

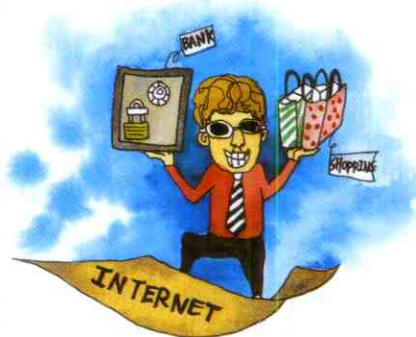
ISSUE 35

Internet

Just a few years back, who would have thought that almost anyone, for almost no money, could instantaneously communicate with anyone else on the planet, retrieve information from any library, publish a book, obtain music or movies, play interactive games, buy anything, get a degree, or find a date, just by using one simple device? And now that that is the reality, who can imagine living in a world without the internet?

What do you mostly use the internet for?

- (1) Games
- (2) Email
- (3) Net surfing
- (4) Finding particular information
- (5) Chatting
- (6) Club activities
- (7) Shopping
- (8) Dating



-instantaneously : immediately

-retrieve : obtain

-(net) surfing : looking at various sites one after another (on the internet)

Sample Answers

(A) I don't know about you, but every day I have a couple of hundred emails to go through. The vast majority of them turn out to be *spam*, but I still have to open each message to find out what its contents are before I can *delete* it. *Aside from* taking up much of my precious time every day, it is also causing my eyes to go bad.

(B) I can't get enough of online gaming. The activity has not only made me many friends around the world, but it has also improved my *reflexes*, coordination, and reasoning ability. So I don't think it is a waste of time at all — it is good training for life.

Speak Your Mind

1. How many hours a day do you use the internet?
2. Who is the most vulnerable to internet addiction?
3. Can you imagine your life without the internet?
4. Discuss the main characteristics of the following media: television, newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, DVDs, the internet.
5. Which medium is the most trustworthy? Why?
6. Do you think the internet will replace other media in the near future?

Speak Your Mind Helpers

1. How many hours a day do you use the internet?

(A) It's hard to estimate actually. I constantly check my email, probably five or six times a day. Sometimes my box is empty and sometimes I have a lot of messages to respond to. Usually when I get home from work I play a game. So I guess that, on average, I probably spend four or five hours a day, maybe less. (Wow! Four or five hours! That sure does seem like a lot, doesn't it? Maybe I don't need to check my email so often!)

(B) I never use the internet and I never have. Many of my friends have suggested that I try it, but I don't like to play electronic games. I don't want to shop online — I want to be able to see, smell, and feel whatever I'm buying. I hardly ever use a phone, so I can't see myself messaging anyone very often. I guess I'm just old-fashioned, but I'm afraid the whole world is becoming more *isolated* and less personal.

2. Who is the most vulnerable to internet addiction?

(A) There is no such thing as internet addiction. It is just a *myth* invented by worried parents who think their kids are not studying hard enough or getting enough exercise. The internet doesn't have any harmful substances, so using it is no more addictive than talking, typing, or reading. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to get back to a game I'm playing. I play it every day at this time and I don't want to be *disturbed*.

(B) Addiction does not have to be physical; it can be psychological as well. People can become addicted to gambling or shopping, for instance. Studies have shown that adolescent and young-adult males are the ones most likely to become addicted to the internet, especially in terms of playing violent action games. The colors and sounds, and their sense of competition and accomplishment, are all key components of this addiction. However, slightly older women are also vulnerable; for them, the *habituation factors* are the need for close human interaction and to feel loved, so chatting and date-lines are the most appealing aspects of the internet to them. But anyone who feels a need to spend more than an hour a day on the internet may be addicted.

- **isolated** : feeling alone

- **myth** : false belief

- **disturbed** : interrupted or bothered

- **habituation factors** : addiction factors

3. Can you imagine your life without the internet?

(A) I do not believe that there ever was a time when the internet was not available. Stories *to that effect* are just grandmothers' tales used to teach some sort of moral lesson.

(B) I am a heavy internet user, but when I go on vacation in another country it's easy to *get by* without it. For one thing, finding a cyber café is not always convenient, and even if one is available the connections are often poor. The *hassles* are generally not worth the effort, so I just go on about my life and enjoy myself. Being off-line is not the end of the world after all.

4. Discuss the main characteristics of the following media: television, newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, DVDs, the internet.

(A) It's too easy to ignore the TV or radio, they're such a normal, passive part of our everyday lives. Usually, they are turned on whether anybody is watching or listening to them at all. And we constantly get up and go to another room or get something to eat or drink, even if we are watching television. However, for *breaking news* there is no *substitute*.

(B) For thoughtful, in-depth analysis of something, nothing can beat a newspaper, magazine, or book. I can easily carry it with me, read it at my own convenience, and take my time *comprehending* it. I can usually find the same information on the net, of course, but doing a lot of reading on a computer is both uncomfortable and physically harmful.

5. Which medium is the most trustworthy? Why?

(A) No medium is better than its source: *garbage in, garbage out*. But the respectable print media are still the most *reliable*, I think. News professionals are trained to be objective and accurate, and what they write has a *permanence* that adds to its trustworthiness: tomorrow it will still be the same as it is today.

(B) What we need is a variety of perspectives rather than the narrow views of one (or a small group of) commentators, so we can apply our own judgment and common sense based on our own experience to a *multiplicity* of facts and possibilities. So I think bloggers and their interactive audiences are superior to the corporate news *put out* by publishers and broadcasters, who have their own particular interests to promote.

Speak Your Mind Helpers

6. Do you think the internet will replace other media in the near future?

F : Do you think the internet will replace other media in the near future?

M : What an odd question! Why do you ask?

F : Because it is part of a discussion topic in my English conversation book.

M : Oh. That explains a lot. I was wondering why you have been talking to me about all these strange topics.

F : Not as strange as some of your answers!

M : OK, you win. But do you sincerely want to know what I think?

F : Of course. What about the internet?

M : The medium is still in its early *phase*. We haven't yet even begun to *exhaust* all its possible uses.

F : But will it replace the other media?

M : No, probably not. The tendency is for the old ones to continue to exist but to find more specialized usage.

F : What do you mean by that?

M : Well, people still read. In fact, more books are published every year than at any time in history. So radio and the movies did not replace newspapers and magazines. Movie producers and radio station owners were *deathly* afraid of the competition from television; this was especially the case since radio and TV programming were *virtually* the same format. But both of the older media *adapted* and are doing very well in their particular *niches*. Even when VCRs and then DVDs came along, instead of killing the motion picture business they helped promote the cinema-going experience.

F : That was a very thoughtful answer. Thank you.

M : You're welcome.

F : Whether you are right or wrong, there's one thing I'm very sure of, however.

M : What's that?

F : That no medium, whether print or electronic, will ever replace the emotional pleasure of dealing directly, face-to-face, with another person. Especially with one as thoughtful and *articulate* as yourself.

M : You're very kind. I don't know what to say.

F : Well, let me put this book away and then let's go someplace and just talk.

M : *Sounds like a winner!*

