ARE YOU AN INTERNET ADDICT?

Experts say that millions of people around the world are one click away from 'online' addiction.

The Internet is where we spend more and more of our time. But for a growing number of people, it's an out-of-control habit that interferes with normal living and causes severe stress on family, friends, loved ones and work.

Experts are worried about the increasing number of people that are becoming internet addicts. Kimberly Young, clinical director of the Centre for Internet Addiction Recovery and author of the book Caught in the Net, says that about 5% to 10% of Americans – 15 to 30 million people – may suffer from Internet addiction and the problem may be even greater in countries like China, Korea and Taiwan. It's a global problem. Colleen Moore, coordinator of resource development at the Illinois Institute for Addiction Recovery, says she has clients from college age to early adulthood who spend 14 to 18 hours a day online. But Young notes that it's not just how long people spend using a computer; it's what they're doing online.

Becoming aware of the addiction is the first step. To help people with their diagnosis, Young developed a test that uses a 20-question survey to measure levels of Internet addiction. "There are no real drugs for this yet," she says. "It's not about medication, it's more about therapy" The estimated recovery time varies. At the Illinois Institute for Addiction Recovery, some patients need 30 to 90 days of in-patient treatment, followed by a continuing care program. But Internet addiction recovery, like any other addiction, requires lifelong treatment, experts say.

Online gaming is the form of Internet addiction most rapidly growing among young people. "Initially we primarily had people addicted to surfing the Web, chat rooms, virtual communities and things like that. Now we are looking more to gaming," Moore says. "Gaming is certainly one of the things that could get people addicted to the Internet, because it has such compelling content. But I don't think games are any more likely to cause Internet addiction than any of the other forms of entertainment".

What about you? How many hours a day do you use the internet?

2) Decide if each sentence is TRUE (T), FALSE (F), or NOT MENTIONED (NM).

- The number of Internet users has increased notoriously.

- Internet addiction affects people's life in many different ways.

- Almost half of Americans spend too much time online.

- The USA is the country with the highest number of addicts.

- There are centres to recover from Internet addiction.

- Their clients are between 14 and 18 years old.

- Internet addiction hasn't been understood very well yet.

- It's difficult to recover from this addiction.

- People are mostly addicted to surfing the web, chat rooms and social networks.

A. Experts say that millions of people are becoming _____ _____.

B. Internet addiction is an _____ ____ _____ habit.

C. Internet addiction is a bigger problem in _____, _____ and Taiwan.

D. _____ _____ is the form of Internet addiction most rapidly growing.

E. Millions of people around the world _____ _____ _____ away from online addiction.