Internet Involvement: Heart Poison for the University Student?

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Introduction

The issue of moral decay is at the heart of the present research. The researcher and her co-author wished to determine the moral quality of students' internet behaviour. Are they learning values and ideologies that advance them along the path to full human maturity? Are they wasting their time? Are they engaged in behaviour that would make them feel shame if their grandmother or grandfather, mother or father, sister or brother, wife or husband, pastor or priest, imam or teacher were to learn about the websites and the networks that they visit? Would they feel shame about their browsing habits? Would their elders ordinarily watch what students watch when they surf the web?

My co-author introduced two terms to me that by their very definition unveil two of the more attention provoking moral issues involved in internet use.

Phubbing[1]**:** A fairly new English word now in use in most English-speaking countries that the lexicologist forms by combining the "ph-" of phone and the "-ubbing" that comes from snubbing. We have all observed it: the phenomenon of ignoring somebody in order to compose a text or take yet one more look at the message, the social network, the image, the video, or the

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[1] Cambridge Dictionary, "Phubbing" at https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/phubbing Accessed on 1 Jan 2018.

website that is appearing on the screen of the mobile phone. Students use their phones and go online even as they walk with their friends who find it difficult to enter their internet world. That is why they are called phubbers: they prefer to interact with their smart phone than interact with the human being who is standing or sitting next to them.

Pornography[2]**:** the portrayal of sexual subject matter for the exclusive purpose of sexual arousal. Dr. Leon Seltzer unabashedly explains what pornography intends to do. It appeals exclusively to our senses or carnal appetites in order to "turn on" the viewer. In the Doctor's words, "the unabashed goal is simple and straightforward: titillation and immediate, intense arousal… an instantaneous stirring of the genitals."

In a YouTube 37-minute presentation published on the 4th of Dec 2012 by the National Center on Sexual Exploitation in the United States, Dr. John Foubert of Oklahoma State University and President of One in Four USA, shared his expert analyses of the pornography dilemma.[3] One in Four is an organization established to stop sexual assault on university campuses and in the military.

First he made a comment on the economics of the porn industry: the company took in four billion dollars in profits in the year 2002, but during the period from 2002 to 2012 they made profits of 13 billion dollars. This means that the industry is not designed to serve human beings and make them healthier and more mature. No; the industry is designed to put money into the pockets of very powerful individuals who seem not to care about human persons as beings that are worthy of dignity, respect and love.

Even before one begins to talk about the harm that pornography inflicts upon those who view it – even nonviolent pornography increases the risk of men experiencing difficulty in their intimate relationships by 20% – one has to consider what the industry does to the woman "employed" by the industry. An instructive

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[2] L. Seltzer, "What Distinguishes Erotica from Pornography?", *Psychology Today,* posted 6 Apr 2011 at https://www.psychologytoday.com/ us/blog/evolution-the-self/201104/what-distinguishes-erotica-pornography and accessed on 1 Jan 2018.

[3] J. Foubert (2012) *Porn on Campus: The Harm to College Students.* YouTube, 36 minutes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaCt6qUL_Pk

comparison that Dr. Foubert makes is with the Viet Nam war. Because one-third of the soldiers that returned from the war suffered Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), it was not difficult for therapists to figure out that the cause of the trauma was not an emotional or mental weakness on the part of the soldier. The cause obviously was to be found in the dynamics of the war itself: the war was gravely harming even the soldiers who were not getting physically shot or bombed.

The eye-opening fact about the pornography industry is that not one-third but two-thirds of all women who work in that industry suffer PTSD. Obviously what happens to the women in the production of the pornographic films is the cause that provokes the trauma. Now, what keeps the industry going? The continuing fact that there are people who view the videos. To make a long story short, those who watch pornography are not engaging in a harmless activity to feel relaxed or sexually gratified. They are engaging in an activity that gravely harms real people. Would my readers want to conclude from the present research that viewing pornography is normal… that it has no moral implications?

Michelle Hassell from the University of North Texas in the USA cited the statistic that a pornographic website, Pornhub, reported about the volume of its viewers: in 2014 alone the site claimed to have 18 billion visits.[4] This would mean 2.1 million visits per hour! The site also indicated that this was an increase of 4 billion over the previous year, 2013. Our own research brought us to the annual reports that Pornhub issues about its own activity. The website reports 28.5 billion visits during 2017, which amount to 81 million per day. The same site reported 33.5 billion visits for 2018, a daily average of 92 million visitors; and on the day they were writing their report in mid-December of 2018, they were averaging more than 100 million per day. That means the rate of visits is accelerating and shows no inclination to slow down.

The actors and actresses who do the porn videos for this particular website, classified as amateurs, models and content partners, uploaded 4.79 million new videos, creating over 1 million

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[4] M. Hassell (2016) *Online Pornography and its Effects on the Behavior of College Students*. Texas: University of North Texas (Master's Thesis).

hours of new content. This means that if you were to start watching these new videos in 1904 for 24 hours per day, seven days per week, you would still be watching them today, 114 years later. This is what we mean by sickness. The sickness at issue is sexual perversion. The symptom that alarms us to the fact that the person is stricken with this sickness of sexual perversion is pornography viewing.[5]

Nicholas W. Smith, writing from New York for Our Sunday Visitor, a Catholic Newsweekly in the United States, reported that there is one pornography website that receives 64 million visits per day. That amounts to 44,444 visits per minute. This same website claimed to have received 92 billion visits in the year 2016.

Where are your priorities? Do you watch pornography, a habit that always offends God, always reduces the human being – whether a woman or a man – to a sexual object, always deprives the person of dignity, is usually addictive, and usually brings moral and psychological disorder to those who pass valuable stretches of time watching it and to those who dangerously involve themselves as actresses and actors in the doing of it? Do you intend to continue watching pornography even though you know that this habit always corrodes the human being's ability to enter into an act of marital intercourse with a respectful awareness of the sacredness of the act and of the sacredness of the other person to whom one is giving oneself freely with a love that is capable of a unifying power that brings forth life? Do you wish to corrode your ability to find the fulfilling happiness that comes to blossom only for the person who loves responsibly?

We already saw that there are people who give priority to the pornographic website called Pornhub: 4.2 million visits per hour.

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[5] https://www.pornhub.com/insights/2018-year-in-review   The authors discourage any and all involvement with this website. It brings grave moral and psychological harm to the viewer; and it makes one complicit with all the moral, mental and emotional damage suffered by the actors and actresses. For the link between a website such as this one and violent crimes see N. Smith (March 2017) "Pornography: a Growing Public Health Crisis", *Our Sunday Visitor* at: https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/Story/TabId/2672/ ArtMID/13567/ArticleID/21868/Pornography-a-growing-public-health-crisis.aspx

How does Dr. Foubert's very enlightening presentation about the harm of pornography fare with viewers? Dr. Foubert uploaded this presentation in 2012: that means it has been available for six years on the internet. I was viewer number 3,239. That would be about 540 visits per year or between one and two per day.

After I completed my research about internet usage among social psychology students at JUCO under the supervision of my co-author, both of us recognized our unity of conviction about the impact that the internet can exert on either the moral development or the moral decay of university students.[6] We both share a confidence in Michael Polanyi's position that the scientist or philosopher most likely to discover the most precious meanings hidden in the data – the meanings that can change dramatically a person's life and move her towards God, towards the source of an unanticipated, enduring joy – are the scientists and philosophers who commit themselves to their intellectual enterprise with an "I-Thou" relationship to the data. These are the people who are not interested in manipulating the data or the experimental design in order to verify or falsify their personal hypotheses; rather they are the ones who commit themselves to learning from the data by finding new meanings in the reality that impinges upon them through the data. They allow the data to impose on their senses and intellects new insights and new hypotheses that they could never

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[6] Miss Rosemary Richard, the primary author, and Father John Gibson, the co-author, collaborated in the production of the present article by integrating Miss Richard's research objectives, literature review and research findings from her study on university student internet involvement with Father Gibson's own literature review and research into the Michael Polanyi "I-Thou" approach to scientific investigation, an approach that Miss Richard adopted for her research method. The Polanyi approach allows researchers to make choices about the subject(s) of the investigation and the methodology to be followed based on religious conviction and commitment so that overemphasis on objectivity does not mask meanings that may be hidden in the data. Miss Richard relies on her own faith to make objective ethical determinations about the rightness or wrongness of personal engagement with websites that can either bring to bloom positive moral transformation or negative moral perversion. Websites that violate the norms of human dignity and the ethics of responsible love are not only to be shunned but also to be rendered inaccessible since they constitute a morally lethal health hazard.

have anticipated. One might say that they approach the data as learners; and that they ultimately discover in, with and through the data, the God who provides the data. Polanyi emphasizes the fact that one can only make a scientific discovery if she or he makes a commitment not to avoid the "unknowns" of scientific objectives but rather to labour diligently to welcome the "unknowns" in all their mystery.

Knowing, as a dynamic force of comprehension, uncovers at each step a new hidden meaning. It reveals a universe of comprehensive entities which represent the meaning of their largely unspecifiable particulars. A universe constructed as an ascending hierarchy of meaning and excellence is very different from the picture of a chance collocation of atoms to which the examination of the universe by explicit modes of inference leads us. The vision of such a hierarchy inevitably sweeps on to envisage the meaning of the universe as a whole. Thus natural knowing expands continuously into knowledge of the supernatural.

The very act of scientific discovery offers a paradigm of this transition. I have described it as a passionate pursuit of a hidden meaning, guided by intensely personal intimations of this yet unexposed reality. The intrinsic hazards of such efforts are of its essence; discovery is defined as an advancement of knowledge that cannot be achieved by any, however diligent, application of explicit modes of inference. Yet the discoverer must labor night and day. For though no labor can make a discovery, no discovery can be made without intense, absorbing, devoted labor. Here we have a paradigm of the Pauline scheme of faith, works and grace. *The discoverer works in the belief that his labors will prepare his mind for receiving a truth from sources over which he has no control.* I regard the Pauline scheme therefore as the only adequate conception of scientific discovery.[7]

1.   What the Present Article Purports to Do?

This article integrates a research project conducted at a Tanzanian university, that of Jordan University College (JUCO) in the Morogoro Region of Tanzania, and a refined articulation of

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[7] M. Polanyi (1961) "Faith and Reason", *The Journal of Religion* 41/4, 247. The bold print is ours.

moral parameters that indubitably must guide the international networks of information and entertainment in the world of today. The researcher concerned herself with the volume of internet use among students and the priorities that governed their choice of websites. The co-author helped the researcher make her acquaintance with Michael Polanyi and his emphasis on the moral character of scientific research.

Michael Polanyi has established his credentials as an internally renowned scientist and philosopher. He was nominated three times to receive the Nobel Prize: (1) 1959 – Chemistry; (2) 1960 – Chemistry; and (3) 1961 – Physics. His own son, John, won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1986 for his contribution concerning the dynamics of chemical elementary processes. Two of Michael Polanyi's students also won the Nobel Prize: Melvin Calvin in 1961 (Chemistry) for his research on the carbon dioxide assimilation in plants and Eugene Wigner in 1963 (Physics) for his contribution to the theory of the atomic nucleus and the elementary particles particularly through the discovery and application of fundamental symmetry principles.[8]

Polanyi affirms that a true scientist cannot be simply an objective observer standing by to calculate frequencies and norms and then determining the verification or falsification of hypotheses and the predictive power of the findings. The true scientist cannot act as if she may act professionally without accepting accountability for all the moral ramifications of her findings. The true scientist must commit herself to searching for meanings and inspirations that may lie hidden in the data. The data must affect her personally – maybe even change her life dramatically – so that she may properly view the data both within the horizon of her personal reality and within a horizon of universal intent. She is not an observer but a discoverer; and what she is learning/ discovering affects not only her but everyone – the intent of her scientific involvement reaches out to the reality that embraces everyone. The reality that she is studying affects everyone. Her I-Thou relationship with the data allows her to make unanticipated

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[8] Lists of all the Nobel Prize laureates and nominees are available on the Nobel Prize website: https://www.nobelprize.org.

discoveries precisely because she is humble enough to let the data teach her. Polanyi:

> The discovery of objective truth in science consists in the apprehension of a rationality which commands our respect and arouses our contemplative admiration; … such discovery, while using the experience of our senses as clues, transcends this experience by embracing the vision of a reality beyond the impressions of our senses, a vision which speaks for itself in guiding us to an ever deeper understanding of reality.
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> *… I believe that in spite of the hazards involved, I am called upon to search for the truth and state my findings.*
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> ... The distinctive ability of a scientific discoverer lies in the capacity to embark successfully on lines of enquiry which other minds, faced with the same opportunities, would not have recognized or not have thought profitable. This is his/[her] originality. Originality entails a distinctively personal initiative and is invariably impassioned, sometimes to the point of obsessiveness. From the first intimation of a hidden problem and throughout its pursuit to the point of its solution, the process of discovery is guided by a personal vision and sustained by a personal conviction.
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> *The freedom of the subjective person to do as he pleases is overruled by the freedom of the responsible person to act as he must.*[9]

Together the researcher and her co-author committed themselves to involvement with web browsing by deciding to be the first respondents for the research. Following Polanyi's conviction that the committed scientist establishes an I-Thou relationship with the data, the researcher and her co-author chose to utilize the search engines to investigate websites that correspond to their primary moral and religious commitments. Then in an I-Thou manner of approaching the information that the websites offered them, they allowed the websites to shed light on their own personal desires, needs and hopes. They did not try to manipulate

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[9] M. Polanyi (1962) *Personal Knowledge,* London: Routledge – Kegan Paul, 4, 315, 317, 325-326. In all cases the italics in the citations are those of Polanyi.

the information they received in the I-It manner of compiling data without being personally affected by the data. These personal web searches constituted a preliminary stage of the research.

One class was selected as the target population for the research: all students that were currently studying social psychology. The researcher and her co-author were aware from the outset that generating statistics for the volume of internet use and the priorities guiding the choices of websites with the purpose of making comparisons with other internet studies conducted in university settings in other countries could not be a major objective because the students involved were too few. With the co-author's advice, the researcher refrained from giving top priority to an analysis of the data for frequencies and norms as if the data were a malleable mass of raw material to be manipulated cleverly by the researcher for purposes of hypothesis verification and predictive ability. What the researcher did do was to allow the data to be a source of unanticipated meaning and impact precisely in its moral implications for student internet users. Following Polanyi's approach, both the researcher and her co-author allowed their personal moral and religious convictions to guide their own internet usage in the preparatory stages of the study, the construction of the questionnaire, the format for a class discussion about the internet, and their interpretation of their findings.

In tandem with this approach that emphasizes "commitment" and "personal involvement" with the research project rather than "cold objectivity", the authors chose to interpret the JUCO social psychology students' data within the context of several significant studies that other researchers have undertaken in other countries. When a significant number of studies are all analyzed together – a meta-analysis - the results manifest the frightening possibility of a wholesale irreversible moral perversion for present-day internet users on a worldwide level. It is not only pornography itself but also the preoccupation with the internet at the expense of interpersonal relationships that eerily darken the horizon. But the data also offer hope: the capacity of the internet to provide influential role models so that students can understand their specifiable responsibilities for resisting what is unethical and psychologically harmful and their identifiable possibilities for

growing in virtue, valour and integrity… this capacity of the internet is also to be noticed and appreciated.

1.1 Background for the Issue at Hand

The scientist cannot and must not renounce personal convictions, planted in the fertile soil of truth and goodness, in order to enslave herself to an objectivity that she has adopted from her own educational experience or that has been passed on to her from her academic culture. The scientist cannot make genuine discoveries by relying on her own or other people's norms. She must rely on a higher, supernatural power that she cannot comprehend or anticipate. Yet within the grace that flows forth from this supernatural power, the scientist can identify meaningful convictions, purposes, indeed a calling. Polanyi:

> A result obtained by applying strict rules mechanically, without committing anyone personally, can mean nothing to anybody. Desisting henceforth from the vain pursuit of a formalized scientific method, commitment accepts in its place the person of the scientist as the agent responsible for conducting and accrediting scientific discoveries. The scientist's procedure is, of course, methodical. But his methods are but the maxims of an art which he applies in his own original way to the problem of his own choice. … Every factual statement embodies some measure of responsible judgment as the personal pole of the commitment in which it is affirmed.

> … Within its commitments the mind is warranted to exercise much ampler powers than those by which it is supposed to operate under objectivism; but by the very fact of assuming this new freedom it submits to a higher power to which it had hitherto refused recognition. Objectivism seeks to relieve us from all responsibility for the holding of our beliefs. That is why it can be logically expanded to systems of thought in which the responsibility of the human person is eliminated from the life and society of man…. We cast off the limitations of objectivism in order to fulfil our calling, which bids us to make up our minds about the whole range of matters with which man is properly concerned.

… Those who are satisfied by hoping that their intellectual commitments fulfil their calling, will not find their hopes discouraged when realizing on reflection that they are indeed truly hopes. … Commitment offers to those who accept it legitimate grounds for the affirmation of personal convictions with universal intent… Our subjective condition may be taken to include the historical setting in which we have grown up. We accept these as the assignment of our particular problem. Our personhood is assured by our simultaneous contact with universal aspirations which place us in a transcendent perspective.

… The stage on which we thus resume our full intellectual powers is borrowed from the Christian scheme of Fall and Redemption. Fallen Man is equated to the historically given and subjective condition of our mind, from which we may be saved by the grace of the Spirit. The technique of our redemption is to lose ourselves in the performance of an obligation which we accept, in spite of its appearing on reflection impossible of achievement. We undertake the task of attaining the universal in spite of our admitted infirmity, which should render the task hopeless, because we hope to be visited by powers for which we cannot account in terms of our specifiable capabilities. This hope is a clue to God.

… [The human being] stands rooted in his calling under a firmament of truth and greatness. Its teachings are the idiom of his thought: the voice by which he commands himself to satisfy his intellectual standards. Its commands harness his powers to the exercise of his responsibilities. It binds him to abiding purposes, and grants him power and freedom to defend them. [10]

A thorough reading of *Personal Knowledge* makes it clear that the Hungarian scientist holds the lifelong conviction that the scientist who commits herself to a relationship with the data that allows the data to reveal hidden meanings and hence open the door to unanticipated discoveries is the scientist who places all of her projects and tasks within the supernatural activity exercised by a higher power – by a divine power that transcends the scientist's capacities and skills. In order to fulfil her commitment as a scientist she needs divine grace. Polanyi places the scientist's aspirations to make discoveries that have universal application – "universal

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[10] M. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 328, 341, 342, 401.

intent" – for all individuals families, cultures and societies within the notion of "calling". The scientist who accepts her task as a gift from the God who gives the call understands that human greatness can be recognized only by submission to it and thus belongs to the family of things which exist only for those committed to them.

By virtue of the call and the grace that accompanies the call, the scientist is capable of discerning what is excellent in the scientific endeavour and accepts that excellence as a guide. It is a respect for the call that motivates the scientist to accept her tasks as obligations even though there is no particular authority that is obliging her. Within her convictions and commitments that pull her through the various stages of the scientific enterprise, she can approach purely cognitive targets, such as facts, knowledge, proofs, reality and science as helpful media that move her towards her noble purpose, i.e., the fulfilment of her calling.[11] All manner of excellence that we accept for our guidance, and all obligations to which we grant jurisdiction over us, can be defined by our respect for human greatness. And from these objects of our respect we can pass on continuously to purely cognitive targets, such as facts, knowledge, proof, reality, science – all of which can likewise be said to exist only as binding on ourselves. We can then work our way back from this point, by aid of reflection, to a recognition of ourselves as the persons deliberately entering on these commitments and can extend our recognition also to all the members of a society sharing similar beliefs and obligations.

A scientist responds to the call, therefore, when she exercises responsible judgment with universal intent. The committed scientist acts according to her conscience in a stance of independence towards all her colleagues, associates and co-workers. She acts according to universal standards. What Polanyi calls the "accidents of personal existence" – the conceptual framework that one borrows from the local culture and the melange of motives that seem to link with the frenetic desire to hold on to one's reputation and to cling to the privileges of social status within one's society – all these accidents of personal existence form a constellation of concrete occasions that the scientist recognizes

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[11] See M. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 401.

as a framework that must be transcended in order to exercise one's personal responsibility before the God who is in an I-Thou relationship with her and with all creation.

By no means are one's personal convictions reducible to the mere products of a particular home milieu and to one's interests that she has nourished since childhood. The scientist is capable of making deliberate intellectual commitments with universal aspiration because she labours under the canopy of her call.[12]

There is a kind of psychology that refuses to accept the human heart's ability to surrender oneself to a call and labour with purity of conviction and commitment according to the parameters of the call. It is a psychology that refuses to accept that the heart has the capacity to be pure, i.e., to be free of the inclination to use other people as a means of satisfying one's own desires, needs, inclinations and impulses. My co-author listens to the psychiatrist Judith Herman, one of the world's foremost specialists on trauma and recovery; and he accepts her explanation why Sigmund Freud seems to be the father of this ideology that suspects the human heart.

> Denial within the medical and mental health professions goes back to Freud who, in his early work, saw many upper-middle-class Viennese women complaining of hysteria. What they were hysterical about, they revealed, were sexual assaults by men that they knew and trusted – frequently their fathers. Freud initially believed his informants, took them seriously, and in an 1896 essay called "The Aetiology of Hysteria" proposed the seduction theory, which postulated that at the basis of every case of hysteria was a childhood sexual assault. Within a year he retracted that theory – not because he found new evidence from patients – but because he could not believe that there were so many incest cases. In other words, he would not accept the notion that there were so many incestuous fathers among the well-to-do bourgeoisie of Vienna. Later he not only repudiated his seduction theory, but also falsified his incest cases, identifying the perpetrators as governesses, other children, and in two cases he professed that uncles were to blame. Eventually he admitted that those two were father-daughter cases.

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[12] See M. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 339, 400.

He went on to claim that the women's reports of sexual assault were fantasy… [13]

History seems to indicate, therefore, that Freud arrived at his suspicion of the human heart's ability to love purely and freely through his day-to-day, one-on-one counselling of women who were sick with hysteria. His essay, *The Aetiology of Hysteria,* made it very clear that the sickness was not the consequence of a mental, emotional, or personality weakness on the part of the person who was sick. What was causing the sickness was the blatantly immoral behaviour of sexual predators that abused these women in their earlier years. The sickness had planted its roots in the hearts and the minds of people who were abusing the women. Often these people were their own fathers.

The elite and influential of Vienna where Freud was conducting his practice as a psychoanalyst felt very disturbed about Freud's findings because they knew even the demographic details of his clients/ patients so they could make conclusions about the identity of the abusers. They accused Freud of tarnishing the reputation of people "known" to be benevolent, philanthropic, and upright examples for society.

As Herman pointed out, Freud got nervous and cancelled the publication of the book. In its stead, he began developing what can only be called spurious theories about women's fantasy life. To make a long story short, he no longer espoused the truth about the origins of hysteria; instead he developed an unsubstantiated theory that the women were losing their psychological health because in their subconscious they "wanted" sexual experiences even from an early age. Freud tried to argue, therefore, that their abusers were really satisfying the secret, subconscious cravings of their victims.

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[13] J. Herman (1984) "Sexual Violence (colloquium paper)", in *Work in Progress.* Wellesley, Massachusetts: Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies, 6. Herman supplies the reference to Freud's original essay: S. Freud (1896) "The aetiology of hysteria", in J. Strachey, ed., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* III, London: Hogarth, 1962. Freud's later denial may be found in S. Freud (1896) *Further remarks on the neuropsychoses of defence*, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* III. London: Hogarth, 1962.

Sigmund Freud typifies the psychosocial school of suspicion. He suspects the human heart's capacity to love freely and purely. Freud exemplifies the psychic determinism typical of all those who suspect that it is the drive for sensual and emotional gratification that governs the human heart even if the person involved is totally unaware of it. In this instance the other person loses his or her identity as a person. This person – typically a person of the opposite sex – has become an object-for-me. Once the person has gratified me, I can dispose of her. In my eyes, she is reducible, replaceable and repeatable: I can substitute another for her once I am tired of her. I have deprived her, therefore, of her freedom, her dignity, and her right to live and love responsibly. I have done the same to myself: I have deprived myself of the freedom and the right to love responsibly and chastely.

The instinct determinism that motivates a person to seek self-gratification gives rise to a lifestyle of psychosocial consumerism. This kind of mindset anchors itself in the shallow conviction, "I am what I feel." This is the person who feels a great need for social contact with individuals and groups. Loneliness can make this person look for romantic relationships that will gratify sexual inclinations and impulses, even if those relationships are only for the moment and are really actresses or actors in a video. This person may pursue friendships that are emotionally pleasing. To this person the "product" is another human being whose physical and social behaviour are touching, soothing, peace-giving, tender, gentle, delicate, exciting, uplifting, and sensually stimulating.

Our present-day global culture brings to the fore a problem that can destroy the heart's ability to love and be loved. This is a health problem that would certainly seem to demonstrate that one should agree with Freud and should suspect the heart's ability to be pure and loving. The waste of time, expense of energy, uncontrollable sway of sensual impulse, and the ignorance – wilful or naïve – of the requirements of conscience: all of these symptoms that characterize pornography viewing seem to place the heart in suspicion.

Polanyi understands that the Freudian position can anchor itself in the ideologies, the cultural practices, and the individual habits of many people in the world of today. Hence he makes a dramatic

assertion: **The moral control of our drives, which would harness them to the service of a reasonably satisfying life, is ever in danger of being swamped and disorganized by them [i.e., by the drives].**[14] Our research aims to formulate the emphatic suggestion that the internet perverts people's moral principles precisely because as rabid internet users, they allow their drives to swamp them, disorganize them, and so overwhelm both their ability and their desire to control themselves.

1.2 Why Do People Cling to the Internet and Phub Their Family and Friends?

Information and communication technology seems to have become an integral dimension to every facet of human life especially since it facilitates the doing and completing of tasks at a much quicker pace and at a much lower cost. Publishing in the year 2011, an Iranian team of educational specialists, Mohammad Reza Ghaznavi and Alemeh Keikha together with a management professional Nour-Mohammad Yaghoubi have observed that there has been a conversion of the social-industrial complex into a worldwide network of information exchange: today the most technologically developed countries are those who have access to the most reliable sources of information and to the people who can understand it and translate it into action. Indeed using IT (Information Technology) seems indispensable for every school and every organization.[15]

By introducing information and communication technology in teaching and curricular program domains, classroom management has evolved into a research-based and student-based procedure. The responsibility of the teachers is no longer gathering and transferring information; but they assume various responsibilities, and they should be multi-skilled persons.

The teachers should acquire the skills necessary to help the students explore and understand the research that is available through the internet – and to make critical choices about how to

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[14] M. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 339.

[15] M. Ghaznavi – A. Keikha – N. Yaghoubi (2011) "The Impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on Educational Improvement", *International Education Studies* 4/2, 116-125.

make intelligent and ethically valuable use of the search engines and websites, especially those that involve email and social interaction. What in the past used to be a closed, limited and concentrated system where administrators could tap resources only at considerable expense and then utilize them with teaching/learning methods that depended greatly on memorization and formulaic thought patterns has now evolved into an educational environment where resource systems are quite dispersed and provide access to a seemingly unlimited volume of information that is not only geared to accumulation of knowledge content but is also prone to provoke and stimulate questions that neither the teachers nor the students were considering at the moment. What seems to take priority is not the content that a student learns, but rather the method or technique that she uses to choose how she is going to seek information that she has not yet learned.

When the student searches Google, will she ask questions that leave her ignorant of the real issues? Will her manner of phrasing questions be inadequate so that the search engine fails to offer entries that can provide her with the information that she is seeking? Will she ask questions that lead her to ethically unstable websites – questions of a morbid or salacious quality? Will she ask questions that go to the heart of the issues she needs to explore?

1.3 The Choice to Take the Polanyi Approach to Data

To examine questions of this nature, the researcher and her co-author chose to adopt an attitude towards the data that is not simply an objective categorizing of respondent input and a series of logical inferences about the data that are inductive in nature.

Rather, from the outset, we decided to involve ourselves morally with the research objectives and the data we would be collecting to serve those objectives. We were following Michael Polanyi's principles because Polanyi's research attitude happened to coincide with the philosophy of Martin Buber and so formed a kind of backbone for a morally upright scientific effort particularly in investigations with an unusually controversial moral tone. Pornographic websites are available for all who use IT technology: that is unusually controversial.

Polanyi was quite aware that he was doing his science in an international intellectual community that admired those researchers who could compose testable hypotheses, categorize and systematize the data collected to test the truth of those hypotheses, conduct analyses upon those data, and then either confirm the hypotheses or disconfirm them with an indifference so noble, with an objectivity so thorough, that the intellectual community would want to conclude: whatever she or he says about her or his findings must be true: "there is no moral or religious bias here." The ideal was to allow the researcher to make as many valid inferences as possible from the data – by processes of induction – without the researcher's personal involvement with the data. It was in Buber's words a standard I-It procedure. A common problem for this approach was that the quality of the scientific enterprise could often depend upon the researcher's ability to manipulate data to explain his or her own preconceived notions.

Like Buber, Polanyi envisioned another kind of scientific attitude. Instead of organizing, systematizing and transforming the data to suit one's preconceived expectations, is it not better for the scientist to be so involved with the data that the scientist allows the data to transform her heart and soul so that she becomes a new person, living new meanings, precisely on account of her involvement with the data? This is the I-Thou relationship. It is a manner of proceeding that generates new objectives and hypotheses that may be exceedingly more meaningful for individuals and societies as they strive to resolve life's most critical challenges. Polanyi believes it is this attitude that generates scientific discovery.

Polanyi's point was this: the best researcher is not necessarily the one who stands aloof from his or her research with cold, impassioned objectivity – and with the desire to "control" the data – but rather is the one who engages his or her personal emotions and convictions with the focus of the investigation so that the researcher lets herself be guided by an "invisible hand" and so forms an I-Thou relationship with the research and not an I-It relationship. From this point of view the researcher allows the data to give new meanings to her own personal involvements with the real world. She may even redefine herself in terms of what she has

discovered from the data. The data unveils an entirely new dimension not only to the universe that impinges upon the researcher but unveils for the researcher a new shade of her own personal identity. The researcher allows the data to reshape and transform her personal convictions about the issue at hand within the universe that is given to her as a gift. This is an I-Thou relationship; and it acknowledges all data to be a "given" that are entering the life space of the researcher as a Gift from one particular Supreme Giver.

2. A Preliminary Phase in the Research: The Researcher as the First Respondent

We would like to be so bold as to say that instead of establishing ourselves as the "lord" and "lady" of the data in an I-It relationship, we commit ourselves as "servants" of the data in an I-Thou relationship. It was with this conviction in our hearts that as a first phase in our investigation, we chose to conduct a data search that matched our own personal ideals, commitments and interests. In the spirit of Michael Polanyi, I allowed my first data collection to be my own brief visit to websites that corresponded to what was most important to my heart: my religious faith. As an African I do not succumb to the secularist mood and divorce my religious faith from my scientific endeavours.

My first respondent in my research was myself. I chose to involve myself with the internet in a manner consistent with my convictions and my commitment. I opened the Google search engine and I saw right in front of me the words, "Search Google or type URL." A friend had told me that there is a beautiful slide show available about Pope St. John Paul II and Jesus on the Cross. I wanted to search for it. I typed into that space six words, "John Paul II and Jesus Crucified." I went only to the Images page for my search. What did I find there?

Among the images, I found Pope John Paul with Mother Teresa of Kolkata. Immediately I did a Google search for her as well. In

the space of five minutes, I had done two searches, and I had found the following images.[16]

- **Image One**: a picture of Pope John Paul II when he was young with the words "I connected the world before Facebook was popular." Adjoined to these words is the comment, "Nice Move St. John Paul II." This image can lead to a full exploration of perhaps the most traveled leader in human history. The image relates to the topic of my research since it already raises a moral issue: can the virtual relationships formed through social networks on the internet replace real-life interpersonal relationships?

- **Image Two**: a very uplifting photo of Pope John Paul II who is caught in a pose where he expresses confidence, warmth and friendship. The picture supports the message of Image One.

- **Image Three**: I see a personal example of Pope John Paul II making a social connection. With whom? Like probably millions of people around the world I recognize the face of the man with whom John Paul is speaking in such a close, tender and friendly manner: it is the one who tried to assassinate him and indeed almost killed him. The image plainly exudes forgiveness. Pope John Paul is connecting to his assassin. If by chance, I am one of the few who do not recognize the man, I see that the label for the photo refers to Ali Agca. It will take me another two minutes to look him up in the search engine; and his Wikipedia page tells me the essentials of who he is.

- **Image Four**: Pope St. John Paul II appears in the posture of greeting either an individual or a crowd with the other person who undoubtedly has connected more people to each other in human history than any other human being, living or dead.

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[16] This and all the other images to which I refer comes from a five-minute search inquiry using the words "John Paul II and Jesus Crucified" and "Mother Teresa of Calcutta". I accessed these pages on 1 Jan 2018.
https://www.google.com/search?q=John+Paul+II+and+Jesus+Crucified&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiEtPPW14fcAhXFAewKHWctBEsQ_AUICigB&biw=1707&bih=844&dpr=1.13 and
https://www.google.com/search?q=mother+teresa+of+calcutta&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjEp4aY2YfcAhUSCewKHer9C7kQ_AUICigB&biw=1707&bih=844&dpr=1.13#imgrc=5EkuwwH2f5S16M:

Everyone who recognizes Mother Teresa of Calcutta (now updated as Mother Teresa of Kolkata) understands that one reason why she received the Nobel Peace Prize was because of her quite effective methods of connecting people who were suffering and dying alone, connected to no one, abandoned, homeless, rejected, unloved, unwanted, and humiliated. Mother Teresa connected these totally isolated people to the world's most "connected" political leaders, religious leaders, actors, actresses, princes and princesses, volunteers from almost every nationality there is… in other words, she actively worked to create the human family. For the one who does not know Mother Teresa the label to be found with the image leads the person to a thoroughly descriptive Wikipedia presentation.

- **Image Five**: Inspiring words from Mother Teresa's lips that accompany a photo that attracts the viewer because of Mother Teresa's eyes express Mother Teresa's concern that all of us, no matter where we happen to be in the world, should find peace and meaning in our connection with God: "Give yourself fully to God. He will use you to accomplish great things on the condition that you believe much more in His LOVE than in your weakness."

- **Image Six**: the words that I have put into the search engine have not failed to elicit an image of Jesus Crucified – only it is not Pope John Paul but rather Mother Teresa who is in the photo. The two words, "I Thirst," bring the mind and heart of each and every one of the world's Christians – and of many who are not Christian – to Jesus Crucified, just moments before he died an excruciatingly painful death. Having taken note of this image, the internet user can very easily do the search to find the connection between these words of Jesus and Mother Teresa's prayer (she is obviously praying in the photo). The searcher will learn that Mother Teresa's entire life mission of bringing love, hope and help to the poorest of the poor were her response to Jesus' cry of need on the cross when the only substance the world gave him was a bitter potion of vinegar.

- **Image Seven**: these same words with which I have engaged the search engine bring up another image of Jesus Crucified. This time it is the image of Jesus from the movie *The Passion of the Christ*. The image label identifies Jim Caviezel, the one who

played the part of Christ in that movie so that I can go in at least two directions: find out more about Caviezel and the movie or/and obtain the movie and watch it. A Wikipedia search tells me that in the United States and Canada the movie ranks as the highest R-rated movie of all time if one speaks in terms of how many people paid to see it. It also has been the most seen non-English speaking movie in the world until 2017 when it became the second. Perhaps more importantly I learn that there is to be a sequel in the near future *The Resurrection* with Caviezel reprising his role as Jesus.

This is what a five-minute search taught me: it led me into at least four new avenues of inquiry: about Pope St. John Paul II, particularly his relationship with Ali Agca, who is now free from jail; St. Teresa of Kolkata; the movie *The Passion of the Christ*; and the actor Jim Caviezel. It is not difficult to discern that someone else looking at the same set of images as I did could find other avenues of inquiry.

I reached the conclusion, therefore, that my use of the internet was a positive experience.

My second group of data came from my co-author: he was my second respondent in this preliminary phase of research. He, too, entered the project with his own convictions and commitments. He began by searching for a document that he was obliged to study for a panel discussion: *Gaudete et Exsultate*, a document about the call to holiness that Pope Francis promulgated throughout the world. His interaction process with the internet was as follows:

- **Document One**: he downloaded the document he needed, *Gaudete et Exsultate.*
- **Document Two**: having known that Pope Francis is a vowed member of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) and that the Jesuits had provided a vast fabric of I-Thou relationships for Pope Francis during the last several decades, my co-author searched for and downloaded one of several recent addresses that Pope Francis directed towards the Jesuits. My co-author chose the remarks that the Pope gave to Jesuit formators on 1st August, 2018, because the address brought to light two very significant I-Thou relationships in the life of the Pope.

- **Document Three**: my co-author searched for and found a document that Pope Francis referred to as the finest address ever given by a pope to the Society of Jesus. It was a speech given by Pope St. Paul VI to the Jesuits on the 3rd of December, 1974, during their 32nd General Congregation. In other words, Pope St. Paul VI gave his address when the future Pope Francis was in attendance as a finally professed member of the Jesuits bound to Pope Paul by a fourth vow (a vow that professes love and obedience to the Pope in all apostolic matters). During that address Pope Paul stressed the authentic identity of the Jesuit.
- **Document Four**: my co-author searched for and found another document also highlighted by Pope Francis during his remarks to the formators. This document was an address of Father General Pedro Arrupe on the 6th of August, 1981, who spoke to the Jesuits and their co-workers in the Thailand refugee camps. This was the last public act of Father Arrupe as Superior General because the very next day he was stricken with an incapacitating stroke.

The human being, of course, does not live by the internet alone. The documents that Father Gibson downloaded now became data for him that motivated him to read through certain important sections of the hard copy of the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. The Spiritual Exercises are a method of prayer that wonderfully helps a person grow in a true friendship with Jesus and then from within that friendship discern the will of God for her or his life. By allowing the Exercises to transform his manner of praying and discerning, the Pope came to experience an I-Thou relationship with Jesus. By doing research about Pope Francis' addresses to Jesuits, Father Gibson saw how the Spiritual Exercises have had a dramatically meaningful impact on the Pope's life.

But that is not all. Just as I felt inspired to cultivate new insights about myself by learning about Pope St. John Paul and Mother Teresa through the internet, this accumulation of data also gave Father Gibson an occasion to pray and to grow in self-awareness: in the *modus operandi* of Michael Polanyi, my co-author was allowing the data to transform him.

My co-author, in other words, was learning some things about himself through Pope Francis and the Spiritual Exercises, namely, that he is a Carmelite precisely because Jesus has wanted him to be

a Carmelite. He has become what God has wanted him to be, a Carmelite priest, precisely by doing what Jesuits do, enter into an I-Thou relationship with Jesus through the meditations and contemplations of the Spiritual Exercises of the Jesuit founder, St. Ignatius. My co-author assures me that this helps him feel more of a brother to Pope Francis.

My co-author's research into Pope Francis and the Spiritual Exercises inspires me to pray more humbly and more meaningfully so that I too may discern God's will for my life. I also find it freeing in all my labours, for example, in my thoughtful considerations of what is required of me in order to give moral significance to my current research, to remain open and deeply appreciative of God's love for me and the grace he gives me so that I may aspire to human greatness and truth even by means of this apparently small-scale study.

By adopting this attitude during our research, we understood for the first time the capacity of the internet to give us *role models* that can inspire us and even influence us in life-changing ways so that we become different persons because of our research. We mention two role models that I learned about through a simple browse by means of the Google search engine: Pope St. John Paul II and St. Teresa of Kolkata. We take into account other role models on the horizon that influenced my co-author's web browsing: Pope Francis and Father Pedro Arrupe of the Society of Jesus.

We construct our questionnaire for the social psychology students with the interior conviction that Jesus is the one who has changed our lives. As Pope Francis says in *Gaudete et Exsultate*, n. 61, Jesus is the one who allows us to see the face of God in our family, in all our friends, in our colleagues, even in the ones who have spurned us and have expressed no desire to have an I-Thou relationship with us. Jesus is the One who is renewing and re-energizing our hearts every day so that we can give and forgive without frontiers or limits. Pope Francis has taught us this.

This is the starting point and the endpoint of our article: the internet can connect us to God *and* to the people God has given us, like Pope St. John Paul, Mother Teresa, and Pope Francis. But there is a dark shadow in this picture. As my research among social psychology students at Jordan University College showed me, the

internet conceals many ploys and stratagems that can place an insidious divide between ourselves and God. I shall give an example by explaining my first steps in the research process for deciding how I was going to plan and carry out my research project.

2.1 Negative Implications of Internet Usage: A Message for All

It was actually my same five-minute search that brought to the surface the negative dimension of internet use. What do I mean?

I am still within this five-minute search. Yet another image of Pope St. John Paul II catches my attention. One reason is because it is not a picture. It is a jpg message coming from the saint himself.

Image Eight: This image was Pope St. John Paul II's Message for Lent in 2003. The message, a jpg image reads as follows:

> Our age, regrettably, is particularly susceptible to the temptation toward selfishness which always lurks within the human heart. In society generally, and in the media, people are bombarded by messages which more or less openly exalt the ephemeral and the hedonistic. Concern for others is certainly shown whenever natural disasters, war and other emergencies strike, but in general it is difficult to build a culture of solidarity. The spirit of the world affects our inner propensity to give ourselves unselfishly to others and drives us to satisfy our own particular interests. The desire to possess ever more is encouraged. Surely it is natural and right that people, by using their own gifts and by their own labour, should work to obtain what they need to live, but an excessive desire for possessions prevents human beings from being open to their Creator and to their brothers and sisters.

This message brings to light a social fact that is surfacing in almost every country of the world: internet use breeds self-preoccupation. Phubbing and pornography come immediately to mind. Self-preoccupation breeds the consumer mentality. Pope John Paul suggests that this mentality deprives the human being of an ethical backbone; and more often than not pushes the human person towards the tendency to view other people, not as persons,

but as objects, for advancing one's self-interests.[17] Pope St. John Paul's mindset helped shape my objectives and research questions.

Pope Francis helps us realize that we wander into ethically dangerous waters if we try to establish ourselves in an I-It relationship with the internet. To borrow his language from the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate,* n. 108, we waste time drinking in superficial information, engaging in instant messaging to satisfy our own needs and desires of the moment, and dissipating our energies and our values in the virtual reality that pleasurable websites offer us.

2.2 Final Background Considerations: Gaps/Lacunae in the Research

Educational improvement in the twenty-first century takes place in tandem with the discoveries and inventions of the information age. By reviewing the existing statistics and information about the development of ICT in the educational systems of developing countries, we find out that they have had to face the same inhibiting expenses as the developed countries have had to face when it comes to equipping schools, colleges and universities with various facilities such as the computer and the internet.

Today students must engage themselves with information and communication technologies in almost all of their academic enterprises. They search for their academic materials online; they communicate with their loved ones using phones, WhatsApp, Facebook, and other social networks. They no longer go to a photo studio to take photos; instead they use their own mobiles to take photos by themselves. Others are even no longer attempting their assignments by themselves; instead they download the answers from already published articles and submit them to their lecturers. Because both students and lecturers use downloads and sometimes forget to cite them as downloads, they get into an ethical quandary – especially since educated readers, i.e., supervisors and lecturers, are accustomed to noticing somewhat immediately the plagiarism involved.

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[17] K. Wojtyla (1981) *Love and Responsibility*, transl. by H. T. Willetts. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 21-44.

3. Statement of the Problem

Taking advantage of such modern technology as the computer and the worldwide web in academic settings gives a possibility to the students to learn at a faster speed, to perform better, and to feel more satisfaction when they attend class because the students are growing accustomed to a milieu that is audio-visual, i.e., a milieu that always seems to be in movement. However, using the information and communication technology is still a problem to most students especially in universities where students are allowed to possess technological devices for their own private use. How is this so?

Most students seem to consume a lot of their time in social network chatting, taking photos and uploading them onto the web pages that will make them easily accessible to others. Others persistently watch unethical – pornographic – videos and neglect their essential duties and studies.

4. General Objective

The general objective of the research was to assess what motivates social psychology students to use information and communication technology. Hidden within this general objective was the researcher's own personal concern – a concern aroused by her moral and religious convictions – about how her colleagues make ethical choices about what sites to visit on the internet. Because her co-author accepted his responsibility to confirm the face validity of her data collection instrument, namely, a questionnaire that was both closed-ended and open-ended in format, he advised her to include an important ethics question that researchers from other countries seemed to be overlooking.

The key question was as follows:

Do you believe that it is okay for a person to look at another person as a sexual object for pleasure, for example, in pornography? You may give more than one response:

a) Yes, because men and women have a right to sexual pleasure.
b) Yes, because the man or the woman may be tense and needs relief.

c) Yes, because it is morally okay to use the body as a sexual thing.

d) No, because the woman and the man have dignity and should not allow their bodies to be used, manipulated, or pleasured by someone who is not committed to them as a married spouse

e) No, because God does not allow the man or the woman to be degraded.

5. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this research were:

1) To establish a concrete list of students' reasons for using the internet, ordered according to preferences and time spent;

2) To determine students' perception of the ethical character of IT technology usage;

3) To establish the optimal ways of improving the ethical standards for accessing information and utilizing communication technologies as far as the student population is concerned.

6. Significance of the Study

This study could help to determine whether university students perceive pornography to be a grave moral issue that degrades women and sexual intimacy. This study, then, could prove to be an aid for those who are wondering if university students are fully aware of the addictive effects of the internet or whether they are naïve to those effects.

The project could prove to be helpful for educators, policy makers, curriculum designers, education assessors, counsellors and other stakeholders who make decisions about the creation of websites, the monitoring of websites, and the use of education technology particularly where social networks are concerned. The findings of the study could prove to be significant for psychologists who evaluate emotional or mental disorders that are connected to addictions that arise from exaggerated IT use, especially that of pornography. The findings could also give rise to novel ideas about how to develop further studies regarding students' psycho-social health, moral integrity and personality development. Finally, the

study could fortify society's conviction that religious commitments should help shape research designs especially when the research topics involve morally problematic issues.

7. A Literature Review of the IT Use in Education

7.1 The IT Revolution in Educational Methods: The Iranian Perspective

It is noted that the present research involves students from Christian and Islamic backgrounds. It has already been shown emphatically that the researcher and her co-author are bringing their Christian convictions into their research methodology. In order to place our data within the proper religious perspectives we shall review literature from the Islamic world and from the Christian world.

The Iranian investigators Ghaznavi and his colleagues emphasize the fact that the invention of new educational methods, learning transmissions that take place not only in the classrooms but also in computer networks, educational software and multi-media, internet resources, together with e-mail and social networks, bring forth a new milieu for implementing information and communication technology.[18]

It is necessary for both students and teachers to be well acquainted with the educational media and technology and also to approach it with a positive attitude.[19] Because most accept that ICT is capable of improving the quality of teaching and training processes in normal educational systems, constructing some facilities to implement these innovations for teachers and learners seems to be indispensable.

Ghaznavi and his associates suggest that scientists generally and students specifically seem to be the main consumers of these technologies.[20] The internet occupies students both in their educational and leisure time activities; and there is this possibility that using the internet technology will help them improve their academic performance.

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[18] M. Ghaznavi – A. Keikha – N. Yaghoubi, "The Impact", 117.

[19] *Ibid*.

[20] *Ibid*.

Ghaznavi and his colleagues conclude that the entire manner of perceiving the essence of education has undergone a transformation because the "eyes" with which we are doing the perceiving are precisely the media available through IT.

IT captivates. Ghaznavi and his colleagues report that because both teachers and students invest interest in the technology, the teachers teach with more enthusiasm and insight and the learners learn more quickly and more thoroughly when they use it.[21]

Ghaznavi and his associates affirm that students devote more time to homework and research projects when they use the computer; and they work with the computer during their free time.[22] These researchers comment as follows:

> According to what the teachers said, despite the fact that their work volume increased (which was the result of more intensive preparation for learning introductions), teachers are much more comfortable in the class environment and enjoy this new environment: hence they have been able to teach their students better. In addition, they have reported that their cooperation with other teachers has been improved and this has caused an increase in their motivation.[23]

7.2 University Students and IT in a Pluralistic Religious Environment

Having reviewed the literature from the point of view of an Islamic environment, we now consider how university students use IT in an environment that is by and large secularist even though the students themselves may be from a variety of religious backgrounds. The country in question is the United States of America. Many university students in America are actually from foreign countries so that the studies conducted in the USA offer a data base that has an international character. The data source is the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2002).[24]

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[21] M. Ghaznavi – A. Keikha – N. Yaghoubi, "The Impact", 118.

[22] *Ibid*.

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] S. Jones – *al.* (2002) "The Internet Goes to College"*, Pew Internet & American Life Project,* L. Rainie (Director). Washington, D.C.: http://www.pewinternet.org/

The researchers involved in the Pew Internet and American Life Project accumulated their data through the University of Illinois at Chicago. Between March 2002 and June 2002 researchers at the University of Illinois randomly distributed paper surveys to a wide range of higher education institutions, i.e., to undergraduate and graduate students registered in degree-seeking programs at 27 institutions of higher learning across the USA. The sample was designed to accord with known population parameters – gender, race, and age – that would reflect the national population of college students as reported by *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* The total number of the surveys returned was 2,054. Statistically speaking, one could say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects was plus or minus 2 percentage points. Hence the surveys seemed to be significantly bias-free and error-free.

I cite their findings:

- Twenty percent of today's college students began using computers between the ages of five and eight. By the time they were 16 to 18 years old all of America's college students had begun using computers. The Internet was part and parcel of everyone's life style.
- The percentage of college students who have gone online surpasses the percentage of the general population by a generous margin, 86% compared to 59%.
- Seventy-two percent of college students check their email every day.
- Seventy-eight percent of college internet users say that at one time or another they have entered the internet to browse "for fun".
- College internet users are twice as likely to have ever downloaded music files when compared to all internet users: 60% of college users compared to 28% of the general population.
- College internet users are twice as likely to use instant messaging on any given day compared to the average internet user: on a typical day, 26% of the college student population uses instant messaging compared to 12% of all other users.

- Seventy-nine percent of college students affirm that internet use has had a positive impact on their academic experience.
- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of college students in the USA say that they use the internet more than the library, while only 9% say that they use the library more than the internet in order to search for information.
- Two-thirds (68%) of college students have reported subscribing to one or more academic-oriented mailing lists that relate to their studies. They use these lists to carry on email discussions about topics covered in their classes.
- Forty-two percent of American college students affirm that they use the internet primarily to communicate socially.
- Only 10% of college students use the internet primarily for entertainment.
- Nearly three-fourths (72%) of college students say most of their online communication is with friends.
- The most popular online social activity is forwarding messages to friends or family: thirty-seven percent of college students report that they do this.

Another useful study coming from the United States drew forth its data from email invitations sent to a sample of 9,350 university freshmen and 9,050 university seniors at 13 institutions of higher learning, all located in five of the most populous American states, namely, California, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.[25] Approximately, 4,500 students responded to the email survey. The author of the study considers his findings to be instructive rather than conclusive: we shall now proceed to show that even though our present study is dramatically low profile in terms of the numbers of students surveyed, the compass of this present research is pointed in the same direction.

The average student in this survey reported that he or she used an electronic device between 3 and 5 hours for classroom activities and study per week. Writing documents consumed close to three hours per week. Surfing the internet for pleasure seemed to consume about two hours per week for the average student;

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[25] R. Kvavik (2018) *Convenience, Communications, and Control: How Students Use Technology*, Minneapolis, MI: EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research – University of Minnesota.

creating, reading, or sending email together with chatting with friends or acquaintances by way of instant messaging seemed to consume about the same amount of time. Downloading, listening to music or watching videos/DVDs consumed a little over one hour per week.

Kvavik also interviewed students to determine the reliability of his results. Interviews confirmed the fact that students spent much computer time on communication with others, but nevertheless schoolwork remained the most important matter for time consumption. Often courses required the use of the computer; hence time spent on academic matters could depend greatly on the lecturers' requirements. Those with high grade point averages spent more hours weekly using the computer in support of classroom activities.

A pluralistic panorama of how students use the internet emerged from a 2013 international study entitled *Students' Online Usage: Global Market Trends Report*.[26] This document enjoyed as its data source a total of 918 surveys completed at World Grad School Tour events during 2012-2013 held in 26 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and North America. Survey respondents not only came from a variety of countries but they showed diversity in their areas of study. They varied in age (from 18 upwards), in level of education, and in professional experience. All were present at the Tour events in order to gain information about graduate-level degree courses – both Master and PhD programmes – including application advice, information about funding and visas, and detail about specific courses. The key findings were as follows:

- (A) The data from all 26 countries show that sixty-two percent of those who were between 18 and 20 years old reported that they go online only from 0 to 3 hours per day. Fifteen percent reported that they are online 5 or more hours per day. (B) Forty-three percent of those between 21 and 30 years of age go online 0 to 3 hours per day. Twenty-seven percent from this age group reported that they are online five hours or more per day.

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[26] M. Vannozzi – L. Bridgestock (2013) *Students' Online Usage Global Market Trends Report,* publ. by QS Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd. For information about report: onlinemarketing@qs.com

(C) Finally 51% of those who were 31 years old or older reported that they go online between 0 and 3 hours per day; 29% of this group are online more than five hours per day.

- The data provided by Africans indicate that forty-six percent of the African youth are online 0 to 3 hours per day. This statistic is comparable to that of Asia and Europe. Forty-eight percent of Latin Americans said that they are online between three and five hours per day: this is quite a bit more than all the other continental groupings.

- Twenty-three percent of social science and management students are online more than five hours per day in comparison with 43% in engineering and technology, 25% in the natural and life sciences and 17% in the arts and humanities.

- African respondents generally report lower levels of social network usage compared to other regions – with the exception of Facebook. The main motivation in Africa for social network usage is "keeping up to date" – this is true for all continents except for Latin America where "interest" is a key motivator.

- It is not difficult to notice that this global report did not include many countries of Islamic tradition and belief. Having already considered Iran, we may wish to catch a glimpse of another country that has developed a lifestyle according to Islamic traditions, that of Indonesia (Puspita & Rohedi, 2018). What do we find out?

7.3 Indonesia: Vocational Secondary Students and Their Absorption with the Internet

Puspita and Rohedi first speak of statistics that extend to the total population of the country of Indonesia.[27] Online activity for the social media, e.g., Facebook, has involved 42.5 million people, the fourth highest in the world. The number of Twitter users amounted to 5.7 million, the third highest in the world. Indonesia is a country with the population of 245 million people: the number of mobile phone users has reached 266 million people which exceeds the population itself! If the multi-phone users were to only

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[27] R. Puspita – D. Rohedi (2018) "The Impact of Internet Use for Students", *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, 306, https://iopscience.iop.org/

have two phones, this statistic would mean that 21 million people have more than one mobile. We can also imagine other variations on this statistic since little babies are not using mobiles. In any event we would have to say that probably every adolescent and every adult has at least one mobile.

The authors then express unmistakeable concern about the possibilities that the internet is a poison for the heart: "If you or your child feel more comfortable with friends online than with friends in the real world, or you cannot refrain from playing online games or unlock your smart phone or other gadget, it is possible that you or your children already use the internet too much (the term: internet addiction)."

The survey was a more controlled study than the ones that I have already summarized. The authors limited themselves to one institution, Vocational Secondary School located at SMKN 4 Pekanbaru with a student population of 1120 students. From this population the authors used standard random sampling techniques to select 120 respondents. All 120 said they always use the internet. Fifty-five percent leave the internet open from the time they wake up in the morning to the time they go to sleep at night.

Sixty-eight percent always used the internet to access social media. Only one person said that they rarely use the internet for social media. Approximately 31% said they often use the internet for social media. From this sample 54% said that they always use the internet for online games. About 42% used the internet often for online games. Five of the 120 students said they rarely use the internet for online games.

What may seem to be mind boggling is the responses that students gave to the next question: Do you use the Internet to learn and seek information? We would hope that as in some of the literature already reviewed we would be getting higher percentages than for the social media and the online games. With 68% always using the internet for social media and 54% always using the internet for online games, how many do you suppose use the internet for seeking information? Only 32% of these 120 students said that they always use the internet for researching information. What may seem more astonishing is that 34% said they rarely use the internet for seeking information. One would wonder if these

vocational secondary school students even had the curiosity to find out what the internet says about their own school's internet habits!

Consistent with the data that these researchers were already accumulating was another disconcerting item. They knew that they may not get a completely honest answer if they were to ask about pornography. They chose to address the apparently more innocent issue of YouTube use on the internet. Exceeding greatly the number of people who were using the internet to seek information, the YouTube users – the ones who said they "always" use YouTube" – were 52%. Forty-six percent said they often use YouTube. One person said they rarely look at YouTube; and one person said they never watch YouTube.

Then the researchers brought up the pornography question. Four people said they often look at pornography. The statistic that caught the researchers' attention was the "rarely" category: exactly 50%, i.e., 60 of the students looked rarely at pornography. What Puspita and Rohedi point out is that "rarely" *does* mean they have looked at it. The authors take note, too, that the preoccupation with the social media may mean that students are cultivating a habit of curiosity about the latest trends for finding pleasure and the satisfaction of material desires. Sure enough, about 37 percent of the students questioned often use the internet to keep up with technology and trends.

8. Literature Review of Cyber Harm

8.1 Abuse of Social Networks: An Example

Aaron Kheriaty (2018) reports that on the 2nd of August, 2013, a 14-year-old British girl named Hannah Smith hanged herself.[28] Her sister was the one who found her dead. It was known that she had been receiving harassing comments through the social media online – this had been going on for months. After her suicide her father demanded an investigation into the harassing messages that had driven his daughter to suicide. The results of the investigation were clear and verifiable: Hannah had posted the messages herself. She was writing messages to inflict harm on herself. Further investigation revealed that other teenagers were doing the same:

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[28] A. Kheriaty (2018) "Cyber Self-Harm", *First Things,* 29.01/18.

they were posting messages – nasty, mean, humiliating messages – that were directed at themselves.

Kheriaty informs us that J. Patchin and S. Hinduja published findings in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* that after surveying 5,593 adolescents in a random sample of 12-to-17-year-olds in the USA, one in twenty admitted to engaging in "digital self-harm." That means 280 teenagers from the sample. It also means that if there was a population of 41,731,233 teenagers in the USA – the statistic (actforyouth.net/adolescence/demographics) that the U.S. Census Bureau estimates – then 2,086,562 teenagers might be engaging in digital self-harm. Kheriaty's essay raises the question: have Americans created a culture in which the status of victimhood is sufficiently desirable that adolescent boys and girls are willing to go to remarkable lengths to establish an online victim identity?

8.2 University Students & Pornography in the USA

Perhaps an even more troubling question is that related to pornography: to what lengths are men and women willing to reduce themselves to sexual objects so that those watching them online use them for personal pleasure and gratification in a way that completely degrades the body and emotions? The moral issue involved obviously includes the actors/actresses and the viewers – all are involved in acts that are violating the sacredness of the human person.

Michelle Hassell from the University of North Texas, the same researcher who publicized the shocking information about the visits that the pornography website Pornhub receives per year, entitled her research *Online Pornography and its Effects on the Behavior of College Students*. Her research questions were as follows:[29]

- What is the frequency of pornography use among college students?
- What is the extent of the use of violent pornography by the average college student?

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[29] Hassell, *Online Pornography and its Effects*, 6-7.

- What age groups and gender see the most frequent online pornography use? What is the frequency of use among undergraduate and graduate students?
- Does the college student draw a distinction between real sexual interactions versus the ones depicted in pornography?

Her results provoke urgent reflection:

- Of the 2,290 students who responded to her survey, 80% said, yes, they use pornography. Eighteen percent said, no. Almost 2% did not respond to the question. When the researchers studied the difference between genders, it was determined that 90% of the men use pornography in comparison to 71% of the women. Nine percent of the men said they do not use pornography in comparison to 28% of the women. Twenty-eight percent of the men said they use pornography from 1 to 2 days during the week; the same percentage of men said they look at pornography three to four days per week. Fifty percent of the women said they look at pornography one to two days per week. Fourteen percent said they look at pornography three to four days per week. Sixty-eight percent of the men said they look at pornography less than a half-hour on the days they view pornography; 80% of the women said the same. Twenty-six percent of the men would view pornography one to three hours on the days they utilized pornography; 14% of the women would do the same.
- Sixty-six percent stated that they either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that premarital sex is unacceptable. While 65% of the men held this position, 67% of the women did. Indeed 31% of the men and 31% of the women indicated they were neutral on the issue of whether someone may have sexual intercourse with a stranger.
- Sixty-six percent of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that viewing pornography is normal. Seventy-one percent of the men questioned expressed this position; 61% of the women. Sixty-one percent of all respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that viewing pornography is unethical. There did not seem to be too much difference between men and women on this issue: 62% of the men and 60% of the women did not agree that watching pornography is immoral. Yet 80% of all respondents indicated disagreement of varying

intensity on the question that women like to be degraded or humiliated.

- Thirty-two percent of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that pornography reduces sexual need: 41% of the men responded this way, 25% of the women. Forty-eight percent said that they felt relaxed when finished viewing: 57% of the men showed either agreement or strong agreement with this statement; 30% of the women. Nine percent, on the other hand, said that pornography leaves them feeling agitated: the percentage of men and of women who either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement was about the same.

This was a study undertaken in only one university, that of the University of North Texas. It goes without saying that there should be no university in the world that coughs up results like these that can only be labelled as morally perverse. The study raises urgent issues: does a form of "entertainment", namely, pornography, that clearly reduces a woman to a sexual object, reduces sexual intimacy to the level of a physical interplay of sensual gratification, reduces the viewer to someone who seeks to be sensually stimulated and relaxed by the total strangers that are acting in the videos, and so obviates the responsible love of mutual self-gift that should motivate all sexual activity – how does this come to be accepted as "normal" and within the bounds of ethical acceptability?

Would we get the same results at Jordan University College in Morogoro?

8.3 Internet Pornography in Nigeria

We shift our attention to Africa. In 2016, O. Arulogun, I. Ogbu, and I. Dipeolu conducted survey research that carried the title *Influence of Internet Exposure on Sexual Behaviour of Young Persons in an Urban District of Southwest Nigeria.*[30] Unlike the American researcher that we just discussed, Arulogun and his colleagues invested their research with an ethical attitude about pornography. They considered any trend towards an increased

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[30] O. Arulogun – I. Ogbu – I. Dipeolu (2016) "Influence of Internet Exposure on Sexual Behaviour of Young Persons in an Urban District of Southwest Nigeria", *The Pan African Medical Journal,* 25:261.

accessibility to pornography and its actual viewing to be a sign of moral corruption.

In 2016 when Arulogun and his associates published their research, Nigeria apparently did not yet have an available data base about internet pornography and its impact on the lives of youth and children. They noted, however, that one cannot bypass the statistic that 32% of internet users in Nigeria at that time were children and teenagers between the ages of 7 and 18 years old. They also reported the findings of other studies: they cite the fact that Ajuwon (2003) found out that 60% of his respondents from the University College Hospital in Ibadan, Nigeria, used the internet: those surveyed were first year clinical and nursing students of that institution. Arulogun and his colleagues also report that Odusanya and Bamgbala (2002) found that 58% of the medical and dental students in their final year at the University of Lagos used the internet. Arulogun and his colleagues noticed the lacuna in the research concerning the impact of explicit sexual material available through the internet on adolescents, so they chose to study this influence in Ibadan North Local Government Area, an urban district of Ibadan in southwest Nigeria.

They studied 413 young persons who were selected according to stratified, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques in order to accurately represent the youth population of the particular government area in question. Two-thirds were between the ages of 20 and 24 years, 29.8% were less than 20 years old, and 6% did not indicate their age. Christians comprised 83.8% of the sample and 14.8% were Muslim.

Those accessing the internet in cybercafés constituted 99.3% of the sample.[31] Those who were using the internet everyday numbered 29.5%. Fifty-three percent of internet users would spend between 30 minutes and one hour, 29.1% would spend from two to three hours, and 14.5% more than three hours. When asked about their choice of internet activities, 55% reported that they sent or read email, 34.1% chatted online, 31% did research or homework,

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[31] The fact that they were using cybercafés is important because it means, for better or for worse, that any choices of websites, e.g., of those that were pornographic, could be witnessed by companions or onlookers.

27.6% looked for information about current events, 24.9% looked for information about schooling abroad, 18.6% downloaded music, 16.2% searched for jobs, and 12.6% played online games. Visiting pornographic sites was reported by 8% and 3.6% sought information on health issues. *One sees immediately the vast discrepancy between the American youth users of internet and the Nigerian youth: 80% of the Texan students reported viewing pornography while only 8% of the Nigerian youth affirmed that they did so*.

When the researchers probed a bit more specifically into the topic of pornography, 65.4% admitted that they had visited or "stumbled upon" pornographic sites. This statistic, then, seems to indicate that perhaps the Nigerians surveyed were expressing greater moral sensitivity than their American counterparts – because of a moral sense of shame only 8% reported that they view pornography but 65.4% reported an inadvertent stumbling upon pornographic websites. In contrast, 34.6% said they had never done that. Among the visitors, 20.4% did so regularly, 79.6% did so occasionally. When indeed internet users stumbled upon the sites, 45.2% indicated that they glanced through the site and closed it; 38.5% said they closed it immediately. It is noteworthy that 12.6% said they minimized it for later viewing.

Arulogun and his associates ventured to ask about how these youth perceived changes in their own sexual behaviour after exposure to sexually explicit sites. Almost one-third of the pornography viewers, 31.1% reported changes in their sexual behaviour: oral sex (48.3%), having multiple sexual partners (11.6%), and 5% reported homosexual behaviour. Among those who visited these sites, almost one-fifth, 19.5%, reported practicing the actual behaviours that they saw on the sites.

Their conclusions, based on logistic regression analyses of their data, stressed the fact that daily users were more likely to view pornography sites than other respondents and that males were more likely than females to suffer changes in their sexual behaviour. The tone in this research emphatically underscores the viewpoint that pornographic websites provoke perversions in adolescent sexual behaviour. They called for stringent guidelines for the operation of cybercafés.

8.4 Pornography in the Muslim World: Iran

We have come full circle in this literature review. While we do not have ready access to data concerning Iranian youth and pornography, we do catch a glimpse into an attitude towards pornography that recognizes the moral problematic. In the *International Journal of Medical and Health Sciences*, Rabiepoor, Soheila and Elham Sadeghi published an article based on data they had collected from 71 married women in Urmia, Iran, in 2016.[32] They used means to report their data. The average age was 28.98±7.44, with a marriage duration, on the average, of 8.12±6.53 years. Hence one of the marriages had lasted only for one year; the maximum duration of a marriage among these women was 28 years. The unusual characteristic of these women was that all of them were applying for divorce. What the investigators did was to examine their use of pornography and their level of sexual satisfaction and function within their marriages. This is what they discovered:

- Nearly 42% of the women and 59% of their spouses had watched sexual pornography clips.
- Those respondents who compared their own sexual relationship with sexual pornography clips numbered 45.5% of the total.
- Most of the women showed dramatically low levels of sexual satisfaction and sexual function. Indeed the researchers concluded that those who were showing a low sexual satisfaction score had a higher rate of watching pornography clips.
- The researchers' recommendation: pay more attention to family education and counselling programs and less attention to pornography clips.

Hence one could argue that this Iranian study showed more moral common sense than any of the others. It is true that they omitted an important control variable: how often husbands and wives in healthy marriages viewed pornography. But further

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[32] S. Rabiepoor – E. Sadeghi (2018) "The Survey of Sexual Health and Pornography among Divorce-Asking Women in West Azerbaijan-Iran: A Cross-Sectional Study", *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, International Journal of Medical and Health Sciences* 5/2.

reflection would uncover the fact that if indeed these marriages were prone to include porn in their lifestyle, they could slip into the category of potential divorces.

In the spirit of Michael Polanyi, my co-author and I invested our moral convictions in our interpretations of how Jordan University College students were using the internet. I do not say this because I am imposing a conservative ethical bias on the present research: rather I am suggesting that to try to conduct the present research in a secularist fashion independently of moral norms as if pornography viewing were not a moral issue would be to sink the youth of today into a morass of addiction from which they would not escape.

9.   Astute Observations by an Undergraduate

Hailey Billat is a student who does not yet have a degree. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Science at Brigham Young University in the United States. That means she has adopted the Michael Polanyi attitude of bringing her moral and religious convictions to her research. She is a Mormon. She is also an Intern at the National Centre on Sexual Exploitation in Washington, D.C. That means she holds one of the world's most important political positions when it comes to policies related to the pornography issue.

She argues that "allowing access to hard-core pornography and promoting such content fuels the demand for abuse, sexual exploitation, and sexual violence."[33] She points out how tragically immoral students can become with the help of internet pornography:

- Drawing from Luke Gilkerson's statistics of 2013, Hailey affirms, "Two-thirds of college-age men and half of college-age women say viewing porn is an acceptable way to express one's sexuality."
- She reports a finding of Jason King from the Cardinal Newman Society (2013): 70% of 18-24 year-old males visit porn sites monthly.

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[33] H. Billat (2015) *Pornography Plaguing College Campuses.* Publ. by End Sexual Exploitation. All the data that follow are from this article. https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/pornography-plaguing-college-campuses/ accessed on 1 Jan 2018.

- Giving us the information that she garnered from a 2nd February 2015 USA Today 57-second video clip, Hailey reports that a former Oregon State University student shot a pornographic video inside the school's library; the video received more than 250,000 views in just a few days.

- Hailey reports the mind-boggling fact that one week after two Vanderbilt football players were found guilty of rape, Vanderbilt University advertised the program a "How to be Brilliant in Bed" workshop in the Student Life Center, Ballroom A, precisely at the time when the students were awaiting their sentencing to prison. This was the year 2015. The Bed-Sex workshop facilitator was Megan Andelloux: she claimed the workshop was a "A Crash Course in Sexy Sex Ed – Great for Everyone, from Sexual Novices to Full Blown Sexperts".

- Hailey comments upon a survey that brought forth results that dovetail with the Nigerian study summarized above. When surveyors tapped 487 college-aged males for information to discern whether actively viewing pornography is wrong or not, the responses unveiled the fact that "the more pornography a man watches, the more likely he was to use it during sex, request particular pornographic sex acts of his partner, deliberately conjure images of pornography during sex to maintain arousal, and have concerns over his own sexual performance and body image" (D. Horsey, LA Times, 15 Dec 2014, cited by Billat).

Billat's conclusion: "Allowing easy access to pornography on campus puts students in danger, especially female students, and creates a hostile environment. Colleges must take action now towards reducing access to pornography."[34]

10. Theoretical Model: Responsible Choice-Making for the Internet User

The model I have devised with the help of my co-author clearly and convincingly demonstrates that internet usage is either a minute-by-minute exercise in responsible choice-making that blossoms forth into a true maturation process according to the intellectual, social and ethical dimensions of the human being, or it

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[34] H. Billat, *Pornography Plaguing College Campuses*, web page.

becomes a degenerating lapse into immorality, self-absorption, laziness and irresponsibility.

According to my model, everyone has a choice. In other words, everyone is redeemable, and capable of becoming sexually mature, capable of the intimacy that allows the other sex to feel their worth, their freedom and their dignity, capable of the joy that befits those who know how to love. Everyone has the option, too, of recognizing their need for God's supernatural help so that they may transcend the limits of their natural capacities and accomplish feats that they could not anticipate being able to accomplish. A person, however, may refuse to carry the onus of freedom, confine herself to the secular, the material and the sensual, and so reduce herself to her pre-planned sense of natural aptitudes and skills without a true openness to human greatness and truth.

It is to be noticed that in following Polanyi's understanding of the scientific enterprise, we have placed the consequences *before* the options available for choice-making. This is an important psychological and moral conviction: we make good choices when we consider all the foreseeable consequences before making the choices.

The Consequences of my Choices
Intellectual, Social, Ethical Development and Accountability, Unhesitating Openness to God, His Love and His Grace
OR
Deterioration of Morals, Self-Absorption, Lapse into Laziness, Irresponsibility, Absence of Personal Vision beyond the Secular, the Material and the Sensual

The Options which I May Choose
(the list is not exhaustive)

A.　Search Engines such as Google and Yahoo, and the Information Gleaned from Them

B.　News Sites including World and Local Events, Politics, Human Rights, Finance, Business, Commerce, Sports, Entertainment, Fashions

C.　Social Networks

D.　Email and Instant Messaging

E. Music
F. Videos and Photos
G. Miscellaneous

10.1 Brief Resumé of the Methodology for the Present Research

The study was conducted at one Tanzanian university, that of Jordan University College in the Morogoro Region of Tanzania. One class was selected as the target population for the research: all students that were currently studying social psychology. The researcher and her co-author were aware from the outset that generating comparative statistics involving frequencies and percentages for the volume of internet use and the priorities guiding the choices of websites could not be a major objective because the students involved were too few. The researcher's objective was more modest: how would one particular social psychology group of students react to questions about the internet that have grave moral implications? The research, then, could act as a pilot study.

The key avenues for generating data were a written questionnaire that was both closed-ended and open-ended in nature and a classroom discussion that involved some of the same students who responded to the written questionnaire. The reader will be able to grasp our style of questioning from the results that we summarize below. We intend to focus on the questions that were the most significant for our research objectives.

The sample size for this study was 52 respondents. In other words, all available second-year social psychology students were included in the group of respondents. These students were a combination of candidates for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and Counselling. Thirty-eight students were female; fourteen were male. Thirty-two females indicated they were Christian, five indicated they were Muslim, and one did not identify her religion. Among the males, 7 indicated they were Muslim and 7 indicated they were Christian.

10.1.1 Time Spent Using the Internet

Before inquiring about the reasons for using the internet, the researcher asked each respondent to estimate (a) his or her frequency of using the internet and (b) the amount of time spent each day on the internet.[35]

Table 1: Frequency of internet use

Options	M: Frequency (%age)	F: Frequency (%age)
Every day	13 (92.9)	31 (81.6)
Every few days	1 (7.1)	5 (13.2)
Once a week	-	1 (2.6)
Once a month	-	1 (2.6)
Totals	14 (100)	38 (100)

From among the 14 male respondents, 13 males affirmed that they use the internet every day; the remaining male indicated that he used the internet every few days.

From among the 38 female respondents, 31 females affirmed that they use the internet every day, 5 indicated that they use the internet every few days, 1 said that she uses it once per week, and 1 indicated, surprisingly, that she only used it once per month.

As the reader can see, the percentages were calculated within each gender group: 92.9 percent of the males use the internet every day; 81.6 percent of the females. If we were to combine males and females to assess internet use for the whole group, we would see that out of the 52 student respondents, 44 or 84.6 percent use the internet on a daily basis.

Table 2: Average time spent on the internet per day

Options	M: Frequency(%age)	F: Frequency (%age)
Less than 1 hour per day	3 (21.4)	10 (26.3)
1 to 2 hours per day	8 (57.2)	18 (47.4)
2 to 3 hours per day	2 (14.3)	2 (5.3)
4 hours per day	1 (7.1)	3 (7.9)
More than 4 hours per day	-	5 (13.1)
Totals	14 (100)	38 (100)

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[35] The researcher gathered all her survey data on the 14th of January 2018. All tables correspond to the input that the respondents gave on that day.

Having asked the 14 male respondents to indicate how much time they spend, on the average, with the internet each day, 8 reported that they used the internet 1 to 2 hours per day. Three reported that they use it less than one hour per day. Two affirmed that they used the internet 2 to 3 hours per day. In view of the literature summarized in chapter two, it may come as a surprise that only one reported using the internet 4 hours per day; and no one used it for more than 4 hours per day.

Eighteen of the 38 female respondents indicated that they used the internet 1 to 2 hours per day. Ten reported that they use it less than one hour per day. Two indicated that they use the internet 2 to 3 hours per day. Three said that they use it 4 hours per day. Unlike the men there were women who use the internet more than 4 hours per day: 5 of the female respondents. While this difference may be due to the low number of men in the social psychology class, it remains remarkable that women at Jordan University College may have that much time available.

Again if we were to combine males and females in order to surmise how the entire group fares with the factor of time spent daily with the internet, it would seem that exactly 50% of the students, 26 out of 52 spend 1 to 2 hours per day with the internet. Exactly 25% spend less than one hour per day. The five females who spend more than four hours per day with the internet constitute 9.6 percent of the group.

Table 3: Top preference for online activity

Options	M: Frequency(%age)	F: Frequency (%age)
Look at videos/photos	-	1 (2.6)
Google	2 (14.3)	5 (13.2)
Listen to music	-	-
Watch/read the news	8 (57.1)	10 (26.3)
Social networks	4 (28.6)	22 (57.9)
Totals	14 (100)	38 (100)

For the majority of men, watching or reading the news was their activity of choice when they went online. In contrast, the majority of the women preferred to involve themselves with social networks. It is noteworthy that the one man who reported that he viewed the internet for an average of 4 hours per day preferred to

use his internet time for the news. Meanwhile out of the 8 women who went online for four hours or more each day, 5 involved themselves with social networks and three paid attention to the news.[36]

Table 4: Respondents' everyday viewing

Options	M: Frequency (%age)	F: Frequency (%age)
Look at videos or photos	2 (14.3)	18 (47.4)
Google	10 (71.4)	23 (60.5)
Listen to music	4 (28.6)	6 (15.8)
Watch/read the news	12 (85.7)	18 (47.4)
Social networks	8 (57.1)	21 (55.3)
Totals	14 respondents	38 respondents

The overriding preference for what to view in the internet does not necessarily mean that the respondents' were ignoring the other possibilities. Even though only one woman indicated that her priority was looking at photos and videos still 18 of the women said they look at photos and videos every day. Similarly even if the women showed a distinct preference for social networking it did not preclude their daily attention to the news on the internet. Perhaps a surprising statistic is the attention that both males and females gave to the Google search engine. If we were to combine the male and female groups 33 respondents, 63.5% of the total group went to Google every day. Thirty respondents, i.e., 57.7%, watched or read the news; 29 respondents, that is, 55.8%, did social networking. The surprise diminishes when one considers that in fact they are, after all, students.

10.1.2 The Benefits from Using the Internet

Two open-ended questions touched upon the benefits to be gained from using the internet:

1) Please state the three best advantages for using the internet.

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[36] These data are consistent with the vast number of studies that have concluded that women more naturally share their joys and pains with others and reciprocally pay closer attention, both mentally and emotionally, to what others are going through. Empathy is more natural to the woman: social networks interest her. See D. Myers (2010) *Social Psychology*, 10th ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 169-171.

2) Please state three reasons for using the internet.

The researcher was able to catalogue the responses into five categories:

1) The internet serves as a source of new information in technology, science, history, the arts, religion, economics and other fields.
2) The internet serves as a source for staying up-to-date with the news and current events on a global level.
3) The internet serves as a medium for leisure, relaxation and entertainment by means of music, photos, and films (videos).
4) The internet facilitates communication, the cultivation of friendships and other types of social relationships, and group tasking.
5) The internet serves as a practical aid for educational matters (i.e., it helps to complete assignments and theses), business matters, employment opportunities, and commercial activity (e.g., Amazon).

Needless to say, the students did not hesitate to give all of these responses.

Table 5: Benefits from using the internet

Responses	M: Frequency (%age)	F: Frequency (%age)
Source of new information	9 (64.3)	29 (76,3)
News and current events	8 (57.1)	23 (60.5)
Leisure and relaxation	4 (28.6)	16 (42.1)
Social interaction	10 (71.4)	21 (55.3)
Practical aid	10 (71.4)	21 (55.3)
Totals	14 respondents	38 respondents

It is noteworthy that among these data for both the males and the females, less than half the group mentioned leisure, relaxation and entertainment as benefits for using the internet. Another advantage not catalogued in the table because it was only mentioned by two people, both of whom were women, is that the internet can provide worthy role models. One of these two women mentioned Catholic saints.

10.1.3 Disadvantages of Using the Internet: The Ethical Factor

The salient feature of the replies that the students gave to the open-ended question, "What are three disadvantages for using the internet?", was the emphasis on the possibility of immorality – see Table 6 below. Nine out of the 14 male students – 64.3% – mentioned immorality as a disadvantage: 6 of those 9 – 42.9% of the total group – mentioned pornography specifically. Twenty-six of the 38 female students, 68.4%, mentioned immorality; 12 students, i.e., 31.6% of the female group, indicated pornography directly. Four women indicated the destruction of one's local or national culture. Two males and two females mentioned the possibility of eye disease as a disadvantage. Two women mentioned the problem that the risk of terrorism increases. Three women mentioned self-isolation; and one woman mentioned obesity. Since students normally do not eat smart phones or computers, the researcher imagines that by obesity the respondent was indicating that internet use tends towards a lifestyle that involves eating and drinking without exercise or manual labour.

Table 6: Disadvantages to using the internet

Responses	M: Frequency (%age)	F: Frequency (%age)
Immorality	9 (64.3)	26 (68.4)
Pornography	6 (42.9)	12 (31.6)
Waste of time and money	10 (71.4)	26 (68.4)
Laziness	6 (42.9)	13 (34.2)
Eye disease	2 (14.3)	2 (5.3)
Isolation	-	3 (7.9)
Obesity	-	1 (2.6)
Destroys culture	-	4 (10.5)
Easier to terrorize	-	2 (5.3)
Totals	14 respondents	38 respondents

The literature review only scratched the surface of the vast array of studies that have been conducted about pornography. Unlike many of these studies, the researcher worked with the conviction that one should adhere to moral parameters when one frames questions. One should be morally involved with the data collection. One's faith in God and the truth that God reveals about himself and

about the human person should guide the researcher in the design of the study.

Another way of saying this is that the dignity of the human person eclipses any attempt to find out information by violating that dignity. Hence the researcher made an important tactical decision: she was not going to ask respondents directly if they used pornography. She is not a priest in the confessional. The context of the questionnaire was research, not confession or soul baring. Instead the researcher asked the students if other students, males and/or females used pornography. No one, of course, was to identify other students. With the same concern that no matter what valuable information she may fail to obtain, she was going to respect the dignity of the person, she did not directly ask if the respondent was addicted to the internet; rather, she asked if "students" can become addicted to the internet.

Table 7: Addiction and Use of Pornography

Issues	M: Frequency (%age)	F: Frequency (%age)
Addiction is possible	14 (100)	38 (100)
Male students view porn	11 (78.6)	37 (97.4)
Female students view porn	9 (64.3)	28 (73.7)
Totals	14 respondents	38 respondents

There was universal agreement, therefore, that the internet can cause addiction. All but one of the female students indicate that males look at pornography. It may not seem credible but three of the 14 male students said that males do not look at pornography. Meanwhile another noteworthy statistic is that of the women's view about female students looking at pornography: 73.7% affirmed that, yes, female students look at pornography.

In an open-ended question, the researcher asked the respondents to explain what indicates to them that a colleague is addicted to the internet.

Table 8: Indications of addiction to the internet

Responses	M: Frequency (%age)	F: Frequency (%age)
Laziness, low grades, lack of concentration in studies	4 (28.6)	17 (44.7)
Social network fixation	4 (28.6)	7 (18.4)
Time and money wasted	5 (35.7)	17 (44.7)

Can't live without it	6 (42.9)	20 (52.6)
Depravity in conduct	4 (28.6)	5 (13.2)
Totals	14 respondents	38 respondents

If we were to combine the gender groups, we would find that exactly 50% suggested that a primary indication of internet addiction is a constellation of behaviours that signal such a strong dependence on the internet that one "can't live without it." Some students elaborated a bit on this claim: the student cannot endure a lecture without going online while the lecturer proceeds. Students suffer even grave insomnia because they cannot say, "Good-by," to the internet at night. Some students get angry and lose their peace of mind if they do not have the money for the vouchers necessary to keep the internet open or if the connection with the provider is too weak.

The possibility that the internet contributes to the corrosion of moral fibre was central to this research. The researcher wished to determine how students were assessing the ethical nature of pornography viewing.

The key question that brought us to the heart of our research was as follows: Do you believe that it is okay for a person to look at another person as a sexual object for pleasure, for example, in pornography? You may give more than one response:

a) Yes, because men and women have a right to sexual pleasure.
b) Yes, because the man or the woman may be tense and need relief.
c) Yes, because it is morally okay to use the body as a sexual thing.
d) No, because the woman and the man have dignity and should not allow their bodies to be used, manipulated, or pleasured by someone who is not committed to them as a married spouse
e) No, because God does not allow the man or the woman to be degraded.

Table 9: Ethically okay to look at a person as a sexual object?

Options	M: Frequency (%age)	F: Frequency (%age)
Yes: right to sexual delight	2 (14.3)	1 (2.6)
Yes: need for relief	2 (14.3)	0 (0.0)
Yes: can use body as a thing	1 (7.1)	0 (0.0)

No: against human dignity	11 (78.6)	35 (92.1)
No: God forbids it	6 (42.9)	28 (73.7)
Totals	14 respondents	38 respondents

Women are usually the victims in pornography. It might be surprising to some that there were still three women who did not choose to say that looking at a person as a sexual object violates that person's dignity. In both Islamic and Christian traditions, God is certainly against anything motivated by lust or reducing the other person to an object for pleasure. Yet there were still individuals – 10 females and 8 males – who refrained from expressing the ethical conviction that God forbids looking at a person as a sexual object.

A couple of more remarks may be made about these data. Two people chose to say that it is ethically okay to look at a person presented in a pornographic medium in order to find relief: at the same time both of them said that it violates human dignity. One man ventured to say simultaneously that it is okay to use the body as a sexual thing and that it still violates human dignity. One man and one woman said that it is okay to look at a person as a sexual object because we have a right to sexual pleasure and that viewing pornography violates human dignity. No matter how much a person may rationalize the viewing of pornography there always seems to be the sense that pornography degrades the person, whether that person be a man or a woman. There seems to be a surprising lack of sense of the fact that viewing pornography offends God.

11. Observations from a Classroom Discussion

As indicated in footnote 35, all survey data reached the hands of the researcher on the 14th of January, 2018. A classroom discussion three days later on the 17th of January focused on the issue: "Is pornography helpful or harmful to those who commit themselves to responsible, self-giving love, i.e., the kind of love that typifies marriages that are spiritually healthy?" The students who participated were 20 social psychology students who are pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology and Counselling. There was an unmistakable unanimity that viewing pornography degrades the woman and reduces her to a sexual object: hence it is always harmful to the love that should subsist between a man and a woman whether they are married or

unmarried. There was also another eye-opening phenomenon: there was a woman in the class that voiced her opinion that single men have a right to the sexual pleasure that pornography gives because these men have sexual needs. I add the unusual datum that she also affirmed that viewing pornography always degrades the woman and reduces her to a sexual object. Hence the datum she was offering coincided with the datum in the questionnaire where a woman stated that men and women have a right to sexual pleasure, and yet pornography always degrades women. Would one call this a contradiction?

12. Discussion and Recommendations

It will be remembered that I was my first respondent. In order to evaluate the benefits of IT, I engaged in a Google search on the basis of a dialogue I had with a friend who told me that there was a beautiful power point programme of Pope St. John Paul II and Jesus Crucified. On the basis of this communication, I did the search inquiries that I described earlier in this article.

I also found the power point to which I alluded. Even though the power point is written in Spanish, a woman from Brazil (whose native language is Portuguese) had sent it through the email to my co-author. Here is the translation (translated by my co-author):

- Slide One (Title Page): In Front of a Crucified
- Slide Two: I left my house to take a walk and I found myself with a man in the terror of the crucifixion.
- Slide Three: "Allow me to remove the nails from your cross," I said to him.
- Slide Four: And I set myself to looking how I could take out the nails from his feet.
- Slide Five: But he responded to me:
- Slide Six: "Leave me where I am, because I will not go down from the cross until all men, all women, all children…
- Slide Seven: … unite with each other, and together with hands joined, come to take the nails out."
- Slide Eight: Then I asked him:
- Slide Nine: "How am I going to endure your groans? What is it that I can do for you?"
- Slide Ten: And he responded to me:

- Slide Eleven: "Go through the whole world…
- Slide Twelve: … and tell everyone that you meet that there is a man nailed to a cross."
- Slide Thirteen: [written in Italian and Spanish] "Do not be afraid…" [Signed in Latin] Joannes Paulus II – John Paul II. Dated: 2 April 2006 (1st anniversary of his death).

My experience with the internet was a positive one because it made available to me an inspiring power point that reinforced my interior longing to act faithfully and compassionately according to the directives my God has given me. The power point in question also helped me to understand that reducing another person to a sexual object always offends God: there is no motive or rationale that can obviate this fact.

How do we weigh the positive and negative effects of internet use when we formulate conclusions from the data that we collected from a Morogoro university social psychology class? Although both my co-author and I initially questioned ourselves about presenting a study that was not a full-fledged accumulation of data because of the low number of students, we appreciate the fact that our research is a fully valid pilot study: this research presents some statistics that reflect a perverse state of affairs at our university and so indicate a grave need for an ethical shift of consciousness similar to the kind of shift that other countries desperately need.

By our own moral convictions, we see how indeed the research results connect to what other researchers have discovered with much larger samples of people in a variety of international contexts. We see a pattern so consistent that we cannot exclude ourselves from the global trends. There are advantages to using the internet; but the internet can also be toxic for the heart if one browses morally inappropriate websites.

- My results accord with the Iranian scholars, Ghaznavi and his colleagues, who emphasized the significance of the internet's contribution to educational enterprises.
- My results harmonize with the Iranian scholars on the point of the importance of social networking to organizations.
- My results harmonize with Pope St. John Paul II's message that the use of IT can veer towards a hedonistic and self-centred lifestyle.

- My results accord with the data of Pew Internet & American Life Project (2002) and its substantiated affirmation that indeed university students use the internet on a frequent, if not a daily basis. Their purpose for internet use are educational but with a seemingly never-ending occupation with social networks.
- My results accord with Kvavik's research that students do indeed spend a good amount of time each week in watching and downloading videos as well as listening to music. Kvavik's study indicated that using the internet as a practical aid for classroom activities still predominated: our research has shown the same.
- My results harmonize with the global market trends that the World Grad School Tour groups manifested in terms of amount of time that students spend on the internet.
- My results do not accord with the Indonesian Vocational Secondary School study since they report much less use of the internet for academic purposes. The Indonesian school is an anomaly since the other reports that I have mentioned do harmonize with ours. My results, on the other hand, do correspond appreciably with the Indonesian results concerning pornography.
- My results on the pornography issue do not accord with the respondents Michelle Hassell's study from the University of North Texas. The responses her students gave seemed to be show that they were less inclined than the Jordan University College students to accept pornography as immoral. Indeed one may argue that her university represents a secularist bias. If the students in her study really think as they say they think, they can expose themselves to the spiritual poison that certain sites offer.
- The Nigerian study conducted by Arulogun and his associates brought to the surface the immorality of pornography viewing. Their results accord more with mine.
- The Iranian study published by Rabiepoor and his colleagues revealed the low sexual satisfaction that corresponds to viewing pornography. This conclusion harmonizes with my research.

The present study showed that the social psychology students from one Tanzanian university do in fact recognize the immorality of pornography: yet the majority report that both male students and female students view pornography. The need for university

students to pay attention to the conclusions of experts such as Dr. Foubert and social activists such as Hailey Billat so that they may understand more intelligently the immorality of pornography and its psychological effects on those who participate in the production of the videos as well as on those who view them. Pornography can exert a deadly impact on the heart.

We also discovered what can be considered to be a positive response on the part of government officials and policy makers to the growing epidemic. Beginning with the Mormon State of Utah, there are regions in the United States that are declaring pornography viewing to be a danger to public health. Technically this means that the government is entitled to act, even to the point of complete censure and eradication, so that pornography becomes no longer accessible. Just as the government has the right to eradicate the Ebola virus, so the government has the right to eradicate the pornography virus.

My personal quest for images of Pope St. John Paul and their connection to Jesus Crucified and my co-author's quest for information about what has transformed the life of Pope Francis verified the suggestion offered by two students in my research that indeed the internet can present inquirers and viewers with worthy role models. It will be remembered that I not only discovered Pope John Paul's character as one who established social connections among the peoples of the world in a way that the internet cannot. I also set my eyes upon this Pope in a lively gesture of forgiveness towards the man who intended to kill him. Similarly Mother Teresa can be a role model for woman in her fascinating ability to link together the rich and the powerful of this world with the poorest of the poor. If one does a quick inquiry into the online biography of Jim Caviezel, the actor who starred in *The Passion of the Christ,* one would discover another worthy role model who is even more exceptional when one considers the notoriety of his colleagues in the actor/actress industry.

Pope Francis may be a worthy role model for all who intend to see God in their brother and in their sister. Indeed Pope Francis' exhortation on the call to holiness directs the internet browser to yet another role model, an Algerian martyr that Pope Francis has

beatified. Father Gibson discovered it in his internet follow-up to Pope Francis' exhortation:

Document Five: the last testament of the Algerian martyr Blessed Christian de Chergé, who, having had a premonition of his impending martyrdom, wrote a message that not only expressed his vision of who Moslems are before the loving, contemplative gaze of God the Father, but also communicated his "thank you" to all those whom he loved, including his "friend of the final moment": this was the person who was going to assassinate him. Here are key words to his message:

> … Finally my most avid curiosity will be set free. This is what I shall be able to do, God willing: immerse my gaze in that of the Father to contemplate with him His children of Islam just as He sees them, all shining with the glory of Christ, the fruit of His Passion, filled with the Gift of the Spirit, whose secret joy will always be to establish communion and restore the likeness, delighting in the differences.

> For this life lost, totally mine and totally theirs, I thank God, who seems to have willed it entirely for the sake of that JOY in everything and in spite of everything. In this THANK YOU, which is said for everything in my life from now on, I certainly include you, friends of yesterday and today, and you, my friends of this place, along with my mother and father, my sisters and brothers and their families. You are the hundredfold granted as was promised!

> And also you, my friend of the last moment, who will not have known what you were doing: yes, I want this THANK YOU and this GOODBYE to be a "GOD-BLESS" for you, too, because in God's face I see yours.

> May we meet again as happy thieves in Paradise, if it please God, the Father of us both. AMEN! INCHALLAH!

God willing! Father Christian possessed the fortitude of spirit to say, "Thank you!" and "God bless you!" to the man who was going to kill him by beheading. Father Christian is a role model for us all.

God willing! Inchallah! I am not ashamed to profess that I believe this article about Internet Involvement corresponds to what God has willed for me at this juncture of my life. It was God's

will that I do this together with a Catholic priest, Father Gibson. I am not ashamed to profess that my personal and family relationship with Jesus Christ motivated me not only to choose the topic for my research but to explore the implications of what each person, as a solitary human being, purports to do when he or she continues to go online.

I conclude by inviting our readers, our colleagues, our friends, our counsellors, our religious leaders, and our government authorities to invest all their intellectual effort and moral conviction to keep Tanzania's youth, elders and children within the freedom and the purity of the heart that knows how to love in a manner that respects the woman, recognizes God's desires for the human person especially from the point of view of sexuality, and establishes its priorities according to a very important promise that God makes to us, that of eternal life. To reach eternal life, God is calling us to be holy.