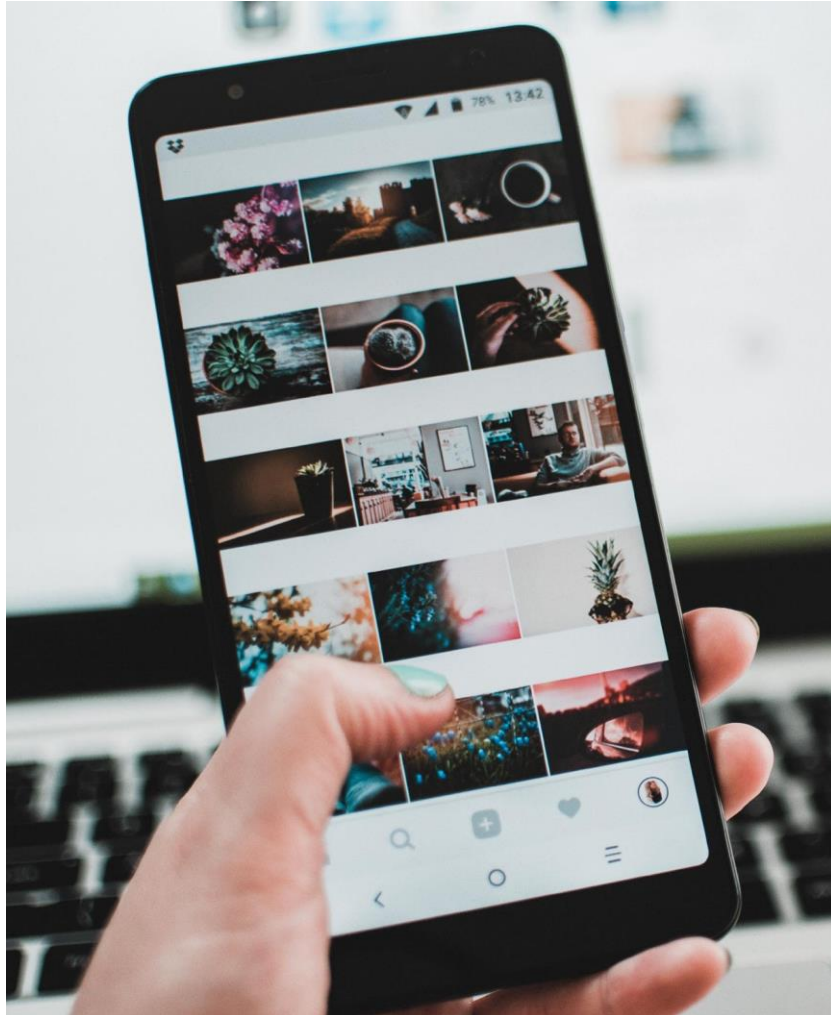
What makes Social Media Addictive?

The **ATARI** Model of habit formation is used by social media developers for designing mobile apps and online platforms:

- **A**ttitude
- **T**rigger
- **A**ction
- **R**eward
- **I**nvestment

ATARI-Model





The ATARI Model

- Attitude:
Psychological profile of the user – personality, preferences, likes, desires, opinions and motivation.
- Trigger:
Notifications that inform users to take action. Triggers are initiators of behaviour. They are designed to be easy to execute and appealing to do.
- Action:
After the Trigger comes the Action, which fulfils the immediate need.
- Reward:
The anticipation of reward, and the unpredictability of the outcome is what has us coming back for more.
- Investment:
Time, money, data, social capital put into the app.

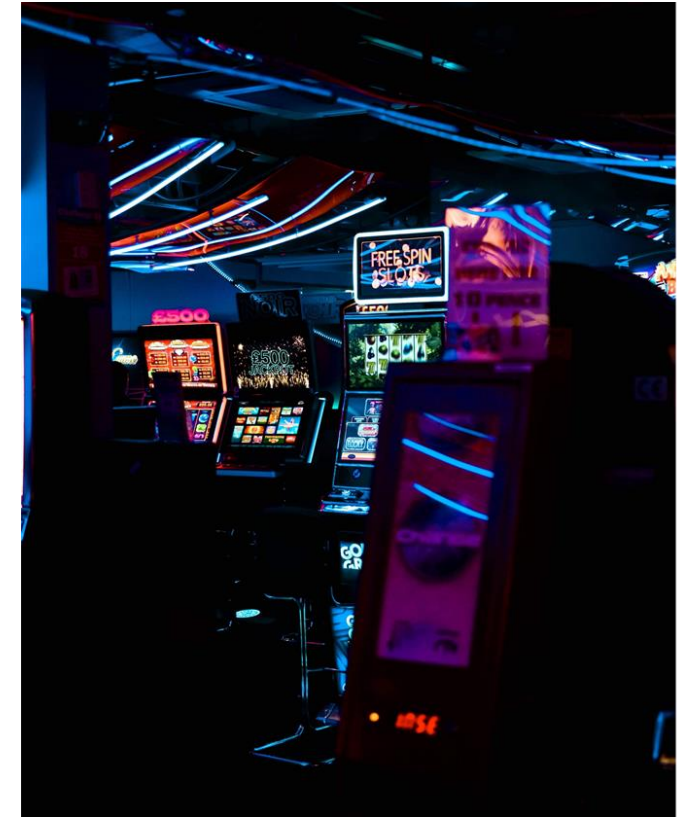
1 How we use the internet and the addictive aspects of online activities

What makes gaming addictive?

There are several commonalities observed between the structural characteristics of videogames and gambling, especially slot machines.

Common elements:

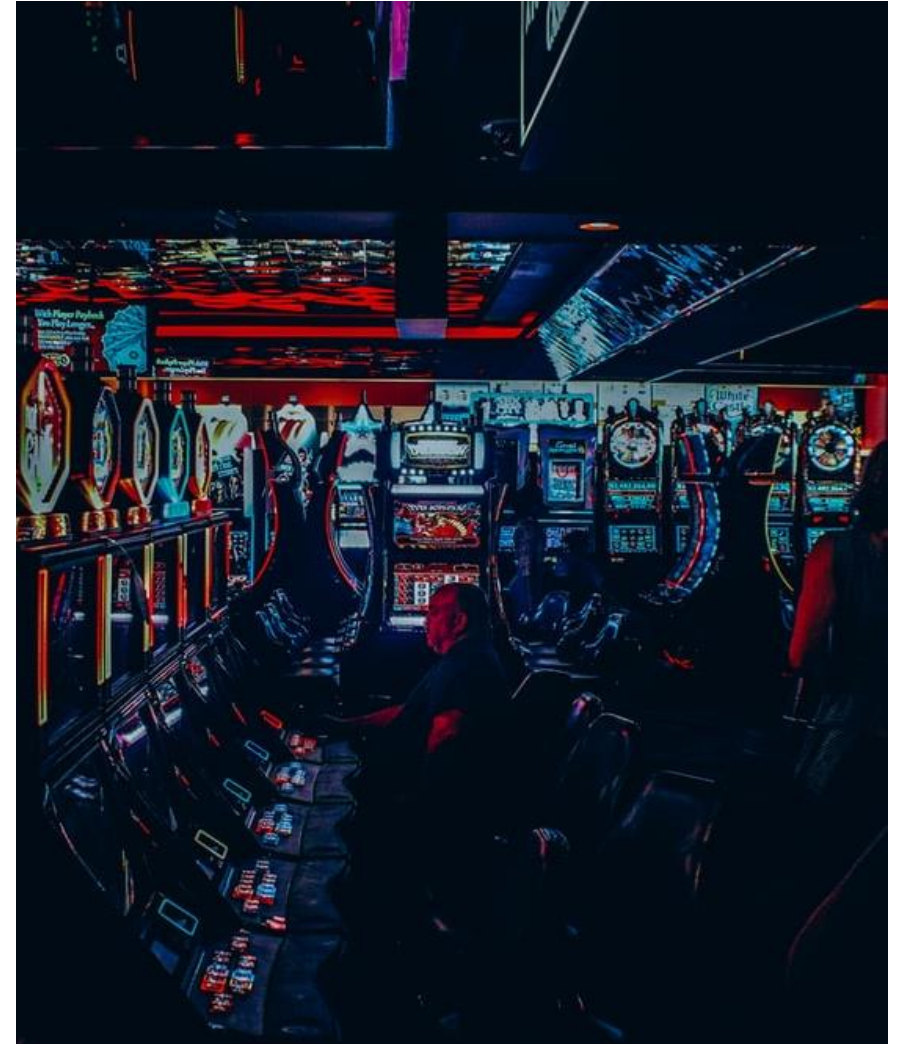
- The need to respond to specific predictable cues, which are controlled by the software.
- The requirement of total concentration and hand-eye coordination
- Fast span of play, which depends also on how skilled the player is (more seen in videogames)



What makes gaming addictive? (2/2)

Common elements between videogames and slot machines:

- Winning gives the player visual and auditory cues such as flashing lights or jingles
- Winning moves give the player game-specific rewards, like points or cash. This teaches the player how to “behave correctly”.
- Scores (points or cash) that are displayed digitally.
- Opportunities to gain the attention and approval of other players in-game, through competition.



What features players seek for in games (1/2)



1. The Achievement Component

- Advancement: The desire to gain power, progress rapidly, and accumulate in-game symbols of wealth or status
- Mechanics: An interest in analyzing the rules, to optimize character performance
- Competition: A desire to challenge other players and compete with them

2. The Social Component

- Socializing: Wanting to chat with and help other players
- Relationship: Wanting to form long-term meaningful relationships
- Teamwork: Getting a feeling of satisfaction by being part of a team effort

What features players seek for in games (2/2)

3. The Immersion Component

- Discovery: Finding and knowing about things other players don't know about
- Role-playing: The creation of a persona with a backstory, and interacting with other players to create a story
- Customization: The interest in modifying a character to one's liking
- Escapism: Using the online environment to avoid thinking about the real world.



CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ Teenagers use the internet mostly to connect with each other.
- ✓ The highest predictors for problematic internet use are Social Media and Online Gaming.
- ✓ We are constantly connected to the internet through our smartphones, making addiction easier.
- ✓ Both Social Media and Online Gaming play upon the element of potential reward, which is highly addictive to humans.
- ✓ The social element of the internet feeds our need as humans for social interaction.

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How we use the internet and the addictive aspects of online activities

QUIZ

1. Internet Addictive Behaviour (IAB) is the same as Disfunctional Internet Behaviour (DIB).
 - a. True
 - b. False**
2. Using the Internet only has negative results.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
3. Teens spend most of their online time shopping,
 - a. True
 - b. False**

1

How we use the internet and the addictive aspects of online activities

QUIZ

4. The ATARI model has to do with the old popular gaming console.
 - a. True
 - b. False**

5. There are several similarities between the structural characteristics of videogames and slot machines.
 - a. True**
 - b. False

1

How we use the internet and the addictive aspects of online activities

QUIZ

7. Match the concepts with their definitions:

1. Internet Addictive Behaviour (IAB)

A. Internet use which presents addictive elements, but not to the point where other areas of life suffer.

2. Dysfunctional Internet Behaviour (DIB)

B. The compulsion to spend extensive amount of time on the internet, to the point where other areas of life suffer. The loss of control over internet use.

Correct answers: 1-B, 2-A,

LEARNING OUTCOMES

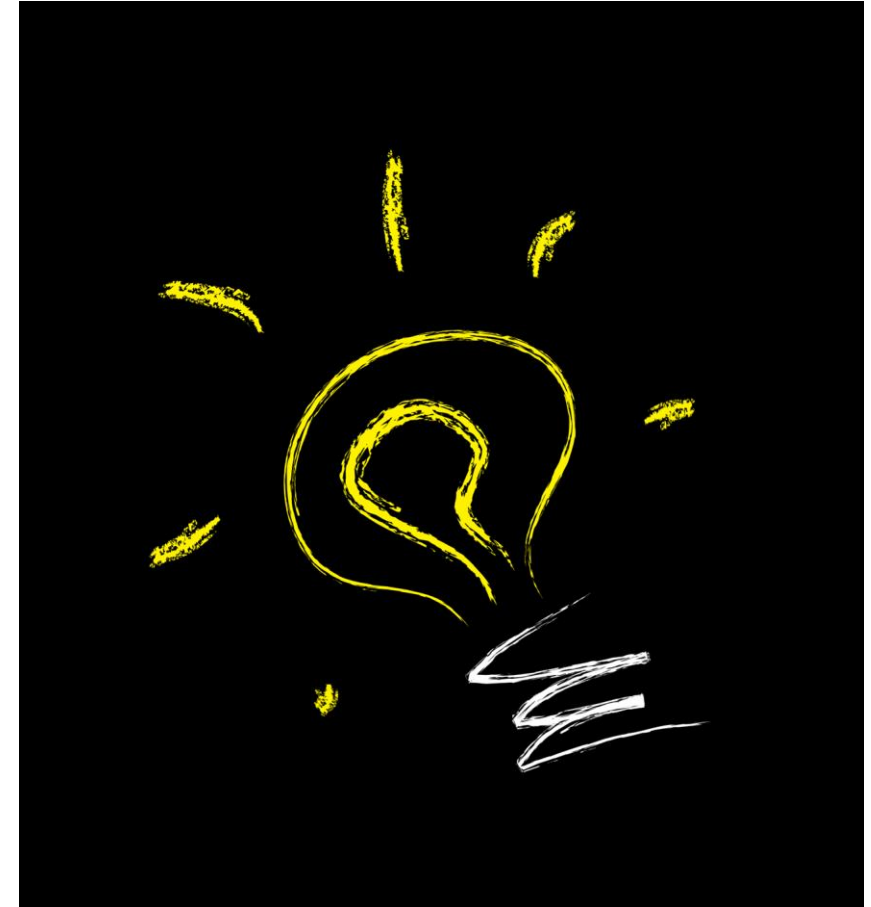
This topic will present the psychological constitution and personality characteristics of teenage internet users, and provide insights on how these affect internet use habits.

Once you have followed this module, you will:

- Gain a better insight into the psychological makeup of teenage internet users
- Improve your understanding of the reasons leading to excessive internet usage

Personality traits linked to excessive internet use (1/2)

- Openness to experience/resourcefulness:
Traits indicative of resourcefulness such as **creativity**, **imagination**, and **innovation** may lead adolescents to engage in pleasurable activities, such as using the Internet, excessively.
- Low agreeableness/aggressive online behaviour:
The anonymity that the internet offers leads to the suspension of inhibitions, as well as deindividuation, hence people feel free to act outside of socially appropriate behaviour.



Personality traits linked to excessive internet use (2/2)

- Negative conscientiousness:

Adolescents who are less conscientious tend to choose to use the internet rather than do other, less enjoyable but important things, such as homework.



Psychological traits linked to excessive online use

- Low emotional stability:

Low emotional stability is congruent with **high neuroticism** and the latter has been found to be predictive of Internet addiction and Internet gaming addiction.

There is a correlation between the frequency in use of social media, and traits such as:

- Depression
- Attention deficit
- Loneliness
- Impulsivity





Motives for extensive use:

- Maintenance of established offline social networks, or creation of new social networks
- Need for emotional support – implications that emotional support is not found in real life
- Need to modify mood, escape real life and its problems – escapism – implication that problems are not faced directly and therefore not solved, therefore increased
- The need to explore a different identity: teenagers may feel that they can have a different identity online or can be more themselves away from in-person family and peers

What happens when we use the internet, that has us coming back for more?

Effects include:

- **Biochemical responses:**
- A release of dopamine is triggered, which affects the pleasure center of the brain
- **Escapism:**
- Easy way to get our minds off of real world problems
- **Multiple layers of rewards:**
- Every time we log in we get an unpredictable mix of happy news, funny content, in-game rewards
- **Instant gratification:**
- Quick relief from negative emotions, any time, as our smartphones are with us constantly



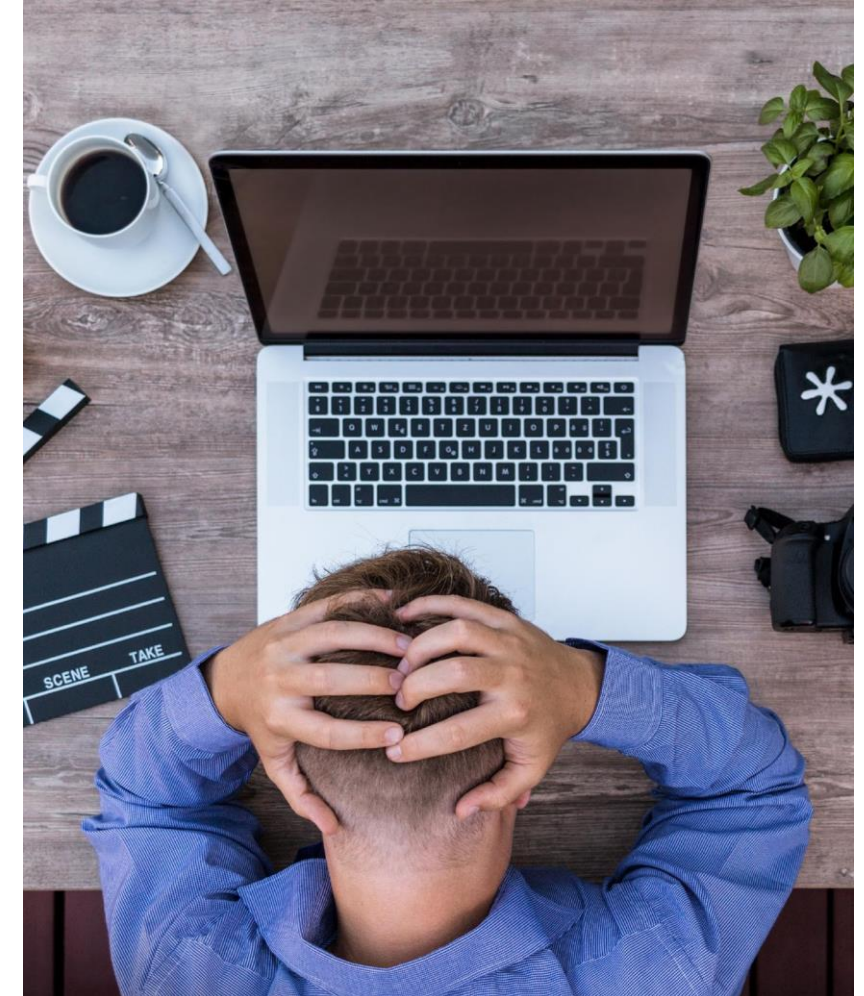
Symptoms of Internet Addiction

Emotional

- Feelings of guilt
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Dishonesty
- Euphoric feelings when in front of a computer
- Inability to keep schedules
- No sense of time
- Isolation
- Defensiveness
- Avoiding doing work/homework
- Agitation

Physical

- Backache
- Headaches
- Weight gain/weight loss
- Disturbances in sleep
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Blurred or strained vision



Implications:

- Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) - a worried feeling that you may miss exciting events that other people are attending, especially brought on by browsing social media.
- Peer pressure – being pressured into behaviours or mindsets by the feedback you receive online
- Cyberbullying – harassment over social media or other forms of online communication
- Unrealistic expectations – regarding body image, lifestyle, financial/social status



CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ The social aspect of the internet can lead to FOMO, cyberbullying, peer pressure.
- ✓ There are adverse motives behind internet use as well, such as the need to escape reality, people, and the need for emotional support.
- ✓ Certain personality characteristics, such as creativity, imagination, resourcefulness, negative conscientiousness and low agreeableness are connected with excessive online use.
- ✓ There are various adverse effects to excessive online use, both emotional and physical, which might have a serious impact on one's life.

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QUIZ

1. Choose the personality traits associated with excessive online use:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| a. Imagination | d. Creativity |
| b. Independence | e. Compassion |
| c. Laziness | d. Lack of diligence |

2. The physical symptoms of online addiction include:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Bad hearing | d. Headaches |
| b. Weight gain/loss | e. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome |
| c. Dizziness | d. Blurred or strained vision |

QUIZ

3. Teenagers use the internet mainly to improve their mood, to communicate with friends, to find emotional support and to explore their identity.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Feelings of guilt and anxiety in relation to using the internet are possible symptoms of Internet Addictive Behaviour.

- a. True
- b. False

3 Types of internet users

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Here we will look at how we can distinguish the **different types of internet users** and what characterizes each one.

- By understanding various **typologies** we can perhaps see ourselves in one of those groups.
- Thus, we get a clearer picture of **our own situation** and the risks that we face as “members” of one typology or another.

3 Types of internet users



In order to understand the adverse effects of the internet, we need to first understand and think critically, not only about **how much** time we spend online, but also **the way** we use our online time.

Researchers categorize internet users using various criteria, with no common consensus as to what should be the go-to method.

3 Types of internet users



One model (Johnson, G. M. & Kulpa, A., 2007) suggests that online users be categorized based on their motives, where online use is characterized by **sociability** (human connection motives), **utility** (efficiency orientation), and **reciprocity** (cognitive stimulation and active involvement).

3 Types of internet users

Others (Brandtzaeg, P.B., Heim, J. & Karahasanovic, A., 2010) identified five user types, based on specific internet activity:

Non-Users (who do not use the Internet on a regular basis),

Sporadic Users (who use the internet infrequently, for email and specific tasks),

Instrumental Users (who lean towards goal-oriented activities, such as commerce, online banking, to look for information on goods or services),

Entertainment Users (mainly using the internet for radio, TV, films, games, music and chat), and

Advanced Users (can use the internet both for instrumental and for entertainment purposes).



3 Types of internet users

Some researchers (Bodovskaya, A. et al.) defined their typologies based on what one does while online, but how much time they spend daily doing their favourite type of activity:

- **"Innovators"**, characterized by excessive consumption (12-16 hours per day) of all main types of Internet content;
- **"Traditionalists"**, who engage in low-intensity consumption of Internet content (1-2 hours per week);
- **"Entertained"**, who intensely consume mostly recreational internet content (for 8-12 hours per day)
- **"Pragmatists"**, who for 2-4 hours per day consume internet content of mostly educational and vocational nature;
- **"Disconnected"** - people who are not involved in Internet communication, for various reasons.



3 Types of internet users



Contact

Genie

Petition



About

Partners

Results

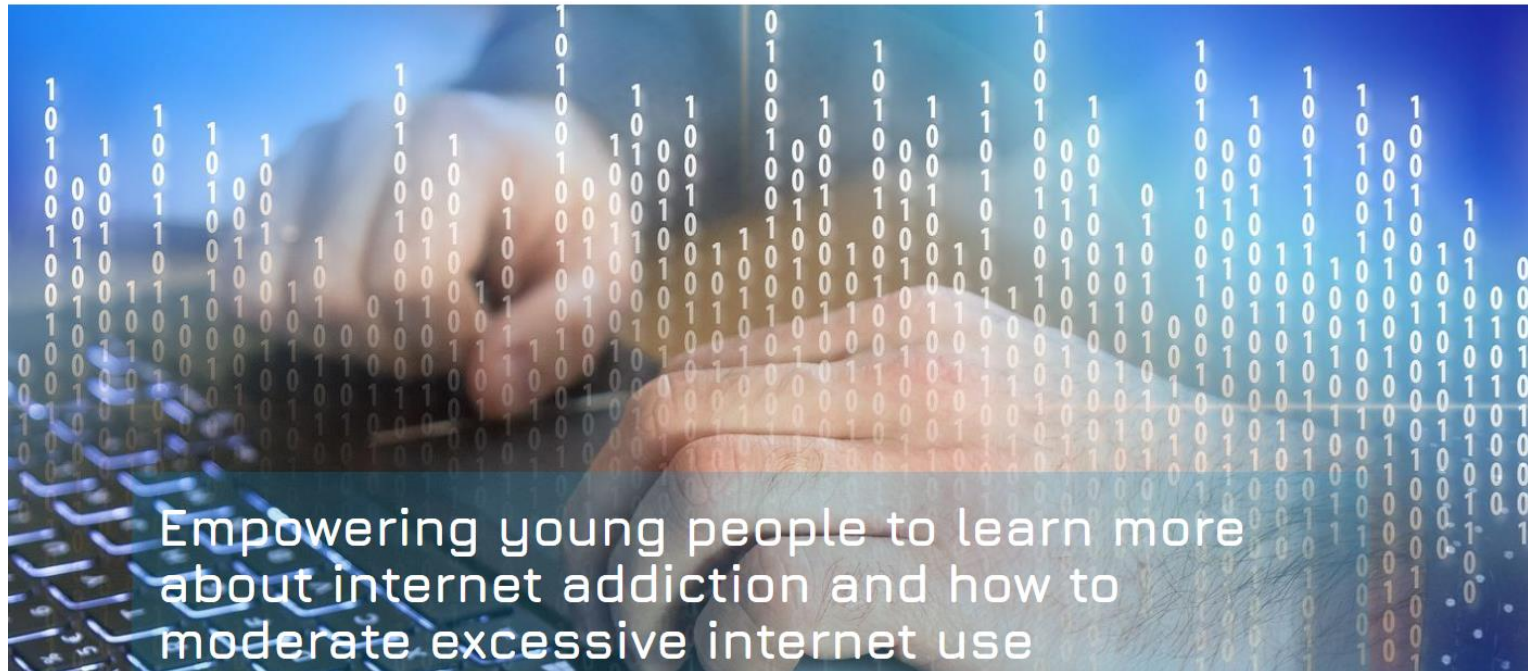
Training

Events

News

Academy

English ▼

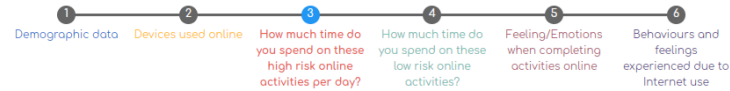


Erasmus+

Submission no.
2017-1-UK01-KA205-036208

An easy-to-use model, specifically designed for adolescents, has been presented by a European Union-funded research project, called inScreenMode. The project's homepage explains the purpose of the project, which is to moderate excessive internet use by adolescents. Most importantly, this project implements the Genie, a tool especially designed for teens.

3 Types of internet users



Nice, give us some more information now!

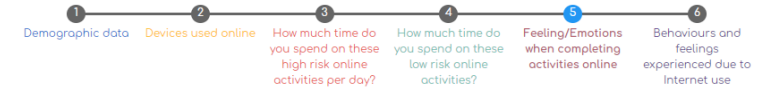
How much time do you spend on...

	0 hours	0.5 - 2 hours	2.5 - 5 hours	more than 5 hours
Social media for non-academic or non job-related purposes per day?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chatting to people on instant messenger (i.e. Whatsapp) for non-academic or non job-related purposes per day?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playing video/online games per day?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gambling online per day?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online shopping per day?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Viewing online pornography per day?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Save Draft

< Previous Page

Next Page >



You are almost there. Go on!

Tell us how you feel

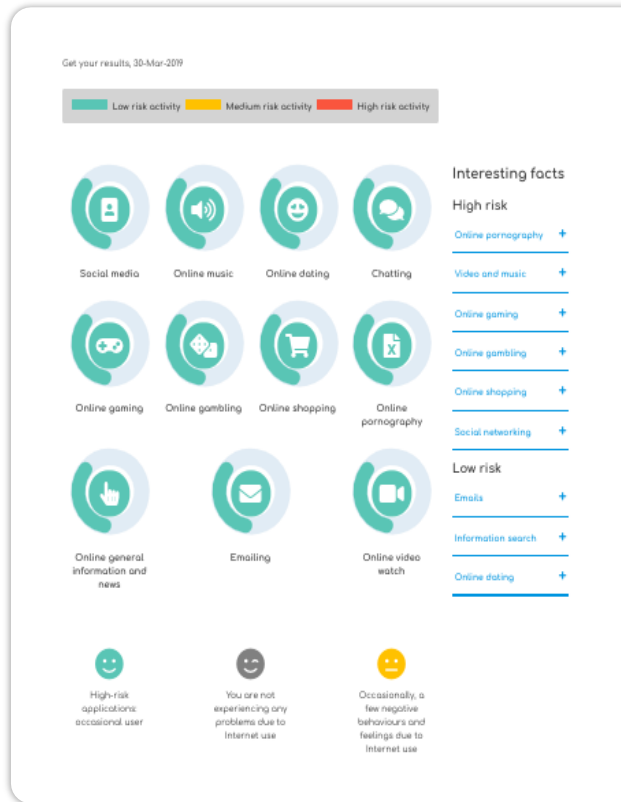
	Never	Rarely	Often
Do you ever feel anxious before going online?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you ever experience aggression if you can't access the internet?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you experience boredom if you can't access the internet?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you ever feel stressed if you can't access the internet?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you ever experience a lack of confidence when you are not engaged in online activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you ever feel sad when you can't engage in online activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you ever feel lonely if you can't engage in online activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

After registering, users take a test which refers to their internet use habits.

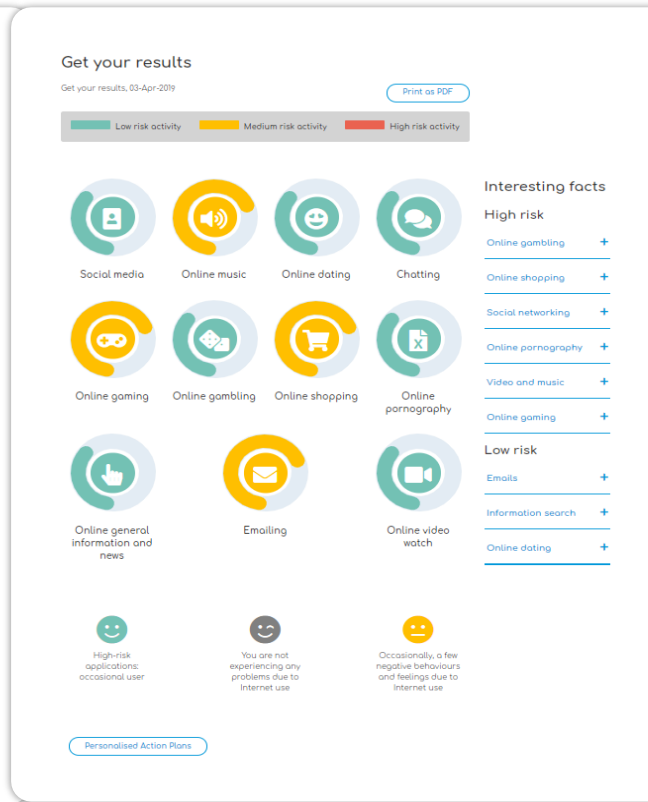
3 Types of internet users

Based on the answers given, the Genie then tells users how risky their online activities are in terms of addiction.

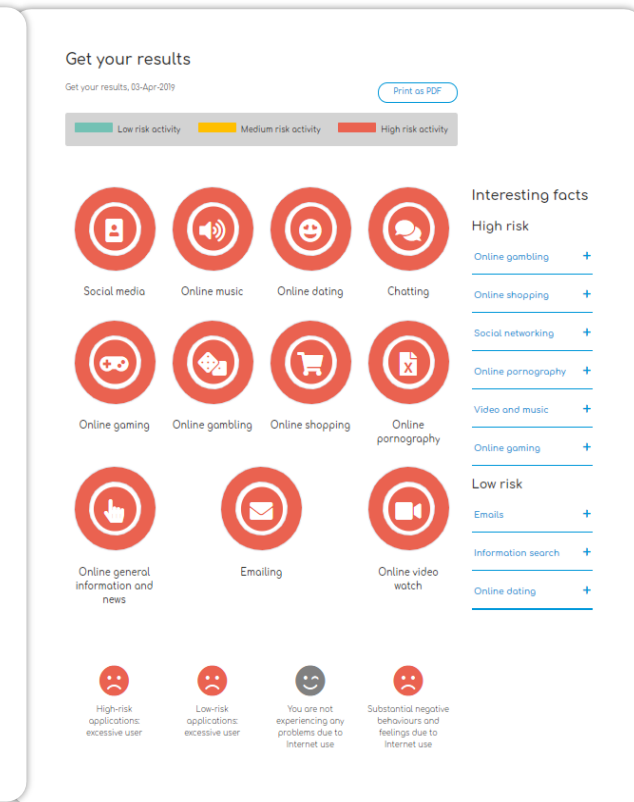
Low risk activity



Moderate activity



High risk activity



3 Types of internet users

Finally, and most importantly, the Genie provides users with personalized action plans for the moderation of any addictive behaviour, tailored to their needs.

Genie's Action Plan for you!

Your action plans

Time Management

- ▶ Recognize the internet usage routines and set moderation goals
- ▶ Use external constraints to regulate online use
- ▶ Adopt alternative offline activities instead of online use

Submit

Negative urges for online use

- ▶ Cope with boredom
- ▶ Cope with stress
- ▶ Cope with anxiety
- ▶ Cope with loneliness
- ▶ Cope with sadness
- ▶ Build self-confidence
- ▶ Cope with aggression

Submit

3 Types of internet users

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3 Types of internet users

EXTRA RESOURCES

InScreenMode Genie: <https://genie.inscreenmode.eu/>

3 Types of internet users

QUIZ

1, It doesn't matter what we do online, only how much time we spend on the internet.

- a. True
- b. False**

2. Scientists have decided which is the correct method to distinguish between types of online users.

- a. True
- b. False**

3 Types of internet users

ASSIGNMENT

Write a small essay about the internet use of adolescents you come in contact with often (e.g. family members, students).

Pay special attention to any problematic behaviours they present, and try to pinpoint the reasons behind them.

MODULE

GLOSSARY

Internet Addictive Behaviour (IAD)	The compulsion to spend extensive amount of time on the internet, to the point where other areas of life suffer. The loss of control over internet use.
Dysfunctional Internet Behaviour (DIB)	Internet use which presents addictive elements, but not to the point where other areas of life suffer.
Risk Factor	A characteristic of an individual which increases the likelihood of showing/developing problematic behaviour.
Sexting	The sending or receiving of sexually explicit or sexually-suggestive images or video via electronic devices.
Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO)	A worried feeling that you may miss exciting events that other people are going to, especially caused by things you see on social media.

Project acronym: ON/OFF4YOUNGSTERS

Project title: Embracing a balanced approach between
Online engagement and OFFline alternatives

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Website: <https://on-off4youngsters.eu/>

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