SHANGHAI (Reuters) - Mainland China has opened its first halfway house for Internet addicts, offering shell-shocked teenagers counselling, books -- and the use of computers.

The shelter can hold four minors for one-night stays and help bridge gaps between children and parents, the Shanghai Daily said.

"None of the teenagers are forced to come here," the newspaper quoted Wang Hui, the house's chief social worker, as saying.

"We wander around in nearby Internet bars at night and bring them to the halfway house if the teen agrees."

Computer and online gaming has exploded in China in recent years, with an estimated 14 million people taking part.

Amid growing concern that more and more young people are getting hooked, China has issued a raft of regulations aimed at curbing excessive game playing at Internet cafes and heavily fining owners that admit minors.

The Shanghai shelter, modeled on one already in operation Hong Kong, took in the first three boys on Monday, the paper said, including Chen Jiafeng -- a 17-year-old "fed up with the depressive atmosphere" of his family.

Chen went home after talking with a psychologist for four hours and after social workers visited his family to discuss proper parent-child communications, the paper said.

In May, the parents of a 13-year-old boy who killed himself after playing a computer game for 36 hours sued the game's Chinese distributor.
Internet addicts halfway house opens in Shanghai – Yahoo! News

Technology News

Japan: Sony, Dell must probe batteries AP
Apple to pay $100M to settle 5 lawsuits AP
Logitech unveils new cordless laser mice AP
Dell stops selling Ditty music players AP
Hui makes pitch for Gateway retail unit AP

Most Viewed - Technology

Logitech unveils new cordless laser mice AP
Apple to pay $100 mln to Creative in settlement Reuters
Canon to start making its own photo printers Reuters
Internet addicts halfway house opens in Shanghai Reuters
Review: Mac Pro beats Dell on price AP

Technology & Health Video

Pluto may flunk out as planet CNN - 49 minutes ago
Hurricane season eerily quiet CNN - 2 hours, 18 minutes ago

Sponsored Links

Clean Radio Bits and Showprep
Get clean, funny radio bits, humor, trivia, odd news, and more delivered daily via e-mail at Onairprep"s showprep service. Fraction of the cost of other services. 30-day free trial.
www.onairprep.com