

S.Korea to offer software to fight web addiction

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A teenager studies a computer screen. South Korea will offer gamers and other Internet addicts free software from next year to limit the time they spend on the web, the prime minister's office has said.

South Korea will offer gamers and other Internet addicts free software from next year to limit the time they spend on the web, the prime minister's office said on Tuesday.

The government, which estimates the highly wired nation has about two million web addicts, will offer two types of software -- a consensual shutdown programme and one called Internet [Fatigue](#).

Consensual shutdown limits usage to a time set by a guardian or user. Internet Fatigue makes games harder as time goes by so that the player becomes bored.

The offer is part of a plan drawn up by the Ministry of Public Administration and Security to combat Internet addiction.

"The recent incident of a death caused by game addiction clearly shows Internet addiction is a problem for all ages," a ministry spokesman said.

Police this month arrested a couple who allegedly left their baby daughter to starve to death at home while out at an Internet cafe, playing marathon sessions of an online game that simulates child-rearing.

The new plan will offer education and counselling. The government says 8.8 percent of [Internet users](#) are addicted, and hopes to reduce that to five percent by 2012.

The Korea Computer Life Institute estimates a third of adults are game addicts and around a quarter of teenagers.

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