

Opinion

Internet depression study prompts unnecessary criticism, alarm

Well, it looks like another bad break for Aggies "wired in" college students in general. First one of the er was the road action. Then, parking. Then, of the ever-present between students and the Parking, and Transportation Services. v, something else to worry about net depression. Jeez. What will next? The University will decide re all the parking to West Campus? for the love of God, no.



BEVERLY MIRELES

sion stems from trying to download Netscape 4.0 Gold on a 66 megahertz computer and then watching the hard-drive spontaneously burst into flames.

In all seriousness, though, the researchers had earlier hypothesized that the Internet would have more positive effects because its main function is interaction with others online. It is one of the few places people can interact with others from a huge range of eclectic environments and cultures on an everyday basis.

The Internet has many social features on it, such as chat rooms and personal Web pages.

These are all basically designed to foment human contact, if only by computer screen. And that is what researchers found to be the problem.

Of the people who used the Internet, most did frequent the chat rooms, but the lack of face

face interaction seemed to affect them. In that aspect, the findings are not really all that shocking. Being in close quarters with a computer screen is just not the same as having an exchange with

an actual human being, no matter how enthralling the cyber chat might be.

The study is a strong reminder that direct human contact is essential to the public's health and well-being.

Biologically, people are social animals. By denying the basic need to have direct social contact with other people, individuals can begin to lose their sense of self and their place in society.

Though that is one huge theoretical leap, with at least 70 million adults online these days (adults include college students, scary as that may be), Internet depression is one topic that deserves some attention.

Attention it will most likely receive. In 1996, the big media circus busied itself with delving into the "Internet addiction." Pages upon pages were written about youths who were suffering with drawings likened to those of heroin addicts.

However, more serious investigative reporting threw out the idea of Internet addiction, especially once it

was learned that the phrase itself had been coined as a joke.

But with some actual research done in the area of Internet depression, the findings will be harder to dismiss. Does that mean there will be a rapid media backlash against technology?

Hopefully not. The study, though quite thorough, was hardly conclusive. The subject group was not ever randomly picked. There were also many non-controlled variables that threw off the findings, such as sleep-deprivation and flaming.

Flaming is a concept that says remote human interaction increases candor. This would mean that the Internet users, spending more time alone, cut off from society of the tangible sort, were only more aware of their depressed sensibilities than their non-Internet using counterparts. And as anyone who has recently visited a chat room knows, lack of candor on the Internet is most definitely not a problem, especially in comparison with everyday social interaction.

This study may show the negative sides of the Internet, and there are plenty, but one-sided evaluations are useless. Until a more scientific and conclusive study is completed, using the Internet should continue to be a positive activity, and not one that will send us running for our psychiatrists.

Beverly Mireles is a sophomore microbiology major.



GRAPHIC BY TIMOTHY KANG/THE BATTALION

Many freshmen underestimate alcohol's potential health threat

inking is an inevitable experience. You do not drink off into a. When art slurping the drinking d stop, and if the room spinning, it is too late. nking is not an activity that eyed only by those of legal age. In fact, drinking often than not begins during first year of college. So Agree all a bunch of alcoholics No, but it is responsibility revents one from taking it



CORRIE CAULEY

gles on, an inebriated fish is more likely to fail to recognize the immediate dangers involved in driving while intoxicated. Many times people will altogether deny their impaired state, claiming they are sober enough to drive.

It is important to know when to say when. And as the saying goes, friends don't let friends drive drunk.

Do not cheat yourself by riding with someone that is not as drunk as you. If they are drunk at all, find another way of getting home. It only takes one misjudgment for you to never make the same mistake again.

One night of being irresponsible can be a fatal mistake.

Last year, Scott Krueger, a freshman at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, made headlines after falling into a coma as a result of excessive drinking, which ultimately led to his death.

that freshmen tend to be the most susceptible. Freshmen exploring their first year of freedom often drink more than they can handle. Many freshmen admit that they drink to get drunk.

The first year away from home can be difficult. There are a lot of adjustments to be made. One of the hardest adjustments to make is meeting new people and making new friends. Often freshmen turn to drinking to loosen up and to make their conversation and socializing less inhibited.

Sometimes, the buzz they wanted to have for the sake of meeting new people turns into a drunkenness that makes for a night of regret. According to statistics, alcohol is related to many cases of sexual assault. Alcohol also lowers inhibitions and increases the likelihood of couples engaging in unplanned and unprotected sex.

Nights you cannot remember are not the only result of too much to drink. Alcohol is strongly associated with missed classes and lower GPRs.

Researchers at the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse say alcohol is a factor in about 41 percent of all academic problems and 28 percent of all cases of student dropout.

Do not forget the reason you are at A&M in the first place. It was hard enough to get in the first time, remember?

So what does all this boil down to? One thing. When you drink, drink responsibly. No one wants to hear your "I was so smashed" stories. No one wants details about how you puked your guts up or about the girl you brought home.

Do not be immature about drinking. Be responsible. Coming from a fellow Ag, no one wants to hear your name called at Muster yet.

Corrie Cauley is a senior journalism major.



GRAPHIC BY TIMOTHY KANG/THE BATTALION

During the same year, a student from Louisiana State University died in a very similar situation. Although much of the blame was placed on the fraternities they were involved with, it is up to the individual to know their limit. Knowing when you have had too much to drink is a personal responsibility.

So why point the finger at freshmen? Obviously freshmen are not the only ones who overindulge, but statistics show

Recycling efforts change campus

As another school year begins, Texas A&M has begun to once again gradually turn over a leaf of self-improvement.



RICHARD PADDACK

With Reed Arena completed and the numerous other construction sites becoming less and less of an eyesore, A&M is starting to feel more like a major university, and less like a hard-hat area. Even Sbisa received a much-needed facelift this summer. But aside from the many structural renovations; A&M has now begun renovations on mother earth.

Starting this summer, A&M joined the ranks of the many selfless organizations and universities throughout the country in the efforts to conserve our planet's natural resources and save the tax payers and students a little money in the process.

The recycling center is not new at A&M, but due to the recent efforts of the Student Senate and the Department of Residence Life they have taken recycling to the next level. But these efforts may be short lived unless students and faculty make the effort to cooperate.

The latest of the new recycling projects have been a success. The most recent achievement of these recycling efforts took place last week during residence hall move-ins.

With the help of the Physical

Plant, Department of Residence Life, Department of Food Services and incoming students A&M was able to haul away 18,000 pounds of cardboard. Before move-in periods fliers were posted with a list of locations accepting the students used cardboard boxes, whereby in return the students received coupons for a free drink from Food Services.

Once the boxes were bundled, they were then shipped to a Waco recycling center where A&M recycling center then received cash per pound depending on the present rate.

Another recent addition to the cause is the Battalion Recycling Bill, which focuses on the clean up of the excess of Battalions left littering the campus at the end of the day.

The recycling center has placed temporary recycling bins at the five main distributing locations on campus until funds for permanent bins are available. Mind you these bins are not just for Battalions, but other newspapers as well.

You will also notice the donated bins in the Blocker building and other buildings for plastic bottles.

The problem that arises with any non-profit organization is the lack of funding, this is the case with the A&M Recycling Center.

"The recycling center is mostly funded from the money they receive from recycled products and this is how they stay afloat," said Elizabeth McKee, a student senator and a senior animal science major. "The problems the recy-

cling center is having are lack of expansion and the lack of departments urging their employees to recycle," she said.

It is obvious that a stronger commitment needs to be made by everyone. It is just another case Aggies helping Aggies.

With the latest influx of freshmen it is even more crucial that we all chip in. Many universities have instilled recycling programs on their campuses and with student and faculty cooperation they are saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in cost avoidance from dumping fees alone, not to mention what they are making from what they recycle.

A&M will save thousands in dumping fees as well. Recycling also improves A&M's image, enabling the campus to serve as a model for the community at-large, and students will take their campus recycling habits with them wherever they go.

So, the next time you are flipping through your insightful and colorful school publication, do not throw it on the ground or the classroom floor, recycle it. Also, this week get up a little early and maybe catch an episode of "Captain Planet." You could even go buy some of that cool fibrous-looking recycled paper. For Aggieland's sake. Look around for recycling bins Ags and make a conscious effort because in this case the ends will justify the means.

Richard Paddock is a senior journalism major.

IM "REMORSEFUL"... IM "CONTRITE"...
IM "REGRETFUL"... IM "PENITENT"...

IF YOU CAN'T JUST SAY 'IM SORRY,' MAYBE YOU SHOULD AT LEAST ADMIT TO AN "INAPPROPRIATE RELATIONSHIP" WITH YOUR THESAURUS...



MIKE LUCKAICH
ART ANIA CONSTITUTIONS

MAIL CALL

th not needed real fulfillment

response to Andrew Baley's 7 column: a senior and a long-time reader of the Battalion, I was rather taken back by Andrew Baley's column mpus religion. I have grown accustomed to the continuous dissonance of religion at A&M, but until I have not seen such outright gelism in the Battalion. hile I do not object to the right

of Baley to write anything he wishes, I want to let new students on campus know that there is opportunity at A&M for non-Christian students.

Any student at A&M can succeed and have a wonderful experience without having to resort to faith and religion. Believe me, I know.

While the overwhelming number of students here are practicing Christians, there are definitely non-Christians out there, and we are having just as much fun as everyone else.

Dan Pirolo
Class of '99

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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