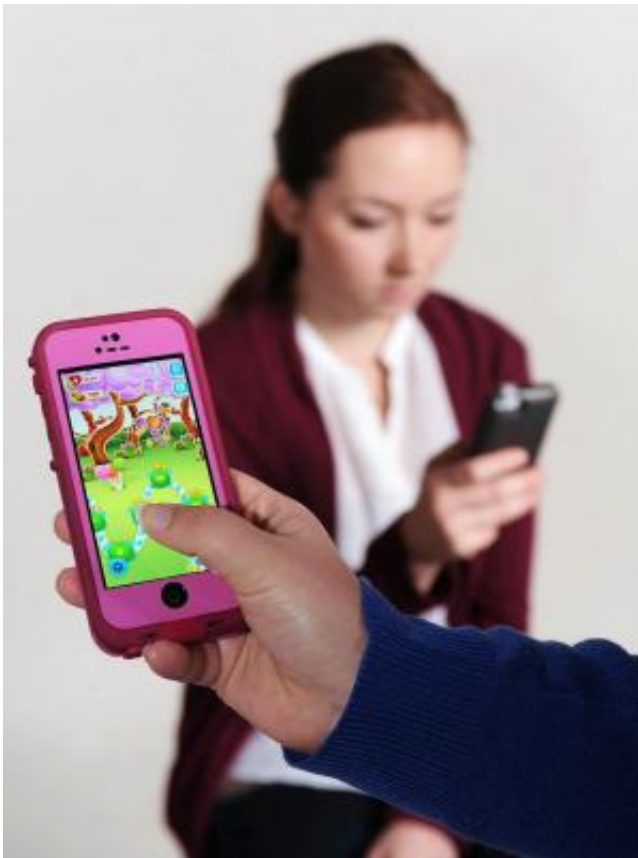


# Researchers find more smartphone play equals less fun during leisure

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A new study by Kent State University researchers suggests college students with increased leisure time on their smartphones experience decreased enjoyment. Credit: Kent State University

Today's smartphones are designed to entertain and are increasingly marketed to young adults as leisure devices. Not surprisingly, research

suggests that young adults most often use their phones for entertainment purposes rather than for school or work.

With this in mind, three Kent State University researchers, Andrew Lepp, Ph.D., Jacob Barkley, Ph.D. and Jian Li, Ph.D., and a Kent State graduate student, Saba Salehi-Esfahani, surveyed a random sample of 454 college students to examine how different types of [cell phone](#) users experience daily [leisure](#).

The trio from Kent State's College of Education, Health and Human Services measured each person's total daily cell phone use, personality and experience of daily leisure. The students were then categorized into distinct groups based on similar patterns of smartphone use and personality. Lastly, each group's experience of daily leisure was compared.

An analysis revealed three distinct types of cell [phone users](#): low-use extroverts, low-use introverts and a high-use group. The high-use group made up about 25 percent of the sample and averaged more than 10 hours of cell phone use per day. An increased level of smartphone use was this group's defining characteristic and was associated with a diminished experience of daily leisure.

"The high-frequency cell phone user may not have the leisure skills necessary to creatively fill their free time with intrinsically rewarding activities," Lepp said. "For such people, the ever-present smartphone may provide an easy, but less satisfying and more stressful, means of filling their time."

In comparison to the other two groups, the high-frequency cell phone users experienced significantly more leisure distress. Leisure distress is feeling uptight, stressed and anxious during free time.

"In our previously published research, we found that high-frequency cell phone users often described feeling obligated to remain constantly connected to their phones," Barkley said. "This obligation was described as stressful, and the present study suggests the stress may be spilling over into their leisure."

By contrast, the low-use extrovert group averaged about three hours of smartphone use per day and had the greatest preference to challenge themselves during leisure time as well as low levels of leisure boredom and distress.

"Although this study was not designed to assess cause and effect, the relationships identified are important to reflect upon," Li said. "Being constantly connected to your phone is not likely to enhance your experience of leisure. On the other hand, disconnecting for short periods of time in order to seek more challenging leisure opportunities is likely to be beneficial."

**More information:** The article's complete citation is: Lepp, A., Li, J., Barkley, J. & Salehi-Esfahani, S. (2015). Exploring the relationships between college students' cell phone use, personality and leisure. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 43, 210-219.  
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Provided by Kent State University

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