

## PROBLEM OF COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RISKS TO CHILDREN ON THE INTERNET

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In the article it is considered the necessity of comprehensive study of psychological risks to children on the Internet. The authors identify the following risks of virtual environments that are dangerous for the coming generation: risks to personal safety; risks of social and personal deformations; risks of disorders of psychological children health; risks of educational-cognitive activity distortion etc. There are proposed such directions of the problem solution such as prevention and early detection of children psychological distress signs due to the negative impacts of the virtual space, parents' education about the potential psychological risks of the Internet space and their instructing about technologies of maintenance of school children Internet safety, formation of the future teachers and psychologists preparedness to the competent use of Internet resources.

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The Internet has become an indispensable part of modern human life. The first child's knowledge of a computer currently tends to occur in the preschool or early school age. At the same time parents being experienced Internet users are often incompetent in terms of the child encounter with web opportunities opening for the children audience. Having bought a computer game or a CD, they often leave the child alone with the problem of self-study of the Internet resources' content and functionality; they keep from the joint and active exploration of the Internet without fully realizing how dangerous the lonely unsupervised "journey" of a child across the Network expanses can be.

Children who are often more confident Web users rather than adults around them due to some the age and psychological peculiarities (naivety, trustfulness, curiosity, the inability to predict the coming of negative consequences, lack of life experience, etc.), can easily become victims of risks which the Internet carries. One of such risks is the accessibility of information of dubious moral content distorting the teen formation of ideas about gender relations and moral norms. Sources of the danger are sites with pornographic content, possibility of anonymous purchase of goods in online shops "sex shop"; widespread web-resources that provide information about the intimate services in various cities of Russia. Access to such sites is formally limited for under-age persons; however, it is impossible to monitor the implementation of this condition. Moreover, widespread virtual communication allows individuals with paedophilic inclinations quickly to find potential "victims" in social networks and carry out with impunity activities that threaten mental health and psychological well-being of children and adolescents. The Internet is a potential escalator of younger generation neurotization, a source of various kinds of addictions and deviances. This type of threat carries unlimited access to online games including gambling. Network games that are so popular now among young people, abound in violence, develop ha-

tred, sadism and pursuit of death and provoke the development of such negative mental phenomena such as game and Internet addiction, gadget mania. Information about drugs, traumatic games is in the open access. The reality of the modern Internet is advocating suicidal behavior sites. Adults who admit unsupervised children's surfing the Net are not able to protect them both from the actions of intruders and from contact with information that is not intended for children's perception.

It is necessary to consider the fact that schoolchild interaction with the Internet influences the nature of learning activities. In this context, the risks are caused by the possibility of unimpeded obtaining ready results of educational activity via the Net – answers to problems, essays and compositions, etc., as well as access to information that requires remembering – dictionaries, translation software, encyclopedias, etc. Plagiarism instead of one's own intellectual creative efforts and obtaining information on the Internet instead of remembering considerably reduce the quality of training activities, which in its turn leads to a decrease in indices of mental development of schoolchildren. Controlling function of teachers and parents in relation to the inadequate use of web-resources by a schoolchild and the use of Antiplagiat systems allow to correct learning outcomes in each individual case. However, there are currently no technologies allowing implementing the prevention of educational activity deformations under conditions of school training informatization.

Thus, along with the positive possibilities, the virtual environment contains many psychological risks that could adversely affect the mental, psychological, physical health and social well-being of users, cause irreversible adverse effects in personal and social development of the younger generation, determine a number of socially significant diseases such as Internet addiction, hikikomori, autism, mental deprivation, reduced mental development, etc. The impact of the Internet on the immature personality of preschool and primary school age

children is particularly dangerous when a child's first encounter with a computer comes.

Nowadays in science and technology various parental control programs are developed and implemented, however, none of the currently existing measures provides continuous monitoring of the child's pastime on the Internet. We believe that an alternative as well as a complement to existing programs should be the study of psychological risks of virtual environment and the development of measures to prevent their occurrence.

Analysis of the theoretical sources on the research subject allows us to speak of a special relevance at the present time of such trends in solving young users' security problems in the Internet environment as the problem of early detection, prevention of psychological risks and the prevention of negative psychological consequences of the children interactions with the Internet, the problem of competence formation in this sphere at persons responsible for the psychological well-being of children (parents, teachers, psychologists). Significance of the study is determined by insufficient development of issues relating to the classification of modern psychological risks of the virtual environment; the technology for early detection of the facts of negative psychological consequences of the child's interaction with the Internet; development of scientific and methodological support to form preparedness of the future teachers, psychologists and parents to share the interaction in the field of the Internet safety of children.

The novelty of our work consists in a comprehensive approach to the study of psychological risks that threaten the safety of children on the Internet. Comprehensive study presupposes examination of the phenomenon from different angles, involvement of experts from various fields, use of mutually supportive methods. It is planned development of classification of psychological risks to children in cyberspace, systematization of ideas about the negative psychological effects and the conditions caused by the impact of the Web, content model development of competence of persons responsible for the psychological well-being of children in the interaction with the Internet, improvement of vocational training of higher pedagogical educational institutions students taking into account the processes of informatization of modern society.

Analysis of the current state of knowledge of the problem suggests that some aspects of human interaction with the Internet are the subject of a number of authors. By now specific areas of research related to this topic have been formed. Internet addiction problem are well studied: in the works of scholars and practitioners there are discussed causes, mechanisms of formation, peculiarities of impact on the personality, measures of prevention, correction and treatment of gambling addiction, Internet addiction, and relatively

recently emerged form of addiction – addiction to the means of access to the Internet and games (gadget mania) (A.V. Gogoleva, M.S. Ivanov, A.V. Kotlyarov, B.R. Mandel' and others). Specialized literature reflects issues of Internet communication: features and effects of virtual communication are studied. A large number of studies is devoted to the negative phenomena of the Internet communication: aggressive forms of behavior via the Net are studied (such as cyberbullying, trolling, mobbing); the phenomenon of the real aspects of social interaction by virtual counterparts replacement is investigated. The problem of formation of ethical behavior among users in the network – cyberethics, is formulated and studied (K. Gamelink, A.I. Naftul'yev, V.M. Ruf, G.T. Tavani, U. Shvartau and others). A number of studies are devoted to the issues of Internet security of users (Yu.I. Bogatyryova, S.V. Pazukhina, A.N. Privalov, etc.) [1].

In this connection, it should be emphasized that today the concept of Internet security is associated not only with the protection of personal information against unauthorized access, but also with the protection of the personality against the potential risks related to the presence in the network causing socially significant diseases (Yu. D. Babaeva, A.Ye. Voyskunsky, G.V. Grachev, V.P. Solomin, O.V. Shatrova, etc.). In the scientific researches of recent years such issues are discussed as ones concerning the impact of information technology on the child's personality formation and development that takes place in the context of global informatization; the peculiarities of moral norms formation and the specifics of the intellectual sphere development are investigated, the phenomenon of hacking and software piracy is studied; another aspect of the research is the psychological effects associated with the spread of users' personal information via the Internet, mass social phenomena determined by the impact of the Internet on the consciousness of the rising generation (D. Bell, O.V. Doronina, G.N. Mustaf'yeva, O.V. Smyslova, S.V. Pazukhina, etc.) [2]. The data of theoretical and empirical researches form the basis focused on the comprehensive study of various aspects of human interaction with the information environment.

At the same time, our analysis of the scientific literature shows that there is still no common approach to the classification of the negative effects of the Internet impact on the psychological, mental and social well-being of the individual. Existing methodological developments in the field of psychological safety of children and adolescents in the interaction with the Internet at this stage do not allow solving the problem raised in our work in full as they are mainly focused on the prevention and elimination of Internet addictions and the negative effects of the Internet communication. There is no formed idea of the interrelated conditions complex of children Internet security, of crite-

ria, content and structure of the competence of those responsible for the safety of children when they are online. There is no holistic model of the Internet competence formation of future teachers and psychologists at the training stage at the University in the field of ensuring psychological Internet safety of children. All this testifies the relevance of our research in the chosen area.

At present we distinguish the following groups of risks of the virtual environment: risks to personal safety; risks of social and personal deformations; risks of infringement of psychological children's health; risks of educational and cognitive activity distortion, etc.

Among the psychological risks of the virtual environment which have a serious impact on the psyche of the child and which are planned to study deeper in the framework of our research, we single out the following:

1) potential risk of forming of the children Internet addiction and other neurotic disorders as a result of pathological computer interest;

2) potential risk of becoming a victim of the negative effects of the Internet communication (cyberbullying, trolling, sexual harassment, fraud, user's personal information getting into the Net, etc.);

3) risks of infringement of psychological well-being of children as a result of the access to Internet resources that contain information of a sexual nature, demonstrate violence, incline to suicide and form a distorted view of properties of the body, etc.;

4) risks associated with the negative impact of the Internet on the process of learning activities, etc.

We plan to explore other influences of the virtual space that have a negative impact on the human psyche on an unconscious level, to assess the number of sites in order to identify these negative factors. It is supposed to create a classification built on the basis of the specific psychological risks influence of the Internet environment on social, personal and physical development of schoolchildren, their psychological, mental and physical health.

A pilot survey of groups of schoolchildren aged 8 to 16 years we conducted showed that one in four of them daily spends on the computer more than three hours a day. During the weekend the percentage of children replacing leisure activities by the Internet increases significantly and reaches 45%. Over the past five years the number of students working on the computer for at least three hours a day has quadrupled (from 6 to 24%). More than 80% of the interviewed students indicated that they have access to the Internet at any desired time without any restrictions from parents. About 30% of students consider the virtual world as a way of escaping from problems. Here they find a way out for such negative emotions and feelings as anger, rage, hatred, guilt, feelings of

loneliness, hopelessness, stress, depression, etc. About 10% of children during the anonymous survey confessed that they have been attacked by pedophiles in chat rooms, social networks, have received letters with threats and invitations to sexual contacts by e-mail. It is established that at the moment the first encounter with pornographic information usually happens at the age of 11 years. 90% of children watch pornographic films while doing their homework. 80% of students admit that they have repeatedly observed scenes of sexual violence on the Internet.

One in six schoolchildren shows signs of Internet addiction. About 5% of students have symptoms of addiction to computer games. One in three spends more time on the Internet than it is originally planned. Losing control of the time they stay in the virtual space, students resort to lies in relationships with close people, family members in order to hide the amount of time they spend on the computer. Becoming Internet-dependent, children begin to consider the virtual world as an important part of their lives and they run the danger of narrowing, distortion of normal relationships with friends, family and reducing of the importance of study and other activities, etc.

According to our survey, more than 30% of parents don't stay with their children when those spend their time on the computer without limiting their use of the Internet, and don't monitor the time of their staying on the Internet. Only one tenth of parents take rather strict position in this matter. Such parents are interested in what their children do on the Internet, which sites are visited, whom they communicate with; the parents use special supervisory programs.

We suppose that pedagogs and psychologists of a new generation should play the leading role in forming children skills of safe using on the Net, parents educating on potential psychological risks of the cyberspace and their training to technologies of ensuring Internet safety of schoolchildren. In this regard, we plan to conduct a study on the future teachers and psychologists preparedness to such activities, to develop formative program built on the basis of the use of interactive practical works, psychological workshops, trainings of parental competence in the field of early signs of psychological distress of children associated with the negative effects of the virtual space as well as to ensure their Internet security and which involves the formation of a competent use of network resources.

#### References

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