

## Is Cybersex Cheating

Written by Dr. Kimberly Young

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How is adultery defined? Bill Clinton would ask us all to first define what we mean by the word "is", but the real issue here is how do we define infidelity. "Adultery is adultery, even if its virtual" according to Pamiglia Cristiana (Christian Family), a magazine close to the Vatican. "It is just as sinful as the real thing." The question of the morality of flirting, falling in love and perhaps betraying a spouse via the World Wide Web surfaced in the advice column of the June, 2000 issue of Italy's largest-circulation newsweekly.

Adultery is often based upon moral judgments rather than factual information, independently formed through social conventions, religious teachings, family upbringing, reading books, and life experiences. So before anyone can answer the question, "is cybersex cheating", we need to first define what is meant by the term adultery and what constitutes "sex" outside of marriage?

*Cybersex becomes adultery when one person in the relationship does it without consent from a partner and without concern for how he or she will feel about it.* Concealing a relationship outside of the primary one means that lying and hiding are involved, and at the moment, there is very little, if any, regard for how the other person will feel about that outside relationship. The lying and secrecy associated with cybersex and most cyberaffairs will destroy a couple's trust and commitment. Trust is sacred in any relationship, and once that trust is broken, it is hard to repair.

We can see that cybersex is not simple harmless flirtation because it doesn't involve any "physical touching". The emotional pain and devastation to a once, loving relationship is just the same. Cybersex is cheating and can't be rationalized away. Not that I feel a moral obligation to decide that cybersex is cheating, but the reality is that cybersex makes a partner feels betrayed, hurt, jealous, and angry at the discovery. I always ask the audience, when this question comes up, "how would you feel if it was your significant other having cybersex?"

For more information, read Dr. Young's [Infidelity Online Workbook](#)

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