

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, February 3, 2020

Where: 270 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:20 pm

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“Smartphones are the Mirror of the Self”

ABSTRACT:

One of the most dramatic shifts in recent years has been consumers’ increased use of smartphones for making purchases and choices. This paper examines whether using a smartphone, as opposed to a personal computer (PC), influences what consumers choose and how they view their choices. Our findings suggest that the use of smartphones leads consumers to prefer more unique and self-expressive options and to perceive their own choices, once made, as more self-expressive. Further, we find that chronic individual differences, such as risk-aversion and maximizing, correspond to choice more strongly when using a smartphone rather than a PC. These effects appear to be driven by an increased self-focus when using a smartphone, compared with a PC. The findings rule out alternative explanations based on emotionality, touch, task difficulty, and display size. We theorize that because smartphones are highly personal devices, using them shifts one’s attention toward the self and activates self-related knowledge.