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## Internet as a new space for life: phenomenological view

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### Abstract

This article presents a phenomenological research of internet-addictivity. Internet-addictivity is understood as a human's feature in modern society which means perception of the world of the Internet as a field of finite values, not less important than daily occurrence. Here we are trying to overcome medical discourse in relation to this feature by using phenomenological alternative. The article shows some of the results of conducted empirical study, which allowed to create 2 polar ideal-typical constructions – internet-addictivity and non-addictivity. With internet-addictivity Internet is used principally value-rationally. Internet conducts to the creation of the "We-group", the shortage of which is possible in daily life. In the plans for the future there is nothing connected with family; freedom has a special value. Internet-addictivity is characterized by presence of experiences and emotions about the Internet, which are not weaker than in everyday life. For non-addictiveness is typical understanding of the Internet as a secondary reality, or, in the extreme case, as a way, as a tool, not as a separate world.

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### 1. Introduction

In contemporary post-industrial society information starts to be a major resource, and the Internet is the main source and tool storage, production, distribution of it (Abels, 1998). Usage of information technologies leads to the creation of a new feature of social life – internet-addictivity, which is interesting for sociologists, psychologists and is characterized by newness and dynamism. The researchers noted the negative impact of the Internet and a corresponding view on the internet addiction is forming. It is noted that excessive uncontrolled usage of the Internet

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could lead to stress, loss of money, physical exhaustion, conflicts with others, etc. Addicts worse cope with everyday responsibilities, have problems in real communication, in family, at work, in their sexual lives; there are cases when long-term lack of access to the Internet resulted not only in a state of desperation and stress, but also led to the suicide (Husserl, 2005; Korytnikova, 2010; Marchenkova, 2010).

Given the different criteria for determining addiction, the proportion of Internet addicts in various countries ranges from 2 to 30% of Internet users (Tsoi, 2012). Rapid internetization is accompanied by the growth in number of addicts. This problem is estimated as severe and significant as alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, etc.

In this study we have moved beyond the medical discourse. This position is similar to the idea of Surratt and is in line with the position of William James that the only criterion of reality is a psychological belief of its existence (Davydov, 2002; Surratt, 1999).

We find it useful to distinguish between "addictivity" and «addiction». Internet-addictivity is a new term that implies a phenomenological description. It can be used in sociology and social psychology for a new phenomenon in society, avoiding such definitive categorizations as "addict / non-addict."

Internet-addictivity is a property of experiencing the world of the Internet as a reality (field of finite values), not less important than daily.

The idea of internet-addictivity as a feature of modern society is developed on the basis of ideas of phenomenologists in the framework of qualitative research strategy (See. Schutz (Abels, 1998; Davydov, 2002), Husserl (2005) Berger, Luckman (1996)).

Phenomenologists point out that in contemporary society we should be more relative in considering all the worlds, including daily occurrence, as one of the worlds, but not as the only (Abels, 1998; Berger, Luckman, 1996; Shutz, 2003). Despite the quasi-reality of all worlds, except daily, Schutz notes their importance, claiming that they are realities and they influence the thinking and action of a man in the world of other people (Shutz, 2003).

In line with these ideas, the Internet can be seen as an opportunity to construct a new world and internet-addictivity can be interpreted as an expression of involvement in this new world. In our study, users with a tendency to internet-addictivity were considered as persons with certain characteristics in their interaction with the world and its perception, but not as persons with a deviant behavior. Hence the importance of studying the pictures of the world of users with a tendency to internet-addictivity; moreover, in studied literature, such information is not available.

Definition of the Internet world is facing difficulties. It is necessary to distinguish between usage of the Internet as a tool for everyday life, as a continuation of everyday life and as a way of constructing a new reality. Thus, the perception of the Internet is not unified in minds of users; however, we can't say that social reality is something united; rather we should talk about the set social realities. The Internet can be a part of or a continuation of everyday life, and perhaps another world (or, probably worlds).

## **2. The concept of a word picture**

In this study, we understood the picture of the world as a reality displayed in the mind of the individual (Wittgenstein); reflection, focused on the life-world (Husserl); the content of consciousness, perceived and experienced life-world, which is classified in the form of the system of relevancies (Berger, Luckman, 1996; Husserl, 2005; Shutz, 2003, Wittgenstein, 1958). The system of relevance is a structured current representations in human mind; a common principle of construction the picture of the world (Shutz, 2003). These systems are implemented in schemes of typifications that guide understanding and interpretation of the situation and the world (Berger, Luckman, 1996; Shutz, 2003). With their help, through the consciousness and practices institutional frameworks of daily occurrence are designed (Berger, Luckman, 1996). It is important that world is objectified in the minds of people in their language, for the Internet it is objectified in a form of slang (Berger, Luckman, 1996).

## **3. The methodology of the study.**

In this study we were focused on the pictures of the world of Internet users. We were interested in such components of it as values, motives of using the Internet, perceptions of "we-group" and "they-group" (or "us" and "them") and space-time structure. In addition, it was important to apply to feelings of people on the Internet, because the core of the world picture is "I feeling" (Shutz, 2003). Finally, a special role in the study was given to social

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