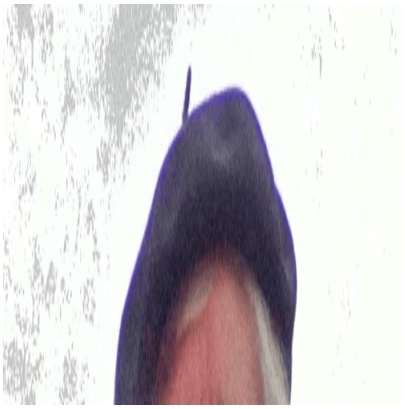


Digital mood modifiers

Description

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Apparently botox helps you feel better. Iâ??m researching mood, so Iâ??ve skimmed through a recent book called *The Face of Emotion: How Botox Affects Our Moods and Relationships,* in which the author says, â??If you smile broadly, at that moment you *will* feel happier. You need your smile to help you â??feelâ?? the emotion.â?•



Conversely, frowning has a negative effect on how you see the world around you. So using botox, which apparently prevents you from scowling, can make you feel good, which is ultimately good for your health.

This reminds me of an experiment I read about in which human participants were required to slouch for several minutes prior to solving certain puzzles. It turned out that slouchers were then less likely to persevere with the puzzles. Participants required to sit with chests raised and heads up seemed more

motivated to complete the puzzles, even though sitting up straight for long periods of time induces fatigue. So the comportment of the body has some influence on motivation, competence, mood and wellbeing.

So perhaps smartphones, tablet computers and other digital devices have an effect on our moods by virtue of the facial expressions and postures they require us to adopt when we are using them. Sitting for long periods of time, concentrating and with your head down, glowering at an iPhone or Kindle screen may put you in a bad mood, whatever you are looking at.

Mood organs

I think thereâ??s a lot of interest in the mood effects of digital devices. In the science fiction novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Philip K. Dick introduces the idea of a â??mood organ,â• from which the user can select â??a creative and fresh attitudeâ• towards their job, or even â??ecstatic sexual bliss.â• Itâ??s not clear how the device would work.

Outside of science fiction, there exist ordinary mood modifiers such as television sets, radios, personal stereos, game consoles, and home entertainment centres, and of course smartphone and tablet computer that deliver similar content while on the move.

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There are other devices that claim to affect mood, e.g. those that monitor the moods of their users through specialized journal and questionnaire monitoring protocols, such as daily self-reporting on mood. There are apps that turn smartphones into mood organs. Some apps provide logs for entering mood information according to a scale: mood intensity, sleep quality, the amount of exercise, medication, conflicts encountered, and so on. The information is then monitored by a clinician. A range of such apps exists for people with bipolar disorder, such as Bipolar Bear, Mood Tracker, and Optimism .

Thereâ??s also a mood ring bracelet, e-cigarettes and various other specialised devices that claim to affect mood. See Wired and DigitalTrends.

So digital devices are bound to affect the mood you are in. Look past the content of your iPad and check out your reflection. If you are stooped and frowning then try pushing back your shoulders and affecting a grin. It might just change your mood for the better â?¦ or at least ensure that others give you a wide birth.

Iâ??m interested to hear of other ways that digital devices affect the mood you are in, whether sensible or just as far fetched.



References

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- Riskind, John H., and Carolyn C. Gotay. 1982. Physical posture: Could it have regulatory or feedback effects on motivation and emotion? *Motivation and Emotion*, (6) 3, 273-298.

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Notes

Also see Mood machines, Are you aware of your brain, and Emotion.

Category

1. Body

Tags

1. body
2. emotion
3. expression
4. media
5. mood

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