

# Video Kid

Chris Woods



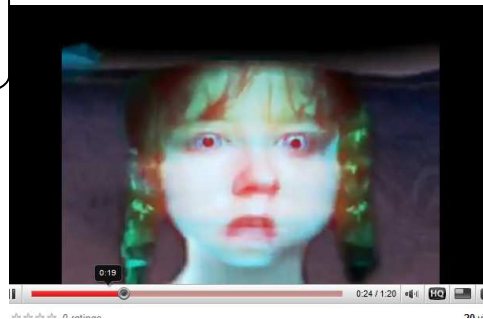
## Before Listening and Watching

### addiction

1. A physical or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, such as a drug or alcohol.
2. A habitual or compulsive involvement in an activity.

What does the title of this piece, together with the dictionary definition given above, tell us about the content of this poem? Look at the other clues below and decide which part each word or picture takes in the poem.

blank



switched off



deaf

programmed

plays



fast forward

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### After Listening and Watching

**1.** What other forms of addiction caused by electronic equipment are you aware of? (refer to the dictionary definition in the 'Before Listening' section)

**2.** Read this article. Do you think that the method described is appropriate to deal with the addiction mentioned?

#### China's Fight against Internet Addiction

With the world's largest netizen population of 300 million, China is struggling with a new problem: Internet obsession among its youth. Since the 2004 more than 3,000 adolescent and young-adult patients have been treated for Internet addiction in military run camps. Hundreds of similar treatment centres have grown in recent years in China, joining other centres operating elsewhere in Asia and the U.S. The U.S.-based Centre for Internet Addiction Recovery classifies the disorder as compulsive behaviour in which "the Internet becomes the organizing principle of addicts' lives."

Tao Ran, director of the Beijing treatment centre and a colonel in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), helped come up with a strict definition of Internet addiction last fall: consecutive usage of the Web for 6 hr. a day for three straight months is addiction. The new standard, which is still pending official endorsement by the Ministry of Health, has aroused widespread scepticism in Chinese cyberspace, with many arguing that too many people could be wrongly categorized as Internet addicts under this definition.

This has not stopped anxious parents like Wang from dragging their children to Tao's camp, a four-story building in Beijing's major military compound. Once checked in, most patients are required to stay for three months, without access to the outside world, cell phones or, of course, computers. But unlike in other similar camps, parents of patients at the Internet Addiction Centre have to stay at the camp to receive "treatment" too — because, according to Tao, Internet addiction is often a result of parenting mistakes.

Life in the treatment camp, not surprisingly, is defined by strict, semi-military disciplines. Patients get up at 6:30 a.m. and go to bed at 9:30 p.m. Their daily schedule includes military drills, therapy sessions, reading and sports. "At first, I felt like [I was] living in hell," says 22-year-old Yang Xudong, a camp resident for two months. "But over time, it gets more comfortable and peaceful." Despite the small steps he's made, like eating a diet that consists of something other than instant noodles, the Beijing native admitted he still got upset too easily and was "afraid of people" — two classic symptoms of Internet addiction, according to Tao. "I think life in this camp has definitely calmed me down to some degree," says Yang. "But I'm far from ready to get out, since I don't know what to do with my life yet."

That lack of motivation is widely shared by the young adults at the camp, even among patients with decorated academic backgrounds. Didi, a 20-year-old college student who did not disclose his full name, picked up online gaming almost as soon as he got into the prestigious Tsinghua University. He says he became so obsessed that he skipped all his classes for an entire semester and eventually received academic warnings from the school. As many as 30 students from Beida and Tsinghua Universities have been to the camp, says Tao, and it's becoming an increasing trend among students from other top schools. "Our kids are all very special and intelligent," says the PLA colonel. "It's only normal for people to make detours when they're young. Our mission is to help them get back on track before it's too late."

A **Netizen** (a mixture of **Internet** and **Citizen**) or **cybercitizen** is a person actively involved in online communities.

## Word Box

In this short poem there are no less than five verb/preposition collocations. The poet uses the collocations carefully. Look at the definitions of the collocations here, then decide what the use or metaphor has been given to them by the poet in the poem. (Some have more than one meaning. Which one is used in the poem?)

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| switched off | disconnected † not paid attention            |
| go through   | pass from one side to another † be absorbed  |
| play through | rehearse † heard or seen via mechanism       |
| play with    | share games † give sense of (false) security |
| reels past   | wind past † dizzy † (fast dance)             |