
The Internet: A Secret Weapon

By now everyone is familiar with the Internet. It has become a tool that we use in our everyday life. We rely on the internet for everything, whether it's to give us directions to a certain location or for searching up information for a school project or work. At the end of the day we are dependent on the internet, and it becomes more popular in today's world. But as helpful as it might seem, the internet is harming us in severe ways and the worst part is that we aren't even conscious about it. The internet is hurting our mental health. It is the reason more and more individuals are falling under the grip of depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies.

The internet has been part of our lives since the late 1980's, early 1990's. Since then it has taken over our lives, and now with the advancement of smartphones and technology, more people have access to this tool. Young children are being raised and taught to have internet in their life. In school they have WIFI in every corner. They even have free time where the students get to go and play on the computers for a good while. The internet has been incorporated in a child's education and household. They spend their time being online watching videos, playing games, or even be on social media. With this said, people, especially the younger generations have easy access to the internet eventually leading to the development of internet addiction. Internet addiction is defined as the act where internet usage starts interfering with a person's everyday life. This disorder has been said to be more popular in students who are in their high school years. Teens are more vulnerable to suffer of internet addiction since the idea of missing out is one of the main causes in which teens cannot accept living a life with no internet. "The excessive internet use among adolescents appears to be related to their mental health". This means that the more time we spend on the internet the more we become victims of mental health-related issues. And we see this today! We see more and more teens declaring themselves depressed, eventually leading them to commit self-harm or even suicide.

The reason for all of this is that through the continuous excessive internet use, we isolate ourselves. We no longer have the same physical communication with other people compared to past generations that grew up without internet in their lives. As mentioned before we rely on the internet for everything, and we end up being on the internet 24/7. Instead of actual communications, we have our faces glued to the screens of our phones, that we don't bother to even talk to one another face to face. Instead, we text one another. We avoid situations where we must verbally speak. We prefer situations where we do everything virtually. All this are examples where we are slowly isolating ourselves, leading to the lack of communication between humans, eventually causing us to feel this sense of loneliness and slowly but surely, we begin feeling this depression within ourselves. This sense of loneliness and depression that we begin to feel makes people start questioning their purpose and become triggered to do self-

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harm. In various experiments conducted around the world many teenagers confirmed that they have either done severe self-harm on their selves or have thought of the idea of self-harm. It is females who are more likely to accept that the thought of self-harm and suicide has crossed their minds. Now not only does the internet causes us to be victims of depression, but we also become victims of anxiety. We are becoming addicted to the internet, the single thought of living a life without WIFI is something that for most of us is unbearable. The thought of having no internet begins to give us anxiety. We become anxious due to the fear of missing out we all have within us. We fear that while living with no internet, we will be missing out on whatever it is other people are doing. We start developing this anxiety within us. Even with a simple message anxiety creeps in on people. It has been said that the bubbles of someone typing a message gives us anxiety to a certain extent. And when the person on the other line stops typing and no message appears on our end, we begin to freak out, not knowing what is happening to us. Anxiety presents to us in many ways, but the more we continue using the internet the more we expose ourselves and cause our anxiety to grow.

There have been various experiments done throughout the world that prove that although the internet can be helpful in so many ways, it is ruining our mental state severely. In the article "The Development of Compulsive Internet Use and Mental Health: A Four-Year Study of Adolescence" it talks about how the internet is not bad, it has helped teenagers in various ways, however when the usage of the internet becomes extreme, "it can lead to low self-esteem, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and social phobia". Now the way the internet affects your mental health depends in your gender. In the multiples studies I read about, they all concluded that compared to males, females had a higher tendency of suffering of mental health issues due to the internet. What is the reason for this to happen? Well females spend more time on the internet compared to men. They browse social media apps, and shopping websites. Females spend more time socializing and boding with people online. Although males don't fall behind in this issue, they are more likely to fall under internet addiction due to excessive video game usage. What can be done to prevent and solve this issue between the internet and a person's mental health? Well the solution starts with the parents of adolescents. It has been recommended that parents should take some control as to how much internet time their son or daughter spends each day. It has also been recommended that for this issue there should be some rehabilitation facilities dedicated to internet addicted individuals since being addicted to the internet is what causes most of the mental health problems. Most importantly there should be awareness and acceptance over this issue. The internet overall is not bad, how much internet we use throughout the day is what is ruining our health. We need to be conscious of the fact that spending too much time online everyday leads to addiction. And this very same addiction is what leads a person to feel depress or develop anxiety within them.

At the end of the day the internet is not bad, we make it bad by the use we give it. If we used the internet moderately we wouldn't be facing mental health issues. It all comes down to how

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much internet we use per day. We might still be in denial of all these consequences our internet use is causing, but the sooner we realize the dangers we are putting ourselves through the sooner we can solve such issue. Internet addiction has yet to be consider a disorder, but it is something that many of us are victims of. As mentioned before, we need to bring awareness to this issue, many people don't even know they are addicted, and if they do know some face the hard challenge of accepting it.

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