

John Yi
CATW Prompt

“An Ugly Toll of Technology: Impatience and Forgetfulness”

We do spend a lot of time with our devices, and some studies have suggested that excessive dependence on cellphones and the Internet is akin to an addiction. Web sites like NetAddiction.com offer self-assessment tests to determine if technology has become a drug. Among the questions used to identify those at risk: Do you neglect housework to spend more time online? Are you frequently checking your e-mail? Do you often lose sleep because you log in late at night? If you answered “often” or “always,” technology may be taking a toll on you.

In a study to be published in the journal *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, researchers from the University of Melbourne in Australia subjected 173 college students to tests measuring risk for problematic Internet and gambling behaviors. About 5 percent of the students showed signs of gambling problems, but 10 percent of the students posted scores high enough to put them in the at-risk category for Internet “addiction.” Technology use was clearly interfering with the students’ daily lives, but it may be going too far to call it an addiction, says Nicki Dowling, a clinical psychologist who led the study. Ms. Dowling prefers to call it “Internet dependence.”

The problem is similar to an eating disorder, says Dr. Kimberly Young, a professor at St. Bonaventure University in New York who has led research on the addictive nature of online technology. Technology, like food, is an essential part of daily life, and those suffering from disordered online behavior cannot give it up entirely and instead have to learn moderation and controlled use. She suggests therapy to determine the underlying issues that set off a person’s need to use the Internet “as a way of escape.” “Texting and I.M.’ing my friends gives me a constant feeling of comfort,” wrote one student. “When I did not have those two luxuries, I felt quite alone and secluded from my life. Although I go to a school with thousands of students, the fact that I was not able to communicate with anyone via technology was almost unbearable.”

Tara Parker-Pope, 2010

Writing Directions

Read the passage above and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author’s most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that are needed to help your reader follow your thinking. You will have 90 minutes to complete your essay.