

Vamping out at night

Vamping is a term used for youngsters who camp out like vampires on social media past midnight. These 'vampers' are a sort of after-hours cyber community

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There is a new lingo in town and that is "Vamping"! If you probably haven't heard of the word then it is likely that you don't have tweens or teens in the house! Vamping, of course, refers to vampires, but teens are not hunting humans for blood, instead it is a latest Internet and social media fad referring to kids, teens and youngsters camping out like vampires on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp etc. mostly after midnight.

Hectic schedules during the day don't stop these youngsters from craving for some unstructured activities during the wee hours. Like many other things youngsters do, vamping seems to be about looking cool in front of your buddies. These "vampers" see themselves as a sort of after-hours cyber community as well.

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Hashtagging everything we do as 'vamping' adds a fun element, it's like we are relating ourselves to the legendary creatures of the night – vampires!

SUSAN, FASHION STUDENT



Priyanka Kamboj, a photographer, likes to catch up with friends post midnight

PHOTO COURTESY: PRIYANKA KAMBOJ

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Their hashtags range from #breaking-night, #notsleepingatall and #vamping. Susan, 17, first year fashion designing student quips, "Throughout the day I am surrounded by teachers, seniors and parents. Very few interactions are unstructured until my parents go to bed. Hence the late night fun suits me well. I like to have time for myself at night, catching up with my buddies, update Facebook etc. Also, I know that nobody/nothing is going to disturb me at night. Also, all my friends are available online only in the wee hours. Hashtagging everything we do as 'vamping' just adds a fun element to the whole thing and it's like we are relat-

ing ourselves to the legendary creatures of the night – vampires!" She adds, "Plus, there are Internet and mobile night plans which fit my budget. During the day everyone I know is busy with their lives, but at night everybody is free to chat."

Another vamber Priyanka Kamboj, a photographer, says, "Mornings are very busy compared to nights. Late night browsing is a great stress-buster. From checking Facebook to reading a blog, or reading the latest news, I am addicted to social media!"

While youngsters staying up past bedtime is not new, however, their desire to connect to others in the wee hours of the night is something professionals consider extremely unhealthy. Dr Vikas Maurya, consultant respiratory medicine and sleep disorder from BLK Super Speciality Hospital informs, "The famous US psychologist Dr Larry Rassen has given a

new term iDisorders i.e. change in the brain's ability to process information and relate to the world due to addiction to technology and media. Vamping with technology is an example of iDisorders. Initially, youngsters may feel excited when they find themselves in the virtual world. However, it may gradually take a toll on their physical and mental health. Decline in the quality of sleep and its duration daily after a period of time leads to chronic sleep deprivation which is associated with large number of health hazards. This includes irritability, decreased performance and alertness, memory and cognitive impairment, poor quality of life. There is an increase in such cases in recent years but the acceptance of the problem among patients is lacking."

However, not all youngsters stay up late at night. Samantha Fernandes, TV

actress, Channel V, shares that she sleeps for 7-8 hours at night, but her crazy work schedule allows her to catch up on everything only past midnight. "I sometimes get done with my work post-midnight and since I don't have a TV and books can't keep me up all night, browsing through Instagram is an option apart from playing Candy Crush to wind up after a long day. Also if I click something I like to instantly post it online," she says.

There is a need to educate people and counsel them about the repercussions of its excessive use, opines Dr Prashant Saxena, senior consultant, Institute of Pulmonology, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine. He informs, "Simple things like keeping the phone away or on silent mode while going to sleep can help this obsession. The craving will decrease over time and youngsters can get rid of the compulsion of being online."