

# Introduction to the Special Series on Addiction and Technology

July 30, 2014

New technologies often create public health concerns. When a new technology emerges, many people become concerned that it will be overwhelmingly attractive to people who are exposed to it, leading to abuse and dependence. The Internet — one of the most important technological advances in history — is no exception. However, these concerns reflect only one side of the story of technology and addiction. For instance, the Internet might help curtail or prevent addictive behavior by creating new opportunities for education, prevention, and intervention. During the month of July, all of our science reviews will be dedicated to the topic of addiction and technology, particularly Internet applications. First, [The DRAM](#) reviewed a study that looked at Facebook use among college students as a predictor for risky drinking. Next, [ASHES](#) examined the effectiveness of a text messaging intervention to help people quit smoking. [STASH](#) examined research that considers whether PIU is better conceptualized as an internalizing or externalizing disorder. Last week, [The WAGER](#) reviewed research that examines adolescents' gambling-related problems and technology-enabled experience with simulated gambling. Today, [The DRAM](#) reviews a longitudinal study testing a shared relationship between social media alcohol-related exposure and alcohol use behaviors in middle school students.

We supplemented these reviews with an [Editorial by Marc Potenza](#), M.D., Ph.D., of Yale University. Together with his colleagues, Dr. Potenza has conducted seminal research on technology and behavioral addiction. We also presented an [Editorial by Venkat Srinivasan](#), a writer and research engineer, that grapples with the question of whether Internet addiction is a true mental disorder. We hope you will enjoy and learn from this Special Series.