

The rise of digital dependencies and their legal implications in cybercrime and addiction.

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Introduction

In the digital age, the internet and technology have become integral parts of daily life, offering unprecedented access to information, communication, and entertainment. However, this convenience comes with its own set of challenges, including the rise of cybercrime and the emergence of digital addictions. The intersection of these two phenomena cybercrime and addiction has significant legal implications, as individuals increasingly find themselves engaging in illegal activities driven by compulsive online behaviors. This article explores the rise of digital dependencies, their connection to cybercrime, and the resulting legal challenges [1].

Digital dependencies, often referred to as internet addiction or technology addiction, encompass a range of compulsive behaviors associated with excessive use of digital devices and online platforms. These dependencies can manifest in various forms, including social media addiction, online gaming addiction, gambling addiction, and even addiction to online shopping or pornography. Such behaviors are characterized by a loss of control, preoccupation with digital activities, and continued use despite negative consequences [2].

Research indicates that digital dependencies share similarities with other forms of addiction, including changes in brain chemistry, particularly in the areas related to reward and impulse control. The constant stimulation provided by digital platforms—such as the immediate gratification from social media likes or the excitement of online gaming—can lead to addictive behaviors, making it difficult for individuals to disengage [3].

As digital dependencies grow, so does the potential for individuals to engage in cybercrime. Cybercrime encompasses a broad range of illegal activities conducted via digital means, including hacking, identity theft, online fraud, cyberstalking, and the distribution of illegal content. Individuals with digital addictions may engage in cybercrime either as a direct consequence of their addiction or as a means to support it [4].

For example, individuals addicted to online gambling may resort to illegal activities such as credit card fraud or hacking to finance their addiction. Similarly, those addicted to online pornography may engage in the distribution of illegal content or cyberstalking to satisfy their compulsions. The anonymity provided by the internet can further exacerbate these behaviors,

making it easier for individuals to engage in illegal activities without immediate repercussions [5].

Moreover, the addictive nature of certain online platforms, such as social media, can lead individuals to participate in cyberbullying, harassment, or other forms of cybercrime, driven by the need for social validation or the thrill of online interactions. As these behaviors escalate, they can result in legal consequences, including criminal charges and civil lawsuits [6].

The rise of digital dependencies and their connection to cybercrime present unique challenges for the legal system. Traditional legal frameworks are often ill-equipped to address the complexities of cybercrime, particularly when it is driven by addiction. This raises several important legal and ethical questions: One of the key challenges is determining accountability for cybercrimes committed as a result of digital addiction. Should individuals be held fully responsible for their actions if they were driven by compulsive behaviors beyond their control? This question parallels debates around criminal responsibility in cases of substance addiction, where addiction is sometimes considered a mitigating factor in sentencing [7].

The evolving nature of cybercrime necessitates continuous updates to legal frameworks. Existing laws may not adequately cover the range of activities associated with digital dependencies, such as cyberbullying or the unauthorized use of digital assets. Legislators must consider the psychological and behavioral aspects of digital addiction when crafting laws that address cybercrime [8].

Given the addictive nature of certain digital behaviors, there is a growing need for rehabilitation and treatment programs tailored to individuals involved in cybercrime. These programs could focus on addressing the underlying digital dependencies, with the goal of reducing recidivism and promoting recovery. Legal systems might explore alternative sentencing options that prioritize treatment over punishment for offenders whose crimes are closely linked to addiction [9].

The rise of digital dependencies also raises concerns about privacy and surveillance. As law enforcement agencies increasingly monitor online activities to detect and prevent cybercrime, there is a risk of infringing on individuals' privacy rights. Balancing the need for security with the protection of personal freedoms is a critical legal and ethical challenge. To

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Received: 01-Aug-2024, Manuscript No. AARA-24- 144071; Editor assigned: 02-Aug-2024, PreQC No. AARA-24- 144071 (PQ); Reviewed: 16-Aug-2024, QC No. AARA-24- 144071; Revised: 21-Aug-2024, Manuscript No. AARA-24- 144071 (R); Published: 30-Aug-2024, DOI: 10.35841/aara-7.4.217

combat the rise of cybercrime linked to digital dependencies, preventive measures are essential. This includes public awareness campaigns about the risks of digital addiction, as well as the development of tools and technologies that help individuals manage their online behaviors. Legal frameworks can play a role in supporting these initiatives, for example, by mandating digital literacy education or regulating the design of addictive online platforms [10].

Conclusion

The rise of digital dependencies has created new avenues for cybercrime, posing significant challenges for individuals, society, and the legal system. As more people become addicted to online activities, the likelihood of engaging in illegal behavior increases, necessitating a reevaluation of legal approaches to cybercrime. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted strategy that includes updating legal frameworks, providing treatment and rehabilitation options, and implementing preventive measures. By understanding and responding to the intersection of cybercrime and addiction, society can better protect individuals and uphold justice in the digital age.

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