

Protecting their Innocence: In a Digital World



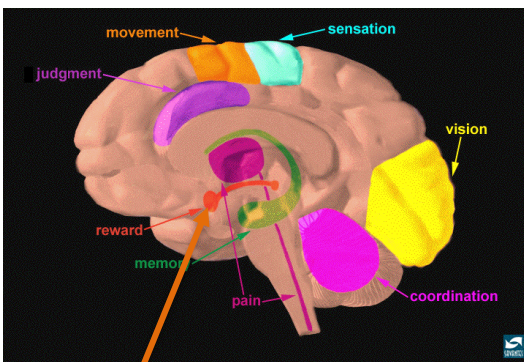
Presented by



Technology and Our Brain

A study at Harvard University has shown that posting about oneself on social media activates the part of the brain that is associated with the sensation of the pleasures that humans get from eating food, getting money, or having sex. During the experiment, the researchers put people in an MRI machine and asked them about their and other's opinions about certain subjects. They found that when the subjects were talking about themselves, the part of the brain related to reward was engaged more so than when they were talking about others. They then found that when people could share their thoughts with their friends or family, the reward section was engaged versus being told they had to keep their thoughts to themselves. All in all, this study shows why people love social media so much. They love it because people love talking about themselves, and love when other people view it or comment on it.

<https://sites.psu.edu/siowfa15/2015/10/15/addicted-to-social-media/>



The Reward Circuit: How the Brain Responds to Natural Rewards and Drugs
[National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA/NIH\)](http://www.nida.nih.gov/publications/reward-circuit)
Published on Nov 18, 2014

Reward circuit links together a number of brain structures that controls and regulates our ability to feel pleasure. When rewards are encountered, **Dopamine** is released causing feelings of pleasure and motivates us to repeat behaviors.

Simon Sinek – Social Media and Dopamine

From "Inside Quest" with Tom Bilyeu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL8AsaEJDdo&t=4s>



What Is Addiction?

Addiction is a condition in which a person engages in use of a substance or in a behavior for which the rewarding effects provide a compelling incentive to repeatedly pursue the behavior despite detrimental consequences. Addiction may involve the use of substances such as alcohol, inhalants, opioids, cocaine, nicotine, and others, or behaviors such as gambling; there is scientific evidence that the addictive substances and behaviors share a key neurobiological feature—they intensely activate brain pathways of reward and reinforcement, many of which involve the neurotransmitter dopamine.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/addiction>



Technology Addiction and Sexually Explicit Material

Source: <http://www.preventtogether.org/>



National Plan to Prevent the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children

DEVELOPING OF THE NATIONAL PLAN TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION



- A study of 804 males and females aged 14 to 19 found pornography use and sexual violence were significantly correlated. Adolescents are normalizing sexual abuse done to them because of pornographic exposure.
- Prolonged and increased exposure to sexually explicit materials "can lead to exaggerated beliefs of sexual activity among peers, sexually permissible attitudes, and sexual callousness, including more negative attitudes toward sexual partners."
- The content of today's media sexualizes and objectifies girls. The effects of self-objectification include eating disorders, low self-esteem, depression, and depressed moods. Far from leading to a healthy sexual development, sexual objectification leads to diminished sexual understanding.
- Females are especially prone to the normalization of sexual promiscuity, which heightens their risk of being victims of unwanted sexual violence and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Recent research suggests that male youth who use sexually explicit material may develop unrealistic sexual values and beliefs and demonstrate sexual preoccupation. Female youth reported feeling physically inferior.
- A growing body of evidence indicates that high-frequency pornography use or consumption of violent pornography among boys and young men intensifies attitudes supportive of sexual coercion and increases their likelihood of perpetrating assault.

The Science of Pornography Addiction

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ya67aLaaCc>



Social Media and Sex Trafficking

Human traffickers using emojis, social media to lure victims

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IRJrMxRRWk&t=2s>



Sex traffickers finding children on social media

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIVH2HFzHkw&t=7s>

Examples of social media posts that draw the attention of a trafficker include expressions of fear, emptiness and disappointment, such as:

"Nobody gets me."

"I am so sick of being single."

"I am so ugly."

"How do I look?"

"My life sucks."

"She's not my true friend."

"My parents don't trust me."

"I'm being treated like a kid."

"I need to get out of here."

Predators look for indicators of substance abuse, runaway activity and destabilization within the home.

A trafficker's strategic response includes:

"I understand you."

"I love you."

"I think you're beautiful. I'll encourage you to show your body. Use your body."

"I'll make your life better."

"I'll encourage you to take risks. You're an adult."

"I'll protect you."

"I'll make you successful."

Grooming children for sex trafficking consists of convincing someone to send a risky picture and then using it to extort them.

<https://phys.org/news/2018-10-link-social-media-sex-trafficking.html>

Am I Addicted?

The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) is the first Validated measure of Internet Addiction described in the **IAT Manual** to measure Internet use in terms of mild, moderate, to several levels of addiction. Based upon the following five-point Likert scale, select the response that best represents the frequency of the behavior described in the following 20-item questionnaire.

0 = Not Applicable

1 = Rarely

2 = Occasionally

3 = Frequently

4 = Often

5 = Always

1. ___ How often do you find that you stay online longer than you intended?
2. ___ How often do you neglect household chores to spend more time online?
3. ___ How often do you prefer the excitement of the Internet to intimacy with your partner?
4. ___ How often do you form new relationships with fellow online users?
5. ___ How often do others in your life complain to you about the amount of time you spend online?
6. ___ How often do your grades or school work suffer because of the amount of time you spend online?
7. ___ How often do you check your e-mail before something else that you need to do?
8. ___ How often does your job performance or productivity suffer because of the Internet?
9. ___ How often do you become defensive or secretive when anyone asks you what you do online?
10. ___ How often do you block out disturbing thoughts about your life with soothing thoughts of the Internet?
11. ___ How often do you find yourself anticipating when you will go online again?
12. ___ How often do you fear that life without the Internet would be boring, empty, and joyless?
13. ___ How often do you snap, yell, or act annoyed if someone bothers you while you are online?
14. ___ How often do you lose sleep due to late-night log-ins?
15. ___ How often do you feel preoccupied with the Internet when off-line, or fantasize about being online?
16. ___ How often do you find yourself saying "just a few more minutes" when online?
17. ___ How often do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend online and fail?
18. ___ How often do you try to hide how long you've been online?
19. ___ How often do you choose to spend more time online over going out with others?
20. ___ How often do you feel depressed, moody, or nervous when you are off-line, which goes away once you are back online?

After all the questions have been answered, add the numbers for each response to obtain a final score. The higher the score, the greater the level of addiction and creation of problems resultant from such Internet usage. The severity impairment index is as follows:

NONE: 0 – 30 points

MILD: 31- 49 points: You are an average online user. You may surf the Web a bit too long at times, but you have control over your usage.

MODERATE: 50 -79 points: You are experiencing occasional or frequent problems because of the Internet. You should consider their full impact on your life.

SEVERE: 80 – 100 points: Your Internet usage is causing significant problems in your life. You should evaluate the impact of the Internet on your life and address the problems directly caused by your Internet usage.

Resources and References

Beware of the False Sense of Security

Our kids may be next to us in the car, sitting on the couch with the family, or in the next room when they are online. We know they are "safe" because we see them.

The Digital World is just that, another world. In this world, fantasies, relationships, bullying, pleasures, virtual friendships, humiliation, entertainment, learning, grooming and boundary violations can take place in the safety and comfort of our homes.

Physically, our children are in our presence, chatting online, playing games, watching videos. We see them and think they are safe.

But where are they at mentally and emotionally? The Digital World

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
www.missingkids.com

Cyber Tip Line
www.cybertipline.com

NetSmartz
www.netsmartz.org www.netsmartz411.org

State of Arizona Department of Public Safety Sex Offender Info Center
www.az.gov/webapp/offender/main.do

WiredSafety
www.wiredsafety.org, www.wiredkids.org, www.teenangels.org, www.stopcyberbullying.org

TechSafety.org
<http://techsafety.org/>

National Network to End Domestic Violence
<http://nnedv.org/>

Safe Smart Social
<https://smartsocial.com/>

Common Sense Media
www.commonsense.com

You are what you share
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyWwX_VzIBY&t=2s

Apps Available from Google Play and Apple Store
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/276623/number-of-apps-available-in-leading-app-stores/>

Simon Sinek – Social Media and Dopamine
From "Inside Quest" with Tom Bilyeu
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL8AsaEJDo&t=4s>

Everything a Parent Needs to Know about Tinder
www.Teensafe.com

