

Virtual Addiction Test

If you believe you have a more serious problem, and you have **six or more** warning signs of Internet abuse as measured by the **Internet Abuse Test (IAT)**, you should take the **Virtual Addiction Test (VAT)** below. If you answer yes to **five or more** of the questions on this test than you may have an Internet addiction problem.

1. Do you feel "out of control" when using the Internet; e.g., feeling. "Carried away"?
2. When not on the Internet, do you find that you are preoccupied with the Internet or computers, (e.g., thinking about or reliving past experiences on the Internet, planning your next experience on the Internet, or thinking of ways to gain access to the Internet in the future?)
3. Do you find that you need to spend greater amounts of time on the Internet to achieve satisfaction similar to previous events?
4. Do you find yourself seeking more sexually stimulating material in order to achieve the same result as previously?
5. Have you repeated unsuccessful efforts to control cut back or stop using the Internet?
6. Do you find yourself to be restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop using the Internet?
7. Are you using the Internet as a way of escaping from problems or relieving a bad mood, (e.g., feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety or depression)?
8. After spending what you consider an excessive amount of time on the Internet and vowing not to do so the next day, do you find yourself back on the next day or soon after?
9. Do you find yourself lying to family members, therapists or others to conceal the extent of your involvement with the Internet?
10. Do you find yourself committing illegal acts related to your use of the Internet?
11. Have you jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job or educational or career opportunity? Because of your use of the Internet?

Score: _____

(If you score five or over, there is a high probability that you are addicted to the Internet.)

If you answered positively to the *Internet Abuse Test* warning signs or the *Virtual Addiction Test*, it may be helpful to *again* ask yourself the two questions below which were initially presented in chapter two. If either of your self-tests indicate that you have a problem, follow the suggestions offered in chapters five through nine.

- **Does your Internet use elicit a clear change in mood? And is your continued Internet use later sought out and utilized to achieve its' mood altering effects?**
- **Does using the Internet interfere with your life in any way, shape, or form? That is, does it have a negative impact on your work, school, family, friends, relationships, etc.?**

Both of these questions are very important. The second question is perhaps more relevant with regard to clarifying your addiction potential. We all do things we like or find exciting because of the way it makes us feel; it is assumed that most individuals who use the Internet find it very pleasurable. On an intellectual basis, it satisfies many needs, including curiosity, knowledge, convenience, access to data that is not ordinarily available, and connecting with people on a personal or sexual basis.

However, when you find yourself using the Internet as a means to gratify what might otherwise not feel fulfilling to you, then your pleasure from online life may be superseding your satisfaction with 'real-time' living. When this occurs there may be a potential problem, for although computers and the Internet are not in and of themselves dangerous, the preference for cyber-life over real-time life should be viewed with some trepidation. The essence of an addiction then is a repetitive pattern of Internet behavior which, in spite of certain negative consequences, is still continued.