

5 July 2008

By: Silviu Stahie, Video and PC Games Editor



## [Weekend Bashing: PC Addiction vs. Console Addiction](#)

*There's nothing like a good fix*

Before any other arguments are brought to the stand, we need to clarify the term addict. Are there gaming addicts? This term is mostly used for Internet addiction and I have recently read a study saying that mobile phones produce a similar effect on people. Are there, in fact, PC and console addicts or are we in complete denial? The word addict, as we find it in Webster dictionary is defined like this: "to devote or surrender (oneself) to something habitually or obsessively". Sounds simple enough, right? After a superficial search on the Internet (about Internet addiction) I came across some articles and research studies that all lead, more or less, to the same conclusion. One of the most interesting theories belongs to a Dr. Grohol: "People engage in the activity because they do not want to deal with the problems in their lives. It is similar to the behavior that a person who watches a lot of TV reveals, or the person who reads an abundant amount of books, or that of the person who goes out for a few drinks regularly". It is already a known fact that this particular disorder has the same symptoms and signs like any other addiction: when separated from the source, people start to experience intolerance and withdrawal and they become just as isolated. The only way for them to escape is a quick fix, using the Internet as a getaway. During the past years, we got bombarded with games that required more and more implication from players and people even died. I, for one, am completely addicted to the Internet and I find myself anxious and curious on what's happened since I left the computer. My problem is easily related to my job. I spend most of time on the Internet, scouring for information just like a badger in the trash bins of suburbia. When I get home from work the first thing I do, after taking my shoes off, I open the computer and check the mail and other stuff that happened in my one hour prolonged leave. I sometimes forget to pay the bill to the Internet provider and I have to wait another whole day for a slice of heaven. Something is missing that day and I feel it constantly. The best way to feel this addiction is on vacation. I'm certain most people in my line of work (and other Internet related jobs) have a similar problem and I'm also certain that most of my online colleagues are aware of this. With PC games and especially MMOs the situation is a little different as it affects a much smaller number of people. Nonetheless, the problem is real and there is no doubt some steps should be taken to prevent this phenomenon. On the other hand, I have noticed that in the last year or so, people around the world are getting more anxious and less patient with games. The developers have noticed this trend and are now providing titles that are less addictive and more to the point. Get in the game and fight the next ten minutes. Long gone are the days when we spent an entire night battling hordes of enemies or when we had the time and the power to look for the answer in a Myst game. Even so, PC games still tend to occupy most of the time, mainly because they provide some sort of comfort for players. Another factor that has severely reduced the long hours spent in front of the monitor is the release of dozens of multiplayer online games and the rise of action ready consoles. People can choose and get bored more quickly from the plethora of games that can be found on the market. Console game can't really be accused of providing long lasting fun. I actually can't remember a console game capable of keeping me occupied for more than three or four hours at a time. Not even the infamous Grand Theft Auto 4 is a match for this thirst. There are a couple of titles ready to "exploit" a niche in the console world and one of them is Too Human. I can't say if they're going to be a major hit but I'm quite positive they will hold players entangled in the action a lot more than others. The only company capable of producing a mass history game is Blizzard and the next gen MMO on the console will change them for ever. Nothing so far can beat the Internet addiction, but PC games are still

ahead when it comes to consuming people's time. Console games are far behind and they seem to be contended with quick action and gore. So, if you want your kid to grow up with severe limbs and blood spatters in his room, you really should get him a console. He'll probably get tired pretty soon and you won't have to commit him to a rehabilitation facility. If you want him to collect trash from the street and deposit it in the inventory, let him play Diablo; he will make a great manager some day.