**Video games strain Italian internet as coronavirus keeps kids home**

The entire country of Italy is currently on lockdown. The government has limited almost all travel and social gatherings. Officials are trying to contain and halt the spread of coronavirus in a country that has seen one of the worst outbreaks so far.

The coronavirus, officially called COVID-19, is a flulike illness that is considered a pandemic because of its global spread. Sometimes it can be deadly, however, the virus mostly targets older people. The risk of children getting it is low.

Fighting the virus has also involved shutting schools down until further notice and now, there are unforeseen side effects of closing schools.

When kids are home from school and essentially not allowed to leave the house, it is not hard to guess what many of them are going to turn to. Many are playing video games.

**Italian Internet Traffic Is Way Up**

This is having some very real effects on Italian internet providers. A bunch of housebound kids, along with adults, are playing games like "Fortnite" and "Call of Duty" online every day. The games use a lot of bandwidth. Bandwidth is the amount of data that can be transmitted over an internet connection per second.

"We reported an increase of more than 70 percent of internet traffic over our landline network, with a big contribution from online gaming," said Luigi Gubitosi. He is the head of Telecom Italia, an internet provider.

The increased internet traffic did lead to some temporary outages in Italy. However, those have reportedly been brought under control, according to Telecom Italia.

This situation is likely to be duplicated in the U.S. very shortly. State after state has begun the process of closing down schools for anywhere from two to three weeks, but it could be more depending on how coronavirus continues to spread.

Like Italian kids, American kids will also probably be playing online video games to pass the time indoors. Many will have no school, no homework, no sports and little else to do but play games and watch TV. We have already seen some U.S. internet providers lift data caps, or limits, in the wake of the pandemic.

**Lots Of People Are Playing Video Games Right Now**

"Call of Duty" was not mentioned directly by Telecom Italia. However, Activision, the company that makes "Call of Duty," launched its Warzone battle royale this week, which drew 6 million players in its first day.

It's what a lot of people are playing at the moment. Many gamers are working their way through old games, playing their usual favorites like "League" and "Counter-Strike: Global Offensive" or starting new seasons of "Destiny" or "The Division."

It is easy to question how U.S. internet providers may handle the coming internet slowdown if things get even worse. If Italy is a model, the technology appears to be holding.

Still, the U.S. has far more people and a whole lot of internet problems even on a good day. As more U.S. schools close, expect similar surges in internet gaming traffic. It will remain to be seen how that affects things overall as time goes on.