

## Motivace u závislostního chování na internetu MMORPG hráčů



VONDRÁČKOVÁ<sup>1,2</sup>, P., ŠMAHEL<sup>1</sup>, D.

<sup>1</sup> Masarykova Univerzita, Fakulta sociálních studií, Institut výzkumu dětí, mládeže a rodiny, Brno

<sup>2</sup> Klinika adiktologie, 1. lékařská fakulta, Univerzita Karlova v Praze a Všeobecná fakultní nemocnice v Praze

**Citace:** Vondráčková, P., Šmahel, P. (2012). Motivation of MMORPG Players with Addictive Behaviour in Relation to Internet Use. *Adiktologie*, (12)1, 24–34.

**CÍLE:** Popsat motivy ke hraní online her (tzv. MMORPG) u hráčů vykazujících prvky závislostního chování, důvody, které vedou tyto hráče k omezení hraní a způsob, jakým omezení hraní probíhalo. **DESIGN:** Kvalitativní studie. **METODA:** Obsahová analýza polostrukturovaných rozhovorů zaměřených na téma motivace a vývoj hraní. **SOUBOR:** Šestnáct hráčů online her vykazujících rysy závislostního chování na internetu (4 ženy a 12 mužů) ve věku 15–33 let. **VÝSLEDKY:** Motivace uváděné hráči pro jejich online hraní jsou odreagování, seberealizace, kontakt s lidmi a zahánění nudy. Motivace pro hraní je dynamického charakteru a u jednotlivých hráčů se v průběhu času mění. Motivace

pro omezení hraní, které účastníci uváděli, byly: uvědomění si pohlcení hrou, zdravotní důvody, impuls z okolí, impuls ze hry. Strategie, které hráči volili k omezení online hraní, lze rozdělit do dvou základních skupin: postupné omezení se substitucí jiné online aplikace s „bezpečnějším profilem“ a odinstalování hry ze svého počítače. **ZÁVĚR:** Výsledky motivace pro hraní potvrzují závěry zahraničních studií na toto téma a tuto kategorii rozšiřují o zcela nový submotiv hraní online her za účelem profesionálního růstu a možnosti se tímto či podobným tématem v budoucnu živit. Tato studie navíc nově mapuje důvody pro omezení online her a způsob jeho omezení.

**KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA:** INTERNET – MMORPG – ONLINE HRY – ZÁVISLOST NA INTERNETU – ONLINE ZÁVISLOST

**Došlo do redakce:** 24 / SRPEN / 2011

**Přijato k tisku:** 20 / BŘEZEN / 2012

**Grantová podpora:** Autoři přiznávají podporu GAČR – grant „Faktory excesivního hraní a jejich vývoj v čase“ (P407/12/1831) a MŠMT ČR, projekt NETAD, CZ.1.07/2.400/17.0111.

**Address for correspondence:** Mgr. Petra Vondráčková / [vondrackova@adiktologie.cz](mailto:vondrackova@adiktologie.cz) / Klinika adiktologie, 1. lékařská fakulta, Univerzita Karlova v Praze a Všeobecná fakultní nemocnice v Praze, Apolinářská 4, 128 00 Praha 2

# Motivation of MMORPG Players with Addictive Behaviour in Relation to Internet Use



VONDRÁČKOVÁ, P.<sup>1,2</sup>, ŠMAHEL, D.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies, Institute for Research on Children, Youth, and the Family, Brno

<sup>2</sup> Department of Addictology, 1<sup>st</sup> Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague and General University Hospital in Prague, Czech Republic

**Citation:** Vondráčková, P., Šmahel, P. (2012). Motivation of MMORPG Players with Addictive Behaviour in Relation to Internet Use. *Adiktologie*, (12)1, 24–34.

**OBJECTIVES:** To describe the motives for playing online games (MMORPG) in players whose behaviour shows symptoms of addiction to the Internet, the reasons which lead the players to reduce their playing, and how such a reduction takes place. **DESIGN:** Qualitative study. **METHOD:** Content analysis of semi-structured interviews focused on the motivation for and the development of online playing. **PARTICIPANTS:** Sixteen players of online games (4 women and 12 men) aged 15 to 33 years whose behaviour shows symptoms of addiction to the Internet. **RESULTS:** The motives for online gaming reported by the players included escapism, self-realisation, socialisation, and coping with boredom. The motivation for online playing changed dynamically with time. The moti-

ves for the reduction of online playing reported by participants included their realising that they have been absorbed by the game, health problems, impulses from their environment, and impulses from the game. Strategies that the players chose to reduce online gaming were divided into two basic groups: a gradual reduction with replacement by another online application with a “safer profile” and uninstalling the game from the user’s computer. **CONCLUSION:** The results of motivation for online playing confirm the findings of foreign studies and expand the category with the completely new motive of playing online games for professional growth. This study also maps out new reasons for limiting online gaming and how such reductions occurred.

**KEY WORDS:** INTERNET – MMORPG – ONLINE GAMES – INTERNET ADDICTION – ONLINE ADDICTION

**Submitted:** 24 / AUGUST / 2011

**Accepted:** 20 / MARCH / 2012

**Grant support:** The authors would like to acknowledge the support of the Czech Science Foundation (GACR), Grant P407/12/1831, and the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic, Grant CZ.1.07/2.400/17.0111.

**Address for correspondence:** Petra Vondráčková / [vondrackova@adiktologie.cz](mailto:vondrackova@adiktologie.cz) / Department of Addictology, 1<sup>st</sup> Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague and General University Hospital in Prague, Apolinářská 4, 128 00 Prague 2, Czech Republic

## ● 1 INTRODUCTION

Addictive behaviour involving the excessive and compulsive use of the Internet is a form of risky behaviour which has been studied all over the world (see e.g. Vondrackova & Smahel, 2012, Young & de Abreu, 2010). Researchers describe this phenomenon by various terms, such as pathological Internet use (Young, 1995; 1996), problematic Internet use (Shapira, et al., 2000), and Internet addiction (Widyanto & Griffiths, 2006). To this day there is no agreement on the exact definition of Internet addiction or on whether it is a specific mental disorder or only a symptom of another disorder (Block, 2008; Pies, 2009). Currently, this problem is most often clinically diagnosed as an unspecified impulsive and compulsive disorder (Pies, 2009; Shapira et al., 2000). In this article we will use the term addictive behaviour in relation to Internet use, especially since this phenomenon has not yet been included as an official mental disorder and also because we agree with the presumption of Griffiths (2000), who classifies it as addictive behaviour.

Typically, three basic areas of addictive behaviour in relation to Internet use are studied – addiction to online games (especially MMORPGs<sup>1</sup>), addiction to online communication (use of chat applications, email, or social networks) and addiction to pornographic websites or “cybersex” (sexually-themed communication between two or more users) (Šmahel et al., 2009). Playing online games is one of the activities with the greatest addictive potential (Rau et al., 2006), since a large portion of players spend over 40 hours a week in the game (Ng & Wiemer-Hastings, 2005) and playing can thus negatively affect one’s studies or employment and lead to anxiety, the deterioration of interpersonal relationships, escape from reality, and even to violent behaviour and criminal activities (Barnett & Coulson, 2010; Wan & Chiou, 2006b).

One of the perspectives which can be used to study this phenomenon is the reasons why people spend such a great amount of time playing online games and also the reasons leading to the decision to terminate or limit online gaming. The authors of this study try to answer questions such as these. What are the motives for playing MMORPGs for players exhibiting symptoms of addictive behaviour? What are the reasons for MMORPG players exhibiting addictive behaviour to limit their playing? How did they limit the amount of time spent playing? The main contribution of this work is the comprehensive mapping of the motives behind the development of addictive behaviour in relation to the Internet, which, in addition to the mapping of the motives for playing MMORPGs, includes a description of the

1/ MMORPGs (Massive(ly)-Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games) are role-playing computer games connecting thousands of players around the world simultaneously in a single, typically fictitious, virtual world through the Internet.

motives for limiting behaviour showing symptoms of addiction to MMORPGs and the methods used by players to limit such behaviour. We would like to point out that the last of these areas has not been studied in any previous literature.

## ● 2 MOTIVATION OF PLAYERS OF ONLINE GAMES

Bartle carried out the first study focusing on the motivations of players of online games (1996) by means of the analysis of long-term Internet discussions with experienced MUD<sup>2</sup> players and obtained four types of motivation for playing: (a) achieving results in the game; (b) discovering the virtual world; (c) socialisation with others, and (d) gaining power over others. The motivation typology of players of online games was further studied by several authors (Hsu et al., 2009; Yee, 2006a, b; Wan & Chiou, 2006a), and the players’ motives can be divided into four basic categories: achievement, socialisation, immersion in the game, and escape from reality (*Table 1*). The most frequently cited typology, which was also used in other studies, is Yee’s typology (2006a, b) based on the analysis of data from an extensive questionnaire study (n=3000) which focused on the motivations of MMORPG players. The questionnaire was created on the basis of Bartle’s motivation types and the results of previous studies concerning MMORPG players. Yee lists three main categories of motives (achievement, socialisation, and immersion, which includes the motive of escaping from reality), which are then divided into subcategories (see *Table 1*). Some of the motives falling into the immersion category are often labelled as the flow experience, which is described as a status of absolute concentration during a certain activity, in this case playing a game. The flow experience is often conceived as a uni-dimensional motive (Hsu & Lu, 2004). Chou & Ting (2003) define the flow phenomenon as a motive containing a group of five submotives: concentration, playfulness, exploratory behaviour, altered perception of time, and tele-presence (the feeling of presence in the game, despite the player not being physically in the game).

Yee’s studies (2006a, b) of the motivation categories show that the achievement category is preferred by men, especially the younger age categories, while women reported the socialisation and immersion categories more frequently and young women the escape from reality category. The studies differ in which motive is reported most frequently; this could be due to different research methods and differ-

2/ MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons) are text-based role-playing multiplayer computer games which allow thousands of players from all around the world to be simultaneously at a single virtual, generally fictitious, place. In contrast to MMORPGs, MUDs are not based on a graphics engine. Playing takes place through a text interface (either telnet or another connection client). The text form of the communication places more emphasis on the player’s own imagination.

**Table 1**  
Summary of motivation of players of online games

Authors of motivation categories	Basic categories of motivation			
	Achievement	Socialisation	Immersion in the game	Escape from reality
Yee (2006a)	<p><b>Development</b> – progress in the game, hoarding of treasure, experience, and levels</p> <p><b>Mechanisms</b> – raising the numerical characteristics of characters and their optimisation</p> <p><b>Competition</b> – provoking other players, exploiting one's dominance over them</p>	<p><b>Meeting new people</b> – random chatting and trying to find new friends</p> <p><b>Relationships</b> – self-disclosure, finding and providing support</p> <p><b>Teamwork</b> – cooperation, working as a group</p>	<p><b>Discovery</b> – discovering the world, amassing knowledge, and discovering lost things</p> <p><b>Role-playing</b> – the character and its history, the storyline and fantasy theme</p> <p><b>Character</b> – its appearance, equipment, and behaviour</p>	<p><b>Escape from reality</b> – including real-life problems, relaxation</p>
Wan & Chiou (2007) <sup>1</sup>	<p><b>Success</b> – the need to achieve success</p> <p><b>Power</b> – the need to achieve superiority, be in control, and bolster self-esteem</p>	<p><b>Satisfying interpersonal and social needs</b> – finding friends, strengthening friendships, having a feeling of belonging somewhere</p>	<p><b>Fun and free time</b></p>	<p><b>Emotional coping</b> – shifting attention away from isolation, loneliness, boredom, stress, and frustration, relaxation</p> <p><b>Escape from reality</b></p>
Hsu, Wen a Wu (2009)	<p><b>Challenge</b> – fulfilling and achieving goals</p> <p><b>Control</b> – the ability to learn the game and its mechanics and to use them to reach the player's goals</p> <p><b>Competitiveness</b> – the tendency to compete and be better than other players</p> <p><b>Success</b> – high character level which is used to determine social status among other players</p>	<p><b>Cooperation</b> – cooperating with other players</p> <p><b>Acknowledgment</b> – people notice the player in the game</p> <p><b>Belonging</b> – being in a specific group with other players</p> <p><b>Social commitment</b> – peer pressure on players to play longer and more intensively</p>	<p><b>Fantasy</b> – new experiences, immersion in the game world</p> <p><b>Curiosity</b> – the sensory curiosity stimulated by impulses in the game world and cognitive curiosity stimulated by the principles of the game and knowledge of the game world</p>	
Koo (2009)	<p><b>Epistemological curiosity</b> – playing perceived as a source of experience and skill</p>	<p><b>Social affiliation</b> – the socialisation of players in the game</p>	<p><b>Concentration</b> – maximal immersion in the game</p> <p><b>Entertainment</b> – perceiving participating in online games as a welcome and exciting form of entertainment</p>	<p><b>Escape from everyday routine and boredom</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> This study was carried out among players fulfilling the criteria of Internet addiction.

ent samples. However, the authors generally agree that players report the achievement category as the most important one (Jansz & Tanis, 2007; Suznjevic & Matijasevic, 2010; Williams et al., 2008). Suznjevic & Matijasevic (2010) tried to connect the motives with online playing activities and concluded that players who prefer the achievement motive more frequently spent time in the game raiding, while those preferring the socialisation motive were more fre-

quently interested in communication followed by raiding, and those preferring the immersion motive were more likely to show interest in searching for and carrying out quests.

Wan & Chiou (2007) divided motives for playing online games into two groups: internal motives (motives arising from the individuals themselves – in the case of playing online games this may include the motives of curiosity, auton-

omy, and belonging) and external motives (motives arising from the environment, e.g. in the form of money, glory, and power). The results indicate that individuals whose behaviour shows symptoms of addiction to the Internet recorded higher levels of internal motivation, while individuals without these symptoms recorded higher levels of external motivation. Hsu, Wen, and Wu (2009) studied which motives are connected to addiction to online games, and found that these are especially the motives of discovery (immersion), belonging, and social commitment (socialisation) and the motivations of development and success (achievement). Yee (2006a) suggests that escape from reality and achievement correlate significantly with the problematic playing of online games. Chou & Ting (2003) connect the flow experience to a higher probability of being addicted to games. Williams, Yee, and Caplan (2008) compare the motives with the amount of time the respondents spend in the game, and their results indicate that the socialisation and achievement motives correlated positively with the amount of time spent in-game, while the motive of immersion was in a negative correlation with it. The authors' explanation for this is that the discovering of the game and character development are less motivating for playing the game longer than socialisation and achievement.

### ● 3 METHODS, SAMPLE, AND DATA ANALYSIS

In the qualitative study presented here, we focus on studying the motivation for addictive behaviour in relation to Internet use among MMORPG players. The data were gathered during 2010 from offline and online interviews with MMORPG players. The players were pre-selected via a questionnaire focusing on addictive behaviour based on the dimensions of Internet addiction in accordance with Griffiths (2000). The questionnaire was used and tested by the authors of this article in the previous quantitative study as part of the World Internet Project (see Šmahel et al., 2009). The criterion for the selection of respondents for this study was that in three out of five dimensions of addictive behaviour they answered "often" or "very often" to at least one question in each dimension (where each dimension was represented by two questions). The answers "often" or "very often" correspond to a high prevalence of the type of behaviour in the appropriate dimension of addictive behaviour. The semi-structured interviews focused on the following subjects related to playing online games: the type of activities, development of play, motivation, the gaming community, interpersonal relationships, self-perception of addiction, the real life of the player and his or her other interests and future prospects. The interviews that were obtained were primarily used to record data related to the subject of motivation and the development of playing, but we also

used background information from other parts of the interviews.

The study participants were asked for an interview on the subject of addiction to the Internet through the interface of the World of Warcraft online game by Blizzard Entertainment. The participants were chosen in such a way as to ensure that both genders and different age categories were represented. Out of 45 players who were asked to take the interview, 16 agreed to do so. Out of these 16 interviews, a total of 9 were conducted online through a chat application and 7 took place offline, depending on the preferences and options of the participants. The recordings of the offline interviews were transcribed and the online interviews were copied from the web application. The sample included 4 women and 12 men aged 15-33 years, with an average age of 20 years. This distribution corresponds to the fact that MMORPG players are mostly males (Barnett & Coulson, 2010). Eleven participants were students and five were working (one of these was unemployed at the time of the interview). Nine respondents were single. The number of hours they spent on the Internet ranged from 20 to 70 hours per week, with an average of 41 hours per week. The length of time they had been playing, as reported, was 1 to 6 years, with an average of 3 years (Table 2).

The first stages of the data analysis were performed by open coding based on the grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1999). The records of the interviews identified significant units related to the motivation of players, which were then categorised by significance. The next stage utilised the methods of Miles and Huberman, specifically simple listing and the creation of clusters (Miovský, 2006).

### ● 4 RESULTS

During the analysis, the results were divided according to the research questions into two main categories: motives for playing online games (the reasons why respondents play online games and why they spend a lot of time in-game) and motives for limiting the amount of time spent playing online games (reasons and stimuli which caused the player to limit the time spent playing online games or to stop). Each of the basic subjects included several subcategories, which we describe below.

#### ● 4 / 1 Motives for playing

We have found that the motivation for playing is dynamic and changes gradually for individual players. The motives which attract players to the game and are prevalent at the beginning of their "gaming careers" are not the same as the motives for playing online games later. The motives for playing include both motives experienced by players during the interviews and the reasons why respondents returned to playing online games after they decided to completely or partially quit. Players reported four basic motivations.

**Table 2**  
Study participants' basic data

Fictitious name	Age	Gender	Status	Employment	Hours per week	Length of playing career
Karel	18	male	engaged	student	30	1 year
Hynek	19	male	single	student	65	6 years
Jan I	16	male	single	student	55	3 years
Tomáš	15	male	single	student	23	2 years
Lukáš	17	male	single	student	65	2 years
Helena	33	female	married	unemployed	35	5 years
Jaromír	18	male	single	student	70	5-6 years
Lucie	18	female	engaged	student	20	1.5 years
Matouš	23	male	engaged	student	25	5 years
Petra	15	female	single	student	40	1 year
Jaroslav	21	male	engaged	employed	40	2 years
Pavel	17	male	single	student	56	1.5 years
Hana	15	female	single	student	23	2 years
David	28	male	single	employed	35	3 years
Jan II	25	male	married	employed	35	3.5 years
Roman	27	male	engaged	employed	35	3.5 years

#### ● 4 / 1 / 2 Relaxation

This motive generally manifests itself as relaxing by simply transferring attention from real life to the game, which may allow players to relax after a long hard day or escape from an unpleasant reality or certain worries. One respondent was apt in describing this function of playing:

*„... I go home from school, it's quite a distance and I'm tired, grumpy, and can't wait to get home, especially if I know that I need to go somewhere later in the evening. So, I get home, turn the computer on, make myself something to drink and wait for everything to start up, log in, say hi to my friends in the guild, talk to them, find out what's new etc. and this makes me happy. It's a form of relaxation; some people like to take a bath, some people watch TV...“*

This category also includes active relaxation, an example of which may be a player who vents the tension he feels in real life, probably because of his incapability of assertive behaviour in real life, through aggressive behaviour in the game:

*„I mostly play to do damage => I prefer murdering, stealing, doing anything dirty (a guy needs to relax after a long day) – after the tension caused by ... the outside world, politics, government, people, school, there's so much to worry about“. He also adds: “I can't imagine being violent or vulgar to anyone in real life. I'd say that in the game I'm exploring otherwise unrecognised possibilities.”*

In relation to this fact, we may only speculate that it is exactly the motive of relaxation from the often harsh reality

that may cause players to return to the game. For instance, one player stated that he began playing more often when his girlfriend broke up with him, since he was feeling down and playing helped him avoid thinking about this unpleasant situation. Other respondents stated that they began playing more when they lost their jobs or moved to a new environment.

#### ● 4 / 1 / 3 Self-realisation

Another motive which is frequently brought up in many forms is self-realisation. As stated by respondents, this takes the form of development in the game and using various options offered by the game (improving one's character, reaching goals, and winning matches or fights), which then lead to a feeling of success, knowing that one is good or better than the others. In relation to this, some respondents also emphasise the fact that self-realisation via an online game is often easier in comparison to other activities, especially since they have much more control over what happens in the game in comparison to real life. For instance, one player stated:

*“... the game offers an easier path to self-realisation, I'm a creative person and like to create stuff, be it web pages, graphics, poems, games, anything... in the game this is more or less easier to do.”*

Another aspect of this motivation that has been mentioned is the possibility of one's own professional development. Some respondents became interested in and began

developing their programming skills, even becoming game administrators. One of the respondents claimed:

*“... once I became an administrator, for the first time I was, in a sense, forced to begin learning how the game works. That’s how I began learning programming languages. At first this included standard html and css, and then I realised that the game was actually based on php, and so I also learned that. All of this has brought me to making web pages, and that’s what I still do today to make some extra money.”*

As discussed above, success in the game seems to be a significant motive for playing.

#### ● 4 / 1 / 4 Contact with people

A significant number of respondents (13) said that the game is an important means of interpersonal contact, for instance with the friends they play with. The game is a good subject of conversation and sometimes leads to the strengthening of already-existing friendships, as in the case of the following respondent:

*“To tell the truth, when I played with my male friends (and one girl) who used to be and still are important for me, I was happy...”*

Another variant of this motivation is contact with new people, which could take the form of replacing the absence of interpersonal relationships related to deteriorating social skills, which some experts such as e.g. Caplan (2005) or Davis (2001) use to explain the development of Internet addiction. For instance, consider the following statement of one player:

*“... well, since playing basically took away my childhood, especially during puberty (13+), when a person kind of finds those friends that tend to last longer than before, I kind of use it to replace contact with people, I’m a bit of an introvert, not that I don’t have friends but I guess I can’t really open up to them like I do in the MMO, where they’re simply just teammates and you don’t really care about the consequences.”*

In this context, respondents also often reported that, in addition to game-related subjects, they often discussed personal subjects with real or game friends, and that the personal subjects actually predominated over game-related ones. One female respondent stated:

*“... with old friends it’s 30:70 in favour of personal subjects, for newer ones it’s 60:40...”*

The respondents also reported that the reason for repeatedly returning to the game was often contact with people, because their game friends kept persuading them to return to the game or because their friends kept talking about the game, which motivated them to return to the game.

#### ● 4 / 1 / 5 Coping with boredom

The last motive for playing online games which appeared in the interviews was coping with boredom. In this respect, playing online games was often mentioned as one of the least boring activities. For instance, one participant said:

*“... And what else should I do? I don’t watch TV, I think that’s just garbage. I’m not into cleaning or sports. I usually don’t feel like reading. Basically, if WoW is the least boring activity...”*

It may also be speculated that coping with boredom is a motive for repeatedly returning to the game as a result of some external event; those mentioned most frequently were health problems and losing one’s job.

#### ● 4 / 2 MOTIVES FOR LIMITING PLAYING

This category includes motives which players report as impulses to limit the amount of time spent in an online game or to quit the game completely. Respondents were more likely to report external motives (such as health reasons and impulses from the environment and from the game) rather than internal ones (realising one’s addiction). Analysis of our interviews has shown the following four motives for limiting or quitting the game.

##### ● 4 / 2 / 1 Realising one’s addiction

Some respondents (2) stated that the reason for limiting the amount of time spent in the game was that they suddenly realised that the game had started interfering with their lives. It may be suggested that this motive could be related to realising one’s own addiction to the game. For instance, one respondent spoke about the circumstances which motivated him to stop playing, although only for a short time:

*“... I’d say that it was the moment I realised I didn’t want to see people and wanted to play ... I guess I just decided that enough was enough... you could probably say that the game completely devoured me... I quit for good, but then the thought of playing started nibbling at me again...”*

On the other hand, it should be mentioned that the actual realisation of one’s addiction does not cause all players to limit their time spent playing. On the contrary, some respondents consider themselves addicted but do not change their behaviour. Consider the following example:

*“... yeah, I’m addicted, I don’t care that much, though, it’s simply who I am... it’s the same as my addiction to nicotine. If I feel the urge to light a cigarette, I’ll simply do it... with playing games it’s the same...”*

##### ● 4 / 2 / 2 Health reasons

One respondent said that the main reason for his limiting the time spent in the game was health problems, specifically headaches:

*“... my head hurt a lot back then, so I tried to play less, nowadays I don't work with the computer as much as before, it's still a lot but at least now my head doesn't hurt ...”*

Another respondent said that he could imagine limiting his time spent in-game because of a serious illness. However, a third player said that he actually started playing more when he had broken his leg, was at home, and had no way of spending his free time. From these individual cases, it is reasonable to assume that the motives for limiting playing time could include health problems, such as a serious illness or headaches, which actually prevent people from playing the game.

#### ● 4 / 2 / 3 Impulses from the environment

Respondents frequently mentioned impulses from the environment as a real or hypothetical reason for quitting or limiting time spent in the game. The respondents describe two forms of impulses from the environment: positive ones and negative ones. Positive impulses most frequently take the form of a new romantic relationship, as in the case of one respondent:

*“... only a girlfriend who didn't want me to play could provide sufficient motivation to stop playing...”*

Another form was game activities which could, at least temporarily, be much more attractive than playing the same or similar games. As regards substitution by offline game activities, players most frequently report traditional PC games or Nintendo (an offline gaming console):

*“...I stopped playing lately, I downloaded new games for Nintendo and I'm playing those now... definitely declining (about online gaming), I've got something new now and I'm playing that... but I know I'll regain interest, this is just a short break, the Nintendo will not keep me occupied for long, and especially once someone gets ahead of me ... I'll go mad and get back.”* After these effects disappear, there is a risk that the players will return to the virtual world, as some have mentioned. It may thus be assumed that these external impulses are mostly temporary and players return to the game once these effects disappear.

Some respondents also mentioned possible negative effects, most frequently conflicts with work and school duties or some form of prohibition from the outside.

*“... but once I start in my new school, I'll limit it to almost nothing or quit outright, since the school's hard, I'll limit the time spent in the game in favour of studying, so that I can graduate...”*

One respondent said that the reason for limiting playing was conflicts with friends who complained that she didn't have time for them because of the game.

#### ● 4 / 2 / 4 Impulses from the game

The last group of real or hypothetical motives to limit or quit reported by players were related to the game itself.

These motives can be divided into two basic types: motives resulting from an external decision to quit and motives resulting from an internal decision to quit.

With respect to the first category, players reported reasons such as finishing the game, the end of the game itself, and arguments with guildmates. These were mostly hypothetical. Finishing the game or the actual end of the game are not very realistic in the case of MMORPG games, since their operators try to keep the game continuously updated so that it remains attractive to its players (Barnett & Coulson, 2010). It may be assumed that the reporting of this hypothetical reason could point to the fact that the players are currently very motivated to play and can only imagine quitting as a result of a radical external action.

The second category includes reasons related to the player getting bored with the game, as was the case of one female respondent:

*“... I became a little bored as a result of the feeling that I fully understand the game, so I only played for about 30 minutes a day; then a new patch came out and I wanted to find out what had changed, what new options are there now, which locations were added... the time kept increasing and then this whole cycle repeated itself...”*

It may be assumed that the player becomes bored by the game when he or she finds a new distraction in the form of impulses from the environment which are stronger, and the online game becomes boring instead. Presumably, such motives may be associated with the motives of impulses from the environment; for instance the beginning of a new relationship and being in love may temporarily overshadow the entertainment provided by the online game. The reason the respondent reported this as an impulse from the game rather than from the environment may be related to a different perspective and description of the change.

#### ● 4 / 3 Limitation strategies

In relation to motives for limiting the game, players also mentioned specific strategies used to limit online gaming. These may be divided into two basic groups. The first strategy is a gradual limitation of gameplay in conjunction with substitution by other online applications with a “safer profile”, such as another online game where the player does not need to spend as much time online (one player mentioned the game “Ultima Online”) or Facebook. The second method is uninstalling the game from one's computer. In this respect, a noteworthy finding was that although most people reported that they considered themselves addicted to the Internet, this realisation meant nothing to them in most cases and they did not feel the need to seek professional assistance.

## ● 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This qualitative study focused on mapping the motivation of players of online games, specifically the reasons for playing online games and spending a lot of time in such games, and the mapping of the causes or impulses for trying to limit or quit the game. Through an analysis of data obtained from semi-structured online and offline interviews, several motives for playing and for limiting time spent in the game were identified.

Players provided the following motivations for playing: relaxation, self-realisation, contact with people, and coping with boredom. The primary motives that have been discovered were also found in analogous or similar studies on this subject conducted abroad (Bartle, 1996; Hsu et al., 2009; Yee, 2006a, b; Wan & Chiou, 2006a, b). As regards the self-realisation motive, players reported a completely new submotive – playing online games with a goal of professional growth and the possibility of making a living in this or a similar area. It should be pointed out that only four of the above-listed studies (Yee, 2006a, b; Wan & Chiou, 2006a, b) mention the motive of relaxation, which was the most frequently reported motive in our study. In fact, Yee (2006a) does not even list it separately, but places it in the “immersion” category instead. In this respect, it may be assumed that this motive was omitted because the studies were carried out on a sample of respondents whose behaviour perhaps did not exhibit symptoms of addiction to the Internet, while this motive may be somehow associated with Internet addiction. Another contribution of this study is the finding that motives change with time and those motives which caused the players to start playing an online game might not be the same as the ones which led them to continue playing. Yee (2006a) mentions that the current motivation of the player may also depend on their mood.

No studies mapping the motives for limiting online gaming were found in the existing literature. However, such motives could be discussed together with those for quitting addictive behaviour (Blomqvist, 2002; Cunningham et al., 1999). The motives for limiting the amount of time spent playing an online game reported by our study participants may be grouped into 4 categories: realising one’s absorption in the game; health reasons; impulses from the environment, and impulses from the game. The motives listed above may be divided into motives which are related to or follow from a possible addiction to online games and motives which are not related to potential addictive behaviour.

The first group of motives related to addiction to a game contains the first two motives (realising one’s absorption in the game and health reasons) and negative impulses from the environment. The motive of realising one’s absorption corresponds to the reflection on one of the dimensions of Internet addiction by Griffiths (2000) – sa-

lience, which manifests itself by addiction to a certain on-line application becoming the main subject of one’s thoughts, behaviour, and experience. On the other hand, players often mentioned in interviews that they were “addicted”, but this notion had no actual value for them and did not cause them to discontinue their addictive behaviour. Instead, they tended simply to treat it as a statement which does not carry any negative implications. This is in agreement with previous studies (e.g. Šmahel et al., 2008; Yee, 2006 a, b), where the player’s perception of him- or herself as being “addicted” might not correspond to their actual addiction (measurable by symptoms, for example) and does not come with a signal for limiting addiction. The word “addiction” is often used by players to explain that they need to play in a sense and that playing is a part of their lifestyle. As for limiting gameplay for health reasons, we can assume that health reasons could also be a consequence of excessive playing, which, in fact, is cited in the literature (e.g. Chou, 2001; Suhail & Bargees, 2006). The motive of negative impulses from the environment could correspond to the dimension of conflict, which is mentioned as the most significant component of addiction to the Internet (Griffiths, 2000, Beard & Wolf, 2001). However, the respondents mentioned external conflicts (fights with friends), as well as internal conflicts (conflict between playing the game and studying for school or working). It can thus be speculated that, if players report these motives as possible reasons to quit, they are, to a certain extent, aware of their own game-related addictive behaviour. On the other hand, positive motives from the environment in the form of a new game or new partner and motives originating from the game are not necessarily consequences of addiction to the online game and it may thus be assumed that these respondents do not quit or limit their gameplay because they feel addicted, but rather because they simply found a new way of fulfilling their needs. The existence of two basic types of motives for quitting addiction may also be found in specialised literature describing motives for quitting addiction to a psychoactive substance (Blomqvist, 2002; Cunningham et al., 1999; Maierová, 2010). Here we may find reasons originating from the addiction itself, such as health problems, conflicts with the law, and work-related and financial problems, as well as reasons which are not necessarily caused by the addiction; these may include positive key events, esoteric or spiritual experiences, and changes in the situation. In comparison to the motives for changing one’s addiction to psychoactive substances (such as health reasons, financial problems, humiliating or horrible experiences, and existential or personal crises), we see that the motives of players mirror the fact that addiction to online games does not entail such severe consequences as addiction to psychoactive substances. This may also partially explain the fact that individuals addicted to the Internet do not often seek profes-

sional help (Blomqvist, 2002; Vondráčková & Šmahel, 2012).

When exploring the motives for limiting gameplay, it was found that respondents who exhibited signs of addiction to the Internet or risk factors of such addiction (measured by a non-standardised questionnaire) mentioned external motives more frequently than internal ones. While only a hypothesis that needs to be verified by a quantitative study at this point, this finding may have a significant overlap with the clinical area in that players whose behaviour shows signs of addiction to the Internet mostly reduced this behaviour in response to external rather than internal impulses. This corresponds to a theoretical presumption of the trans-theoretical model of Prochaska and DiClemente (1992), according to which the primary motives for changing any behaviour are mostly of an external nature, and internal motives only apply when the change needs to be maintained, including confidence in managing and keeping the change.

Interestingly, none of the respondents stated that they had considered seeking professional assistance when limiting their activity or quitting the game. This raises the question of how many people really seek help in these cases and

how devastating addiction to online games may be for the life of the player. Investigation of the motives for quitting addictive behaviour also found that addiction to online games does not show constant addictive symptoms, but may change according to the developments in the player's life.

The results presented here have a limited application because of the qualitative nature of the research. The characteristics of addictive behaviour in relation to the Internet were measured using a questionnaire which was not standardised. The results may also be affected by the fact that the participants included in the sample were contacted in the environment of the online game World of Warcraft, whose specific focus on adventuring and conquering could project into the types of motivations reported by the players.

The results of this study also bring up further questions which could be the subject of future research projects, such as those trying to find a formula for the development of motivation over time or examining how often and under what circumstances players of online games with symptoms of addictive behaviour seek professional assistance or whether parallels exist between addiction to the Internet and addictions to various substances.

## REFERENCES

- Barnett, J., & Coulson, M. (2010). Virtually real: A psychological perspective on massively multiplayer online games. *Review of General Psychology*, 14, 167–179.
- Bartle, R. (1996). Hearts, clubs, diamond, spades: players who suit MUDs. *Journal of MUD Research*, 1(1). Downloaded on 10 March 2011. Available on <http://www.mud.co.uk/richard/hcds.htm>
- Beard, K. W., & Wolf, E. M. (2001). Modification in the Proposed Diagnostic Criteria for Internet Addiction. *Cyberpsychology & Behaviour*, 4, 377–383.
- Block, J. J. (2008). Issues for DSM-V: Internet addiction. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 126, 306–307.
- Blomqvist, J. (2002). Recovery with and without treatment: A comparison of resolutions of alcohol and drug problems. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 10(2), 119–158.
- Caplan, S. E. (2003). Preference for online social interaction: a theory of problematic Internet use and psychosocial well-being. *Community Research*, 30, 625–48.
- Chou, C. (2001). Internet abuse and addiction among Taiwan college students: An online interview study. *Cyberpsychology & Behaviour*, 4, 573–585.
- Chou, T. J., & Ting, C. C. (2003). The role of flow experience in cyber-game addiction. *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 6(6), 663–675.
- Cunningham, J. A. (1999). Resolving alcohol-related problems with and without treatment: The effects of different problem criteria. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 60, 463–466.
- Davis, R. A. (2001). A cognitive-behavioural model of pathological Internet use. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 77, 187–195.
- Griffiths, M. (2000). Does Internet and computer "Addiction" exist? Some case study evidence. *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 3, 211–218.
- Hsu, C.-L., & Lu, H.-P. (2004). Why do people play on-line games? An extended TAM with social influences and flow experience. *Information & Management*, 41(7), 853–868.
- Hsu, S. W., Wen, M.-H., & Wu, M.-C. (2009). Exploring user experiences as predictors of MMORPG addiction. *Computers & Education*, 53, 990–999.
- Jansz, J., & Tanis, M. (2007). Appeal of playing online first person shooter games. *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 10, 133–136.
- Maierová, E. (2010). Motivace uživatelů návykových látek v nařízené ochranné léčbě a dobrovolné léčbě [Motivation of Female Drug Users in Compulsory and Voluntary Treatment]. *Adiktologie*, 10(4), 236–245.
- Miovský, M. (2006). *Kvalitativní přístup a metody v psychologickém výzkumu* [Qualitative Approach and Methods in Psychological Research]. Prague: Grada.
- Ng, B. D., & Wiemer-Hastings, P. (2005). Addiction to the Internet and online gaming. *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 8, 110–113.
- Pies, R. (2009). Should DSM-V designate "Internet addiction" a mental disorder? *Psychiatry*, 6, 31–37.
- Prochaska, J. O., DiClemente, C. C., & Norcross, J. C. (1992). In search of how people change. Applications to addictive behaviours. *American Psychologist*, 47, 1102.
- Rau, P. L. P., Peng, S. Y., & Yang, C. C. (2006). Time distortion for expert and novice online game players. *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 9, 396–403.
- Shapira, N. A., Goldsmith, T. D., Keck, P. E., Khosla, U. M., & McElroy, S. L. (2000). Psychiatric features of individuals with problematic Internet use. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 57, 267–272.
- Šmahel, D., Blinka, L., & Ledabyl, O. (2008). Playing MMORPGs: Connections between addiction and identifying with a character. *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 11, 715–718.
- Šmahel, D., Ševčíková, A., Blinka, L., & Veselá, M. (2009). Abhängigkeit und Internet-Applikationen: Spiele, Kommunikation und Sex-Webseiten. In Stetina, B., Kryspin-Exner, I. (Eds.) *Gesundheit und Neue Medien*. Berlin: Springer-Wien NewYork.
- Šmahel, D., Vondráčková, P., Blinka, L., & Godoy-Etcheverry, S. (2009). Comparing Addictive Behaviour on the Internet in the Czech Republic, Chile

and Sweden. In: G. Cardoso, A. Cheong, & J. Cole. *World Wide Internet: Changing Societies, Economies and Cultures*. Macau: University of Macau, 2009. 544–582.

● Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1999). *Základy kvalitativního výzkumu [Basics of Qualitative Research]*. Boskovice: Albert.

● Suhail, K., & Barges, Z. (2006). Effects of excessive Internet use on undergraduate students in Pakistan. *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 9, 297–307.

● Suznjevic, M., & Matijasevic, M. (2010). Why MMORPG players do what they do: Relating motivations to action categories. *International Journal of Advanced Media and Communication*, 4(4), 405–424.

● Vondráčková, P., & Šmahel, D. (2012). Internet addiction. In Z. Yan (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Cyber Behaviour* (754–767). IGI Global: Hershey, PA.

● Wan, C., & Chiou, W. (2006a). Psychological motives and online games addiction: A test of flow theory and humanistic needs theory for Taiwanese adolescents. *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 9, 317–324.

● Wan, C., & Chiou, W. (2006b). Why are adolescents addicted to online gaming? An interview study in Taiwan. *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 9, 762–766.

● Wan, C. S., & Chiou, W. B. (2007). The motivations of adolescents who are addicted to online games: A cognitive perspective. *Adolescence*, 42, 179–197.

● Williams, D., Yee, N., & Caplan, S. E. (2008). Who plays, how much, and why? Debunking the stereotypical gamer profile. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13, 993–1018.

● Widyanto, L., & Griffiths, M. (2006). Internet Addiction: A critical review. *International Journal of Mental Health Addiction*, 4, 31–51.

● Yee, N. (2006a). Motivations for play in online games. *CyberPsychology & Behaviour*, 9, 772–775.

● Yee, N. (2006b). The Psychology of MMORPGs: Emotional Investment, Motivations, Relationship Formation, and Problematic Usage. In R. Schroeder & A. Axelsson (Eds.), *Avatars at Work and Play: Collaboration and Interaction in Shared Virtual Environments* (187–207). London: Springer-Verlag.

● Young, K. S. (1995). *Internet addiction: Symptoms, evaluation, and treatment. [Electronic Version]*. Center for On-Line Addictions. Retrieved 6th October 2010 from <http://www.netaddiction.com/articles/symptoms.pdf>.

● Young, K. S. (1996). Internet addiction: The emergence of a new clinical disorder. *Cyberpsychology and behaviour*, 1(3), 237–244.

● Young, K. S. & de Abreu, C. N. (2010) (Eds.) *Internet Addiction: A Handbook and Guide to Evaluation and Treatment*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

## ZPRÁVY

### NOVÝ PSYCHOTERAPEUTICKÝ VÝCVIK V SUR

**V rámci akreditovaného programu vzdělávání v psychoterapii o. s. SUR otevíráme v r. 2012 další výcvikovou komunitu, kterou povede doc. MUDr. PhDr. Kamil Kalina, CSc.**

Rozsah 550 výcvikových hodin během pěti let (ročně 1 týden, 2 skupinové víkendy a 1 prodloužený komunitní víkend). Cena 150 Kč/v. hod., v případech hodných zvláštního zřetele na základě individuální žádosti je možné snížení.

Nová komunita je otevřená lékařům, psychologům a dalším pracovníkům „pomáhajících profesí“ s VŠ vzděláním zdravotnických či humanitních směrů nebo minimálně se SŠ vzděláním a praxí v oboru nebo dokončujícím studium, ve věku od 23 let, působícím ve státním, soukromém i nestátním neziskovém sektoru, ve zdravotnictví i mimo něj.

Výcvikový tým komunity: Doc. MUDr. PhDr. Kamil Kalina, CSc. (vedoucí), PhDr. Iveta Jonášová, Ph.D., Mgr. Martina Kukolová, PaedDr. Martina Richterová Těmínová, PhDr. Ing. Radoslav Ernest, PhDr. Jiří Libra, PhDr. Petr Moos.

Výcvik má základní psychodynamické zaměření s integrací některých dalších uznávaných psychoterapeutických přístupů. Probíhá podle pravidel akreditovaného výcvikového institutu SUR, uznávaného Evropskou psychoterapeutickou asociací, a řídí se etickým kodexem České psychoterapeutické společnosti.

Předběžné přihlášky prosíme e-mailem na adresu [kalina@adiktologie.cz](mailto:kalina@adiktologie.cz) neprodleně poté, co si přečtete tuto první informaci. Další informace zašleme pouze předběžně přihlášeným. Příjímáací řízení předpokládáme v květnu/červnu, první týdenní soustředění komunity se uskuteční 30. 9.–6. 10. 2012 v Sola Gratia v Bystřici pod Hostýnem.

Doc. MUDr. PhDr. Kamil Kalina, CSc.

1. místopředseda o.s. SUR, vedoucí výcvikového týmu  
Klinika adiktologie 1. LF UK a VFN, Apolinářská 4, 128 00 Praha 2,  
e-mail: [kalina@adiktologie.cz](mailto:kalina@adiktologie.cz), [www.adiktologie.cz](http://www.adiktologie.cz), mobil 603 712 667