

Help! I'm a networking addict!

1 Read the messages below and choose the correct words.

A Things are getting really bad! A teacher at school asked me for my home (0) *computer* / *address* / *postage* the other day and I found it really difficult to write! I hardly ever use a pen these days – I write everything on my (1) *hardware* / *printer* / *keyboard*. What will happen when I do my exams and have to write by hand?

B I haven't seen my best friend in real life for three weeks. We send each other (2) *parcels* / *envelopes* / *texts* on our mobile phones every day, and we chat on the (3) *internet* / *operator* / *hardware* for hours. But I'm starting to forget what she looks like. Do you think this is a problem?

C My teenage son barely talks to me. If I'm lucky, he'll say 'hello' in the morning and 'goodnight' before bedtime. The only other methods of communication he uses are sending text messages on his (4) *laptop* / *equipment* / *mobile phone* or (5) *emails* / *software* / *programs* on his computer. He only ever listens if I ask him something electronically. This is getting ridiculous!

2 Match messages (A-C) to the replies below (1-3).

1 _____
That's a real sign of trouble. Not only will your friendship suffer, but you'll start to forget how to communicate in the real world. Make a date to see your friend face to face. Book tickets to go to the cinema, or plan to go shopping. You can still chat online, but you should try to see each other in person at least once a week.

2 _____
Oh dear – this sounds like true addiction. But remember many teenage boys are uncommunicative, so don't feel too bad! Send him text messages and emails, but talk to him too – even if he doesn't answer you! Keep trying. I'm sure as he gets older, he'll become less addicted to the computer. Try not to worry!

3 _____
Well, that is pretty serious! What's going to happen when you need to address an envelope or fill in an important form? Limit the number of hours each day you spend typing, and try to start writing with a pen more. Maybe you could write a diary, or send your friends and family greeting cards.

3 Work in pairs. You are going to roleplay a conversation between a social networking addict and a friend. Decide who is Student A and who is Student B.

Student A: Read the problems below and think of the advice you can give for each problem.

Student B: Read the problems below and choose which problem you have.

Problem 1:

You invite everyone you meet to become a virtual friend. You now have 200 virtual friends and it takes 20 minutes to read all the names. You only really know 15 of the people.

Problem 2:

You like dating online. You invite your boyfriend / girlfriend to virtual dates, such as an online walk through a park. The only kisses he / she gets are online, and you last saw him / her in real life two weeks ago. Your boyfriend / girlfriend isn't happy.

4 Roleplay the conversation. Did the addict get good advice?