



TOO MUCH TECH

An addiction to something is an illness where a person struggles to cope without something. Many children and young adults are now struggling with addiction to their phones or the Internet. This is a serious problem that is impacting lives around the world, but what is too much tech?

Like many things in life, the Internet and mobile devices aren't good or bad. They can be used for good things, and they can be used for bad purposes. They can benefit your life, or they can make it worse; it all depends on how they are used. When somebody gets angry or struggles to cope without their device, then that is a sign of a problem. It can put a strain on their relationships and make them very unhappy. If you struggle if your device is taken away or you can't access it, then it is important to ask an adult for help.

In a recent study by Common Sense Media, 50% of teenagers said that they felt addicted to their devices. 59% of parents agreed that their own children struggled to cope without them. How people use their devices is different across the world. A child in America opens a social media app roughly 17 times a day, whereas one in Mexico opens one 40 times a day. The apps that children use vary by location as well.

Perhaps one of the most worrying statistics was that 32% of children in the same study said that they argued on a daily basis with people about how they used their devices.

It isn't just mobile phones that can become addictive. Computer consoles are also having an impact on people around the world. 47% of teenage boys admit that they spend more time on their computer consoles than they would like to. Only 11% of teenage girls felt the same way. However, 48% of teenage girls said that they are online on their phones almost constantly, compared to 43% of boys.

Childhood addiction to gaming is growing around the world. It is a particularly large problem in countries like Singapore and Hong Kong. It has been estimated that 10% of children in Singapore and 14% in Hong Kong are addicted to gaming. In 2019, the National Centre



for Gaming Addiction was opened in the UK to deal with the growing problem. As of March 2023, 745 had sought help through the centre. Most of those patients were between the ages of 13 and 17.

Addiction to devices is on the rise around the world and can destroy people's lives. It's impossible to say how much is too much; it's much better to look at the impact. If you are using a device and are happy to put it down and walk away, then you are probably fine. If you hate the idea of being without your device or console and get angry when you can't be on it, then talking to an adult is a good way to start getting help.

RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. How many teenagers feel addicted to their device according to Common Sense Media?
2. In which country do people use social media apps more, the USA or Mexico?
3. When was the National Centre for Gaming Addiction opened?
4. How old are most of its patients?
5. What should you do if you feel like you are struggling with using your devices too much?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

- I** Why might it be better to look at the impact of your device usage rather than how much you are using it?
- P** Why do you think most people who attend the National Centre for Gaming Addiction are the age that they are?
- I** What does it say about gaming addiction that there needs to be a National Centre for it?
- V** What does the word "constantly" tell you about how often somebody uses a device?
- I** Why is it a bad thing that children are arguing with people about how much they use their phone?