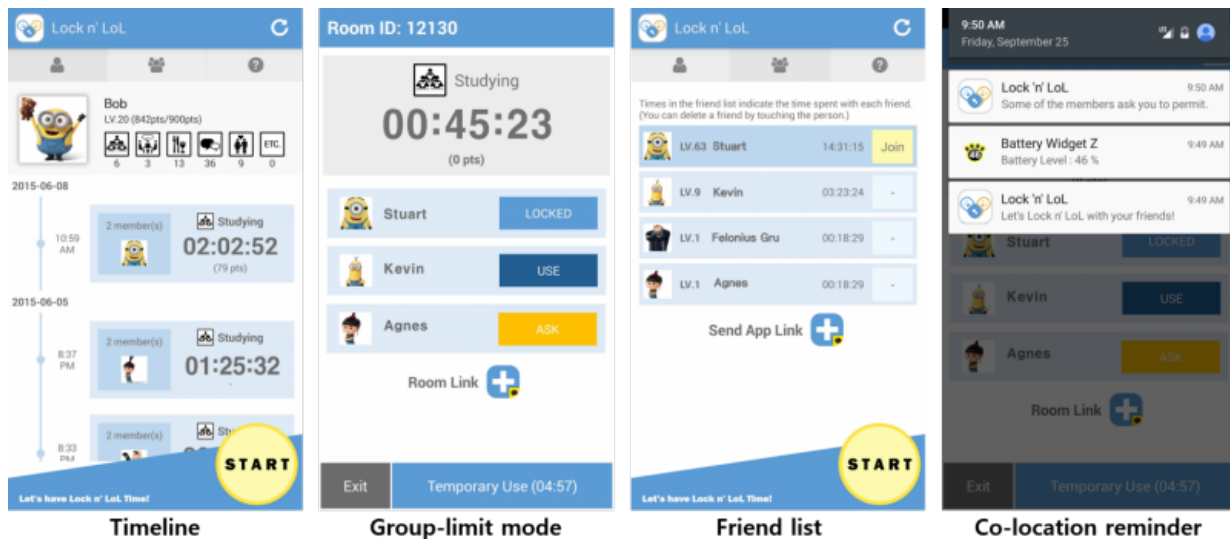


An app to digitally detox from smartphone addiction: Lock n' LOL

December 16 2015



The final design of Lock n' LoL, which consists of three tabs: My Info, Friends, and Group Limit Mode. Users can activate the limit mode by clicking the start button at the bottom of the screen. Credit: KAIST

When a fake phone company released its line of products, NoPhones, a thin, rectangular-shaped plastic block that looked just like a smartphone but did not function, many doubted that the simulated smartphones would find any users. Surprisingly, close to 4,000 fake phones were sold to consumers who wanted to curb their phone usage.

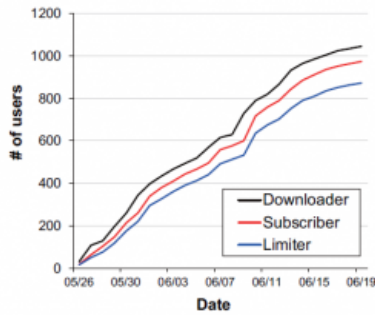
As smartphones penetrate every facet of our daily lives, a growing

number of people have expressed concern about distractions or even the addictions they suffer from overusing smartphones.

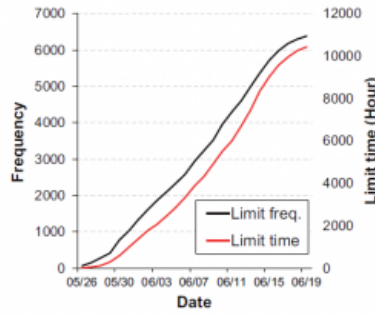
Professor Uichin Lee of the Department of Knowledge Service Engineering at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) and his research team have recently introduced a solution to this problem by developing an application, Lock n' LoL (Lock Your Smartphone and Laugh Out Loud), to help people [lock](#) their smartphones altogether and keep them from using the phone while engaged in social activities such as meetings, conferences, and discussions.

Researchers note that the overuse of smartphones often results from [users'](#) habitual checking of messages, emails, or other online contents such as status updates in [social networking service](#) (SNS). External stimuli, for example, notification alarms, add to [smartphone](#) distractions and interruptions in group interactions.

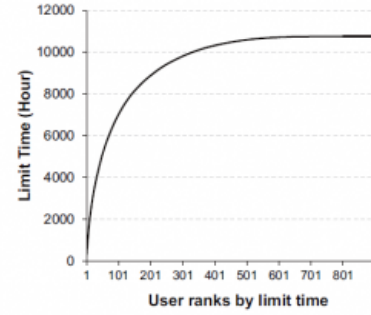
The Lock n' LoL allows users to create a new room or join an existing room. The users then invite meeting participants or friends to the room and share its ID with them to enact the Group Limit (lock) mode. When phones are in the lock mode, all alarms and notifications are automatically muted, and users must ask permission to unlock their phones. However, in an emergency, users can access their phones for accumulative five minutes in a temporary unlimit mode.



(a) CDF of downloaders, subscribers, and those who tried use limiting at least once



(b) CDF of limiting time and frequency



(c) CDF of limiting time per user

The deployment summary of Lock n' LoL campaign in May 2015. Credit: KAIST

In addition, the app's Co-location Reminder detects and lists nearby users to encourage app users to limit their phone use. The Lock n' LoL also displays important statistics to monitor users' behavior such as the current week's total limit time, the weekly average usage time, top friends ranked by time spent together, and top activities in which the users participated.

Professor Lee said,

"We conducted the Lock n' LoL campaign throughout the campus for one month this year with 1,000 students participating. As a result, we discovered that students accumulated more than 10,000 free hours from using the app on their smartphones. The students said that they were able to focus more on their group activities. In an age of the Internet of Things, we expect that the adverse effects of mobile distractions and addictions will emerge as a social concern, and our Lock n' LoL is a key effort to address this issue."

He added, "This app will certainly help family members to interact more

with each other during the holiday season."

More information: The Lock n' LoL is available for free download on the App Store and Google Play: [itunes.apple.com/lc/app/lock-n ...
ol/id1030287673?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/lc/app/lock-n-lol/id1030287673?mt=8)

Provided by The Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST)

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