

## Addicted to Technology

### Motivation

What is addiction? According to Psychology Today,

Addiction is a condition that results when a person ingests a substance (e.g., alcohol, cocaine, nicotine) or engages in an activity (e.g., gambling, sex, shopping) that can be pleasurable but the continuation of which becomes compulsive and interferes with ordinary responsibilities and concerns, such as work, relationships, or health. People who have developed an addiction may not be aware that their behavior is out of control and causing problems for themselves and others.

“What Is Addiction?” Psychology Today, Sussex Publishers, LLC,  
www.psychologytoday.com/basics/addiction. Accessed 27 Sept. 2017.

### Article

Ask students to read, or read as a group, the article “Medical Experts Say Addiction to Technology is a Growing Concern.”

Pretz, Kathy. "Medical Experts Say Addiction to Technology Is a Growing Concern." *The institute*. IEEE, 23 Dec. 2016. Web. 22 Jan. 2017. <<http://theinstitute.ieee.org/ieee-roundup/blogs/blog/medical-experts-say-addiction-to-technology-is-a-growing-concern>>.

### Discussion

As a class, reflect on the following discussion questions:

- How is this article relating technology to what Psychology Today defines as addiction?
- Do you see technology as addictive activity? Why or why not?
- Consider some of the statistics in this article:
  - “people said they spend 25 hours per week online and check their smartphone 200 times a day”
  - “not a day goes by that they don’t check their computer or phone”
  - “one in four people reported spending more time online than sleeping”How do those statistics make you feel? Are you surprised by the numbers?
- At the time this article was written, India had two clinics for technology addicts. Do you believe the US needs such clinics?
- Consider these five question the article posed:
  - Do you *crave* access to gadgets?
  - Do you lose *control* over yourself when using them? (e.g., Have you ever been unaware that large amount of time has passed when using your device? Do you get upset when you are asked to put your device down?)
  - Do you feel *compelled* to use technology?
  - Are you using technology to *cope* with distress? (e.g., Are you using technology as an escape? Do you use technology to handle stress?)
  - What are the *consequences*—are you experiencing any problems because of your usage? (e.g., Are you losing sleep because of your technology use? Because of usage, are you isolating yourself from social interaction?)

After considering these questions, do you believe you are you in the 40% surveyed that said they were not addicted to technology or in the 60% that said they were addicted.

- If you are in the 60%, do you believe there is anything to be concerned about?
- If you are in the 40%, what do you believe you do differently than the 60% that said they were addicted? Do you believe you are at risk of becoming addicted?
- What new information from this article did you learn?

**Writing Assignment and/or Group Discussion:**

Consider what it would be like to spend a day away from all the gadgets that typically surround us: cell phones, tablets, computers, and smart devices. What would your day look like without these gadgets? Imagine a day where you do not check your phone for text messages, a day not spent on your favorite social network, or (gasp) a day without Netflix. How do you think you would feel without these gadgets around you? In 800 words, describe what your day off would look like if you did not use these devices.

**Challenge:**

For those who would like a good challenge – see what it would be like to go one weekend without those gadgets. Can you do it?