

Our apps are an extension of our personalities, new research reveals

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We see our phones as an extension of ourselves, according to new research from the University of Cologne (<https://www.wiso.uni-koeln.de/en/en/>).

Professor Martin P Fritze found that we not only use digital services on our devices for practical uses, but we also hold significant sentimental value towards them, ultimately using our phones as way of expressing our personality and reaching likeminded people.

“People consciously hold onto digital services when they attach some meaning to those services, which exceeds purely functional dimensions and connects with individuals’ thoughts and feelings in relation to themselves”, says Professor Fritze, “They often allow us to express ourselves in ways we may not in everyday life”.

The findings, published in the journal Electronic Commerce Research, demonstrate that we only retain apps on our phones either because they tie into our self-image or if we believe they are or will be useful, keeping them ‘just in case’. Furthermore, they prove that we rapidly connect to and are reluctant to give up the digital services on our phones once we have obtained them.

This, along with the fact that downloading a new app, trying out a streaming service, or registering on a social media platform takes very little time to do, means our likelihood to become dependent on our phones and tablets is an increasing inevitability.

Professor Fritze concludes;

“Today, digital services such as Spotify, Tidal, or Apple Music for music streaming, Tinder, Grindr, or eHarmony for online dating solutions, and PayPal, Alipay, or WeChat Pay for online payment offerings, extensively permeate consumers’ lives and thereby dramatically affect their personal well-being”.

Professor Fritze suggests that digital services are so pervasive that we now see them as an extension of ourselves. In an ever more digitalised economy, we should be aware of this, as our effortless access to digital services often leads to time-consuming activities and habits, which can ultimately have a negative effect upon our mental and physical health.

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