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## Internet

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tioned that online conversations allow students to have "safe" relationships, because they have time to think before they write and can avoid awkward pauses. He calls this theory "intimacy versus isolation."

"People at this time are determining who they are," he said. "And once you develop a strong identity with yourself, the next task is to share it with someone else, and people are much more confident online."

But Kandell said that this form of communication can affect people's in-person social skills.

"When people get back into the real world, they may not be able to transfer those skills very easily," he said. "It's a completely different type of communication."

Kandell added that people act differently online because they can pretend to be something they aren't and many times their behavior regresses. They may say things online that they otherwise wouldn't say.

The percentage of college courses using e-mail and multimedia resources has more than doubled in the last few years, and more than 7 million college students and faculty routinely using the Internet and the Web as part of their daily and weekly activities, according to the 2000 Campus Computing Survey.

Anderson said that although students may go online with the intention of doing schoolwork, they get distracted by Internet games and chatting devices, which can turn into hours of endless online surfing.

"When people have things to do, like homework, the Internet is much more appealing," he said.

More and more institutions are also trying to cater to students who need the Internet for classes by offering fast and free Web access. Out

of 137 equally represented public and private U.S. institutions surveyed, 128 provided Internet access in some form, according to a 1999 study by Robert Fleck, professor of computer information systems management at Columbus State University.

One of the most popular forms of Internet access is through the residence halls. Both psychologists said that this kind of access is a big reason students spend so much time online.

But director of residence life Sandy Schoonover said that although some students with the Ethernet connection use the Internet excessively due to unlimited access, generally this problem has declined. She said that the residence halls offer many activities to get students out of their rooms, and because the Internet isn't as new, not as many students spend as much time online.

"I've seen a big difference from when unlimited access was first put in rooms years ago," she said. "Some students probably spend too much time online, but I think that has moderated in the last few years."

Many businesses have also tuned in to the increasing percentage of college students who use the Internet. Web sites such as [UniversityLove.com](http://UniversityLove.com), [Studentadvantage.com](http://Studentadvantage.com) and [IdeaExchange.com](http://IdeaExchange.com) have focused on drawing college students to their Web pages.

Kandell has offered support groups at the University of Maryland for students concerned about their time online. But he said most students don't see themselves as "addicts," and not many have attended his meetings.

"If I ask the kids themselves, they won't say it's a problem for them," he said. "They underestimate how much this can impact their lives."

For more information on Internet addiction and counseling services,

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