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# INTERNET USE AND SOCIAL ISOLATION: EXPLORING THE VARIABLES

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INTERNET USE AND SOCIAL ISOLATION:  
EXPLORING THE VARIABLES

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Social Work

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by  
Melissa Marie Allen

June 2016

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June 2016

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## ABSTRACT

Internet use is a growing trend in today's society, and there are many variables surrounding use that can potentially affect individuals' psychological well-being. The purpose of this study is to discover if the motivation for Internet use has a direct effect on individuals experiencing social isolation. An Explanatory Design was utilized for this study, and participants were comprised of 47 adult males and females. Quantitative data was collected for this study through use of online surveys, such as Internet use (observed motivation and frequency) survey, JongGierveld Loneliness Scale (explored emotional and social loneliness) and The Big 5 Personality Inventory (viewed personality traits). A significant finding of this study was that there was a positive relationship between individuals who are highly agreeable and the frequency of their Internet use. This study was unable to produce conclusive data on how motivation for Internet use influences episodes of social isolation. The results of this study do demonstrate the wide use of the Internet by adults, and reinforce the importance of incorporating this use in assessment and treatment of clients. Information obtained from this study also has potential to stimulate means of advocacy for protective Internet policies and formation of educational programs designed to highlight best practices for Internet use.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to Dr. Carolyn McAllister for providing her knowledge, patience guidance and encouragement to support me in developing this project. I would also like to thank the participants of my study who shared personal information that was essential in establishing a comprehensive understanding of the presented topic. Lastly, thank you to the future readers of this study who will utilize and build from my research to provide transformational data to shape the future of Social Work practice.

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to Jaydon and Adrien (my boys) who have been extremely loving and patient throughout this whole process, and without their love and encouragement, I would have not been able to continue. I would also like to thank my parents for always encouraging my education, and for teaching me the value of serving others. In addition to my family, I would like to acknowledge my entire “support team” of extended family and friends that always reminded me of the bigger picture of achieving my academic goals. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to accredit my success to my Lord and Savior from whom I continually attained peace and resilience.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The following Problem Statement discusses how the expansion of technology has influenced society on a micro and macro practice level. There is also an exploration of the social trends of Internet use, and how the continued growth of use has created the need for more evolved policies and procedures for regulations in government and private sectors. Further conversation, will address the potential impact on individual psychological well-being due to Internet use, and the reasons for the social work profession to study problematic scenarios that may arise due to multiple variables and unique individual characteristics. Methods to address the relationship between Internet use and social isolation will also be outlined, along with a discussion of the significance of the conducting the study for social work practice.

#### Problem Statement

The evolution of technology has provided society with many life-altering inventions, and these innovations have collectively increased efficiency and productivity in private and public sectors. In most recent years, the advancements in technology have given way to devices such as the smartphone and advanced personal computers that have bred a culture of convenience and immediacy. Along with the creation of the aforementioned

devices, there has been an exponential growth in connectivity and information retrieval through the World Wide Web (WWW) also known as the Internet.

As of 2015, there are roughly seven billion people that live in the world. A 2009 speech given by President Barack Obama revealed,

Almost a third of the world's population uses the Internet and countless more are touched by it in their daily lives. There are more than four billion digital wireless devices in the world today. Scarcely a half century ago, that number was zero. (as cited in The White House, 2011, p. 3)

The number of internet users continues to grow, according to International Telecommunication Union, "Globally 3.2 billion people are using the Internet of which 2 billion are from developing countries" (2015).

#### Social Work Policy Perspective

The growing trend of Internet use is an important topic to address in the social work profession due to the rapid expansion of users, and the significant cultural influence it has on numerous societies. According to an online report by the United States Census Bureau, (p. 2) "In 2013, 234 million Americans that utilize the Internet. 74.4 percent of all households (in the United States) reported Internet use:"

There has been much debate regarding utilization of the Internet, and the potential beneficial and harmful implications on the collective society. The lack of substantial research on the short and long-term impact of Internet use on society is a concern due to the need to construct policies and procedures

that will ideally protect citizens' safety and human rights. The ways in which the Internet is being utilized in the political and social movement realm is evolving, and organizations are able to distribute their propaganda and further their agendas by capturing the attention of a larger audience in a fraction of the time it took in earlier years. The Internet, virtual communities, and expressions of cyber-protest are significant to social movements, and offer ideal environments for conducting social research (Zimbra, Chen, & Abbasi, 2010). With the expansion of technology and connectivity there is the ability to reach parts of the world that were not as accessible in previous years.

Many cyber policies have emerged in federal and local governments and businesses in recent years to help protect the safety of citizens and to increase security on compromise of personal information. An example of some federal government policies that have Internet clauses are, Homeland Security Act, The Patriot Act and Freedom of Information Act. The aforementioned policies have Internet clauses built in that address various degrees of information retrieval practices that the government may utilize to ensure the safety and welfare of the greater society in the United States. According to a statement released by President Obama, "America's economic prosperity, national security, and our individual liberties depend on our commitment to securing cyberspace and maintaining an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable Internet" (2014).

Many businesses in the United States that allow access through the use of the Internet have privacy agreements that a consumer must agree to before utilizing services. These privacy agreements outline the manner in which businesses may electronically store and share individuals' personal information, and these agreements also outline the degree to which the business is liable and the practices they may use to ensure quality and safety of their users. Although there have been some measures taken by government and private entities to protect the safety of Internet users, there is still serious concern that the current policies and procedures are not adequate to handle current or future potential dangers in the expanding cyber world.

Recent security breaches in the government and private sectors have grown immensely in recent years. According to CNN, there were almost 61,000 cyber-attacks and security breaches across the entire federal government last year according to a recent Obama administration report. And the number of cyber incidents involving government agencies has jumped 35 percent between 2010 and 2013, from roughly 34,000 to about 46,000, according to another recent report by the Government Accountability Office (Government hacks and security breaches skyrocket, 2014, para. 5).

The ability for societies around the world to connect to their surroundings and across the globe continues to grow due to Internet connection development. There is much unknown about the impact that Internet use will have on society, and due to data that have been presented

above there is reason to believe that there is a potential for additional unforeseen dangers. The apprehension of Internet use is not only a concern on a macro level, but the concern also includes the impact that use has on individuals' psychological well-being.

### Social Work Practice Perspective

Considering how great an impact the environment creates for individuals' development, behaviors, and attitudes, there is a need for practitioners to examine social features, social trends and social movement to discover how they may further impact one's ability to function. One social trend that continues to gain momentum is the use of the Internet. A development that needs to be studied more in depth is the impact of Internet use on an individual's emotional health, safety and interpersonal relationships.

Diego, Field, Kaplan, and Sanders' (2000) study that was conducted with adolescents and Internet use indicated, "high Internet use is related to weaker social ties: low Internet users reported significantly better relationships with their mothers and friends than did high Internet users" (p. 241). The implication of Internet use may vary from individual due to variables such as, time spent using the Internet, purpose for using the Internet, an individual's unique psychological characteristics and social environment. There has not been irrefutable data presented on the impact of Internet use in terms of human psychological well-being, therefore it is understandable that people may be skeptical of the impact use may have in society.



The foundation of the social work profession is built on examining and considering an individual development, interpersonal relationships, and environmental factors and systems that can have an impact on an individual's ability to thrive and function. Every aspect of an individual's life is shaped by human interactions and social connectedness. Studies and practices by Freud, Erikson, Marcia, Piaget, and Kohlberg have demonstrated the importance of social interactions in development and attachment throughout all life-stages. Infants' do not only depend on their caretakers for survival, but they also need their affection, protection and interaction so that secure attachments can be formed. According to Hutchison,

The suggestion is that the brain is physically affected by the presence or absence of attachment. Gerhardt concludes that without emotional bonding with an adult, the orbitofrontal cortex in the brain of infants (the part of the brain that allows social relationships to develop) cannot develop well. (2008, p. 122)

Development in childhood depends heavily on the child's social interactions and connection because this is when language and morals are modeled and practiced. Further development occurs with shared exchanges between the child and their caretakers, friends and environment to help establish family relationships, roles, gender identity, communication skills, social awareness and self-competency. Connectedness to others also heavily impacts the experiences and life satisfaction for adolescences and adults.

Researchers suggest, “That we each travel through life with a convoy, or a network of social relationships that protect, defend, aid, and socialize us” (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987, 1997; Kahn & Antonucci, 1980).

The information presented on relationship and socialization brings to attention that Internet use potentially can affect every Internet user due to the social aspect that it offers its users. The impact Internet use has on psychological well-being or social connectedness has not yet been extensively defined, there is the possibility that there are real and perceived risks that can manifest from use. Electronic devices to access the Internet are widely available, which increases the number of individuals that can engage in Internet use. Internet users extend all over the world, and users are made up of various demographic factors, such as race, age, socio-economic background, gender and educational level. The vast audience that can possibly be impacted by the above social trend of Internet use should provoke a desire for the profession of social work to be diligent in developing studies that can produce more conclusive data. Obtainment of comprehensive data on the presented topic has the potential to highlight challenges that individuals, various groups and collective societies face as a result of their Internet use.

#### Purpose of the Study

There are many aspects of well-being that can be addressed in regards to Internet use, but one that is fundamental to all aspects of life is an individual's ability to connect with others. The research question that guides

the discussion of this paper is does an individual's motivation for using the Internet increase episodes of social isolation? The term "motivation" in the above question refers to the reason why the individual chooses to access the Internet. Some examples of possible motivations are communication through Social Network Sites (SNS), information retrieval, engaging in social movements, personal development (education and dating) and entertainment. The above question is important to the overall conversation on Internet use because many of the peer review articles studied for this paper did not provide extensive discussion on correlations between an individual's motivation for Internet use and the occurrence of isolation. The above topic of social isolation is an important subject to study for the social work profession due to the impact that interpersonal relationships have on human development and general well-being.

Many theoretical practices, developed perspectives and researched models used in the social work profession encourage the professional to view an individual in their environment, and to examine their ability to function in the surroundings based on established beliefs and connections. Social workers have the challenge of viewing the person in their entirety, and collaborating with the client to provide support and guidance in achieving self-efficacy.

The occurrence of isolation with populations that social workers serve can be a real concern because it impacts all areas of an individual's life, and can manifest in ways such as, depression, poor physical health, stunted

developmental stages, inadequate interpersonal skills, and undeveloped coping skills. The idea that there may be a correlation between motivation for Internet use and episodes of social isolation establishes a great need for social workers to assess and monitor the impact of the growing trend of Internet use. Social workers would benefit in their interactions with clients by completing detailed evaluations, and operating analytically in their approach with clients' difficulties. Exploring all aspects of a client's environmental factors is the bases for developing enhanced interventions, and addressing all barriers that a client may encounter.

In exploring the topic of Internet use and isolation a study conducted with a systematic random sample was chosen. Also, a nonprobability, snowball sampling was desirable for recruitment of additional known adult, Internet users. This sampling method ideally produced a culturally diverse sample that was more representative of the greater population of Internet users.

An explanatory research design was utilized for this study. This design was chosen to establish a causal connection between motivation of Internet use and occurrence of social isolation. In addition, the explanatory research design is more generalizable, and with the vast populations that use the Internet a study that can be applied to many populations is appropriate.

Adult participants were the desired population for this study. There has been limited established research on the presented topic with this age

population. Recruitment for this study was through the avenue of social media (Facebook), and the measurements utilized were three online surveys. The surveys were composed of multiple close-ended, open ended and Likert matrix questions. The surveys addressed individuals' motivation (reasons) for Internet use and addressed participants' Internet habits. Additionally, data collection concentrated on social and emotional variables to in order to establish a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data.

#### Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

The study of individuals' motivations for Internet use and how it may potentially relate to arising episodes of social isolation is an important topic to address. Obtaining conclusive data on this topic can ideally provide detailed information to assist the social work profession in developing comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments and treatment modalities to address isolation. Moreover, the social work profession's ability to develop a multifaceted understanding of the effects of Internet use on individuals well-being can potentially stimulate means of advocacy for protective Internet policy creation and formation of educational programs designed to highlight best practices for Internet use.

Regarding obtainment of conclusive data on the above topic, ideally future implementation of new socially conscious Internet policies and programs will emerge, and also command the attention of funders that see the benefit in funding longitudinal studies that will observe a greater amount of

participants. Further studies on this topic can also provide improved insight on reduction of the risk of isolation, and improve access to resources for support and treatment. Increased avenues of funding for organizations can allow them liberty to be more creative when developing comprehensive measurements to examine clients, and give them access to extra financial resources to hire additional staff to conduct inclusive assessments with clients. Growing the Social Work profession's capacity to observe clients in a detailed manner may encourage enhancements of micro and macro level practices, and also provide clients with resources for improvements to their social structures and relationships. As demonstrated above, an evolution of social work practice can emerge by studying the question of, does an individual's motivation for Internet use increase episodes of isolation?

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The researcher of this project studied several articles prior to developing this discussion, and all peer reviews addressed the topic of Internet use in relation to psychological well-being, including the topic of isolation. The past decade has given way to a society that appears more globally connected, and has established a platform for Internet users to obtain more information. There has also been an increase in avenues to more accessible entertainment options, and expanded communication channels. The development of advanced technology has provided opportunities for people to become connected to the world around them in ways that they had not been able to in the past, but despite the idea of enhanced connectivity there is cause for concern about the negative implications of Internet use.

#### Previous Research

Previous studies conducted on Internet use and social isolation provided some insight into the variables that can affect an individual's well-being, but the data are unable to provide any conclusive evidence that supports the positive or negative implications of Internet use. The theme that is prominent throughout the studies, and what researcher appear to agree on,

is that there is no definitive answer to the impact the Internet has on society as a whole.

Some studies have alluded to the notion that personality is a determining factor for increased social isolation in regards to Internet use. A study conducted by Phillips, Scealy, and Stevenson indicated, "The present study found that shy individuals employ the same amount of online communication as non-shy" (2002, p. 514). A similar study also concluded that,

the Internet is a positive source of interactions for those who are socially anxious as a means for overcoming anxiety in meeting people assumes that the individual is still trying to interact with people in real life, outside of the Internet. (Bargh & McKenna, 2000, p. 68)

In contrast, another study conducted on Internet use, personality and well-being affirmed, "However, for women, loneliness is significantly related to both neuroticism and the use of social services in the Internet" (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003, p. 76). What the studies discussed do not accomplish was securing data that revealed concrete positive offline relationships among their participants.

Other information known about the above topic is that social isolation appears to have decreased amongst individuals who use the Internet for therapeutic purposes. Billick and Veretilo, (2012), discussed how a patient with significant psychiatric comorbidities was able to use social media during the



treatment process, and how he eventually was able to carry his online relationships over offline. Through additional article exploration, evidence supported that medical patients were not the only population to have improvement with social isolation due to their increased use of the Internet. Older adults are another population who are at risk for isolation as their social mobility and connectedness decrease with age. A study conducted by Jones and Rebola (2011) regarding sympathetic devices to combat inclusion discovered, "Communication technologies have the potential to enrich many aspects of our lives, especially for older adults" (p. 56). Internet use appears to have increased among the elderly due to revisions of technology to make them more user friendly.

Another discovery from an Internet study on isolation is that there are data that suggest that time spent on using the Internet is not as harmful as the type of communication that is being conducted online. In regards to social and parasocial relationships online, researchers Bae, Baek, and Jang determined, "higher dependency on parasocial relationships is positively related with feeling of isolation, lower interpersonal distrust, and addictive SNS use" (2013, p. 515). There also appear to be additional studies that support the positive impact on individuals when they develop reciprocal relationships and shared interactions. Researcher Grant and Shaw collected data that revealed, "over the course of a 4-8-week study during which participants chatted anonymously on the Internet, loneliness and depression decreased markedly. Furthermore,

participants' perceptions of social support increased, as did self-esteem" (2002, p. 168). In antithesis to the topic of emotional loneliness and frequency of Internet use, Moody (2001) uncovered, "As was hypothesized, individuals who spend more time online are more likely to have higher rates of emotional loneliness and lower rates of social loneliness based on correlational evidence" (p. 395).

#### Unknown About the Problem

There is a considerable need for research on the topic of Internet use and isolation. The studies reviewed do not speak to existing social and psychological factors that may have contributed to episodes of isolation. Also, many of the studies were limited by their population selections. Many of the participants either were college students or were selected from explicit populations.

Additional research on more diverse populations would provide a better understanding of cultural factors that may aid or hinder an individual's experience of isolation. Another aspect that is not known about the presented topic is if an individual's personality has some impact on their choice to engage in more online relationships and communication than they do offline. It would also be beneficial to know if the type of Internet use has an impact on the amount of time an individual spends engaged online to obtain more insight into the motivation of their use.

## Theories Used in Previous Research

There were three theories that were identified in the articles that were reviewed prior to conducting this study. One theory that was utilized in regards to Internet addiction was Social Skill Deficit Theory. One of the assumptions of this theory is, “lonely and depressed individuals hold negative views of their social competency” (Black & Shaw, 2008, p. 360). The study may provide this as an explanation for extensive use of the Internet that leads to Internet addiction.

Another theory that was observed in the reviews was Social Presence Theory. One article state, “According to Social Presence Theory, online interaction, due to fewer nonverbal cues, demands, less communicative complexity and creativity than face to face communication” (Kang, 2007, p. 475). The research used the above theory to explain that some people prefer to use the Internet for communication and relationship building because they do not favor non-verbal communication.

The last theory that was observed in one of the studies was Social Cognitive Theory. This theory embraces the idea that an Individual’s observation of social settings can influence their perception of their ability to engage in social situations. The data obtained in this research study discovered that, “Online extroversion, which is the expression of extroverted traits in the online environment, is a variable that has direct impact on people’s online behavior” (Larose & Liu, 2008, p. 311). These data reveal that an

individual may avoid social isolation by not connectedness alone, but also by how they perceive that their environment supports their interactions.

### Theory Guiding Conceptualization

One theory that can be applied to the proposed study is Self-Determination Theory (SDT). This theory considers how external factors intersect with an individual's inherent nature to determine degree of internal motivation. Three aspects addressed in this theory are autonomy (freedom to perform acts consistent with one's interest and principles), competence (developed sense of environment to manage effects on individual) and relatedness (consideration for others through exchange and association). This theory can be used as a framework to view the previously stated topic of Internet use and isolation because these internal motivators can be considered protective factors against social isolation. Additionally, individuals' motivations for Internet use can be viewed as their cognitive process (intrinsic reasoning), and the social and cultural rewards (extrinsic elements) attained from Internet use can provide insight on the increase or decrease in their well-being.

Originally, Self-Determination Theory was developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, and since the creation of the theory there have been numerous researchers that have expanded on the concept. In order to thoroughly explain the motivation occurrences that appeared in SDT research, six mini-theories were embraced. These six mini theories are Cognitive

Evaluation Theory (CET), Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), Causality Orientations Theory (COT), Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT), Goal Contents Theory (GCT), and Relationships Motivation Theory (RMT) they have been applied to SDT, and they were utilized to view the operations of motivation and personality.

Self-Determination Theory emphasizes that the three previously stated experiences of autonomy, competence and relatedness can determine an individual's ability to be more or less intrinsic. Deci and Ryan (2008) assert the following:

The most central distinction in SDT is between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation comprises both intrinsic motivation and the types of extrinsic motivation in which people have identified with an activity's value and ideally will have integrated it into their sense of self. When people are autonomously motivated, they experience volition, or a self-endorsement of their actions. Controlled motivation, in contrast, consists of both external regulation, in which one's behavior is a function of external contingencies of reward or punishment, and introjected regulation, in which the regulation of action has been partially internalized and is energized by factors such as an approval motive, avoidance of shame, contingent self-esteem, and ego-involvements. (p. 182)

### Contribution of Proposed Study

The proposed study contributes to the current research dialogue by providing more insight into another variable of motivation for Internet use and how that contributes to occurrences of isolation. Obtaining more conclusive data on this topic may also assist professionals in developing appropriate supports and services for the evolving Internet user population.

### Summary

The information studied in the above peer reviews did provide some convincing evidence in regard to some aspects of Internet use. The literature does support the idea that when individuals from at risk populations utilized the Internet, the use increased their sense of social connections. The literature also suggest that individuals who engaged in excessive Internet use or spent much of their time on SNS they had a decreased sense of well-being, and a desire to further isolate themselves from others. Although the data does appear to support the idea of the intention of the Internet user being a determining factor in their well-being, more conclusive data is needed to determine if other variable also played a role in the differences in psychological well-being.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Introduction

The following methods section will outline several details of the study. Topics that will be covered include, study design, sampling and size, data collection process and instruments used to collect data. Further discussion includes procedures used to gather data, how confidentiality and anonymity are established and maintained for all participants throughout the study and how the collected data was analyzed.

#### Study Design

The objective of the study is to explore variables that can provide insight and conclusive data on the reasoning behind occurrences of social isolation. Procurement of definite data in this area can assist professionals' in evolving their understanding of the impact of internet use and how it possibly contributes to episodes of social isolation in individuals.

An Explanatory Design was chosen for the study to explore the possibility of a causal connection between motivation of Internet use and occurrence of social isolation. In addition, the Explanatory research design is more generalizable, and with the vast population of Internet users a study that can be applied to many populations is desirable. Many articles that were reviewed for this project did not provide extensive information on an

individual's motivation for Internet use, and with the Exploratory design there is an expectation to establish a foundation on this topic to promote further studies. Furthermore, obtaining substantial data can aid in the development of new interventions to address social isolation.

Information gained from the study has the potential to increase professionals' knowledge of the subject, and assist them in identifying symptoms and behaviors that are present with the people they serve. The professional's ability to recognize the need for support will reduce participants' time in accessing treatment, and assist them in applying effective interventions.

### Implications

One micro level benefit of the study is that professionals can potentially utilize data obtained to develop a biological, psychological, and social assessment tool that includes examination of individuals' Internet habits and use. Gaining more inclusive information on individuals' behaviors will assist practitioners in establishing a comprehensive strategy for client success. Regarding mezzo level practice, information gained from the study can be evaluated to determine if there are certain themes that exist with Internet users that promote healthy psychological well-being which can then be integrated into interventions, treatment and educational materials. The combination of data gathered from this study and various pre-existing studies on Internet use and social isolation can strengthen the professional's ability to advocate for



change on a macro level. Compiled data can reveal the potential risks and benefits of Internet use in regards to their psychological and social well-being which can be presented to policy makers who can establish suitable Internet rules, mandate firmer guidelines and dictate disclaimers that will properly inform Internet consumers.

### Limitations

Due to the estimated time allotted for the proposed study, there is not sufficient time to form a longitudinal study with a larger sample size which could perhaps produce a more representative population sample of Internet users. The limitations of length of time to conduct study, sample size and access to available research assists also creates potential for obtaining data that is less conclusive than desirable because of the inability to collect qualitative data to highlight additional complexities surrounding the topic. Additionally, the Snowball sampling method chosen for this study is less desirable than other sampling methods due to the potential to generate a more efficient sample with specified desired characteristics. Despite the limitations of the study there is potential to obtain data that does answer the research question: Does an individual's motivation for using the internet relate to episodes of social isolation?

### Sampling

A compilation of English speaking, male adults and female adults will construct the sample size of 100 participants that are desired for the proposed

study. Twenty adult participants between the ages of eighteen and fifty years old will be selected by systematic, random sampling from the researcher's 150 people Facebook "Friend List." After the first random participant is selected, every 5th participant from the researcher's "Friend List" will be selected to complete the additional 19 initial participants designated.

The additional 80 participants will be obtained through snowball sampling. The 20 random selected participants will each be encouraged to recruit four participants from their Facebook "Friends List." The 20 participants will be informed of the criteria to participate in the study, and they will be given the additional instruction of picking individuals who are of different ethnic backgrounds than their own. The random selections process will ideally increase the odds of creating a sample that is culturally diverse which will promote the chances of establishing a sample that is most representative of the greater population of Internet users. The sample size and sampling method were chosen based on the time allotted for study and the feasibility for the researcher to complete data compilation.

#### Data Collection and Instruments

The basis of the study is to examine the independent variable of motivation for Internet use and habits and the dependent variable of social isolation. Two established instruments that will be used to measure the participants perceived level of loneliness and isolation and personality type. The researcher has also modified the additional instrument that will explore

individual Internet users' habits and use. The two established instruments are, JongGlerveld Loneliness scale (Appendix A) and The Big 5 Personality Inventory (Appendix B). The third instrument is the researcher's modified survey (Appendix C) that was compiled through research of Internet habits and usage.

The JongGlerveld Loneliness scale was chosen for this study because the measurement addresses both social and emotional variables that effect loneliness. This instrument was also chosen due to its proven status of high validity and reliability. There is also the ability for the researcher to run co-efficients and compare to various other research studies that have utilized the measurement. The JongGlerveld Loneliness scale has been utilized to measure loneliness in older adults, but based on available research there does not appear to be a vast difference when using with other adult populations.

The Big 5 Personality test was selected for this study because it explores five broad factors of personality traits. This measurement is also attractive to the researcher due to the extent of use and production of statistical analyses that has been conducted over the years, and it's universal applications among English speaking, adult population.

The final instrument will measure participants' motivation and frequency of Internet use by exploring their patterns of use and habits. The researcher chose to modify an instrument that encompassed several traits of other

instruments that have been used on other Internet studies with adults so that the desired information for the study could be obtained. In exploring other instruments, the researcher did not find one instrument that had characteristic that met all of the needs for the proposed study.

### Procedures

All data collection was conducted over a secure online site named Qualtrics that offered software and security for an avenue of professional research. Conducting surveys over protected website helped to promote confidentiality through their secure server. Participants were provided a link to surveys that connected them to the secure website. Surveys were available for participants to complete for three weeks online. Participants were instructed to complete the surveys one time to increase reliability of results.

There are three steps of data collection for the study. Participants of the study will be asked to complete online surveys composed of a mixture of close-ended and open ended questions that address individuals' motivation (communication through social network sites, retrieval of information, entertainment), frequency (how many times used), and duration (length of time used) of Internet use. Participants were asked to complete a JongGierveld Loneliness Scale to address their perceived thoughts and feelings of emotional and social loneliness. The final step in the data collection process was for participants to complete The Big 5 Personality Inventory that aided in identifying existing personality traits.

## Protection of Human Subjects

Data for the study was collected through Qualtrics that assisted the researcher in promoting confidentiality of participants' identifying information and data. All coding of information collected from participants remained stored online for the duration of the study through the website's secure and private server. Access to aggregate reports were viewed and accessed through the online site by researcher, and information was only accessible with username and password to decrease chances of third party obtaining participant's information and answers from surveys. Participants did provide their names, and all data collected from participants remained private. After data collection was completed, compiled and analyzed the information obtained from the participants of the study were deleted from the Qualtrics site.

## Data Analysis

Quantitative data was collected for this study. Information obtained from online surveys were reviewed by researcher who copulated, coded and analyzed to create meaningful data. The data that was analyzed is age, gender, ethnicity, motivation for internet use, frequency of internet use, loneliness scores and personality types. The next step in the data analysis process was to enter data into the program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis consisted of running frequencies in SPSS for all previously mentioned variables that include standard deviation, minimum,

maximum, mean, median, and mode. Bivariate correlations for all variables will also be conducted.

The next step in data analysis was to obtain more descriptive data by running crosstabs. The last step in the data analysis process was to bivariate analyses on the key variables to determine if relationships between these variables exist. The process of analysis will ideally reveal a relationship between participants' motivation for Internet use, and their level of social interactiveness

### Summary

The information covered in the methods section provides detailed insight into the process of data collection, study and analysis of collected data. The Explanatory Design of the study guided the researcher through obtaining concrete information of the correlation of variables and produce an explanation to support further studies on the topic. The sample population, size, and collection method was largely determined based on the need to protect human subjects, allotted time for the study, feasibility and cost. The quantitative procedure selected for analysis examined several variables, and provides further awareness of how professionals can approach the problem being presented in the proposed study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

In this chapter data gathered from the JongGlerveld Loneliness scale, The Big 5 Personality Inventory and Internet Use Surveys will be presented. The discussion will outline the participants' demographics, key variables of the study, types of communication participants are engaging in during Internet use, level of connectedness participants felt with others and Bivariate Analysis. The discussion will conclude with a summary of the researcher's findings.

#### Presentation of the Findings

##### Demographics

The presented study consisted of 47 participants (Table 1). Participants consisted of 34 females (72%) and 13 males (28%). Participants' ages ranged from 18 years old to 57 years old. Eleven percent of participants were 18 to 25 years old, 19% were 26 to 30 years old, 40% were 31 to 40 years old, 28% were 41 to 57 years old, and one participant did not report her age. More than half (51%) of the participants identified themselves as being Caucasians, followed by Hispanics (41%), Asian (4%), and individuals who identified as other (4%). Regarding participants levels of education, 21% reported that they had completed some Secondary (Middle/High) school, 34% reported

completion of some university education, and 45% reported having obtained advanced degrees.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender (N = 47)		
Female	34	72
Male	13	28
Age (In Years)		
18-25	5	11
26-30	9	19
31-40	19	40
41-57	13	28
Unknown	1	2
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	24	51
Hispanic	19	41
Asian	2	4
Other	2	4
Education Level		
Some Secondary (Middle/High School)	10	21
Some University	16	34
Advanced Degree	21	45



### Key Variables

The Internet Use survey used for this study was composed of a mixture of 19 multiple choice, Likert scale, closed-ended, and demographic questions. The central purpose of the Internet Use survey was to gather data on participants' motivations (reasons) for accessing the Internet (Table 2), and also the average frequency they were engaging in Internet use (Table 3).

The 47 participants reported the following categories regarding their motivation for Internet use (Table 2), 11% blogging, 51% music, 45% news, 9% Instant Messaging, 23% gaming, 2% file sharing, 51% shopping, 68% Social Networking, 57% web browsing, 28% Internet Television. Additionally, 19% reported that they do something other than the previously listed categories of use, and no participants reported using the Internet for online dating or chat rooms.

Table 2. Motivation for Internet Use

Variables	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Internet Categories (N = 47)		
Blogs	5	11
Music	24	51
News	21	45
Instant Messenger	4	9
Gaming	11	23
File Sharing	1	2
Shopping	24	51
Social Networking	32	68
Web Browsing	27	57
Internet Television	13	28
Other	9	19

Additionally, participants reported their frequency of Internet use (Table 3) as followed, 17% used every day and 83% used more than once a day. Participants described that on average 4% of them spend less than one hour a day using the Internet, 72% used 1 to 4 hours a day, and 24% used more than 4 hours a day.

Table 3. Frequency of Internet Use

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Internet Use (Monthly) (N = 47)		
Daily	8	17
More than Once a Day	39	83
Daily Internet Use (hours)		
Less than One Hour	2	4
1-4 Hours	34	72
More than 4 Hours a Day	11	24

### Communication

The results from the Internet Use survey provided further information on how participants' motivation for Internet utilization was to communication with others. Most common forms of Internet communication participants identified using were 13% voice calling, 75% SMS (texting), 2% email, 4% Instant Messaging, and 3% specified that they met with others face to face. Also, forty-five percent of participants indicated that they had initially become acquainted with someone online prior to meeting them in person.

### Connectedness

Data collected on connectedness revealed 60% of participants believed that through their Internet use they were more connected with their families, followed by 51% with others who share their hobbies and recreational activities, 38% with people in their profession, 13% with others who share

similar life situations (self-help and support groups), 9% with individuals who hold the same religious beliefs and 4% with people who share their political interests. In addition, 77% of participants believe that their Internet use habits have not made them more isolated from the people in their lives, and 23% did endorse that they believe that their Internet use and habits have made them more isolated

### Big 5 Personality Inventory

The Big 5 Personality Inventory utilized for this study is a self-reported inventory composed of a brief list of 44 expressions that participants responded with options from a five point Likert matrix. Concluding the Inventory, the participants' answers were evaluated to determine their openness to experience (intellectual interest, ingenuity and a partiality for originality), neuroticism (emotionally adverse), agreeableness (passive characteristics), extraversion (concentration on external environment) and conscientiousness (self-directed).

The Big Five personality instrument is based on theory that personality traits are broad and impact the person's mental state, the way a person expresses emotions, and how they express behaviors. These are divided into five relatively distinct areas of traits, and include Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness.

Participants results reported from the Inventory (Table 4) provided detailed statistics for the 5 personality types previously mentioned. The

Extraversion Mean was (26), Minimum (13) and Maximum (38), Agreeableness Mean (35), Minimum (17), and Maximum (45), Conscientiousness Mean (34), Minimum (16), and Maximum (44), Neuroticism Mean (24), Minimum (9), and Maximum (38), and Openness Mean (37), Minimum (17), and Maximum (47).

Table 4. Big 5 Personality Inventory Participants Statistics

	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
N Valid	47	47	47	47	46
Missing	0	0	0	0	1
Mean	25.5532	35.2766	34.2128	23.8723	37.1522
Median	24.0000	36.0000	35.0000	24.0000	37.0000
Minimum	13.00	17.00	16.00	9.00	17.00
Maximum	38.00	45.00	44.00	38.00	47.00

#### De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale

This self-reported loneliness scale is a compilation of 11 questions with a 3 point Likert matrix of “no,” “more or less” and “yes.” This scale was employed to determine the occurrence of the variables of emotional loneliness and social isolation in participants. Loneliness statistics (Table 5) derived from Participants’ responses were Mean (5), Minimum (0) and Maximum (11). More than half (66%) of participants endorsed that there is always someone they can talk to about their day-to-day problems. Thirteen percent of participants reported that they experience a general sense of emptiness. Over one-fourth

(28%) of the participants reported that they miss the pleasure of the company of others, and 17% indicated that they miss having people around.

Data obtained from participants was processed by totaling neutral and positive answers (“more or less”, “yes”) on negatively framed items that provided the emotional loneliness score. The range of emotional loneliness was from 0 (not emotionally lonely) to 3 (intensely emotionally lonely). Calculating neutral and negative answers (“no” and “more or less”) on the positively articulated items resulted in the social loneliness score. The social loneliness score ranged from 0 to 3 (intensely socially lonely). Missing data did not produce any score on the Loneliness because data was not calculated.

Table 5. De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale Participants Statistics

Loneliness Statistics		
N	Valid	45
	Missing	19
Mean		4.6444
Std. Deviation		3.41225
Minimum		.00
Maximum		11.00

### Bivariate Analysis

A Bivariate analysis was completed to search for relationships between demographics, personality types and loneliness with Internet use and Frequency. The results revealed that none of the variables were related to

Internet Use or frequency with the exception of Agreeableness and how often the participant used the Internet. This was a positive correlation ( $r(45) = .35$ ,  $p = .015$ ).

### Summary

This chapter highlighted the statistical, frequency and percentage data that was gathered from the various completed surveys. Participants' demographics were presented to provide a description of the sample utilized for the study. Key variables were also defined to provide a framework for the study. Participants' Internet communication and perceived connectedness were viewed, and lastly, the Bivariate Analysis details were presented to determine relationships between variables.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This final chapter will outline significant outcomes and central findings, and examine the limitations of the study. Additionally, recommendations for social work practice, policy and research will be considered, and an overview of the study will be presented with researcher's concluding comments.

#### Discussion

This study was designed to examine an individual's motivation for Internet use and how it relates to episodes of social isolation. Research focused on gathering data regarding individuals' motivation and frequency for Internet use, personality type, social isolation and emotional loneliness.

Regarding motivation (reason) for Internet use, the two most commonly selected reasons were social media use (68%) and web browsing (57%). The three least selected motives for Internet use were file sharing (2%), Instant Messaging (9%) and blogging (11%). The data retrieved regarding motivation for Internet was not extensively addressed in the other studies, but the information retrieved from this study provides some information on individuals' habits and preference for Internet use.

These findings on motivation for Internet use, coupled with the data collected on connectedness that revealed that 60% of participants endorsed



feeling more connected to their families, are consistent with findings by Jones and Rebola (2011) that through Internet communication older adults' lives are possibly enhanced. These findings may also support Kang's (2007) research findings that individuals may favor Internet use for social interactions due to decreased demands associated with in person communication. Additionally, these findings support results by Billick and Veretilo (2012), who found that social media could be used as a treatment method, and socially anxious individuals (Bargh & McKenna, 2000) could use social media to strengthen relationship expansion.

Regarding connectedness, the largest amount of participants (77%) did not consider their Internet habits were secluding them from others. This finding reinforces discoveries by Zimbra, Chen and Abbasi (2010) that through the growing trend of technology use connectivity has expanded globally.

All adult participants reported that they used the Internet daily, and the only variations with data was the frequency of daily use. The majority of Internet use was one to four hours a day (72%), followed by 24% of participants engaging in more than four hours of Internet use, and lastly, findings reflected that only 4% of participants utilized the Internet less than one hour a day.

The information gathered from this study does not appear to support Moody (2001), who found that frequency of Internet use is directly related to increased rates of emotional loneliness and decrease degrees of social

loneliness. Also, these findings do not confirm Diego, Field, Kaplan and Sanders' (2000) outcomes of greater amounts of time accessing Internet being related to decreased social connections or smaller amounts of use enhancing established relationships. Regardless of the amount of time spent on Internet use, participants' data did not reveal that there was a negative impact on participants' social networks or improvement in their relationships with less Internet use.

Personality data revealed that 36% of participants considered themselves both agreeable and open, 34% were conscientious, 28% were extroverts and 19% were neurotic. Additional data revealed that 25% of participants considered themselves to have dual personality traits, and 11% responded in a manner that determined that they had some amount of all personality traits. The study revealed that individuals that have a higher propensity for Agreeableness (approachable, sociable and thoughtful) correlated with how often (frequency) the participant used the Internet, other than this finding there did not appear to be a relationship between personality style or loneliness with Internet use overall. The previously stated finding does not support results by Phillips, Scealy and Stevenson (2002) that shy and non-shy individuals utilize the Internet in the same manner for communication. Nor do the findings support that extroverted traits directly influence individuals' online behavior (Larose & Liu, 2008). Amichai-Hamburger and Ben-Artzi (2003) outcomes concerning neurotic women's significant display of loneliness

related to both their personality and motivation for Internet use are also not supported by the personality findings in this study.

Regarding data collected on loneliness, none of the participants in this study reported being completely isolated, and 23% conveyed that they had some degree of loneliness. The data collected on loneliness did not reveal a relationship between individuals' motivation for and frequency of Internet use. Frequency or motivation of Internet use did not appear to affect participants' episodes of social or emotional isolation.

These outcomes do not aid in demonstrating results by Bae, Baek and Jang (2013) that greater reliance on Internet connections support feelings associated with isolation lower social cynicism, and certain Internet use addiction tendencies. Data did not completely affirm the findings of Grant and Shaw (2002) that Internet use significantly decreased loneliness and depression, however it did support findings on opinions of increased social connectedness.

### Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was the sample size. Researcher had anticipated obtaining results from 100 participants. Sixty-seven individuals initially participated in the study, but the sample size had to be reduced to 47 due to 20 of the participants not completing all surveys. An aspect that should be taken into consideration is that the online research site where surveys were launched did not prompt all participants to complete all posted surveys even

when they indicated that they wanted to proceed. This detail could account for the missing data from the previously mention 20 participants which caused the researcher to disregard some potentially viable data. Obtaining a larger sample size could have increased the probability of developing an inclusive and a more accurate representation of all Internet users.

An additional limitation is the restricted time frame allotted to the research to conduct they study. Researcher's preference would have been to conduct a longitudinal study so that participants Internet habits could be thoroughly observed, and the additional complexities surrounding the topic of isolation could have been explored in depth.

Lastly, a limitation that was present is the manner that researcher used to recruit participants. Researcher utilized her Facebook page to obtain participants for the study, which did not produce an extensive variation in the demographics of the participants. The participants were largely Hispanic and Caucasian, and many of them reported being highly educated. Also, 72% of the participants were females, and there was minimal representation from younger (18 to 25 years old) and older (41 to 57 years old) adults.

#### Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

One recommendation for Social Work practice is to utilize data from this study and previously conducted studies on the topic of Internet use and the impact on individuals' well-being to develop comprehensive psychosocial

assessments that consider factors such as Internet use and habits. The more inclusive information social workers can derive from their individual assessments, the more able they are to identify potential social and mental health risk factors so they can deliver viable interventions and services in a timely manner. Complete assessments will also allow social workers to observe the impacts Internet use may have on interpersonal relationships, how an individual interacts in a virtual person in environment, and examine how individuals' behaviors are shaped based on their established beliefs and connections through Internet use.

Another manner that social workers can utilize data in this study is to highlight outcomes and couple them with other studies' results to present to prospective funders in order to secure financial resources to conduct longitudinal studies that will provided more concrete data to develop applicable treatment modalities. Longitudinal studies also will provide social workers the opportunity to observe the possibility of implementing Internet use as part of treatment plans, and considering how certain motivations for Internet use can help reduce other concerns that accompany isolation, such as depressed mood, decline in physical health, inhibited development, insufficient interpersonal skills, and immature coping skills.

Lastly, social workers can use the outcomes offered to educate themselves on the presented topic so that they can develop a multidimensional understanding and increase their desire to advocate for

socially conscious Internet policies, As a result, social workers can also take on the role of consultant to inform others of the benefits of Internet based research and programs.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored the variables of motivation and habits for Internet use, individuals' personality traits and perception of loneliness as it relates to isolation. One substantial result that was obtained from this study is that frequency of Internet use is associated with the personality trait of agreeableness. Other than the aforementioned relationship there was no other relationships that emerged between the offered variables. Previous studies determined that Internet use in a treatment context for specific populations can be beneficial, but only a small percentage of participants in this study utilized the Internet for treatment purposes (self-help or support groups). The greatest motivation for Internet use amongst participants was to access social media that did allow them to maintain or increase their social ties especially to their families. Although there was no conclusive data obtained on motivation for Internet use and relationship to social isolation, data reveals that more than three-fourths (77%) of participants believed that their Internet habits did not make them more isolated from others, and 60% of individuals reported being more connected to others that they already had an established relationship through their Internet use.

The need for further research in this area is apparent due to the limited conclusive data that exist on this subject. Future studies would benefit more from conducting research with a larger amount of participants, that are more culturally and socially diverse to construct a more representative sample of the Internet user population. A longitudinal study is also recommended to produce data that are more conclusive. Limitation of time and sample size in this study created a challenge for the researcher to collect data that are more concrete.

Social Workers would benefit immensely from studying the presented topic further because of the unknown impact Internet use has on the overall well-being of an individual. A large percentage of social workers duties are to evaluate the impact that environmental factors have on individuals' development, relationships and ability to achieve self-efficacy. The professional's increased awareness will aid them in becoming a more effective practitioner, and assist them in developing a broad understanding of the people they serve. Social Workers will continue to work various populations in various settings, and one aspect that they need to be aware of is that there are new generations emerging that will never know a society without the Internet.

APPENDIX A  
DE JONG GIERVELD LONELINESS SCALE



## De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale

**Please indicate for each of the statements, the extent to which they apply to your situation, the way you feel now. Please circle the appropriate answer.**

- 1. There is always someone I can talk to about my day-to-day problems**  
Yes    More or Less    No
- 2. I miss having a really close friend**  
Yes    More or Less    No
- 3. I experience a general sense of emptiness**  
Yes    More or Less    No
- 4. There are plenty of people I can rely on when I have problems**  
Yes    More or Less    No
- 5. I miss the pleasure of the company of others**  
Yes    More or Less    No
- 6. I find my circle of friends and acquaintances too limited**  
Yes    More or Less    No
- 7. There are many people I can trust completely**  
Yes    More or Less    No
- 8. There are enough people I feel close to**  
Yes    More or Less    No
- 9. I miss having people around**  
Yes    More or Less    No
- 10. I often feel rejected**  
Yes    More or Less    No
- 11. I can call on my friends whenever I need them**  
Yes    More or Less    No

APPENDIX B  
BIG FIVE INVENTORY (PERSONALITY TEST)

## Big Five Inventory (Personality test)

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

<b>Disagree strongly</b>	<b>Disagree a little</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree a little</b>	<b>Agree strongly</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

### I see Myself as Someone Who...

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ___1. Is talkative                            | ___23. Tends to be lazy                           |
| ___2. Tends to find fault with others         | ___24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset    |
| ___3. Does a thorough job                     | ___25. Is inventive                               |
| ___4. Is depressed, blue                      | ___26. Has an assertive personality               |
| ___5. Is original, comes up with new ideas    | ___27. Can be cold and aloof                      |
| ___6. Is reserved                             | ___28. Perseveres until the task is finished      |
| ___7. Is helpful and unselfish with others    | ___29. Can be moody                               |
| ___8. Can be somewhat careless                | ___30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences     |
| ___9. Is relaxed, handles stress well         | ___31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited                |
| ___10. Is curious about many different things | ___32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone |
| ___11. Is full of energy                      | ___33. Does things efficiently                    |
| ___12. Starts quarrels with others            | ___34. Remains calm in tense situations           |
| ___13. Is a reliable worker                   | ___35. Prefers work that is routine               |
| ___14. Can be tense                           | ___36. Is outgoing, sociable                      |
| ___15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker           | ___37. Is sometimes rude to others                |

- \_\_\_16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm      \_\_\_38. Makes plans and follows through with them
- \_\_\_17. Has a forgiving nature              \_\_\_39. Gets nervous easily
- \_\_\_18. Tends to be disorganized          \_\_\_40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas
- \_\_\_19. Worries a lot                          \_\_\_41. Has few artistic interests
- \_\_\_20. Has an active imagination          \_\_\_42. Likes to cooperate with others
- \_\_\_21. Tends to be quiet                    \_\_\_43. Is easily distracted
- \_\_\_22. Is generally trusting                \_\_\_44. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature

**Please check: Did you write a number in front of each statement?**

Oliver P. John hold the copyright to the BFI and it is not in the public domain per se. However, it is freely available for researchers to use for ***non-commercial research purposes***. Please keep us posted on your findings.

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John, O. P., Donahue, E. M., & Kentle, R. L. (1991). *The big five inventory-- Versions 4a and 54*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley, Institute of Personality and Social Research.

APPENDIX C  
INTERNET USE SURVEY

Internet Use Survey

1. **Age In Years:** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Ethnicity:** \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Choose which of the following best describes your educational level?**
  - None
  - Some elementary school
  - Some secondary school
  - Some university
  - Advanced degree
5. **Choose how often do you use the Internet?**
  - Everyday
  - More than once a day
  - Once a day
  - Once a month
  - Less than once a month
6. **On average, how many hours per day do you spend on the Internet?**
  - Less than 1 hour a day
  - 1-2 hours
  - 2-3 hours
  - 3-4 hours
  - More than 4 hours a day
7. **What do you like doing most online? Circle all that apply.**

Chat rooms	Shopping
Blogs	Social Networking (e.g. Facebook, Instagram)
Music (e.g. iTunes)	Web browsing
News	Internet TV
Instant Messenger (e.g. MSN, Yahoo)	email
Gaming	Other (please specify)
File Sharing	_____

8. How often do you use.....Write the number of how often you use next to the activity.

Everyday-5, More than once a day-4, Once a week-3, Once a month-2 Less than once a month-1

- Chat rooms\_\_\_\_\_
- Instant messenger\_\_\_\_\_
- Social Networking sites\_\_\_\_\_
- Blogs\_\_\_\_\_
- Gaming\_\_\_\_\_
- Web Browsing\_\_\_\_\_
- Music\_\_\_\_\_
- File Sharing\_\_\_\_\_
- Shopping\_\_\_\_\_
- News\_\_\_\_\_Internet TV\_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. Where do you use the Internet? Circle all that apply.

- Home
- School
- Café
- Library
- Your mobile phone
- Friend's or family's house
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

10. If you use Internet at home, what room do you use it in? Circle all that apply.

- Living Room
- Bedroom
- Dining Room
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the main way of communication with your offline friends? Circle all that apply.

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Voice call (Mobile) | Instant Messaging |
| Video call (Mobile) | Skype             |
| SMS                 | Chat Rooms        |
| Email               | Gaming Sites      |

12. How many online contacts do you have that you have not met in the real world?

Number of Contacts\_\_\_\_\_

**13. Have you ever met someone in the real world you have only met online?**

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**14. Which of these groups have you become more connected to through the Internet? Circle all that apply.**

People who share my political interests

People in my family

People who share my hobbies/recreational activities

People in similar life situations (e.g. self-help groups, support groups)

People who share my religion  
People in my profession

Other groups

**15. Complete the following sentence in the way that comes closest to your own views: "Since getting on the Internet, I have "**

become MORE connected with people like me.

become LESS connected with people like me.

Don't know/can't say

**16. Do you believe that your Internet use and habits have made you more isolated from the people in your life?**

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**Thank you for your participation in this Internet Survey**

© 2016 QuestionPro Survey Software sample Internet habits and use survey and Internet Usage Questionnaire Survey modified by Melissa Allen



APPENDIX D  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee

Researcher(s) Melissa Allen  
Proposal Title Internet Use and Social Isolation:  
Exploring the Variables  
# 1602

Your proposal has been reviewed by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board. The decisions and advice of those faculty are given below.

-----  
Proposal is:

- approved  
 to be resubmitted with revisions listed below  
 to be forwarded to the campus IRB for review

Revisions that must be made before proposal can be approved:

- faculty signature missing  
 missing informed consent  debriefing statement  
 revisions needed in informed consent  debriefing  
 data collection instruments missing  
 agency approval letter missing  
 CITI missing  
 revisions in design needed (specified below)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chair Signature

12/9/15  
Date

Distribution: White-Coordinator; Yellow-Supervisor; Pink-Student

APPENDIX E  
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

## DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

### Adult Participants

The study that you have chosen to participate in was designed to explore relationships between motivation for Internet use and occurrences of social isolation. In this study four variables were assessed: social connectedness, emotional well-being, personality type, and Internet use and habits. Survey questions were designed to obtain current and past information on participant feelings, thoughts and habits to determine if individuals are more or less vulnerable to episodes of isolation.

Due to the sensitive nature of topics presented in this study, a list of mental health resources have been provided below to support you in processing feelings or thoughts that may have developed due to your participation. If you have immediate need for assistance, there is a number for emergency hotlines that can provide immediate service. Resources may also be used to obtain educational information on topics discussed in the study.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Melissa Allen or Professor Carolyn McAllister at California State University San Bernardino's School of Social Work at (909) 537-5000. If you would like to obtain a copy of the results of this study, please contact PFAU Library, Scholar Works in the summer 2016.

## **Behavioral and Mental Health Resources**

### **Access Unit**

(909) 381-2420

24/7

365 Days per year

The Community Crisis Response Team is a community – based program which provides:

Mobile crisis response for psychiatric emergencies

Case management

Intensive follow up services

Relapse prevention

### **National Suicide Prevention Line**

(800) 273-TALK (8255)

Press #6

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Since its inception, the Lifeline has engaged in a variety of initiatives to improve crisis services and advance suicide prevention.

### **Emotions Anonymous**

(909) 793-3157

First Congressional Church (Lounge)

2 West Olive Avenue

Redlands, CA 92373

Every Wednesdays at 12pm

12 step program for people with different emotional needs.

### **Inland Behavioral Health**

(909) 881-6146

1963 North 'E' Street

San Bernardino, CA 92405

[www.ibhealth.org](http://www.ibhealth.org)

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8pm-5pm

Mental Health, Substance Abuse Counseling,

Homeless Support Services, Prevention/Outreach Program, anger management, medical, pharmacy, and dental.

Medical/Medi-Medi/lehp/Molina accepted.

Sliding scale available for uninsured. Sliding fee scale ranges from \$20-\$100 based on income,

**SAC Clinic**

(909) 382-7135

1455 E. Third St.

San Bernardino, CA 92408

For more information, go to; <http://sbcms.org>

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 7:30am-5:00pm; Friday, Closed

Must make a general appointment first. After that initial appointment the client would be referred to their behavioral health department for further psychological needs.

Therapy/ counseling, psychological testing, group therapy, drug and alcohol outpatient treatment, and parenting classes.

Accepts Medi-cal and Medi-Medi

Low Cost- Sliding fee scale, must bring proof of income (\$30-\$60)

**Valley Star Community Services**

1585 South D ST. Suite 101

San Bernardino, CA 92408

Phone: (909) 388-2222

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm

Family Activities

Mental Health Workshops

FREE Short Term Counseling- Children, Adults, Family, Couple etc

**Loma Linda Integrated Academic Clinic**

1686 Barton Rd, Redlands, CA 92373

(909) 558-9500

Services

- Individual, couple, child, and family therapy
- Premarital Counseling
- Parenting/Co Parenting and Anger Management Classes
- Psychological Assessments
- Medication Management

Affordable services on a sliding scale

Appts available Mondays-Thursdays from 8am to 8pm and Fridays 8am-5pm

Services include; Premarital & Marital Therapy, Family & Group Therapy, Child & Adolescent Therapy, Therapy for Work & School Related Issues, Medication Management Parent-Child Therapy, & Couple Therapy. (Spanish Speaking Therapists available)

A non-profit agency with sliding scale fees

**SAMHSA's National Helpline** (also known as the Treatment Referral Routing Service)

Call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** or visit the **online treatment locators**.

- confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year
- information service, in English and Spanish
- Individuals and family members facing mental health and/or substance use disorders.
- This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations. Callers can also order free publications and other information.

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