

## Chapter 25

# The Impact of the Internet in Twenty–First Century Addictions: An Overview

**Shilpa Suresh Bisen**

*Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology Nagpur, India*

**Yogesh Deshpande**

*Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology Nagpur, India*

### ABSTRACT

*In the era of digital technology, the internet has its significant role in sprouting vulnerability toward the different form of addictions and psychiatric disorders as well as providing the platform to manage them effectively. The internet provides ready access to illicit drugs, nonprescription medications which facilitate a sale of controlled substances over the Internet without a valid prescription which contributed to the rise of several forms of addictions. Studies have linked the severity of Problematic Internet Use to increase chances of substance Use disorder. Utilization of internet for longer durations serves as a booster for behavioral addictions like online gambling. Web based interventions on the positive side provides a cost effective, readily accessible and user-friendly platform to reach out majority of patients to help them in seeking treatment of Addictions and various psychiatric disorders. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the contribution of the internet in a positive and negative way to develop as well as resolve Psychiatric disorder.*

### INTRODUCTION

The word Internet originates from the words “Internet Connection Network” (Greenfield, 1999), which connects computers around the world with a standard protocol. Internet created a completely different and consumer friendly way to communicate and gradually evolved into the most important prop to the personal, professional and social life of a significant proportion of the world population. Its use ranges

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-8900-6.ch025

from very basic search engines, socializing, shopping to sophisticated research aids, banking, business to name a few. At the same time, it has also come with its share of misuse like accessing inappropriate sites, hacking, stalking, spamming, etc. The Internet has become a basic tool for trading, entertainment, communication, as well as education in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, despite the high speed of information flow and potential educational value of the Internet, there are several attributes of the Internet which may foster addictive behavior. Of all the revolutions that have influenced mankind in the course of its evolution mass communication has been the most remarkable one and internet has catalyses the process to an extent that even Charles Darwin would have been left wonder-struck, for those who make their living forecasting change in social institutions are frequently humbled by the actual flow of events. Developments that seem inevitable (such as “artificial intelligence”) seem to take forever to happen, while seemingly unstoppable institutions or innovations (such as physician practice, management firms) suddenly collapse. Sometimes, however, innovations spring, full blown and unheralded, seemingly from out of nowhere.

The objective of this chapter is to discuss how the internet has the impact on fulfilling the craving for various types of addiction among the larger section of the population. As well as the role of the internet is serving the mode of treatment for various addictions and psychiatric disorders.

As per the outline of whole chapter, researcher will be discussing in the following sections, the neutral role of internet in increasing the risk of addictions and various psychiatric disorders as well as contribution to the management of psychiatric illness by helping in increasing awareness, web based interventions, web based counseling, etc., on the whole, the influence of internet on 21st century has been immense in all aspects of humanity and obviously mental health hasn't remained untouched by it

## **BACKGROUND**

Addiction of any kind is traditionally associated with an uncontrollable urge, often accompanied by a loss of control, a preoccupation and continued use despite negative consequences.

In the era of digital technology, the internet has its very significant role in sprouting vulnerability toward the different form of addiction, whether it's chemical or behavioral addiction, at the same time providing the platform to manage it well.

## **INTERNET: A PLATFORM FOR ILLEGAL DRUG TRAFFICKING**

It has been revealed in researches that the internet provides ready access to drugs, including prescription medications. A study in the United states, Jena AB & Goldman DP (2011) estimated that for every 10% increase in high-speed Internet use from 2000 to 2007 (a proxy for access to Internet-based pharmacies), associated with admissions to treatment centers for opioid, sedative, hypnotic, and stimulant abuse increased by 1% each, whereas admissions for abuse of substances that are not purchasable online (alcohol, heroin, and cocaine) were unaffected. Due to increase in internet connectivity, an emergence of the new psychoactive substance called “legal highs” has increased. These drugs are specially designed to be legal alternatives to the established illegal drugs (Gibbons, 2012). Most of these are amphetamine- or ecstatic-like stimulants, hallucinogens or synthetic cannabinoids. They are widely sold on the internet without any information regarding safety content, interactions, and side-effects (Schmidt et al, 2011).

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:  
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-impact-of-the-internet-in-twenty-first-century-addictions/228872](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-impact-of-the-internet-in-twenty-first-century-addictions/228872)

## Related Content

---

### Unraveling the Taste Fabric of Social Networks

Hugo Liu (2009). *Social Networking Communities and E-Dating Services: Concepts and Implications* (pp. 18-43).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/unraveling-taste-fabric-social-networks/29214](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/unraveling-taste-fabric-social-networks/29214)

### Developing a Social Media Communication Plan

Ahdia Nazari (2016). *Strategic Integration of Social Media into Project Management Practice* (pp. 194-217).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/developing-a-social-media-communication-plan/145678](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/developing-a-social-media-communication-plan/145678)

### Guidelines for Detecting Cyberbullying in Social Media Data Through Text Analysis

Nomandla Mkwanzand Hanlie Smuts (2023). *International Journal of Social Media and Online Communities* (pp. 1-13).

[www.irma-international.org/article/guidelines-for-detecting-cyberbullying-in-social-media-data-through-text-analysis/330533](http://www.irma-international.org/article/guidelines-for-detecting-cyberbullying-in-social-media-data-through-text-analysis/330533)

### Mobile Extension in Enhancing the Livelihood of Farmers in India

G. Sakthivel Murugan, I. Arul Aram, S. Amal Raj, A. Arivudai Nambiand Nancy J. Anabel (2018). *International Journal of E-Politics* (pp. 48-58).

[www.irma-international.org/article/mobile-extension-in-enhancing-the-livelihood-of-farmers-in-india/199069](http://www.irma-international.org/article/mobile-extension-in-enhancing-the-livelihood-of-farmers-in-india/199069)

### Retaining and Exploring Digital Traces: Towards an Excavation of Virtual Settlements

Demosthenes Akoumianakis, Giannis Milolidakis, George Vlachakis, Nikolas Karadimitriouand Giorgos Ktistakis (2011). *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking* (pp. 46-65).

[www.irma-international.org/article/retaining-exploring-digital-traces/72899](http://www.irma-international.org/article/retaining-exploring-digital-traces/72899)