



## **BINGE COMPUTING HAS DRAMATIC IMPACT ON HEALTH OF COMPUTER USERS**

*Press release, 16 July, 2007, Wellnomics Ltd, New Zealand: The emergence of 'binge computing' as a significant contributor to computer use injuries needs to be taken into account in developing strategies to manage RSI or OOS in the workplace.*

According to ergonomic software specialists, Wellnomics Ltd, the issue of binge computing needs to be brought to the attention of HR and Health and Safety staff within companies of all sizes.

Binge computing is the term coined to describe long periods of intensive computer use, often without breaks of any kind, in order to meet deadlines, produce university level papers, or create business presentations under time pressure.

It is compounded by the stress of those situations, which can often eventuate in a serious case of RSI being triggered, which then makes the user far more vulnerable to future overuse injuries.

Dr. Benjamin Amick, from the University of Texas School of Public Health, coined the phrase to address one of the problems with computer-related injuries: working at the computer for an extended time without a break.

Results of his research on university students have shown a strong correlation between binge computing and RSI injuries, especially when the semester end nears, along with deadlines for term papers. The impact of mouse usage rather than keyboard usage is also a source of injury.

Coincidentally, many businesses are finding their newly minted graduates are suffering from symptoms of RSI within months of taking on their first job.

Projects, deadlines and intense work periods are the trigger points for MSD symptoms to become apparent or worsen. It is unlikely that the high incidence of discomfort is caused purely by the immediate demands of the new position, but rather by the 'binge computing' habits and patterns developed during university study.

Wellnomics managing director Dr Kevin Taylor says that the issue has been addressed in the new suite of risk management software recently launched by the company.

"The research indicates that young people are entering the workplace with pre-existing conditions, which are showing up as injuries within just a few months of them starting work.

"In a work environment where there is a shortage of skilled workers in many sectors, and every step we can take to reduce staff turnover and increase the overall wellbeing of employees is a valuable investment," he said.

Wellnomics® Risk Management is the world's first and only scientifically validated ergonomics software for the prevention of computer usage injuries in office workers.

This new solution builds on the success of the company's popular WorkPace® Breaks & Exercises software, which was launched in 1997 and is now used by more than 1 million office workers worldwide to enhance productivity and improve their own health and safety at work.

According to Dr Taylor, Wellnomics® Risk Management is the first scientifically validated product to cover all the known risk factors for RSI.

"It provides a unique combination of direct measurement of computer use and user self-assessment, as well as providing the tools to assist those with existing RSI," he said.

Dr Taylor stresses that the Wellnomics Risk Management tools are not designed to help companies discriminate against staff with computer user injuries, but rather to provide all the necessary information to best manage those valuable employees.

The advantages of adopting a Wellnomics® Risk Management work environment include reduced injury rates; increased productivity; reduced stress levels; reduced absenteeism; lowered ergonomic assessment costs and assured compliance with health and safety obligations.

Wellnomics software automatically monitors computer use on each employee's PC then combines this information with data from a set of online questionnaires completed by the computer user covering posture and workstation ergonomics, symptoms and stress.

A personalised risk report provides feedback to each computer user, with a list of recommendations and advice on how to reduce their risks.

The result is accurate identification of high risk employees within the organisation, and a list of the top risk factors that need to be addressed to reduce risks to safe levels.

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### **About Wellnomics**

Founded in 1997, Wellnomics Ltd is a leader in the health and safety field, with many thousands of clients across North America, Australasia and Europe and over 1 million software product licenses in use worldwide. Clients include PricewaterhouseCoopers, Comcare, CSIRO, Governor General's Office, Commonwealth Ombudsman, Linklaters & Alliance, Royal Sun Alliance, WestpacTrust, Philips, Boeing, Chevron, Shell, BP, ING Bank, KPMG, PWC, Pacific Gas and Electric, Cap Gemini, Nike, and Eli Lilly.

Wellnomics® Risk Management is an integrated suite of software tools to enable organizations to effectively manage the health and safety of large numbers of office workers. Our products are designed to prevent injuries, improve productivity, and minimise lost work time, and are underpinned by extensive research, led by Directors Dr Robert Van Nobelen and Dr Kevin Taylor.

Wellnomics is an active, contributing member of elite computer industry research organization, the OERC (Office Ergonomics Research Council) which includes IBM, Microsoft, Dell, Apple, Intel, HP, Herman Miller and LogiTech.

At any one time Wellnomics Ltd is involved with numerous scientific studies on computer use in the office environment around the world. These activities allow Wellnomics Ltd to make a measurable improvement to health and safety outcomes and provide clients with tangible returns on investment. For more information visit [www.wellnomics.com](http://www.wellnomics.com).

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