Games People Play: Virtual Asset or Affliction?

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We are genetically predisposed to socially connect and communicate

- The question is whether virtual communications are as healthy as real-time relationships.
- I believe all communication technologies are attempts to connect to others more efficiently, but perhaps with the cost of less depth and quality.
- Does the Internet affect our ability to judge and obtain social cues?

Connection to What or Whom?

- The Internet is both a way to communicate and a place to communicate to.
- The Internet/Gaming can be a social activity that is simultaneously socially isolating.
- What you see may not be what you get?
Why do we Love Computer & Internet Gaming

- Personal competence
- An Intellectual slot machine
- Persona and Shadow
- Adventure without risk
- Social connection without contact/commitment
- Fun
- Multimedia stimulating content
- Immediate gratification

Lost in Cyberspace

Sometimes New Technology can cause New Problems

Surf’s Up

Dr. David Greenfield says millions of Americans are hooked on the Internet, and for some of them, it’s an addiction.
Social Connection vs. Social Isolation

• Are games a form of communication?
• What is being communicated and is it constructive?
• When you’re existing in a virtual game world are you the same person as you are in real-time interaction?
• Inner-tainment pulls us away from real-time social interaction.
• Entertaining in small doses, but seems to be psychologically damaging/limiting in larger doses, over longer durations.
• Are electronic/computer games addictive?

The Power of the Internet

• A-moral: we imbue positive or negative value based on how we use or abuse it.

• Computer and Internet technology have a positive valance associated with them.

• Just because the technology exists, and is profitable, doesn’t mean it is harmless, and does not improve the quality of life.

• When we are gaming we are NOT doing other things.
What about the Internet Gaming makes it so powerful?

• The same aspects of the Net that make it so attractive make it so addictive….
• And the addictive potential of a substance is determined by the speed of absorption into the body or the speed of reinforcement received.
• The Internet, and particularly, gaming operate on a variable ratio reinforcement schedule, and are therefore highly resistant to extinction.

Many factors contribute to the power of the Net.

• **Accessibility:** Open 24-7.
• **Intensity:** The power of connecting to the world and something bigger than ourselves.
• **Stimulation:** An Online High.
• **Time Distortion:** Time has no meaning when you’re online.
• **Anonymity**: A Virtual Mardi Gras.

• **Disinhibition**: Let it All Hang Out.

• **Accelerated Intimacy**: feel closer to people more quickly

• **Ease of Access**: Convenience is the mother of Invention.

• **The Story without an End**: Information with no boundaries… always another link, click, or web site!

• **Sex**: Human sexuality is forever changed.

• **Interactivity**: This is TV on Steroids!

• **The Hypnotic Trance**: melting into a virtual world.