



# Alcohol and Substance Abuse Newsletter

Internet Intensive

Issue 3  
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## The Addicting World of Massive Multiplayer Online Games By Avi Zacherman

Hello, my name is Avi Zacherman, and I am a recovering World of Warcraft addict. I blew an entire semester not for drugs, or for alcohol, but striving to reach some mythical number 60. And I have sworn to myself, I will never go back to that.

Many times when we think of addiction, we only in terms of substances such as nicotine or alcohol. But online games are quite addictive as well. A recent study done by the International Gaming Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University determined that 12% of MMO gamers exhibit signs of clinical addiction, such as neglect of other activities or even withdrawal symptoms. Professor Mark Griffiths, the director of the unit stated that the problem lies with the fact that because there is no climax to the game, there is no satisfaction derived

***“A recent study done by the International Gaming Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University determined that 12% of MMO gamers exhibit signs of clinical addiction”***

for beating it. This leaves gamers wrapped up in playing the story, always trying to get to what comes next. Online Game addiction is such a rising problem, that a substance abuse clinic in Amsterdam has opened up to treat MMO addicts. These are also a common sights in some

parts of Asia.

As someone who knows what it means to be addicted to one of these games, I can tell you that pulling away was no small task. I became content to slip into my world, as an escape from terrible grades and overworking myself in school. All the while I retreated more and more into World of Warcraft, I neglected my schoolwork further and so the grades kept getting worse and worse. And as the grades got worse and worse, I slipped deeper and

deeper into the game. It was a terrifying cycle, one that I finally manage to break free of.

Games are not necessarily evil, when played in moderation. But it is when we become sucked into them that they are so threatening to our college career. College students generally do not have the time to spend 10 hours a day killing wolves on some virtual mountain trying to skin them for pelts. We have homework and studying to do.

So next time you or your friend decides to login to kill some orcs, remember to get your primary responsibilities done first. We are here to learn, not play, and whether that means the bar or the local virtual guild house, take the time to study.

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## The Alcohol & Substance Abuse Task Force

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## Today's Hottest Game By Richie Kenney

Welcome to online gambling, most notably online poker. In the past few years the world of poker has risen steadily in popularity; some might attribute this to ESPN's airing of the World Series of Poker virtually every few hours, even showing it live from Las Vegas at certain times. The World Series of Poker presented the perfect opportunity for the poker websites to commercialize their product. Bodog, Paradise Poker, Party Poker, Poker Stars, etc. all had non-stop commercials running during the airing of the World Series of Poker, with the occasional public service announcement about the addictions that can result. The message was so strong in 2003 that the sites had sparked hundreds of others to form. There are millions of online poker players world wide, most playing for fun, but there are a lot out there that play consistently and are addicted to the computer screen.

It is average for a tournament round of poker to last a couple of hours, but should someone be playing three or four tournaments a day? When does it become a problem? In 2005 revenues from online poker were estimated at \$200 million per month. With the people playing online ranging from the traditional college student, to the lawyer looking for a way to spend some extra money, to the professional

player, to the gambling addict who spent his whole pay check and lost it all, online gambling is a serious problem. It is incredibly easy to join one of the sites, all one needs is a credit card, a checking account, and an email address. With minimum starting balances of \$20, virtually anyone can join, adding money to the account whenever they wish.

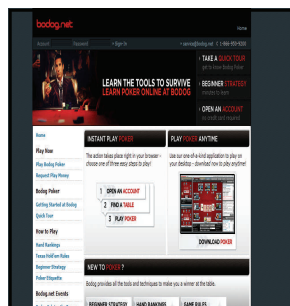
What's the problem with this you ask? When you gamble with money you do not have, like maxing out a credit card, it causes financial stress, which typically causes one to add more money in order to try and win back the money that was lost. It seems like common sense that it is not such a good idea to gamble the grocery

money away. And if you are a college student, ruining your credit at age 21 is not something you want to do. Sure, the majority of people can handle it and set limits, but just like any other addiction, such as alcohol or drugs, gambling is a very serious one causing families to separate, and significant financial issues.

Only a slim percentage of online players actually succeed in winning some money. We have all heard of the person who has won over \$10,000 playing online, one in

a million chance. The likelihood of you being that person is very slim, and if it is you, congratulations, but quit while you are ahead. Online gambling is not something to get involved with because it can take over your life. It is something that can be played anywhere, because the casino is not needed anymore, and what's the point of paying attention in class or even going to class, when you could be playing online. Online poker is an addiction so simple that people do not look at it as an addiction but as a leisure activity, which is not the case. Instead of playing online, have a weekly low stakes game with your friends, \$2 buy-ins is all you need to have fun, and still win something. The glory of it is that the money gets sloshed between your friends, with everyone winning once in a while.

If you know someone who you think has a problem with online gambling there are plenty of resources that provide help. One such resource is Gambler's Anonymous, which has helped millions of people with their program. The twelve step program helps to rid the body of the need to gamble in all fashions, using friends, family, as well as other addicts to aid on the road of recovery. Contact information can be found online by searching for "Gambler's Anonymous" on any search engine.



Bodog.net is one of hundreds of online poker websites out there.

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## Instant Messengers- Where Does the Time Go?

By Bri Lewis

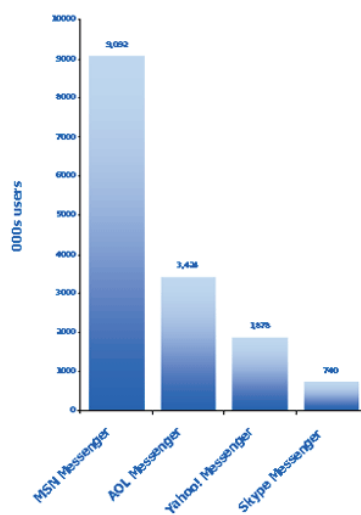
“I glanced over at my clock. It brightly displays eight o’clock. I sign online and begin talking to my friends. Just as the conversations start to die down, I look over at my clock again. Two in the morning!! I cannot believe where all of the time has gone.” Has this ever happened to you? Well, it has to me and many other students and adults across the country.

Instant Messenger programs are taking the nation by storm and absorbing time faster than anyone can believe. There are four big instant messenger programs. These are America Online, MSN, Yahoo!, and ICQ. Many other companies are beginning to jump on the instant messenger bandwagon. These include Google and Skype. The most popular instant messenger is promoted by America Online and is more commonly called AIM. However, you can see in the graph provided that AIM is not the most commonly used instant messaging system. The graph shows the top four used instant messaging programs. Although the number at the top of each column is labeled in thousands, the key to the left of the table shows that the numbers truly represent millions of people. (ex. MSN Messenger 9,902 users = 9,902,000 users)

Students are becoming exposed to instant messengers at a very early age. Most know what

they are or have used them by then time they are in middle school. Students are beginning to show signs of addiction by the time they reach high school. Parental knowledge and control limit the use of these programs. It is the parents and guardians responsibility to show a strong influence of the importance of completion of homework assignments. “According to a study conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project in 2001, 13 million teenagers in the United States now use instant messenger to contact friends in real-time.” The attraction for students is the ease of sending an instant message over picking up the phone or sending an e-mail.

Instant messenger programs have created an entirely new set of problems for college students.



Many college students have developed a social disorder called Internet Addiction Disorder. Instant messenger is a free program just waiting to be downloaded onto any computer system; therefore, the ease of contacting friends without a bill attached is extremely intriguing. Kimberly Young established the Center for On-Line Addiction, in Bradford, Pa. Young believes that “college

students are vulnerable to internet addiction disorder because of many factors, including difficulty adapting to life away from home and underlying psychological problems, such as depression or social anxiety.”

Finally, it has been discovered that instant messenger is a popular item used in the workplace. Instant messenger was first promoted throughout many workplaces because many employees did not answer their phones due to constant calls from sales people or the like. It is easier to simply send an instant message requesting a copy or to set up a meeting. However, new problems are arising. Nothing is stopping employees from adding the names of their friends to their Buddy Lists. It is virtually impossible for a manager to know what you are doing on your computer because typing on instant messenger sounds exactly the same as typing a report or a memo.

Instant messaging programs are causing more harm than good throughout our nation. Students are losing track of time and not completing assignments because they feel instant messaging is easier than calling, however it is easy to get wrapped up in a conversation that is off topic from what you really wanted to know. Limiting the use of these programs will help time management skills and allow for more through completion of assignments both in school and in the workplace.



## Alcohol Case Study Winner By the University of Arizona

Thursday nights at the University of Arizona are Thirsty Thursdays!!! However this is not your typical Thirsty Thursday on a typical college campus.

Residence Hall

Association

meetings are held every Thursday at 5pm at the Memorial Student Union. Meetings typically last anywhere between 45 to 90 minutes and can range from open discussions of what the individual

halls would like to see in the next coming months to presentations from other campus organizations about important campus happenings. After the meetings, the entire Executive Board, as well as many of the hall council members, go to one of the restaurants in the Memorial Student Union to have dinner.

The Executive Board began to notice that after the meetings and dinner residents would go out and drink, many saying that they were only doing this because there was nothing else to do. After discussing this issue as an Executive Board it was decided to hold a series of events and programs to help residents have other social options on Thursday nights besides for drinking.

On the University of Arizona campus the TV show Grey's Anatomy is very popular.

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Since this show comes on every Thursday the Executive Board decided to use its popularity to help combat the drinking problem. The Executive Board asked for halls to volunteer to host a Grey's Anatomy program on a rotating weekly basis. RHA supplies all of the necessary materials and the hall simply supplies the space for the program. Utilizing one of the large screens and projectors that RHA owns,

Grey's Anatomy is projected for all to enjoy. Snacks, such as popcorn, cotton candy, chips, and soda and juice are provided for everyone's snacking enjoyment by the RHA Executive Board. If the hosting hall wishes to provide more snacks they are more than welcome to but not required. This allows all of the halls on campus, regardless of size of budget, to have the opportunity to host this weekly program.

After Grey's Anatomy is over, the screen and projector are taken down and games are busted out!!! These games can vary from week to week and include things such as Trivial Pursuit or Monopoly or even craft projects. This gives residents the opportunity to meet new people and socialize with friends in a safe, alcohol free environment, while providing entertainment and stress busting.

Thirsty Thursdays allows residents on campus a consistent, weekly program to look forward to. Starting the program and the evening off with the weekly RHA General Body meeting and dinner offers a consistent and reliable start to Thirsty Thursdays. By changing location of the Grey's Anatomy aspect of the program every week it keeps residents excited and mixes up the program, making it different every week. Thirsty Thursdays also gives the individual halls an opportunity to work closely with the RHA Executive Board and to highlight their hall community to the other residents on campus. The name of the program grabs resident's attention and encourages them to come out to the program. Residents know that they can rely on RHA to provide them with something to do every Thursday.

While the RHA Executive Board recognizes that completely eradicating drinking on a college campus is almost impossible, at least on the University of Arizona campus, providing a safe and fun alternative to drinking is very important and a top priority for RHA. Thirsty Thursdays offers this alternative and is a great way to increase the services that RHA provides to the residents at the University of Arizona.



## NACURH Mission Statement

NACURH is the leading national organization advocating for the interests and welfare of residence hall students, while also providing opportunities for their personal growth and development. It is an organization of students committed to developing leadership, honoring diversity, recognizing achievement, as well as stimulating engagement and involvement among students who reside in college and university residence halls. Through regional and national programs and services, NACURH provides leadership opportunities for students, shares residence hall programming resources and best practices, and coordinates activities with appropriate professional associations and business partners.

The NACURH Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force is one of four issue based task forces established by the NACURH National Board of Directors. The mission of the task force is to provide a monthly newsletter (which you are currently reading), write articles for the NACURH Link, create national case studies and implement a half-day program at NACURH 07.

The Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force currently consists of three members:

- Avi Zacherman, Task Force Chair - Associate Director of Administration and Finance for the NEACURH Region
- Richie Kenney - Vice President of Administration and Finance for the University of Massachusetts—Amherst Residential Leadership Association
- Bri Lewis - NCC for the Ithaca College Residence Hall Association and NEACURH 2007 Regional Conference Chair

If you are interested in contributing, e-mail [adafnsacurh@gmail.com](mailto:adafnsacurh@gmail.com)

**NACURH 2007 Is Just Five Months AWAY!!! Keep Your Eyes Peeled for More Information Regarding Half-Day Programs Put On by the Task Forces.**



## One Small Step

University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh

June 1st—June 4th, 2007

<http://www.mio.uwosh.edu/nacurh/>