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Trends. More on the Psychology of the Internet: Ignoring the Old for the New?

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In the haste to publicize findings suggesting noxious, psychological consequences of Internet use, behavioral scientists and journalists are ignoring some of the most basic caveats about psychological cause and effect. There has been little discussion about people with psychological problems selecting Internet use as oppose to the Internet use inducing psychological problems. So, too, that Internet use may have different consequences--including no consequences--for various types of people in various types of situations. Yet again, that the consequences of Internet use may vary in quality and quantity--even from positive to negative and back again and then cease and reappear--through time.

One psychological consequence of Internet use might be the premature jettisoning of psychological routes to knowledge--the quest for the new inducing an ignorance of the old leading to epistemological disaster. (See Kraut, R., et al. (1998). Internet paradox; A social technology that reduces social involvement and psychological well-being? *American Psychologist*, 53, 1017-1031; Markoff, J. (February 16, 2000). A newer, lonelier crowd emerges in Internet study. *The New York Times*, p. A1; A15; Rierdan, J. (1999). Internet-depression link? *American Psychologist*, 54, 781-782; Shapiro, J.S. (1999). Loneliness: Paradox or artifact? *American Psychologist*, 54, 782-783; The political psychology of the psychology of the Internet. (February 18, 2000). *IBPP*, 8(7).) (Keywords: Internet, Online Behavior Analysis.)