

Experts debate Internet addiction

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Experts have questioned whether Internet addiction constitutes a psychological disorder and an Arlington, Va., group may add it to its diagnostic manual.

Members of the American Psychiatric Association have said the organization may include Internet addiction in its next guidebook, while experts debate whether the issue constitutes a psychological problem, The Washington Post reported Tuesday.

"There's no question that there are people who are seriously in trouble because of the fact that they're overdoing their Internet involvement," said Ivan Goldberg, a New York psychiatrist. Goldberg said the problem is a disorder and not a true addiction. Merriam-Webster's medical dictionary defines addiction as a "compulsive physiological need for and use of a habit-forming substance."

Jonathan Bishop, a Wales researcher who focuses on Internet communities, said addiction is impossible. "The Internet is an environment," he said. "You can't be addicted to the environment." Bishop said the problem lies with the Internet user's priorities and can be solved by encouraging them to pursue offline goals.

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