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# “LOG IN BACK THE REAL LIFE”

**2022-1-HU01-KA220-SCH-000087324**

## **Educational Material**



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## I. INTRODUCTION

It is crucial to consider the multifaceted components and understand the complex nature of digital resilience. **Addressing pathological internet addiction requires an overall strategy based solely on remedial expertise. It is important to make a clear distinction between common problems and pathological addiction which requires professional medical help which teachers and educators might not be able to perform adequately by themselves only.** The transitional impact of the internet on our relationships with the world requires better use of social environments, especially virtual environments, as it redefines the way we communicate, connect and interact with others.

In the contemporary digital age, the pervasive influence of the internet and virtual social environments have become an integral part of our daily lives. As technology continues to evolve, so do the dynamics of our online interactions, shaping the way we communicate, connect, and learn. This comprehensive guide aims to delve into various aspects of the digital environment, shed light on critical topics, and equip readers with the knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of the online world.

Understanding the nuances of the Internet and virtual social environments is crucial given their profound impact on interpersonal relationships, communication, and social dynamics. This guide will explore the transformative power of virtual spaces and their impact on individuals, communities, and educational institutions. Readers will gain insight into the positive aspects of online connection as well as the challenges and risks associated with virtual interactions.





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The next segments will concentrate on particular facets of the digital landscape and tackle the issues that emerge from a growing reliance on technology. Each instalment will provide a thorough examination of important topics that are intertwined with the digital world, ranging from internet addiction and video game addiction to the role of educators in enhancing online safety, social media literacy, and cyberbullying prevention. For instructors, there are several lesson plans that cover every topic.

## UNLOCKING DIGITAL LITERACY: LESSON PLANS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE

Lesson plans are the cornerstone of successful instruction in the always changing field of digital literacy. When educators negotiate the complicated web of themes spanning from the internet and virtual social settings to problems like internet addiction, cyberbullying, and social media literacy, a well-prepared lesson plan becomes an invaluable tool. Lesson plans with the following elements have been created for teachers in this study for each topic, making it more likely that instructors would use concerns connected to digitalization in the classroom.

### Planned Learning:

Using lesson plans as a guide, teachers can approach teaching difficult subjects in an orderly and planned manner. Every issue, from the fundamentals of the Internet to the complex discussions surrounding video game addiction, has to be thoroughly examined. A lesson plan outlines the goals of the class, the main ideas, and the instructional techniques that will help teachers and students navigate the intricacies of the digital world.





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### Set Clear Goals:

It is critical for teachers to have well-defined goals. For these subjects, lesson plans offer a thorough synopsis of the knowledge and skills that students should acquire. Well-defined goals foster targeted and intentional learning, whether the focus is on preventing cyberbullying or diagnosing online addiction.

### Involvement and Communication:

To keep kids interested in the digital age, lesson plans must include interactive components. Lesson plans offer a framework for promoting active engagement, from group talks on virtual social dynamics to practical training on online safety techniques. Students' total learning experience is enhanced by practical applications, such real-world case studies, which let them apply theory to real-world situations.

### Holistic Scope:

A thorough approach is necessary due to the wide range of applications of digital literacy. Lesson plans make sure that every topic, including social media literacy and the responsibility of educators in stopping cyberbullying, receives enough emphasis. With this comprehensive approach, students may get a comprehensive comprehension of the digital world and be motivated to use it properly.

### Adaptability:

In the ever-changing world of technology, adaptability is crucial. The adaptable frameworks provided by lesson plans allow them to be modified to meet the changing requirements of both students and learning settings. By adding the most recent advancements, pertinent case studies, and emerging trends into their





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lesson plans, educators may maintain content effectiveness and currency.

### **Evaluation and Assessment:**

Lesson plans assist teachers in creating tests that accurately gauge students' comprehension and implementation of digital literacy principles. makes it easier to incorporate assessment techniques that are in line with learning goals through written reflections, project presentations, class discussions, and lesson planning.

### **Encouraging Lifetime Digital Skills:**

Outside of the classroom, lesson plans have a direct impact on the development of lifetime digital skills. Teachers foster resilience and digital citizenship by tackling problems like internet addiction and social media literacy and giving pupils the tools they need to use the digital world responsibly.

Lesson plans are therefore more than simply instructional aids; they are strategic blueprints that enable teachers to enable their pupils to reach the full potential of digital literacy. Teachers may successfully traverse the intricacies of the digital world and guarantee that pupils have the knowledge and abilities necessary to thrive in it by using well-structured strategies.





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## CHAPTER CONTENT

### **Chapter 1: Internet and Virtual Social Environment**

In this section, the basic concepts of the internet and virtual social environments are examined. Examines its effects on communication, relationships and social structures.

### **Chapter 2: Internet Addiction**

In this section, where the phenomenon of internet addiction is discussed, the definition, symptoms and consequences of internet addiction are discussed in detail. Preventive measures and interventions to address this growing concern will be discussed.

### **Chapter 3: Teachers as Supporters of Internet Safety**

In this section, where the vital role of educators is emphasized, the importance of internet security in educational environments is emphasized. Practical strategies for teachers to create a safe online environment will be explored.

### **Chapter 4: Social Media Literacy and Applications in Education**

In this section, the concept of social media literacy is discussed and its impact on education is evaluated. Strategies for integrating social media literacy into educational practices and promoting responsible use will be discussed.

### **Chapter 5: Video Game Addiction**

This chapter examines the addictive nature of video games and discusses the psychological and behavioural effects of excessive gaming. It also provides information on preventive measures and interventions.





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## **Chapter 6: Teachers as Preventers of Cyberbullying**

Addressing the common problem of cyberbullying, this chapter outlines the role of educators in preventing and addressing digital harassment. Strategies to create a safe online learning environment and promote digital citizenship will be explored.

### **CASE STUDIES:**

Real-world case studies will be presented to illustrate practical applications of the concepts discussed in each chapter. These cases will offer valuable insight into the challenges and successes of navigating the digital landscape.

### **REFERENCES:**

The guide will conclude with a comprehensive reference section that provides readers with a selected list of authoritative sources to further explore the topics covered in this guide.





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## II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

### Participants should discover and comprehend the digital world

This book offers a comprehensive approach to understanding the digital world. It carefully examines certain aspects of our digital environment as well as the difficulties brought on by our growing reliance on technology. Each chapter offers a thorough analysis of crucial themes, including internet addiction, video game addiction, the crucial role that educators play in online safety, social media literacy, and the prevention of cyberbullying. This book seeks to foster a thorough grasp of resilience and digital literacy by serving as a guide for educators, students, and digital influencers. Through the promotion of methodical education, real-world implementations, and continuous research, this manual helps people become competent digital citizens, securely traverse the internet, and participate in responsible online communities.

### Participants should learn to use lesson plans and understand their significance in teaching digital literacy

Given that digital literacy is a constantly changing skill, lesson plans are becoming a valuable addition to a teacher's toolkit. A plethora of thoughtfully designed lesson plans, thoughtfully organized for teachers, address the vast array of subjects covered in this book. By offering direction on planned learning, goal-setting, promoting active engagement, offering a holistic viewpoint, accommodating changing surroundings, enabling evaluation, and fostering the development of lifetime digital skills, these plans work as guidelines.





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### Participants should be able to connect theory and practice with regard to digital literacy

Real-world case studies are carefully weaved into the story to provide tangible applications of the basic ideas covered, strengthening the theoretical underpinnings. These instances provide the reader with essential insights into the struggles and victories encountered in traversing the complicated terrain of the digital world, so acting as a link between theoretical concepts and real-life circumstances.

Fundamentally, this guide gives readers the resources they need to thrive in the digital world in addition to illuminating its complexity. By fusing theoretical knowledge with practical experience, it goes beyond conventional teaching methods and guarantees that students not only understand the digital world but also become resourceful and accountable members of the always changing online community.

Learners should be able to do the following.

#### Chapter 1: Virtual Social Environments and the Internet

The training's attendees will comprehend and be able to articulate the fundamental ideas that underpin the Internet. They will be able to differentiate between the several online virtual social situations that are available to Identifying Fundamental Internet Concepts.

**Proficiency in impact analysis:** They possess the ability to assess the ways in which virtual social environments impact interpersonal communication. They will be able





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to pinpoint the essential elements influencing connections and interactions on the internet.

**Assessing the benefits and drawbacks of online communication:** They will be able to weigh the pros and downsides of interacting virtually and have a comprehensive understanding of the effects of online communication.

**Recognize and explain how the internet has transformed modern social relationships:** Also, they will be able to acknowledge how online platforms have enabled the evolution of social connections. They will be able to recognize the impact of the internet on social relationships.

## Chapter 2: Internet Addiction

Learning Goals for the Section on Internet Addiction: These learning goals include the concept of internet addiction, its social and psychological effects, risk factors, warning signs, potential therapies, and preventive measures in order to help students get a thorough grasp of the subject.

Clearly defining Internet addiction and enhancing people's capacity to recognize its telltale signs are crucial steps towards helping others overcome their addiction.

**Examining the impact on psychology and society:** participants will be able to examine and comprehend the wider societal ramifications of internet addiction by taking into account how it affects social dynamics and communities. We will examine and identify the psychological ramifications and impacts of excessive internet use on people's mental health and well-being.

**Finding risk factors and warning signs:** A number of risk factors will be recognized and understood as they relate to the emergence of Internet addiction. You'll learn to spot red flags that might point to problematic internet use in other people or yourself.





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**Examine treatments and preventive strategies:** This section will conduct research and analysis on current therapeutic interventions and treatments for internet addiction sufferers. Additionally, it will recommend and study preventive strategies that emphasize educational, psychological, and technological modalities.

### Chapter 3: Internet Addiction: Teacher as Developers of Internet Security

Participants will be able to discuss how to develop tactics that will motivate children to use the internet in an ethical and responsible manner. The notion of digital citizenship must be advanced through the accentuation of conscientious online conduct and moral engagement.

The chapter's learning objectives are to provide students a thorough grasp of the value of internet security, clarify the duties of educators, offer doable solutions for enhancing security, and help students develop a sense of accountability and digital citizenship.

Recognizing the Significance of Internet Security: Acquire a thorough comprehension of the significance of internet security within the framework of an educational setting. There will be a raise in awareness of the potential impact that compromised Internet security may have on students' well-being and the educational process.

Specifying the Function of Teachers in Establishing a Secure Online Environment. Give a precise explanation of the roles and duties that educators have in establishing a secure online learning environment. We will underline and clarify the





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leadership role that educators have in creating a culture of security and accountability in the online world.

We are going to use realistic strategies to boost internet safety. Gained will be the capacity to put specific and useful strategies into practice to improve internet security in learning settings. Participants will be able to modify security strategies to meet the unique requirements and difficulties of the educational setting while taking administrative, pedagogical, and technical factors into consideration. Participants will be able to encourage students to use the internet responsibly.

#### **Chapter 4: Social Media Literacy and its Applications in Education**

The purpose of these learning goals is to provide students with the necessary tools to comprehend, evaluate, incorporate, and encourage responsible usage of social media as well as to form a comprehensive understanding of social media literacy in educational settings.

Participants should gain a thorough understanding of the notion of social media literacy, including knowledge of its essential elements and how it relates to the educational setting. They should be able to acknowledge social media literacy as an essential educational ability in the digital age for students.

Assessing social media's beneficial and harmful impact on students:

- Positive Effects: Determine and assess the advantages that social media has for students, keeping in mind factors like connection, cooperation, and information sharing.
- Negative Effects: Examine and critically assess the possible harm that social media may do to kids, taking into account concerns about distraction, privacy, and cyberbullying.





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Formulating integration techniques for digital literacy:

Developing methods for integrating social media literacy into teaching procedures in a way that is consistent with curricular goals and learning outcomes. Examine a range of pedagogical strategies and techniques to successfully integrate social media literacy into the classroom.

Promoting ethical and responsible use of social media:

Creating techniques to encourage responsible behaviour that will motivate students to use social media in an ethical and responsible manner. Establishing and disseminating explicit ethical rules to students that prioritize empathy, respect, and responsible online involvement.

### Chapter 5: Video Game Addiction

Upon completion of this chapter, learners should be able to include the definition, psychological impacts, risk factors, prevention, and intervention techniques of video game addiction in an effort to provide students a thorough grasp of the subject.

**Describe the definition and signs of video game addiction:** creating a comprehensive and unambiguous definition of video game addiction that includes all of its essential components. It will be possible to learn how to identify and articulate the characteristics that set video game addiction apart from regular gaming.





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We will look at the behavioural and psychological effects of excessive gaming. We will look into and study the psychological repercussions of excessive gaming on people, including how it affects their emotions, mental health, and cognitive function. We will examine the behavioural effects of extended and heavy video game playing, taking everyday activities and social interactions into account.

**Determine the risk factors and warning indications of addiction to video games:**

Recognize and understand the many risk factors that lead to the emergence of video game addiction. It will be possible to recognize telltale indicators of dangerously high levels of video game use in oneself or others.

**Putting prevention and intervention strategies into practice:** By placing a strong emphasis on awareness-raising, education, and responsible gaming, Proactive Preventive Strategies aim to stop video game addiction before it starts. For existing cases of video game addiction, intervention strategies and procedures will be developed with consideration for both individual and community-based approaches.

**Chapter 6: Teachers as Cyberbully Preventers**

The purpose of the learning objectives for the chapter "Teachers as Cyberbullying Preventers" is to give students the information and abilities they need to recognize, stop, and deal with instances of cyberbullying. It also emphasizes the critical role that educators play in fostering a welcoming and safe online learning environment.

Gain a thorough grasp of the idea of cyberbullying, including its different forms and expressions, and learn about its prevalence. Acquire knowledge about the





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frequency and significance of cyberbullying in academic and wider virtual environments.

Understanding the role of teachers in preventing and combating cyberbullying: Understanding the role of educators in crisis management in effectively responding to cyberbullying situations and promoting a safe and supportive environment. Acknowledging and defining the specific responsibilities that educators have in preventing and addressing cyberbullying incidents. The following topics will be covered: proactive strategies to stop cyberbullying incidents in the online learning environment, preventive measures to create a safe learning environment, and promoting an inclusive and respectful digital space by encouraging positive interactions among students as inclusive practices.

Emphasizing responsible, ethical, and courteous online behaviour will help students develop digital citizenship skills. Other goals include clarifying the implementation of educational initiatives that raise students' awareness of the consequences of their online actions and help them develop a sense of responsibility in the digital sphere.





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## Educational Material

### CHAPTER 1:

### INTERNET AND VIRTUAL SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Developed by:  
**ARDA BERATUNG & BILDUNG GmbH**



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## CHAPTER 1: INTERNET AND VIRTUAL SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

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## 1. Introduction

It is crucial to understand the complex nature of digital addiction, given its multifaceted components. Addressing pathological addiction requires a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond the expertise of teachers alone. It is important to make a clear distinction between common difficulties and pathological dependency to determine the extent to which educators can contribute effectively. Therefore, there is an urgent need to increase the awareness of students and faculty on digital issues. The transformative impact of the internet on our interactions with the world requires better understanding, especially as virtual social environments redefine the way we communicate, connect and interact with others.

**Importance of the internet:** The internet has become a global platform for information exchange and communication. It has facilitated instant communication through various mediums like email, instant messaging, and video calls (Castells, 2001). This has brought people closer despite geographical distances.

**Virtual social environments:** Virtual social environments, including social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, have become integral to modern life. These platforms enable individuals to create profiles, share content, and interact with others virtually (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

**Positive aspects:** Virtual social environments offer numerous benefits. They allow people to maintain relationships across borders, connect with like-minded individuals, and share experiences (Dunbar, 2016). Online forums and communities also provide spaces for learning and information sharing (Wasko & Faraj, 2005).

**Negative aspects:** However, virtual social environments also have their downsides. Privacy concerns arise due to data collection and online tracking (Lyon, 2003).





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Cyberbullying and online harassment have become prevalent issues (Kowalski et al., 2014), and misinformation spreads quickly through online channels (Vosoughi et al., 2018).

**Impact on relationships:** Virtual interactions can affect personal relationships. While they help maintain long-distance relationships (Hertlein et al., 2012), they may also lead to misunderstandings due to lack of non-verbal cues (Spitzberg & Hoobler, 2002). Online connections may sometimes lack the depth of face-to-face interactions (Kraut et al., 1998).

**Digital identity:** Virtual social environments allow users to create and manage their digital identities (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). People curate their online presence, presenting a certain image to the world.

**Online communities:** Online communities, formed around shared interests, provide platforms for people to engage with others who have similar passions (Ridings & Gefen, 2004). These communities foster collaboration and knowledge sharing.

**Digital well-being:** Balancing virtual and offline life is crucial for digital well-being (Przybylski et al., 2013). Setting boundaries for screen time and managing the impact of constant connectivity is essential.

**Future trends:** The future of the internet and virtual social environments may involve more immersive experiences through virtual and augmented reality (Dede, 2009). Additionally, advancements in artificial intelligence could shape how we interact online (Culnan & Williams, 2009).

The internet and virtual social environments have fundamentally altered how we communicate and engage with the world. Understanding their impact, both positive and negative, is essential as we navigate this interconnected digital landscape.





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## 2. Learning Objectives

**The following subjects will be covered in this learning module.**

### **Recognize the internet's development:**

Acquire a thorough understanding of the Internet's historical growth, from its creation to the present. Examine significant dates, technical developments, and the internet's revolutionary effects on a range of societal issues.

**Examine internet applications in daily life:** Explain and evaluate the different ways that the Internet is used in daily life. Describe and evaluate the different ways that the Internet is used in daily life. Learn how the Internet is transforming modern life in terms of trade, entertainment, information access, and communications.

**Assessing social networks' effects:** to investigate social networks' function and significance in the digital era. Examine how social media platforms affect relationships, communication, and the spread of information.

**Examine how people act in the real and virtual worlds:** comprehending the dynamics of behaviour in digital and physical surroundings in humans. Examine the psychological facets of online interactions, taking into account the function of technology, social dynamics, and the effect of anonymity.

**Examine privacy and ethics on the internet:** Talk about moral concerns related to social media and internet use. Consider the meaning of privacy in the digital era and the ramifications of disclosing personal information online.

**Examine case studies:** Take part in the examination of actual case studies pertaining to human behaviour, applications, and Internet growth. Use critical thinking abilities to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of various internet-related situations.

**Boost your digital citizenship capabilities:** to increase knowledge about morally and responsibly conducting digital citizenship. Encourage students to acquire the





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knowledge and abilities necessary to behave responsibly online, show empathy for others, and make valuable contributions to the online community.

**Enhance critical thinking and problem solving:** By assessing the societal effects of internet advancements, one can bolster one's critical thinking abilities. Encourage problem solving by investigating solutions for issues pertaining to social media, the Internet, and online behaviour of people.

**Promote reflective analysis:** Promote reflective thinking among students by asking them to evaluate how they use the internet and behave. Encourage conversation on how technology is changing and how it affects people and society.

**Create effective communication skills:** Engage in online debates and group projects to hone your communication abilities. Stress the value of courteous and transparent communication in both offline and online contexts.

**Create lifelong learning habits:** Install a curiosity for ongoing education on advancements in upcoming technology and the Internet. Urge pupils to remain knowledgeable, adjust to technology advancements, and keep exploring the ever-changing digital world.

**Get students ready for responsible digital citizenship:** Give them the information and abilities they need to grow into ethical, responsible, and knowledgeable digital citizens. Give pupils the tools they need to appropriately navigate the Internet's intricacies and to be conscious of its societal influence.





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### 3. The Development of the Internet and its Applications in Daily Life

Keywords:

1. ARPANET
2. Social networks
3. Inter-network communication
4. Personal exposure
5. Media psychology
6. Visual alphabet
7. Online environments
8. Visual communication

The development of the internet has brought about a revolutionary change in the way we live, work, communicate, and access information. From its origins as a research project to its current status as a global network, the internet has become an indispensable part of daily life.

**Early Stages of the Internet:** In the 1960s, computers were bulky and stationary, and the only ways to access the data they held were either physically visiting the computer or ordering magnetic computer tapes to be sent via regular mail. However, as it evolved, the internet transitioned into a platform for sharing information and connecting people.

The intensifying Cold War served as a catalyst for the development of the Internet. The Soviet Union's Sputnik satellite launch prompted the U.S. Defense Department to think about how information could be shared even in the event of a nuclear assault. Its initial purpose was to create a decentralized communication network that could survive a nuclear attack. As a result, the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, or ARPANET, was eventually created. This network eventually





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gave rise to the Internet as we know it today. Although ARPANET was a huge success, only a few academic and research institutions with contracts with the Defense Department could join. Other networks were established to facilitate information sharing in response to this (Abbate, 2000).

Historians broadly consider that the internet which we know today had its official introduction on January 1, 1983. Before this, there was no common method for the different computer networks to communicate with one another. Transfer Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) is a newly established communications protocol. This made it possible for various computer types on various networks to "talk" to one another. It can be thought of in such a way that the language of the internet was provided with grammar and spelling rules, which made it possible to communicate with each other. The Internet was created when the Defense Data Network and ARPANET switched to the TCP/IP standard on January 1, 1983. A universal language could now link all networks.

**Key developments:** Several key developments shaped the evolution of the internet:

- **World Wide Web:** Tim Berners-Lee's invention of the World Wide Web in 1989 marked a major milestone. It introduced a user-friendly interface for accessing information through web pages (Berners-Lee, 1999).
- **Commercialization:** The 1990s saw the commercialization of the internet, with the launch of commercial ISPs and the rise of e-commerce platforms (Cortada, 2000).
- **Social Media:** The 2000s witnessed the emergence of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, transforming the way people connect





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and share (boyd & Ellison, 2007).

- **Mobile Internet:** The proliferation of smartphones in the 2010s brought internet access to people's pockets, enabling constant connectivity (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

**Applications in Daily Life:** The internet's applications in daily life are far-reaching:

1. **Communication:** Email, instant messaging, and video calls enable real-time communication irrespective of distance (Castells, 2001).
2. **Information Access:** The internet is a vast repository of information, allowing users to research, learn, and stay informed (Hargittai, 2002).
3. **E-Commerce:** Online shopping and banking have become integral to modern consumer behavior (Turban et al., 2008).
4. **Social Networking:** Social media platforms facilitate connections, enabling individuals to share updates, photos, and connect with friends and family (boyd & Ellison, 2007).
5. **Education:** Online courses and e-learning platforms provide accessible education opportunities (Anderson & Dron, 2010).
6. **Work and Collaboration:** Remote work, virtual meetings, and collaborative tools like Google Workspace have transformed how businesses operate (Bélanger & Watson-Manheim, 2006)

**Challenges and concerns:** Despite its benefits, the internet also poses challenges:

- **Privacy:** The collection and use of personal data raise concerns about privacy and surveillance (Lyon, 2003).
- **Cybersecurity:** The increasing frequency of cyberattacks highlights the need for robust cybersecurity measures (Dutta & Mia, 2010).





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- **Digital Divide:** The digital divide persists, with unequal access to the internet across regions and demographics (Warschauer, 2003).
- **Fake news:** It has become far harder for individuals to distinguish true information from fake news. Therefore, the potential the internet provides for the dissemination of conspiracy theories and false information should not be underestimated.

The development of the internet has had a profound impact on daily life. Its applications have transformed the way we communicate, access information, conduct business, and interact with the world. As the internet continues to evolve, understanding its implications and addressing its challenges are crucial for a digitally connected society.



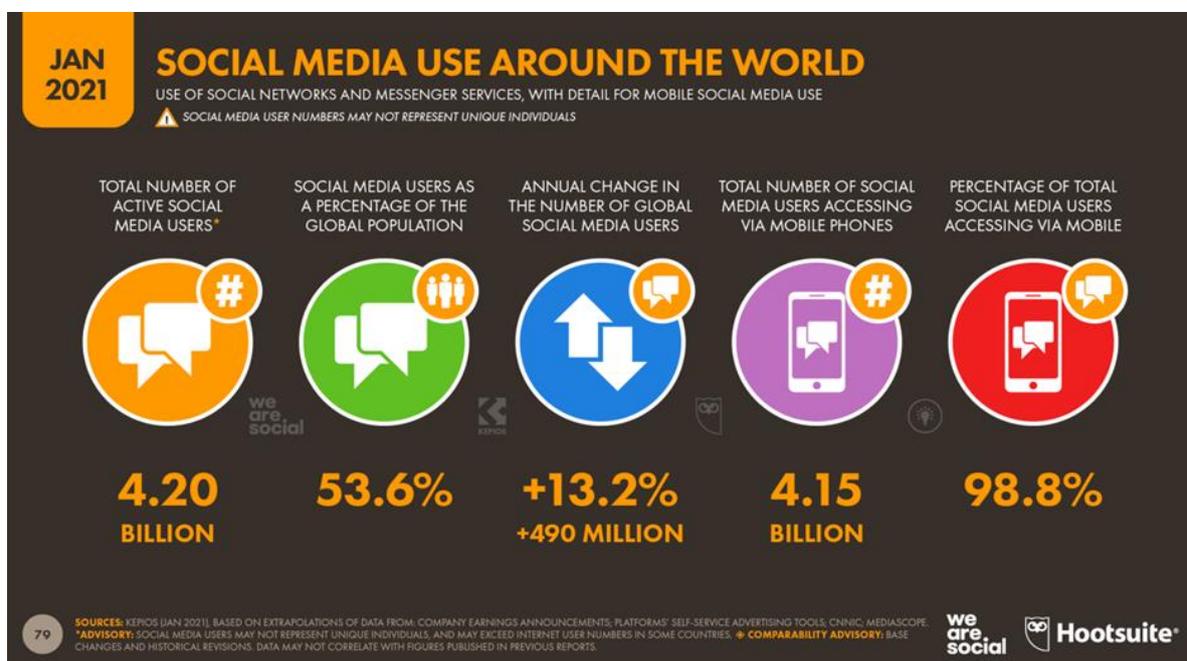


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## Internet and Virtual Social Media

### The Development of the Internet and Its Applications in Daily Life

## Social Media Use around the World



Certainly, the impact of social media on global communication and interaction is undeniable.

- **Global Social Media Usage:** Approximately 4.2 billion individuals, which is roughly 54% of the world's population, actively engage with social media platforms.
- **Yearly Growth:** In the year 2021, there was a notable 13% increase in social media usage when compared to the previous year. This growth contributed to the addition of over 500 million new users within a span of just 12 months.





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These statistics highlight the widespread influence of social media on modern society. Its ability to connect people worldwide, enable communication, and serve as a platform for sharing information and experiences has resulted in its significant adoption and continuous expansion.

### Which Social Media Application is Most Used?

The proliferation of smartphones on a global scale has significantly contributed to the widespread adoption of social media platforms, leading to an unprecedented increase in their user base. With smartphones becoming an integral part of modern life, people from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations now have access to these platforms, amplifying their reach and impact.

According to the latest statistics as of September, the sheer scale of social media engagement is truly remarkable. Facebook boasts a daily active user base of 2.085 billion users, indicating its continued dominance in the realm of social networking (Statista, 2023). YouTube, a platform known for its video-sharing capabilities, has amassed 122 million daily active users, highlighting the platform's ability to captivate a vast audience (Shephard, 2023). WhatsApp, with 2.78 billion unique users, has become a staple for instant messaging, transcending borders and connecting individuals worldwide (Ceci, 2023). Instagram, a visual-centric platform, has drawn 1.036 billion users, emphasizing its role in visual storytelling and self-expression (Dixon, 2023).

Additionally, the immense popularity of Facebook Messenger is evident with 1.3 billion active users, underlining its significance as a dedicated messaging app





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(Kemp, 2023). Lastly, the relatively newer entrant in the social media landscape, TikTok, has managed to captivate a staggering 0.834 billion active users, demonstrating its rapid rise as a platform for short-form video content (Ceci, 2023).

These statistics underscore the profound influence of social media platforms and their integration with smartphone technology. As the world continues to embrace digital connectivity, the impact of these platforms on communication, information dissemination, and cultural exchange remains undeniable.

The preferences of teenagers in the realm of social media are continually evolving, with certain platforms taking the lead in popularity within this demographic. Presently, YouTube stands as the foremost choice among teenagers, captivating their attention with its diverse array of video content and channels. Following closely behind is Instagram, a platform that emphasizes visual storytelling and creative expression, making it an appealing choice for young users.

In recent times, TikTok has emerged as a noteworthy contender within the teenage demographic, particularly within the age range of 16 to 24. This platform has gained substantial traction as the fastest-growing influential app in this age group. Its unique format of short-form video content, coupled with its ease of use and algorithm-driven content discovery, has contributed to its rapid rise in popularity. The interactive nature of TikTok allows users to not only consume content but also actively participate in creative challenges and trends.

As the social media landscape continues to evolve, teenagers' preferences are influenced by factors such as content diversity, engagement features, and trends. YouTube's extensive library of videos spanning various genres, from educational





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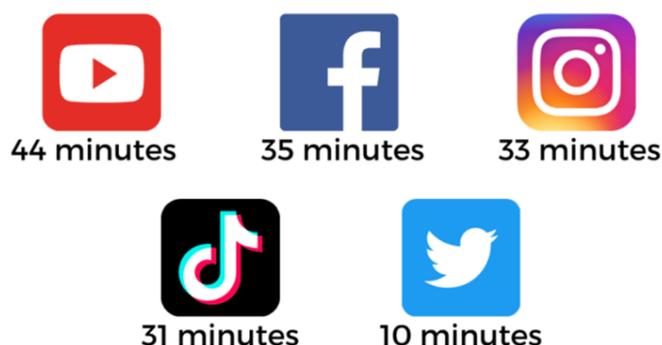
content to entertainment, contributes to its lasting appeal. Instagram's focus on visually appealing content and the ability to curate personal profiles allows teenagers to express themselves in a visually captivating manner.

TikTok's ascendancy is indicative of the dynamic nature of social media trends. Its innovative format and emphasis on user-generated content have led to its swift rise among teenagers. However, the popularity of YouTube and Instagram, with their established user bases and familiar features, continues to assert their influence.

In essence, the social media preferences of teenagers reflect their desire for engaging, relatable, and visually stimulating content. While YouTube and Instagram maintain their prominent positions, TikTok's rapid growth showcases the

potential for new platforms to resonate with younger audiences.

### Daily Time Spent On Social Media Per Platform



FameMass.com





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The evolution of the internet and its influence on social interaction is a fascinating journey that spans decades. Starting from the ARPANET, often considered the prehistoric ancestor of the internet, to the advent of the first social network, the story is one of innovation, connectivity, and transformation.

The journey of the internet, from its origins as ARPANET to the emergence of the first social network, has been a remarkable evolution shaped by the contributions of numerous scientists, programmers, and engineers. This transformative process has led to the internet as we know it today, impacting every corner of the globe and fundamentally changing the way we live, communicate, and interact.

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ARPANET, funded by the US military in 1969, can be considered the pioneering prototype of the modern internet. Over the years, the internet has transcended its initial identity and name. From a handful of computer scientists, the user base has grown to a staggering 1.5 billion individuals. The reach of the network has expanded globally, transcending geographical borders and touching lives across cultures and continents.

Initially affiliated with only five centres including institutions like UCLA, Stanford, UC Santa Barbara, University of Utah, and BBN, ARPANET's influence expanded in 1983 with the separation of MILNET, a subset serving declassified military communications. The transformation from ARPANET to internet occurred in 1984, connecting not only research labs but also homeowners, and corporate labs.





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However, ARPANET faced limitations in portability due to its reliance on massive, fixed links. Pioneering computer network visionary Paul Baran sought a solution for a decentralized and resilient communication system, eventually developing a mesh network that split messages into blocks for faster transmission. This breakthrough led to the creation of a nationwide experimental packet network.

From its stagnant beginnings of linking four computers in university research labs, the internet has burgeoned to connect over 440 million computers directly and millions more through innovative addressing schemes. By 2018, an estimated 4.021 billion users were accessing the internet, and approximately 3.196 billion were using social networks. Furthermore, around 5.135 billion individuals globally owned smartphones.

Europe stands at the forefront of internet prevalence, boasting a rate of 76%, exceeding the global average. With 49% of European citizens utilizing social platforms, mobile device adoption rates are exceptionally high, with the number of smartphones nearly surpassing the region's population.

In light of these developments, the internet's impact on communication, work patterns, and leisure activities is expected to be profound. Adapting to the rhythm of daily life, the internet has permeated various spheres, from education and work to entertainment and information seeking. This remarkable evolution continues to reshape society, making the internet an integral and ubiquitous aspect of modern existence.

### **The Evolution of Communication in the Internet Age**

The Internet's evolution has been profoundly shaped by virtual communication, leading to a transformative impact on how people communicate and interact.





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Brands like Yahoo!, Messenger, MySpace, and Facebook have played pivotal roles in this development. Among them, Facebook, particularly popular among younger generations, has spurred significant shifts in communication dynamics, placing greater emphasis on images rather than written words. This transformation can be analysed and discussed through the following key aspects:

The emergence of platforms like Facebook has led to a shift in how messages are conveyed. Traditional written alphabets are being replaced by visual alphabets. This change has reshaped the structure and content of messages, with visuals becoming the primary means of conveying meaning. On platforms like Facebook, images often carry the weight of meaning in communication. Messages centred around images tend to be emotionally charged. As a consequence, communication is becoming increasingly emotive. The author foresees a future where the visual alphabet will entirely replace the written one, resulting in actions and thoughts being encapsulated by emotions, enhancing the depth and nuance of communication.

The integration of images into communication has led to a reduction in vocabulary usage. With images becoming a central part of expression, the need for an extensive vocabulary diminishes. Communication could rely on a more limited number of words as we harness the power of images to convey complex ideas and emotions. The visual nature of communication is highlighted by phenomena such as "Emoji News on The Late Late Show," which demonstrates the ubiquity and impact of images in modern discourse. As the Internet's influence continues to expand, these changes are becoming integral to daily communication. Platforms like Facebook symbolize a shift from traditional textual communication to a more visually driven, emotive, and efficient way of interacting.





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## The Internet's Profound Impact on Communication: The Rise of Emojis

One of the most significant and captivating effects of the Internet on our daily communication is the remarkable popularity and, in some cases, the substitution of language by a novel form of expression: emojis.

Professor Vyv Evans, a linguist at Bangor University, sheds light on this transformation by pointing to the emergence of a visual communication system that has rapidly gained prominence, particularly in Japan. This visual language owes its meteoric rise to the influence of emojis.

Emojis have revolutionized how we communicate online, offering a concise yet expressive means of conveying emotions, ideas, and actions. This phenomenon is closely intertwined with the rise of digital communication platforms and the internet's interconnected global community.

The rapid adoption of emojis reflects a cultural shift towards more visual and emotionally resonant communication. In a world where people are increasingly seeking efficient and relatable ways to communicate across languages and cultures, emojis serve as a universal language. Their impact extends beyond mere text augmentation to creating a new mode of expression that transcends linguistic barriers.

As emojis continue to evolve and diversify, their influence on communication remains undeniable. From social media interactions to text messaging, emojis have become an integral part of how we convey meaning and connect with others in the digital age. This dynamic transformation underscores the profound and far-reaching influence of the Internet on the very fabric of human communication.





Symbols used in the past vs. the present.

### The Evolution of Emojis: Ancient Languages to Modern Icons

The adoption of emojis as a visual language has drawn intriguing parallels with ancient forms of communication, notably the hieroglyphs of Ancient Egypt. This progression from ancient hieroglyphs to contemporary emojis underscores the enduring human fascination with symbol-based communication.

Professor Evans compares emojis to the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, suggesting that emojis, like hieroglyphs, are a form of visual language that has gradually evolved over centuries. The analogy extends to the idea that emojis, much like hieroglyphs, convey practical information through images. However, this also implies certain limitations in conveying complex ideas. Hieroglyphs, despite their artistic and mythological significance, did not foster the development of a rich literary culture. They excelled in conveying practical information but were less suited for in-depth expression.



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The comparison between emojis and hieroglyphs highlights the trade-off between the concise and immediate communication that symbols afford and the nuanced depth that written words provide. Emojis, while numerous in their variations, are often used in a limited range of expressions, particularly laughing emojis. This pattern of usage mirrors earlier research findings indicating that users tend to gravitate towards a select subset of emojis.

The proliferation of emojis, numbering over 2,784 by February 2018, speaks to their ubiquity and relevance in contemporary digital communication. Yet, the debate between the convenience of visual communication and the versatility of written expression continues to unfold. The transition from hieroglyphs to emojis underscores the timeless human quest for innovative ways to communicate, bridging the ancient and modern through the evolving nature of language and expression.



Graph of emojis mainly used by English speakers





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#### 4. Internet & Social Networks

Without a doubt, the absence of the internet would have an immense impact on our daily lives, reshaping the way we access information, communicate, and conduct various activities. The internet has become an integral part of modern life, profoundly altering the way we gather information, connect with others, and carry out tasks. In a world without the internet, seeking information would require significantly more effort and time. The convenience of a quick Google search for any query would be replaced by trips to libraries, reliance on encyclopedias, and consulting physical directories. The rapid accessibility to a vast range of information within milliseconds would no longer be at our fingertips.

The internet's role as a global communication platform would be sorely missed. The instant connectivity and communication offered by email, social media, and instant messaging would be replaced by traditional postal services, telephone calls, and face-to-face interactions. The ability to maintain relationships across great distances, as well as the convenience of real-time communication, would be greatly compromised. In the absence of the internet, the way we conduct business, research, and education would undergo significant changes. Online shopping, e-commerce, and digital transactions would not exist in their current forms. Businesses would rely heavily on physical storefronts and traditional advertising methods.

Moreover, the concept of a "small world" fostered by the internet would fade away. Global news and events would take longer to reach us, and international communication would be limited, affecting cultural exchange and globalization efforts. The ease of finding information, from historical facts to booking movie





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tickets, is a luxury that the internet has bestowed upon us. Additionally, the internet's power to bridge gaps and facilitate communication across distances is unparalleled.

In essence, the internet has revolutionized the way we access information, communicate, and conduct various activities. Its absence would require us to revert to more traditional methods, altering the pace and convenience of modern life. While the internet has undoubtedly brought numerous benefits, it's essential to consider the potential challenges and adjustments that would arise in a world without it.

### ► Business and Advertising

Almost all businesses these days have their own websites where they advertise and promote. Today, the internet is considered an important tool in every marketing campaign.



Undoubtedly, the internet has revolutionized the landscape of business and advertising, ushering in new paradigms and strategies for promoting products and





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services. The emergence of the digital age has transformed the way businesses connect with their target audience and market their offerings.

In the modern business landscape, having a strong online presence is essential. The majority of businesses now have their own dedicated websites, acting as digital storefronts where they showcase their products or services. These websites serve as a virtual hub for customers to learn about offerings, compare options, and make informed decisions. The ability to provide detailed information, images, and even interactive elements enhances the customer's experience.

One of the most significant changes brought about by the internet is in the realm of advertising. Traditional forms of advertising, such as print media and television commercials, have been complemented and often superseded by digital advertising. The internet offers a range of targeted advertising options, enabling businesses to reach specific demographics with precision. Online ads can be tailored based on user behavior, preferences, and location, resulting in higher engagement and conversion rates.

Social media platforms, search engines, and various websites serve as channels for businesses to deploy their advertising campaigns. These platforms enable businesses to create engaging content, connect with users, and foster brand loyalty. Moreover, the internet facilitates real-time interactions between businesses and customers through comments, reviews, and direct messaging, enhancing customer engagement and relationship-building.

E-commerce has also been a significant beneficiary of the internet's influence on business. Online shopping has become increasingly popular, offering customers





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the convenience of browsing and purchasing products from the comfort of their homes. E-commerce platforms provide a global reach for businesses, enabling them to expand beyond their geographical boundaries.

However, along with its benefits, the digital landscape also presents challenges. The competition for online visibility is intense, and businesses need to implement effective strategies to stand out in a crowded digital marketplace. Privacy concerns, data security, and the need for authenticity are also critical considerations in the digital realm.

E-commerce, symbolized by stock stores or online retail platforms, has seamlessly integrated itself into the fabric of modern commerce. The emergence of the internet has facilitated a paradigm shift, propelling businesses to establish a robust online presence to showcase products, connect with a global customer base, and facilitate seamless transactions. This democratization of retail has empowered not only established enterprises but also small businesses to reach audiences they might have never accessed before. In turn, consumers enjoy the convenience of shopping at their own pace, from virtually anywhere, thereby reshaping the shopping experience.

Meanwhile, the evolution of call centers stands as a testament to the internet's transformative capabilities. The traditional model of centralized call centers has evolved into virtual call centers, which leverage the internet to enable remote customer service interactions. This innovative approach not only taps into a wider talent pool of agents but also reduces operational costs associated with physical infrastructure and logistics. The incorporation of internet-based communication

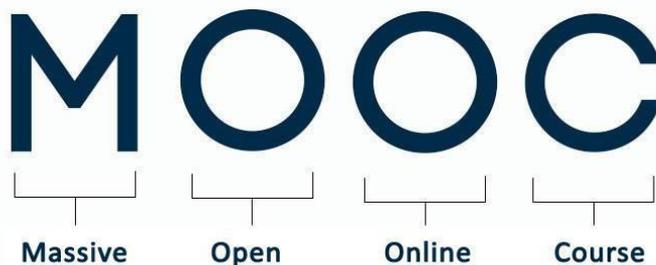




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tools has elevated customer service experiences, enabling real-time assistance through various channels such as chat, email, and social media.

In essence, the internet has become an indispensable foundation for the survival and prosperity of modern businesses. The success stories of sectors like e-commerce and call centres underscore how companies have harnessed the internet's capabilities to not only endure but also thrive amidst the challenges of the contemporary competitive landscape. Your provided passage effectively captures these sentiments and highlights the potential wealth of knowledge that can be found in the referenced work. The internet has transformed business practices and advertising strategies on a global scale. The ability to establish an online presence, connect with customers, and implement targeted advertising campaigns has become crucial for success. As technology continues to evolve, businesses must adapt to the ever-changing digital landscape to remain competitive and relevant in the modern world.





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### Education:

Web-based education has revolutionized the way students access and engage with educational content. The internet has democratized learning, making lecture notes, reading materials, and other resources readily available at the click of a button. Platforms like wikis, YouTube, podcasts, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have expanded the horizons of teaching and learning methods. Students, educators, and researchers alike harness the internet for a myriad of purposes, ranging from applying for courses and checking results to accessing syllabuses and connecting with research communities.

The rise of MOOCs has been particularly notable, enabling learners from around the world to access high-quality educational content from prestigious institutions. The internet has broken down geographical barriers, making education more accessible to individuals who may not have had the opportunity otherwise.

### Communication & Networking:

The internet's impact on communication and networking is immeasurable. Social networking websites have transformed the way people of all ages connect and communicate. These platforms provide a simple yet powerful medium for interaction, allowing individuals and organizations to connect, share updates, and collaborate. From personal blogs to chat rooms, these tools have become ubiquitous in modern communication.





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Sharing documents, photos, and other materials has become effortless, allowing friends and family to stay connected regardless of physical distances. The internet also plays a pivotal role in job searching and application processes. Online job platforms enable job seekers to explore opportunities, submit applications, and even engage in online interviews through tools like video conferencing.

Ultimately, the internet has ushered in a new era of accessibility, connectivity, and communication in the realms of education and networking. It has transformed education into a borderless endeavour and revolutionized the way people connect and interact, profoundly impacting our personal and professional lives.





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Today, there are nearly 600 social networking sites on the Internet, which highlights the widespread presence and diversity of social networking sites in the online world, highlighting the immense range of options available for connecting, sharing, and engaging with others. The diversity and the sheer magnitude of websites utilized by companies should also be noted (an image by KnowEm).

### Social media

Social media stands as a dynamic computer-based technology that revolutionizes the way ideas, information, and virtual communities are shared and established. Rooted in its internet-based nature, social media serves as a platform for users to disseminate personal content, such as videos, photos, and written posts. This content is effortlessly transmitted electronically, facilitating seamless communication. It has additionally become a pivotal aspect of modern communication, reshaping how ideas, information, and connections are shared. It operates as an internet-based platform that enables users to disseminate various forms of content, including text, images, videos, and more. This content can be easily transmitted electronically, fostering seamless interaction.

Social media's accessibility is demonstrated through multiple devices, including web-based software and applications. Originally conceived as a means for interpersonal connections among friends and family, it has swiftly evolved into a widely adopted mode of communication to engage with customers and larger audiences. The potency of social media lies in its capacity to amass and





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disseminate information universally, connecting individuals across the globe as long as they utilize the same social platform.

Remarkably, the global user base of social media amounts to approximately 3.196 billion individuals. A demographic analysis from the Pew Research Center reveals that social media users tend to be younger, with 90% of those aged 18 to 29 having engaged with at least one social media platform. Moreover, this user group exhibits higher levels of education and relatively greater affluence.

At a global level, the United States and China claim prominent positions in the realm of social media usage. These countries epitomize the international appeal and influence of social media, which transcends geographical boundaries and cultural differences.

Social media has redefined communication and connectivity, empowering users to share, engage, and interact on an unprecedented scale. Its vast user base and transformative capabilities underscore its status as a transformative force in contemporary society, influencing everything from personal relationships to business strategies and global communication.





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## Entertainment

Another popular use of the internet is for entertainment. Services such as listening to music online (Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora), Downloading music (iTunes) and movies (Netflix, Hulu), are entertainment platforms.

There are many ways to entertain yourself. You can play online games, view sports events or watch videos of your choice. The Internet is a reliable means of entertainment for such purposes and is widely used for this reason. The importance of entertainment channels like YouTube has already been emphasized, as billions of individuals have access to these websites.

## Other Popular Uses of the Internet

In addition to the areas already discussed, the internet serves as a versatile tool that finds widespread usage in various domains. One notable application is in the realm of internet banking services. This digital platform has transformed the way banking transactions are conducted, enabling users to manage their finances, transfer funds, and perform a myriad of financial tasks from the convenience of their homes. The accessibility and convenience offered by internet banking have made it an integral part of modern financial management.

Furthermore, online shopping has emerged as a phenomenon embraced by a vast portion of the population. The ease of browsing through virtual marketplaces, selecting products, and making purchases online has revolutionized the retail





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experience. The concept of e-commerce has transcended geographical constraints, allowing individuals to order a wide array of products and have them delivered directly to their doorstep. This convenience, coupled with the availability of diverse options, has contributed to the widespread popularity of online shopping.

The internet has also paved the way for a growing trend: remote work. The ability to connect to the internet has enabled individuals to perform their professional tasks from the comfort of their homes. This transformation in the way work is executed has led to the emergence of remote work or telecommuting, allowing for flexibility and potentially reducing the need for physical commuting.

The internet serves as a valuable tool with a multitude of applications that extend beyond communication and information access. From revolutionizing banking transactions to reshaping shopping experiences and enabling remote work, the internet has brought about unparalleled convenience and efficiency to various aspects of modern life.

The internet, while a powerful tool, is not immune to vulnerabilities that expose it to various forms of attacks jeopardizing security. To safeguard the internet against these threats, it is imperative that individuals exercise caution and adopt protective measures to mitigate potential privacy breaches.

Primarily, the internet serves as an unparalleled communication tool, facilitating seamless connections across distances. This foundational purpose remains a cornerstone of its utility, enabling individuals, communities, and organizations to interact and share information instantaneously.





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Yet, the scope of internet applications extends far beyond communication. Its vast potential is evidenced by its multifaceted usage areas, spanning education, commerce, entertainment, research, and more. As technology evolves, the horizons of internet utilization continue to expand. Emerging technologies invariably introduce fresh avenues for application, enriching the ever-growing list of internet uses.

In conclusion, while the internet's vulnerabilities underscore the necessity for vigilance, its role as a communication tool remains paramount. Its diverse applications, driven by technological advancement, ensure that its impact on various facets of modern life will persist and continue to grow.

## Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Networks

### Advantages of Social Networks:

- 1. Global connectivity:** Social networks transcend geographical boundaries, allowing individuals to connect with friends, family, and acquaintances from around the world.
- 2. Information sharing:** Users can easily share news, opinions, and content, facilitating the rapid dissemination of information on a wide scale. There has been a significant shift from print media usage towards virtual media usage.





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**3. Business promotion:** Social networks provide businesses with platforms to engage customers, promote products, and build brand loyalty.

**4. Networking opportunities:** Professionals can leverage social networks to expand their professional connections and opportunities.

**5. Educational resources:** Social networks offer platforms for sharing educational content, facilitating learning and knowledge exchange.

**6. Virtual groups:** These platforms facilitate the creation of virtual groups centred around common interests. These groups serve as sources of information and social spaces where individuals can express their opinions on subjects of mutual interest.

**7. Easy access to information:** Social networks enhance our ability to gather information across various topics. Users can access a wealth of information through shared posts, news articles, and discussions.

**8. Freedom of expression:** While social networks enforce certain guidelines, users retain the autonomy to manage their accounts. This allows individuals to share a diverse range of content, including information, photos, announcements, and opinions on contentious subjects in daily life, as long as it respects others' rights and sensitivities. However, it also poses a possible risk as it provides a broad platform for misinformation.





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It is worth acknowledging that these advantages are generally associated with social networks. However, individual experiences may vary based on the specific platform, usage patterns, and personal preferences.

### Disadvantages of Social Networks:

**1. Personal privacy concerns:** The accessibility of personal information on social networks poses a significant risk to user privacy. This vulnerability can lead to the compromise of personal data and put users at risk of identity theft.

**2. Limited direct interaction:** While social networks offer a convenient communication medium accessible on various devices, excessive use can detrimentally impact face-to-face interactions and verbal communication. Users may become more inclined toward virtual interactions to the detriment of direct engagement.

**3. Low self-esteem:** Particularly among young users, the pursuit of validation through likes and online feedback can lead to distorted self-evaluation and the establishment of self-worth based on social media approval. This is also a symptom of the virtual phenomenon of cyberbullying.

**4. Spread of incorrect information or fake news:** Social networks are fertile ground for the dissemination of false user profile information and inaccurate content. This misinformation is not only prevalent but also difficult to validate, raising concerns about the authenticity and reliability of online information.





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**5. Cyberbullying:** Social networks can be breeding grounds for cyberbullying and harassment, affecting mental well-being.

**6. Addiction:** Excessive use of social networks can lead to addiction, negatively impacting productivity and real-world relationships.

**7. Reduced face-to-face interaction:** Over-reliance on virtual interactions may lead to a decline in face-to-face communication skills and real-world connections. It is essential to recognize that these disadvantages can vary in impact depending on an individual's usage habits, platform preferences, and personal circumstances. In addition to the previously mentioned general advantages, it's vital to recognize the specific benefits and considerations of incorporating social networks in the realm of education. Romanian anthropologist Răzvan Nicolescu underscores the potential of social networks to foster connections among individuals rather than isolate them. He emphasizes that social networks play a historical role that is only now beginning to be comprehended. Many young individuals, particularly those in Southern Italy, rely on platforms like Facebook for news consumption, underscoring the significance of social networks in contemporary communication. Nicolescu emphasizes that rather than disregarding or prejudicing against social networks, their role should be studied and understood in-depth.

In the United Kingdom, for example, educational institutions are embracing initiatives that integrate existing online media, such as webpages, school blogs, electronic catalogs, and parent feedback forms, with social networks. This





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integration acknowledges the presence of educators and parents on social platforms and highlights the potential for enhancing interaction and, consequently, elevating the overall educational experience. Experts argue that there's no compelling reason to overlook the utility of social networks in facilitating educational interaction.

However, amidst these benefits, a critical downside of technology development emerges: Internet addiction, particularly among the youth. Extensive research indicates that Internet addiction is a contemporary reality that affects many. The literature highlights a strong correlation between addiction to computer games and overall Internet addiction, particularly among younger individuals who are more inclined to embrace innovation and are inherently more susceptible.

While social networks offer considerable advantages in the realm of education, including fostering connections and facilitating interaction, the challenge of cyber bullying, particularly among the youth, stands as a notable concern. As society moves forward, it's imperative to recognize both the potential benefits and the possible drawbacks of integrating social networks into educational contexts. Research on top of this consistently underscores the reality of Internet addiction. Literature reveals a strong correlation between addiction to computer games and overall Internet addiction, particularly among the younger population, who are more inclined to embrace innovation and are potentially more susceptible.

In conclusion, while the benefits of integrating social networks into education are substantial—such as fostering connections and facilitating interaction — it is crucial to acknowledge and address the challenge of Internet addiction, particularly





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among young people. Striking a balance between leveraging the advantages of social networks and mitigating their potential drawbacks is essential as society navigates the complexities of the digital age.

In this context, the concept of addiction manifests through the following behaviours:

- ▶ Excessive internet and communication tool usage: When the utilization of the internet and emerging communication tools surpasses healthy limits, it can pave the way for addiction across diverse demographics.
- ▶ Youth vulnerability: International research underscores that the younger population is particularly susceptible to addiction related to computer usage and online gaming.
- ▶ Psychological factors: Addiction to computer and online games is predominantly attributed to psychological factors. Emotions such as frustration, dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, the erosion of self-control, and the cultivation of antisocial behaviour have been identified as drivers of this phenomenon.

Recognizing these behaviours and their underlying causes is essential in comprehending the complexity of addiction within the realm of digital technology. Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach that involves education, awareness, and support mechanisms to help individuals manage their digital interactions in a healthy and balanced manner.





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It is very important to educate young people and other vulnerable groups with regard to potential risks, and how to be able to find professional help, if needed. Please ask for any potential concerns, so that it can be made clear that they do not have to feel ashamed to request help, and that a solution can be found more easily, if they share the challenges they face with others, including professionals. It is important to move against the societal trend of making psychological sicknesses a taboo, to be able to help as many people as possible.

### **5. Human Behaviour in the Real and Cyber World**

The proliferation of the Internet and its complementary social networks has brought about a substantial impact on how we perceive both ourselves and others. Just as television was embraced as a mediated reality during the 1960s, we now employ the lens of media psychology to understand how our physical surroundings are artificially expanded through the digital realm. This concept has evolved into a recognized field of scientific study. Even if we intentionally abstain from certain social media-related activities, it's improbable to entirely sidestep their influence. For instance, we may not actively use Facebook, but we are likely engaging with chat applications or participating in online shopping.

Furthermore, platforms as influential as Facebook serve as conduits for investigating the effects of the internet and social networks on human psychology. They offer an extensive arena for conducting research into these dynamics.





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Lonely individuals, particularly, can find avenues for forming intimacy online. This is reflected in the increased potential for establishing friendships, the evolution of social interaction forms in the digital space, and the mitigation of negative emotional states associated with loneliness. During online interactions, individuals have the ability to gauge their level of social presence and intimacy. Users can opt to remain incognito while observing the interactions of others, affording them control over the timing and quantity of their own engagements.

The attributes of anonymity and the absence of face-to-face communication within online interactions facilitate prosocial behaviour and foster the formation of online friendships. Simultaneously, these factors can diminish self-awareness and mitigate social anxiety, thereby contributing to a more relaxed and open digital environment.

This intricate interplay of technology, psychology, and social dynamics highlights the transformative potential of the digital age, and underscores the importance of studying its multifaceted effects on human behaviour and perception.

### **Basic Online Activities of Young People**

The utilization of the Internet, particularly through digital media, has seamlessly integrated into the daily routines of the majority of children, who are online on a daily basis or with high frequency. This trend is evident across Europe, where children are beginning to engage with the Internet from a very young age. The accessibility of the Internet has become more diversified with the proliferation of





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mobile devices, although the most common access point remains within children's homes.

Remarkably, teenagers dedicate a substantial portion of their day to online activities, accounting for approximately one-third of their daily routine. This prevalence of online engagement has led many parents to perceive smartphones as an inseparable extension of their child's identity, with concerns of potential addiction arising. Interestingly, a recent study from the Pew Research Center has revealed that even teenagers themselves share this viewpoint, acknowledging the issue.

It is evident that young people's engagement with digital media has become an integral aspect of their lives, shaping their experiences, interactions, and behaviours. The influence of the digital age is particularly pronounced among teenagers, as they navigate the delicate balance between reaping the benefits of online connectivity and mitigating potential challenges associated with excessive screen time and device dependency.

### **Social Media's Impact on European Youth**

The pervasive presence of European youth on social media is a predictable trend, underscoring the significant role these platforms play in their lives. What's particularly noteworthy is the extent to which social media has embedded itself in the daily routines of today's youth.

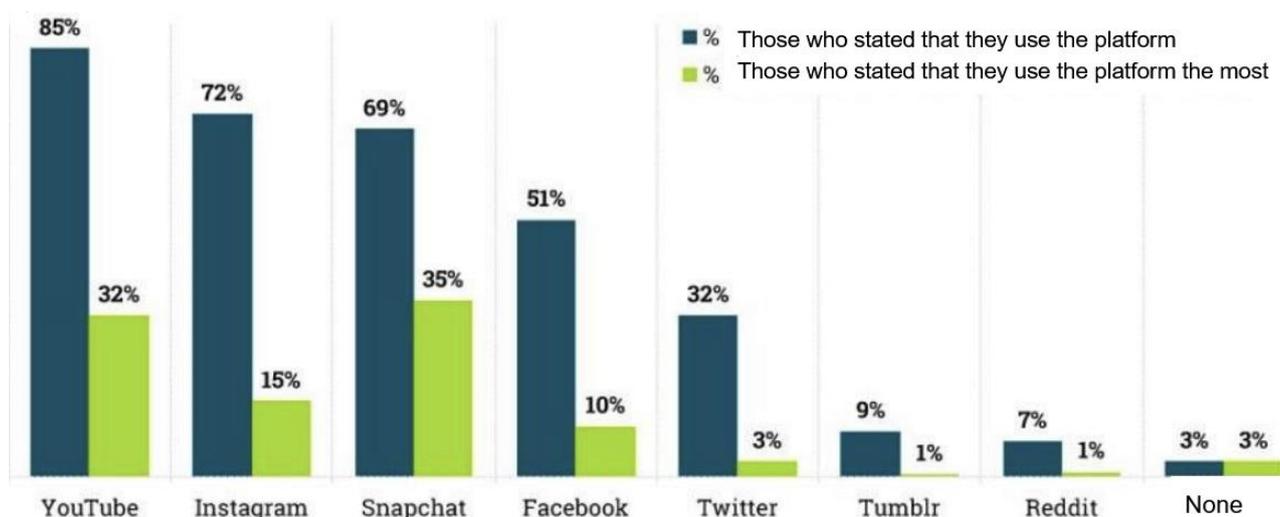
Approximately half of individuals aged 13 to 17 across Europe find themselves in a state of near-constant online engagement. It's an undeniable fact that a substantial portion of their online activity revolves around social media platforms.





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This prompts us to examine which platforms are favored by teenagers and how these preferences have evolved over time.



This diagram depicts the results of a survey conducted in which participants were asked whether they use these social media platforms, and which they use the most.

In the past, Facebook held a dominant position in the social media landscape. However, this scenario has undergone a transformation. Facebook no longer stands as the preferred online platform for teenagers. Instead, platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat have risen to prominence among European youth. This shift in social media usage patterns is emblematic of how the technological landscape catering to teenagers has evolved.





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Perhaps most strikingly, the possession of a smartphone has become an indispensable aspect of nearly every facet of teenagers' lives. This small, portable device serves as a gateway to their social interactions, entertainment, learning, and more.

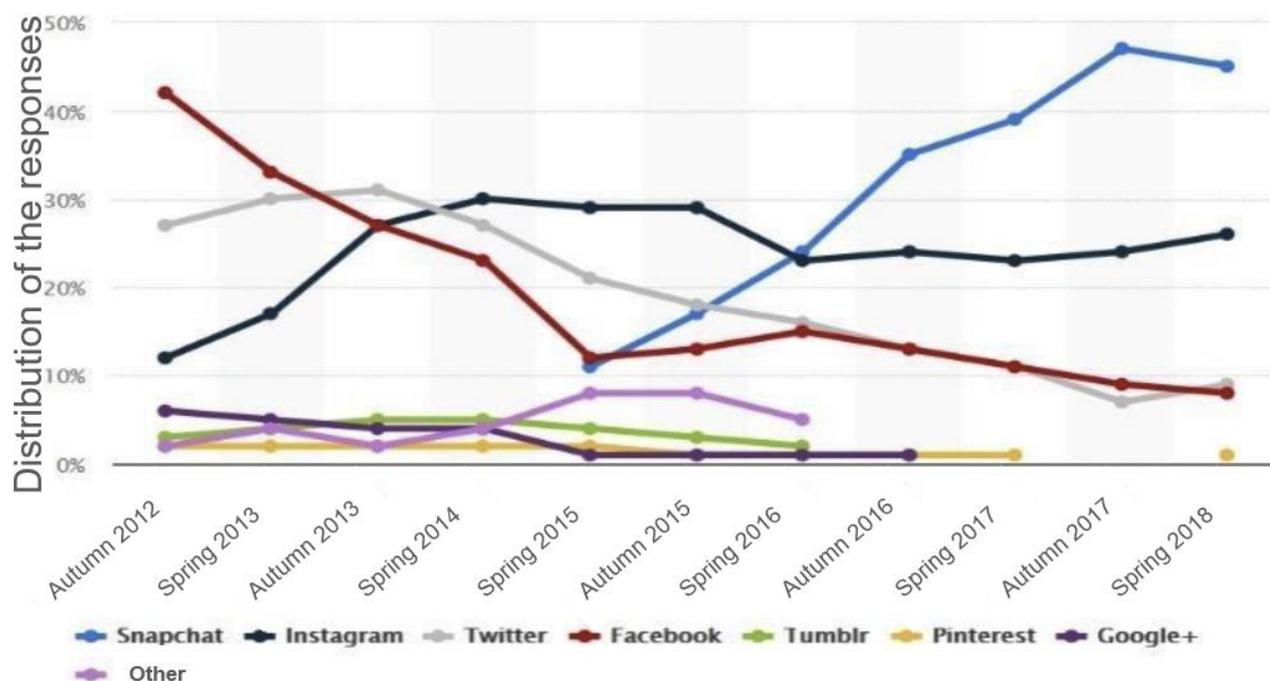
The influence of social media and digital technology on the lives of European youth is profound and continues to shape their interactions, preferences, and behaviours. As these platforms evolve and adapt, teenagers are presented with new avenues for connectivity, self-expression, and engagement with the digital world.

An overwhelming 95% of teenagers report owning a smartphone or having access to one. This prevalence of mobile connections is driving a heightened level of continuous online engagement, with 45% of teens indicating that they are virtually online at all times. This pervasive smartphone usage has fundamentally transformed the way teenagers interact with the digital realm, shaping their behaviour, communication patterns, and the nature of their online activities. The smartphone has evolved from being a mere device to becoming an integral part of their daily routines and a central conduit for their online experiences. This shift in connectivity dynamics underscores the profound impact of mobile technology on the lifestyles and habits of today's youth.





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Changing trends in social media usage among young people: Facebook is no longer actively used by a significant portion of young people.

In recent times, the once-dominant social media platform, Facebook, has experienced a notable decline in its popularity among young individuals. This shift is particularly pronounced among the youth demographic. As newer and more dynamic platforms have emerged, Facebook's active presence in the lives of young people has diminished.

This trend signifies the ever-evolving landscape of social media preferences, where platforms that resonate more with the current generation's communication and content consumption preferences have taken the forefront. In contrast to the development of Facebook, Snapchat is used by more and more young people.



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## Impact of Video Games on Young People

Video games represent a unique form of entertainment that immerses players within the scenario, requiring their active participation. Despite having existed for over three decades, contemporary advanced video games demand players' continuous engagement. These games delve deeper than the physical and emotional experiences derived from watching movies or TV shows.

In present-day Europe, video game engagement is prevalent, with 95% of young individuals participating in gaming activities. Consequently, the video game industry has witnessed a surge in sales, contributing to an annual domestic revenue of approximately \$12 billion. While this popular media form holds both positive and negative effects for children, one commonly accepted "positive" aspect is that video games foster the development of manual dexterity and computer literacy.

Technological advancements consistently enhance the graphical quality of games, contributing to a more "realistic" virtual gaming environment. This evolution positions the video game industry as a substantial influence on the lives of numerous young people. Dr. Douglas Gentile, a Psychology professor at Iowa State University, conducted a study in 2014 revealing that "pro-social" video games centred on activities such as city-building or assisting others can enhance children's empathy and helpfulness in real-life situations.

However, studies have also established a correlation between violent video games and increased aggressive behaviour in adolescents. This is concerning, given the





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prevalence of violence in many popular video games. The rise in aggressive behaviour is partially attributed to the amount of time children dedicate to gaming, as their daily media consumption escalates.

The intricate relationship between video games and young people's behaviour underscores the need for a balanced approach to video game engagement. While they can offer positive developmental benefits, the potential for negative outcomes necessitates thoughtful moderation and consideration of game content. As technology continues to evolve, the impact of video games on the lives of young individuals remains a topic of ongoing exploration and concern.

### **Educational Purposes**

Today's students are multipurposely integrating technology into all aspects of their lives to do their homework as well as socialize, play and shop using the internet. Therefore, in the field of education, attention has turned to integrating technology into the curriculum. According to research, students prefer to access and use information technology in order to help them in their school work. Google and Wikipedia are the most consulted sites, unlike other rarely visited sites for accessing information technology. (Ólafsson, Livingstone, Haddon, 2014). When most students copy from the Internet, they use a variety of strategies to hide information theft. However, the Internet plays a very important role in students' communication with their classmates and fellow students.

Students acknowledge that there is a visible link between their achievements in accessing information through information technology and their achievements in homework and project research.





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Moreover, with the rapid spread of technology, interest in distance learning and MOOCs (Mass Online Open Courses) such as Coursera and Edx has increased significantly. (Especially the interest in MOOCs, the basic concept of which is structured with academic/technical content that we can access online for free from anywhere.) To connect to MOOCs, it is enough to have the Internet and a computer or a smart device (smartphone / tablet).





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**Table 2. Classification of online opportunities and risks for children (Source: Livingstone & Haddon, 2009)**

Contents: child in the receiving position	Contents: Participant child	Contents: child in subject position
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Educational learning and digital literacy	Education sources with people who share common interests communication
Participation and civic engagement	Global knowledge	Among interest groups exchange Concrete forms of civic engagement
Creativity and self-expression	Diversity of resources	Invitation for participation and creative activities/ inspiration
identity and social bond	Recommendations (such as personal/health)	Social networking, expressing identity experiences with others don't share
<b>RISKS</b>	commercial purpose	Advertising, spam, sponsorship
Attacker	<b>Violence/fear/hate</b> content	Monitoring/collecti on of personal information
Sexual	Obscene/vio	Betting, illegal downloads, hacking
	meeting	harassing another person or to bully by or be followed (stalk)
	strangers,	Creating/uploading obscene





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	lent content	abuse	content
Values	Racist, biased information/advice (e.g. drugs)	self-harm, unwanted beliefs	Encouragement (e.g. suicide/anorexia)

### Impact of Entertainment Media and Video Games on Young People

A 2010 survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation revealed that young individuals aged 8 to 18 dedicate an average of seven and a half hours per day to entertainment media. This immersion in media consumption shapes their experiences and behaviours. Alarming, fewer than half of the surveyed children indicated that their parents established rules regarding the content they could access, whether in the form of shows or games.

Interactive video games have a unique ability to enable players to embody their favourite characters, bringing them to life within the virtual realm. As players advance in these games, their characters evolve and acquire new skills. However, some video games incorporate violence as a means to achieve goals, linking in-game violence with direct benefits.

Gentile and Anderson (2003) emphasize that the repetitive portrayal of violence within video games can potentially contribute to an escalation of aggressive behaviours among players. This mechanism of repetition aligns with established teaching methodologies that reinforce learning through repeated patterns.





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Furthermore, research indicates that early exposure to violent video games can have long-lasting effects on children's behaviour. A study published in *Pediatrics* in November 2008 found that children who engage more frequently with violent video games during the early school year tend to display heightened aggression compared to their peers later in the school year (*Pediatrics*, 2008).

The insights drawn from such studies point to the complex relationship between media consumption and the behaviours of young individuals. While entertainment media, including interactive video games, can offer various benefits, including skill development, the potential for desensitization to violence and an increase in aggressive tendencies necessitates careful consideration and informed parental guidance.





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## 6. Lesson Plans

### Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 1: "Navigating the Digital World"

**Duration: 5 hours [2 hours of theory / 3 hours of practical applications]**

#### **Objectives of the module:**

**Comprehensive information for high school teachers:** The aim of this module is to provide school teachers and participants with comprehensive information about the internet, virtual social environments, and social networks. It will cover topics such as how the internet works, the role of social networks, and the significance of the virtual social environment. Teachers should also be made aware of the dangers the internet may pose and its benefits.

**Understanding human behaviour in real and cyber worlds:** This module intends to assist school teachers and participants in understanding human behaviour in both the real and cyber worlds. It will explore how people interact, communicate, and behave in online environments, as well as the implications of these behaviours.

**Understanding basic online activities of young people:** School teachers will gain insight into the fundamental online activities that young people engage in. Topics such as social media usage, online gaming, and internet-based communication will be explored to help teachers better comprehend their students' digital interactions.





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**Practical applications and case studies:** The module will offer practical applications and case studies to assist school teachers and participants in better understanding the internet's impact on human behaviour. These practical examples and case studies can help teachers guide their students on topics related to digital citizenship, online safety, and responsible internet use.

Overall, the module aims to equip school teachers with the knowledge and tools to effectively navigate and guide their students through the complexities of the internet and virtual social environments. It will enable teachers to promote responsible and informed online behaviours among their students while fostering a better understanding of the effects of internet usage on human behaviour.

**The following learning outcomes should be achieved upon completing this module.**

Knowledge	Skill	Competence
<p><b>Comprehension: Exploring the Internet's Impact on Behaviour and Daily Life:</b> Participants will gain the ability to elucidate the profound influence of the Internet and virtual social environment on human behaviour and everyday life. They will analyse how</p>	<p>Participants will be equipped with a comprehensive understanding of the Internet's historical context, its transformative journey, and its impact on individuals' behaviour and daily experiences in both physical and digital realms</p>	<p><b>Defining key development points of the internet:</b> Participants will be able to articulate the pivotal stages and crucial developments that have shaped the Internet's trajectory. They will identify significant moments such as the advent of the World</p>





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<p>online interactions, information consumption, and virtual relationships impact cognitive processes, social dynamics, and personal routines.</p>	<p>with regard to the internet and virtual social environment development.</p>	<p>Wide Web, the rise of social networking platforms, and the proliferation of mobile devices, among others.</p> <p>Participants will attain a solid grasp of the historical evolution and growth of the Internet and the virtual social environment. They will be able to trace the key milestones, technological advancements, and societal shifts that have contributed to the current digital landscape.</p>
<p><b>In-depth understanding of human behaviour:</b> Participants will acquire a more detailed and nuanced understanding of human behaviour in both the real and cyber worlds. They will explore the psychological, social, and</p>	<p><b>Distinguishing real and cyber human behaviour:</b> Participants will be able to differentiate between human behaviour exhibited in the real world and that observed in the cyber world. They will recognize how the</p>	<p><b>Predicting online activities of youth:</b> Participants will be equipped with insights to predict the online activities of young people. They will understand common trends and behaviours exhibited by youth in virtual social</p>





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<p>cultural factors that influence how individuals behave in physical and virtual environments.</p>	<p>context, anonymity, and communication modes unique to the virtual environment can lead to distinct patterns of behaviour.</p>	<p>environments, including social media usage, online communication preferences, and participation in virtual communities.</p> <p>Overall, participants will be well-prepared to navigate the complex interplay between real-world and online human behaviour. They will have the tools to comprehend, analyse, and predict how individuals, particularly young people, engage with and behave in digital spaces, fostering a better understanding of the digital behaviours that shape today's society.</p>
<p><b>In-depth understanding of human behaviour:</b> Participants will acquire a more detailed and nuanced understanding of</p>	<p><b>Distinguishing real and cyber human behaviour:</b> Participants will be able to differentiate between human behaviour</p>	<p><b>Predicting online activities of youth:</b> Participants will be equipped with insights to predict the online activities of young people.</p>





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<p>human behaviour in both the real and cyber worlds. They will explore the psychological, social, and cultural factors that influence how individuals behave in physical and virtual environments.</p>	<p>exhibited in the real world and that observed in the cyber world. They will recognize how the context, anonymity, and communication modes unique to the virtual environment can lead to distinct patterns of behaviour.</p>	<p>They will understand common trends and behaviours exhibited by youth in virtual social environments, including social media usage, online communication preferences, and participation in virtual communities.</p> <p>Overall, participants will be well-prepared to navigate the complex interplay between real-world and online human behaviour. They will have the tools to comprehend, analyse, and predict how individuals, particularly young people, engage with and behave in digital spaces, fostering a better understanding of the digital behaviours that shape today's society.</p>
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<p><b>Enhanced awareness of key online activities:</b></p> <p>Participants will develop a deeper awareness of the primary online activities engaged in by young people in the digital age. They will gain insights into the virtual behaviours, preferences, and trends that characterize the online interactions of youth.</p>	<p><b>Describing major online activities of young people:</b></p> <p>Participants will acquire the ability to succinctly describe and explain the central online activities that are commonly practised by young individuals. They will effectively communicate the ways in which young people utilize the internet for communication, entertainment, learning, socialization, and other relevant purposes.</p> <p>Upon completion of the module, participants will be well-informed about the predominant online behaviours of young people and be capable of articulating these activities in a clear and comprehensible manner.</p>	
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**Education/Teaching Methods:** Lecture, group discussion, task groups, drama (role playing), individual study

**Education/Teaching Methods:**

1. **Lecture:** The instructor will provide structured presentations to convey essential theoretical knowledge about the internet, virtual social environments, and their impact on human behaviour. This method offers a comprehensive overview of the subject matter.
2. **Group Discussion:** Participants will engage in group discussions to share their perspectives, insights, and questions related to the topics covered. This fosters an interactive learning environment, allowing participants to learn from each other's experiences and viewpoints, as well as to further develop central competences such as the evaluation of arguments and the formation of sound and thorough conclusions.
3. **Task Groups:** Participants will be organized into small task groups to collaborate on specific assignments or projects. This collaborative approach encourages active engagement, critical thinking, and teamwork as participants work together to accomplish goals.
4. **Drama (Role Playing):** Role-playing exercises will enable participants to immerse themselves in scenarios related to the subject matter. This technique promotes experiential learning and helps participants explore various aspects of human behaviour in both real and virtual environments.





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5. **Individual Study:** Participants will be assigned readings, research tasks, or case studies for individual study. This self-directed learning approach allows participants to delve deeper into specific topics, enhance their understanding, and apply the acquired knowledge.

Each of these teaching methods contributes to a comprehensive learning experience, catering to different learning styles and fostering a well-rounded understanding of the internet, virtual social environments, and their effects on human behaviour.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 2: "Introduction to the Internet and Virtual Social Environments"

**Objective:** Students will understand the basics of the internet, virtual social environments, and their significance in modern communication.

**Materials:**

- Computer with internet access
- Whiteboard and markers
- Diagrams and visuals of the internet and social media platforms

**Time:** 70 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Briefly discuss the statement about the internet transforming communication. Ask students about their experiences with the internet and social media.

**Engagement (15 minutes):** Show a short video or presentation explaining the basic concepts of the internet, how it works, and introduce popular social media platforms.

**Direct Instruction (15 minutes):** Discuss the importance of the internet, virtual social environments, and their impact on communication, citing examples from the provided information.

**Guided Practice (10 minutes):** In pairs or small groups, have students research a specific positive aspect of virtual social environments and share their findings with the class.





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**Independent Practice (10 minutes):** Assign a reflection essay where students discuss their personal experiences with the internet and virtual social environments, highlighting positive and negative aspects.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group discussions, and the reflection essays for understanding and engagement.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize key points and discuss any questions or concerns students may have.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 3: "Exploring Positive and Negative Aspects of Virtual Social Environments"

**Objective:** Students will analyse the positive and negative aspects of virtual social environments and understand their impact on individuals and society.

### **Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Articles or case studies on positive and negative aspects of virtual social environments
- Chart paper and markers

**Time:** 80 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Recap the previous lesson and discuss the importance of understanding both positive and negative aspects of virtual social environments.

**Engagement (15 minutes):** Present real-life examples or case studies of positive and negative incidents related to social media. Encourage class discussions on the implications.

**Direct Instruction (20 minutes):** Discuss the positive aspects mentioned in the





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provided information and introduce the negative aspects, emphasizing privacy concerns, cyberbullying, and misinformation.

**Guided Practice (15 minutes):** In groups, have students create two lists on chart paper: one for positive aspects and one for negative aspects. Encourage them to include examples.

**Independent Practice (10 minutes):** Assign a written assignment where students analyse the impact of a specific positive or negative aspect on individuals or society.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate the group activity, class discussions, and the written assignments for comprehension and critical thinking.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize the lists created by each group and initiate a class discussion on balancing the positive and negative aspects of virtual social environments.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 4: "Digital Well-being and Future Trends"

**Objective:** The students will explore the concept of digital well-being and discuss potential future trends in internet communication.

### **Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Articles on digital well-being
- Videos or presentations on future trends in internet communication

**Time:** 80 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Discuss the impact of virtual interactions on personal relationships and introduce the concept of digital well-being.

**Engagement (15 minutes):** Present statistics or case studies on the effects of excessive screen time and constant connectivity on mental health. Encourage discussions on finding a balance.

**Direct Instruction (20 minutes):** Discuss the concept of digital well-being, citing information from the provided content. Introduce future trends like virtual reality,





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augmented reality, and artificial intelligence.

**Guided Practice (15 minutes):** In pairs, have students discuss strategies for maintaining digital well-being and share their thoughts on potential benefits and drawbacks of future trends.

**Independent Practice (10 minutes):** Assign a reflective essay on how students envision the future of internet communication and its potential impact on society.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group discussions, and the reflective essays for understanding and critical thinking.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize key points and initiate a class discussion on how students can proactively manage their digital well-being in the evolving landscape of internet communication.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 5: "Early Stages of the Internet and ARPANET"

**Objective:** Students will understand the early stages of the internet's development, with a focus on ARPANET and its role as a precursor to the internet.

### Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Diagrams and visuals of ARPANET
- Historical documents or video clips related to ARPANET

**Time:** 70 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Briefly discuss the early stages of the internet and its transition from a military project to a communication network.

**Engagement (15 minutes):** Show historical documents or video clips related to ARPANET and its role during the Cold War. Discuss the catalysts for ARPANET's development.

**Direct Instruction (20 minutes):** Provide detailed information on ARPANET, its objectives, and its significance in laying the foundation for the internet.

**Guided Practice (10 minutes):** In pairs or small groups, have students discuss the impact of the Cold War on technological advancements and how ARPANET addressed communication challenges.





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**Independent Practice (5 minutes):** Assign a short written reflection on the importance of ARPANET in shaping the internet.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group discussions, and the written reflections for understanding and engagement.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize key points and discuss any questions or concerns students may have.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 6: "Key Developments Shaping the Internet"

**Objective:** Students will explore key developments that shaped the evolution of the internet, focusing on the World Wide Web, commercialization, social media, and mobile internet.

**Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals and timelines depicting key internet developments
- Articles or videos on the invention of the World Wide Web and the commercialization of the internet

**Time:** 80 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Recap the early stages of the internet and introduce the importance of key developments in its evolution.

**Engagement (20 minutes):** Use visuals and timelines to illustrate the timeline of key developments, emphasizing the World Wide Web, commercialization, social media, and mobile internet.

**Direct Instruction (25 minutes):** Provide detailed information on each key development, including the individuals involved and the impact on internet usage.

**Guided Practice (10 minutes):** In pairs or small groups, have students create a





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visual timeline of key internet developments, emphasizing their significance.

**Independent Practice (5 minutes):** Assign a short written reflection on the most impactful development discussed.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group timelines, and the written reflections for understanding and critical thinking.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize the importance of key developments and initiate a class discussion on their lasting impact.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 7: "Applications of the Internet in Daily Life Developments Shaping the Internet"

**Objective:** Students will explore the diverse applications of the internet in daily life, including communication, information access, e-commerce, social networking, education, and work collaboration.

### Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Real-life examples, screenshots, or demos of internet applications
- Articles or case studies on internet applications

**Time:** 80 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Discuss the transformative impact of the internet on daily life and introduce the various applications to be covered.

**Engagement (20 minutes):** Use real-life examples, screenshots, or demos to illustrate how the internet is used in communication, information access, e-commerce, social networking, education, and work collaboration.

**Direct Instruction (25 minutes):** Provide detailed information on each application, discussing their significance and contributions to modern living.





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**Guided Practice (10 minutes):** In pairs or small groups, have students brainstorm additional examples of how the internet is used in their daily lives.

**Independent Practice (5 minutes):** Assign a short written reflection on the most impactful internet application discussed.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group discussions, and the written reflections for understanding and engagement.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize the diverse applications of the internet and discuss their implications on modern living.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 8: "Challenges and Concerns of the Internet"

**Objective:** Students will analyse the challenges and concerns associated with the internet, including privacy, cybersecurity, digital divide, and the spread of fake news.

### Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Articles or case studies on internet challenges
- Video clips or examples of fake news dissemination

**Time:** 75 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Discuss the dual nature of the internet, its benefits, and the challenges it poses.

**Engagement (20 minutes):** Use articles or case studies to illustrate challenges such as privacy concerns, cybersecurity issues, the digital divide, and the spread of fake news.

**Direct Instruction (25 minutes):** Provide detailed information on each challenge, discussing their implications on individuals and society.

**Guided Practice (5 minutes):** In pairs or small groups, have students discuss potential solutions or preventive measures for one of the internet challenges.

**Independent Practice (5 minutes):** Assign a short written reflection on the





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importance of addressing internet challenges for a digitally connected society.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group discussions, and the written reflections for understanding and critical thinking.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize key challenges and concerns, emphasizing the importance of responsible internet use and addressing these issues collectively. Feel free to adjust the timing and activities based on your classroom needs and available resources.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 9: "Internet and Virtual Social Media and Concerns of the Internet"

**Objective:** Students will explore the global impact of social media on communication, focusing on statistics, growth trends, and the most used social media applications.

### **Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Infographics or visuals depicting social media statistics
- Devices with internet access for real-time statistics

**Time:** 70 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Discuss the ubiquity of social media in daily life and its impact on global communication. Highlight the interconnected nature of social media platforms.

**Engagement (15 minutes):** Present statistics on global social media usage, emphasizing the number of users, yearly growth, and its influence on society.

**Direct Instruction (20 minutes):** Provide detailed information on the most used social media applications, such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, and TikTok. Discuss their daily active user bases and significance.





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**Guided Practice (10 minutes):** In pairs or small groups, have students research and present additional information on one social media platform, including its features and impact.

**Independent Practice (5 minutes):** Assign a short written reflection on the role of social media in their own lives and how it connects them globally.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group presentations, and the written reflections for understanding and engagement.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize key points and discuss any emerging questions or concerns.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 10: "The Development of the Internet and Its Applications in Daily Life"

**Objective:** Students will trace the evolution of the internet, from ARPANET to its current state, and understand its impact on daily life.

**Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visual timeline of internet development
- Historical documents or video clips related to ARPANET

**Time:** 85 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Briefly discuss the origins of the internet and its transformative journey. Emphasize its impact on communication and daily activities.

**Engagement (15 minutes):** Show visual timelines depicting key developments in internet evolution, including the transition from ARPANET to the current internet.

**Direct Instruction (25 minutes):** Provide detailed information on ARPANET, its objectives, and how it evolved into the internet. Discuss key milestones in internet development.

**Guided Practice (15 minutes):** In pairs or small groups, have students create a timeline of the internet's development, highlighting key events and their impact.





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**Independent Practice (10 minutes):** Assign a short written reflection on how the internet has influenced their lives and communication.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group timelines, and the written reflections for understanding and critical thinking.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize the evolution of the internet and discuss its continued impact on society.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 11: "Social Media Use around the World"

**Objective:** Students will examine global social media usage patterns, focusing on statistics, preferences, and the evolving landscape of teenage preferences.

**Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals depicting global social media statistics
- Articles or case studies on teenage social media preferences

**Time:** 80 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Discuss the significance of global social media usage and its impact on cultural exchange. Emphasize the interconnectedness of the world through these platforms.

**Engagement (20 minutes):** Present statistics on global social media usage, highlighting yearly growth and the most popular platforms.

**Direct Instruction (25 minutes):** Provide detailed information on the most used social media platforms, emphasizing their user bases and impact. Discuss the preferences of teenagers and the evolving landscape.

**Guided Practice (10 minutes):** In pairs or small groups, have students analyze a case study on teenage social media preferences and present their findings.





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**Independent Practice (5 minutes):** Assign a short written reflection on how social media preferences reflect cultural trends.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group presentations, and the written reflections for understanding and critical thinking.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize key points and initiate a class discussion on the role of social media in global communication.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 12: "Communication – Emojis"

**Objective:** Students will explore the evolution of emojis as a form of visual communication, drawing parallels with ancient hieroglyphs.

### Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals comparing emojis and hieroglyphs
- Articles or videos on the evolution of emojis

**Time:** 75 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Discuss the significance of emojis in modern communication and their rapid adoption.

**Introduce the concept of emojis as an Engagement (20 minutes):** Present visuals comparing emojis and hieroglyphs, highlighting similarities and differences. Discuss the historical context of hieroglyphs.

**Direct Instruction (25 minutes):** Provide detailed information on the evolution of emojis, drawing parallels with ancient hieroglyphs. Discuss the cultural shift towards visual and emotionally resonant communication.

**Guided Practice (5 minutes):** In pairs or small groups, have students create a set of modern hieroglyphs representing common expressions.





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**Independent Practice (5 minutes):** Assign a short written reflection on the impact of emojis on modern communication and the parallels with ancient symbols.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group activities, and the written reflections for understanding and creativity.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize key points and discuss the enduring human fascination with symbol-based communication, bridging ancient and modern forms of expression.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 13: "The Internet's Impact on Daily Life"

**Objective:** Students will explore the profound impact of the internet on daily life, focusing on its role in information access, communication, and various activities.

**Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals depicting internet statistics and its impact
- Devices with internet access for real-time examples

**Time:** 70 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Discuss the significance of the internet in daily life. Emphasize its role in information access, communication, and convenience.

**Engagement (20 minutes):** Present visuals depicting internet statistics, such as the number of users globally and the types of activities people engage in online.

**Direct Instruction (25 minutes):** Provide detailed information on how the internet has changed the way we access information, communicate, and conduct various activities. Discuss potential challenges in a world without the internet.

**Guided Practice (10 minutes):** In small groups, have students brainstorm and share examples of how their daily lives would be different without the internet.

**Independent Practice (5 minutes):** Assign a short written reflection on the personal impact of the internet on their daily lives.





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**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group discussions, and the written reflections for understanding and critical thinking.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize key points and discuss the importance of the internet in contemporary society.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 14: "Business and Advertising in the Digital Age"

**Objective:** Students will examine the transformation of business and advertising strategies in the digital age, emphasizing the role of the internet.

**Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals depicting digital advertising trends
- Examples of successful online businesses

**Time:** 75 minutes

**Introduction (10 minutes):** Discuss the significance of the internet in revolutionizing business and advertising. Emphasize the shift to digital platforms.

**Engagement (20 minutes):** Present visuals depicting digital advertising trends and examples of successful online businesses.

**Direct Instruction (25 minutes):** Provide detailed information on how the internet has transformed business practices, including the importance of online presence, digital advertising, and e-commerce. Discuss potential challenges.

**Guided Practice (10 minutes):** In pairs or small groups, have students analyse a case study of a successful online business and discuss the key factors contributing to its success.





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**Independent Practice (5 minutes):** Assign a short written reflection on the role of the internet in shaping modern business practices.

**Assessment (5 minutes):** Evaluate class participation, group discussions, and the written reflections for understanding and critical thinking.

**Closure (5 minutes):** Summarize key points and discuss the future trends in digital business and advertising, considering the evolving role of the internet.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 15: "Understanding the Advantages of Social Networks"

**Objective:** Students will explore the positive aspects of social networks, focusing on global connectivity, information sharing, business promotion, and educational resources.

### **Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals illustrating social network statistics
- Devices with internet access for real-time examples

**Time:** 60 minutes

### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Discuss the prevalence of social networks in today's society.
- Introduce the objectives of the lesson.

### **Global Connectivity (15 minutes):**

- Discuss how social networks transcend geographical boundaries.
- Use visuals to illustrate global connectivity statistics.





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**Information Sharing and Business Promotion (20 minutes):**

- Explore how social networks facilitate information sharing and business promotion.
- Provide real-life examples of successful business promotions on social media.

**Educational Resources (15 minutes):**

- Discuss how social networks offer platforms for sharing educational content.
- Showcase examples of educational initiatives on social media.

**Group Activity (optional, 10 minutes):** In small groups, students discuss a case study on the positive impact of social networks on a specific business or educational initiative.

**Homework Assignment:** Research and find examples of how social networks have positively impacted global connectivity, information sharing, business promotion, and education.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 16: "Examining the Disadvantages of Social Networks"

**Objective:** Students will explore the negative aspects of social networks, focusing on personal privacy concerns, limited direct interaction, and the spread of misinformation.

### **Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals illustrating social network disadvantages
- Devices with internet access for real-time examples

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Recap (10 minutes):** Briefly review the advantages discussed on Day 1.

### **Personal Privacy Concerns and Limited Direct Interaction (25 minutes):**

- Discuss the risks associated with personal privacy on social networks.
- Explore how excessive use can limit face-to-face interactions.





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**Spread of Misinformation (20 minutes):**

- Address concerns related to the spread of incorrect information or fake news on social networks.
- Discuss the challenges of validating online information.

**Group Discussion (optional, 15 minutes):** Engage students in a group discussion about their personal experiences with privacy concerns on social networks.

**Homework Assignment:** Write a short reflection on the potential risks and concerns discussed in class regarding social networks.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 17: "Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Networks – Balancing the Scale – Social Networks in Education and Internet Addiction"

**Objective:** Students will explore the specific benefits and considerations of incorporating social networks in education and the challenges of internet addiction.

### **Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals illustrating social networks in education and internet addiction
- Devices with internet access for real-time examples

**Time:** 60 minutes

### **Review (10 minutes):**

- Recap the advantages and disadvantages discussed in the Social Networks in Education.
- Discuss how educational institutions are integrating social networks into learning.
- Highlight the benefits of connecting educators, students, and parents through online platforms.

### **Internet Addiction (25 minutes):**





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- Explore the concept of internet addiction and its correlation with social networks.
- Discuss psychological factors contributing to internet addiction.

**Group Activity (15 minutes):** In small groups, students discuss potential strategies to maintain a healthy balance between using social networks for education and avoiding internet addiction.

**Closing Reflection (10 minutes):** Students individually reflect on how they can maximize the benefits of social networks while mitigating potential drawbacks.

Conclusion and Next Steps: Summarize key takeaways, discuss responsible social network usage and strategies for avoiding internet addiction.

This three-day lesson plan provides a comprehensive exploration of the advantages and disadvantages of social networks, emphasizing the role of responsible usage in different contexts.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 18: "Introduction to Media Psychology and Online Intimacy"

**Objective:** Students will understand the impact of the Internet and social networks on human behaviour, particularly in forming online connections and mitigating loneliness.

### **Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals illustrating online interactions
- Devices with internet access for real-time examples

**Time:** 60 minutes

### **Introduction to Media Psychology (15 minutes):**

- Define media psychology and its relevance in understanding digital influence.
- Discuss the historical comparison of television as a mediated reality to the current impact of the Internet.





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**Online Intimacy and Loneliness (25 minutes):** Explore how lonely individuals find avenues for forming intimacy online. Discuss the attributes of anonymity and the absence of face-to-face communication in fostering online friendships.

**Group Discussion (15 minutes):** Facilitate a discussion on students' experiences with online connections and the impact of digital interactions on loneliness.

**Homework Assignment:** Research and bring examples of online platforms that contribute positively to users' mental health.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 19: "Basic Online Activities of Young People"

**Objective:** Students will delve into the daily routines and online activities of young people, understanding the prevalence of digital engagement.

### **Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals illustrating online activities
- Devices with internet access for real-time examples

**Time:** 60 minutes

### **Introduction to Young People's Online Activities (15 minutes):**

- Discuss the seamless integration of the Internet into the daily routines of children.
- Highlight the prevalence of online engagement among teenagers.

### **Social Media Trends (25 minutes):**

- Explore the impact of social media on European youth.
- Discuss the evolution of social media preferences among teenagers.

**Group Activity – Analysing Survey Results (15 minutes):** Analyse and discuss the survey results on social media platform preferences among teenagers.





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**Homework Assignment:** Reflect on personal social media usage and the potential influence on daily routines.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 20: "Social Media's Impact on European Youth"

**Objective:** Students will understand the profound impact of social media on the daily lives and preferences of European youth.

### **Materials:**

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals illustrating social media usage trends
- Devices with internet access for real-time examples

**Time:** 60 minutes

### **Overview of Social Media Impact (15 minutes):**

- Discuss the pervasive presence of European youth on social media.
- Examine the changing trends in social media usage among young people.

### **Interactive Diagram Analysis (25 minutes):**

- Analyse the survey results using the interactive diagram.
- Discuss the shift from Facebook to other platforms and the influence of smartphone ownership.





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**Group Discussion – Impact of Smartphone Usage (15 minutes):** Discuss the implications of pervasive smartphone usage on behaviour, communication patterns, and online activities.

**Homework Assignment:** Research and bring examples of positive and negative impacts of social media on youth.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 21: "Impact of Video Games on Young People"

**Objective:** Students will explore the prevalence and effects of video game engagement among young individuals.

### Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals illustrating video game industry statistics
- Devices with internet access for real-time examples

**Introduction to Video Game Engagement (15 minutes):** - Discuss the prevalence of video game engagement among young people. - Highlight the positive aspects such as manual dexterity and computer literacy.

**Advanced Video Game Influence (25 minutes):** Explore the impact of technological advancements on the video game industry. Discuss the research findings on pro-social and potentially negative effects of video games.

**Group Activity – Case Study Analysis (15 minutes):** Analyse case studies on the correlation between video games and aggressive behaviour in adolescents.

**Homework Assignment:** Reflect on personal experiences with video games and consider their potential impact on behaviour.





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## Chapter 1 – Lesson Plan 22: "Educational Purposes and Online Opportunities/Risks"

**Objective:** Students will understand the role of technology in education and explore online opportunities and risks.

### Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Visuals illustrating online opportunities and risks
- Devices with internet access for real-time examples

**Time:** 60 minutes

### Integration of Technology in Education (15 minutes):

- Discuss how students integrate technology into various aspects of their lives, especially for educational purposes.

### Online Opportunities and Risks (25 minutes):

- Explore the classification of online opportunities and risks for children.
- Discuss the impact of online activities on educational learning, digital literacy, and social engagement.

**Group Discussion – Balancing Technology Use (15 minutes):** Discuss strategies for balancing technology use for educational purposes while mitigating potential risks.





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**Conclusion and Reflection (5 minutes):** Summarize key learnings from the week. Encourage students to reflect on their digital behaviours and make conscious choices.





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## 7. Case Studies

**Case Study 1:** *Interpret the following explanation: “We spend most of our lives in the virtual world.”*

*To what extent is this statement applicable to you? Which societal changes have you encountered? What has changed on a personal level? How do you evaluate these changes? Do you consider them to be good or bad?*

The following is a possible example of an interpretation. However, any other justified answer is equally correct. You can use the other questions to engage with the participant, and have a joint discussion with regard to possible fears they may harbour with regard to the virtual transition.

The statement "We spend most of our lives in the virtual world" suggests that a significant portion of our time and daily activities is devoted to interactions, experiences, and engagements that occur within digital or online environments. It implies that digital technology, including the internet, social media, video games, and other online platforms, has become deeply integrated into our routines and lifestyles.

This integration blurs the line between the physical world and the digital realm, highlighting the extent to which our interactions, communication, entertainment, and even work are conducted through online channels. The statement





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underscores the transformative impact of technology on our daily experiences and the evolving nature of human interaction and engagement.





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**Case Study 2: Experts claim the internet is a necessity. What do you think? What are the benefits of the internet? What are the disadvantages of the internet? Please discuss the advantages and drawbacks and reach a conclusion by evaluating them accordingly and justifying your assessment.**

The following provides an example of an answer. However, other answers with sound justifications are equally correct. It is important that your students or participants can express their opinion adequately in form of a conclusion.

**Experts claim the internet is a necessity:** Many experts assert that the internet has evolved from being a luxury to a necessity in today's world. This claim is rooted in the widespread integration of the internet into various aspects of daily life, including communication, education, business, entertainment, and more. The internet has become a fundamental tool for accessing information, connecting with others, conducting transactions, and even participating in civic activities. Its role in enabling global communication, information dissemination, and knowledge exchange has led experts to consider it an essential resource for personal, professional, and societal development.

#### **Benefits of the internet:**

- **Access to information:** The internet provides instant access to an immense amount of information on various topics, fostering continuous learning and knowledge sharing.
- **Communication:** It enables real-time communication through email,





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messaging apps, social media, and video calls, connecting people across the world.

- **Global connectivity:** The internet bridges geographical gaps, fostering international collaborations, friendships, and cultural exchange.
- **Education:** Online resources, courses, and e-learning platforms make education accessible to a wider audience, offering flexibility in learning.
- **Business and commerce:** The internet supports e-commerce, online marketing, and remote work, facilitating business growth and innovation.
- **Entertainment:** Streaming services, gaming platforms, and online content provide a diverse range of entertainment options.
- **Information sharing:** Blogs, forums, and social media enable individuals to share their perspectives, expertise, and creativity with a global audience.
- **Research and innovation:** The internet accelerates research and innovation by providing a platform for collaboration and the exchange of ideas.

#### Disadvantages of the internet:

1. **Privacy concerns:** Online activities can lead to privacy breaches, data theft, and unauthorized access to personal information.
2. **Cybersecurity threats:** The internet is vulnerable to cyberattacks, viruses, malware, and hacking attempts, compromising security.
3. **Digital addiction:** Excessive internet use can lead to digital addiction, affecting mental health and social interactions.
4. **Misinformation:** The ease of content sharing can lead to the spread of false information and misinformation.
5. **Social isolation:** Overreliance on the internet may reduce face-to-face interactions, leading to social isolation.
6. **Cyberbullying:** Online platforms can be used for cyberbullying, harassment, and hate speech.





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7. **Health issues:** Prolonged screen time can lead to digital eye strain, sedentary lifestyles, and sleep disturbances.
8. **Digital divide:** Not everyone has equal access to the internet, contributing to a digital divide based on socioeconomic factors.

Therefore, the internet's status as a necessity is driven by its transformative impact on various aspects of modern life. While it offers numerous benefits, its drawbacks necessitate responsible usage, cybersecurity measures, and ongoing efforts to mitigate its negative effects.





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**Case Study 3: *Cyberspace is a purely functional and task-based environment, but it also has an emotional and human side to it. Write down at least five characteristics of cyberspace-based human relationships.***

The following provides an example of an answer. However, other answers with sound justifications are equally correct.

**1. Anonymity and identity exploration:** Online platforms provide a level of anonymity that allows individuals to explore different aspects of their identity. People may feel freer to express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions without the constraints of real-world judgments.

**2. Global reach and diversity:** Cyberspace transcends geographical boundaries, enabling connections between people from different cultural backgrounds, languages, and perspectives. This diversity enriches discussions and promotes cross-cultural understanding.

**3. Ease of communication:** Digital communication tools facilitate quick and continuous interaction, allowing individuals to maintain relationships regardless of time zones or physical distance. This ease of communication fosters consistent connections.

**4. Empathy and emotional sharing:** Despite the lack of physical presence, individuals often form emotional bonds in cyberspace. People share personal experiences, offer support, and show empathy through text, emojis, and virtual expressions.





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**5. Niche communities and shared interests:** Online platforms enable the creation of specialized communities centred around shared interests or hobbies. People with niche passions can find like-minded individuals and develop strong connections.

**6. Selective self-presentation:** Individuals have control over what they share online, allowing them to present a curated version of themselves. This selective self-presentation can lead to deep connections based on shared values or interests.

**7. Online disinhibition effect:** The absence of face-to-face interactions can lead to a phenomenon called the "online disinhibition effect," where individuals feel more liberated to express their emotions and thoughts, sometimes to an extent they might not in offline interactions.

**8. Virtual support networks:** People often turn to cyberspace for emotional support during difficult times. Online communities provide a safe space to share struggles, receive advice, and find solace in the understanding of others.

**9. Intimacy and trust building:** While formed in a digital environment, some cyberspace relationships can develop deep levels of intimacy and trust. People may share personal stories, vulnerabilities, and emotions that lead to profound connections.

**10. Digital nostalgia:** Cyberspace-based relationships can evoke feelings of nostalgia and attachment to digital platforms that have played a role in connecting people, similar to how physical places hold sentimental value.





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Virtual and non-virtual relationships have significant differences which should be observed and known. However, these characteristics showcase the multifaceted nature of human relationships in cyberspace, underscoring the emotional bonds and meaningful connections that can thrive in the digital realm.





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#### **Case Study 4: How does the online and offline environment affect the user's personality?**

The following provides an example of an answer. However, other answers with sound justifications are equally correct.

##### **Effects when an individual faces an online environment:**

**1. Selective self-presentation:** Online platforms allow individuals to present a curated version of themselves, emphasizing certain traits while downplaying others. This selective self-presentation can influence the perception of one's own identity and impact how others perceive them.

**2. Anonymity and disinhibition:** The anonymity provided by the online environment can lead to a phenomenon called the "online disinhibition effect." People may feel more comfortable expressing their thoughts and emotions freely, which could reveal aspects of their personality that they might be hesitant to express in offline interactions.

**3. Identity exploration:** The online environment provides a space for individuals to explore different facets of their identity. People can experiment with new interests, hobbies, and personas, potentially leading to the discovery of hidden aspects of their personality.

**4. Reduced social cues:** Online communication lacks many of the non-verbal cues present in face-to-face interactions, such as body language and tone of voice. This can impact how personality traits are perceived and interpreted by others.





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**5. Digital nurturing:** Online interactions and feedback, such as likes, comments, and shares on social media, can reinforce certain behaviours and personality traits. Users may seek validation and reinforcement of specific aspects of their personality online.

### Effects when an individual faces an offline environment:

**1. Face-to-Face Interaction:** Offline interactions provide rich opportunities for observing and adapting to non-verbal cues, fostering the development of social skills and empathy. Personal interactions can impact how individuals perceive and present themselves.

**2. Socialization and Peer Influence:** Offline environments, especially during childhood and adolescence, heavily influence personality development through interactions with family, friends, and peers. These interactions shape values, beliefs, and social behaviours.

**3. Physical Environments:** The physical surroundings in which individuals live, work, and socialize can impact their personality. For example, an urban environment might encourage different personality traits than a rural one.

**4. Cultural Norms:** Offline cultural norms and societal expectations can shape how individuals express their personality. Different cultures value and encourage certain traits, behaviours, and attitudes. They vary from cultural norms exhibited in an online environment.





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**5. In-Person Experiences:** Offline experiences, such as travel, outdoor activities, or engaging in hobbies, contribute to a person's growth, interests, and character development are valued differently when one is directly present, and does not face the distance which a virtual connection exhibits.

Both the online and offline environments exert significant influences on a user's personality. The online environment allows for identity exploration, selective self-presentation, and exposure to diverse perspectives, while the offline environment contributes to the development of social skills, values, and behaviours through face-to-face interactions and cultural norms.

These combined influences contribute to the complexity and multidimensionality of an individual's personality. However, it is important to note that these are general trends and opportunities and drawbacks the two environments possess depending on the individual's point of view and the context of their situation.





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**Case Study 5: State your universal rules for the virtual world so that the users may coexist in a friendly and pleasant environment. You may know them as the “coexistence rules” for the virtual world.**

Any answer is possible depending on the value the individuals hold.

Having stated these coexistence rules for the virtual world, talk about the consequences of not following these rules.

Encourage the participants to critically evaluate their rules, and to question their rules. Please make sure that they are aware of the consequences and possible emotional damages misconduct in the internet can pose to them and others, when breaking these rules.





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# “LOG IN BACK THE REAL LIFE”

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## Educational Material

### CHAPTER 2:

### INTERNET ADDICTION

ARDA BERATUNG & BILDUNG GmbH



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## CHAPTER 2: INTERNET ADDICTION

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## 1. Introduction

In this part of the book, the internet and internet addiction are discussed. In contemporary digital age, the internet has become an integral part of our lives, especially of the lives of children and adolescents. They are prolific users of internet platforms, with a significant portion of their daily lives spent online. They use the internet for various purposes, including to communicate and connect, to inform themselves, to have a positive global impact, and for entertainment.

However, the use of the internet does not only have a positive side, but can also have negative consequences for children and adolescents. One of the catalysts for such negative consequences is internet addiction, which can have drastic and dreadful effects on the relationships with others, the mental and physical health, and the academic and work life of individuals.

Concluding, the internet is beneficial and dangerous for children and adolescents. Balancing the benefits and challenges of social media requires a collaborative effort among teachers, parents, and society as a whole to ensure that children and adolescents can navigate the digital landscape safely and responsibly.

An explanation of the internet: Often referred to as the "information superhighway," the internet is a global network of servers and computers that are connected to one another, facilitating the flow of data and information. It allows for seamless communication, access to enormous information stores, and the creation of virtual communities beyond geographic borders. The Internet's Development and Applications: The internet's history begins with it





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being a simple academic and military tool and ends with it becoming a revolutionary force that has shaped our modern world. This progression includes the emergence of the World Wide Web, the development of protocols, and the spread of internet-enabled devices. Applications for it may be found in many other fields, such as trade, education, entertainment, and communication.

**Social Media:** Social media platforms are a crucial component of the internet's influence. Social media allows knowledge to spread quickly and creates connections beyond regional boundaries. Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have completely changed how we interact, exchange stories, and take part in international dialogues.

Using the Internet: Getting Around in Digital Worlds

### **General Information on Internet Use:**

Using the internet has become a daily need that affects our interactions, learning, and working life. This section examines the many uses of the internet, from e-commerce and entertainment to research and communication.

**Benefits and drawbacks of using the internet:** although the internet has many benefits, there are drawbacks as well. While it's important to recognize the advantages of online collaboration, immediate communication, and information availability, it's also important to be aware of the possible disadvantages, which include information overload, cyber risks, and privacy erosion.

**Children and Adolescents' Use of the Internet:** When it comes to using the internet, children and adolescents have special considerations. This section explores the



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many ways in which younger generations interact with the digital environment, taking into account both the possible hazards and problems as well as the chances for socializing and learning.

### **Internet Dependency: Handling Digital Obstacles**

The term "internet addiction" describes an obsessive and excessive usage of the internet that can have a number of detrimental effects on a person's personal, academic, or professional life. It is the incapacity to restrain one's online conduct even when one is aware of its negative consequences.

#### **Signs of an addiction to the internet:**

Understanding the symptoms of internet addiction is essential to diagnosing it. These symptoms might include spending excessive amounts of time online, ignoring obligations, experiencing withdrawal symptoms when offline, and becoming obsessed with online activities to the point that real-world relationships suffer.

**Fighting an Internet Addiction:** Taking a diverse strategy is necessary to combat internet addiction. This section looks at ways that people can take back control of their online activity, with a focus on time management, self-awareness, and getting professional assistance when needed.

**The Parental Role:** Parents are essential in reducing the likelihood that their children may develop an internet addiction. This section covers techniques for encouraging open communication, creating healthy digital environments at home, and establishing appropriate limits.



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**The Teacher's Role:** Teachers play a major role in forming responsible digital citizens. This section describes how educators may help students learn how to use the internet responsibly, develop their critical thinking abilities, and provide a supportive online learning environment.

**Other Important Players' Roles:**

In addition to parents and educators, other parties who are involved in the issue of internet addiction include legislators, tech corporations, and mental health specialists. This section examines these important parties' shared accountability for encouraging a thoughtful and balanced approach to digital engagement.

**Treatment:** Getting expert help is essential for people who are suffering from serious internet addiction. A summary of therapy methods, counselling services, and support groups for persons seeking assistance in overcoming obsessive online habits is given in this section.

**Proper Internet Usage:** Keeping a positive connection with the internet is crucial. This chapter offers advice on how people can use the internet in a responsible and knowledgeable manner, with a focus on self-control, responsible digital citizenship, and seeking out a variety of online experiences.

The goal of studying these subjects is to get a comprehensive understanding of how the Internet affects people individually, in relationships, and in society at large, in addition to mastering the technical nuances of the Internet.





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## 2. Learning Objectives

In this chapter, students will endeavour to lead other students through an in-depth investigation of internet addiction, cultivating a sophisticated comprehension of its intricacies and providing useful perspectives for mitigation and guidance.

**Examine the Internet Landscape:** Gain a thorough grasp of the internet by following its development and investigating its many applications, with an emphasis on the emergence of social media.

**Define Internet Addiction:** Understand the ramifications of internet addiction and provide a clear definition, differentiating it from normal internet usage.

**Analyse Youth Internet Use:** Examine how kids and teenagers utilize the internet, emphasizing both the advantages and disadvantages of their online presence.

**Recognize Internet Addiction Symptoms:** Acknowledge and understand the symptoms of internet addiction, recognizing the differences between infrequent usage and indications of problematic behaviour.

**Treat Internet Addiction:** Examine practical methods for preventing internet addiction, taking into account both individual and group initiatives.

**Recognize the Critical Roles of Parents and Teachers:** Be cognizant of the important roles that parents and teachers play in tackling internet addiction, including education, prevention, and intervention.

**Include Important Stakeholders:** Recognize the importance that a variety of stakeholders—including community leaders and mental health professionals — have in reducing internet addiction, in addition to parents and educators.

**Examine Your Options for Treatment:** Examine various internet addiction treatment modalities while keeping in mind the value of individualized therapies.





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**Encourage Responsible and Mindful Internet Usage:** Learn how to build a positive relationship between people and the internet by focusing on responsible and thoughtful usage methods.

**Examine Real-World Case Studies:** Consider real-world case studies that show examples of internet addiction and offer insightful information about how it manifests and is resolved.

**Create Knowledge using References:** Using credible sources and research, access and make use of a variety of references to create a solid foundation of knowledge on internet addiction.

### 3. The Internet

#### 3.1 A Definition of the Internet

The internet is a global network of interconnected computers. It can be used for almost any purpose that depends on information, and can be accessed by anyone who connects to it.

The internet can be used for many different purposes.

Firstly, it can be used for communication. Social media platforms, electronic mail (e-mail), blogs, chat rooms, and more allow people to communicate with each other independently from factors concerning time and place. This means that anyone can communicate with anyone, regardless of the time or where they are, if they are connected to the internet. Additionally, due to this aspect, the internet





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can also be used to keep in touch and to contact friends, family members, colleges, etc.

Secondly, it can be used to research information. This information is provided in various forms: scientific articles; media including newspapers, television, and social media; and recounts of personal experiences. Due to the global accessibility of social media, information from all around the world can be accessed through the internet.

Other things the internet can be used for including shopping, transactions, downloading files, entertainment, and more.

### **3.2 Evolution of the Internet and its use**

The first recorded idea of the internet was a concept created by J.C.R. Licklider of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1962. He envisioned a global network that enabled social interactions as well as quick access to information and programmes that was based on the interaction of computers. He intrigued others, including MIT researcher Lawrence G. Roberts, of his idea, who started working on developing mechanisms to enable such a network. While he started sharing the results of their research at conferences, the RAND group was researching about so-called packet switching networks that are essential for the efficient transportation of data. By the end of 1969, four computers were connected to the so called ARPANET, the first version of the internet. In the following years, more computers were added to the network until the first e-mail was sent in March, 1972. This technology was furthered until it evolved into the global and high-performing network we see today.





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### 3.3 Social Media

Social media refers to digital and online platforms and websites that allow users to create, share, and interact with content, information, and other users in a social or networking context. These platforms enable individuals and organisations to connect, communicate, and share various forms of content, such as text, images, videos, and links, with a wide audience. Social media has become an integral part in our day to day life and plays a role in many aspects of our society, including health care, politics, activism, education, and sports.

There are two different types of social media. On the one hand, there is the social media that is mainly used for communication, for example messenger services such as WhatsApp or Signal. On the other hand, there is the social media that is mainly used to spread content to a wider audience, including Instagram or Facebook. What both of these types have in common is that they can be used to spread knowledge, opinions, and other information.

Social media is known for some specific characteristics. These are the user generated content that social media relies on, where individuals and so-called users (people that use the social media platforms) create and share content, including information and opinions. This content can take the form of posts, comments, photos, videos, and more. Another characteristic is the interactivity. Social media platforms are designed for interactive communication. Users can engage with each other by liking, sharing, commenting, and messaging. These interactions often occur in real-time. Additionally, networking and connectivity also is a characteristic of social media, as social media platforms facilitate networking as well as the creation and conservation of connections among users.





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People can connect with friends, family, colleagues, and even strangers who share common interests. Other specific characteristics of social media include the multimedia aspect, the global reach social media has, the profiles people create to be able to use a social media platform, and privacy settings to ensure that users only communicate with and can be contacted by people they wish to communicate with.

Finally, it is important to note that the landscape of social media is continually evolving, with new platforms and new technologies (for example, new forms of artificial intelligence) emerging and existing ones evolving to meet changing user expectations, needs, and trends.

Today a large variety in social media platforms exists, and each one attempts to have an emphasis on another aspect to attract users. Simultaneously, they are also constantly adapting to each other and creating similar features to prevent users from switching to other social media platforms. One can say that there is a fierce competition between the social media platforms concerning the amount of users they have and how popular their platform is.

The general idea behind the platforms is often the same: You create an account and become a “user”. Then, you can start uploading media, so called “content”, including photographs, videos, or messages (depending on the platform) to create “posts”. You can also stay in contact with other users through “following” them or “subscribing” to them. If you do this, you will receive their content and be able to communicate with them. Depending on the platform, you might also be able to do other things or the actions described might be called differently.





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Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube and others are very attractive and popular. This is because social media are intentionally designed to take advantage of the brain's pleasure circuitry. Users are given dopamine-producing rewards at an optimised pace to keep them engaged with the media for long periods. Every time an individual receives engagement via a "like," "follow" or "comment" the individual's brain releases rewarding neurotransmitters, ultimately resulting in individual's wanting more engagement. Additionally, endless scrolling of social media feeds, constantly refreshing feeds, or binge watching TikTok or YouTube videos also serve as a way to fend off loneliness, fight off boredom and fill other psychological voids. Furthermore, the fear of missing out also plays a large part in social media addiction.

## **4. The use of the Internet**

### **4.1 General Information on the use of the Internet**

At the start of the fourth quarter of 2023, 5.3 billion people were using the internet, which is 65.7 % of the global populations. This is an increase of 189 million users in the year before October, 2023 (2023, DataReportal). This is also a substantial increase in comparison to the one percent of the global population that had access to the internet in





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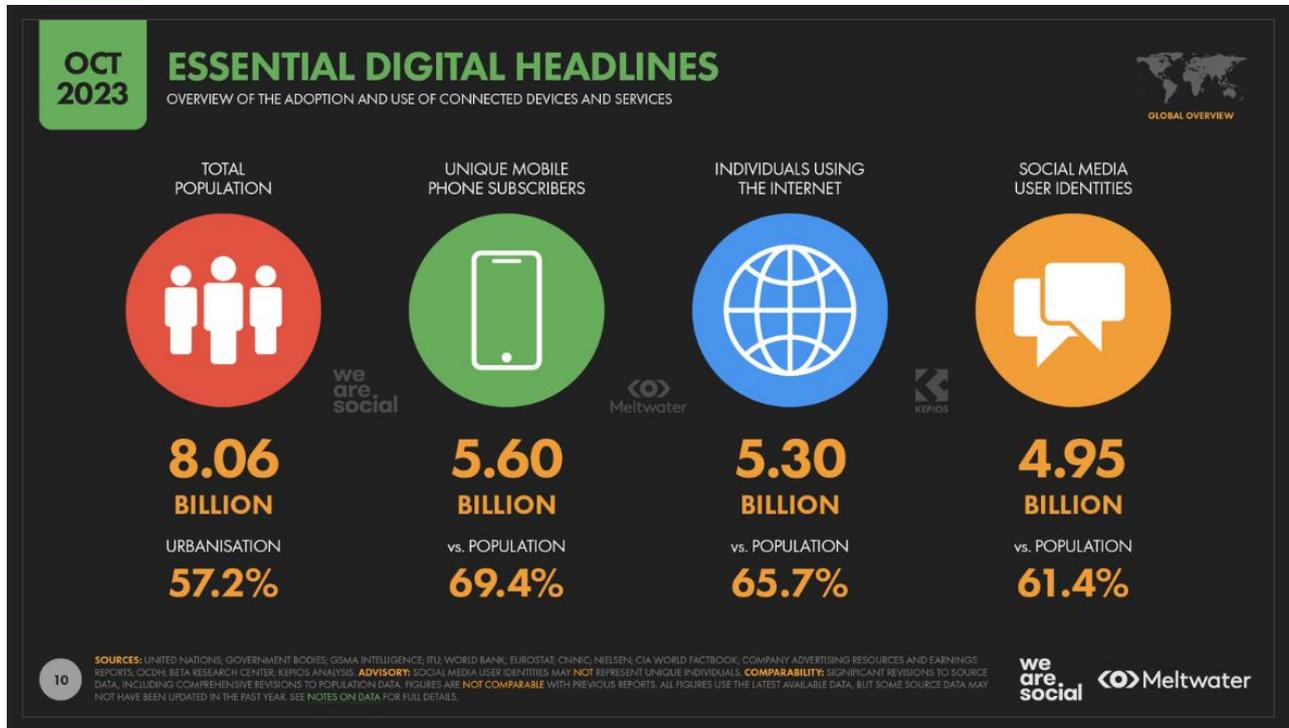


Image 1: Essential Information on Internet use

The internet use and penetration is not equally divided over the world. Highly developed nations, such as Iceland, Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Japan have internet penetration rates of above ninety percent. In contrast, developing countries, particularly developing countries in Africa, have lower overall penetration rates, although they are also experiencing a growth in internet usage. This digital divide reflects the existing global inequalities.

Furthermore, social networks have played a central role in the evolution and spread of online communication. They have gained immense popularity, connecting people across the globe and increasing the use of the internet. This growth of social networks and online communication as well as the diversity of the existing networks has driven a digital transformation in various sectors, including business, education, and healthcare.





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In the future, the internet usage is predicted to increase due to various factors. Firstly, social networks and public platforms are evolving into horizontal internet services, meaning that these platforms offer a wide range of tools and functions, making them suitable for various purposes and thus making them more attractive for diverse networking needs. Additionally, the popularity of social media is increasing and the accessibility of the various services is appealing to younger people who value freedom of choice in their entertainment preferences.

Overall, the internet's evolution and the rise of social networks have significantly impacted the way we communicate, connect, and conduct various aspects of our lives. As internet penetration continues to grow and technology advances, its influence on society is likely to expand further.

#### 4.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the use of the Internet

The internet offers numerous advantages and disadvantages, which are compared in the following table.

Table 1: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Media

	Advantages of the internet	Disadvantages of the internet
<b>Connectivity</b>	The internet allows people to connect with friends, family, and acquaintances regardless of geographical distances. It fosters personal and professional connections.	A larger connectivity brings up concerns about privacy. There is a fear that people can access one's accounts even if the privacy settings have been activated. Social media



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		<p>platforms also often require users to share personal information, which is good to find a friend but might influence the extent of security and privacy the platforms are able to provide.</p> <p>Excessive use of social media and the sole interaction with others through social media platforms can reduce face-to-face interactions, potentially impacting social skills and real-world relationships.</p>
<p><b>Information and news</b></p>	<p>The internet is a quick and accessible source of news, updates, and information. It provides real-time updates on current events and trending topics.</p> <p>With the information and news the internet offers, including educational content, courses, and resources, lifelong learning and skill development is enabled.</p>	<p>The rapid spread of misinformation and fake news on the internet can lead to confusion, misinformation, the dissemination of false and harmful information, and radicalisation.</p> <p>Additionally, constant notifications and information overload can lead to digital fatigue and burnout.</p>





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<p><b>Algorithms</b></p>	<p>Algorithms can allow you to see the content that interests and entertains you. They thus enable you to connect with people with similar interests.</p>	<p>Algorithms on the internet can create filter bubbles, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives and reinforcing existing beliefs.</p>
<p><b>Business, marketing, and networking</b></p>	<p>Platforms and websites on the internet such as LinkedIn are valuable for professional networking, job searching, and career development.</p> <p>Businesses can reach a vast and diverse audience through the internet, making it an effective tool for marketing, advertising, and customer engagement.</p>	<p>People that do not have constant access to the internet can not benefit from marketing and networking on the internet, which limits their opportunities to enter the work-force. This reinforces existing inequalities.</p>
<p><b>Customer service</b></p>	<p>Businesses can provide customer service and support via the internet, responding to inquiries and resolving issues promptly.</p>	<p>The part of the population that cannot navigate the internet well, especially the older part of the population, does not have access to this benefit.</p>
<p><b>Awareness, activism, and global impact</b></p>	<p>The internet facilitates awareness campaigns and activism, helping raise awareness about various world-</p>	<p>This aspect can also encourage the radicalisation of our society and lead to violence and the neglect of</p>





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	<p>wide social, political, and environmental issues.</p> <p>The internet has the potential to create global movements, influence change, and mobilise support for various causes and movements.</p>	<p>human rights.</p>
<b>Entertainment</b>	<p>The internet hosts a wide range of content meant for entertainment, including videos, live streams, and creative content.</p>	<p>Excessive use of the internet as a form or the only form of entertainment can lead to addiction and negatively impact mental health. It can be time-consuming and lead to reduced productivity.</p>
<b>Expression and creativity</b>	<p>Users can express themselves creatively through content creation, art, photography, and writing, sharing their talents with a global audience.</p>	<p>The internet can be a breeding ground for cyberbullying and online harassment, causing emotional and psychological harm to individuals. Especially the expression of oneself is a popular point of target for cyberbullies.</p>
<b>Community building</b>	<p>Online communities and groups on the internet bring together people with shared interests,</p>	<p>The comparison culture that many online-communities have can contribute to feelings of</p>





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hobbies, and identities, fostering a sense of belonging. These communities provide support and social interaction, also to people that might be excluded from their society.

inadequacy, anxiety, and sadness among users. Furthermore, the pressure to maintain an online presence can lead to digital fatigue and burnout.

Image 1: Toddler reaching to Phone

When discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the internet, young people tend to see the internet as a positive and essential aspect of their lives, while some adults may have concerns. These concerns include the lack of restrictions and censorship, the perception of unlimited freedom leading to moral decay, the potential for stress and time-wasting, and the idea that the internet can alienate people and promote ignorance.

### 4.3 The Internet use of Children and Adolescents

Children and adolescents are coming into contact with smartphones and tablets, and thus also with the internet, earlier and earlier. Ninety-eight percent of children and adolescents from the age of six use a



smartphone or a tablet; fifty-nine percent of children and adolescents between the ages of ten to eighteen cannot imagine life without the internet. Additionally, on average, children and adolescents spend almost two hours a day on the internet (Bitkom, 2022).



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While online, children and adolescents access social media platforms. Nearly 75% (three out of four) of the world's population aged thirteen and more uses social media (DataReportal). There are various reasons as to why children and adolescents enjoy being active on social media.

Firstly, children and adolescents appreciate the freedom the internet offers, in terms of content selection, information access, and in who they portray themselves to be. It allows them to explore their interests and values independently, without having to share them with others that might judge them for their preferences. With this freedom, children and adolescents can create an identity that they fantasise about to be in the physical world. They can create an account using their favourite movie character's name and pictures. They can also express their ideas, opinions, and preferences in discussion rooms as well as build social contacts without revealing their true identity, but with the identity they wish to have. They can thus build an imaginary world to showcase themselves as the best version as possible and as the version they want to be.

Additionally, social media gives children and adolescents the opportunity to escape from problems they face in their lives. These problems can include their family situation, their economic situation, bullying they face in school, academic stress, etc.

Furthermore, the concept of attachment is also relevant to explain why children and adolescents enjoy spending time on social media. Attachment stems from the concept of commitment, which is described as a fundamental human state, with individuals are born attached to caregivers and reliant on them to meet their basic needs. Over time, individuals transition from complete dependence to





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relative attachment, which involves psychological separation from parental care to establish personal and relational identity. If, however, children are brought in contact with the internet and social media early in their lives, they might not only develop attachment to their caregivers, but also to the internet and social media, which will make them use it often in their every day lives and make imagining a life without social media difficult for them.

Concluding, it is important to mention that, although the internet and social media is particularly popular with children and adolescents, especially because, as digital natives, they grew up, or are growing up, with social media and the internet, they are not immune to the dangers linked to social media. This means that, for children and adolescents, it is important to balance the benefits and challenges of social media, to be able to access the benefits and circumvent the challenges. Children and adolescents often experience pressure through the internet, being it the pressure to have accounts on various social media platforms, to post about their daily life, to behave a certain way, or to look a certain way. This means that they might begin to compare themselves to their peers, creating a low self-esteem. At the same time, though, they usually do not feel that they want to live without social media. Therefore, it is important to teach children and adolescents how to use social media in a safe way and to provide them information about social media addiction, especially because children and adolescents can be enticed by the diverse and ever changing content social media provides.

### **5. Internet Addiction**

Each of the next three lesson plans addresses a certain facet of internet usage and comprehension. Each lesson plan's content is explained by a theme that follows the pertinent explanations.





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## 5.1 A Definition of Internet Addiction

Internet addiction, also known as problematic internet use (PIU) or internet use disorder (IUD), is a behavioural addiction characterised by an excessive and compulsive use of the internet, causing a detriment of an individual's daily life, responsibilities, and well-being. It is a relatively new phenomenon associated with the widespread use of the internet and smartphones. While it is not officially recognised as a mental disorder in diagnostic manuals such as the DSM-5 or the ICD-11, it has gained recognition as a behavioural addiction. In addition, it shares similarities with other forms of behavioural addictions, such as video game addiction, which has been recognised the ICD-11.

Internet addiction is a growing concern, with varying prevalence rates across different regions and age groups. The rates range from 0.8% to 26.7%, indicating that the problem affects a significant portion of the population. Among children aged eight to eleven in Europe, the prevalence of internet addiction ranges from 1% to 18.3%. These figures underscore the need for awareness and intervention efforts to address internet addiction.

The internet has several characteristics that facilitate the development of an internet addiction.

Firstly, it is easily accessible. The easy access to the Internet, with its vast wealth of information and endless opportunities for exploration and engagement, is a significant factor contributing to the appeal and addictive potential of online activities. This accessibility means that users can engage with the Internet at any time and access an almost limitless amount of information and entertainment. This





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continuous availability can make it challenging for individuals to disengage from the internet, leading to excessive use and potential addiction. It is important to recognise the impact of this easy access when assessing and addressing issues related to Internet addiction (Kearns and Whitley, 2019).

Additionally, the internet is appealing to the senses. Many websites and online platforms use vibrant and attention-grabbing colours, which can stimulate users' visual senses and make the online environment visually appealing. The internet's ability to provide information and responses also quickly contributes to its addictive nature. Rapid loading times and instant feedback keep users engaged and immersed in online activities. Furthermore, user-friendly interfaces and intuitive navigation make it easy for individuals to access and interact with online content. The simplicity of use encourages prolonged engagement. Finally, the interactive nature of the Internet, including features like clickable links, multimedia content, and social media interactions, allow users to actively participate in online experiences. This interactivity can be highly rewarding and stimulating.

Another characteristic of the internet that can facilitate the development of an internet addiction are the social interactions with many people in real time. This social aspect can enhance the sense of immersion and connection, making it even easier to lose track of time. The interaction with others can also create peer pressure to be active on the internet and awaken a fear of missing out, leading to an increased social media use.

Apart from characteristics the internet has, there are also personality traits that make individuals more vulnerable to internet addiction.





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One of such a prone personality trait is shyness and social anxiety. Individuals who are very shy or have difficulty in communicating with other people can take refuge in the internet as a way of escape. For these people, the internet becomes a safe harbour where they can spend time without the need for face-to-face communication. Shy people can express themselves better in the online world, reveal their personalities and express themselves with an identity independent of reality.

Another prone personality trait is sadness. In some cases, sadness can also lead people to internet and technology addiction. The enjoyable time spent on the internet can temporarily make people forget their sadness. People who spend more time on the internet and technology to escape from their problems turn into technology addicts.

Narcissism is also a prone personality trait. Narcissism is characterised by an excessive sense of self-importance, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy for others. Individuals with narcissistic traits may be drawn to social media platforms that emphasise self-presentation, such as Facebook or Instagram, as they offer a way to showcase themselves and seek attention and admiration.

In this context, it is also necessary to mention comorbidity, which refers to the presence of two or more medical conditions or disorders in an individual at the same time. In this case, comorbidity refers to the co-occurrence of mental health disorders, such as depression, social anxiety, or ADHD, and internet addiction. This means that mental health disorders can increase the possibility of the development of an internet addiction.





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There are several types of internet addiction, which highlights the complexity of categorising them. The following are different subtypes of internet addiction:

1. Cyber relationship addiction: This subtype involves excessive involvement in online relationships. Individuals who are addicted to cyber relationships may prioritise online connections over their real-life relationships.
2. Net impulses: This subtype refers to compulsive behaviours related to activities such as online betting, shopping, or trading. These individuals find it challenging to control their impulses in these online activities.
3. Cyber Sexual Addiction: This subtype involves an obsessive use of adult websites with explicit content. Individuals who are cyber sexually addicted may spend a significant amount of time engaging in online sexual activities.

In conclusion, the ubiquity of the internet and the potential risks associated with excessive internet use, such as addiction, highlight the importance of responsible and balanced online behaviour, especially among young users. Internet addiction is a complex issue with multifaceted causes, and addressing it requires a comprehensive approach involving education, counselling, and support services.

## 5.2 Symptoms of Internet Addiction

An internet addiction can develop slowly and imperceptibly, without any symptoms that make a person stand out. This is also because many people use social media for longer periods of time every day, and therefore many people do not notice when they cross the boarder between accessing social media platforms regularly and having a social media addiction.

There are, however, still some symptoms associated with internet addiction.





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The direct symptoms include excessive usage of the internet; a loss of control when it comes to stopping an internet session or attempts of cutting down on internet use; preoccupation, meaning frequently thinking about the internet, planning the next online session, or craving the use of the internet, even in inappropriate or inconvenient situations; withdrawal symptoms, including experiencing restlessness, irritability, or anxiety when unable to access the internet or during periods of reduced use; compulsive checking, meaning constantly checking for notifications, updates, or messages, often interrupting other activities or conversations; dishonesty about the extent of internet use; and prioritising the use of the internet over other responsibilities, plans, or self-care activities.

Indirectly, these symptoms have other consequences. Addicts experience strained relationships with friends and families, as they prioritise using the internet over meeting with them. They start neglecting school or their work because they prioritise the internet or because they do not find it interesting anymore, which causes them to fall behind and, in the case of work, maybe even get fired, leading to financial issues. Internet addiction can also lead to physical health issues such as obesity, muscle atrophy, and cardiovascular problems due to a lack of movement and exercise. They also start having disrupted sleeping patterns, which leads to insufficient or irregular sleep, as well as start experiencing anxiety or mood disorders, such as depression and irritability, especially when people try to cut their time on social media.

In conclusion, although the severity of the consequences and symptoms can vary widely among individuals, social media addiction needs to be taken seriously, as it can have devastating effects on the life of the addict.





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### 5.3 Combating an Internet Addiction

Before being able to combat an internet addiction, one has to notice it. To do this, Dr. Kimberly Young (1996) and Staff, H. (2008) developed the first questionnaire for diagnosing Internet addiction. The short, eight-item questionnaire modified the gambling criteria to provide an addictive internet use screening tool. The eight questions are:

1. Do you feel preoccupied with the internet (answer by thinking about your previous online activities or anticipating your next online activities)?
2. Do you feel the need to increase the time you spend on the internet to please yourself?
3. Have you tried controlling, interrupting, or stopping internet use many times and failed?
4. Do you feel restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when you try to reduce or stop internet your use?
5. Do you spend more time online than you actually intend to?
6. Have you endangered or risked a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of the internet?
7. Have you lied to family members, therapists, or others to hide the extent of your preoccupation with the internet?
8. Do you use the internet as a way of escaping from problems or relieving a dysphoric mood (for example, helplessness, guilt, anxiety, or depression)?

People that do have an internet addiction, answer with "yes" to five or more questions. Young stated that having five "yes"-answers to diagnose an internet addiction was consistent with Pathological Gambling addiction and was sufficient to distinguish normal use from pathological internet use.





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People that are addicted to the internet should carry out the following steps to combat their internet addiction.

Firstly, individuals should get feedback from the people around them and talk about what they are experiencing. Opinions from outside and open conversations can help to assess one's own situation better.

Afterwards, they should try to distance themselves from the internet. To do this, they should switch off their notifications and hide the applications from the home screen of their smartphone or their computer, so that the internet and social media platforms are not that present in their lives any more and less tempting. They should also monitor their usage behaviour on their mobile phones and set time limits for themselves. These time limits do not have to be drastic at first; small steps also make a difference. They should try to use applications to set these time limits that immediately close applications once a set time limit is reached. Additionally, they should to direct their attention to other hobbies they have that do not include the internet and practise mindfulness and meditation to help themselves become more aware of their online habits and to provide tools to manage impulses.

#### **5.4 The Role of the Parents**

Before attempting to combat an internet addiction of their child parents should do two things.





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Firstly, they should verify that their child is experiencing an internet addiction. To do this, they should ask themselves the following questions. If the answers are “yes”, their child is probably addicted to the internet.

1. Do you have the impression that your child’s thoughts are always revolving around the smartphone, computer, console, or internet – even while carrying out other activities?
2. Does your child seem nervous, irritable, or sad when they cannot access the internet?
3. Are the offers the internet provides dominating over the interests and hobbies your child used to have?
4. Does your child skip meals or family activities to use the internet?
5. Does it appear that the academic performance of your child has been lacking due to their internet behaviour?
6. Has your child gained or lost a lot of weight?
7. Is your child more often tired than they used to be?

Secondly before helping their child combat an internet addiction or implementing measures to prevent their child from developing an internet addiction, parents should first look at themselves, so that they can serve as role-models for their children. To do this, they should take the time to educate themselves about both the benefits and risks of the internet. This knowledge allows them to guide their child effectively, enabling them to explore the online world while equipping them with the necessary coping skills and resilience to handle potential harm. While informing themselves about the online risks, parents should maintain a balanced perspective and pay attention to not overemphasising or exaggerating them. This could make their children overly cautious and fearful, hindering their ability to explore and learn online. Parents should then, with the new knowledge, exhibit





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responsible behaviour to serve as a role model for their children.

After learning about social media use themselves, parents can start educating their child about the risks and benefits social media use entails. They should do this using open communication; creating an environment where their child feels comfortable discussing their online experiences, questions, or concerns; and ensuring that their child will seek their help if they start developing problems surrounding their internet use. Parents should also discuss how to handle social pressure with their children, because, as mentioned before, children and adolescents often experience social pressure while using social media. This can include discussions about peer pressure, risky online behaviour, and the addictive nature of social media.

Parents should also establish clear expectations and rules for the online behaviour of their child. This is essential to prevent addiction while allowing your child to enjoy the benefits of the internet. The following is a list of rules parents can implement:

- Set daily or weekly time limits. Explain why you are setting these limits to your child, so that they cooperate and understand why these are necessary.
- Designate screen-free zones, such as the dining room or the living room. Parents can also establish screen-free activities, such as family meals or family activities. This might be difficult for the child to implement at the beginning. Be patient but firm and make sure that your child understands why this is important.
- Encourage your child to follow a daily routine that includes time for homework, physical activity, possible chores, social interactions, and screen time, without prioritising screen time over other activities.
- Parents can also have their child complete their homework before giving





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them access to screens and the internet.

It is important that once you establish these rules, you also ensure that they are implemented. It is also recommended that every family member adheres to the rules so that the children or the child do not feel left alone or treated differently. Seeing their parents or siblings respect the rules, encourages them to respect the rules as well.

Furthermore, if their child develops a social media addiction, parents should support the mental health of their children and seek professional help. A therapist or counsellor with expertise in digital addiction can provide the guidance and support that parents cannot.





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## 5.5 The Role of the Teachers

Teachers also play a critical role when it comes to preventing and addressing an internet addiction of their students.

They mainly should include education about the internet and internet addiction into their lessons. This means that they should incorporate digital literacy education to help students understand the potential risks and challenges associated with the internet. They can also organise awareness programmes and workshops on internet addiction, its signs, and its consequences. For this, teachers can invite experts or counsellors to speak to the students, so that they understand the gravity of an internet addiction. During these workshops, students can also develop guidelines for healthy internet behavioural habits. Here, it is important to highlight that internet use is not necessarily bad, but rather needs to be balanced to be healthy. Furthermore, it is recommended that some workshops teach students about self-regulation to help them learn skills such as time management, goal setting, and impulse control, as well as that workshops incorporate self-assessment and reflection so that the students can assess their social media use.

Apart from educating their students about internet addiction, teachers should encourage students to talk to an adult if they notice that they or someone else are showing signs of an internet addiction. Teachers should also create an open classroom environment, so that the students feel comfortable talking about their experiences and seeking help from a teacher if they want to.

Furthermore, teachers should be aware of what they should do if they notice that one of their students might be addicted to the internet. They should know that





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they should, in this case, contact the parents of the student and, if possible, the school counsellor, as well as be aware of any school policies concerning internet addiction that might exist.

In the end, teachers need to be aware to the importance of their role. The goal should be to empower students with knowledge on how to have a healthy relationship with the internet. A goal can also be to create a class community where students feel comfortable talking to fellow students and their teacher about their internet behaviour, so that they have a social network that can support them if their internet behaviour deteriorates.

## **5.6 The Role of Other Key Players**

The following recommendations highlight the importance of the collaboration between various key players to create a safer internet environment for children and to prevent internet addiction.

A key player are the governments. They should coordinate multi-stakeholder efforts to enhance internet and social media safety, ensuring meaningful youth participation to be able to include their perspective. They should also support positive online content tailored to different age and interest groups and review and update legislative provisions for the regulation of online content. Additionally, the government should support teacher training programmes that include the potential of online tools for education while highlighting the danger of internet addiction as well as increase their awareness of their role when it comes to the social media use of their children.





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Another key player is the industry of the providers of internet content, such as social media companies. They should focus on providing user-friendly and customisable safety tools for children and adolescents, for example by promoting “safety by default” features in their online platforms and websites and by providing safety information. They can also include features in their platforms and websites that remind users to take breaks and to not use the internet for too long.

A final key player are the communities. They should organise parenting workshops that educate parents about the internet and addiction prevention as well as youth programmes and support groups that offer alternative activities and social interactions for children and adolescents. They can also launch public awareness campaigns to educate the community about responsible internet use and support the collaboration between themselves, schools, healthcare providers, and mental health organisations to address internet addiction as a community issue.

## 5.7 Treatment of Social Media Addiction

There are various forms of treatment of internet addiction and the form of treatment should always be tailored to the specific needs of the individual. The following is a list of different treatment options:

- Counselling and therapy: Counselling and therapy, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), can address the underlying psychological issues contributing to internet addiction and help create measures and strategies specifically tailored to the needs, the strengths, and the weaknesses of an individual.





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- Support groups: Joining a support group or a community where individuals can share their experiences, receive support, and learn from others who have overcome internet addiction can help overcome an internet addiction.
- Family involvement: Involving all family members in the treatment process can create a supportive and understanding environment and motivate people. Family members can, for example, also adhere to time limits.
- Self-help resources: There are various self-help resources available, including books, online forums, and mobile apps, designed to assist individuals in managing and overcoming social media addiction. These resources often provide tips, strategies, and motivational support.
- Behavioural contracts: Developing a behavioural contract or agreement with a trusted friend or family member can help individuals set clear boundaries and consequences for their gaming behaviour. This external accountability can be a powerful motivator.

Remember that a combination of strategies is often employed to address social media addiction. Seeking help from mental health professionals or addiction specialists is recommended to tailor a treatment plan that suits the individual's unique needs and circumstances.

In conclusion, the early recognition of internet addiction and tailored interventions are crucial in preventing its escalation and associated risks. Seeking professional help when necessary is essential for recovery and improved quality of life.





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## 6. Healthy use of the Internet

To ensure that children and adolescents use the internet in a healthy and beneficial manner, there are some aspects that should be taken into account.

Firstly, children and adolescents should be encouraged and enabled to maximise their digital literacy skills. Digital literacy skills include three core areas that children need to discuss and learn in order to become digitally literate: using digital tools (to be able to use technology to search for and create content), sharing and interacting online (to be able to connect and communicate effectively online, learn, and collaborate with peers), and safety and well-being online (to be able to recognise risks, stay safe online, protect their physical and emotional well-being, and practise positive online behaviours). Digital literacy skills are essential to navigate the online world, safely without harming oneself.

Another important aspect that contributes to children and adolescents using the internet in a healthy manner is promoting online safety and empathy. Teaching children and adolescents to share responsibility for online safety and the well-being of others, particularly in situations involving online bullying and harassment is essential. They should also understand the impact they can have as bystanders or participants of internet platforms and online bullying, as well as be aware of the impact other users on the internet can have on them.

In addition, children and adolescents should learn the importance of respecting age limits. To do this, parents and teachers should emphasise the importance of adhering to the age limits of online services and of encouraging children and adolescents to seek advice regarding the suitability of services and content they





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want to access.

Furthermore, to ensure the safe use of social media of children and adolescents, adults should help them develop proactive coping strategies, such as deleting messages, blocking unwanted contacts, and utilising reporting tools to address problematic online situations. For this open communication is essential.

Finally, another important aspect is that children should be reminded that they can and should reach out for help from a trusted adult if they notice that their social media behaviour is changing or deteriorating. They should be aware of the fact that this is a necessary step to prevent social media addiction, and that asking for help is nothing to feel ashamed or scared about.

With these aspects, children and adolescents will be able to make informed and responsible choices in their digital interactions and their use of social media platforms, ensuring a positive and secure online experience.





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## 7. Lesson Plans

### Chapter 2 – Lesson Plan 1: "Understanding the Internet"

**Lesson:** Exploring the Internet Fundamentals (45 minutes)

**Aim:** Students will gain a basic understanding of the Internet, including its definition and basic components.

#### **1. Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Discuss students' prior knowledge of the Internet.
- Introduce the purpose of the lesson: To understand the basic concepts of the internet.

#### **Activity 2: Internet Scavenger Hunt (20 minutes):**

- Provide a list of Internet-related terms.
- Students research in pairs and provide short explanations for the given periods.
- Encourage discussions and questions during presentations.

#### **3. Definition of the Internet (15 minutes):**

- Provide a clear definition of the Internet.
- Discuss key components such as servers, websites, and data transmission.
- Engage students in a short Q&A session to reinforce understanding.

#### **Homework:**

Ask students to create a visual representation (drawing, diagram, or infographic) of the basic components of the internet.



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## Chapter 2 – Lesson Plan 2: "The Dynamic Evolution of the Internet and Social Media Impact"

**Objective:** Students will explore the evolution of the internet, understand its diverse applications, and examine the impact of social media on communication and society.

**Lesson Duration:** 60 minutes

### Introduction (10 mins):

- Begin with a quick discussion on students' experiences with the internet and social media.
- Introduce the lesson's objective: understanding the evolution of the internet and the role of social media in shaping our digital landscape.

### Activity 1: Timeline of Internet Evolution (20 mins):

#### Overview (5 mins):

- Provide a brief overview of the internet's early stages, emphasizing its origin as ARPANET.
- Highlight key developments leading to the World Wide Web.

#### Timeline Exploration (15 mins):

- Display a visual timeline of the internet's evolution on the board or screen.
- In pairs or small groups, students analyse and discuss significant milestones.
- Facilitate a class discussion on the transformative impact of these milestones.





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### Activity 2: Diverse Applications of the Internet (15 mins):

**Introduction (5 mins):** Discuss the variety of applications the internet offers in different sectors, such as education, business, and healthcare.

#### **Group Activity: Application Exploration (10 mins):**

- Assign each group a specific sector (e.g., education, business, healthcare).
- Groups research and present how the internet has evolved and is currently used in their assigned sector.

Encourage discussion on the positive and transformative aspects of internet applications.

### Activity 3: Unraveling Social Media (15 mins):

**Definition and Overview (5 mins):** Define social media and provide a brief overview of its emergence and popularity.

#### **Case Study: Impact of Social Media (10 mins):**

- Present a case study or real-life examples showcasing the influence of social media on communication, information dissemination, and societal dynamics.
- Engage students in a discussion on the positive and negative impacts of social media.

#### **Conclusion and Reflection (10 mins):**

- Summarize key points about the internet's evolution and the impact of social media.
- Ask students to reflect on how these digital advancements have transformed their own lives.





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**Assessment:** Evaluate student participation in class discussions and group activities. Assess the depth of understanding through reflections on the impact of social media.

**Adaptations:** Adjust timing based on class dynamics and familiarity with the topics. Encourage creativity in the group activity, allowing students to present their findings in various formats (short presentations, posters, etc.).





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## Chapter 2 – Lesson Plan 3: "Navigating the Digital Realms – Understanding the Use of the Internet"

**Objective:** Students will explore the diverse applications of the internet, understand its advantages and disadvantages, and examine the unique patterns of internet use among children and adolescents.

**Lesson Duration:** 1 Class (60 minutes)

### Introduction (10 mins):

- Begin with a brief discussion on how students currently use the internet.
- Introduce the lesson's objective: exploring the general use of the internet, its advantages, disadvantages, and the specific considerations for children and adolescents.

### Activity 1: General Information on Internet Use (20 mins):

**Overview (5 mins):** Provide a general overview of the various ways people use the internet in their daily lives.

### Group Activity: Internet Use Scenarios (15 mins):

- Divide students into small groups.
- Assign each group a specific scenario (e.g., work-related, educational, entertainment).
- Groups discuss and present how the internet is utilized in their assigned scenario.

### Activity 2: Advantages and Disadvantages (20 mins):





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**Introduction (5 mins):** Discuss the concept of advantages and disadvantages in the context of internet use.

**Class Discussion: Pros and Cons (15 mins):** Facilitate a class discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of internet use. Encourage critical thinking about both positive and negative aspects.

### **Activity 3: Internet Use of Children and Adolescents (20 mins):**

**Introduction and Discussion (10 mins):** Introduce the unique patterns of internet use among children and adolescents. Discuss how young people engage with the internet for education, socialization, and entertainment.

**Case Study: Online Safety (10 mins):** Present a case study or real-life examples related to online safety for children and adolescents. Engage students in a discussion on the importance of internet safety measures.

**Conclusion and Reflection (10 mins):** Summarize key points about general internet use, its advantages, disadvantages, and considerations for children and adolescents. Ask students to reflect on responsible internet use and online safety.

#### **Assessment:**

- Evaluate participation in group activities and class discussions.
- Assess the depth of understanding through reflections on responsible internet use.

#### **Adaptations:**

- Adjust timing based on class dynamics and familiarity with the topics.
- Incorporate real-life examples or guest speakers to provide practical insights into online safety for children and adolescents.





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## Chapter 2 – Lesson Plan 4: "The Basics of Internet Use"

**Objective:** Students will gain a fundamental understanding of the internet, its components, and general applications.

**Lesson Duration:** 1 Class (60 minutes)

**Introduction (10 mins):** Briefly discuss students' current use of the internet and its significance in their lives. Introduce the lesson objective: understanding the basics of internet use.

### Activity 1: Defining the Internet (20 mins):

#### Presentation (10 mins):

- Present a clear definition of the internet and its primary functions.
- Discuss the basic components, such as servers, websites, and data transmission.

#### Group Activity: Internet Scavenger Hunt (10 mins):

- Divide students into small groups.
- Provide a list of internet-related terms and ask each group to research and present a brief explanation of their assigned term.
- Encourage discussions and questions during the presentations.

### Activity 2: Applications of the Internet (20 mins):

**Discussion (10 mins):** Discuss various applications of the internet, including communication, research, entertainment, and commerce.





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**Group Activity: Real-World Scenarios (10 mins):**

- Present real-world scenarios and ask each group to discuss how the internet is used in those situations.
- Groups share their findings with the class.

**Conclusion and Reflection (10 mins):** Summarize key points about internet basics and applications. Ask students to reflect on how their understanding of the internet has evolved.





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## Chapter 2 – Lesson Plan 5: "Understanding Internet Addiction"

**Objective:** Students will learn about internet addiction, its symptoms, and strategies for combating excessive internet use.

**Lesson Duration:** 60 minutes

**Introduction (10 mins):** Initiate a discussion about the time students spend on the internet and whether they feel it could be excessive. Introduce the lesson objective: understanding internet addiction and its impact.

### Activity 1: Defining Internet Addiction (15 mins):

**Presentation (10 mins):** Present a clear definition of internet addiction. Discuss how it can impact various aspects of life.

**Group Discussion: Personal Reflection (5 mins):** Ask students to reflect on their own internet use and whether they've ever felt it might be excessive. Encourage sharing without judgment.

### Activity 2: Symptoms and Combating Strategies (25 mins):

**Interactive Exercise (15 mins):** Present common symptoms of internet addiction. Conduct an interactive exercise where students identify these symptoms in hypothetical scenarios.

**Class Discussion and Strategies (10 mins):** Facilitate a discussion on strategies for combating internet addiction, such as setting boundaries and seeking professional help.





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### Activity 3: Role-Playing (10 mins):

**Divide students into pairs (5 mins):** Each pair acts out a scenario depicting someone struggling with internet addiction and someone providing support and guidance.

### Conclusion and Reflection (5 mins):

Summarize key points about internet addiction, its symptoms, and combating strategies. Ask students to reflect on their own responsibility in maintaining a healthy internet use.





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## Chapter 2 – Lesson Plan 6: "Addressing Internet Addiction – Collaborative Efforts for Intervention"

This lesson plan underscores the importance of collaborative efforts among parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in addressing internet addiction. By recognizing the distinct roles each party plays, students gain insight into the multifaceted approach required to combat this issue effectively. Through discussion and role-play activities, students develop a deeper understanding of the support networks necessary for promoting responsible internet use and addressing addiction. Whilst combating a social media addiction, remember to keep your goals in mind. Celebrate small victories and do not be too hard on yourself. Addictions do not disappear in a day.

**Objective:** Students will explore the roles of parents, teachers, and other key players in addressing internet addiction and promoting responsible internet use.

**Lesson Duration: 80 minutes**

### **Introduction (10 mins):**

- Begin by asking students about their perceptions of internet addiction and its impact on individuals and society.
- Introduce the lesson objective: understanding the roles of parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in combating internet addiction.



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### Activity 1: The Role of Parents (20 mins):

#### Presentation (10 mins):

- Discuss the importance of parental involvement in recognizing and addressing internet addiction.
- Highlight strategies parents can employ to promote responsible internet use and set healthy boundaries.

#### Group Discussion (10 mins):

- Divide students into small groups.
- Each group discusses scenarios related to parental involvement in addressing internet addiction.
- Groups share their insights and proposed solutions with the class.

### Activity 2: The Role of Teachers (20 mins):

#### Presentation (10 mins):

- Explain how teachers can identify signs of internet addiction and support students in seeking help.
- Discuss the importance of integrating digital literacy and responsible internet use into the curriculum.

#### Class Discussion (10 mins):

- Facilitate a discussion on the challenges teachers may face in addressing internet addiction in the classroom.





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- Encourage students to brainstorm ways teachers can effectively support students struggling with internet addiction.

### Activity 3: Roles of Other Key Players (30 mins):

#### Presentation (10 mins):

- Introduce other key players in addressing internet addiction, such as school counsellors, mental health professionals, and policymakers.
- Discuss the collaborative efforts needed to create comprehensive intervention strategies.

#### Role-Playing Activity (10 mins):

- Divide students into pairs or small groups.
- Assign each group a specific role (e.g., school counsellor, mental health professional).
- Groups role-play scenarios depicting how these key players would address internet addiction in their respective roles.

**Conclusion and Reflection (10 mins):** Summarize the roles of parents, teachers, and other key players in addressing internet addiction. Ask students to reflect on the importance of collaboration and support networks in combating internet addiction. Encourage students to consider how they can contribute to promoting responsible internet use in their own lives and communities.





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## Chapter 2 – Lesson Plan 7: "The Responsible Use of Social Media"

These lesson plans aim to cover various aspects of internet use, including the basics, understanding addiction, and responsible use of.

**Objective:** Students will explore the concept of social media, its impact on society, and the importance of responsible use.

**Lesson Duration:** 60 minutes

**Introduction (10 mins):** Discuss students' experiences with social media and its role in their lives. Introduce the lesson objective: understanding social media and practising responsible use.

### Activity 1: Defining Social Media (15 mins):

**Presentation (10 mins):** Define social media and provide a brief overview of its emergence and popularity.

### Group Activity: Social Media Exploration (5 mins):

- Divide students into small groups and assign each group a popular social media platform.
- Groups research and present the platform's history, features, and societal .





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### Activity 2: Impact of Social Media (20 mins):

**Case Study or Real-Life Examples (10 mins):** Present a case study or real-life examples showcasing the influence of social media on communication and society.

**Group Discussion: Positive and Negative Impacts (10 mins):**

- Facilitate a class discussion on the positive and negative aspects of social media.
- Encourage students to share personal experiences and observations.

### Activity 3: Responsible Social Media Use (15 mins):

**Discussion and Guidelines (10 mins):** Discuss the concept of responsible social media use. Present guidelines for promoting positive online behaviour.

**Group Activity: Creating Guidelines (5 mins):** In small groups, have students create

**Conclusion and Reflection (10 mins):** Summarize key points about social media, its impact, and responsible use. Ask students to reflect on how they can contribute to a positive online environment.





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## **8. Case Studies**

### **Case Study 1: Sarah's Social Isolation**

#### Background:

Sarah, a 16-year-old high school student, has become increasingly isolated due to her excessive use of the internet. She spends most of her waking hours scrolling through various platforms and interacting with her online friends while neglecting face-to-face interactions.

#### Consequences:

Sarah's grades have declined significantly and she has lost interest in the extracurricular activities that once gave her joy. She also often experiences loneliness and sadness.

#### Intervention:

Her parents notice that her internet behaviour has changed and send her to the school counsellor. The school counsellor then initiates a conversation with Sarah about her internet use. Sarah is encouraged to join a support group for teenagers struggling with internet addiction. The counsellor also works with Sarah's parents to establish screen time limits and promote offline social engagement.

#### Conclusion:

Sarah's case displays typical consequences associated with internet addiction. It shows how important it is that parents pay attention to their children's social media behaviour to be able to notice any changes at an early stage and to provide their children help as soon as possible.





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## Case Study 2: *David's Compulsive Posting*

### Background:

David, a 17-year-old aspiring influencer, has developed a compulsive habit of posting on various social media platforms. He always feels the need to update his followers about his life and what he is doing at the moment. Additionally, he constantly seeks validation through likes and comments on his posts, often staying awake late at night to engage with his followers. Because of this, he is spending an increasing amount of time on the internet.

### Consequences:

David's sleep pattern is disrupted, leading to chronic fatigue. Furthermore, David's self-esteem is heavily dependent on social media validation and he struggles to maintain real-life relationships because of how much time he dedicates to his social media accounts.

### Intervention:

David's teacher notices that he does not interact with his peers as much as he used to. She also notices that he is constantly taking pictures of what he is doing. Thinking that he might be compulsively posting on social media, she gives him the contact of a psychotherapist specialised in the field of social media. David visits the psychotherapist and they discuss David's current social media use, the importance of healthy internet behaviour, and the state of David's self-confidence. Animated by the psychotherapist, David's parents encourage him to take breaks from social media and set boundaries. They also place more importance on family activities to distract David from the internet and his social media accounts.





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### Conclusion:

David's case shows the importance of teachers being aware of their student's emotional state and that they intervene when they think intervention is necessary. It also shows how family can help people with internet addiction overcome their addiction.





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### **Case Study 3: Emma's Internet Addiction**

#### Background:

Emma, an 18-year-old college student, was an excellent student until she started spending excessive time on the internet. Her addiction has led to late-night scrolling, procrastination, and a decline in her academic performance. Emma's parents and professors notice the change in her behaviour.

#### Consequences:

Emma's academic performance drops dramatically and she is at risk of being forced to drop out. This would make reaching her childhood dream of becoming a lawyer difficult.

#### Intervention:

Emma's parents and academic advisor collaborate to develop a plan. They encourage her to use time-management techniques and digital detox strategies. Emma also seeks academic counselling to catch up on her coursework. As she regains control over her internet use, her academic performance improves and she manages to graduate.

#### Conclusion:

Emma's case demonstrates the dramatic consequences internet addiction can have. Emma was at risk of failing to reach her childhood dream, because her internet use had overshadowed the passion she actually has.



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#### **Case Study 4: James' Internet Addiction**

##### Background:

James, a 20-year-old university student, is addicted to the internet, specifically to using social media. He often spends his entire nights on social media, neglecting his studies, sleep, and personal well-being.

##### Consequences:

James starts falling behind in his course work. His addiction also has severe consequences on his physical and mental health. He feels that he is wasting his life and his self-confidence is decreasing.

##### Intervention:

James joins a university support programme for addiction, where he receives counselling for his internet addiction. Through therapy, he develops strategies to manage his screen time, prioritise his studies, and improve his sleep schedule. He also joins a campus fitness group to address his physical health. By turning his life around and working hard, he recovers his self-confidence, even if he sometimes relapses.

##### Conclusion:

James' case emphasises the need for specialised addiction programs that address the challenges of social media and internet addiction while promoting a healthier lifestyle.



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### **Case Study 5: *Elena's Instagram Infatuation***

#### Background:

Elena has been active on Instagram for ten years. She prides herself on using Instagram in a healthy way. However, one day, she wakes up and notices that Instagram is experiencing technical difficulties, meaning that she cannot access the application any more.

#### Consequences:

Elena notices how, for the rest of the day, she is anxious and stressed because she cannot access Instagram. At school, she is easily distracted and constantly trying to reaccess her account. She notices that she does not have such a healthy relationship to Instagram as she always used to think, and starts wondering whether she might be addicted to it.

#### Intervention:

Elena talks to her parents about her suspicions and they recommend that she informs herself with a book her father has found in the local library about the topic. Elena learns simple techniques to distance herself from Instagram and the internet in general. Through using these techniques, that include not using social media for specific days, she develops a better relationship to social media and learns how to use these in a healthy manner.

#### Conclusion:

Elena's case shows that internet addiction can be covert and that it does not need to express itself in direct consequences (such as procrastination or lack of sleep). It also shows that people can think that they are using the internet healthily, even though they actually are not.





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# “LOG IN BACK THE REAL LIFE”

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## Educational Material

### CHAPTER 3:

### TEACHERS AS PROMOTERS OF INTERNET SECURITY

ARDA BERATUNG & BILDUNG GmbH



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## CHAPTER 3: TEACHERS AS PROMOTERS OF INTERNET SECURITY

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## 1. Introduction

In today's interconnected world, the digital space plays a pivotal role in shaping the way we communicate, gather information, and interact with a wide range of online content. This educational journey encompasses a comprehensive exploration of key themes: recognizing and addressing social media and video game addiction, fostering a healthy classroom environment, improving media literacy, understanding the implications of privacy, strengthening cybersecurity, and instilling digital citizenship principles.

The pervasiveness of social media and video games in our daily lives brings with it the necessity to understand the potential challenges that arise. As we explore the complexities of addiction to both social media platforms and video games, our goal is to equip students with the knowledge to recognize the signs and create a supportive environment for those affected.

Beyond personal use, the classroom is a microcosm where digital interactions occur regularly. By exploring strategies to foster a healthy classroom environment, educators and students can develop spaces that encourage positive digital engagement and foster a sense of community.

Media literacy comes to the fore when navigating the vast sea of information available online. Enabling students to critically evaluate and understand media messages enables them to navigate the digital environment with understanding and resistance to misinformation.

In an age where personal information is shared and stored digitally, privacy





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awareness and cybersecurity emerge as the most important considerations. Understanding the intricacies of protecting privacy and strengthening cybersecurity measures are important components of responsible digital citizenship.

This holistic exploration of digital themes aims to not only inform but also empower. By promoting awareness and responsibility, we aim to guide students to become conscious digital citizens who navigate the digital environment with a clear understanding of opportunities, challenges and ethical considerations.

Research has shown that approximately 50% of people aged eleven to sixteen living in the European Union face different internet risks. Research also shows that more than half (55%) of people over the age of eight and all people aged fourteen and over have internet access. Therefore, it is important and necessary for children and adolescents to learn how to navigate the Internet safely, including knowing how to protect their personal information, how to treat people online, and how to avoid getting scammed or contracting viruses.

Teachers play an important role in ensuring that young people and adolescents know how to use the internet safely, as they play a large role in their education in general. They can contribute to internet safety by providing digital literacy training, providing information about cyber security awareness, encouraging critical thinking, providing information on safe social media use, ensuring open communication, and paying attention to whether their students' internet behavior is healthy. It may turn into addiction.

As a result, teachers play an important role in improving internet safety.





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## 2. Learning Objectives

This chapter's students will With the help of these learning goals, instructors will be equipped with the information and abilities needed to actively encourage internet security, giving students access to a secure and responsible digital learning environment.

**Acknowledge Social Media and Video Game Addiction:** Gain the skills necessary to recognize the telltale signs and symptoms of social media and video game addiction, as well as their detrimental effects on students' mental health.

**Encourage a Healthful Environment in the Classroom:** Learn how to create a safe, supportive environment in the classroom that promotes responsible online conduct and protects the safety of your kids.

**Improve Media Literacy:** Gain a thorough grasp of media literacy so that teachers can provide children the critical thinking abilities they need to successfully explore digital information.

**Cultivate Privacy Awareness:** Gain knowledge about contemporary privacy concerns in the digital era so that educators may assist students in safeguarding their personal data online.

**Comprehend Cybersecurity Measures:** Acquire an understanding of basic cybersecurity procedures so that educators may put safety precautions in place for students and learning materials.

**Encourage Digital Citizenship:** Encourage pupils to behave responsibly and ethically online by promoting the concepts of digital citizenship. Examine real-world case studies that demonstrate successful tactics instructors have used to promote internet security. These case studies offer helpful advice and real-world examples.

Make Use of References To ensure that instructors are knowledgeable about the





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most recent advancements and recommended practices in promoting internet security, access and utilize a range of references to enhance comprehension.

### **3. Recognising Social Media and Video Game Addiction**

Social media addiction and video game addiction both have similar symptoms and consequences that teachers can be able to notice if they pay attention to the behaviour of their students. Recognising social media and video game addictions as early as possible is essential to minimise the extent of which the addiction establishes itself and of the consequences it has on the life of the addicted person.

People who are addicted to social media or to video games cannot control their social media/gaming behaviour, including its start, frequency, duration, and end. This means that a sign of an addiction can be that they are on social media or gaming during lessons and during breaks more often, to the extent that they are not interacting with peers and are not paying attention to lessons any more. Individuals with such an addiction might also experience withdrawal symptoms in school if they do not have access social media/video games, such as frustration, sadness, and verbal or physical aggression.

It is also important to mention that people with such an addiction prioritise gaming/social media over other daily activities. This has various consequences. Firstly, they might neglect their physical health, as they might prioritise gaming/social media over self-care, exercise, eating, regular medical check-ups, sleep, and hygiene. Teachers can notice this if they notice physical changes in students (such as a sudden gain or loss of weight). Additionally, people addicted





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to gaming/social media might stop meeting up with friends or family member. This neglect of their relationships might lead to social isolation, social anxiety, and loneliness. Teachers can notice this if students suddenly do not interact with their peers any more. Furthermore, school related responsibilities, leading to a drop in academic performance, which a teacher can notice if a students stops participating, looks visually lost in class, does not complete homework, etc.

In conclusion, teachers may be able to notice signs their student might be addicted to video games or to social media. If this is the case, they should act as quickly as possible and, for example, talk to the student about their observations. Preventing the escalation of such an addiction is also an essential role teacher scan play when it comes to promoting internet security.

#### **4. Promoting a Healthy Classroom Environment**

Promoting a healthy classroom environment and promoting internet security goes hand in hand. This is because if the classroom environment is health, meaning that if students treat each other with respect, if they feel valued by their teacher, and if open communication is fostered, they will be more likely to talk about their internet use and to discuss any problems they might encounter. They will also have a supportive surrounding, which will decrease the possibility of them trying to use the internet as an escape from their daily life, something bullying or exclusion at school might cause them to do.

If the classroom environment is worsening, teachers can use the following intervention programme to counteract this change. This programme is specifically designed to promote healthy relationships and combat internet addiction among





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students. It can be used if there is a current problem but can also be adapted so that it can be used as a tool for the prevention of problems.

#### Title:

Promoting Healthy Relationships and Combating Internet Addiction Among Students

#### Description of the Problem:

There may be conflicts in the student group, often with manifestations of verbal and emotional abuse. Some students may show signs of internet addiction and tend to isolate themselves from the rest of the group.

#### Objective:

To address and resolve conflicts within student groups, reduce manifestations of verbal and emotional abuse, and provide support for students displaying signs of internet addiction, with a focus on reintegration into the group.

#### This intervention programme is divided into eleven sessions:

- Programme Introduction  
Begin with a warm welcome and introduction of the programmes objectives. Emphasise the importance of a safe and inclusive learning environment. Maybe organise ice-breaking activities so that the students can loosen up and get comfortable with each other's presence.
- Understanding Conflict  
Define conflict and its common causes among students. Discuss the impact of unresolved conflicts on individuals and the group. Here, you can ask the students to share how they feel about the current classroom in class, if there





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is one. Do this without allowing a discussion to break out amongst the students concerning the current conflict. This is not the place for such a discussion, but rather for students to use empathy to attempt to understand their classmates. Share real-life examples of conflicts and their resolution.

- Conflict Resolution Skills

Teach conflict resolution techniques, including active listening, empathy, and compromise. Conduct role-playing exercises for students to practise conflict resolution. For this, choose scenarios that do not relate to the current conflict, if there is one. Emphasise the importance of finding solutions that all parties agree to and that are beneficial for all parties.

- Building Empathy

Define empathy and its role in understanding others' perspectives. Highlight the importance of empathy. Engage in empathy-building activities and discussions. Encourage students to express how they feel and to listen to each other.

- Identifying and Addressing Bullying

Define bullying, including verbal, emotional, and cyberbullying. Discuss the signs of bullying and its consequences. Students should, with the use of empathy, try to see bullying from both the victim's and the bully's perspectives. Encourage students to report bullying and discuss strategies for intervention.

- Internet Addiction Awareness

Raise awareness about internet addiction and its signs. Highlight the importance of reporting signs of internet addiction. Discuss the negative consequences of excessive internet use. Share resources and strategies for overcoming internet addiction.

- Team Building





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Plan group activities that promote teamwork, trust, and cooperation. Encourage students to collaborate and solve challenges together. Highlight the importance of supporting each other.

- Self-Care and Stress Management

Teach self-care strategies for managing stress and promoting well-being. Discuss the importance of setting healthy boundaries and the consequences if this does not happen. Encourage students to seek help when dealing with stress or addiction.

- Conflict Resolution in Practice

Now, apply the learned techniques to the conflict that currently exists in the classroom. Remind the students to, especially, use empathy and to listen to each other. Monitor and guide the interactions between the students to ensure positive outcomes. Celebrate successful conflict resolution efforts.

- Support and Reintegration

Address the needs of students showing signs of internet addiction. Create a supportive environment for their reintegration into the group to prevent future conflicts. Encourage open communication and empathy among peers.

- Reflection and Future Steps

Allow students to reflect on their personal growth throughout the programme. Discuss ways they can continue promoting healthy relationships. Plan future initiatives to maintain a positive classroom environment.

In conclusion, creating a healthy classroom environment and resolving conflicts are crucial aspects of preventing students from using the internet in a negative manner and to promote internet security.





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## 5. Media Literacy

Media literacy is the ability to access and analyse media messages as well as to create, reflect and take action using the information and communication tools media creates. This can be applied to the internet, as the internet provides many different forms of media, including traditional media, such as newspapers, television, and radio programmes, as well as social media, including platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

Teachers should be aware of the importance of media literacy for their students. After all, our ideas and opinions are shaped by what we see, hear, and read. This means that the internet plays an integral part in shaping the opinions of children nowadays. Being able to navigate the internet, meaning having media literacy skills, can help children counter the stereotypes they have and educate themselves. For example, if they know how to investigate from sources with different political standpoints, they can learn about different perspectives and formulate well-informed opinions and values. At the same time, not having media literacy skills can cause children to only view one perspective, because they will only be exposed to one opinion.

Media literacy is important when it comes to internet security, as it can, on the one hand, prevent cyberbullying. If children learn that everything they see on the internet has a backstory and many different perspectives, they will also learn to not bully people they get to know online for pictures they post, videos they upload, or opinions they share. They will learn to respect other's opinions and backstories and not judge people for what they see on the internet. On the other hand, they will avoid developing harmful stereotypes, such as that people from the LGBTQ+





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community are not valid. In this case, by being able to navigate the internet and hear the perspective of people from the LGBTQ+ community, they will learn that all people are valid, no matter their gender or sexual orientation.

Together with teaching children about media literacy, teachers should also always mention that students should speak with an adult they trust if they find something on the internet that scares them or that they find inappropriate. Together with the adult, they can then do something against it, such as report it. Students should also speak with a trusted adult if they see something they do not understand or if they have any questions concerning an issue they encounter on the internet.

## 6. Privacy Awareness

Students should learn about how to protect their identity and their accounts on the internet.

Firstly, students should learn about digital footprints. Each person has a digital footprint, composed of what information exists on the internet about them and what data from them exists on the internet. This includes photos, comments, messages, recordings, websites you access, emails, etc. Students should be aware of the fact that information is a form of power. The more information someone has about you, the more vulnerable you are to them. They can find out where you live, your weaknesses, what you have experienced, and more. With this, they can embarrass you and ruin your reputation. Because of this, it is necessary to teach students how they can protect the information that exists about them online.





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To do this, teachers should explain to their students how to create safe passwords. They should always include capitalised and non-capitalised letters, numbers, and symbols, and they should be at least eight symbols long. Here is an idea how teachers can teach students how to create a secure password:

- Think of a phrase you can remember. It can be your favourite song lyric, a book title, a line in a movie, an inside joke, etc.
- Choose the first letter or first couple letters from each word in the phrase.
- Make some letters uppercase and some lowercase.
- Include numbers. It is best if these numbers fit to the phrase so that you can remember them (for example if you chose a phrase similar to twelve days of Christmas). Otherwise, you can also try changing the letter “i” to the number “1” or the letter “o” to the number “0”.
- Include symbols. You can, for example, change the word “and” to the symbol “&” or “+”. You can also add symbols such as “!”, “?”, or “.” to include intonation to your phrase.

Students should also learn that they should not use the same password for different accounts and that they should change their passwords regularly.

Teachers should also teach students about privacy settings. They should recommend their students to keep accounts private, to always, if possible, reject cookies or notifications, and to check the privacy settings of any new account they are making to see if they have overlooked something.

Other aspects teachers should make sure their students are aware of include:

- If students set up a new account, they should set it up with an adult they trust and go through the privacy policy together. They should also make two lists with the adult. One list should include things they should never share





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publicly and the other should include things that they are allowed to share publicly.

- They should not share their secrets or information, pictures, or videos they do not want everything to know online. Once information is online, it is very difficult to put it down again, which means that it can be made accessible for a large part of the world.
- They should enter as little personal information about themselves as possible. This means that, if asked for personal information, they should analyse which of the information they are asked for they actually have to give and whether it is feasible for them to lie about their personal information. It is also best to recommend students that they contact a trusted adult once they are asked to enter personal information.
- Students should avoid granting applications and websites access to their location.

## 7. Cybersecurity

Children should be made aware that while the internet has many interesting and entertaining offers, not everyone on the internet is friendly. Cyber hackers exist and are constantly attempting to exploit and compromise users, especially users that are more vulnerable and less knowledgeable such as children. Children should learn about the following aspects.

Firstly, they should avoid sharing personal information. They should also talk to their parents about virus protection and keeping the software up-to-date. This is important to ensure that so that the devices children use are less likely to be infected by a virus or hacked by hackers. Furthermore, students should be on





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guard for phishing. Phishing is when someone pretends that they know you to receive money or information from you. Students should be able to identify key-indicators for phishing or other types of scamming, including wrong spelling and unprofessional e-mail addresses. They should learn to ask themselves if the message makes sense and if the person they know would ask for what is being asked. Additionally, students should be careful what they click. They should be cautious when visiting unknown websites or downloading documents from unknown websites. They should also not click on pop-up boxes or messages and e-mails where they do not know the sender. These could contain spam, inappropriate content, or viruses. Children should also not tick boxes without the approval of a trusted adult.

Finally, teachers should highlight the importance of informing a trusted adult immediately if they feel uncomfortable with something they encounter online or if they are unsure of something. When it comes to this, it is important for teachers to keep in mind that children have been taught or conditioned not to tell on others for so long that this has become a social norm. This means that children might hesitate to tell an adult about something they encounter that they think is wrong if they know the person that published it. Help your students see that seeking help when they witness harmful things happen on the internet is not something incorrect or to be ashamed of, but rather a way of helping themselves or the people getting hurt. If a student comes to you with a concern about something they have seen on the internet or if a student tells you how they reported something on the internet, it is important to make them feel proud and brave to have taken action, especially if they tell you this in front of their peers.





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The following programme is meant to enhance children's cybersecurity skills, especially the skills of critical thinking, learning to view challenges from multiple perspectives, and actively participating in finding solutions to internet-related issues. This programme has a focus on challenges the internet provides, which can be adapted to specific cybersecurity challenges, such as spam mail or viruses:

Title:

Collective Consulting Programme for Students

Objective:

To enhance students' critical thinking skills, promote open discussion, and provide a platform for analysing and addressing challenges related to the internet.

This intervention programme is divided into eight sessions:

- **Session 1: Introduction to Collective Consulting**

Explain the purpose and the goal of the programme. Emphasise the importance of critical thinking and collaboration. Set ground rules for respectful and constructive discussions and encourage the students to voice their opinions, experiences, and questions.

- **Session 2: Identifying Internet Challenges**

Introduce various challenges or difficulties that might arise due to the use of the internet (for example, cyberbullying, misinformation, and addiction). Form small groups and assign each group a specific challenge to research. Groups present their findings and discuss the impact of these challenges and the consequences individuals can experience due to these challenges.

- **Session 3: Hats for Critical Thinking**





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Introduce the Six Thinking Hats techniques for critical thinking. In this technique, each “hat” represents a different way of thinking. These six hats are:

1. White hat (facts and information): Focuses on gathering and presenting facts and information about the issue. This hat is concerned with data and objective details.
2. Red hat (emotions and intuition): Deals with emotions, feelings, and intuitions. It allows participants to express their gut reactions and emotions without needing to justify them.
3. Yellow hat (positive judgement): Encourages optimistic thinking and explore the benefits and advantages of a situation. It focuses on what is good and how things could work.
4. Black hat (negative judgement): Takes a critical view and looks for potential risks, dangers, and problems. It is the “devils advocate” hat that helps identify weaknesses.
5. Green hat (creativity and innovation): Encourages creative thinking and the generation of new ideas and alternatives. It thinks outside of the box.

Split the class into six groups and assign one “hat” to each group. Discuss internet challenges from different perspectives using the hats.

- **Session 4: Brainstorming Solutions**

Encourage students to brainstorm creative solutions to the challenges. Each group presents their proposed solutions. Facilitate a discussion on the feasibility and potential outcomes of the solutions.

- **Session 5: Analysing Case Studies**





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Share real-life case studies related to internet challenges. Divide the students into groups to analyse and discuss these cases. Explore the ethical aspects and decision-making involved.

- **Session 6: Implementing Solutions**

Have groups refine their proposed solutions based on the case studies. Discuss how students can take action to address internet challenges in their community. Encourage personal commitments to promoting online safety.

- **Session 7: Presentation of Solutions**

The groups present their final solutions to the class. Encourage peer feedback and suggestions for improvement. Emphasise the role of collective consulting in problem-solving.

- **Session 8: Evaluation and Future Steps**

Reflect on how the programmes impact on critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Discuss how students can continue addressing internet challenges beyond the programme. Provide resources for further learning and engagement.





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## 8. Digital Citizenship

Digital citizenship encompasses the rights and duties we have in the internet.

An important aspect of digital citizenship that students should learn is how to treat the people they encounter on the internet. They should learn to treat them as if they were meeting them in real life, with personalities and feelings. This means that they should learn to respect them, to show empathy, and to show kindness. Students also should learn that because elements of communication such as non-verbal communication or tone does not exist on the internet, they need to pay close attention to how they communicate, so that their intentions are clearly shown. They should learn to use formulations that focus on what they think and what they feel (I-statements) instead of formulations that blame or confront the other person (you-statements).

Children should also learn to not let their frustration or anger out on the people they meet online. This happens often, as people tend to depersonalise the people they meet online. This means that because they meet them in the form of accounts or names and not in the form of actual people, they might forget that they are, indeed, actual people with emotions and feelings. Due to this, they might find it acceptable to insult them or make them feel bad because they themselves are feeling bad in the moment. Students need to be made aware that the people they meet are actual people. This can be done through empathy-building exercises or through showing students examples of mean messages or posts and asking them what they feel.





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Finally, a part of digital citizenship are the duties we have on the internet. These duties include that we stand up for the people that are not treated well. Teachers should empower students so that they feel confident enough to stand up for what they think is right on the internet. Empathy-building is important for this as well, because if students are aware of how harmful content can be, they are more likely to step in. Another important factor is that students themselves feel safe and supported. Only then will they feel confident enough to risk going against someone, tell them that they are wrong, and maybe be excluded. For this a supportive classroom environment is important.





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## 9. Lesson Plans

### Chapter 3 – Lesson Plan 1: "Digital Well-being and Internet Safety for High School Teachers"

This lesson plan provides a comprehensive approach to addressing digital well-being, internet safety, and responsible technology use in high school classrooms. Teachers will leave with practical strategies, resources, and a plan for integrating these concepts into their teaching practices. Equip high school teachers with knowledge and strategies to address digital well-being, internet safety, and responsible technology use in the classroom.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Objective:** Equip high school teachers with the knowledge and strategies to address digital well-being, internet safety, and responsible technology use in the classroom.

**Materials Needed:**

- Projector or whiteboard
- Handouts with internet safety tips and resources
- Laptop or tablet with internet access

**Introduction (5 minutes):** Begin the lesson by discussing the importance of digital well-being and internet safety in today's technology-driven world. Ask teachers to share any concerns or experiences they have had related to students' digital well-being or internet safety.





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**Understanding Digital Well-being (10 minutes):** Define digital well-being as the healthy and balanced use of technology to enhance one's life. Discuss the potential risks and benefits of digital technology on mental health and overall well-being. Provide examples of digital well-being practices such as setting screen time limits, taking digital breaks, and practising mindfulness.

**Internet Safety Basics (15 minutes):** Present an overview of common internet safety risks such as cyberbullying, identity theft, and online predators. Discuss strategies for protecting personal information online, including strong password creation, avoiding sharing sensitive information, and recognizing phishing attempts. Provide examples of safe online behaviour such as critically evaluating online content and communicating respectfully in digital spaces.

**Responsible Technology Use in the Classroom (20 minutes):** Share strategies for integrating digital well-being and internet safety into classroom practices. Discuss the importance of establishing clear guidelines for technology use in the classroom, including acceptable use policies and digital citizenship expectations. Demonstrate tools and resources for promoting responsible technology use, such as educational apps, digital citizenship curriculum, and internet filtering software.

5. Resources and Support (5 minutes): Distribute handouts with internet safety tips and resources for further reading and support. Encourage teachers to seek additional professional development opportunities and support networks for addressing digital well-being and internet safety in their classrooms.

**Conclusion (5 minutes):** Summarize the key takeaways from the lesson,





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emphasizing the importance of prioritizing digital well-being and internet safety in high school education. Invite teachers to reflect on how they can implement the strategies and resources discussed in their own teaching practices.

**Assessment:**

- Informally assess teachers' understanding and engagement through class discussions and participation.
- Encourage teachers to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the lesson and any additional support they may need in addressing digital well-being and internet safety in their classrooms.





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## Chapter 3 – Lesson Plan 2: "Recognizing Social Media and Video Game Addiction"

**Duration:** 60 minutes

### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Welcome and Icebreaker: Establish a positive learning environment.
- Overview: Discuss the prevalence and impact of social media and video game addiction on high school students.

### **Understanding Addiction (20 minutes):**

- Signs and Symptoms: Explore common signs and symptoms of addiction.
- Case Studies: Analyse real-life case studies related to students' addiction issues.

### **Intervention Strategies (20 minutes):**

- Guest Speaker: Invite a mental health professional or addiction specialist to share insights.
- Group Discussion: Facilitate a discussion on effective intervention strategies within the school context.

### **Reflection and Action Plan (10 minutes):**

Personal Reflection: Ask teachers to reflect on their role in addressing addiction.

Action Steps: Encourage teachers to identify concrete steps to address addiction in their classrooms.





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### Chapter 3 – Lesson Plan 3: "Promoting a Healthy Classroom Environment"

**Duration:** 60 minutes

#### **Establishing Digital Etiquette (15 minutes):**

- Discuss the importance of digital etiquette in fostering a healthy classroom.
- Collaborative Activity: Engage teachers in creating a digital etiquette guideline for their classrooms.

#### **Balancing Screen Time (20 minutes):**

- Presentation: Share information on the impact of excessive screen time on students.
- Workshop: Collaboratively develop strategies to balance screen time and offline activities.

#### **Building a Supportive Community (20 minutes):**

- Team Building Activities: Facilitate team-building exercises to enhance teacher collaboration.
- Strategies for Support: Discuss ways to create a supportive classroom culture.

#### **Reflection and Implementation (5 minutes):**

- Individual Reflection: Prompt teachers to consider how they will implement healthy practices in their classrooms.
- Action Items: Assign actionable tasks to be implemented in their classrooms.





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## Chapter 3 – Lesson Plan 4: "Media Literacy and Privacy Awareness"

**Duration:** 60 minutes

### **Understanding Media Literacy (20 minutes):**

- Definition and Importance: Explore the concept and significance of media literacy.
- Classroom Integration: Brainstorm ways to integrate media literacy into the curriculum.

### **Privacy Awareness (20 minutes):**

- Importance of Privacy: Discuss the value of personal privacy in the digital age.
- Practical Tips: Provide teachers with practical tips to educate students about safeguarding personal information.

### **Interactive Activities (15 minutes):**

- Role-Playing: Engage teachers in privacy-related role-playing scenarios.
- Group Discussion: Share experiences and insights from the activities.

### **Reflection and Planning (5 minutes):**

- Reflect on the session and discuss how media literacy and privacy awareness can be applied in their teaching.
- Plan for classroom activities or lessons that incorporate these concepts.





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## Chapter 3 – Lesson Plan 5: "Cybersecurity and Digital Citizenship"

**Duration:** 60 minutes

### **Basics of Cybersecurity (15 minutes):**

- Introduction: Provide an overview of basic cybersecurity concepts.
- Classroom Applications: Discuss how teachers can integrate cybersecurity principles into their teaching.

### **Recognizing Threats (20 minutes):**

- Cyber Threats in Education: Identify common cyber threats faced by high school students.
- Practical Exercises: Conduct interactive exercises to recognize and respond to cyber threats.

### **Digital Citizenship (15 minutes):**

- Defining Digital Citizenship: Discuss the definition and importance of digital citizenship.
- Rights and Responsibilities: Explore the rights and responsibilities associated with being a digital citizen.

### **Classroom Implementation (10 minutes):**

- Reflect on the session and brainstorm ideas for incorporating cybersecurity and digital citizenship into the curriculum.
- Develop a plan for ongoing reinforcement and education on these topics.





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### Chapter 3 – Lesson Plan 6: "Digital Citizenship – Treating Others with Respect Online"

The lesson plan on the topic of Digital Citizenship focusing on treating others respectfully online, understanding the impact of online communication, and empowering students to stand up against online mistreatment:

**Objective:** To instil a sense of responsibility and empathy in students regarding their behaviour and interactions on the internet, promoting a positive digital culture.

**Duration:** 70 minutes

#### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Briefly define digital citizenship and its significance in online interactions.
- Discuss the rights and duties individuals have on the internet.
- Emphasize the focus of the lesson on treating others with respect and understanding the impact of online communication.

#### **Activity 1: Real-life vs. Online Interactions (15 minutes):**

- Engage students in a discussion about the differences between face-to-face interactions and online communication.
- Discuss the challenges of understanding tone and non-verbal cues online.
- Introduce the concept of I-statements versus you-statements in communication.

#### **Activity 2: Empathy-building Exercises (20 minutes):**

- Conduct empathy-building exercises to help students understand the emotions and feelings of others online.





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- Show examples of mean messages or posts and ask students to share their reactions and feelings.
- Discuss the importance of considering the human behind the screen.

### **Activity 3: Impact of Depersonalization (10 minutes):**

- Explain the concept of depersonalization and how it can lead to negative online behaviour.
- Share examples and discuss the potential harm caused by treating online interactions as less significant than real-life interactions.

### **Activity 4: Standing Up Against Online Mistreatment (10 minutes):**

- Discuss the duties individuals have on the internet, including standing up for those who are mistreated.
- Conduct a scenario-based activity where students can practice standing up against online mistreatment.
- Emphasize the importance of a supportive classroom environment in building confidence.

### **Conclusion and Reflection (5 minutes):**

- Summarize key points from the lesson.
- Ask students to reflect on what they've learned and how they can apply these principles in their online interactions.
- Encourage open discussion and questions.

The homework assignment encourages students to reflect on a positive online interaction, emphasizing empathy and respectful communication. It also provides resources on digital citizenship and online etiquette, promoting responsible online behaviour and preventing mistreatment.



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## 10. Case Studies

### **Case Study 1: John's Gaming Addiction**

#### Background:

John, a 17-year-old high school student, had always been an avid gamer. His interest in online gaming started innocently enough, but over time, it became a serious problem.

#### Problematic Behaviour:

John began to spend increasing amounts of time playing online games, sometimes staying up all night. He started neglecting his schoolwork, and his grades began to drop. He withdrew from his family and friends, preferring to interact with his online gaming buddies. He even stopped participating in sports and other activities he used to enjoy.

#### Consequences:

As a result of his gaming addiction, John's academic performance suffers, and he becomes socially isolated. His parents notice the changes in his behaviour and try to intervene, but he becomes irritable and defensive when they suggest he cut back on gaming. John's addiction affects his mental and physical health, and he is eventually diagnosed with depression.

#### Intervention:

John's parents seek help from a therapist who specialises in internet and gaming addiction. He goes through cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) to address his addiction and underlying issues contributing to his depression. With professional help and family support, John gradually reduces his gaming hours, reconnects with friends and family, and works on improving his mental health.





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## Case Study 2: *Emily's Internet Addiction*

### Background:

Emily, has always been an enthusiastic user of social media and the internet in general. She uses various platforms to stay with friends, keep up with news, and for her school-related research. However, over time, her internet use becomes problematic.

### Problematic Behaviour:

Emily's internet use starts to interfere with her daily life. She checks her social media accounts constantly, even in school and during class, leading to a decline in her academic performance. She finds it difficult to concentrate on tasks, often getting sidetracked by online videos and posts. Her sleep patterns suffer because she stays up late into the night browsing the internet.

### Consequences:

Emily's excessive internet use begins to affect her school and personal life. Her productivity at school decreases significantly, leading to warnings from her teachers. She withdraws from in-person social activities, preferring online interactions. Emily's physical health deteriorates as she neglects exercise and develops poor eating habits. She also experiences increased anxiety, especially when she cannot access the internet.

### Intervention:

Recognising the negative impact of her internet addiction, Emily decides to seek help. She asks her teacher if she knows a mental health professional, and reaches





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out to the psychotherapist she recommends. In therapy, she learns about the root causes of her addiction, which include loneliness and a need for validation through social media.

Emily works on developing healthier coping mechanisms and time management skills. She implements strategies such as setting specific time limits for internet use, blocking distracting websites during work hours, and engaging in offline hobbies and social activities. She also joins a support group for individuals dealing with internet addiction, which provide a sense of community and accountability.

#### Outcome:

With therapy and a strong commitment to change, Emily is able to overcome her internet addiction. She gradually improves her academic performance and regains a healthy and balanced use of the internet. Emily rekindles her in-person social connections and starts prioritising her physical and mental health. Her anxiety decreases as she learns to manage it more effectively.

Emily's case demonstrates how internet addiction can impact various aspects of life and how seeking professional help, as well as making lifestyle changes, can lead to recovery and a healthier relationship with the internet.





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### Case Study 3: *Nora's Excessive Internet Use*

#### Background:

You, a teacher, have noticed that one of your students, Nora, is showing the following symptoms due to excessive internet use. She does not complete her homework, is absent, skips classes, and comes late. She also does not participate in social activities at school and always plays with her smartphone during breaks, rather than socialising, as she used to do. In summary, Nora displays the following symptoms associated with excessive internet use:

1. Incomplete homework: Nora consistently fails to complete homework assignments.
2. Absenteeism and tardiness: Nora is frequently absent from school or arrives late.
3. Isolation: Nora avoids participating in social activities at school and does not socialise with classmates.
4. Smartphone dependency: During breaks, Nora is consistently engaged with her smartphone instead of interacting with her peers.

#### Intervention:

Recognising the signs of excessive internet use, you decide to intervene to help Nora overcome this issue and improve her overall well-being.

1. Open communication: You initiate a private and non-confrontational conversation with Nora and express your concern about the recent changes in her behaviour. You inquire about her reasons for excessive internet use, while ensuring she feels heard and supported.





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2. Involve parents: You contact Nora's guardians to discuss the situation and seek their support in addressing the issue. Collaboration between home and school is crucial for a successful intervention.
3. School counsellor involvement: You collaborate with the school counsellor, who can provide additional guidance and support. The counsellor can conduct a more in-depth assessment of the Nora's mental and emotional well-being.
4. Educational plan: You work with Nora and school counsellor to create an educational plan that includes strategies to catch up on missed assignments and improve attendance. You provide clear expectations for her academic performance, without putting too much pressure on her.
5. Restructuring breaks: You encourage Nora to limit smartphone use during breaks and instead engage in face-to-face interactions with peers. You can suggest extracurricular activities or clubs where she can socialise and develop interests outside of the internet.
6. Peer support: You focus on fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where Nora's classmates are understanding and supportive of the her efforts to reduce her internet use.
7. Regular monitoring: You keep track of Nora's progress by monitoring her attendance, homework completion, and social interactions. You periodically check in with her to discuss her challenges and successes.

#### Outcome:

With a combination of support from the school, parents, and peers, Nora begins to make positive changes. She gradually reduces her excessive internet use, leading to improved attendance and a return to completing homework assignments. She





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also starts participating in school activities and engaging in face-to-face interactions with classmates.

This case highlights the importance of early intervention by teachers and school counsellors when students exhibit signs of excessive internet use. By addressing the issue promptly and collaboratively, the student can regain their academic and social life, ultimately leading to a healthier and more balanced lifestyle.





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#### **Case Study 4: Emma's Social Media Addiction**

##### Background:

Sarah, is a hard-working students, but she struggles with an addiction to social media.

##### Problematic Behaviour:

Sarah checks her social media accounts obsessively and without being able to control it, spending several hours a day scrolling through her feeds, liking, sharing, and commenting on posts. She often loses track of time, neglecting her work tasks and personal responsibilities. Her in-person interactions with friends and family dwindle.

##### Consequences:

Sarah's work performance suffers as she misses deadlines and fails to meet her targets. Her personal relationships become strained as she cancels plans and is often physically present but mentally absent, as she cannot stop thinking about her social media accounts. She experiences symptoms of anxiety and depression when she cannot access social media.

##### Intervention:

Sarah realises the extent of her addiction when she misses an important presentation at school due to her excessive social media use. She decides to seek help from a therapist specialising in technology addiction. In therapy, Sarah explores the emotional reasons behind her need for constant validation through social media.





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Sarah works on setting boundaries, including designated times for checking social media. She also learns healthier ways to cope with stress and anxiety, such as journaling and engaging in hobbies she enjoys.

#### Outcome:

With therapy and her commitment to change, Sarah regains control over her social media use. She becomes more productive when it comes to school work, hands in homework and assignments, and improves her relationships. While she continues to use social media, it no longer consumes her life, and she finds a healthier balance between her online and offline activities.





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### **Case Study 5: Jason's Online Shopping Addiction**

#### Background:

Jason has developed an addiction to online shopping.

#### Problematic Behaviour:

Jason makes impulsive online purchases daily, often buying items he does not need. He uses all the pocket money he receives and lends money from friends. He hides his purchases from his parents, out of fear of judgement.

#### Consequences:

Jason's friends stop trusting him and are angry at him because he does not give them the money back he lends. He often lies to his family about what he uses his pocket-money from and feels stressed due to the strain the lies have cause to his relationship with his parents.

#### Intervention:

Jason's parents discover all the clothes and objects he has bought over the last weeks hidden in his closet and confront him. They send him to behavioural therapy and go to family therapy together to heal their relationship. In therapy, Jason explores the emotional triggers behind his shopping addiction, including using it as a coping mechanism for stress and unhappiness.

Jason and his parents work on a budgeting plan for his pocket money and a debt repayment strategy for the money he has loaned from his friends. Jason also attends support groups for shopping addiction to learn from others who have successfully overcome similar issues.





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#### Outcome:

With therapy and a solid plan in place, Jason gradually reduces his impulsive shopping behaviour. He and his parents work together to repair his financial situation and rebuild the trust in their relationship. Jason develops healthier coping mechanisms for stress and finds other ways to increase his happiness without resorting to excessive shopping.





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# “LOG IN BACK THE REAL LIFE”

2022-1-HU02-KA220-SCH-000087324

## Educational Material

### CHAPTER 4:

### SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY AND ITS APPLICATIONS IN EDUCATION

Developed by:  
**ARDA BERATUNG & BILDUNG GmbH**



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## CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY AND ITS APPLICATIONS IN EDUCATION

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## 1. Introduction

In the ever-changing world of the twenty-first century, the ubiquitous influence of digital technology has changed how we live, work, communicate, and get information. Digital literacy has become a critical skill set that people must have in order to successfully navigate this complex digital ecosystem. It goes beyond the simple ability to use digital devices or software; instead, it encompasses a wider range of skills that allow people to critically engage with digital tools, media, and information.

Digital literacy means the ability to understand, evaluate, and effectively use digital technologies. Being digitally literate is not only an advantage but a necessity in a world where the boundaries between the physical and digital realms are increasingly blurred. It provides people with the abilities to adjust to technological advancements, identify the validity of online information, and actively participate in the digital society.

The term "digital literacy" also includes the capacity to comprehend, assess, and apply digital technologies. In an increasingly connected world, having a solid understanding of digital technology is not only advantageous but also essential. It gives people the skills they need to adapt to new technology, judge the reliability of information found online, and engage fully in the digital society.

The following will provide you with extensive information with regard to social media, social media literacy and lesson plans which you can use in your class to educate your students about the importance of social media literacy. As we will point out again later, it cannot be emphasized enough how vital the





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competences that make up social media literacy are in the post-modern era. Therefore, it is even more important to teach this thoroughly.

## 2. Learning Objectives

With the help of these learning goals, students should be able to participate with social media platforms responsibly and intelligently by giving them a thorough grasp of social media literacy, its intricacies, and its uses in educational contexts. The following subjects will be covered in this part, and curricula on pertinent learning themes have been developed. Gaining a thorough grasp of social media involves investigating its numerous platforms, features, and societal effects.

**Examining Social Media Literacy:** Learn about the meaning, foundational ideas, effects of social media addiction, competences, and significance of social media literacy.

**Social media literacy is defined as:** Give a precise description of social media literacy and explain how it differs from ordinary media usage. Examine the Concepts of Social Media Literacy: Gain a deeper knowledge of the fundamental ideas that comprise social media literacy by investigating them.

**Analyse the Impact on Addiction to Social Media:** Examine the ways in which social media literacy influences and mitigates the possible adverse consequences of social media addiction.

**Determining the Competencies of Social Media Literacy:** identifying the fundamental skills needed for people to use social media in an appropriate manner.

**Stress the Value of Social Media Literacy:** Stress the role that social media literacy plays in encouraging responsible and informed online conduct.

**A Handbook for Instructors and Guardians:** to give parents and educators suggestions for the problems to take into account while educating kids about





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social media literacy.

**Plans for Social Media Literacy Lessons:** Get access to well-structured lesson plans that cover the subject in-depth and are intended to educate social media literacy.

**Case studies:** Examine real-world case studies that illustrate the difficulties and practical uses of social media literacy in a learning environment.

**Utilize References:** To learn more about social media literacy and its educational applications, consult a carefully collected selection of references from reliable sites and research.

### 3. Social Media

Social media includes all digital and online platforms, websites, and applications that enable people to create, share, and access content and information, in the form of texts, images, videos, and links. Through social media platforms, people can also interact with each other, contact each other, and write each other messages, independent from time or location. Today, social media is deeply ingrained in our society and plays a role in health care, politics, activism, education, and sports.

The different social media platforms can be categorised into two types: the social media that is mainly used for communication, such as WhatsApp or Signal, and the social media that is mainly used to spread content to a global audience, such as Instagram or Facebook. However, all social media platforms can be used to spread knowledge, opinions, and other information.

There are specific characteristics that social media is known for, and that each





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have their advantages and disadvantages.

Social media is accessible constantly from all over the world and by everyone that also has access to the internet. There is also a large variety of social media platforms, which means that social media can be used for many different purposes. On the one hand, this implies that people can contact each other, which can help maintain friendships, find work, raise awareness, access information and news from all over the world, learn about cultural differences, and more. On the other hand, this also means that people can constantly harass others, spread stereotypes and rumours, spread false information, use social media to promote their personal ideologies, trick and scam people, and more.

Nowadays, social media is used by more than 4.62 billion people, and more are joining social media platforms day by day (datareportal, 2023). It is especially becoming popular amongst children and adolescents, who use social media to communicate, for entertainment, to educate and inform themselves, and to stay politically active. Because of its wide use and how dangerous social media can be, it is important to learn how to use social media healthily and safely. This includes learning about social media literacy and acquiring social media literacy skills.





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## **4. Social Media Literacy**

### **4.1 A Definition of Social Media Literacy**

Social media literacy is based on the concept of media literacy. Media literacy is the ability to access and analyse media messages as well as to create, reflect and take action using the information and communication tools media creates.

This can be applied to social media, including platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. In this context, social media literacy centres on the user as an individual and analyses their choices concerning their use of social media platforms, what they use social media platforms for, their values that influence other users, the way in which they are influenced by other users, how they interact with other users, etc. While doing this, the evolving nature of social media and the ever changing possibilities of social media are taken into account.

### **4.2 Concepts of Social Media Literacy**

There are several concepts related to social media literacy.

One of the concepts is the social media self, meaning the user of social media. This includes information on the self's motivations, choices, networks, and interactions, and may differ from the actual personality of the user, as social media is a platform, where people can behave differently than they would than in real life. The social media self is directly related and influenced by, as well as influences, its media choices and networked environments (see image 1). This also means that awareness about one's social media self is a critical step towards social media literacy (Cho, 2022).



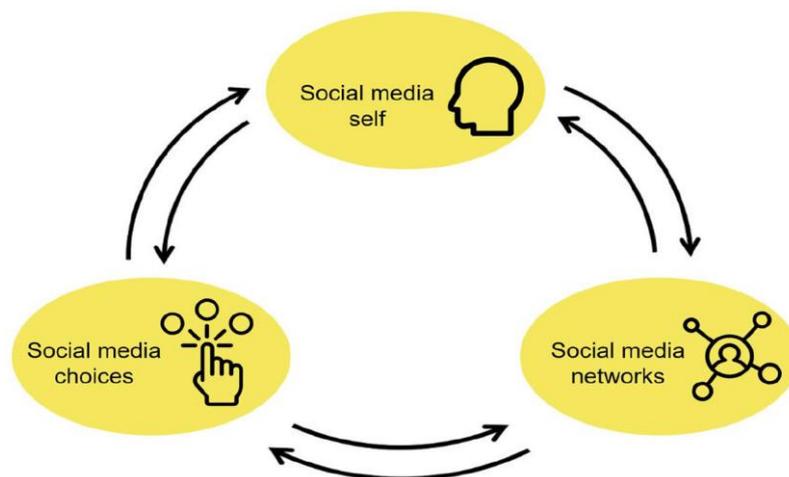


Image 1: Social Media Self

Usually, social media users are aware of their motivations and interests. As these influence the choice of what they access on social media, and this, in return and due to digital algorithms, influence what is recommended to them, the social media users assess increasingly personalised media content. This social media bubble then also influences the user, firmly establishes certain opinions in their mind, and sometimes even leads to radicalisation. To avoid this, part of social media literacy is being able to identify this social media bubble and also actively search for content outside of this bubble, to be exposed to different perspectives and opinions.

Another concept related to social media literacy are the different social media platforms. These have certain specific characteristics, including their dynamics and fluidity that are based on what is technically possible and what is normalised by users or what users use the platforms for. These characteristics also include the absence of journalistic protocols and conventions for sourcing and fact checking, which has led to social media being filled with misinformation and hate speech.



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This concept also includes the fact that social media platforms are privately owned and that these companies can influence the content available on the social media platform, as they are able to remove content or terminate accounts, as well as the fact that law enforcement is considered arbitrary rather than effective. In terms of social media literacy this means that people need to learn which information is fake as well as which information might have been concealed by the social media platforms and for which reasons.

Finally, a concept of social media literacy is the reality. As mentioned, the reality on social media is often distorted by fake information. Other factors, such as framing, meaning the way that content is created to convey a certain meaning and ignore other perspectives, also contribute to the distortion of reality on social media. A key aspect of social media literacy is therefore learning to determine the reality behind content that can be seen on social media platforms. This can be done best through cross-referencing, meaning comparing different sources and the perspectives and information these different sources provide.

#### **4.3 Effects of Social Media Literacy on Social Media Addiction**

Social media literacy plays a pivotal role as a protective factor with regard to social media addiction (Eskandari & Baratzadeh Ghahramanloo, 2020). Furthermore, it appears that the latent support found in social networks also influences the development of internet addiction. That is, we can stop or lessen internet addiction if we foster genuine relationships and social support, and encourage the development of social media literacy.





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However, social support can mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and internet addiction, so it stands to reason that increased emotional intelligence will also increase social support. Consequently, this impacts the mitigation of addiction to virtual social networks. As a result, emotional intelligence can lessen addiction to virtual social networks either directly or indirectly through the mediating effect of social support.

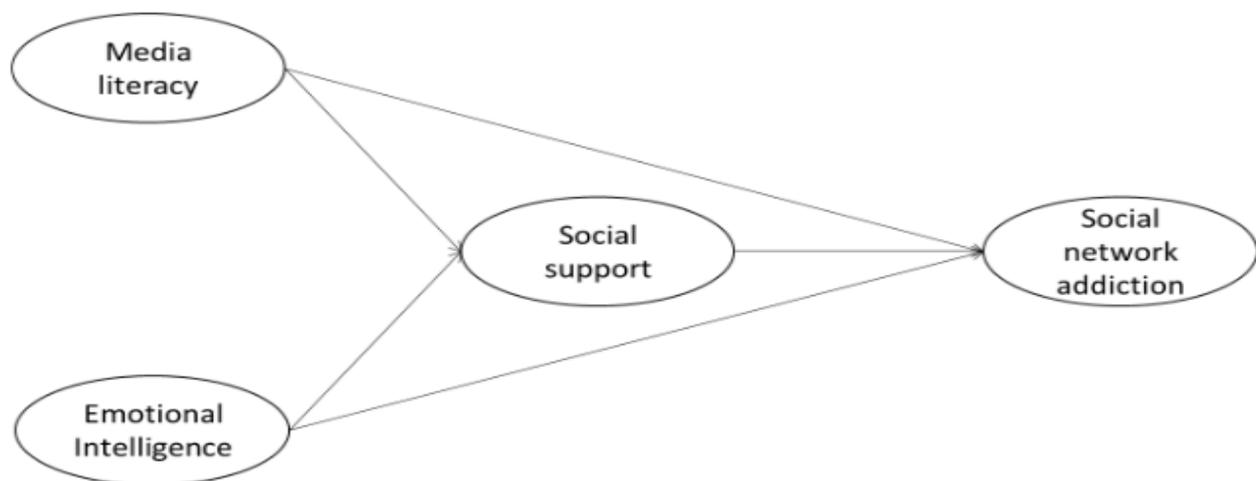


Image 2: A conceptual model to visualize the protective factors to prevent social media addiction.

All things considered, the findings of various studies demonstrate that social media literacy has a favourable impact on social media addiction. In other words, a greater degree of social media literacy is linked to both a decrease in social media addiction and an increase in social support. Addiction to social networks is impacted by media literacy, which also enhances social support. In other words, a lower addiction to social media and a higher level of social support are associated with higher media literacy. Social support has an impact on social network addiction as well; a higher level of social support is linked to a lower level





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of social network addiction. Results show that social support plays a mediating role in the relationship between emotional intelligence and social network addiction as well as the relationship between media literacy and social network addiction.

The results are consistent with those published by Burnay, Billieux, Blairy, and Larøi (2015), Floros and Siomos (2013), and Lu and Yeo (2015). For example, depression, loneliness, and stressful events along with cognitive aberrations have been reported to be strong predictors of internet addiction among students in a recent paper entitled "addiction to Internet among Malaysian students: risk factors and cognitive aberration role."

People who are media literate are better able to control how they engage with and use media. The term "media literacy" refers to a collection of understanding, abilities, experiences, and knowledge that are used to access, assess, use, create, and communicate with a variety of media, including social media and the Internet. Instead of the other way around, users with this kind of knowledge and skill set can take charge of the social network. Put differently, media literacy reduces people's psychological reliance on the media.

The context in which media literacy and emotional intelligence are employed is a major problem, even though they can both directly impact social media addiction. People who experience positive and fulfilling relationships outside of cyberspace, grow their social network, and receive social support all contribute to the creation of this context (Morgan et al., 2017). In this situation, media literacy can be especially beneficial for identifying and evaluating cyber-content as well as developing emotional intelligence to control emotions in the virtual world.



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Social media addiction strongly correlates with medical symptoms. Therefore, it is imperative to emphasize the possible risks social media and by extent the internet poses to individuals and especially to minors and students. A person's perceived level of anxiety, behavioural issues, depression, hyperactivity, and poor physical health are all positively correlated with the amount of time spent online, while their quality of life is negatively correlated (Machimbarrena et al., 2019; El Asam et al., 2019; Lin et al., 2016; Twenge et al., 2017; Woods, 2016). Overuse of the internet may lead to a larger number of virtual friends, but it is also linked to lower quality of life scores based on health and a lower sense of social support (Takahashi et al., 2018; Müller et al., 2014).

The negative effects of Internet abuse can be reduced and managed in a number of ways, including by promoting and generalizing the use of the Internet in many spheres of life, teaching media literacy (knowledge and skills), and developing emotional intelligence. Therefore, to lessen the negative repercussions of social media addiction, it is possible to promote media literacy and emotional intelligence among users in addition to increasing social support.

#### **4.4 Competencies of Social Media Literacy**

In the age of information, where digital platforms have become integral to communication, education, and social interaction, social media literacy has emerged as a critical skill set.

There are three main competencies of social media literacy: analysis, evaluation, and contribution.





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- Analysis is the ability to observe and monitor different one's social media behaviour. This includes the used social media platforms, the viewed social media content, the consumption patterns, and the interactions with other users.
- Evaluation is the ability to, using what has been analysed, identify one's personal beliefs, values, and experiences that are the reasons behind one's internet use and one's understanding and interpretation of the viewed content.
- Contribution includes the content one creates and shares on the different social media platforms.

In this way, social media literacy considers how social media extends beyond the skills needed to navigate social media and also includes the understanding and knowledge about the self's role in the social media role, how the self interact with social media, and how the self, based on personal experiences and values, understands and interpret the content it encounters on social media.

- The first important concept is the value of privacy. As individuals share various aspects of their lives on social media, understanding privacy settings and managing personal information become crucial. Social media literacy demands an awareness of the potential risks associated with oversharing and the importance of safeguarding one's privacy. Users need to be adept at configuring privacy settings to control who can access their content and personal details.





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- The second vital competence is critical thinking. Students should be able to distinguish true information from false ones. It is equally important for students to ask the following questions: who benefits from these kind of messages for example, to whom is this harmful, who is the most directly affected, who displays the highest amount of expertise with regard to this topic, are there counter-arguments or other perspectives?
- Thirdly, online safety should be known to students. Students must be aware of common threats such as phishing, cyberbullying, and identity theft. Competence in this area involves recognizing and responding to potential risks, employing strong passwords, and understanding the importance of keeping software and antivirus tools updated.
- Lastly, cultural competence and diversity are very important concepts to know. Social media literacy entails the ability to navigate this diversity respectfully and inclusively. Students and by extent users should be aware of cultural nuances, avoid perpetuating stereotypes, and engage in constructive dialogue that promotes understanding and empathy across different backgrounds.

Furthermore the other core competencies which are also applicable to other situations different from a social-media environment. These are for example also helpful for tasks provided in ordinary school classrooms. These competencies should be learned in order to use the internet in a more mindful and safe manner.

- Analysis: according to the Cambridge dictionary an analysis is, “the act of studying or examining something in detail, in order to discover or understand





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more about it, or your opinion and judgement after doing this.” In the context of social media literacy, it can be defined as the ability to observe and monitor one’s social media content and network choices, consumption, and engagement behaviours, and to discern the patterns and connections among them (Cho, 2022).

The media content is the focus of analysis in social media literacy. Since it was produced by media organizations and professionals, this content is independent of the self and reflects the ideals of the organizations as well as those of their sponsors, funders, special interests and supporters.

Analysis in social media literacy should centre on the self, their social networks, and the content they choose. The decisions the self makes on social media about what to create, alter, and maintain as networks on various platforms, as well as what content to engage with and consume, are mutually dependent. The ability to track and observe one's social media use behaviour patterns, motivating factors, and consequences is a component of the social media competency of analysis.

The scope of observation includes everything from the amount of time and frequency of the time spent on social media to the capacity to identify, categorize, and draw connections between the types of networks one has and the content one chooses to create, including the networks' structure (e.g., variety, uniformity) and ties (strength, weakness). Self-regulation processes require quality (for example: precision, consistency) in the monitoring of one's behaviour and relevant aspects, as social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997) explains.





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- Evaluation: according to the Cambridge dictionary an evaluation is, “the process of judging or calculating the quality, importance, amount or value of something.” In the context of social media literacy, the capacity to analyse the veracity of one's social media messages by identifying, challenging, and recognising the values, experiences, and beliefs that underpin them.

The authenticity of the content that an individual chooses to consume is the main focus of the evaluation competency in social media literature. Beyond just factual information, perceived social media realism encompasses opinions about how accurately the content represents the creators' real-life experiences. The resonance between one's own experiences, values, and perspectives and the available information may be a factor in what makes a social media message seem real (Cho et al., 2014, 2019).

The diversity and plasticity of realities on social media should be noted by users. An individual who possesses social media literacy exhibits an understanding of the various standards by which individuals evaluate realism and authenticity, as well as the drawbacks of depending solely on one's own emotional connection and the apparent coherence of a social media post to determine realism.

Thus, helping people explore the self, the medium, and how these intersections create realities that are susceptible to skewed assessments of information can be a crucial part of promoting media literacy and





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combating misinformation. Along with fact-checking, users should also have access to tools and resources that help them comprehend the values and worldviews that drive the creation and spread of misinformation, as well as the lived experiences that the misinformation is perceived, acknowledged, and comprehended through.

Studies have indicated that the belief in conspiracy theories might not be the result of ignorance. Rather, the belief in conspiracy theories was predicted by a lack of confidence that organizations, associations and individuals in general will act morally) (Miller et al., 2016). Perceived value similarity is a significant determinant of social trust (Earle and Cvetkovich, 1995).

These values can be recognized and investigated, even though they are frequently implicit, quickly, and automatically elicited in situations (Cvetkovitch, 1999). For instance, a study discovered that people's varying assessments of the risks associated with social issues were determined by their varying cultural values, regardless of their race or gender (Kahan et al., 2007). Users may gain a better understanding of the impact of the reality they co-create by considering their own values as well as those of other content creators in their social media environment.

- Contribution: according to the Cambridge dictionary a contribution is something you do to help produce or achieve something together with other people, or to help make something successful. In the context of social media literacy, it can be defined as the capacity to create, communicate, and spread messages for the common good and civic objectives.





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The ability to create counter-messages to prevailing media messages that may have negative effects is known as production in social media literacy (e.g. tobacco ads). For two main reasons, production in social media literacy is modified to become a contribution competency.

Social media expects users to have a skill set beyond the skill set of "production", removing obstacles to qualitative message delivery and dissemination. Production for social media literacy education frequently takes the shape of PowerPoint presentations, classroom posters, or succinct summaries of significant phenomena on the internet. The educators were unable to take into account how these messages would be shared and how they would affect students outside of the classroom due to the diverse nature of social media. Counter-messages must reach the public's attention in both a cognitive and emotional sense in order to have a social impact. The youth should be prepared for these objectives through social media literacy competencies.

Moreover, contribution is distinct from production in that the former entails the orientation of civic goals. People should use their agency to engage in sociocultural and political discourse on social media as part of a civic orientation that commits them to the greater good (Mihailidis, 2018). Counter-messages should be those that advance the common good in an ethical manner. In order to use social media to create accurate counter-messages and share them with others for a positive social impact, contribution necessitates a variety of knowledge and skills. These abilities will change as the medium and the individual grow (Brough et al., 2020). But the



civic and goal orientations should remain the same. As a result, this competency of contribution is closely linked to the medium's content dimensions, reality, and self.

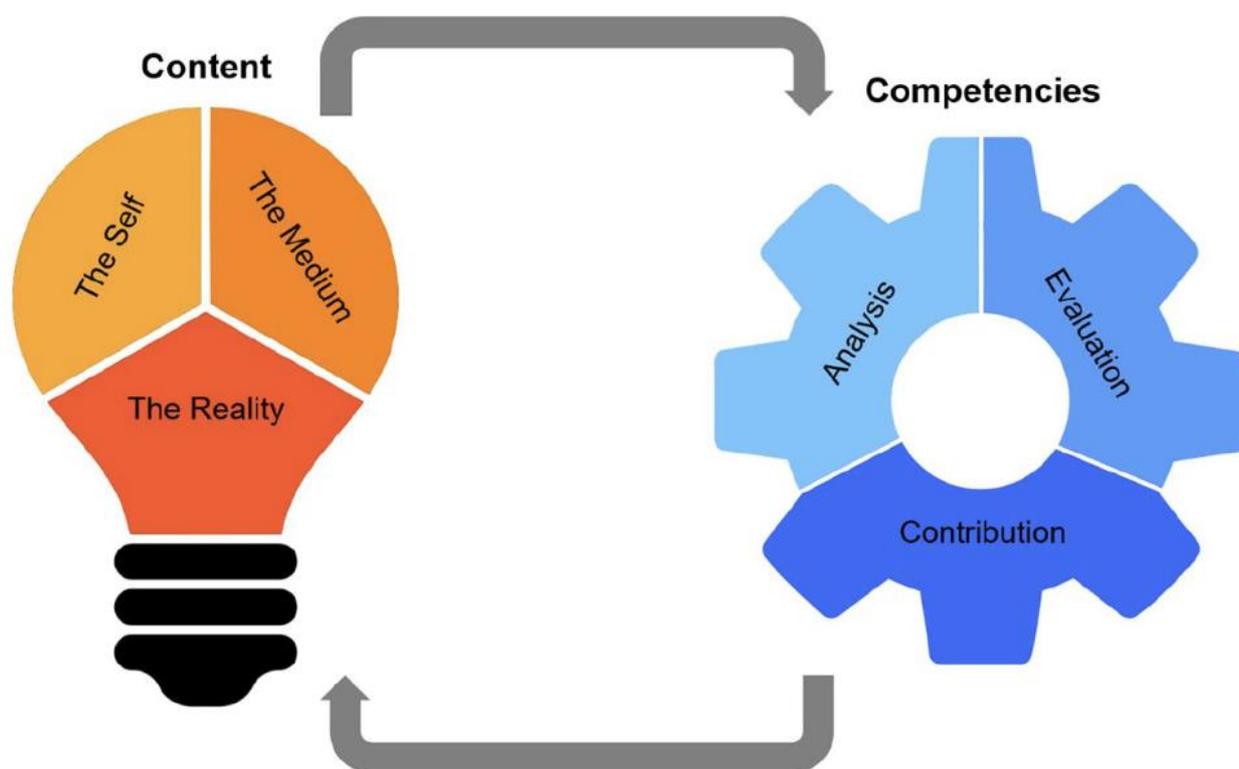


Image 3: A depiction of the interactions between the perception of the contents and certain competencies which an individual has.

This diagram shows the interactions between the content displayed on social media which is dependant on the self, the medium and the reality, and the competencies required to process the content properly and critically. The competences among other concepts, as mentioned earlier, the ability to analyse, evaluate and contribute.



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#### 4.5 The Importance of Social Media Literacy

It is crucial for them to learn about social media literacy to be able to use social media platforms correctly and safely, as the internet gains more and more importance in the postmodern era. Therefore, it is even more important for young students and by extent the population at large to use it safely and in a critical and mindful manner.

Individuals firstly need to have social media literacy skills to be able to protect their personal information and identity on social media. Social media platforms are spaces where individuals publish information on themselves, which is why knowing how to use privacy settings correctly and how to diminish their digital footprint, skills that social media literacy encompass, is essential. People also need to learn how to avoid predators, scamming, and viruses as well as how to protect their accounts through

Social media literacy is also important to be able to navigate social media. This includes knowing which platforms to use for which goal, how to use these platforms, how to find quality information, etc. Only through knowing how to do this, will individuals know how to access the benefits social media can provide without falling victim to its dangers.

**Learn to think critically:** Individuals have to decide whether the content makes sense, why information was included or not included, what the key ideas of the content is, and what the intention behind the content is.





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Become an intelligent consumer of content on social media. Be aware when someone is trying to, with their content, achieve an ulterior goal, such as getting you to buy something.

Recognise the creator's or author's point of view to avoid manipulation and appreciate different perspectives. Be open to new perspectives.

Creating content responsible, including recognising your personal point of view, clearly acknowledging that it is, in fact, your point of view, and fact-checking your content before uploading it to social media.

Children and adolescents use social media platforms constantly. As digital natives and part of generation Z, they grew up surrounded by free access to social media. They are thus more significantly impacted by the internet than digital foreigners. However, they also display a better know-how with regard to the usage of the internet overall.

#### **4.6 What Should Teachers and Parents keep in mind while Teaching children about Social Media Literacy?**

Other aspects that children should learn:

##### **Online privacy:**

Importance of protecting personal information:

The main thesis describing the importance of protecting personal information was made in a paper by published by Rachels. It suggests that maintaining the variety of interpersonal relationships that people value requires privacy. According to





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Rachels, particular actions and specific information exchanges make up personal relationships (Rachels, 1975). Rachels' theory consists of two sections.

Here are some tips to create a strong password for you and your student:

When creating your password, create mnemonics by coming up with a sentence that you will remember repeatedly and that only uses the initial letter of each word and the punctuation. The password, for instance, would be something like "Little Red Riding Hood was swallowed by the Big Bad Wolf after having been tricked by him" LRRHwsbtBBWahbtbh. Ideally, this sentence was created by you and was not taken from somewhere.

Another helpful tip is to use long passwords that are at least 20 to 25 characters long can consist of several consecutive words separated by special characters of your choice. For example: I.Love.My.Family.So.Much.

Even though it might be inconvenient, avoid using the same password for several services! Strangers could easily figure out even variants like LRRHwsbtBBWahbtbh.-E-Mail for the email account and LRRHwsbtBBWahbtbh.-PC for computer login.

Only if you must, record the password in a secure location rather than on paper, if possible, on your computer, in your wallet, or in your calendar. The same holds true for smartphones and PCs: Don't create password-free, unprotected files that are readily accessible to strangers.

Just write down a portion of your passwords! The first step is to create a strong, easily remembered password (six to eight characters) that you can use anywhere. You add various character combinations to this for every access, noting them



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down at the end of the core password which you remember. You can then have unique passwords for each of your accounts. Even if someone manages to obtain your list, they will not be able to access it without the initial portion stored in your mind.

**For example: R0ckst4r (remembered as core sequence “rockstar”)**

Write down variable suffixes for each individual website;

E-mail: R0ckst4r.e-m4il

Online banking: R0ckst4r-0nlin3-B4nking!!!

Social media platform: R0ckst4r@soci4lm3di4!

**What you will record in your secret password booklet:**

E-mail: .e-m4il

Online banking: -0nlin3-B4nking!!!

Social media platform: @soci4lm3di4!

**Risk of sharing personal information online:**

Your digital footprint is the information trail you create every time you use the Internet. When you purchase something online, subscribe to a newsletter, post something on social media, or leave an online review, for instance, you are leaving a digital footprint.

However, there are situations when leaving a data trail is less evident. For instance, apps can gather data without your knowledge and websites can track your activity by installing cookies on your device. Giving an organization access to your data gives them the ability to sell it or give it to other parties. Or even worse, a data breach might allow someone to access your personal information.





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Speaking of the digital footprint, the terms "active" and "passive" are frequently used.

### **Active digital footprint**

An active digital footprint indicates that the user has voluntarily shared personal information online, such as by posting on social media or participating in a forum. All of a user's posts are included in their active digital footprint when they access a website with a registered username or profile. Subscribing to a newsletter, accepting cookies in the browser, and completing an online form are some other actions that create an active digital footprint.

### **Passive digital footprint**

Information about a user that is gathered without their knowledge is called a passive digital footprint. This occurs, for instance, when websites monitor a user's IP address, location, and frequency of page visits. The user is not always aware of this process because it happens in secret. Social media platforms and advertisers that use your likes, shares, and comments to create a profile of you and target you with particular content are other examples of passive footprints.

Your or your students' digital footprint most certainly will remain permanently in the internet, and thus raises a severe risk for their future. If their digital footprint is vast, others may use the information to impersonate them or to enact harm upon them. Supporting certain positions – may they be political or not – may impair their chances of employment with certain employers holding grudges against certain institutions, minorities, people, ethnicities or certain specific individuals for example.



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Therefore, it is of utmost importance to teach your students and yourself how to protect your privacy and identity effectively.

**Critical thinking:** Critical evaluation of online content; children should ask themselves the following questions:

**Who created this?** Was it a company or an individual? Was it someone who is known for supporting a specific opinion? Was it in an anonymous source? Was it a comedian?

**Why did they create the content?** Was it created to inform, to entertain, to change your opinion or behaviour, to make you laugh or to make you buy something, for example?

**Who is the content for?** Is this content made for kids, grown-ups or certain people who share particular interests?

**What techniques were used to make the content credible?** Were the following elements used: statistics, which source, quotes from experts, which experts, professional-looking, evidence?

**Was something left out?** Were details or perspectives missing? Was only one side of the story argued? Is more information needed to understand the message?

**How does the content make you feel?** Would this make you feel uncomfortable, happy or sad? Why? Would others feel different emotions?



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## **Cyberbullying awareness, examples and consequences the victims experiences:**

Everybody who is subjected to bullying eventually experiences physical or psychological complaints, such as difficulty sleeping, incessant headaches, nausea, or anxiety about leaving for work. Eventually, every victim of ongoing psychological violence becomes unbalanced. Bullying can cause long-term trauma and the development of post-traumatic stress disorder in its victims, much like it can in victims of major accidents, crimes, or natural disasters. This can show up as anxiety, depression, repressed or excessive anger, difficulty concentrating, sleep disturbances, or helplessness.

In other words, you could think of a trauma like an injury to the soul. The long-term, consistent harassment that occurs during bullying is too much for the subconscious to process. In other words, the subconscious wants to figure out a way to make sure that you never experience something similar again.

Traumatization is more common in those who are unable to comprehend why they are the targets of bullying. One cannot truly comprehend why they are bullied if their own world-view is limited to the idea that some people merely take pleasure in bullying others or that some people wilfully use immoral methods to further their own agendas. But without this knowledge, you won't be able to protect yourself from bullying in the future with any kind of effective plan. The brain's fear systems identify this unpleasant situation and, in an attempt to find a way out, repeatedly bring the unpleasant feelings and memories back into awareness.





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Keep in mind that many small unpleasant details you or your students may not even be fully aware of can cause devastating feelings towards other people. Therefore, please raise awareness with regard to cyberbullying to prevent harm from your students and their peers and also other possible victims.

Cyberbullying can emerge in many forms. Here are some examples: ongoing intimidation or persecution (cyberstalking), threat of physical violence (cyberthreat), social exclusion, posting offensive images or videos online (happy slapping), provoking and insulting one another (flaming), bullying and harassment on a regular basis, identity theft through impersonation, sending offensive or nasty messages via WhatsApp, SMS, or e-mail, posting unpleasant or hurtful images, videos, or comments in chat rooms, on websites, or on social media, making nasty or offensive phone calls and defamations.

### **Respectful and responsible online behaviour:**

Understanding the fundamentals of decency and civility is the first step toward appropriate online conduct. It entails using words carefully and being conscious of their power. It is crucial to exercise caution when selecting words in the realm of social media, as tone and context are frequently overlooked. It's crucial to speak in a polite manner, refrain from saying harsh or hurtful things, and remember that there is a real person behind the screen.

Another aspect of a decent digital etiquette is observing others' privacy. This entails being cautious with images and information that might worry other people, as well as refraining from disclosing personal information without authorization. In general, a positive, polite, and healthy online culture depends heavily on digital





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etiquette. By abiding by these unwritten guidelines, we improve the digital well-being of the entire online community in addition to our own.

### **Understanding algorithms: what is an algorithm?**

Predefined, limited sequences of operations are called algorithms, and they are employed to solve problems. They are employed to convert input values into output values or to carry out specific tasks utilizing predetermined step sequences. The steps are executed in a predetermined order and are precisely predetermined. Furthermore, algorithms are used in a variety of real-world applications, such as elevator call functions and traffic lights, in addition to mathematics and computer science as well as in search engines or in the recommended content in social media which might be used by your students or you.

An algorithm's flow of actions needs to be efficient and obvious at every stage. This means that in order to get a result or output value, each statement needs to be relevant and suitable for the application. Each step and action must make sense and be able to be carried out. Transforming input data into output data is the aim of an algorithm. It can only be this way if the process is finite. Because of this, algorithms need to have a finite form, which could be achieved by having a cap on the number of characters or memory usage.

Within a finite amount of time, the executable, logical, and finite individual steps must result in an output. As a result, the sequence ought to have a purpose and not lead to an infinite loop that produces nothing. The same outputs must result from the same inputs under the same circumstances. Algorithms can only ensure





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the dependability of an application and its solution in this way. There is only ever one way to proceed with the problem's solution given the steps in the algorithm. As a result, the intermediate outcomes clearly define the subsequent steps, which are not random (Udupa & Samarasekera, 1996).

### **How algorithms in social media create a bubble of personal information**

Social media platforms want to keep their users online as long as possible, because the longer a user remains online, the more advertisements they watch, which in turn leads to a bigger revenue for the social media platform. That is why their algorithms determine what kind of content the user likes or dislikes. It uses their predicted emotional response as a mean to continue capturing the user's attention. All emotional responses, anger being the most effective one, trigger a user to stay online for a longer period of time, excluding sadness. When a user feels sad the probability of them going offline increases.

This is the reason why social media algorithms are designed to create bubbles in which pre-existing opinions – may they be political or not – are being constantly reinforced. This means that if you were to support a fictional political party A, for example, you would be recommended content supporting the agenda of this political party. The opposing side of the argument is discredited. If these contents are not being critically examined and questioned, having learned social media literacy, this will lead to the radicalisation of opinions in a so-called echo-chamber. Within this echo chamber certain statements are being communicated over and over again, echoing your opinions (Seargeant & Tagg, 2019).





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In the final stages of this process, the user will lose a basic understanding with the opposing side of the argument, and might even think that they are being brainwashed. As more and more statements reach this user, which are not being fact-checked or questioned, the user may be inclined to take radical action which they might believe is just. An example of this would be the events of January 6, 2021 in the United States, where thousands of people gathered to storm the US capitol, thinking that the election was rigged.

If the opinions of groups of the population are being polarized by this severe extent, this can pose severe risks with regard to the social cohesion within a community and, at a larger level, within a society. This underscores the need for education to promote social media literacy to mitigate these mentioned risks.

### **Creating and sharing content:**

It is very important that you teach your students not to divulge private information by posting content on social media. This also includes posting photos of you and your friends without their consent. You must always ask for consent when posting personal information of others and should avoid doing this when possible. Respecting the privacy of others is very important to prevent possible identity theft or misuse of the posted contents as mean of malicious individuals to bully victims for example.

It is equally important to take great care not to harass others, may it be accidental or intentional. If there is a personal problem between two individuals, it is best to sort it out in a civilized and respectful manner, giving a chance for both parties to express their views, and perhaps even reach a mutual understanding or



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compromise. As a teacher, you should always encourage this manner of settling problems, and strongly discourage using social media to cyberbully victims.

#### **Adult's engagement:**

**If students feel uncomfortable in any way or do not know what to do they should contact an adult they trust. It is of utmost importance that you convey this message in an appropriate but determined manner to your students, as the psychological repercussions of cyberbullying are very severe. It is vital that they seek help to stop the bullying as quickly as possible. Both the victim's social development and academic results suffer from cyberbullying, decreasing their quality of life significantly. Please inform your students that they are not alone and should seek help. You should also tell them that seeking help is not something to be ashamed of, as some might think that asking for help is a sign of weakness, when in fact it is a sign of courage and should be commended.**





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## 5. Questionnaire to Assess to what Extent Pathological Internet Addiction Is Exhibited

The following questionnaire can be used by teachers as a tool to assess to what extent their students may suffer from pathological internet addiction. In this case, it is advised to seek professional medical and psychological help. The higher the accumulated points are with regard to the answers given, the more likely it is that the person taking the questionnaire exhibits some form of pathological internet addiction (Nazir et al., 2019).

Answer scale 1-5 (score 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = always).

1. When I am not at school, I spend a lot of time using my device.
2. I feel the need to spend more time using my device.
3. I feel upset when I am not able to use my device.
4. I lie to my parents about the amount of time I spend using my device.
5. Using my device helps me to forget my problems.
6. I do not spend time with my family members because I prefer using my device.
7. I have spent more and more time on my device.
8. I feel upset when I am asked to stop using my device.
9. My parents try to stop or limit me using my device, but they fail.
10. I am sleeping less because I am using my device.
11. When I do not have my device, I think about what I do on it (video games, social media, and texting, etc.).
12. I feel frustrated when I cannot use my device.





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13. I have problems with my parents about the amount of time I spend using my device.
14. Using my device is the most important thing in my life.
15. Using my device is more enjoyable than doing other things.
16. I lie to my parents about what I do on my device.
17. I am not able to control using my device.
18. I have lost interest in hobbies or other activities because I prefer using my device.
19. When I stop using my device, it is not long before I start using it again.
20. I check my device when I am doing homework or other important things.
21. I feel frustrated when I am asked to stop using my device.
22. I argue with my parents when they ask me to stop using my device.
23. I spend too much money on things for my device.
24. Using my device makes me feel better when I feel bad.
25. I continue using my device despite the fact that my grades at school are getting lower and lower.





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## 6. Lesson Plans

### Chapter 4 – Lesson Plan 1: "Safe Social Media Use and Digital Citizenship"

**Objective:** Students will understand the importance of safe social media use and develop skills for responsible digital citizenship.

#### **Materials:**

1. Whiteboard and markers or a digital presentation tool.
2. Devices with internet access (optional, depending on classroom resources).
3. Handouts or digital resources on social media safety tips.
4. Interactive scenarios or case studies related to social media use.

**Duration:** 75 minutes

#### **Introduction (15 minutes):**

**Icebreaker Activity (5 minutes):** Begin with a brief icebreaker to gauge students' familiarity with social media. Ask them about their favourite platforms, and if they have encountered any positive or negative experiences.

**Discussion on Digital Citizenship (10 minutes):** Define digital citizenship and discuss its importance. Emphasize that being a responsible digital citizen includes safe and ethical social media use.

#### **Main Activities (30 minutes):**

**Interactive Presentation (15 minutes):** Use a presentation to cover key concepts related to safe social media use. Include topics such as privacy settings, online





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etiquette, recognizing and reporting cyberbullying, and the permanence of digital footprints. Discuss real-life examples to make the information relatable.

**Case Studies or Scenarios (15 minutes):** Present students with interactive scenarios or case studies related to social media use. Encourage small group discussions where students can analyse the situations and come up with strategies for safe and responsible responses.

#### Group Activity (15 minutes):

**Create a Social Media Safety Campaign (15 minutes):** Divide students into small groups and assign each group a specific social media safety topic (e.g., privacy settings, recognizing scams, respectful communication). Have each group create a mini-campaign that includes a poster, slogan, or brief presentation to educate their peers on the assigned topic.

#### Class Discussion (15 minutes):

**Group Presentations and Discussion (10 minutes):** Each group presents their social media safety campaign to the class. Encourage a class discussion on the importance of each topic and how students can apply the lessons in their own social media use.

#### Individual Reflection (5 minutes):

Journaling (5 minutes): Have students reflect on the lesson by writing in their journals. Ask them to consider one thing they learned about safe social media use and how they can apply it to their online activities.

#### Homework (Optional):



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Family Engagement (Optional): Encourage students to discuss the lesson with their families. Provide resources or discussion prompts for parents to engage in conversations about safe social media use at home.

Assessment: Assess student understanding through class participation, group collaboration, and the quality of their social media safety campaigns. Use the journal reflections to gauge individual comprehension and application of the lesson concepts.

Throughout the lesson, emphasize the idea that responsible and safe social media use is a shared responsibility and that each individual contributes to creating a positive digital environment.





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## Chapter 4 – Lesson Plan 2: "Developing Critical Thinking in Social Media Literacy"

**Objective:** Students will enhance their critical thinking skills regarding content posted online, understanding how to evaluate the credibility, bias, and potential impact of information on social media.

### Materials:

1. Whiteboard and markers or a digital presentation tool.
2. Devices with internet access.
3. Examples of posts from various social media platforms.
4. Handouts with critical thinking frameworks or guidelines.
5. Small whiteboards or paper for individual or group activities.

**Duration:** 100 minutes

### Introduction (15 minutes):

**Icebreaker Activity (10 minutes):** Start with a brief activity that highlights the prevalence and influence of social media. Ask students to share a recent post they found interesting or impactful and discuss why.

**Define Critical Thinking in Social Media (5 minutes):** Introduce the concept of critical thinking in the context of social media. Emphasize the importance of questioning, analysing, and evaluating the content encountered online.

### Main Activities (50 minutes):

**Critical Thinking Framework (15 minutes):** Present a critical thinking framework for evaluating online content. Focus on elements such as source credibility, author intent, evidence, and potential bias. Discuss each element with examples.





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**Analysing Social Media Posts (25 minutes):** Provide students with examples of social media posts. In pairs or small groups, have them analyse the content using the critical thinking framework. Encourage discussions on whether the posts are credible, the potential biases present, and the impact of the information.

**Class Discussion (10 minutes):** Have each group share their analysis, leading to a class discussion. Explore different perspectives and insights gained from the critical evaluation of social media content.

**Group Activity (15 minutes):**

**Create a Debunking Campaign (15 minutes):** Divide students into groups and assign each group a popular or viral social media post. Their task is to research and present whether the information is accurate or misleading. Each group should create a campaign that educates their peers on critical thinking and how to verify information.

**Class Discussion (10 minutes):**

**Group Presentations and Discussion (10 minutes):** Each group presents their debunking campaign to the class. Encourage a discussion on the challenges of discerning credible information online and strategies for critical evaluation.

**Individual Reflection (10 minutes):**

**Journaling (10 minutes):** Ask students to reflect individually on the lesson. What did they learn about critical thinking in the context of social media? How can they apply these skills to their online interactions?





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### Homework (Optional):

Fact-Checking Assignment (Optional): Assign a fact-checking assignment where students need to verify the accuracy of a news article or social media post. Encourage them to use reputable fact-checking websites and report their findings. Assessment: Assess student understanding through their participation in discussions, the quality of their critical analysis of social media posts, and the creativity and effectiveness of their debunking campaigns.

Note: Throughout the lesson, stress the importance of being discerning consumers of information online and the role of critical thinking in fostering a more informed and responsible digital society. You can use the following pictures to demonstrate the importance in the way information is presented to the user. Changing points of view can lead to a different meaning of the picture.

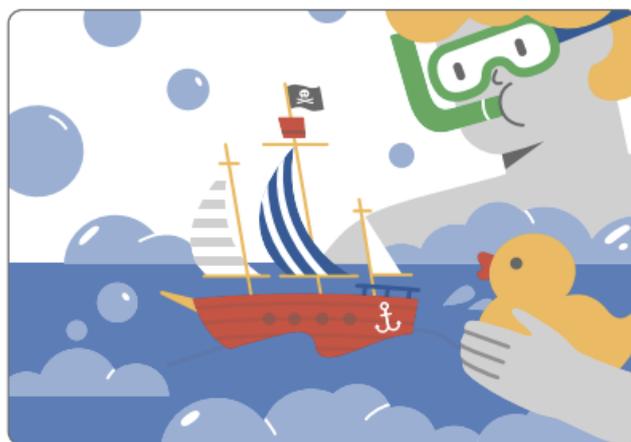




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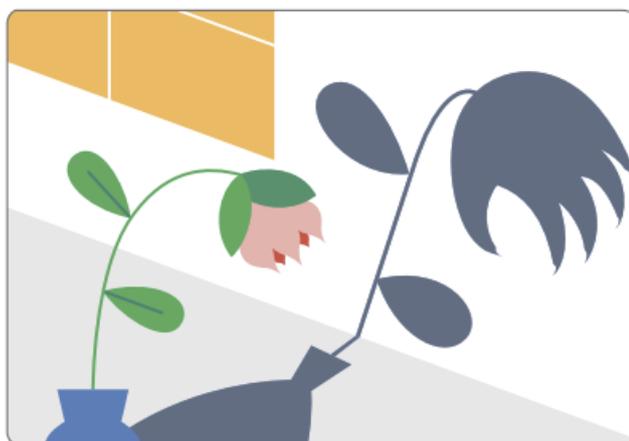
1A



1B



2A

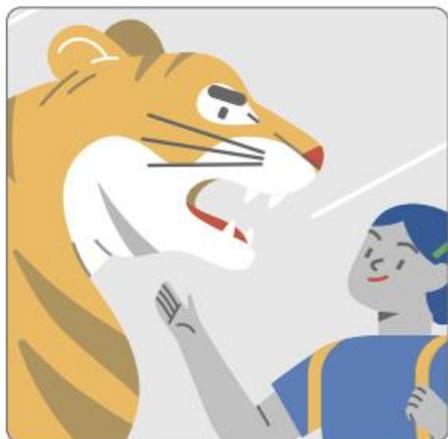


2B





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3A



3B





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## Chapter 4 – Lesson Plan 3: "Empathy or Navigating Empathy in a Digital World"

The lesson plan focusing on social media's negative online messages

**Objective:** To cultivate empathy among students by examining negative online messages on social media, understanding the root causes, and developing strategies for empathetic responses.

**Duration:** 110 minutes

### Introduction (15 minutes):

- Begin with a brief discussion on empathy, its importance in both offline and online interactions.
- Connect empathy to the digital world and social media, highlighting the challenges and opportunities.

### Activity 1: Case Studies of Negative Online Interactions (30 minutes):

- Present case studies or scenarios of negative online messages encountered on various social media platforms.
- In pairs or small groups, have students analyse the case studies, focusing on the emotional impact on both the sender and the recipient.
- Encourage discussions on the potential motives behind negative messages and the broader implications.

### Interactive Exercise (15 minutes):

- Conduct an interactive exercise where students share their personal experiences or observations of negative online interactions.





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- Facilitate a guided discussion on how these instances made them feel and the potential reasons behind such behaviour.

### **Activity 2: Empathy Mapping (25 minutes):**

- Introduce the concept of empathy mapping. In small groups, provide large sheets of paper or digital platforms for students to create empathy maps.
- Have students identify key elements: thoughts, feelings, actions of the sender, and the impact on the recipient in negative online interactions.
- Encourage creativity and visual representation in their empathy maps.

### **Role-Playing Empathetic Responses (15 minutes):**

- Assign scenarios derived from the case studies for role-playing.
- In pairs, students enact scenarios, focusing on responding with empathy. Emphasize the importance of understanding rather than reacting.
- Allow for reflection and feedback after each role-play.

### **Reflection and Action Planning (10 minutes):**

- Lead a reflective discussion on the activities, emphasizing the role of empathy in resolving online conflicts.
- Ask students to brainstorm actionable strategies for promoting empathy on social media.

### **Creative Expression (5 minutes):**

- Conclude the lesson with a creative expression activity where students create positive digital content (e.g., posters, infographics, or short messages) to counteract negativity.
- Share these creations within the class.



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**Homework Assignment:** Assign a reflective essay where students share their insights into the challenges of promoting empathy online and propose ways to foster a more empathetic digital community.

Note: This lesson plan aims to explore empathy in the context of negative online messages through case studies, interactive exercises, empathy mapping, role-playing, and creative expression. It offers a varied approach to engage students in thinking critically and proactively about fostering empathy in the digital realm.



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## Chapter 4 – Lesson Plan 4: "Social Media Literacy "

**Objective:** To enhance students' social media literacy skills, enabling them to navigate digital platforms critically and responsibly.

**Duration:** 65 minutes

### Introduction (10 minutes):

- Briefly discuss the importance of social media literacy in the digital age.
- Define key terms: social media literacy, digital citizenship, and responsible online behaviour.

### Activity 1: Understanding Digital Footprint (15 minutes):

- Explain the concept of a digital footprint and its implications.
- Discuss how personal information is shared online and its potential consequences.
- Engage students in a brief activity to explore and analyse their own digital footprints.

### Activity 2: Evaluating Online Information (15 minutes):

- Introduce critical evaluation skills for online content.
- Discuss the importance of fact-checking and discerning reliable sources.
- Conduct an interactive exercise where students assess the credibility of information found on social media.

### Activity 3: Privacy Settings Exploration (10 minutes):

- Guide students through a demonstration of adjusting privacy settings on a





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popular social media platform.

- Discuss the significance of controlling personal information and managing privacy settings.

#### **Activity 4: Responsible Posting (10 minutes):**

- Discuss the potential impact of posts and comments on social media.
- Provide guidelines for responsible posting, including avoiding misinformation and promoting positive engagement.
- Engage students in a brief discussion on the consequences of irresponsible online behaviour.

#### **Reflection and Q&A (5 minutes):**

- Allow time for students to reflect on what they've learned during the lesson.
- Open the floor for questions and encourage students to share their thoughts on social media literacy.

#### **Homework Assignment:**

- Assign students to research and analyse a case study involving the consequences of misinformation or inappropriate behaviour on social media.
- Request a short written reflection on the importance of social media literacy in today's digital landscape.

This lesson plan is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of social media literacy within a 65-minute timeframe. It covers key aspects such as understanding digital footprints, evaluating online information, exploring privacy settings, and promoting responsible online behaviour. Adjustments can be made based on the specific needs and dynamics of the class.

### **7. Case Studies**





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Materials:

1. Whiteboard and markers or a digital presentation tool.
2. Devices with internet access.
3. Examples of posts from various social media platforms.
4. Handouts with critical thinking frameworks or guidelines.
5. Small whiteboards or paper for individual or group activities.

Grade Level: Middle School (6th-8th grade)

Duration: 110 minutes





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### **Case Study 1: Cyberbullying Intervention (15 minutes)**

#### Background:

Sarah, a 14-year-old student, was experiencing cyberbullying on a social media platform. Classmates were posting hurtful comments about her appearance, causing emotional distress.

#### Discussion Questions:

Ask the class how they would feel in her situation. What should Shanna do next? What potential reasons may the person which wrote this message have for publishing it?

#### Intervention:

The teacher, upon learning about the situation, initiated a classroom discussion on cyberbullying. The teacher educated the students about the consequences of their online actions and the importance of empathy. Additionally, the teacher reported the incident to the school administration and involved a counselor to provide support to Sarah.

#### Conclusion:

The intervention resulted in increased awareness of cyberbullying among students. The class collectively developed a pledge against cyberbullying, fostering a more supportive online environment. Sarah received emotional support, and the school implemented ongoing discussions on digital citizenship and empathy.





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## **Case Study 2: Digital Footprint Awareness (15 minutes)**

### Background:

Alex, a 16-year-old, was unaware of the permanence of digital footprints. Alex posted inappropriate content online, not realizing its potential impact on college admissions and future opportunities.

### Discussion Questions:

Ask the class whether they have posted content which may be potentially dangerous to future opportunities. Which measures can Alex take to mitigate the effects of his digital footprint. Are your students aware of their digital footprint? Is there also a footprint which they are unaware of? Encourage constructive discussions amongst the students, and motivate them to question pre-existing beliefs to maximize the success of the lesson.

### Intervention:

The teacher conducted a lesson on digital footprints, emphasizing the long-term consequences of online behaviour. The class discussed real-life examples, and students engaged in activities to assess and curate their digital footprints. Additionally, the teacher reached out to Alex privately, offering guidance on responsible online behaviour.

### Conclusion:

Alex became more conscious of the content shared online and actively worked on improving digital literacy. The school implemented a digital citizenship





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curriculum, educating students about the importance of maintaining a positive digital presence.

### **Case Study 3: Privacy Settings Education (15 minutes)**

Background:

Emma, a 15-year-old, had her personal information exposed online due to lax privacy settings on her social media accounts. She faced potential risks from strangers accessing her information.

Discussion Questions:

Ask your students what they would do to prevent this from happening. What can Emma do now? Do the students consider their privacy settings to be too lax? What potential risks are there with regard to lax privacy settings?

Intervention:

The school organized a workshop on online privacy and security. The workshop covered setting strong passwords, adjusting privacy settings, and recognizing phishing attempts. Teachers and parents collaborated to ensure consistent messaging and support.

Conclusion:

Emma and her peers gained a better understanding of online privacy. The school established a partnership with cybersecurity experts to provide ongoing workshops, ensuring students remained informed about the latest online security practices.





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#### **Case Study 4: Fact-Checking and Misinformation (15 minutes)**

Background:

John, a 17-year-old, frequently shared information without verifying its accuracy, contributing to the spread of misinformation within his social network.

Discussion Questions:

Which indicators do the students use to determine the reliability of a source? Why is it important to fact check? Do the students know about concepts like social media bubbles and echo-chambers? Do your students know any examples of widespread use of misinformation? What is propaganda? Do they know examples of propaganda? How does one differentiate between propaganda and reality? What kind of intervention do the students recommend to help John? Do they also share content without verifying its accuracy?

Intervention:

The teacher integrated a lesson on media literacy and fact-checking into the curriculum. Students learned to evaluate sources, identify reliable information, and discern fake news. The teacher also engaged John in a one-on-one conversation, providing resources on fact-checking and critical thinking.

Conclusion:

John became more discerning about the information he shared. The school implemented a digital literacy club, empowering students to actively combat misinformation by promoting fact-checking and responsible information sharing.



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### **Case Study 5: Positive Online Behavior Promotion (15 minutes)**

Background:

Sophia, a 13-year-old, was a victim of online negativity. Her self-esteem was affected due to negative comments and peer comparisons on social media.

Discussion Questions:

Do they empathize with Sophia? What is empathy? Do they blame Sophia for her insecurities? Is it normal to be insecure with regard to some things? Should one be ashamed of asking help in these kinds of situations? What would you do to prevent this from happening? How would intervene to help Sophia?

Intervention:

The school counsellor initiated a peer mentorship program focusing on positive online behaviour. Older students served as mentors, guiding younger students on digital citizenship, empathy, and building a supportive online community. The school also organized a student-led campaign promoting kindness online.

Conclusion:

Sophia experienced a boost in confidence and support from her peers. The mentorship program became a school-wide initiative, positively influencing the online culture. The school continued to emphasize positive behaviour through ongoing campaigns and activities.

Further material (15 minutes):





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You can use the following material to raise awareness and empathy with regard to cyberbullying amongst your students. You can divide them into groups or discuss the messages as a class. Ask them which emotions each individual message evokes within them. How would they react? Have they encountered messages like this before? What would they do if these messages were directed at them? If you believe so, how could the messages be considered offensive?

Am I the only one who thinks Shanna looks kinda like a little green alien?

LOL Connor is the only one in class not going on the camping trip this weekend.

Everybody wear purple tomorrow but don't tell Lilly.

Sorry I don't think you can come to my party. It'll cost too much money.

No offense but your handwriting is a mess so you should probably switch groups for this project.

This makes me cringe—who told her she can sing??

You can only join our group if you give me the login to your account.





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Individual reflection (15 minutes):

Recap with your students what they have learned today. Could they empathize with everyone? Do they feel safe using the internet? Ask them how prevalent they think cyberbullying is. Surprise them with the fact that in each class, consisting of 20 students, 1-2 students on average have already experienced cyberbullying. You can dismiss them by asking them how they can help their classmates who might be experiencing this.

Homework (optional):

Ask your students to research their digital footprint to make it clear how vast it can potentially be. Ask your students to research how to identify false information and how to fact-check and present it in class. Ask your students to research what the consequences of cyberbullying is for victims.

You can use multimodal literacy to your advantage to increase the learning success on top of using these lesson plans. The following provides you with a definition of multimodal literacy first and then moves on to the importance of multimodality in education

### **Definition of Multimodal Literacy**





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- Multimodal literacy describes the study of language where multiple modes of meaning are combined.
- According to the Oxford Research Encyclopedia, modes of meaning are “socially and culturally shaped resources or semiotic structure for making meaning”. This means, that examples of modes includes speech, gesture, written language, drawings, pictures, music, etc. Anything that can express a meaning.
- Our society has always used different modes to express themselves. Nevertheless, the rise of the internet and the increase in globalisation has, undeniable, increased the number of multimodal texts that constantly circulate around the world. Because of this, many texts that we encounter daily include different modes. Articles use written language and images, news reports use videos and audio files, and entertainment nowadays includes movement, videos, speech, audio files, music, pictures, drawings, and more.
- Multimodal literacy is the ability to access and analyse multimedia texts as well as to create multimodal texts and express oneself through the creation of such texts. It is important to have multimodal literacy skills, as the amount of multimodal texts could otherwise overwhelm individuals and they might also not be able to correctly use and interpret multimodal texts and the interactions between the different modes.

### Importance of Multimodality in Education

1. It is known, that children combine different modes, long before they attend educational facilities such as nursery schools, pre-school, or school. They talk, draw, sing, and role-play at the same time, mainly for entertainment purpose but also to communicate about their emotions without using words.





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2. Multimodal education is already ingrained in the curriculums of several countries, including the United States of America, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Sweden, and Australia. For example, in the Australian curriculum, the English curriculum “aims to ensure that students (...) learn to listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts across a growing range of contexts with accuracy, fluency and purpose” (ACARA, 2015, as cited in Mills and Unsworth, 2017). This shows that there is an emphasis on bringing students closer to multimodality throughout all grade levels. However, this does not necessarily mean that the testing of knowledge also examines the multimodal literacy skills of the students, as this is not the case in the United States, England, or Australia. Here, the tests of the students are mainly or only based on written language, and do not include images or audio files.
3. Researchers find it necessary to transform the current curriculum and educational methods to be able to better prepare students for the multimodal society we now live in (Mills, 2015A, as cited in Mills and Unsworth, 2017). Children and youth in our society need multimodality in education to cope in a world which becomes more and more digitalized and complex as time advances.





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# “LOG IN BACK THE REAL LIFE”

2022-1-HU02-KA220-SCH-000087324

## Educational Material

### CHAPTER 5:

### VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

Developed by:



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## CHAPTER 5: VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

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## 1. Introduction

The growing number of gamers, or video game users, in the ever-evolving world of digital entertainment coincides with a concerning rise in the danger of video game addiction. Although the original purpose of video games was amusement, there are serious risks associated with addiction that can affect social interactions, mental and physical health, academic performance, and career aspirations. We dissect the complex web of video games in this thorough investigation, exploring the harsh reality of addiction. We do more than just explain things; we want to provide parents and educators practical tools for intervention and prevention. We especially target the most vulnerable group, which is children and adolescents. This educational venture delves further into the complex realm of video game addiction in Chapter 5, as technology drives us into an era where gaming is an intrinsic aspect of modern society. Understanding the many subtleties and effects is just one of the goals; another is to provide readers with useful information about possible actions. The story takes place in an era of rapidly developing technology, when video games have a significant impact on the lives of millions of people worldwide. By conducting this investigation, we hope to promote a proactive strategy that will stop the epidemic of video game addiction by providing knowledge, assistance, and preventative measures.

The curriculum for this course is meticulously structured to guide learners through the intricate domain of video game addiction. Each section is designed to unravel the layers of video game culture, addiction symptoms, consequences, and various approaches to treatment and prevention.

Exploration of Video Games: The chapter begins with an exploration of video





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games, encompassing their definition, historical evolution, diverse genres, and the current state of usage. This foundational understanding sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the challenges associated with video game addiction.

**Understanding Video Game Addiction:** The chapter then delves into the heart of the matter, defining video game addiction and shedding light on its symptoms, consequences, risk factors, and causes. This section aims to equip learners with a nuanced comprehension of the complexities surrounding video game addiction.

**Understanding Video Game Addiction:** The next section of the chapter dives deep into the core of the issue, providing a definition and illuminating the signs, effects, risk factors, and causes of video game addiction. The purpose of this part is to provide students with a sophisticated understanding of the nuances related to video game addiction.

**Treatment and Prevention Strategies:** This chapter walks students through the process of becoming well by outlining different forms of treatment and the supportive roles that parents and teachers may play. It also looks at alternate approaches and professional treatment programs for video game addiction. Additionally, prevention techniques are examined, highlighting the critical responsibilities that parents and educators play in helping children develop positive relationships with video games.

**Encouraging Healthy Play:** The course discusses the idea of healthy play in light of the significance of balance. In order to promote a happy and productive gaming experience, this section advocates for a conscious approach to video game





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interaction.

Intervention Programs and Case Studies: In addition, the chapter covers intervention programs, offering parents and educators helpful perspectives on how to actively support those who are struggling with video game addiction. Analyses of actual case studies will provide concrete instances of difficulties and effective solutions.

References: A thorough reference section with a carefully selected list of reliable sources and research is included in the course to enhance the learning process. This enables students to delve further into the complex terrain of video game addiction.

In conclusion, Chapter 5 is intended to be a comprehensive and educational manual that gives students the information and resources they need to understand, treat, and effectively avoid video game addiction.

## **2. Learning Objectives**

Video games have become a dominant force in technology, captivating minds and shaping leisure activities worldwide. From pixelated adventures to immersive virtual realms, they have woven themselves into our daily lives. However, concerns about potential pitfalls, particularly video game addiction, persist as this digital entertainment medium continues to thrive.

With experiences ranging from heart-pounding adventures to cerebrally challenging tasks, video games, in their many forms, provide an interactive escape into different realms. These virtual environments, whether accessed





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through consoles, PCs, or mobile devices, are now an essential component of our cultural fabric.

We set out on a historical tour to observe the development of video games, from the straightforward joys of arcade classics to the intricate storylines and lifelike visuals that characterize modern gaming experiences.

There is a virtual world for every player thanks to the wide range of genres, which appeal to a wide range of interests and inclinations. Whether it's the strategic depths of role-playing games, the fast-paced excitement of action games, or the immersive storytelling of adventure games, there is something for everyone.

There is no denying the pervasiveness of video games in the modern world. Since the emergence of online multiplayer platforms and the general accessibility of gaming consoles and mobile devices, individuals across all age groups frequently find themselves engrossed in virtual experiences.

But the enthralling charm of these virtual worlds has also raised a shadow, a problem that has to be addressed: video game addiction. We examine the complex layers of obsessive gaming behaviour and its effects on people as we investigate this phenomena.

The word "video game addiction," which reverberates through the digital corridors, describes an excessive and obsessive gaming habit that becomes uncontrollable and interferes with day-to-day activities.

Video game addiction may be diagnosed by looking for the telltale indications



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and symptoms in the actions of those who give in to the seduction of technology. These signs, which range from more screen time to responsibility dereliction, act as warning signs.

Video game addiction may have real-world effects in addition to pixelated landscapes. These effects might include poor academic performance, strained relationships, and negative effects on mental and physical health.

In order to understand video game addiction, we must examine the many facets that contribute to its formation, including psychological, environmental, and personal elements that weave a complex web of problematic gaming behaviour. An all-encompassing strategy that combines professional intervention, family support, and personal dedication is required to address video game addiction. Diverse therapy approaches serve as rays of hope during the healing process. Video game addiction may be identified, addressed, and prevented by parents who act as guides in the digital wilderness by communicating with their children, establishing limits, and encouraging them to pursue other hobbies. At the intersection of education and technology, educators play a critical role in the fight against video game addiction by raising awareness, educating students, and working in tandem with parents.

Seeking the help of mental health specialists becomes an essential step on the road to recovery for people enmeshed in the grip of serious addiction. Apart from conventional treatment procedures, alternative techniques like mindfulness meditation and cognitive-behavioral therapy provide more ways to fight video game addiction.





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The key to reducing the hazards connected to video game addiction is prevention. We can strengthen people against the temptation of excess by encouraging mindfulness, balanced digital lifestyles, and good gaming habits. It's critical to understand that, despite the seemingly endless potential of the digital age, video game addiction calls for a cautious and deliberate approach as we look into the issue. With the help of educators, parents, mental health specialists, and people, we can make our way through these challenges.

### 3. Video Games

Students will concentrate on the following subjects in this section:

- They will get a thorough grasp of video games by investigating their definition, kinds, historical evolution, and present applications and acquire the ability to articulate precisely what video games are, particularly their interactive digital aspect. They will examine the evolution of video games throughout history, noting significant turning points and advancements.
- Recognize the diversity of the gaming environment and divide video games into different genres. We will analyse the current state of video game consumption while taking social impacts and trends into account. Examine the idea of video game addiction, taking into account its definition, signs, effects, and underlying causes.
- Clearly identify addiction to video games and set it apart from regular gaming. Determine the signs of a video game addiction by differentiating between moderate and excessive gaming. Consider the Effects of Video Game Addiction and Evaluate the possible repercussions and effects of video game addiction on





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mental health and general wellbeing.

- We will look into risk factors and underlying causes that lead to the emergence of video game addiction. Examine a range of therapeutic approaches, such as professional therapy, preventative measures, and parental and educational assistance. We will look at the supporting role parents may play in helping their kids overcome a video gaming addiction, and examine the methods in which educators might help combat and prevent video game addiction in the classroom. Furthermore, we will examine alternate techniques to treating video game addiction, taking into account holistic approaches and professional treatment choices for those who are addicted to video games.
- We will look closely at how parents and teachers may help promote good gaming habits and prevent video game addiction.
- Discover how teachers can proactively help students avoid being addicted to video games. Recognize the fundamental duties parents have in regulating and preventing their children's video game addiction.
- Stress the value of establishing a healthy balance when using video games and promote appropriate gaming practices. Examine how intervention programs are created and put into action with the goal of successfully treating video game addiction. Examine real-world case studies that highlight effective strategies, obstacles, and applications in the fight against video game addiction.
- View a carefully chosen collection of references from reliable research papers to learn more about video game addiction, treatment options, and avoidance strategies.





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### 3.1 A Definition of Video Games

A video game is an electronic or digital game played on a video screen, usually a television, a computer monitor, a gaming console, or a mobile device, through the interaction with an interface. They often incorporate audio, visual, and interactive methods to engage players in a virtual world or scenario. Video games can be played offline or online, and sometimes also with multiple players.

### 3.2 The History of Video Games

The concept of video games can be traced back to the early computer programmes and experiments in the 1950s and 1960s. These early games were often text-based and had limited graphical elements. They also were not nearly as accessible to the wider population that they are today.

In the 1970s, the first commercially successful arcade video game emerged, including well-known games such as “Pong” and “Space Invaders”. These games laid the foundation for the arcade gaming industry and the gaming industry in general.

The release of home game consoles, such as the Atari 2600 and the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in the late 1970s and 1980s brought video games into people’s homes and made the more accessible to a broader audience.

In 1983, the video game industry faced a severe crash due to oversaturation of low-quality games and market saturation. This led to the bankruptcy of several game companies. However, the industry rebounded in the late 1980s with the release of the Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES). The





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1990s brought innovations, such as 3D graphics, which transformed the gaming experience and made them more attractive.

Between the 1990s to the 2000s, online multiplayer games rose to popularity due to the introduction of the internet. In the 2000s, the introduction of smartphones led to the rise of mobile gaming, with popular games including “Angry Birds” and “Candy Crush”.

Today, there is a variety of different, high quality types of video games, which means that everyone can find a type of game they enjoy. In the future, it is predicted that technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) will expand, allowing players to immerse themselves in virtual worlds or interact with their real environment.

### 3.3 Types of Video Games

There are many different types of video games, that differ in the genre, amount of players that can play simultaneously, whether you can play them online or offline, and device you can play them on.

There are various genres of video games. Examples are action games that emphasise challenges including combat, exploration, and reflex-based tasks (for example, “Assassin’s Creed” and “Tomb Raider”), adventure games that combine narrative-driven gameplay, puzzle-solving, and exploration with complex stories and character development (for example “The Legend of Zelda” and “Monkey Island”), simulation games where real-life activities or scenarios are replicated (for example “The Sims” or “Microsoft Flight Simulator”), sports and racing games that simulate real-world sports and racing games (for example “FIFA” and “Need for





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Speed"), and many more (including puzzle games, horror games, educational games, war games, etc.).

These different genres of games can be played with a different amount of players, depending on the type of game. This also relates to whether the game can be played online or not, as online games tend to allow more participants. An example of these are the massively multiplayer online games (MMO) that allow a large number of participants to interact in an online world. However, online games do not always need to enable a large amount of people to play simultaneously. In FIFA, for example, you can play online but with only one other person, who is then your opponent. Additionally, if you play a game on a device with multiple consoles, you can also play with others without the game having to be an online game. Some games also allow multiple people to play together without having different consoles. In these games, the players then usually play after each other and not simultaneously, even though there are also some exceptions here, where the players play on the same device at the same time (this goes for some games that can be played on the smart phone).

In conclusion, the wide variety of video games cater to diverse player preferences and interests, which make video games attractive.





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### 3.4 The Current Situation of Video Game Use

The number of active games (meaning people that play video games) is constantly increasing, year by year. This can be seen in the following chart:

Year	Number of Gamers	Increase	Increase Rate
2015	2.03 billion	-	-
2016	2.17 billion	140 million	↑ 6.9%
2017	2.23 billion	160 million	↑ 7.37%
2018	2.49 billion	160 million	↑ 6.87%
2019	2.64 billion	150 million	↑ 6.02%
2020	2.81 billion	170 million	↑ 6.44%
2021	2.96 billion	150 million	↑ 5.34%
2022	3.09 billion	130 million	↑ 4.39%
2023	3.22 billion	130 million	↑ 4.21%
2024	3.32 billion	100 million	↑ 3.11%

Image 1: Chart of the Number of Gamers Worldwide from 2015 to 2024 (Harscha, Kiran, 2023)

The chart published in 2023 gives information on the number of gamers worldwide from 2015 to 2023, and an estimate of the number of gamers worldwide in 2024. As can be seen, the number of gamers has been increasing from 2.03 billion in 2015 to 3.22 billion in 2023, and is estimated to increase further to 3.32 billion in 2024.





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Additionally, one can see that the growth rate is receding. It is estimated that the number of gamers worldwide will reach a peak in 2027 (statista, 2023).

There are several reasons that might have created the growth in the number of video game users, including the increasing accessibility of video games and the increasing accessibility to the internet. Most people play to pass time, for entertainment, or to escape their daily lives.

## **4. Video Game Addiction**

### **4.1 A Definition of Video Game Addiction**

Video game addiction, also known as gaming disorder, is characterised by excessive and compulsive gaming that leads to significant distress or impairment in various areas of life. It has been recognised as a mental health condition and is included in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The WHO recognised the video game addiction in 2018, when it was included into the new ICD-11 catalogue under the official diagnosis of "Gaming Disorder". This means that the problematic and harmful behaviour associated with a video game addiction was, as of then, classified as a disease. The WHO's decision to include gaming disorder into the ICD-11 catalogue and thus officially recognise it as a disease was heavily debated among experts. There were concerns, that especially young people, may be misclassified as dependent or stigmatised because of their enthusiasm for their hobby of video gaming. On the other hand, experts believed that classifying people with a gaming addiction as sick was beneficial as it provided a more solid basis for further developing research, diagnostics and





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therapy for video game addiction to be able to help those affected in the best possible way. Because of this debate, the WHO highlighted that it acknowledges that a video game addiction expresses itself differently for different individuals, and that it therefore is not possible to give a general definition of with how many hours of gaming a person is considered to be addicted to video games.

Regarding demographic information about gaming disorder, the ICD-11 states that males are more often affected by gaming disorder during adolescence and adulthood (between ages 12 to 20), but that girls, though less frequently diagnose, might be more likely to develop emotional or behavioural problems.

#### **4.2 Symptoms of a Video Game Addiction**

According to the ICD-11, a gaming disorder is “characterised by a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behaviour” and is manifested by the following aspects:

- An impaired control over the gaming activity, including its start, frequency, duration, and end.
- If gaming has an increased priority and takes precedence over other life interests and daily activities. This can lead to the individuals neglecting their health.
- If the gaming activities are continued despite negative consequences and the recognition of such consequences.

The ICD-11 also mentions that the pattern of gaming behaviour that have the aspects of the three points must exist over an extended period of time and that individual with a gaming disorder might feel the need to increase the duration or frequency of their gaming behaviour or play more challenging games to maintain or exceed the excitement they feel. Individuals with gaming disorders might also





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experience withdrawal symptoms such as frustration, sadness, and verbal or physical aggression.

The ICD-11 further elaborates stating that a gaming disorder often co-occurs with other disorders, including anxiety, fear-related disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

It is also important to distinguish gaming disorder from hazardous gaming, which refers to people who show problematic gaming behaviour that increases the risk of physical or mental health problems, but has not yet reached the extent of a gaming disorder.

#### **4.3 Consequences of a Video Game Addictions**

Although the consequences of a video game addiction, similarly to all kinds of addictions, cannot be generalised due to the individuality of each person, there are some aspects and consequences that most people with a video game addiction experience.

Firstly, there are patterns that can be seen in children and adolescents that develop a gaming addiction. At the age of up to six, the extent and intensity of video game consumption clearly correlates with the language development disorders increasingly identified by doctors. From the age of seven, there are clear correlations between academic performance, ADHD, and socially related disorders, and the duration of video game use. In adolescence, there is an increase in sleep disorders and also anxiety disorders, which are considered precursors for later depression. Obesity in childhood and adolescence correlates





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with extreme video game consumption and especially with the amount of sweets and sweet drinks consumed.

Secondly, one can say that, in general, excessive gaming can have adverse effects on physical health, leading to sedentary lifestyles and related health issues (Griffiths et al., 2016). This is due to the fact that people with gaming disorder prioritise gaming over self-care and health related aspects of life, including exercise, eating, regular medical check-ups, and hygiene. It can also impact mental health, contributing to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and social isolation (Mentzoni et al., 2011).

Thirdly, the consequences of a video game addiction also transfer to other parts of life that do not directly include health. A video game addiction has a serious impact on the academic life of adolescents, as staying up all night and sleep disorders cause concentration at school to wane. Additionally, homework is hardly ever done, and many young people addicted to gaming drop out of school, as they see gaming as more important or cannot stop. Gaming disorder has similar effects on the work-life of individuals, as they stop going to work and making an effort, which often leads to unemployment and, consequentially, financial difficulties and poverty. Furthermore, the lack of social contacts and isolation in the youth prevents the person affected from taking natural developmental step, such as building friendships and romantic and sexual experiences.

Concluding, gaming disorders have devastating consequences on the lives of individuals and therefore has to be taken seriously.





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#### 4.4 Risk Factors and Reasons

Children and adolescents represent a particularly vulnerable group for the development of risky and pathological patterns in the use of video games due to the incomplete neuronal maturation processes, extensive developmental tasks to be mastered in adolescence, and the emotional trials during puberty. Gaming awakens the desire for adventure and satisfy the need for success. This, together with the diversity of video games and their constant evolution makes them very tempting for children and adolescents. Video game addictions can also emerge due to psychological reasons, such as frustration, dissatisfaction, the lack of self-esteem, and the desire to distance oneself from the obstacles one experiences in life.

As a video game addiction is one form of addiction, it can be explained with the triad of addiction development by Kielholz and Ladewig (1973), which is used to explain the development of addictions. Kielholz and Ladewig realised that an addiction usually has causes in three different areas: the personality of the affected person, the characteristics of the addictive object/substance, and the family, environment, and society of the affected person. In the context of a video game addiction, these three aspects could be viewed as following:

- The personality of the affected person: Some people are genetically more prone to addictions. Introverts and shy people have fewer friends and hobbies, which means that computer games are more tempting for them. Loneliness and emotional instability are also unfavourable.
- The characteristics of computer games: Game developers intentionally build in reward mechanisms that trigger feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. Free





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games and role-playing games in particular use psychological tricks to motivate people to continue playing and to stay hooked on the game for as long as possible. For most players, this is not a problem, but a small part becomes addicted to it. Also, whether you play the game alone or in multiplayer mode on the Internet makes a difference, as well, as other people can, through peer pressure, encourage you to continue playing.

- The family, environment, and society of the affected person: A family can protect against addiction. However, family problems, conflicts, bullying experiences, and strokes of fate such as death or divorce often contribute to a computer game addiction. Sometimes, parents are bad role models themselves. If the individuals also does not have a social support network, such as close friends, family members, clubs and societies which can provide support and encouragement, they become more exposed to the risk of a video game addiction. Society is also a contributing factor: the pressure to perform, the constant availability of mobile games and social networks, and a high degree of digitisation contribute to the development of a video game addiction. In addition, there is a clear trend toward loneliness, individualism, and singles living alone in society.

In summary, addiction is a dynamic condition influenced by a combination of factors, including the addictive substance, in this case video games, the individual's physical and mental state, and social support. Understanding these factors can inform effective prevention and treatment strategies tailored to the unique needs of each individual.





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## **5. Treatment of a Video Game Addiction**

### **5.1 Help Parents can Provide**

Children and adolescents need special protection against an uncontrolled and excessive use of computer games. If a child has an internet addiction, their parents often still have an influence. They can make use of special psychological techniques and tips to support them. No matter what parents attempt, they should always keep their child's well-being in mind while thinking about what they want to achieve. Goals can be: Reducing playtime, taking up old hobbies again, showing your child that you care about them, etc.

In milder cases of a computer game addiction, parents can try using the following three psychological techniques. The first is a reward schedule, where positive behaviour is enforced with rewards. The second is the time-of-day cake. Here, playtime is documented to establish an overview of the extent of the video game playing. Then alternatives should be considered to make better use of the free time. Finally, parents can talk to their child about motives and consequences of the computer game addiction. Sometimes simply talking about the addiction can already help the child realise how to improve. It can also show them that they have the support of their parents, which can reassure them and encourage them to try to get better.

1. Further tips for parents about how they can address the addiction are the following. Firstly, open communication: Parents should foster open and non-judgmental communication with their child about their gaming habits. Listen to their concerns and experiences.
2. Be a role model: Parents should model responsible digital behaviour and





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demonstrate a healthy balance between screen time and offline activities.

3. Encourage alternative activities: Parents should promote a variety of interests and hobbies beyond gaming to help their child explore other activities or reconnect with the hobbies they used to have. Parents can should also consider organising family activities or game nights to support their child by actively limiting their child's screen time, taking their mind off of video games, and showing care for their child.
4. Online safety: Parents should educate their child about online safety, including the importance of not sharing personal information and avoiding contact with strangers. In this way, they also show their child that they will help them get over their addiction, without pressuring them or completely removing their access to video games.

If these tips and psychological techniques do not improve the matter, parents can suggest rules to limit the use of video games without completely depriving their child of their freedom. These can include:

1. Setting daily or weekly time limits for gaming.
2. Designating game-free zones, such as the dining room or the living room.
3. Putting homework and chores before gaming. Be careful to not exaggerate with this rule, as the transition from gaming to also working and studying is not easy for children and teenagers that are addicted to video games and it will therefore not work at once. Remember to be patient and to celebrate and positively reward small improvements.
4. Encouraging regular screen breaks to prevent extended periods of continuous play. These breaks can be used to stretch, hydrate, eat, or rest.





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Remember that the key is to strike a balance between allowing your child to enjoy gaming as a form of entertainment and ensuring that it does not become excessive or harmful. It is crucial to tailor these rules to your child's age, interests, and needs while fostering open communication and mutual understanding. Parents should also consider applying the rules for themselves and all other family members as well. This could create a sense of belonging in their child and, in this way, motivate them to adhere to the rules.

Finally, do not forget that, although parents and relatives can certainly help with psychological and educational means, they are always in a supporting role, meaning that they often cannot end an addiction on their own and should not have this expectation for themselves or for their child. It is always better to seek professional help for their child and cooperate with the therapy.

## 5.2 Help Teachers can Provide

Teachers play a more educational role in the lives of children and adolescents than their parents, which is also reflected in the form of help they can provide. The following are tips for teachers to address video game addictions:

1. Awareness and education: Teachers should be informed and aware of the signs of a video game addiction, as well as of its impact on the student's academic performance and well-being. They should also incorporate digital literacy and responsible gaming education into their lessons.
2. Open communication: Do not treat gaming addictions as a taboo subject but rather discuss the topic, including the consequences and the benefits of a balanced screen time, openly. In this way, they create a safe space for students to discuss their gaming habits and concerns.





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3. Digital citizenship: Teach students about responsible digital citizenship, emphasising the importance of ethical online behaviour and balancing gaming activities with real-life commitments.
4. Goal setting and time management: Teach your students goal-setting skills and time management strategies to help them prioritise their responsibilities and balance gaming with other activities.
5. Skill development: Offer workshops or training on skills, including stress management, coping strategies, and effective communications. This can help students manage their addiction and address underlying issues.
6. Family involvement: Engage family members in the counselling process to foster a supportive environment at home. Provide resources and guidance to parents and discuss the importance of a balanced use of video games with them.
7. Referral to specialists: If a child or adolescent does reach out to you for counselling or emotional support (this could also be if their parents are not ready to help them), it is important to not ignore the child and to find solutions, without being pulled into a role you, as a teacher, do not need to fulfil. In these situations, it is recommended to contact a professional or counsellor working in the school or outside of school. The teacher should also contact the parents of the child.

### 5.3 Professional Treatment

In severe cases or if the problems stemming from the video game addiction are not reducing, it is better to seek professional help. There are special therapy programs for computer game addiction. A good first contact is your family doctor,





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because they already know you and/or the addict. Addiction counselling centres in your area may also have suitable offers.

To improve a gaming disorder, therapeutic treatment often involves techniques from behavioural therapy, family therapy, or group therapy.

The idea behind behavioural therapy is to change or discard harmful behaviour and thoughts. There are a few aspects that behavioural therapy with regards to gaming disorder usually includes. One aspect is psycho education, where those affected get to know themselves and their addiction better, including the symptoms, causes, and consequences. This helps them receive concrete information and to be aware that they have an addiction. Afterwards, those affected usually learn to recognise triggers of addictive behaviour, as addictions always satisfy needs and recognising these needs can make it easier to counteract them. Then, learning strategies to deal with low mood and setbacks are developed. This is important, as gaming is often used as self-medication for sadness or low mood. Through learning better coping strategies, excessive and unhealthy gaming can be prevented. Finally, those affected learn to manage their free time better and to create a balance.

Family therapy in the context of gaming disorder is meant to tackle possible reasons for the addiction that might lie within the family relationship. It also addresses communication and interaction within the family and the consequences that the family members experience due to the internet addiction of one of them (for example, more fights between family members, siblings that receive less attention, etc.). Through family therapy, the family members can learn to see problems from the perspectives of the others and become a firm part in





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their individual social support systems, which is how other addictions or problems can be prevented.

Group therapy has proven its worth when it comes to addictions. Addicts learn that they are not alone with their problems and in especially difficult times it is easier for them to persevere, if they have a concrete next date planned that they can wait for. People addicted to video games are additionally often shy to the point of developing social anxiety. Through being part of a group where they are not judged, they can gain self-confidence and practice their social skills. Another advantage is that the costs for group therapy are often lower than for individual therapy sessions.

#### **5.4 Other Treatment Methods**

Other treatment methods people, who are addicted to video games, can try, for example, if they do not feel ready to go to therapy or if they have the feeling that they need more than therapy, include:

1. Mindfulness and meditation: Practising mindfulness and meditation techniques can help individuals become more aware of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours related to gaming. Mindfulness can assist in managing cravings and impulsive gaming urges.
2. Self-help resources: There are various self-help resources available, including books, online forums, and mobile apps, designed to assist individuals in managing and overcoming video game addiction. These resources often provide tips, strategies, and motivational support.
3. Behavioural contract: Developing a behavioural contract or agreement with a trusted friend or family member, where individuals note down what





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behaviours they want to achieve and in which way others are allowed to help them, can help individuals set clear boundaries and consequences for their gaming behaviour. This external accountability can be a powerful motivator.

It is important to remember that the most effective treatment approach may vary from person to person, and a combination of strategies is often employed to address digital game addiction comprehensively. Seeking help from mental health professionals or addiction specialists is recommended to tailor a treatment plan that suits the individual's unique needs and circumstances.

## **6. Prevention Methods**

### **6.1 The Role of Teachers**

Teachers have a role when it comes to preventing their students from becoming addicted to video games.

Mainly, teachers should educate their students about the importance of having a balanced relationship with video games as well as about the dangers of a video game addiction. They should incorporate the safe use of video games into the curriculum. The following activity is an example of an activity teachers can use to teach their students about video games and gaming disorder.





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Table 1: Activity for Teachers

1. How do I feel?	
<b>Aim</b>	Helping your students to understand their feelings about the addictive aspects of video games.
<b>Type of activity</b>	Individual and group work
<b>Target group</b>	Grades nine to twelve
<b>Materials</b>	Paper, pen, post-it notes
<b>Instructions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the students the following question "How do you feel when you play video games?". This task is designed to get students to think about how they feel when they go play video games and to recognise that these feelings can be positive and negative.</li> <li>• Ask the students to think about the emotion(s) they most associate with playing video games and write each emotion on an individual post-it note.</li> <li>• Now split the class into smaller groups and give them three to four minutes to exchange what they have thought of and the emotions they associate with playing video games. The goal here is for the students to find someone they relate to and to relate what they hear from their peers to their own experiences.</li> <li>• After the group discussion, ask them to stick the post-its on a whiteboard split into 3 categories, positive, negative, and neutral, in accordance to which</li> </ul>





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category they believe the emotions on the post-its fit best to.

- After all emotions are categorised on the white board, ask them following questions:
  - Are there more positive or negative words?
  - Can they agree a top three most commonly felt emotions?
  - What was the most enjoyable and the most worrying emotions they came up with?
  - To which extent can playing video games change your feelings or does it just reinforce how you already felt?

## Evaluation

At the end of the activity, summarise the activity and the responses of the students, while emphasizing the importance of being aware of the emotional reasons of video game addiction.

Teachers can also invite guest speakers to speak about their experiences with video game addictions. Regardless of which activities teachers implement concerning video game addictions, they should always promote an environment where students feel safe and welcomed to talk about their emotions and experiences. This is essential, as students will not speak to the teacher if they start experiencing difficulties with video games or if they notice that their gaming behaviour is becoming problematic.

Finally, teachers should also be aware of warning signs of gaming disorder. This is especially important as the first signs of excessive computer game use are often





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not even noticed by the person concerned or at least not perceived as disturbing for a long time. It is also always better to notice an addiction as early as possible; the longer the addiction lasts, the deeper can it root itself into the mind of an individual and the more difficult it is for the individual to stop playing video games. The addicted student may be characterised by the following traits:

- Few to no friends and little social engagement with their fellow classmates (for example, during breaks or during group work activities).
- Unwillingness to face conflicts and problems.
- Very often tired in class.
- Failures to complete school tasks and obligations
- Desire to not be in school that can also be made apparent through restlessness and a lack of participation.
- Moody, angry, and aggressive.

## 6.2 The Role of the Parents

Parents should mainly support their child in finding a balance between activities with and without video games. This includes various aspects.

Firstly, parents should support their children in the responsible use of video games by discovering and trying out the world of games themselves. They should show interest and let their children explain to them: Which games particularly fascinate your child and why? What are they about and who do they play with, including online? Maybe, you can play together with your child to better understand the appeal. This step is important so that you develop empathy and see video games from their perspective.





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Image 2: PEGI Symbols

Furthermore, parents should support their child with selecting suitable games. The standardised Europe-wide PEGI symbols on game packaging provide reliable information on the age group for which a game is suitable for the protection of minors. Pictograms also indicate whether the game contains violence, sex, drugs, fear, discrimination, vulgar language, gambling, or online gaming. To find suitable games in the wide range on offer, parents can consult rating aids and recommendations. They should also be aware that online games (which can be played on any device with internet access) often do not have age labels. Parents should therefore talk to their child about the games they play online and explain if and why they think a game is unsuitable. Parents should also set up the video game outside of the room of their child.

Additionally, parents should set rules. Because computer games have a certain addictive potential, it is important to establish a framework at an early stage and





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to explain the reasons for the establishment of such a framework to the child. While creating the rules, it is important to remember that each child is different and therefore needs rules that are adapted to them; what works for their friends might not work for them, and it is important that they understand that. Parents should also make sure that the rules are concrete and clear, for example that the games do not contain excessive violence, that no in-app purchases may be made, or that the child consults with their parents before using online games. Instead of setting a time limit, parents can agree on a certain number of game rounds. This has the advantage that the child does not have to interrupt the game in the middle, which could lead to frustration. It is also important to follow the implemented rules and to be clear about the consequences if the rules are not followed. Parents should involve their child in the creation of the rules. A contract can help ensure commitment.

Another aspect parents should do is observe the gaming behaviour of their child and intervene if necessary. As mentioned before, each child is different, which is why the playing experience is something very individual. Parents should observe which games the child chooses, how they react while playing and how they behave otherwise. They should talk to them if they notice something or believe that their child should get help. Changes in the gaming behaviour can be an indication of problems such as difficulties at school, insecurities, social isolation, or emotional disconnection. Parents should also keep an eye on their child when playing online games and encourage their child to talk to them about negative experiences, including unpleasant content or irritating behaviours of other players. Online games can be misused by paedophiliacs for the purpose of contacting minors or by extremists for radicalisation or recruitment of young people. Parents should ask their child to immediately stop communication in case of inappropriate



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behaviour and report it directly to the respective game provider (many game websites and consoles offer corresponding feedback options) and, depending on the case, also to the police or a victim counselling centre.

An important aspect is also to not use games as an educational tool. Parents should not use digital games as babysitters or as rewards or punishments. This increases the importance of the games for your child.

Finally, parents should provide variety. A child should not sit in front of a screen all day. Parents should show them other ways to occupy themselves alone or with the family, such as reading, playing board games, or outdoor activities. Children enjoy being with family and value the time they spend together. Also in this aspect, parents should be role models for their children. This means that they too should not sit in front of a screen all day.

In summary, parents play an important role when it comes to children learning how to create a balance between playing video games and doing other activities that do not involve video games.

## 7. Healthy Gaming

It is important to note that video games are not inherently bad for children and adolescents. When used appropriately, they can be an activity to pass time, have fun, and interact with friends, similarly to other activities such as reading or playing football. However, this is only true if children and adolescents learn how to play video games in a healthy manner.





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There are some simple tips to follow that allow a healthy consumption of video games. These are: do not exceed 1.5 hours per day, do not play videos every day (maybe even push yourself to go video-game-free for a few weeks at a time), do not play video games that are not meant for your age group, regularly participate in other activities (for example, play sports or go on a walk), spend more time with other people than with video games, and do not play video games before you go to bed.

The International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television published some recommendations for the use of video games for different age groups:

1. For children aged seven to ten years: Use of video games for a maximum of 45 minutes a day.
2. For children aged eleven to thirteen years: Use of video games for a maximum of one hour a day.
3. For children and adolescents older than fourteen years: Use of video games for maximum one and a half hours a day.
4. Children older than twelve years can have a gaming console or computer in their rooms, if they have agreed to a set of rules with their parents.

## **8. Intervention Programme**

### **Objectives**

Provide support for students displaying signs of game addiction, with a focus on reintegration into the group. Teach students the severity of video game addictions and what they can do to help a person with a video game addiction.

### **Intervention Programme**





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The intervention programme is divided into six sessions.

- Programme introduction

Begin with a warm welcome and introduction to the programmes objectives. Emphasise the importance of a safe and inclusive learning environment. Engage in ice-breaking activities to create trust between the students.

- Understanding video game addiction

Explain a video game addiction, including the reasons for a video game addiction, the symptoms, the consequences, and the signs of a video game addiction. Make sure the students understand the seriousness of the topic and how devastating it can be for the life of a student. Also mention treatment methods and how to access help.

- Self-diagnosis

In this part of the class, the students will find out whether they might be addicted to video games. For this, give the students a worksheet with the following statements and ask them to write down whether this statement is true for them or not.

- I am constantly thinking about my current game and when I can play again.
- I spend more time playing video games than I used to.
- The time I play video games every day is getting longer and longer.
- I do not let my play time be limited.
- I find ways to be able to play again.
- I get restless, cranky, or irritable if I cannot play for a long time.
- I usually play longer than I intended when I started the game.
- I do not care if school, my work, my relationship, or my friendships suffer because I play so many video games.





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- I hide how much time I spend playing. If I have to, I also lie.
- I would rather play video games than deal with the problems in my life.

Afterwards, open the room for a class discussions. Prompt questions can be: Where is the line between enjoying video games and having an addiction? Is the criteria for a video game addiction the same for everyone? If you had a video game addiction, would you feel comfortable announcing it in front of the class?

- What do I do if I know someone that has a video game addiction?

Explain to the students once again where people who have a video game addiction can access help, so that they would be able to explain it to someone else. Ask the students to come up with way they can support a friend. Ask them what makes them happy and what makes them want to spend time with others. This session is also meant to develop the empathy skills of the students.

- Team building

Plan group activities that promote teamwork, trust, and cooperation. Encourage students to collaborate and solve challenges together. Highlight the importance of supporting each other.

- Self-care and stress management

Teach self-care strategies for managing stress and promoting well-being. Discuss the importance of setting healthy boundaries. Encourage students to seek help when dealing with stress or addiction. This can also be taught with role-playing techniques.

- Follow-up: Conduct periodic check-ins with students to assess their progress, address any ongoing conflicts or addiction issues, and reinforce the importance of maintaining a healthy and inclusive learning environment.





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By implementing this intervention program, you aim to empower students with teaching them self-care strategies, empathy, and the awareness to combat game addiction. Additionally, creating a supportive and understanding classroom atmosphere can help students overcome conflicts and foster positive relationships within the group.





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## **9. Lesson Plans**

### **Chapter 5 – Lesson Plan 1: "Understanding Video Games – Definition, History, and Genres"**

**Objective:** Introduce students to the world of video games, covering their definition, historical evolution, and various genres.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

#### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Briefly define video games and their significance in contemporary society.
- Discuss the ubiquity of video games and their impact on entertainment and culture.

#### **History of Video Games (20 minutes):**

- Explore the evolution of video games from their inception to the present day.
- Highlight key milestones, innovations, and technological advancements.

#### **Video Game Genres (20 minutes):**

- Introduce various video game genres, including action, adventure, simulation, strategy, and more.
- Engage students in identifying and discussing their favourite genres.

#### **Interactive Activity (10 minutes):**

- Divide students into groups to research and present a brief history of a specific video game genre.
- Encourage discussion on how genres have evolved and diversified over time.





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## Chapter 5 – Lesson Plan 2: "Unveiling Video Game Addiction"

**Objective:** Explore the concept of video game addiction, including its definition, symptoms, consequences, and the current state of video game usage.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

### **Introduction to Video Game Addiction (15 minutes):**

- Define video game addiction and its impact on individuals and society.
- Discuss the current prevalence of video game usage.

### **Symptoms and Consequences (20 minutes):**

- Identify the symptoms of video game addiction, such as increased screen time and neglect of responsibilities.
- Explore the consequences of video game addiction on academic performance, relationships, and well-being.

### **Interactive Discussion (15 minutes):**

- Facilitate a class discussion on students' experiences and observations regarding video game usage and potential addiction.
- Share examples and case studies to illustrate the real-world impact.

### **Current State of Video Game Usage (10 minutes):**

- Present recent statistics and trends related to video game usage.
- Discuss how technological advancements and changing lifestyles contribute to the current state.





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## Chapter 5 – Lesson Plan 3: "Understanding Risk Factors and Causes of Video Game Addiction"

**Objective:** Explore the risk factors and underlying causes of video game addiction, as well as therapeutic interventions.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

### **Risk Factors and Causes (20 minutes):**

- Examine psychological, environmental, and individual factors contributing to video game addiction.
- Discuss the role of stress, social isolation, and personal vulnerabilities.

### **Therapy for Video Game Addiction (20 minutes):**

- Introduce therapeutic approaches, including cognitive-behavioural therapy and mindfulness techniques.
- Discuss the importance of seeking professional help for severe cases.

### **Support from Parents and Educators (15 minutes):**

- Explore how parents and educators can provide assistance, recognizing warning signs and fostering open communication.
- Discuss strategies for creating a supportive and balanced learning environment.

### **Interactive Activity (5 minutes):**

- Engage students in a role-playing scenario where they act as supportive friends, parents, or educators for someone struggling with video game addiction.





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## Chapter 5 – Lesson Plan 4: "Beyond Addiction – Prevention and Roles of Parents, Teachers, and Intervention Programs"

**Objective:** Discuss preventive measures, the roles of parents and teachers, and the importance of intervention programs.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

### **Prevention Methods (15 minutes):**

- Explore preventive measures, including promoting healthy gaming habits and fostering awareness.
- Discuss the importance of balance in digital and offline activities.

### **Roles of Parents and Teachers (20 minutes):**

- Discuss the roles of parents and teachers in recognizing, addressing, and preventing video game addiction.
- Share strategies for creating a supportive home and classroom environment.

### **Intervention Programs (15 minutes):**

- Introduce the concept of intervention programs and their significance in addressing severe cases of video game addiction.
- Discuss how schools and communities can implement intervention initiatives.

### **Group Discussion and Reflection (10 minutes):**

- Facilitate a group discussion on the collective responsibility of parents, teachers, and intervention programs in combating video game addiction.





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Encourage students to reflect on the impact of a supportive community in fostering healthy digital habits.





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## Chapter 5 – Lesson Plan 5: "Recognizing Video Game Addiction and Implementing Preventive Measures"

**Objective:** Raise awareness about video game addiction, discuss preventive methods, promote healthy play, and explore intervention programs.

**Duration:** 90 minutes

### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Begin with a brief discussion on the prevalence and impact of video game addiction.
- Share relevant statistics and emphasize the importance of addressing this issue in today's digital age.

### **Recognizing Video Game Addiction (15 minutes):**

- Define video game addiction and discuss its symptoms and consequences.
- Share real-life examples or case studies illustrating the negative effects of excessive gaming.

### **Preventive Methods (20 minutes):**

- Introduce preventive measures to mitigate the risk of video game addiction.
- Discuss setting reasonable time limits, creating a balanced schedule, and encouraging diverse leisure activities.
- Highlight the significance of parental involvement and communication.





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### **Healthy Play (15 minutes):**

- Emphasize the concept of healthy play and responsible gaming.
- Discuss the importance of breaks, physical activity, and social interactions alongside gaming.
- Provide guidelines for maintaining a balanced and mindful approach to video game usage.

### **Interactive Activity – Scenarios and Solutions (10 minutes):**

- Present various gaming scenarios, both healthy and potentially problematic.
- In small groups, have students brainstorm and discuss solutions for promoting healthy play and preventing addiction.

### **Intervention Programs (10 minutes):**

- Introduce the concept of intervention programs for individuals at risk of or struggling with video game addiction.
- Discuss the role of schools, communities, and mental health professionals in implementing effective intervention strategies.

### **Q&A and Discussion (5 minutes):**

- Open the floor for questions and encourage students to share their thoughts and experiences.
- Facilitate a brief discussion on the importance of a supportive environment in preventing and addressing video game addiction.

### **Conclusion and Reflection (5 minutes):**

- Summarize key points covered in the lesson.





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- Ask students to reflect on what they've learned and consider how they can contribute to promoting healthy gaming habits.

**Homework Assignment:** Assign a reflective essay or journal entry where students express their views on healthy video game play and propose preventive measures. Encourage them to discuss the topic with their parents or guardians, fostering open communication at home.

This lesson plan aims to not only raise awareness about video game addiction but also equip students with practical preventive methods and a deeper understanding of healthy play. The interactive activity encourages critical thinking and problem-solving, fostering a proactive approach to digital well-being.





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## 10. Case Studies

### **Case Study 1: John's Gaming Addiction**

#### Background:

John, a 17-year-old high school student, has always been an avid gamer. His interest in online gaming started innocently enough, but over time, it became a serious problem.

#### Problematic Behaviour:

John begins to spend increasing amounts of time playing online games, sometimes staying up all night. He starts neglecting his schoolwork, and his grades began to drop. He withdraws from his family and friends, preferring to interact with his online gaming buddies. He even stopped participating in sports and other activities he used to enjoy.

#### Consequences:

As a result of his gaming addiction, John's academic performance suffers, and he becomes socially isolated. He also starts neglecting his health and gains a lot of weight because he does not eat healthily and stopped participating in sports. His parents noticed the changes in his behaviour and try to intervene, but he becomes irritable and defensive when they suggest he cuts back on gaming. John's addiction affects his mental and physical health, and he is eventually diagnosed with depression.





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#### Intervention:

John's parents seek help from a therapist who specialises in internet and gaming addiction. He goes through behavioural therapy to address his addiction and underlying issues contributing to his depression. With professional help and family support, John gradually reduces his gaming hours, reconnects with friends and family, and works on improving his mental and physical health.

#### Conclusion:

This case shows the importance of having parents who care about you and who actively try to help you. Because John's parents contact a therapist and supports him while he gets better, he manages to start his journey on overcoming his video game addiction. The case also show the consequences a video game addiction can have on you physical and mental health, and how easily it is to become socially isolated.





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## Case Study 2: *Mark's Gaming Addiction*

### Background:

Mark, a 19-year-old college student, has always enjoyed playing online video games. However, over the past year, his gaming habit has escalated to a concerning level.

### Problematic Behaviour:

Mark is spending an average of eight to ten hours per day playing online games. This started when he started avoiding to face issues like stress from college work and anxiety by immersing himself in games. Now, he is unable to control the amount of time he spends on gaming. He often skips class and avoids social interactions with friends and family to continue gaming. He becomes irritable and anxious when not playing and experiences sleep disturbances.

### Consequences:

Mark's academic performance suffers significantly. He fails several courses due to missed assignments and exams. His relationships with friends and family deteriorate, as he isolates himself to play games. His physical health deteriorates due to a lack of exercise and poor eating habits. Although he thinks that he is solving his mental issues (the stress and anxiety), he is actually only making them worse by ignoring them and becoming addicted to video games which offer him a temporary relief.





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### Intervention:

Mark's family becomes increasingly concerned about his behaviour and encourages him to seek help. He starts attending therapy sessions with a counsellor specialising in addiction. In therapy, Mark explores the reasons behind his excessive gaming, which included using games to escape from stress and anxiety. With the counsellor's guidance, Mark establishes a healthier routine. He sets strict limits on his gaming time, attends support groups for gaming addiction, and practises stress-reduction techniques such as mindfulness and meditation.

### Outcome:

Over time, mark's gaming addiction gradually improves. He begins attending classes regularly, catches up on missed coursework, and repairs his relationships with friends and family. While he continues to enjoy gaming as a hobby, it no longer controls his life, and he finds healthier ways to cope with stress and anxiety.

### Conclusion:

This case study shows, how mental problems can lead to gaming addictions. It shows the importance of receiving psychological help, before the mental health problems escalate and create other problems (in this case they created the gaming addiction, social isolation, and neglect of college work).





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### Case Study 3: *George's Game Addiction*

#### Background:

Anna has a son, George, whose behaviour has recently been characterised by laziness and irritability. He spends most of the time alone at home and refuses to see his friends. Anna is worried because George seems increasingly tired and has trouble sleeping and paying attention. Yesterday she received a phone call from George's teacher asking Anna to come to school as George's school results have dropped significantly. Anna feels helpless; she does not know how to help her child.

#### Problematic Behaviour:

George spends most of his time alone at home, immersed in his gaming activities. He refuses to see his friends and avoids social interactions. He has trouble sleeping, and his ability to concentrate has significantly decreased. His excessive video game use, particularly late into the night, has disrupted his sleep patterns.

#### Consequences:

George's academic results have deteriorated rapidly, and his teacher contacted Anna to discuss his declining performance. Anna is deeply worried about her son's well-being but feels helpless and does not know how to address the issue.

#### Intervention:

Anna decides to take immediate action to help her son. She begins by having an open and non-confrontational conversation with George, expressing her concerns about his recent behaviour. She encourages him to share his feelings and struggles. Recognizing that George's behaviour might be linked to a video game



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addiction, Anna seeks professional help. She schedules an appointment with a therapist specialising in technology and game addiction. In therapy, George explores the emotional triggers behind his excessive internet use, such as using it as an escape from stress and unhappiness.

The therapist and Anna work together to set boundaries for George's internet use, including designated times for online activities. They introduce healthier sleep practices to help him get adequate rest. Anna also reaches out to George's school to collaborate on a plan to improve his academic performance.

#### Outcome:

With therapy, the support from his mother, and a structured plan in place, George begins to make positive changes. He gradually reduces his excessive video game use, which allows him to focus better on his studies and improve his academic performance. He reconnects with friends and becomes more socially engaged. Through therapy, George learns healthier ways to cope with stress and negative emotions. Anna's proactive approach and unwavering support played a crucial role in helping her son overcome his game addiction and regain control of his life.

#### Conclusion:

The active involvement of parents in the treatment of their children's video game addiction is very valuable and essential for their children so that they can recover quickly. If they feel supported and heard, they are more likely to stick to rules and plans made by their therapist and/or by their parents. It is also important that the parents are aware of their children's gaming behaviour. Only because Anna was aware of his gaming behaviour could she link the other symptoms George developed to the gaming addiction (these symptoms included laziness, deteriorating academic performance, irritability, difficulties sleeping, concentration difficulties, and reluctance to meet with friends).





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#### **Case Study 4: Student's Video Game Addiction**

##### Background:

You, a teacher, have noticed that one of your students is showing the following symptoms: She does not complete her homework, she is absent and skips classes or comes late, she does not participate in social activities at school, she is always playing with her smartphone during breaks, and she does not socialise with her classmates. You have linked it to a possible addiction to video games that she plays on her smartphone.

##### Problematic Behaviour:

The student displays the following symptoms associated with excessive internet use:

**Incomplete Homework:** The student consistently fails to complete homework assignments.

**Absenteeism and Tardiness:** The student is frequently absent from school or arrives late.

**Isolation:** The student avoids participating in social activities at school and does not socialise with classmates.

**Smartphone Dependency:** During breaks, the student is consistently engaged with her smartphone instead of interacting with peers.

##### Intervention:

You have recognised these symptoms and have decided to intervene to help the student overcome this issue and improve their overall well-being. These are the steps that are considering to implement:





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- Open communication: Initiate a private and non-confrontational conversation with the student. Express your concern about her recent behavioural changes and inquire about her reasons for excessive video game use. Ensure the student feels heard and supported.
- Involve the parents: Contact the student's parents or guardians to discuss the situation and seek their support in addressing the issue. Collaboration between home and school is crucial for a successful intervention.
- School counsellor involvement: Collaborate with the school counsellor, who can provide additional guidance and support. The counsellor can conduct a more in-depth assessment of the student's mental and emotional well-being. You think that they might be able to help your student more than you can.
- Educational plan: Work with the student to create an educational plan that includes strategies to catch up on missed assignments and improve attendance. Provide clear expectations for academic performance, and make clear that she does not need to directly master everything perfectly.
- Restructuring breaks: Encourage the student to limit smartphone use during breaks and instead engage in face-to-face interactions with peers. You can suggest extracurricular activities or clubs where the student can socialise and develop interests outside of video games.
- Peer support: Foster a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where classmates can be understanding and supportive of the student's efforts to reduce internet use.
- Regular monitoring: Keep track of the student's progress by monitoring attendance, homework completion, and social interactions. Periodically check in with the student to discuss her challenges and successes. In this





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way, you can remind her that she has someone she can ask for support and that she does not need to solve the problem by herself.

#### Outcome:

With a combination of support from the school, parents, and peers, the student begins to make positive changes. She gradually reduces her excessive internet use, leading to an improved attendance and a return to completing homework assignments. The student also starts participating in school activities and engages in face-to-face interactions with classmates.

#### Conclusion:

This case highlights the importance of early intervention by teachers and school counsellors when students exhibit signs of excessive video game use. By addressing the issue promptly and collaboratively, the student can regain their academic and social life, ultimately leading to a healthier and more balanced lifestyle.





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### Case Study 5: *Lucy's Gaming Addiction*

#### Background:

Lucy spends more than 22 hours a week on the “Minecraft” online game. Her parents have tried to reduce her time playing the game to two hours a day, but this failed. Lucy has always been an IT-savvy kid; she has had access to a computer from an early age. Her parents decide to hold a meeting with her teacher and the school counsellor to discuss the problem. Lucy is also invited to this meeting.

#### Problematic Behaviour:

Lucy's gaming behaviour leaves no room for family life. She skip meals and her school performance has declined. Her parents are arguing with her a lot about the game and this has escalated to the point that Lucy once physically pushed her mother away because she tried to block her access to the internet. On the other hand, Lucy says that she does not feel understood by her parents, as they keep on repeating that gaming is a nuisance for the family.

#### Intervention:

The teacher and school counsellor take the following steps to tackle the problem:

1. Assessment and understanding: They begin by empathetically listening to Lucy and her parents, to be able to gain a deep understanding of the situation, the extent of Lucy's gaming habits, and the associated challenges.
2. Educate and raise awareness: They provide information to Lucy and her parents about the potential consequences of excessive gaming, including its impact on physical health, mental health, academic performance, and relationships.





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3. Set clear boundaries: They work with Lucy's parents to establish clear boundaries and rules regarding her gaming time. These should be reasonable and allow for a balanced lifestyle. They should also be discussed with Lucy, so that they work this time and are not inefficient.
4. Encourage open communication: They try to create a safe and non-judgmental space for Lucy to openly communicate her feelings, challenges, and any issues she may be experiencing. They also encourage her parents to create such an environment at home as well. This currently seems to be lacking, as Lucy has stated that she does not feel understood by her parents.
5. Monitor academic progress: Lucy's teacher continuously monitors her academic performance and provides additional academic support if necessary. She discusses strategies with Lucy to help her catch up on her schoolwork and to make learning easier and more attractive to her.
6. Explore alternative interests: They encourage Lucy to explore and engage in other interests and hobbies that can divert her attention away from excessive gaming. This can help her find fulfilment in other areas of life.
7. Family counselling: They recommend family counselling or therapy to address the strained relationship between Lucy and her parents.
8. Supportive peer group: They work to facilitate the formation of a supportive peer group or club where students can discuss their experiences with gaming and share strategies for responsible use. This allows Lucy to build herself a supportive and encouraging social network.





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### Outcomes:

The relationship with Lucy and her parents improves due to the therapy and the open communication between them. Lucy now feels more comfortable at home and accepted for who she is. She also builds a support network with the people she gets to know in the new peer groups. In this way, she feels motivated to change her life style and to find a way to play and enjoy video games in a balanced manner.

### Conclusion

Addressing potential internet addictions requires a multidimensional approach that encompasses emotional support, education, therapy, and open communication. It is important that the child that might have an addiction, their parents, and relevant professionals work together closely and communicate well with each others. In this way, it is possible to develop effective strategies to mitigate the impact of gaming addiction and promote the overall well-being and academic success of the child.





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# “LOG IN BACK THE REAL LIFE”

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## Educational Material

### CHAPTER 6:

### TEACHERS AS A PREVENTER OF CYBERBULLYING

Developed by:



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## 1. Introduction

### **Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking:**

Cyberbullying and cyberstalking encompass harmful behaviours directed at individuals using electronic communication methods. These communication methods include online platforms such as blogs, social networks (for example, Facebook, Instagram, X, etc.) and discussion forums as well as messaging services such as WhatsApp, Telegram, SMS and others.

The term cyberbullying joins the terms “cyber” and “bullying”. “Cyber” is a prefix that signifies something pertaining to computers or electronic communication. The term “bullying” encompasses persistent, unwanted and deliberate negative actions intended to socially exclude or harm an individual over an extended period of time. The victims of bullying are often perceived as vulnerable and weaker. Bullying involves systematic insults, humiliation, threats and sexual harassment, typically accompanied by a power imbalance between the victim and the perpetrator(s). These actions are often downplayed by the perpetrator(s) and occur covertly, making them challenging for teachers, parents, colleagues or employers to detect. Bullying can have severe consequences on the mental and emotional well-being of the victim. It can, for example, lead to fear, anxiety depression, low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts and self-harm.

Cyberbullying has both a verbal and a psychological, however only rarely a physical, dimension. The verbal dimension involves aspects such as spreading rumours, hurtful verbal exchanges, sharing embarrassing content or impersonating someone online, and the psychological dimension includes the exclusion from





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groups or social circles and forms of emotional harm. Cyberbullying usually only has a physical aspect in the form of physical violence in response to psychological attacks.

Cyberstalking is the persistent use of the internet or communication technologies, such as cell phones, to stalk individuals.

### **The Legal Implications:**

In many legal systems, "cyberbullying" is a punishable offence, often categorised as "continued harassment by means of a telecommunications or computer system".

The following are examples of cyberbullying that can lead to prosecution:

Perceptibly violating a person's honour:

1. This refers to any act that diminishes an individual's reputation and respect within their social circle.
2. It considers the objective comprehensibility of the defamation rather than the victim's personal feelings.

Making facts or images of a person's most personal life visible to a larger audience without consent.

1. This includes the individual's sex life, family matters, religious beliefs or health conditions.
2. The images may depict the victim or their private living spaces.

Violating the "cyberbullying" law can result in different penalties, depending to which extent the actions could potentially impact a person's lifestyle, on the consequences of the cyber bullying (for example, if it has lead to a suicide





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attempt) and on the legal system.

These legal provisions aim to protect individuals from the harmful consequences of cyberbullying and cyberstalking and thus promoting online safety and responsible digital behaviour.

## 2. Learning Objectives

The goal of this chapter is to equip educators to play a critical role in stopping cyberbullying. Following this chapter, readers should be able to:

- Recognize the Evolution of Cyberbullying: Examine how, in the digital era, cyberbullying has changed the dynamics of conventional bullying, and examine how technology has affected the occurrence and kind of cyberbullying.
- Comprehend the Aspects of Cyberbullying in Education: Analyse the prevalence and types of cyberbullying that occur in educational environments, and recognize the policies of the schools about occurrences of cyberbullying and the legal ramifications.
- Recognize the Teachers' Role in Preventing Cyberbullying:  
Acknowledge the part that educators play in spotting and stopping cyberbullying, and discover how to reduce the hazards associated with cyberbullying in the classroom by establishing a secure and encouraging atmosphere.
- Recognize Students' Contributions to the Prevention of Cyberbullying:  
Encourage pupils to behave responsibly online and to practice digital citizenship. Give pupils the tools they need to identify instances of cyberbullying and assist their classmates.
- Assist Those Who Have Been Cyberbullied: Provide advice and direction to





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victims on how to report occurrences, get help, and take care of themselves. Give victims the tools they need to withstand the emotional toll that cyberbullying takes.

- Create Course Outlines for Every Subject: Make lesson plans that clearly explain the causes, dynamics, and repercussions of cyberbullying. Create initiatives that highlight preventative and intervention techniques in order to foster a good online culture.
- Examine and evaluate real-world case studies that demonstrate effective efforts to combat cyberbullying in school settings. Recognize the difficulties encountered and the lessons discovered from these actual situations.
- Consult an Extensive Catalogue of Available Sources: Get access to a carefully selected collection of references that includes academic papers, research findings, and other materials for more study on the prevention of cyberbullying.

This chapter's learning goals are designed to provide educators with the information, abilities, and tools they need to take a proactive approach to stopping cyberbullying in the classroom.





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### 3. How Cyberbullying has Changed the Dynamics of Bullying

- Due to the rapid expansion of the internet and the increasing accessibility to the internet, bullying has now also reached the internet in the shape of cyberbullying. This has changes the dynamics of bullying in the following ways:24/7 and global accessibility: The internet is accessible around the clock and does not have geographic restrictions, making it possible for mobbing to occur at any time and anywhere. Victims may be targeted even when they are at home or outside of traditional school or workplace settings.
- Digital amplification: The internet provides a platform for mobbing behaviours to be amplified. Negative actions and content can quickly reach a larger audience and can be done by more people through social media, online forums and instant messaging. This amplification can intensify the harm experienced by the victim.
- Anonymity and pseudonymity: Online anonymity and pseudonymity allow perpetrators to engage in mobbing without revealing their true identities. This anonymity can embolden individuals to engage in aggressive behaviour they might not consider in face-to-face interactions. It also makes the prosecution of bullying more difficult.
- Delayed awareness of injury: In cyberbullying, the victims' reactions to hurtful statements or images are usually not visible to the perpetrators. Therefore, the perpetrators are often not aware of the extent of the hurtful words and images and how much they hurt the victims. This decreases the chance of the perpetuators stopping the cyberbullying.
- Permanence of content: Content shared online can persist indefinitely, even





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after it has been deleted by the original poster. This permanence means that the impact of mobbing incidents can last long after the initial attack.

- New forms of harassment: The internet has given rise to new forms of harassment, such as doxxing (publishing private or identifying information about a person), swatting (making false emergency reports to provoke a police response), and deepfake technology (creating realistic fake videos or audio recordings of someone).
- Escalation: Online mobbing incidents can escalate rapidly, with participants encouraging each other to engage in increasingly harmful actions. This escalation can make it difficult to defuse the situation.
- Mental health impacts: The internet's reach, persistence and omnipresence can make the severe mental health consequences victims experience due to bullying more pronounced than in traditional mobbing scenarios.

Nevertheless, there are some dynamics of analogue bullying that also are present in cyberbullying. The following aspects can both be found in bullying and cyberbullying:

- Group behaviour: Bullying typically involves a group of individuals who engage in aggressive or harmful behaviour directed at a target. In cyberbullying, this group may form online, often anonymously or pseudonymously, and collectively target the victim.
- Power imbalance: Mobbing situations often feature a power imbalance, where the perpetrators hold perceived social, emotional or psychological power over the victim. This power dynamic can stem from factors such as social status, popularity or knowledge of personal information.
- Isolation of the victim: Perpetrators of mobbing, including cyberbullying, may





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attempt to isolate the victim from their peer group or support network. This isolation can intensify the victim's sense of vulnerability and distress.

- Escalation: Bullying behaviours tend to escalate over time, with initial incidents of teasing or harassment turning into more severe forms of abuse. In cyberbullying, this escalation can include spreading rumours, sharing personal information or engaging in public humiliation.
- Reinforcement: Perpetrators often reinforce each other's negative behaviour in mobbing situations, leading to a sense of group solidarity. This reinforcement can make it challenging for individuals within the group to break away from the harmful behaviour.
- Audience effect: In cyberbullying, the presence of an online audience can fuel the harmful behaviour. Perpetrators may act out for attention or to gain social approval from their peers, making the victim's suffering a spectacle.
- Bystanders: Just as in analogue mobbing, bystanders play a role in cyberbullying dynamics. Some bystanders may actively support the perpetrators (this includes, for example, sending harmful comments on social media or "liking" harmful messages), while others may passively observe or even disapprove but remain silent. The role of bystanders can influence the course of cyberbullying.

In conclusion, cyberbullying is dangerous in different ways than analogue bullying due to the specific characteristics of the internet, which have created new opportunities for bullies to harass their victims. Thus, cyberbullying presents a unique challenge for the prevention and intervention of bullying and efforts to combat cyberbullying need to include various layers including legal measures and digital literacy education.





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#### **4. Cyberbullying in School**

The shift towards digital communication that our society has witnessed in recent years has caused the bulk of communication among children and adolescents to now occur in the digital sphere. Conflicts are no longer confined to the analogue world, which means that cyberbullying is also now present in schools.

##### **The Dynamics in Schools and Classrooms**

Empirical studies (Smith et al., 2002; Kowalski & Limber, 2007) have consistently demonstrated that, in every school classroom, there is typically at least one or two students who suffer significantly due to constant attacks from their peers. These individuals carry a substantial burden: their academic performance declines, they may harbour violent fantasies, they experience social isolation, depression and even contemplate suicide, and they may exhibit psychosomatic symptoms (Slonje & Smith, 2008).

One might wonder why cyberbullying seems to occur frequently in schools. Mobbing tends to thrive in social systems where individuals feel trapped and cannot easily remove themselves. Schools, due to their compulsory attendance requirements, create such situations. Furthermore, due to the anonymity the internet provides and the fact that it is easily accessible for children and teenagers as well as an environment they are active in frequently, cyberbullying has become a more effective method than analogue bullying in the eyes of the perpetrators.

In classrooms where cyberbullying persists, discrimination becomes a pervasive issue and democratic principles are undermined daily. The voice of the strongest tends to prevail, eroding the educational efforts on subjects such as diversity,





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tolerance and empathy (Berger & Caravita, 2016). In such classrooms, it is essential that professionals in violence prevention/intervention and those in media education, that usually operate in separate domains, cooperate so that these issues are addressed effectively (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015).

### **Areas of Conflict in Schools**

School conflicts are diverse and occur frequently in various forms. Cyberbullying often stems from such a conflict, which is why a precise diagnosis of such a conflict is crucial for effectively addressing a case of cyberbullying. The following attempts to categorize the areas, levels, dynamics, and sub-conflicts that contribute to school conflicts:

- Areas of conflict: These are the specific contexts or situations in which conflicts arise within the school environment, such as disputes over grades, friendships, classroom dynamics or opinions. Clashing ideologies and world-views can also be an area of conflict.
- Levels of conflict: Conflicts can occur on multiple levels, ranging from individual disagreements to larger group disputes or even systemic issues within the school itself.
- Dynamics of conflict: Understanding the underlying dynamics of a conflict, including power imbalances, communication breakdowns, emotional factors or stereotypes, is vital for resolving it.
- Sub-conflicts: Conflicts can have multiple facets or sub-conflicts, each requiring its own approach. Recognising and addressing these sub-conflicts is essential for effective conflict resolution.

In conclusion, cyberbullying in schools requires a clear understanding of the





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various dimensions of conflicts that may arise within the school community. This knowledge forms the basis for developing strategies to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts effectively.

## **5. The Role of the Teachers**

The role of teachers in reducing cyberbullying is crucial for creating a safe and respectful online environment for students. Teachers can employ various strategies to address and prevent cyberbullying, to promote internet safety, to teach and counsel cyberbullies and to intervene effectively in the case of cyberbullying.

### **How Teachers can Prevent Cyberbullying**

- Education and awareness: Teachers should educate students about cyberbullying, its consequences and strategies to prevent it. This includes teaching digital citizenship skills, which encompass responsible online behaviour, empathy and critical thinking. Teachers should also discuss the consequences of cyberbullying with their students, including the legal consequences for the perpetrator and the mental health consequences for the victim.
- Creating a safe classroom environment: Teachers should establish an inclusive and respectful classroom culture that values diversity and encourages open communication. This can deter cyberbullying and help students feel safe reporting incidents.
- Open communication: Encourage students to speak openly about their experiences and concerns related to cyberbullying. Create a supportive environment where students feel comfortable reporting incidents or seeking





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help.

- Promoting empathy and conflict resolution: Teach conflict resolution and empathy skills to help students address conflicts constructively. Encourage them to think critically about the consequences of their online actions.
- Monitoring and supervision: While respecting students' privacy, teachers should be vigilant about students' online activities during school-related interactions, such as virtual classes or online assignments. Awareness of signs of cyberbullying, such as sudden behavioural changes, can help in early intervention.
- Implementing school policies: Collaborate with school administrators to enforce and reinforce anti-cyberbullying policies. Ensure that students and parents are aware of these policies as well as the consequences of cyberbullying.

Incorporating these strategies into the classroom can empower teachers to play a proactive role in reducing cyberbullying, creating a positive online atmosphere and fostering digital citizenship among students.

### **Practical Applications for Teachers**

The following are tips for teachers to address cyberbullying effectively:

1. Establish clear policies: Teachers should work with their school administration to establish clear and comprehensive anti-cyberbullying policies. Ensure the implementation of the policies in your classroom and that students as well as parents are aware of these policies.
2. Educate students early: Start teaching digital citizenship and responsible





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- online behaviour from a young age. Incorporate lessons on internet safety and the consequences of cyberbullying into the curriculum.
3. Use technology wisely: Integrate technology into your teaching to promote digital literacy and responsibility. Teach students how to use privacy settings on social media, avoid sharing personal information online and recognize warning signs of cyberbullying.
  4. Create a safe reporting system: Establish a safe and confidential reporting system for students to report instances of cyberbullying. Encourage open communication and provide multiple reporting options.
  5. Anonymous reporting: Establish anonymous reporting mechanisms to encourage students to report cyberbullying without fear of realitation.
  6. Foster a supportive environment: Create a classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable discussing their online experiences and seeking help if needed. Emphasize empathy, respect and kindness in all interactions.
  7. Respond promptly: Take all reports of cyberbullying seriously and respond promptly. Investigate each case thoroughly and ensure appropriate consequences for perpetrators.
  8. Teach responsible bystander behaviour: Encourage students to intervene when they witness cyberbullying. Teach them how to support victims and report incidents to adults or appropriate authorities.
  9. Host cyberbullying workshops: Organise workshops or guest speaker events to educate students, parents and staff about the dangers of cyberbullying and how to prevent it. Share practical tips and resources during these sessions.
  10. Use role-playing exercises: The use of role-playing exercises can help students practice responding to cyberbullying scenarios. This can empower





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them with effective strategies to handle real-life situations.

By implementing these practical applications, teachers can create a safer and more responsible online environment for their students while equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to combat cyberbullying effectively.

### **How Teachers can Contribute to Internet Safety**

Teachers play a crucial role in promoting internet security among students and a safe internet use decreases the possibility of being cyberbullied. In an increasingly digital world, where students are exposed to various online risks, educators can act as guides and mentors in teaching safe online practices. The following are several ways in which teachers can contribute to internet security:

- **Digital literacy education:** Digital literacy education encompasses teaching students to use, analyse and create digital content in a responsible and ethical way, including how to analyse a source, how to determine the credibility of a source and how to use the internet safely. Teachers should incorporate digital literacy into their curriculum. They should educate students on the risks associated with internet use, such as cyberbullying, online scams and privacy breaches. By providing age-appropriate resources and lessons, teachers can empower students to make informed decisions online.
- **Cybersecurity awareness:** Teachers can raise awareness about cybersecurity practices, such as creating strong passwords, recognising phishing attempts and using reputable antivirus software. They can educate students on the importance of protecting their personal information and digital assets, which can prevent cyberbullies from gaining access to





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personal information and publishing it.

- **Critical thinking:** Teachers can encourage critical thinking skills when consuming information online. Students should learn how to evaluate the credibility of websites, news sources and online content. This helps them avoid falling for misinformation, scams and some types of cyberbullying, such as the spreading of rumours.
- **Involve parents:** Collaboration between teachers and parents is essential. Teachers can engage with parents to ensure that internet safety practices are reinforced both at school and at home. They can provide resources and guidance to parents on how to protect their children online. In this way, they can also promote the security of their students at home.
- **Stay informed:** The digital landscape is constantly evolving, and new threats emerge regularly. Teachers should stay informed about current internet security issues and trends to keep their students updated with the latest information.

In summary, teachers play a pivotal role in promoting internet security among students. By integrating digital literacy, cybersecurity awareness and responsible online behaviour into their teaching methods, educators can equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the digital world safely and to avoid cyberbullying.

### **How Teachers can Teach and Counsel Cyberbullies**

Teaching and counselling for individuals who engage in cyberbullying is a crucial aspect of addressing this harmful behaviour. It is essential to understand that cyberbullies are often young people who may lack awareness of the





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consequences of their actions. The following are strategies for teaching and counselling cyberbullies:

1. Raise awareness: Start by helping cyberbullies understand the impact of their actions on others. Use real-life examples and case studies to demonstrate the harm caused by cyberbullying, both emotionally and legally.
2. Empathy-building exercises: Engage cyberbullies in empathy-building exercises to help them understand the feelings of their victims. Encourage them to imagine how they would feel if they were on the receiving end of hurtful messages or actions.
3. Digital literacy education: Teach cyberbullies about digital literacy, responsible online behaviour and the importance of respecting others' privacy and boundaries on the internet.
4. Discuss consequences: Clearly explain the potential legal consequences of cyberbullying, such as criminal charges and civil lawsuits. Help them understand the impact on their future, including college admissions and job opportunities. Additionally, address the consequences of their actions for the mental health of their victims.
5. Restorative practices: Implement restorative justice practices that focus on repairing the harm caused by cyberbullying. Encourage cyberbullies to take responsibility for their actions, apologize to their victims and make amends.
6. Conflict resolution skills: Provide training in conflict resolution and effective communication skills to help cyberbullies find constructive ways to address conflicts and express their feelings without resorting to harassment.
7. Counselling services: Offer counselling services to cyberbullies to explore the underlying causes of their behaviour, such as anger, frustration, or peer





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pressure. Provide a safe space for them to discuss their feelings and concerns.

8. Monitor progress: Continuously monitor the progress of cyberbullies as they participate in counselling and educational programs. Assess whether their attitudes and behaviours are changing for the better.

It's crucial to approach teaching and counselling for cyberbullies with the goal of personal growth. With the right guidance and support, individuals who engage in cyberbullying can learn to make better choices and contribute positively to their communities.

### **Intervention Methods for Teachers**

Intervening effectively in cases of cyberbullying is essential to stop the harm and provide support to both victims and perpetrators. The following are various intervention methods that can be employed by schools and educators:

- Immediate action: When a cyberbullying incident is reported or discovered, take immediate action to address it. This might involve contacting the individuals involved, parents or guardians, and assessing the severity of the situation.
- Conduct investigations: Investigate cyberbullying incidents thoroughly to gather evidence. This may include collecting screenshots, timestamps and other digital records that can help establish the facts. If a teacher does not think this is their responsibility, but rather the responsibility of school management, then they should ensure that the responsible people conduct investigations.





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- Meet with involved parties: Notify the parents or guardians of all parties involved. Discuss the incident with them and collaborate on a plan to address the issue and prevent future occurrences.
- Implement consequences: Depending on the severity and frequency of the cyberbullying, impose appropriate consequences for the perpetrator, such as disciplinary actions, loss of privileges or counselling. Ensure that consequences are fair and consistent with school policies.
- Mediation: In less severe cases, consider mediation sessions between the victim and the bully, facilitated by a trained counsellor or mediator. This approach can help both parties understand each other's perspectives and work towards resolution.
- Monitor the situation: Continuously monitor the situation to ensure that the bullying stops and that the victim is not subjected to further harm. Encourage bystanders to report any ongoing harassment.
- Create a safety plan: Collaborate with the victim and their parents to develop a safety plan that includes steps to protect the victim online and offline, as well as strategies for dealing with future incidents.
- Restorative justice: Explore restorative justice approaches that focus on repairing the harm caused by cyberbullying, promoting empathy and facilitating reconciliation between the victim and the perpetrator.

Remember that intervention methods should prioritize the safety and well-being of the victim while also addressing the underlying issues that may be driving the cyberbullying behaviour. Effective intervention can help prevent future incidents and create a safer online environment for all students.





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## **Pedagogical Behaviour to Address Cyberbullying Effectively**

Pedagogical behaviour, in the context of education, refers to the actions, strategies, and approaches employed by educators to facilitate learning and development in students. The following are some pedagogical behaviours that educators can exhibit to address cyberbullying effectively:

- Open dialogue and communication: Encourage open and honest communication with students. Create a safe space where students feel comfortable discussing their concerns, including experiences of cyberbullying.
- Active listening: Active listening means giving your full attention when someone speaks, validating the feelings of the speaker, asking questions, and empathising with their experiences. Practice active listening when students express their concerns about cyberbullying.
- Modelling positive behaviour: Educators should lead by example by modelling positive and respectful online behaviour. This sets a standard for students to follow.
- Conflict resolution skills: Implement conflict resolution skills and teach your students about these.
- Continuous education: Stay updated on the latest trends and issues related to cyberbullying. Attend professional development sessions and workshops to enhance your knowledge and skills in this area.

## **6. The Role of the Students**

Students play an important role when it comes to cyberbullying in schools, as, if cyberbullying exists at a school, students are usually the perpetrators of the cyberbullying and the victims of the cyberbullying. This means that they have a





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large responsibility and that, in a way, they decide whether cyberbullying occurs or whether it does not.

Students should attempt, to the best of their ability, to pay attention to any information that is given to them concerning cyberbullying. They should also be aware of the policies their school has concerning cyberbullying.

The most important thing is, though, that they report cyberbullying as soon as they witness it or experience it themselves. If they witness or experience cyberbullying, they play a deciding role concerning whether the cyberbullying will end or continue, whether there will be consequences for the aggressor or not, how strong the victim will be affected by the cyberbullying and how far the harmful content will be able to spread.

### **7. Tips for Victims of Cyberbullying**

Victims of cyberbullying often face challenging and distressing situations. Nevertheless, there are tips that can help them face the cyberbullying.

Victims of cyberbullying should stay calm and avoid responding to the perpetrators. It can be tempting to retaliate or engage with the cyberbully, but this usually escalates the situation. They should avoid responding to hurtful messages or posts. It can help to distract oneself, for example through engaging in hobbies and spending time with friends and family.

It is also very important that the victims of cyberbullying document evidence of the cyberbullying. This includes taking screenshots and saving any evidence, including





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messages, comments or posts, preferably in an external device such as an USB-stick. After documenting the evidence, they should block and report the cyberbully.

Victims of cyberbullying should furthermore remember that they are not alone and that they do not need to handle the situation by themselves. They should not hesitate to talk to someone they trust, preferably a trusted adult, about what is happening to them. If they do not want to speak to someone they know or who knows them, they can seek advice from resources such as youth counselling teams and helplines. Additionally, victims of cyberbullying should not hesitate to seek professional help, such as the help of mental health professionals or counsellors, if the cyberbullying is taking a toll on their mental health.

Finally, it is essential that the cyberbully receives punishment for their actions, in order to prevent them from repeating what they have done. In a school context, this means that students who have experienced cyberbullying need to talk to a teacher or to school management about the cyberbullying. Even if they are not believed at first, it is important that they persevere and talk to other teachers until they find someone ready to support them. For a victim of cyberbullying, talking about their experience will be extremely challenging and emotionally draining due to the emotional impact it has. Nevertheless, they should not give up. In the long run, it will be worth it.





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## **8. Lesson Plans**

### **Chapter 6 – Lesson Plan 1: "How Cyberbullying has Changed the Dynamics of Bullying"**

**Objective:** Explore the evolution of bullying into cyberbullying, understand its impact, and discuss strategies for prevention.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

#### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Define bullying and introduce the concept of cyberbullying.
- Discuss the shift from traditional bullying to cyberbullying in the digital age.

#### **Evolution of Cyberbullying (15 minutes):**

- Explore how technology has changed the dynamics of bullying.
- Discuss the anonymity, reach, and potential severity of cyberbullying incidents.

#### **Impact on Individuals (15 minutes):**

- Examine the emotional, psychological, and social impact of cyberbullying on victims.
- Discuss the long-term consequences and challenges faced by those affected.

#### **Preventive Strategies (10 minutes):**

- Introduce preventive measures and strategies for creating a positive online culture.
- Discuss the importance of digital literacy and responsible online behaviour.





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**Interactive Activity (5 minutes):** Engage students in a brief discussion or activity on identifying and addressing cyberbullying scenarios. Encourage students to share their perspectives on the changing dynamics.

**Conclusion and Reflection (5 minutes):**

- Summarize key points and encourage students to reflect on the impact of technology on bullying dynamics.
- Emphasize the role of individuals in fostering a safe online environment.

Homework Assignment:

- Ask students to research and present examples of cyberbullying incidents reported in the media.
- Encourage reflection on the role of technology in shaping interpersonal relationships.



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## Chapter 6- Lesson Plan 2: "Cyberbullying in Schools"

**Objective:** Understand the prevalence of cyberbullying in educational settings, explore its manifestations, and discuss preventive measures.

**Duration:** 70 minutes

### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Define cyberbullying and its various forms, including harassment, cyberstalking, and spreading rumours.
- Discuss the unique challenges of addressing cyberbullying in schools.

### **Statistics and Real Cases (20 minutes):**

- Present statistics on cyberbullying incidents in schools.
- Share real-life cases to illustrate the impact of cyberbullying on students.

### **School Policies and Reporting (15 minutes):**

- Explore existing school policies on cyberbullying.
- Discuss reporting mechanisms and the role of students and teachers in addressing incidents.

### **Preventive Education (10 minutes):**

- Discuss the importance of integrating cyberbullying prevention into the curriculum.
- Explore educational programs and resources available for promoting digital citizenship.





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### **Interactive Scenario Analysis (5 minutes):**

- Present hypothetical cyberbullying scenarios for discussion.
- Encourage students to analyse the situations and propose appropriate responses.

### **Conclusion and Reflection (10 minutes):**

- Summarize key points and discuss the collective responsibility of the school community.
- Encourage students to reflect on their role in creating a safe and respectful school environment.

### **Homework Assignment:**

- Assign students to research and present information on cyberbullying prevention programs implemented in schools.
- Encourage them to reflect on the effectiveness of current preventive measures.





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## Chapter 6- Lesson Plan 3: "The Role of the Teachers in Combating Cyberbullying"

**Objective:** Explore the crucial role of teachers in preventing and addressing cyberbullying incidents in schools.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Discuss the responsibilities of teachers in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment.
- Introduce the specific challenges posed by cyberbullying and the importance of teacher intervention.

### **Understanding Student Dynamics (15 minutes):**

- Explore the social dynamics among students that may contribute to cyberbullying.
- Discuss ways teachers can identify signs of cyberbullying and support students.

### **Cyberbullying Prevention Strategies (15 minutes):**

- Introduce proactive strategies for preventing cyberbullying in classrooms.
- Discuss the role of classroom discussions, digital literacy education, and fostering a positive online culture.

### **Teacher-Student Communication (10 minutes):**

- Emphasize the importance of open communication between teachers and students.
- Discuss strategies for creating a safe space where students feel comfortable reporting incidents.





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### **Interactive Role-Playing (5 minutes):**

- Conduct a role-playing activity where students act out scenarios related to cyberbullying.
- Encourage discussion on effective teacher responses in different situations.

### **Conclusion and Reflection (5 minutes):**

- Summarize the teacher's role in combating cyberbullying.
- Encourage students to reflect on the impact teachers can have in creating a supportive learning environment.

### **Homework Assignment:**

- Assign students to interview a teacher or school counsellor about their experiences in addressing cyberbullying incidents.
- Encourage them to propose additional strategies for teacher involvement.



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## Chapter 6- Lesson Plan 4: "The Role of the Students in Combating Cyberbullying"

**Objective:** Empower students to take an active role in preventing and addressing cyberbullying within their school community.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Discuss the collective responsibility of students in creating a positive and respectful school environment.
- Introduce the concept of peer intervention in combating cyberbullying.

### **Understanding Empathy and Respect (15 minutes):**

- Explore the importance of empathy and respect in online interactions.
- Discuss how students can contribute to fostering a positive digital culture.

### **Bystander Intervention (15 minutes):**

- Discuss the role of bystanders in cyberbullying situations.
- Explore strategies for students to intervene safely and support their peers.

### **Student-Led Initiatives (10 minutes):**

- Encourage students to brainstorm and propose student-led initiatives to combat cyberbullying.
- Discuss the potential impact of awareness campaigns, workshops, or peer mentoring programs.





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### **Interactive Group Activity (5 minutes):**

- Divide students into groups to create anti-cyberbullying posters or digital campaigns.
- Encourage creativity and effective messaging in promoting a positive online culture.

### **Conclusion and Reflection (5 minutes):**

- Summarize the role of students in combating cyberbullying.
- Encourage students to reflect on how they can actively contribute to a respectful and inclusive school community.

### **Homework Assignment:**

- Assign students to create a personal pledge or commitment to promoting positive online behaviour.
- Encourage them to share their pledges in a class discussion or presentation.



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## Chapter 6- Lesson Plan 5: "Empowering Victims of Cyberbullying"

**Objective:** Provide victims of cyberbullying with practical tips and strategies to cope with and address cyberbullying incidents.

**Duration:** 75 minutes

### **Introduction (10 minutes):**

- Discuss the prevalence and impact of cyberbullying, emphasizing the importance of supporting victims.
- Introduce the objective of the lesson: to empower victims with tools to effectively deal with cyberbullying.

### **Understanding Cyberbullying (15 minutes):**

- Define cyberbullying and discuss its various forms, including harassment, cyberstalking, and spreading rumours.
- Explore the emotional, psychological, and social impact of cyberbullying on victims.

### **Tips for Coping with Cyberbullying (20 minutes):**

- Present practical strategies for coping with cyberbullying, such as:
- Ignoring or blocking the bully: Encourage victims to avoid engaging with the bully and to block them on social media platforms.





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- Seeking support: Emphasize the importance of reaching out to trusted friends, family members, or school counsellors for support.
- Documenting evidence: Advise victims to keep records of cyberbullying incidents, including screenshots, messages, and emails, as evidence for reporting.
- Taking breaks from technology: Recommend taking breaks from social media and other online platforms to focus on self-care and mental well-being.
- Practising self-care: Encourage victims to engage in activities that promote relaxation and stress relief, such as exercise, hobbies, and spending time with loved ones.

#### **Role-Playing Scenarios (15 minutes):**

- Divide students into small groups and assign each group a cyberbullying scenario to role-play.
- Encourage students to act out both the victim's and bystanders' responses, focusing on effective coping strategies and seeking support.

#### **Discussion and Reflection (10 minutes):**

- Facilitate a class discussion on the role-playing scenarios, focusing on the effectiveness of the coping strategies used.
- Encourage students to share their own experiences and insights on coping with cyberbullying.

#### **Conclusion (5 minutes):**

- Summarize the key tips and strategies discussed for coping with cyberbullying.
- Reiterate the importance of seeking support and taking proactive steps to address cyberbullying incidents.





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### Homework Assignment:

- Assign students to create a personal cyberbullying prevention plan, outlining the strategies they will use to cope with and address cyberbullying incidents.
- Encourage students to share their prevention plans with the class in the next lesson for further discussion and feedback.





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## **9. Case Studies**

Through discussing case studies, one can better understand the common patterns and distinctions within cyberbullying scenarios. The students can learn examples that classify as cyberbullying and can learn the consequences cyberbullying can have. Case studies can also lead to more effective prevention and intervention strategies.

### **Case Study 1: Resolving Cyberbullying: A Case Study on Mika's Transformation**

#### **Description:**

In the (Cyber)Mobbing Case of "Mika," we encounter a situation involving a sixth-grade student named Mika, who holds a dominant position in his class and can be considered the class leader. Mika engages in cyberbullying against his classmate Sebastian by creating a derogatory photo collage featuring pictures of Sebastian. He posts this collage in the class chat on WhatsApp, accompanied by a threatening audio message. Several classmates react positively to the content, further amplifying the harm caused.

#### **Intervention:**

1. Documenting evidence: Sebastian's mother documents the chat as proof of the cyberbullying.
2. Initial assessment: The headmaster and school social worker investigate the situation to determine the severity of the threat. They also assess the interpersonal relationship between Mika and Sebastian.





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3. Confrontation: Mika initially denies the severity of his actions but is confronted with the evidence. He acknowledges his actions but attempts to downplay them.
4. Renouncement of use of force: Mika agrees to refrain from using force and formally renounces it in a written deposition.
5. Providing support: Sebastian is offered a school escort to ensure his safety at school.

#### Regulating the Conflict:

1. Conflict analysis: The school team analyses the conflict on multiple levels, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, systemic and involving the parents.
2. Systemic brief intervention (SBI): A Systemic Brief Intervention is conducted within the class group to address systemic issues. This is a small workshop that lasts between 45 and 90 minutes where the students learn about cyberbullying and the negative consequences it carries with it.
3. Mediated apology: A mediated conversation between Mika and Sebastian takes place, where Mika apologises for his actions, acknowledges his mistake and expresses remorse. Sebastian accepts the apology.
4. Reparation and responsibility: Mika is given the option to make amends for his actions. He agrees to do twelve hours of voluntary work for the school custodian and presents a written and oral apology to his class, addressing his offence and its impact on class cohesion.
5. Parental involvement: All measures are discussed with the parents of both Mika and Sebastian.





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#### Outcome:

Over time, it is observed that there are no further altercations between Mika and Sebastian or cyberbullying incidents in the class chat. The students in the class also adhere to their voluntary commitment to uphold appropriate behaviour. This case highlights the importance of a coordinated and multifaceted approach to address cyberbullying incidents in schools.





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## **Case Study 2: *Unraveling Cyberbullying: A Case Study of Sarah's Struggle***

### Description:

Sarah is a 16-year-old high school student who enjoys spending time on social media platforms, particularly Instagram. She has a group of friends at school and is active in various online communities. One day, she notices a series of hurtful comments and messages on her Instagram posts and receives anonymous messages that state, "go away" and, "nobody likes you."

Sarah feels devastated and anxious due to the cyberbullying. She becomes increasingly withdrawn, loses interest in her hobbies and her grades started to decline. She confides in her best friend about the situation but is hesitant to share it with her parents or teachers out of fear of making the situation worse.

Upon investigation, it is discovered that some of Sarah's classmates are behind the cyberbullying. Their motivations include jealousy and personal conflicts within their peer group. They believe that targeting Sarah would make them appear more popular.

### Regulating the Conflict:

Sarah's best friend encourages her to speak to a trusted teacher about the cyberbullying. The teacher reports the incidents to the school administration, who promptly initiates an investigation. The school also provides Sarah with access to a counsellor to help her cope with the emotional impact of the cyberbullying. The school takes disciplinary actions against the perpetrators in accordance with its





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anti-bullying policies. Additionally, Sarah's parents consider legal action against the individuals responsible for the cyberbullying.

#### Conclusion:

This case highlights the legal and ethical complexities associated with addressing cyberbullying incidents. It shows that cyberbullying can have severe emotional and psychological consequences for the victims; that open communication between students, parents and teachers is essential for addressing cyberbullying; that schools must have clear policies to address and prevent cyberbullying and that addressing cyberbullying that happens in schools requires a collaborative effort involving the school, parents, teachers and students.





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### Case Study 3: *"Broken Steps: The Cost of Targeted Cyberbullying"*

#### Description:

Mark is in the ninth grade and likes dancing Ballet. Because of this, a group of his peers target him through cyberbullying. They send him threatening messages, spread false rumours about him (including rumours about his sexuality and his love life) and create a fake online profile in his name to damage his reputation. In order to cope with the constant bullying online, Mark stops dancing ballet and starts treating other people in school in a mean and disrespectful manner, thinking that if he acts intimidating, the bullying might stop. Another student, Betty, reports Mark to the teacher, because she is treated badly by him.

#### Intervention:

The teacher talks to Mark about his sudden change in behaviour, but Mark does not tell her anything about the cyberbullying and refuses to explain his actions. That is why the teacher organises a parent meeting to talk to Mark's parents. Mark's parents tell the teacher that Mark has told them about the cyberbullying, but that they do not know what to do because they are overwhelmed by the situation. In continuation, Mark receives disciplinary action due to his bad behaviour and the teacher organises a systemic brief intervention for the class, as the identities of the perpetrators are unknown.

#### Outcome:

The cyberbullying stops, but Mark never tries dancing ballet again due to the fear of being bullied for his hobbies once more.



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### Conclusion:

Cyberbullying can have a large impact on the mental health of the victim and even cause the victim to lose interest in things that they used to love. Furthermore, it is always important to listen to a student if their behaviour suddenly changes in a negative way. There might be a reason behind the change and the student might be hurting. Additionally, talking to the parents of the victim and/or the perpetrator might help to find a way to address the cyberbullying correctly





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#### **Case Study 4: Individual Disagreement "Digital Discord: The Ripple Effects of Online Conflict"**

##### Description:

During a class discussion about climate change, Lucy and Hannah start fighting about whether the climate change policies of their country are justified or not. Although the teacher tries to settle the dispute, Lucy and Hannah do not reach an agreement. When she arrives at home, Lucy posts a negative Tweet about Hannah and her opinion, calling her “dumb” and “ignorant”. About 50 000 people see the tweet and about 10 000 express their approval. More and more people also start calling Hannah names and harassing her on Twitter. On the next day at school, Hannah is socially isolated. She stops saying her opinion and does not participate in class any more.

##### Intervention:

After noticing that Hannah's participation in class is declining, her teacher talks to her and Hannah tells him what happened. He immediately tells Hannah's and Lucy's parents about the incident. He also writes Twitter, asking them to delete the tweets that bully Hannah, which they do. Then, he talks to Lucy. He explains the danger of cyberbullying to her and tries to make her understand Hannah's perspective.

##### Outcome:

After noticing that Lucy feels bad about what has happened, the teacher organises a meeting between Lucy, Hannah and him. He takes on the role of the mediator, which leads to Lucy and Hannah having a civilised talk about the incident. Although they still do not agree on the climate change policies of their





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country, they now both talk kindly to each other. Lucy apologises to Hannah about what she posted on Twitter. Lucy also posts an apology on Twitter and encourages everyone to treat each other with respect.

#### Conclusion:

This case shows how quickly a smaller conflict (such as a classroom debate) can escalate if it is transferred to the internet. It also shows how important empathy is and to treat other people with kindness.





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### **Case Study 5: Difficulties Finding Help "Silent Struggle: Confronting Cyberbullying and Mental Health"**

#### Description:

A group of students constantly cyberbullies their fellow student Jake. They send embarrassing pictures of him into the WhatsApp class chat, they project messages such as "Jake is dumb" on the white board in the classroom and they spread rumours about him over social media. He already talked to his teacher about it and, as a reaction, she gave the class a talk on cyberbullying. Nevertheless, the group of students does not stop. Now, Jake is hopeless. Additionally, the cyberbullying affects Jake's mental health to the point where he develops anxiety and depression, which makes completing every day tasks, such as going to school, eating and doing sport, very difficult for him.

#### Intervention:

One student in Jake's class wants to do something against the cyberbullying. He talks to Jake and motivates him to tell the school principal about the cyberbullying. The school principal immediately takes action, because the cyberbullying partially happened in school and because he sees how badly it has affected Jake's mental health. The school principal talks to the class personally and also has every student in Jake's class have a mandatory meeting with the school counsellor.

#### Outcome:

Although the cyberbullying gradually stops, the impact it had on Jake's mental health is severe. He goes to the psychotherapist regularly for the next years due to



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his depression and anxiety. It takes a long time until he can do every day activities again.

#### Conclusion:

This case shows that getting help is often times difficult, but that there will always be someone who is willing to help. It also shows how severe the mental health consequences can be for the victim.





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