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FROM INTERNET ADDICTION TO INTERNET CULTURE

According to the annual report of the news portal “We are social”, students in the USA spend eight and a half hours a day in the internet. The use of the internet has become the subject of numerous studies. The subject of this research is to reveal the tendencies of the internet use among my peers – students of the Belarus State University. To achieve this goal a questionnaire was designed with questions on the use of devices and its impact on students’ life.

The survey returned the following results: 37.7% of respondents believe they spend more than 8 hours a day using their devices. Moreover, the range of reported hobbies is rather poor. 80.6% of students consider music their hobby, most of them listen to it in the Internet. Students tend to concentrate either on studying or on hobbies, only some manage to combine these activities.

The survey measured the degree of digital addiction taking into account its symptoms. Then, these results were compared with the students’ readiness not to use their phones. Surprisingly, students with digital addiction believe they are not addicted. Those who reported the widest range of symptoms (ranging from mild to severe addiction) chose the option that they would try to give up the phone.

Respondents who are convinced that they can easily refuse the phone have moderate symptoms of the addiction. Those who are confident they are unable to live without devices, experience the least degree of addiction. These results are confirmed by the less amount of time spent on gadgets (70% of those who chose “less than 12 hours” are ‘yes’ or ‘would try’ respondents). These last group of people are still aware of why and wherefore they use devices, they understand their importance. The majority of students who have severe symptoms of the digital addiction try to hide their emotional attachment to the internet, even from themselves.

Every student has conscious physical and mental symptoms and side effects of the digital addiction disorder. According to the study, each respondent observed signs of varying severity of such addiction. These symptoms are evenly distributed and each of them appears on average in 53.36% of answers. Three out of four students recognize their dependence on the digital environment. The most common symptoms are concentration difficulty, inattention (61,3% and 59,7% respectively), intractability in real life (63,9%).

To summarize, students spend almost a third of their time on devices, they lack replacement in the form of hobbies. All respondents can be described as having this or that degree of addiction. The only solution to this problem is mindfulness and reasonable use of the internet – as a useful, informative and truly entertaining source of data.