

ReSTART addresses increased Internet addictions

Caitlin O'Donnell
Reporter

In a world where Facebook, Google and Twitter have become household names, creators of the ReSTART Recovery Program in Fall City, Wash. hope to combat the growing problem of Internet addiction that has been popping up.

According to the program's Web site, the center is "oriented toward launching tech dependent youth and adults back into the real world."

Specifically, the addiction center is meant to help individuals with obsessive overuse of any technology-based activity. Beyond just eBay and Twitter, texting and video games are also addressed.

Though many parents are hesitant to admit their children are addicted, the effects can be severe.

Hilarie Cash, executive director of the program, developed a list of signs and symptoms for families and friends to look for. These include "feeling restless when not engaged in the activity ... feeling guilty, ashamed, anxious or depressed as a result of behavior ... (and) physical changes such as weight gain or loss, backaches, headaches or carpal tunnel syndrome."

Internet addicts, according to ReSTART material, withdraw almost completely from daily activities, which dramatically affects their schoolwork, relationships, jobs and real human development.

In the past, patients with these symptoms were treated only on an outpatient basis. ReSTART now provides a place for them to be sent with an actual program to follow.

The curriculum of the center includes life skills exposure coaching, which reviews the basic aspects of a rewarding life and vocational and career highlights, which train participants in various trade skills and individual and group therapy.

Internet addiction is a relatively new phenomenon in the realm of

addictions and illnesses. Without a significant foundation of research on the subject, many argue it is difficult to gauge whether the program's approach of total withdrawal will be successful.

The directors of the program do understand addiction often coincides with other mental health conditions and underlying problems. Patients are treated on an individual basis with attention placed on issues such as divorce, trauma, depression or ADHD, which often propel addiction.

It is still unclear if Internet addiction will be classified as a separate illness, and if treatment will be covered by insurance.

"In the research surveys I have conducted for the Pew Internet Project, we have found that most people recognize that there are and will be growing numbers of people who have trouble keeping their life balance right in light of the enticements they find online," Janna Anderson, associate professor of communications, said.

Anderson is the director of Imagining the Internet, a project that predicts the future of information and communication.

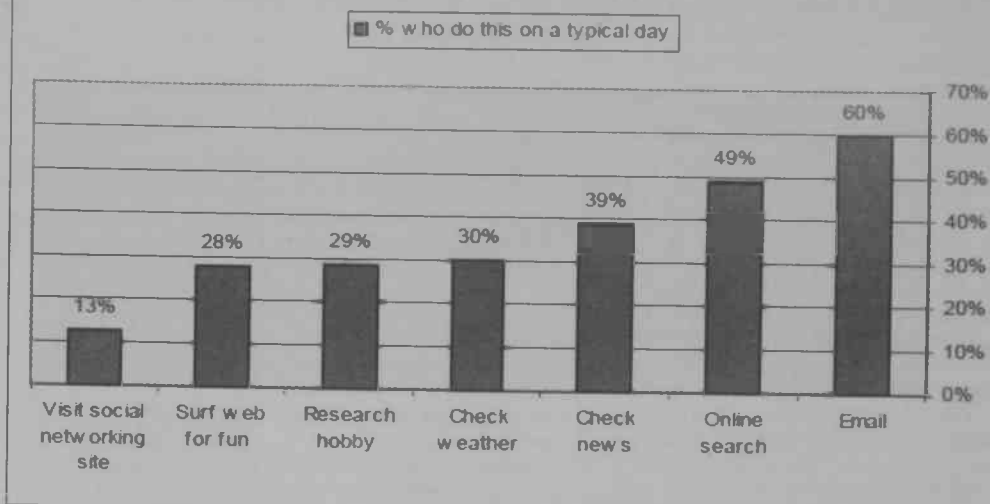
These enticements are particularly strong for college students, sophomore Chelsea Erskine said.

"The majority of our work for class is done online, so Facebook and Twitter are always accessible," Erskine said. "And having wireless connection anywhere on campus makes it so much easier to use the Internet as a free time filler."

Though not everyone who uses the Internet daily can be classified as an addict, Anderson said it is important to be watchful for the warning signs of a serious problem.

"It is up to individuals and their families and friends to find the boundaries that work best for them and to stick to them, whether they are online using Facebook, World of Warcraft, Twitter or whatever they find fascinating," Anderson said.

Daily Internet Activities
(% internet users)



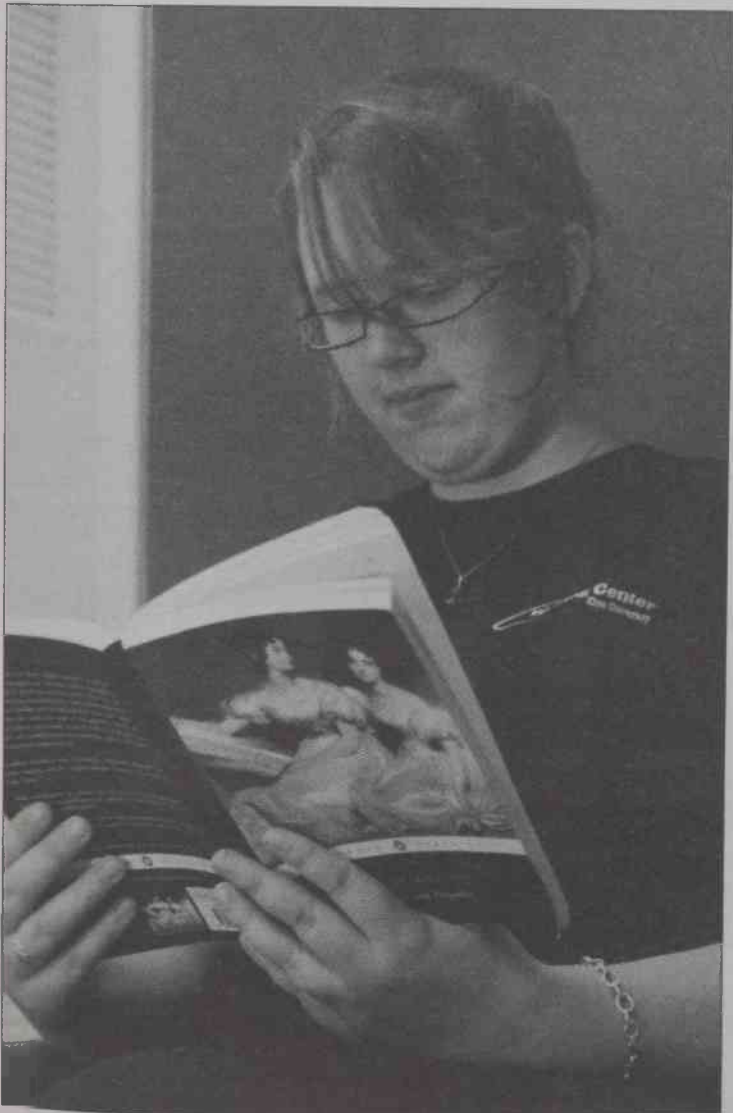
As it becomes more of a part of daily life, Internet use comprises different uses. The top reason for use is e-mail, while visiting social networking sites makes up the fewest percent of Internet users.

ARE YOU ADDICTED?

1. Do you find it difficult to stop using the Internet when you're online?
2. Do you continue to use the Internet despite your intention to stop?
3. Do others say you should use the Internet less?
4. Do you prefer to use the Internet instead of spending time with others?
5. Are you often short of sleep because of the Internet?
6. Do you think about the Internet, even when not online?
7. Do you look forward to your next Internet session?
8. Do you think you should use the Internet less?
9. Have you often unsuccessfully tried to spend less time on the Internet?
10. Do you rush through your work in order to go on the Internet?
11. Do you neglect your daily obligations because you prefer to go on the Internet?
12. Do you go on the Internet when you are feeling down?
13. Do you use the Internet to escape from your sorrows or get relief from negative feelings?
14. Do you feel restless, frustrated or irritated when you cannot use the Internet?

INFORMATION COURTESY OF WWW.NETADDICTIONRECOVERY.COM

College graduate holds 'great expectations' for classic literature Web site



Senior English major Jenna McNair said she feels 60secondrecap.com can help students learn the text of classical novels, such as *Pride & Prejudice*, quicker.

Rebecca Smith
Senior Reporter

YouTube, Facebook and blogs are all kinds of interactive media that are needed in today's society to gain the younger generations' attention. This concept was applied to classical literature last week when a new Web site, 60secondrecap.com, went live.

The Web site's star, Jenny Sawyer, just graduated from Bryn Mawr College in Bryn Mawr, Pa. With the help of a small team, Sawyer is writing and shooting more than 1,000 free one-minute videos that are meant to help students understand, and possibly enjoy, classic pieces of literature that are commonly assigned in the classroom.

Sawyer is the only one who appears on camera and is not afraid to show off her quirks to get viewers to remember the material. With her constant outfit changes, one for each book, and her animated talking style, Sawyer resembles a young and fashionable modern English teacher, the type of teacher few people had in high school.

"I think this would help, especially in more dense books," senior English major Allison Beck. "In my current class we are reading 'The Iliad.' I could see how people would benefit from videos that place the book in a modern context, and these videos could apply to different learning styles."

These interactive guides are meant to appeal to young students more than Cliff Notes or other written study aids.

"The videos are visual and a quicker overview than Cliff Notes, so they would be better for visual or auditory learners," senior major Jenna McNair said. "I could see people being interested in the Web site, but it needs more exposure."

Eventually, there will be more than 100 books covered on the site. Right now there are five classic works, including "Great Expectations," "Of Mice and Men," "Romeo and Juliet," "The Catcher in the Rye" and "The Great Gatsby."

For each book, there are at least 10 60-second videos. There is one video that serves as an overview for the whole book, at least two videos that break down the plot further, a video on the main characters, at least two videos on the themes of the book, a video on the symbols, a video on the motifs and a conclusion video.

"I do not think the videos will really be beneficial to prepare for tests with," said Kevin Boyle, chair of the English department. "They are more for people who want to listen to a conversation about the book."

Sawyer and company are trying to entice advertisers to fund the project, but some worry the integrity of the site may be lost in the process.

"The section looking for advertisers concerned me because having a corporation advertise alongside these pieces of literature may take away from the stories being told," McNair said. "If one of the novels has a view that is against status quo, there may be a conflict between the author's view and the corporation's view, and I would not want the summary to leave out parts to please the advertisers."

There is also a section on the Web site with five videos all about Sawyer, and another section where Sawyer recommends a book, not classical literature, to her viewers. Viewers are also allowed to leave videos with their commentary.

Sawyer was an English literature major and is currently a freelance writer for The Sawyer Science Monitor. Sawyer told USA Today she hopes to be "the big sister you're just dying to talk to before class because you just did not get the symbols in this book."

Her passion for literature is evident, but some wonder if a 10-minute summary is going to cheat students in the long run.

"It would be so sad if someone watched the videos on the Web site for 'The Great Gatsby' instead of reading the book," Boyle said. "The book is so beautifully written and the videos do not compare in that regard."