

Psychology of Smartphone Addiction

Smartphone addiction is becoming a topic of increasing debate in today's society. Children are given smartphones at younger and younger ages, and are growing up around parents for whom interaction with a smartphone is an incessant, habitual activity. Today, smartphone dependence ("addiction") is frequently seen in today's teens, and can have severe and undesirable social impacts. Many teens feel an attachment to their smartphones, and feel uncomfortable without them. Understanding what, psychologically, is responsible for this dependence is an important step towards combating smartphones' unfavorable effects. *good opening*

yes!
Smartphone addiction is certainly prevalent among teenagers. In a survey of 40 New Paltz High School students, more than 60 percent reported that they unlock their phone 25 to 75 times a day, while 10 percent reported that they unlock their phone over 100 times a day. Apple reported in a recent press conference that an iPhone is, on average, unlocked 80 times a day (Statt). Additionally, 53 percent of New Paltz High School students reported that they would feel "uncomfortable" or "very uncomfortable" if they went a week without interacting with their smartphone. This clearly illustrates a dependence on smartphones among teenagers.

Smartphone dependence can be attributed to several simple psychological principles. Although a majority of interactions with a device have little substance, it can still become addictive, because of its habitual nature. Constant smartphone use can become a repetitive, physical behavior, and can be habit-forming. (Richtel). "Constant checking [is] a placeholder for less desirable activities," says Matt Richtel, who interviewed psychologists for his *New York Times* article.

In many cases, communication through a smartphone, whether through texting or social media, yields feelings of validation, inclusion, and desirability (Richtel). In these cases, constant smartphone use can be attributed to the phenomenon colloquially referred to as "FOMO", or fear of missing out. In many cases, teens check their phones incessantly because of anxiety that something interesting or exciting might be happening elsewhere. Incessant checking rewards users with feelings of connectedness and validation (Weisberg). However, in many cases, people experience a fear of missing out on events with no direct connection to themselves. Tara Hunt, a marketing director, describes that "I might think I'm missing out if Google bought another company and I wasn't part of the echo chamber around it" (Richtel). In many cases, FOMO follows this pattern. Because of the constant stream of information provided by smartphones, people develop attachments and anxieties about things with no impact on their life.

Avoid "Things"!

*just
habit-form*

The strategies used by social networks and mobile game developers aren't helping combat smartphone addiction. Social networks often leverage psychological techniques to keep users coming back, such as investment bias, the idea that if you spend time customizing something you are more likely to go back to it to use it again. (Weisberg). Many designers also try to build subconscious habits with their users. "The most successful mobile apps create distinctive, repetitive hand movements," says Jacob Weisberg, writing for *The New York Review of Books*. By building habit-forming elements into mobile apps, designers hope to make interaction with their app a routine.

And it's working.

While smartphone addiction is clear in many places in today's society, it is not going away anytime soon, because mobile experience designers keep building addictive elements into their apps. However, understanding the factors responsible is an important step towards combatting the addictive nature of smartphones and using them as more productive tools.

Works Cited

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excellent, beautiful citations

Like,

Excellent job here. Absolutely

Some of your strongest work recently
Solid research always yields a strong

product Bravo.

A+ 100