

# Youth School of Social Media Safety Leaders

Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices

Strategic partnerships in the youth sector

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# ONLINE GAME ADDICTION

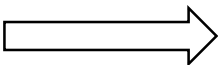


# DEFINATION OF ONLINE GAME ADDICTION

**Game addiction** is a discomfort caused by unhealthy gaming with computers or mobile devices for an extended period of time. People who suffer from this inconvenience tend to isolate themselves from other people and may spend all their time playing games, neglecting their important responsibilities.



# WHO IS ADDICTED TO ONLINE GAMING?

**TEENS AND CHILDREN**  **AUTOCONTROL**

 **ENVIRONMENT**

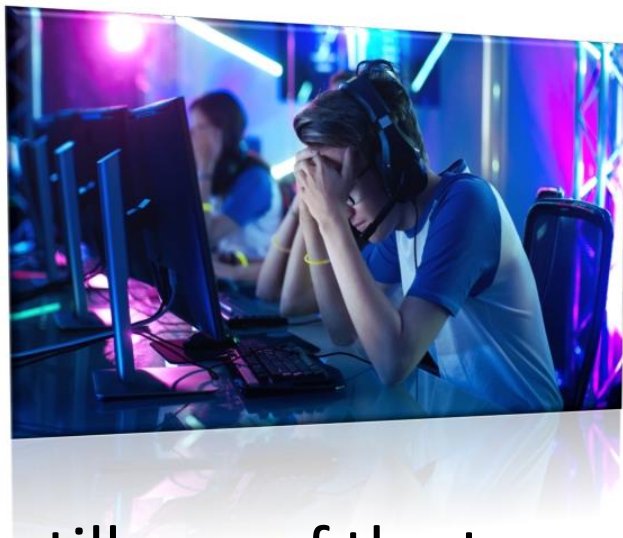
**ADULTS**  **AVOIDING FROM RESPONSIBILITIES**

 **ENVIRONMENT**

- ➔ Providing a continuous loop because some games have no end
- ➔ Social connections in games to interact with other games
- ➔ Character level system and reward system
- ➔ Worldwide (international)
- ➔ Continuous self-updating of games
- ➔ Earning money from games
- ➔ Artificial feelings formed
- ➔ Ease of access (mobile)



## 1. AN INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE GAMING



Online gaming is hugely popular with children and young people. Annual research conducted by OFCOM shows that gaming is still one of the top activities enjoyed by 5-16 year olds online, with many of them gaming via mobile devices and going online using their games console.

## 2. ONLINE GAMING; HOW AND WHERE TO PLAY

There are many ways for users to play games online. This includes free games found on the internet, games on smartphones, tablets and handheld consoles, as well as downloadable and boxed games on PCs and consoles such as the PlayStation, Nintendo Wii or Xbox. Here are some of the most common devices on which online games are played.



## CONSOLES

These games are played on home entertainment consoles designed to work with a TV. Consoles are capable of connecting to the internet via a home network just like other devices. This allows users to purchase and download games, purchase additional content for games (eg extra levels, characters, features) as well as playing online, although a subscription may be required to use a particular gaming network. The main manufacturers (Nintendo, Sony and Microsoft) include parental controls in their consoles that are linked to age ratings systems.





## MOBILE APP GAMES



Mobile games can be free or chargeable and are downloadable through app stores like Google Play or Apple App Store. There may be costs associated with mobile gaming as within some games, even free ones, there are opportunities to purchase added functionality such as 'in-app' purchases. However, these functions can be deactivated, either through settings on a device or via settings on an account used to access the app store.

## HANDHELD GAMES

Handheld games are played on small portable consoles. As with other devices, handheld games are also internet enabled. This allows gamers to download games, purchase additional content, get new features and play and chat to other gamers.



## WEB GAMES

Some games are accessed through unique websites hosting hundreds of different games. Many of these games are free of charge online, although some may have paid-for components. These sites have become hugely popular with many young people as they often offer a creative element which allows a user to create their own games.



## PC GAMES

These games are played on a computer the same way as other software programmes. There are also a large number of ‘free games’ available to download and play that offer limited features with an option to buy extra features or unlock all features via a monthly subscription. Many PC games make use of the internet, and many ‘Massively Multiplayer Online’ (MMO) games, where gamers interact together in virtual spaces, are PC games.



## AUGMENTED REALITY (AR)

This is an element of games where a live view of the real-world environment is altered to include moveable graphics allowing players to experience digital game play in the real world. It is usually achieved by using the camera on a mobile device and can be seen in games like Pokémon Go where Pokémon appear to be actually stood in front of you.



## VIRTUAL REALITY(VR)



This is immersive wearable technology which creates environments and allows you to explore them as if you are actually there. Experiences can vary but most contain sensors which allow you to mimic your movements in the virtual world. This is usually achieved through wearing headsets, which range in terms of price and experience.

Inexpensive cardboard structures have also been developed which allow you to turn your smart phone into a VR headset by downloading an app. Manufacturers are currently recommending that under 12s are to be supervised by an adult when using a VR headset.

### 3. ONLINE GAMING, THE RISKS

Internet safety advice is directly applicable to the games environment because risks of Content, Contact, Conduct and Commercialism also apply to games.



CONTENT

Inappropriate  
material is online.  
available to  
children





## CONTACT

Potential contact from someone online who may wish to bully or abuse them.



## CONDUCT

Children may be at risk because of their own and others' online behaviour, such as the personal information they make public.



## COMMERCIALISM

Young people's privacy can be invaded by aggressive advertising and marketing schemes.



## 4. ONLINE GAMING, TOP-TIPS

It may seem daunting, but one of the best things you can do is to engage with the gaming environment and begin to understand what makes it so attractive to young people as well as the types of activities that they enjoy! If you're not sure what they are, ask them to show you how they play and have a go yourself.



# KEYS FOR PROTECTION



## #KEYS 1:

Read game reviews to understand more about potential risks or difficulties other players have experienced and content they have seen.



## #KEYS 2:

Some games may offer children the chance to chat with other players by voice and text. Ask them who they are playing with and find out if they are talking to other players. If chat is available, look at the type of language that is used by other players.



## #KEYS 3:

Remember that much of the chat within games can be simply about the game itself and different strategies. Never reveal personal information or agree to meet up offline.





## #KEYS 4:

Remember that the same safety rules for going online apply to playing games on the internet. Familiarise yourself with the SMART rules.



# Resources

<https://www.childnet.com/ufiles/Online-gaming-an-introduction-for-parents-and-carers-2017.pdf>



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