RAISING UP OR OVERBEARING-
A BIDIRECTIONAL EFFECT OF
INTERNET ON STUDENTS' WELLBEING.

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Finnish Student Health Services
The FSHS operates in all university towns in Finland for a total of 130,000 university students.
General Health, Mental Health and Oral Health services + Wellbeing and health promotion

The Finnish Student Health Survey every 4th year (latest 2012): A nationally representative sample of 10 000 students
(Kunttu & Pesonen 2013, Pesonen & Tossavainen 2014)
HOW DIGITALISED IS THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT’S LIFE?

AN AVERAGE USE OF INTERNET PER WEEK:

♂ 33 hours, of which 20-22 h for non-studying-related activities
♀ 25 hours, of which 13 h for non-studying-related activities

So “You are addicted to internet” means nowadays: ”You are addicted to life”
SELF-PERCEIVED HARMs CAUSED BY THE USE OF THE INTERNET (%) (USHS 2012 and 2008)
Female students

Using the internet 35+ h/week for leisure activities

- 5%
- 95%

Male students

Using the internet 35+ h/week for leisure activities

- 13%
- 87%
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH BIG WELLBEING PROBLEMS OR DIAGNOSED DISORDER

in internet use for leisure time <35 h/week or +35 h/week -groups

- Mood: 39%
- Sexuality: 13%
- Planning the future: 21%
- General wellbeing: 14%
- Anxiety disorder: 10%
STUDENTS SOCIAL PROBLEMS (%)

<35h /week group  +35h /week group

- Problems in initiating romantic contacts: 8 (p < .0001)
- Problems in initiating other contacts: 11 (p < .0001)
- Diagnosed social anxiety: 5

The bar chart shows a significant increase in social problems for the +35h /week group compared to the <35h /week group.
SEYLE (THE SAVING AND EMPOWERING YOUNG LIVES IN EUROPE) –PROJECT and STUDY


12,395 adolescents (13-18 years) from 11 European countries: Austria, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Romania, Slovenia and Spain

A LOW RISK GROUP 58 %
Low frequency of risk behaviors

A HIGH RISK GROUP 13 %
High frequency on risk behaviors (substance abuse, self-injury, risky sexual behavior, hyperactivity, delinquency, conduct problems)

An “INVISIBLE” RISK GROUP 29 %
High leisure time use of Internet/TV/videogames (minimum 5-6 h/per day), low physical activity and reduced sleep
RISK FOR PSYCHOPATHOLOGY AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR

Most difficult to recognize in "invisible risk" group because of the passive risk factors

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HIGH RISK</th>
<th>INVISIBLE RISK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suicidal thoughts</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subthreshold depression</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>The prevalence of</td>
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<tr>
<td>suicide attempts</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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</tbody>
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(Prevalence of suicide attempts in low risk group 1.7%)
SOCIAL MEDIA or...

ANTISOCIAL MEDIA
Behaving in a way one would not behave in any other circumstances
Staying in net though already depressed, anxious or lonely

ASOCIAL MEDIA
An instrument for sexual and social manipulation, harassment and other types of mental violence

Most applications of the Internet are useful, relaxing and part of our everyday life but can also endanger the mental wellbeing of those already maltreated, ignored, depressed or otherwise prone to get stuck with the net
INTERNET IS AN EXCELLENT BUT ALSO A RISKY SOURCE OF INFORMATION...

So as a health worker or parent: Check, that the information the young person adopts in internet is reliable, understandable and applicable for age
...ALSO REMIND THE YOUNG (or yourself...), THAT THE DIGITAL FOOTPRINTS ARE EVERLASTING
NEW APPLICATIONS OF THE INTERNET IN FINNISH STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE

How to reach the students in need for help and not willing or able to visit our health units?

How to offer services coequally regardless of the students’ residence?

... could we use the internet to bring these discouraged students up?
SEXUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING ONLINE

Electronic remote appointments (="e-counseling") held securely and confidentially

1) Via video link
   (a “MeeDoc-project”)

2) On-screen writing discussion – the student has a personal Citizen's account code allowing the use of a safe email communication between the student and the FSHS
A VIRTUAL PEER SUPPORT GROUP
FOR STUDENTS SUFFERING FROM SOCIAL ANXIETY

An equally accessible first step treatment option for students all around Finland
Psychologist participates the group weekly encouraging the group to utilize the possibility for peer support
The group members can enter the virtual group 24/7

BENEFITS: Low cost, independent of time and place, easy to access because of the anonymity

CHALLENGES: The students lean easily on the professional – how to activate the peer support more effectively?
VIRTUAL WEIGHT CONTROL PEER GROUP called ”the Heavy-orchestra”

Tutored by the Public health nurse
Lasting 4 weeks
MealLogger-application used
(an electric meal diary with photos)

”I❤️my ordinary days –keys for better life”
free netpages for students to improve their
everyday life skills and overall wellbeing
WHERE ARE WE GOING TO....

Society of Humans

Internet of Things

INTERNET OF HUMANS