

Internet leaves users depressed

Web time isn't emotionally fulfilling, study shows

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The more hours people spend on the Internet, the more depressed, stressed and lonely they feel, according to a groundbreaking study that surprised its authors.

Internet use had the same effect even for people who spent most of their time in such social activities as chat rooms or exchanging e-mail, said the study headed by Robert Kraut, a social psychology professor at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

Sociable Internet users ended up feeling just as isolated as users who spent more time crawling the Web for information, Kraut said Sunday.

One reason for the negative effect may have been that using the Internet left less time for the deeper relationships of friends and family, Kraut suggested.

"People are substituting weaker social ties for stronger ones," he said. "They're substituting conversations on narrower topics with strangers for conversations with people who are connected to their life."

It was the first study to examine the emotional impact of people's Internet use over time, Kraut said.

The findings contradicted the researchers' expectation that Internet use would foster social contact, especially through e-mail and chat rooms.

Kraut and his colleagues followed 93 Pittsburgh-area families for two

years. The families were given computers, phone lines and use of the Internet for free, in return for agreeing to fill out occasional questionnaires.

The true-false questionnaires included such statements as "I can't find companionship when I want it," "I felt that everything I did was an effort," and "I felt I could not shake off the blues, even with help from my family and friends."

The number of hours they spent on line were recorded electronically.

Participants' levels of depression and loneliness were measured at the start of the study. At the end of the two years, researchers found they could predict changes in an individual's emotional state according to the number of hours spent on the Internet.

The reverse was not true. "Depression and loneliness doesn't predict subsequent use of the Internet," Kraut said.

The \$1.5 million study was funded by the National Science Foundation, the Markle Foundation and 13 computer, software and communications companies, including AT&T Research, Bell Atlantic, the U.S. Postal Service, Apple Computer, Hewlett Packard and Intel. It is to be published this week in *The American Psychologist*, the monthly journal of the American Psychological Association.

One study participant, 17-year-

old Andrea Rubinsky of Pittsburgh, said she didn't feel any worse for her Internet use, although her Internet use has dropped since the study began. She started out using it 10 to 15 hours per week but now averages about three hours, she said.

"It just also might be I have more things to do now," Andrea said.

She made no lasting friends through the chat rooms, she said, but does use e-mail to keep up with friends she has met in person.

Her father, Peter, also didn't feel he ever neglected personal relationships to spend time online.

"I would say there's a conflict with other things that needed to get done. The grass didn't get mowed sometimes, and the car didn't get washed," Rubinsky said.

Researchers will continue the study so they can examine the mechanisms that seem to produce emotional effects and learn how computer use compares with television use.

Other scientists told *The New York Times* that the research may start a debate over how the Internet should be shaped.

Christine Riley, a psychologist at Oregon-based Intel, told the *Times* the research results surprised her but that more study was needed.

Tora Bikson, a senior scientist at Rand, the research institution, said the study was carefully done and not easily ignored.

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Global issues take the stage

Dorothy "Dot" Ridings will set the foundation for the 1998-99 E.N. Thompson lectures at UNL.

Ridings, the president and chief executive officer of the Council of Foundations, will kick off the E.N. Thompson Forum of World Issues lecture series Sept. 9 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts with her lecture, "As the World Turns: Global Giving Goes Center Stage."

The lecture will begin at 3:30 p.m. and will be available via satellite at sites throughout the state.

Ridings will describe how foundations have increased greatly around the world in the past decade. In 1996, foundations contributed \$14 billion in the United States alone, she said, but with fewer government resources available, foundations and other non-governmental organizations will have to do more.

Record stock market growth and an expected international transfer of more than \$10 trillion over the next 40

years leads Ridings to believe organized philanthropy will be encouraged even more.

Her lecture is the first of five in this year's series. The others are:

■ Oct. 13: Edward O. Wilson, Pellegrino University professor and curator in entomology at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Havarar University, "Conscience: the Unity of Knowledge."

■ Nov. 12: Robert K. Hitchcock, chairman and associate professor of anthropology at NU, "Africa: Environmental Conservation, Development and Human Rights."

■ March 9: Anthony Lake, former national security adviser to President Clinton, "Superpower or Supercop: Dangers and Opportunities in the Post Cold War Era."

■ April 14: Peter Arnett, Pulitzer Prize-winning CNN international correspondent, "Live for the Battlefield: From Vietnam to Baghdad to Bosnia."

Serial killer expert to speak

The founder of the FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program will share his expertise on serial killers, sexual violence and the criminal mind on Thursday.

A part of the Nebraska Wesleyan lecture series, Robert Ressler's presentation will be in the O'Donnell Auditorium, 50th Street and

Huntington Avenue, at 1 p.m. It's free and open to the public.

Ressler served with the FBI from 1970 to 1990 and has investigated and interviewed serial killers including Jeffrey Dahmer, Charles Manson, John Wayne Gacy, Ted Bundy and David Berkowitz.

Particle lecture to be given

The UNL Department of Physics and Astronomy will present a lecture by Steven L. Guberman on Thursday called, "What Happens When a Molecule Captures an Electron."

Guberman is with the Institute for Scientific Research in Lexington, Mass. He will speak at 4 p.m. in the Brace Laboratory auditorium, Room 211. Refreshments will served at 3:30 in Room 201.

Speaker to discuss proteins

Carl Frieden will be a guest of the UNL chemistry department on Friday to give his lecture, "The Search for Intermediates in the Protein Folding Process."

Frieden is a professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

He will talk at 3:30 p.m. in Hamilton Hall, Room 110.

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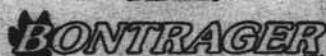
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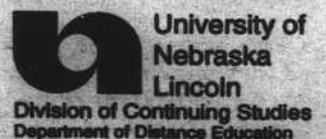
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