

Lost in cyberspace: Students show signs of Internet addiction

by Jonathan Purkiss
The Echo
University of Central Arkansas

CONWAY, Ark. — Sam hasn't studied for his test tomorrow or for any of his tests all semester. Although he was supposed to be in class an hour ago, he opted to spend his time with some friends - digital buddies - in a chatroom he frequents.

He skipped lunch with his roommate to spend time online in the computer lab. Sam isn't expecting to pass any classes this semester, but he is glad that he is the only person in the computer lab at that moment. With everyone else in class, the campus network is a little faster and he'll be free to chat until the next day if he wants, which he probably will.

Sadly, Sam, a hypothetical college student, has become lost in cyberspace. He is an example of a growing number of real-life online addicts.

According to a study released by the American Psychological Association, 6 percent of all Internet users, approximately 11.5 million, show signs of Internet addiction. The fastest growing number of these online addicts are college students.

Net addiction has most recently been classified by specialists as a "behavioral addiction," unlike a chemical addiction. Other behavioral addictions include such activities as watching too much television or spending too much time gambling. Behavioral addictions can cause as many problems for college students as chemical addictions.

"I see that most of the time, students utilize the net for other activities beside education," said Dr. Kimberly S. Young, executive

director of The Center of Online Addiction at the University of Pittsburgh.

Young travels to college campuses to warn students and faculty of the dangers of online addiction. The signs are always the same: grades drop, social life can be measured on one hand and, most importantly, those hands spend all day typing away at keyboards, sending pleas-

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making friends online."

Young said these college students never fully integrate with the rest of the campus; they remain isolated with their computer.

Other aspects of Internet addiction include online gambling and stock-trading that have the potential to devastate bank accounts, and a growing number of Internet users are becoming aware of online trading or

computer addiction (obsessive computer game-playing or programming aspects of computer science)

The Center of Online Addiction offers these tips for beating online addiction before you have to go to a counselor:

- If the Internet is what you crave after getting out of class, try doing something different before going into cyberspace. Go to the cafeteria with some friends or try studying in the library for an hour before checking your e-mail.
- Time yourself by setting a watch alarm. Because Internet users tend to lose track of time, online addicts can benefit from having their time monitored for them.

Ironically, online addicts can also get help from "the beast" itself. Several chatrooms, newsgroups and mailing lists are available for people who can't seem to pull away from computers. Using a support-group system to help addicts, these resources can help addicts find and help each "beat" their obsession. There are even counselors who talk to addicts online, urging them to deal with their offline lives.

The website for The Center of On-Line Addiction at is a great online source for information on "Net addiction. The site offers information for "cyberwidows," victims of spousal online addiction, and gives explanations of various types of cyber addictions as well as giving real-life contacts for people looking for help. Those scared that they may be addicted can take a series of Internet addiction tests at this site to determine which type of addiction they may suffer.

into cyberspace.

Young said that grades often decline after students spend time using the Internet, whether it is chatting, playing fantasy games or posting to newsgroups, instead of doing their schoolwork.

"It becomes an addiction as they try to pull themselves away from the Internet to write a paper, study for a test or read for class," she said.

Young said the lure of the Internet lies in its opportunities for stimulating companionship, especially for college freshmen who may be missing that in real life.

"In several cases, [freshmen] are most vulnerable due to the abrupt adjustment of being away from home for the first time and the ease at

auction sites that are destroying college students' pocketbooks.

There have been attempts to classify these various types of "Net addictions. The Center for On-Line Addiction, a cyberspace resource for online addicts, suggests five main types of net addiction:

- cybersexual addictions (addictions to adult chat rooms or cyberporn)
- cyber-relationship addiction (online friendships made in chat rooms, MUDs or newsgroup that replace real-life friends and family)
- Net compulsions (compulsive online gambling, online auction addiction, and obsessive online trading)
- information overload (compulsive web surfing or database searches)

Colleges battered by Floyd still recovering

by Christine Tatum
TMS Campus
September 23, 1999

CHICAGO (TMS) — Nearly a week has passed since Hurricane Floyd battered the East Coast, dumping torrential rains between South Carolina and New York, but students at colleges in many coastal states are still feeling the storm's effects.

Severe flooding damaged several campuses — ruining libraries, destroying several prized possessions and forcing students to transfer temporarily to campuses less affected by the storm.

Officials at Rutgers University announced Thursday that they were considering sending a total of about 6,900 students on the university's Busch and Livingston campuses home until water supplies were replenished. Both schools remained without water Thursday.

Severe flooding overwhelmed and

shut down local water plants, prompting school officials and ROTC members on both campuses to distribute hundreds of bottles of water

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-Christine Hoffman
freshman at Lodi
campus of Felician

to students and to urge them to conserve water left in very limited supplies by taking fewer showers and trips to the bathroom. Both schools closed bathrooms in academic buildings and scattered a combined total of 140 portable units on campus to serve students.

Students on Rutgers' New Brunswick campus experienced fewer problems Thursday, but were advised to boil water before drinking it and to take sponge baths instead of showers. Students and faculty at Felician College in Lodi, N.J., lost what school officials have assessed at "millions of dollars" in books and valuable texts. Flood waters — some reaching as high as 8 feet — seeped into the campus' library, faculty offices and cafeteria. A school maintenance worker even caught a live carp near the dining hall.

No one on the Lodi campus was injured during the storm, but spirits were certainly dampened, said freshman Christine Hoffman, who lost all of the notes she had taken since the start of the new semester. "My professors say I can borrow their books, but it won't be easy," she said.

At St. John's College in Annapolis, Md., students worried about the damage done to The Liberty Tree, a beloved bit of state history. The 400-

year-old tulip poplar is in critical condition with a 15-foot crack in its trunk. Hurricane Floyd also loosened a large limb on the 96-foot tree, sending school officials scrambling to build a temporary fence that keeps people at least 50 feet away from it — a sad development, many students say, given that the college's commencement has been held under the tree for 200 years.

Tree experts advised the college to remove what is now a potential hazard, but Christopher Nelson, the college's president, said the Liberty Tree will stay.

"(It's) not just a tree," he said. "It's a symbol of our national identity."

In all, there were 13 Liberty Trees — one in each of the original Colonies — where the Sons of Liberty met and planned the American Revolution against the British. Maryland's is the last surviving Liberty Tree.

Harvard education for \$500? Web Site allows students to bid for college

by Christine Tatum
TMS Campus
September 22, 1999

CHICAGO (TMS) — A new Web site is offering students and their families a chance to bid on the price of a college education.

The site, *eCollegebid.org*, made its debut last week. So far, no colleges have agreed to participate, but Tedd D. Kelly, the site's creator, hopes to have 25 to 50 colleges signed up before the year's end. Applicants are not charged to use the site, but member institutions are expected to pay Kelly a yearly fee to participate.

How the site works: er providing a variety of information — including standardized scores, grade-point average and class rank in high school, intended major and desired geographic location — visitors to the site offer to pay a certain amount to attend

college. School officials review the bid and determine whether it's a fair offer given the applicant's attributes. If a college finds the bid acceptable, it responds to the applicant within 10 days. Any college accepting a bid promises to assemble a financial-aid package that meets all the applicant's costs for attending college. An applicant can accept or decline an offer, or press to negotiate further, but is asked to respond within 30 days.

On the Web site, Kelly — a consultant who has worked for more than 30 years with colleges on issues concerning student recruitment and enrollment — explains the type of schools he's hoping the site will attract. "They are mostly private colleges that are not 'household names' and do not often make the 'rankings' found in the popular media," he says. "They are, however, colleges that offer challenging academic programs of study,

and excellent athletic programs, and active student/social activities. Many of these colleges are simply not known outside their region."

Web-based bidding might be new, but wheeling and dealing for a college education isn't. Discounts for desirable students in the form of scholarships, grants and other forms of financial aid have risen at several colleges and universities. According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, some private colleges now give back to students as much as 40 percent of their tuition income in the form of scholarships and financial aid.

While the new site may encourage students to consider schools they wouldn't have otherwise, many college admissions officers caution that it's unwise to start a college search by focusing solely on cost — especially given that many private schools offer financial aid packages

significantly cutting the price of tuition. They also encourage students to consider the entire spectrum of an institution's offerings before deciding whether to attend.

"Focusing only on cost is a bad thing because state and federal assistance programs really have been set up to let students have a choice," said Wendy Branham, assistant director of admissions for the University of Indianapolis. "Sure, people have to decide how much an education is worth to them, and that is a very personal, individualized decision. But it's amazing how many students miss out on the smaller, more personalized attention they can get at smaller private schools because they've heard that bigger schools are cheaper. That's not always the case."

Bomb explodes on Florida A&M campus

by David Cox
Knight-Ridder Tribune
September 23, 1999

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Tensions ran high among students and administrators at Florida A & M University on Wednesday after a small bomb exploded and a caller spewing racial epithets warned that "this is just the beginning."

It's the second bombing at the historically black university in three weeks, and both are believed to be racially motivated.

No one was injured in either blast.

Aug. 31 bomb exploded is on the north end of the strip. Many students wondered whether one of their classroom buildings would be the next and why the area where students congregate the most is being targeted.

"He's systematically knocking off major portions of FAMU," said Bisrat Gebru, 19, of Orlando. "They ain't playing."

FAMU student affairs director Ronald Joe fielded questions from a tense crowd of students, who gathered at the plaza outside the school cafeteria at lunchtime.

"Why don't y'all put [a security



PHOTO BY PHIL SEARS - (KRT)

Police cars and a bomb van sit in front of a building on the Florida A&M University campus after a pipe bomb explosion last Wednesday. The bomb is the second in less than a month. School was closed for the rest of the day.

"Do you really think this... is the end...?" local ABC affiliate WTXX-TV quoted an unidentified man who called the station after the explosion. "This is just the beginning, brother."

Authorities believe the caller may be the same man who contacted the station on Aug. 31, warning about a bomb that went off in the building where FAMU President Frederick Humphries' office is located.

"We're not saying categorically it is related," said Tallahassee regional FBI supervisor Byron Price. "But you have to certainly consider that a possibility."

FAMU is Florida's largest historically black college. The apparent pipe bomb exploded in a men's restroom in a classroom building that houses the university's Navy ROTC and colleges of agriculture, science and technology.

Authorities have no suspects. Just last week, the FBI and FAMU officials pleaded with the public for any information about the first bombing in August and offered a reward of up to \$10,000.

The man first called the television station shortly before Wednesday's explosion at around 10:47 a.m. FAMU spokesman Eddie Jackson said university officials did not get word of the bomb before it exploded.

WTXX assignment editor Mike Roberts, who took the man's call, said he used a lot of profanity, including the word "nigger" and other racial remarks.

FAMU police received another bomb threat around 1 p.m. for one of the university's administration buildings. But a second bomb was not found as of late Wednesday.

Authorities are investigating the Aug. 31 bombing as being racially motivated because the man who called the television station made similar racist remarks as the caller Wednesday.

But unlike the bomb three weeks ago, Wednesday's bomb packed a much stronger explosion. FAMU's Jackson said. Damage from the blast was limited to some ceiling tiles and other fixtures in the bathroom, he said.

"It's more than disastrous. I don't know if I can find the proper words to express how furious we are," Jackson said.

The building where Wednesday's blast occurred is at the south end of a popular gathering strip for FAMU students called "The Set." The administration building where the

officer] in front of every building to stop this sicko," one student asked.

Azmar Dannel, a junior from Miami, suggested that the university was putting students' lives in danger by continuing to hold classes.

Gebru asked Joe: "What measures are going to be taken to make sure this doesn't happen again?"

"I can't tell you at this time," Joe said. "I would tell you to plan on coming to class Thursday."

FAMU officials closed the campus at 3 p.m., but it was reopened about two hours later. All classes were scheduled to resume Thursday. Two dormitories near the building where the bomb exploded were evacuated, but students returned to those dorms later in the evening.

Authorities roped off about a six-block section of the campus after the explosion in order to conduct their investigation.

Employees in the Navy ROTC program, whose offices are closest to the bathroom where the blast occurred, reported hearing a loud explosion and seeing smoke.

Esa Frazier, a secretary for the program, said Capt. Robert L. Cunningham was walking near the bathroom when the bomb went off. Frazier was in her office near the restroom when it exploded.

"When I stepped out into the hall," Capt. Cunningham said, "there's smoke coming out of the restroom. Get a flashlight. There's been an explosion," Frazier said. She then called the campus police.

FAMU President Humphries was in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday but urged authorities in a statement to use all of their resources to catch those responsible for the bombings.

The university set up a toll free hotline for parents and anyone else who wants to check on students or faculty at FAMU. The hotline number is 1-800-501-5352. State University System Chancellor Adam Herbert said everything possible is being done to protect students, faculty and staff on the 500-acre campus.

"I encourage anyone who has information regarding either of the bombings to contact law enforcement agencies immediately," Herbert said.

But no matter how diligent FAMU officials react to the two bombings, they cannot make the campus completely safe, said the FBI's Price.

"This is a big campus and this is a free society, so it's going to be hard to be vigilant and lucky at the same time," he said.