# Information Presentation Response

Snobar, Abdullah. “Council Post: Getting Honest about Mental Health in the World of Tech Startups.” Forbes, 8 Aug. 2018, [www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2018/08/08/getting-honest-about-mental-health-in-the-world-of-tech-startups/?sh=1c98c4e0641a](http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2018/08/08/getting-honest-about-mental-health-in-the-world-of-tech-startups/?sh=1c98c4e0641a).

The source above is from the P2e presentation about “Mental Health in the Tech Sector.” The article was written in 2018, during the current era of the rapidly evolving technology sector so the information should be very current. The relation of the mental health of tech startups is obviously related to the mental of the tech sector as a whole, making the article very relevant. The article is written by Abdullah Snobar, a fairly well-known player in the startup world; he has plenty of relevant experience in this field as the executive director at DMZ, needless to say this authority is fairly trustworthy. The article is well-written and formatting so no concerns with accuracy either. Finally, the purpose of this article seems to be to inform more people about the problem of mental health in this specific sector, and this makes sense with his position as he would want the start-ups incubated at DMZ to succeed, and if mental health is a road block to that, then this informative article should help to serve that purpose.

# Addictive App

# I’ve already kept my decisions strictly to very staunch morals, and thus I would not make the decision to implement the gambling style rewards. The institutionalized sector of gambling is fundamentally unjust, and becoming part of this problem is not a morally justifiable action in my eyes. The industry actively exploits the psychology of gamblers and there are alternative methods to keep an app alive which are less unjust than this. 2.4% of the population is diagnosed with a gambling disorder according to a 2012 study (Bristow, 2). Like with mental health, some part of the population can be genetically predisposed to a gambling addiction, and while casinos and such are fully within the civil liberties of Canada (within regulation of course), the institutionalization of it, and consequentially the use of it in apps or games is undoubtedly immoral. I believe this because of both the exploitation of psychology required to keep people using an app with gambling, and the parallels between the choice to be made in this prompt and other exploitative industries such as the food industry.

# The first discussion is about the clear intent of adding features to this app to purposefully force users to spend more time and/or money to be satisfied with the app. It is clear that at the beginning of this app, they did not need to rely on hooking the top payers in order to be able to keep funding the development and maintenance of the app. In order for this optimization to occur, it’s established that it will cause players, mainly in the top 10% of players in the userbase, to become more “hooked” onto the app, which is really only possible using psychology to maximize users’ attention economy, likely using time-sensitive content, variable-ratio reinforcement, etc. In fact, the entire industry of gambling is based around luring in whales (gamblers who often wager large sums of money) to make large profit margins by enticing them with special treatment and rewards for spending. This obviously extends into the world of gambling within apps, which as discussed before, requires the same tactics as the wider gambling industry.

# You can draw parallels with exploiting the addictive nature of a product in order to draw in more consumers to other industries such as the food industry. It is a highly known and researched fact that sugars, specifically highly refined sugars, are engineered to be addictive in order to keep customers from buying other brands. Like gambling, some people may be genetically predisposed to an eating disorder, lower metabolism, or any other problem with food consumption which causes them to be more easily addicted to these highly refined carbs. Repeating the point again, this is behaviour which is obviously encouraged because of the nature of competition in a capitalist economy and is fully within legal limits for these companies. Ethics are seldom followed within capitalism though, and this is reflected through exploiting these more vulnerable people in any industry, whether it be gambling, food, apps, or otherwise. Thus, because I do not think the choice of making addicting food is right, I do not think the choice to make an addicting app is right and I would not make that choice.

# The Psychological Effects of Technology

A 2020 report from Japan presents the dilemma of the correlation between internet addiction and pathological social withdrawal (reference 2), to try and determine which causes the other if that is the case at all. The authors of this report are part of independent medical institutions with degrees in medical sciences related to psychology and/or psychiatry so there is no conflict of interest or latent message trying to be pushed with the report. The report is peer-reviewed and the sources which are cited are also seemingly reliable with peer reviews of their own.

The article uses the Japanese term “hikikomori” to describe the phenomenon of pathological social withdrawal (Kato et al. 1), and this phenomenon has been observed since the 1970s and has increased in frequency since then. While the article makes clear that longitudinal studies should be required to determine the causal relationship between hikikomori and internet addiction, the referenced research shows possible cause-and-effects for these phenomena. Such previous studies show strong indicators of real-world stressful events causing some social withdrawal. If this withdrawal extends for longer periods, the feeling of loneliness can build up. This is where the internet can amplify the hikikomori effect; connecting to the internet can give instantaneous connections to others through many mediums such as social media, online video games, or others which may provide temporary relief from their loneliness. While it is unclear which of these phenomena cause each other (if at all), it is clear that access to the internet is very likely an amplifying factor to hikikomori.

The next article is a study of the effects of social and technology overload on the psychology of young South Korean adults (reference 3), and the aim is to use known empirical data to find relationships between social and technology overload, social media addiction, and psychological well-being (Choi and Myung 6). This study is also peer reviewed and fairly recent, being published in 2016. The authors are not professors in a psychology-related field however, both are in the business departments of their respective institutions. Both however do have a clean record of publications in psychology-related fields and are acknowledged within that circle.

Social and technology overload can both be described as the amount of input information a person tried to take in exceeds their processing ability (Choi and Myung 1-2). Using data analysis, the study did not have the hypothesised result, which showed neither social nor technology overload directly affected the psychological well-being, but rather, it was found that both overloads can lead to social media addiction, which in turn affects the psychological well-being. It is reasoned that social and technology overload can lead to a habitual need to be on social media, as that is the fastest, most convenient way to be “socially connected,” thus making the need to be using some sort of technology to access the online network. Many factors are presented for possible causes: addictive apps, easy access to technology in schools, passive consumption of media, etc. While the study does not take into account the specific circumstances of each participant, some advice can be drawn to advise social network providers to try and discourage misuse of their networks.

Both articles use international research, however, much of the data is only local to Japan and Korea. This may not fully represent the world population well because of the limited cultural variability in the East Asian area. Regardless, the information is presented objectively and I deem both of the articles to be acceptable to use as sources for a term paper.

# References

1. Bristow, Lindsay A., et al. “Risky Gambling Behaviors: Associations with Mental Health and a History of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).” Journal of Gambling Studies, vol. 38, no. 3, 2022, pp. 699–716, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-021-10040-3. Accessed 31 May 2023.
2. Kato, T. A., Shinfuku, N., & Tateno, M. (2020). Internet society, internet addiction, and pathological social withdrawal: the chicken and egg dilemma for internet addiction and hikikomori. Current Opinion in Psychiatry, 33(3), 264–270. https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0000000000000601. Accessed 1 June 2023.
3. Choi, Suk Bong, and Myung Suh Lim. “Effects of Social and Technology Overload on Psychological Well-Being in Young South Korean Adults: The Mediatory Role of Social Network Service Addiction.” Computers in Human Behavior, vol. 61, 2016, pp. 245–54, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.032. Accessed 1 June 2023.