Impact on Gaming and Pornography

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Ministry in the Digital Age...



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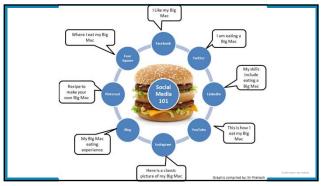
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Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 50th World Communications Day

Emails, text messages, social networks and chats can also be fully human forms of communication. It is not technology which determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal. Social networks can facilitate relationships and promote the good of society, but they can also lead to further polarization and division between individuals and groups. The digital world is a public square, a meeting-place where we can either encourage or demean one another, engage in a meaningful discussion or unfair attacks.

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"Online Presence" vs. Social Media

Online Presence

- · Seminary webpage
- Professional bio/staff description
- Summer assignment/parish blog Personal blogs
- Archdiocesan newsletters/electronic communications

Social Media

- Facebook • Linked In
- Twitter
- YouTubePinterest

Social Media Boundaries

- Turn off all "blue-light" devices 1 hour before bedtime; engage in a wind-down (no technology) activity
- Review the settings on your phone and social media accounts; err on the side of protecting your privacy
- · Keep the phone off the table at meals
- Spend time letting technology work for you

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Social Media Boundaries

- Be intentional about times in your day/week/month where you totally "unplug"
- Consider your relationship *and* how you are seen by the other person
- · Keep a critical eye on your motivation for sharing

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Internet Behavior: The Numbers

- Average user spends 23 hours a week emailing, texting and using social media and other forms of online communication.
- Email is the biggest time consumer.
- Respondents spend:
 - $-\ 8$ hours a week checking email
 - 7 hours a week on Facebook
 - 5 hours a week on YouTube

Mielach, "The Lost Art of Getting Together

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Internet Behavior: The Numbers

- 54% have tried to decrease their reliance on technology in the past year in favor of more in-person contact.
- 62% of web users in the United States said they hope to decrease tech usage in the coming year so they can communicate face-toface.
- Yet users have *increased* the time they have spent using social networks, emailing, watching online videos, playing online games and reading or writing blogs.

Mielach "The Lost Art of Getting Together"

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Technology Self-Assessment

- Do I use technology too much or just enough?
- Has the use of technology helped or hindered my daily life and/or my ministry?
- Do I need to make adjustments to the way I use technology?

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Technology Personality Types

- Always on: 8% of the U.S. adult population; the most connected of all the personality types
- Live wires: 35%; is highly connected and tends to use technology to converse with others
- Social skimmers: 6%; high connectivity group marked by ownership of many devices and the use of many social networking sites
- Broadcasters: 8%; uses technology selectively to create new content and tell others what they are doing

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Technology Personality Types

- Toe-Dippers: 27%; the largest of the three low connectivity groups use technology primarily to converse with others
- Bystanders: 15%; the least connected use technology to connect with family and friends less than three times each day (five times less than the national average)
- Never-Minders: 2%; the outliers do not use phone, text or social media to connect to others

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Technology Self-Assessment

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Gaming

Video games have the potential to consume a large amount of time as players try repeatedly to win. Today, video game addiction has been recognized as a process addiction similar to compulsive gambling, in which the rush of winning becomes one of the primary motivations for playing.

Video games are one of the most popular features of social network sites, and they can be played almost continuously on handheld game devices, personal computers, or smart phones. Video games are quite elaborate, with rich alternate worlds, multiple characters, and complicated storylines. Introverts may find that they can avoid interacting with "real" peers by engaging primarily with other online players, in the guise of characters with awe-inspiring gifts and powers.

 $\underline{american addiction centers.org * video-gaming-addiction}$

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When Gaming Becomes an Addiction

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Video Game Addiction

A gaming disorder, sometimes referred to as "video game addiction," is a pattern of game-playing behavior—involving online gaming or offline video games—that is difficult to control and that continues unabated despite serious negative consequences in other areas of the gamer's life.

Experts debate whether severely problematic gaming truly constitutes an "addiction" in the same sense as drug and alcohol addictions. But disordered gaming behavior recently received official recognition as a mental health condition by the World Health Organization (WHO), which included "gaming disorder" in the 11th edition of its International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). According to that guide, gaming disorder is marked by "impaired control" over gaming, which leads to it taking priority over other interests and activities. The gaming behavior persists even as it causes "significant impairment" in areas such as personal relationships, school, or work.

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/videogame-addiction

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Video Game Addiction

While gaming disorder is not officially included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, widely used for behavioral health diagnoses in the U.S., the latest version of the manual—the DSM-5—refers to Internet Gaming Disorder as a condition for further study. Among the tentative criteria for such a disorder are withdrawal symptoms, such as irritability or sadness, when Internet gaming ceases; tolerance, or an increasing need for gaming; deception about the amount of one's gaming; and failed attempts to control one's gaming.

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/video-game-addiction

Key Warning Signs

- Poor performance at school, work, or household responsibilities as a result of a preoccupation with gaming
- Neglect of other hobbies or friendships
- A decline in personal hygiene or grooming
- Inability to set limits on how much time is spent gaming

- Inability to set limits on how much time is spent gaming Signs of irritability, anxiety, or anger when forced to stop gaming, even for brief periods of time

 The need to spend more time playing games or to play more intensely in order to get the same level of enjoyment
 Symptoms of physical or psychological withdrawal, such as loss of appetite, sleeplessness, agitation, or emotional outbursts if the game is taken away
- Using video games as a way to escape stressful situations at work or school, or conflicts at home.

 | Americanaddictioncenters.org.p.video-gaming-air americanaddictioncenters

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Health Risks and Concerns

- Sedentary lifestyle: Hours spent sitting at a computer or in front of a device can take a toll on the body. The lack of physical exercise involved in video gaming has led to public health concerns about weight gain, poor posture, and an increased risk of type 2 diabetes. Lack of social engagement. Although video games require engaging with others in computerized environments, they don't compare to the realities of socializing with peers. Learning how to interact with others in a real-world setting is an important social skill that may be neglected by individuals who spend too much time gaming.
- Problems with concentration and attention: There is some concern that the rapid movements and fast-paced action of video games promote a loss of concentration in players. Reading books, for example, which requires more focused, prolonged attention.

americanaddictioncenters.org > video-gaming-addiction

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Health Risks and Concerns

- Increased aggression or violence: Those who devote a lot of time to playing video games that focus on combat, fighting, or violence may display more signs of aggression than those who don't play these games. The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) posts guidelines and ratings for popular games.
- Soizures and repetitive stress injuries: The British Medical Journal (BMJ) published an article about the risks of video gaming for players who have epilepsy or other seizure disorders. The flickering graphics, lights, and colors of video game displays may trigger seizure activity in some players. There is also evidence that compulsive game playing may lead to repetitive stress injuries of the wrists or hands.

americanaddictioncenters.org > video-gaming-addiction

Neu	rolog	laoic	Imr	act

Addictive behaviors function like a "drug" that stimulates the brain. Neuroscientists point to three fundamental effects that addiction has on the brain: 1) "desensitization," a numbing of the brain's ability to experience pleasure; 2) "sensitization," an increased sensitivity to triggers and memories related to the addictive behavior; and, 3) "hypofrontality," the reduced activity of the frontal brain, decreasing impulse control and creating a negative mood.

Based on recent brain imaging studies, behavioral addictions—like gambling, food, and Internet gaming—have been found to meet the above three criteria for causing changes in brain circuitry. They are related to pornography addiction in that they are all behavioral/ process addictions, as opposed to chemical addictions.

https://www.usccb.org/committees/pro-life-activities/life-matters-pornography-and-our-call-love

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Seeking Help and Treatment

Video games have had a tremendous impact — both positive and negative — on cultural attitudes, psychological development, and lifestyle choices. For individuals who have become caught in a cycle of compulsive gaming, video games can become destructive. The growing popularity of video games has created a new awareness of the problem of compulsive gaming, which in turn has led to the development of treatment programs for this addictive process. Treatment for video game addiction focuses on behavioral modification therapies, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), that guide the client away from the obsessive thought patterns and obsessive habits of addiction. Group therapy is a valuable source of motivation and moral support, especially for individuals who have lost contact with friends or peers as a result of their game addiction.

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Seeking Help and Treatment

Depending on the severity of the addictive behavior and the co-occurrence of other medical or psychiatric conditions, video game addiction may be treated on an inpatient or outpatient basis. Inpatient facilities offer 24-hour supervision in a supportive, structured environment, which may be beneficial for individuals who haven't been able to control their video game use. Outpatient treatment, which includes intensive outpatient programs and partial hospitalization programs (PHPs), offers more flexibility for individuals who cannot enroll in inpatient treatment due to personal responsibilities or who are very motivated to recover from addictive behavior.

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Discussing these issues in community

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Individual

- Stress importance of bringing this to spiritual direction.
- Be open to discussing this as an elder member of the community.
- Ask whether a person can speak about such issues with others.
- Individualized ongoing formation

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Community

- A House Chapter should approve house rules for Internet use.
- Discuss Internet use issues with the entire community.
- Try to include all of the confreres in Internet use, promote "visibility".
- Encourage an environment of support and accountability.

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Policies

- Community policy on computer use and abuse, including Internet use
- Organizations with central servers use blocking software and Internet monitoring (a problem with new mobile devices!)
- Staff and those in formation are all notified of policies
- When computers turn over, hard drives reviewed by computer expert and/or erased.

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Pornography: The Numbers

- In 2006, estimated sex-related entertainment business revenue were just under \$13 billion
- In 2007, global pornography revenues were estimated at \$20 billion; \$10 billion in the US
- 70-80% of adult websites are free; typically used as "bait"

2015 Pornography Statistics Pac Covenant Eves

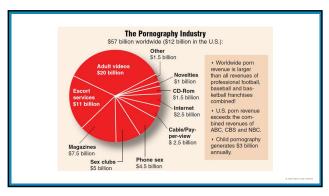
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Trends around Internet Pornography

- According to Covenant Eyes, makes \$97 billion worldwide every year
- 68% of young men and 18% of young women view pornography weekly
- More than 1 in 5 Google searches is for pornography
- Between 1998 and 2007, the number of pornographic websites grew by 1,800%
- Internet traffic study completed in 2004, pornography sites were visited more often than Google, Yahoo and MSN Search combined.

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2014 Survey

- Men report viewing pornography at least once a month: 18-30-year-olds, 79%; 31-49-year-olds, 67%; 50-68-year-olds, 49%
- Men report viewing pornography at least several times a week: 18-30-year-olds, 63%; 31-49-year-olds, 38%; 50-68-year-olds, 25%
- Women viewing pornography at least once a month: 18-30-year-olds, 76%; 31-49-year-olds, 16%; 50-68-year-olds, 4%

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2014 Survey

- Women view pornography at least several times a week: 18-30-year-olds, 21%; 31-49-year-olds, 5%; 50-68-year-olds, 0%
- 55% of married men view pornography at least once a month
- 70% of not married men view pornography at least once a month
- Men are 543% more likely to view pornography than females

2014 Pornography Survey and Statistics Proven Men Ministries (2014)

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According to the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, prolonged exposure to pornography leads to:

- An exaggerated perception of sexual activity in society
- Diminished trust between intimate couples
- The abandonment of the hope of sexual monogamy
- · Belief that promiscuity is the natural state
- Belief that abstinence and sexual inactivity are unhealthy

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According to the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, prolonged exposure to pornography leads to:

- Cynicism about love or the need for affection between sexual partners
- · Belief that marriage is sexually confining
- · Lack of attraction to family and child-raising

Dolf Zillman, "Influence of unrestrained access to erotica on adolescents and young adults' dispositions toward sexuality,' August 2000

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Documented Effects of Exposure

For children or adolescents:

- Lasting negative or traumatic emotional responses.
- Earlier onset of first sexual intercourse, thereby increasing the risk of STDs over the lifespan.
- Belief that superior sexual satisfaction is attainable without having affection for one's partner
- $\bullet \ \ Increased \ risk \ for \ developing \ sexual \ compulsions \ and \ addictive \ behavior.$
- Increased risk of exposure to incorrect information about human sexuality
- Overestimating the prevalence of less common sexual practices

Manning, "Hearing on pornography's impact on marriage & the family." US Senate Hearing, 2005.

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Age of First Exposure Shapes Men's View of Women

Significantly associated with sexist attitudes later in life

- College age, primarily heterosexual (93%) white (85%) men
- Average age of exposure was 13
- Younger age of exposure linked with a desire for power over women
- Older age of exposure linked with promiscuity/play boy behavior
- Continues to confirm that exposure to pornography impacts heterosexual men's views of sex roles

American Psychological Association 8/201

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Four Bodily Systems Involved in Internet Pornography 1. Visual 2. Motor 3. Sensory 4. Neurological

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Pornography Functions Like a Drug

- Viewing pornography triggers the "reward pathway" in the brain – prompting the release of chemicals like dopamine and oxytocin
- This surge of chemicals creates a new pathway, leading the individual back to the behavior (viewing pornography) that triggered the release

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- Other "triggers" like this include cocaine and opioids; they trigger the release of high levels of dopamine without making the user to any of the work
- Over time, the constant overloading of these chemicals changes the brain
 - Tolerance develops, and just like a drug addict requires more drugs to get high, individuals require more/different types of pornography to achieve the same level of "high"

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Describing pornography's effect to a U.S. Senate committee, Dr. Jeffrey Satinover of Princeton University said, "It is as though we have devised a form of heroin ... usable in the privacy of one's own home and injected directly to the brain through the eyes."

Hearing on the Brain Science Behind Pornography Addiction and Effects of Addiction on Families and Communities, November 2004

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Pornography:
A moral, psychological,
and
spiritual problem

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Moral Problem

- Natural Law
- Virtue Ethics

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Psychological Problem

- Addiction
- Behavioral Theory
- Love Maps
- Eroticized Rage
- Neurological Process

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Spiritual Problem

Spiritual Theology (Process of Holiness)

- Live of the Saints
- Prayer
- Vice and Virtue
- Spiritual Development
- $-\, {\sf Discernment}$
- Individual, Communal, Ecclesial, Kingdom

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Themes Among Candidates

- · Greater disclosure about sexual history
- Ability to speak about sexual history is accompanied by less shame
- · Longer exposure to internet pornography
 - Average age of exposure if 11 years of age*
- For those struggling, may have struggled 10 years before application process begins
 - Sexual development, understanding of sexuality and ability to live healthy, chaste life is impacted

*Cooper 2004; Ropelato, 2006; Maahs & Liederbach, 2007; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010

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Themes Among Seminarians

- · Prominent feelings of shame about behavior
- Often feel "addicted" and stuck in cycle
- Emotional supports present but few tangible strategies to utilize
- Felt sense that ordination = ability to live celibacy perfectly
- Conversations about how to talk about this topic with not enough implementation and/or accountability

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Themes Among Seminarians

- · Most have unrealistic expectations for success
- Goal is NOT absence of sexuality/sexual feelings; this sets individuals up for failure
- Goal is progress: healthy awareness of sexuality, lived integration of sexual feelings, sense of confidence around how to deal with sexual feelings, greater confidence and control regarding problematic sexual behaviors
- Reduction in problematic behaviors inconsistent with vocation and increase in periods of time of chaste living

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Themes Among Clergy

- Personal struggles with internet pornography; often associated with stress relief, loneliness
- "Power of distraction"
- Much less support and accountability within presbyterate verses seminary environment
- Education presentations with little tangible resources available
- Struggling to support parents and families with internet pornography behaviors within family systems and parish environments

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Internet Pornography: Problematic Sexual Behavior

- Viewing 11+ hours per week
- Jeopardizing success in other areas of life; interfering with schoolwork, relationships, ministerial obligations, sleep, etc.
- · Presence of compulsivity and obsession
- · Continuation despite adverse consequences
- Preoccupation with sex on the internet (can't not think about it)
- Engage in problematic behavior more often than intended
- Repeated unsuccessful efforts to control/cut back on/stop the behaviors

arnes et al, 2001

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Internet Pornography: Problematic Sexual Behavior

- Restlessness or irritability when attempting to limit or stop problematic behaviors
- Using pornography to escape from problems or as relief to distressing emotional experiences
- Increase in need for more intense/higher-risk sexual experiences or content
- · Lying to others about these behaviors
- · Committing illegal sexual acts
- Incurring significant financial consequences because of online behavior

Carnes et al, 2001

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Problematic Sexual Behavior as an Addiction

- · Pathological relationship has emerged between the individual and their cybersex activities
- "Normal" for that individual involves internet pornography use
- An unhealthy relationship (with internet pornography) is a replacement or substitute for a healthy relationship
- · Evidence of stages where individual retreats further and further away from reality of friends, family and work
- Warped sense of reality; secret life becomes more real than real world

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Problematic Sexual Behavior as an Addiction

- Presence of delusional thought processes (impairment in their thinking system mental gymnastics)
 Faulty core beliefs (I am a bad, unworthy person)
 Sex and sexual behaviors "make isolation bearable"
 Seeking intimacy through sexual behaviors

- Detachment from real relationships
- Impaired thinkingPresence of Addictive Cycle:

 - Preoccupation
 Ritualization
 Compulsive sexual behavior
- Unmanageability and despair
- · Sexual experience becomes the reason for being

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Problem Behavior Vs. Addiction: **Key Differences**

Problematic Behavior

- · Impacts other areas of life
- Trying to stop but difficulty managing behaviors
- Emergence of compulsivity and obsession

Addiction

- Pathological relationship between pornography and individual
- thinking
 - Presence of addictive cycle
 - · Secret life evolves
 - · Further isolation from others

Pornography Addiction Simplified

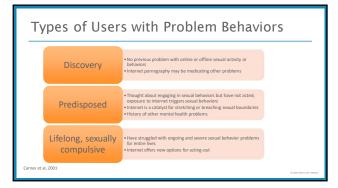
- Preoccupation to the point of obsession with sexual imagery
- Spending at least 11 hours/week viewing pornography
- 2. Loss of control over use of pornography
 - Try to stop but unable to (over and over again)
- 3. Negative consequences directly related to compulsive use of pornography
 - Reflective in behavior changes
 - Shifts in attraction patterns

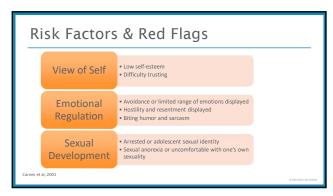
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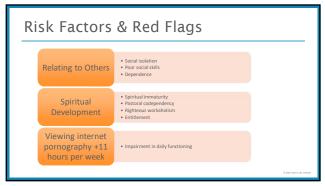
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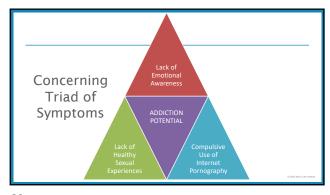


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Treatment and Intervention



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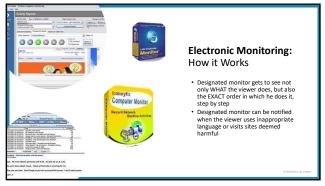
Interventions

- · Individual Therapy
 - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Research to support its efficacy in treating "internet addiction"
 - Goal of "moderated and controlled use" of internet
- External Supports and Accountability Relapse Prevention
 - Sexaholics Anonymous, Sexual Compulsives Anonymous
 - Support groups
 - Monitoring and blocking software

Center for Online Addiction

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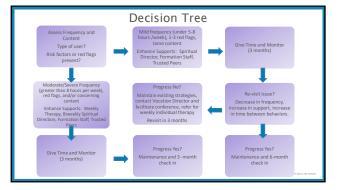




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Internet Pornography Decision Tree

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"Give Time & Monitor"

- This is a finite period of time set forth by the vocation director/formation staff and individual
- · Clear expectations are identified for the purpose of this "time;" what behavioral changes are expected? What does change look like?
- · This doesn't mean radio silence; ongoing support, check-ins, and accountability are part of your role at
- Passivity is indicative of an unwillingness or an inability to implement change at that time

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What does progress look like?

- Progress Yes?

 Consistent follow up on recommendations cooperation, not just compliance

- nor just compinance
 Increase in transparency and
 disclosure between multiple groups
 Greater emotional awareness
 Some improvement in problem
 behaviors; progress not perfection
 Ability to ask for help from others
 Wichla initiative to implement any
- Visible initiative to implement new behaviors
- Internalized responsibility vs. externally motivated change

Progress No? • Passivity

- Compliance but not cooperation Lack of change or increase in problem behaviors

- problem behaviors
 Splitting between supports
 Denial/lying/minimization
 Chronic justification
 Lack of disclosure to peers; limited, controlled communication
 Change only in the presence of external pressure

Can this person move on?

- Willingness to ask for help *and* uses/integrates help that is offered
- · Does not over spiritualize
- *Open* to formation
- Family past/emotional trauma does not *dictate* individual's behavior
- · Possesses an internal locus of control
- Good self awareness
- Willing to work on establishing and maintaining a good core/peer group

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Can this person move on?

- · Rigorously honest about problematic behaviors
- · Can they successfully interact with authority?
- Can they navigate stressful situations without much support?
- Does the structure of the formation program enable unhealthy behaviors or help them to be their best selves?
- Are they making progress on the issues that are most concerning? If not, will they be able to make progress once they are in full-time ministry?

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Spiritual Implications

- Cycle of shame/guilt that interferes with connection to God
- Stuck in superficial spirituality; little depth present in spiritual life
- Often results in disconnection in spiritual life; impacts prayer life, spiritual practices, efficacy of spiritual direction
- "One of the first things to go and the hardest to get back"

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What can vocation directors do?

- Become educated about the problem
- Ensure those in their care are educated about the problem, risk factors, "red flags" and available help resources
- Create a culture of dialogue, healthy expectations, and self-referral
- Use help resources as needed
- Be consistent and present

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Realistic Expectations

- · Progress, not perfection
- Decrease in problematic behavior over time
- Increase in periods of time of sexual sobriety/chaste living
- May always have some struggles, especially during times of stress, but consistent evidence of greater control and less impact on other areas of life

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Case Study: Tim

- Tim is 27 years old. He was seen by some students in the university, where he is assigned as a student chaplain, viewing pornographic pictures of young males.
- Tim admitted to viewing the pictures and expressed his sorrow. He said he has been tired lately and uses the Internet as a way to relax.
- He promises not to visit these adult websites in the future.

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Case Study

- A religious is 30 years old. He recently had his computer serviced and the computer technicians reported to the formation director that he found indications that the computer had browsed some pornographic websites.
- When confronted, he admits that the sites had been visited but says these pictures inadvertently came up when he was doing some research on human sexuality.
- What should the formation director do at this point and what questions might he want answered?

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Web Resources

SLIconnect.org
Addressing Pornography Use
https://www.sliconnect.org/pastoral/



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Additional Web Resources

- USCCB, Create in Me a Clean Heart: http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-lifeand-dignity/pornography/index.cfm
- Archdiocese of New York, True Freedom: http://nyfamilylife.org/chastity/truefreedom/
- Archdiocese of Kansas City, My House: https://www.archkck.org/myhouse
- Diocese of Arlington, Bought with a Price: http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/purity/index.aspx

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Additional Web Resources

- Fight The New Drug: https://fightthenewdrug.org/
- The Porn Effect: http://theporneffect.com/
- Faith and Safety: https://www.faithandsafety.org/
- Integrity Restored: https://integrityrestored.com/

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Rating Monitoring, Blocking & Filtering Software

- http://www.monitoringadvisor.com
- · http://wellresearchedreviews.com/computermonitoring

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Print Resources

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- Young, Kimberly & Klausing, Patrice. <u>Breaking Free of the Web: Catholics and Internet Addiction</u>. 2007.

QUESTIONS

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