

MARKETING COLLOQUIA

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Where: 741 JMHH

When: 12:00 PM to 1:20 PM

CHECKING CURRENT STATUS MORE FREQUENTLY DECREASES SATISFACTION

ABSTRACT:

From the time remaining for an Uber's arrival to the number of likes on an Instagram post, new technologies have made it easier to check the status of desired outcomes than ever before. Smartphones and other devices allow consumers to receive updates (e.g., status of a delivery driver) by the hour, minute, or even second. But is such frequent checking always beneficial? This research explores a potential downside to checking the status of desired outcomes more frequently. Eleven studies demonstrate that compared to checking less often, checking current status more often makes consumers less satisfied with final outcomes (e.g., total "likes" received on a social media post or time spent waiting for a take-out order). We suggest this happens because consumers have overly optimistic expectations, expecting better outcomes at each interval than what actually occurs. Consequently, checking the status of desired outcomes more frequently leads to more disappointments, reducing satisfaction with even the same, objectively successful, outcomes. Importantly, this effect has negative downstream consequences for both marketers (e.g., reduced product use) and consumers (e.g., decreased self-esteem). The findings deepen understanding of the process and consequences of tracking and have important implications for how companies design and implement tracking technologies.