



Addicted.com gives answers and support to struggling addicts.

By James Olinger

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(l-r) Addicted.com co-founders Eric Rawn, John Shegerian and Christopher Rawn at the Addicted.com offices in Clovis. (Photo by Ralph Berrett)

Clovis, CA - It's hard to turn on a TV or listen to the news nowadays without hearing about the struggles with addictions celebrities are having. Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan and Mel Gibson are just a few stars whose difficulties in life have been scrutinized by the media.

It is important for people who are struggling with any type of addictive issue to know that help is available, which is why Addicted.com was created.

Addicted.com is a website that is managed from Clovis and is visited over 10,000 times daily, making it the number one addiction website in the world. It has help of all types for people who are battling all addictions, including ones that are not often thought of, such as overspending and Internet problems.

The website is the brainchild of local businessman John Shegerian, who is also chairman and CEO of the rapidly growing Electronic Recyclers, Inc. Shegerian says that he is an addict in recovery, and has been through rehab. He saw that there was a void on the Internet when it came to addiction websites, and decided to fill that void.

"Look at what the online world has done to fuel addictions such as pornography, such as gambling," Shegerian said. "This was an opportunity to use this platform to help turn back that tide."

The website has many features intended to give addicts support and information to help them with their addictions. Co-Founder Eric Rawn said that the Virtual Tours section is probably the most powerful aspect of the site so far. Anyone can visit numerous treatment facilities without actually being there. One can type in a ZIP code and find the place nearest them where they can receive help.

"Virtual Tours allows us to display treatment centers in a way that's never been done before online," Rawn said.

The Addicted.com staff have also handpicked the best addiction doctors and counselors from across the country and made them a part of the site. Each professional has their own page, where they may be contacted by visitors or asked questions in a Q-and-A type format. Dr. Doug Weiss, who specializes in sex addiction and has been shown on the "Oprah Winfrey Show" and "Good Morning America" has a page, as well as drug and alcohol expert Marty Brenner, who has been seen on "Entertainment Tonight."

"We handpicked them based on their popularity and their knowledge," Rawn said. They have also capitalized on the success of the YouTube and MySpace websites by coming up with AddictedTube and AddictedSpace. They work much like their predecessors. On AddictedTube addicts can upload videos about their addictions, their life stories, addiction recovery news and celebrities. AddictedSpace is a place where addicts can post profiles, share information and give support to others who have similar issues.

Rawn said that the team got AddictedTube up and running in just 72 hours. "When something new comes out, when there's a new technology we can implement on the website," Rawn said, "we're so quick and nimble that we can implement it almost immediately."

The staff that runs Addicted.com is comprised mostly of people under the age of 30. It consists of social bloggers, forum moderators, sales assistants and programmers. Eric's brother, Christopher Rawn, who is also a co-founder, works with treatment centers and counselor. Eric Rawn's specialty is technology.

He believes that the youth of the team members has helped them gel together well.

"We're not out there to climb the corporate ladder and be better than each other," Rawn said.

Some of that staff's future goals for the website include expanding to other countries, reaching places like Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and Mexico.

Rawn said that technology is already in place for when expansion occurs, which should be sometime next year.

"We will use technology to where if someone is in China and logs in, everything will be in Chinese, and it will only show treatment centers in China and only advertising banners from that area," Rawn said.

To get Addicted.com even more in the public eye, the staff is speaking with different Hollywood celebrities about being a spokesperson for the cause. Also, according to Shegerian, they are in talks with Hollywood producers about creating a reality TV show, which should be made in either 2008 or 2009.

"We've written a show called 'Addicted,'" Shegerian said. "What America is now ready to see is how real rehab happens, and how people get well."