

Worrying about smart phone web-dependence anxiety

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The more we rely on our smart phones being connected to the Internet, the greater the anxiety we feel if we lose that connection when travelling, according to new research published in the *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology*.

Hui-Jen Yang and Yun-Long Lay of the National Chin-Yi University of Technology, in Taichung, Taiwan, explain that as smart phone prevalence has grown, people have come to rely more and more on what these devices allow us to do when travelling. That applies whether we are confirming hotel and travel arrangements, hiring a car, mapping our way around our destination, keep in touch with friends and colleagues back home, or sharing photos and videos via [social media](#).

The team suggests, based on their research, that young people and the better educated, or simply the more information literate, tend to have a greater "smart phone web-dependence". Moreover, this seems to translate into greater "smart phone web-dependence [anxiety](#)" when travelling and not having access to reliable and fast Internet access.

Attachment theory proposes that a person or a group of people have the psychological tendency to gain safety by seeking closeness to another person. They feel safe when the other person is present but anxious when the person is absent, for instance, children and parents alike become anxious when they lose sight of each other in a crowded place. The new study suggests that [separation anxiety](#) is just as real for people and their [smart phones](#), although the problem is obviously a one-sided issue.

The team concludes that their study has implications for understanding the psychology of our interaction with information and communications technology, something that will likely become increasingly important. It also points to a need for providers to help "treat" their users' dependency and anxiety by ensuring ubiquitous, fast and low-cost access to services.

More information: Yang, H-J. and Lay, Y-L. (2016) 'Factors affecting smart phone web-dependence anxiety for the travellers', *Int. J. Information and Communication Technology*, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp.389-404.

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