



LISTEN Major League Soccer smashed attendance records this year
Yahoo Finance's Dan Roberts discusses MLS with commissioner Don Garber

YAHOO! FINANCE PODCAST

CUHK Business School Research Reveals Touch Screens Lead Consumers to Choose Unhealthy Food

Marketwired October 25, 2017



HONG KONG, CHINA--(Marketwired - Oct 24, 2017) - This article was first published in the China Business Knowledge (CBK) website by CUHK Business School: <https://goo.gl/eTgbeS>. There is no doubt the Internet has changed our way of living. We can now do everything online: reading the news, shopping for the latest fashion, purchasing a movie ticket or the plane ticket for our next trip, and ordering our meals while sitting in our office or home. In fact, many fast food chains such as McDonald's, Pizza Hut and KFC enable customers to order food online through their websites or mobile apps. Likewise, in many restaurants, iPads are offered to customers who can select their food and drinks with a touch on the digital menu.

While we are enjoying the convenience brought by technology, have we thought about how the digital world has really changed our lives, and perhaps also our choices?

The findings of the research titled "Computer Interfaces and the Direct-Touch Effect: Can iPads Increase the Choice of Hedonic Food?" at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Business School have offered some interesting insights to the question.

Conducted by Associate Professors [Hao Shen](#) and [Meng Zhang](#), both from CUHK Business School's Department of Marketing, with their collaborator Prof. Aradhna Krishna, Dwight F. Benton Professor of Marketing from University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, the study observed the increasing use of technology such as customized mobile apps in the domain of food choice, and asked the question: What effect do these digital devices have on customers' choice of food?

The Studies

In five laboratories studies with various groups of undergraduate students in two universities in Hong Kong, the researchers tested whether customers using different computer interfaces with and without a touchscreen would affect their choices of food. In other words, will there be any difference in their choices when they browse a pictorial menu online and select the food by touching the picture on the screen or by clicking the mouse on the desktop?

In the first study, students were asked to choose from a pair of products online, one hedonic (a piece of cheesecake) and one utilitarian (a bowl of green salad). These two choices were pretested to be affectively superior (i.e., enjoyable and tempting) and cognitively superior (i.e., better for health). The group was divided into two with some participants using an iPad (i.e., touch), while others using a desktop with a mouse (i.e. non-touch).

To test whether the distance of choice buttons would affect their selections, another study asked participants to choose between a cup of hot chocolate and a cup of tea. But this time, the choice buttons were either next to or distant from the food items.

To test whether non-direct touch would make a difference, another study offered some participants a stylus to choose their food on the iPad, while others were using their fingers directly to touch on the iPad. Another group was using a desktop with a mouse. The choices this time were between a food item (a bowl of ice cream) and a non-food item (a USB flash drive).

Direct-Touch and Mental Interaction

All studies supported the researchers' hypothesis -- touching the screen facilitates the mental interaction with the product and makes consumers choose hedonic over utilitarian food items, a phenomenon which the researchers called the 'Direct-Touch' effect.

In the study when participants were using a stylus to touch the screen, the 'Direct-Touch' effect did not happen. In other words, using a stylus is the same as using a mouse to click on the screen.

"When consumers use an iPad and select the food by touching the pictures, they tend to select hedonic food over utilitarian food," says Prof. Shen. "They would be more likely to choose a cheesecake rather than a bowl of salad," he adds.

So what does touching the screen do to our brain?

"The Direct-Touch effect is similar to our natural reaction towards hedonic food -- the spontaneous urge to grab it. When we touch the picture of cheesecake on the iPad menu, it is like reaching out to grab the cheesecake in real life. Such an urge, however, is less strong for utilitarian food (e.g. a bowl of green salad)," explains Prof. Zhang.

[Story Continues](#)

Quote Lookup

Recently Viewed >

Your list is empty.

What to Read Next



Pizza Hut counters Papa John's claim of NFL hurting pizza sales
Yahoo Finance



Better Than Bitcoin
Banyan Hill Sponsored



How your tax bracket may change under Trump's new tax plan, in one chart
Business Insider

Twitter takes responsibility for Trump Twitter outage
Associated Press

Yum profit buoyed by strength at KFC, shares jump
Reuters

Mortgage CDs Savings Auto Loans

Lender	APR	Rate	Cost and Fees	Contact
Optimum First Mortgage	3.554%	3.375% at 1.100 pts Thu Nov 2	Est payment: \$1,282 Lender fees: \$3,196 State Lic # 01525044 NMLS # 240415	Next (877) 804-6329
Sebonic Financial	3.560%	3.375% at 1.100 pts Thu Nov 2	Est payment: \$1,282 Lender fees: \$3,420 State Lic # 603K498 NMLS # 66247 Cardinal Financial	Next (877) 408-7855
Optimum First Mortgage	3.614%	3.500% at 0.100 pts Thu Nov 2	Est payment: \$1,302 Lender fees: \$3,773 State Lic # 01525044 NMLS # 240415	Next (877) 804-6329

Product: 30 Year Fixed Refi, All Points
Loan Amount: \$290,000
Search Criteria: 20% down, 740+ credit score



Start the conversation

[Sign in to post a message.](#)

Never Pay For Cable Or Subscriptions Again!
This Device Allows You To Watch Anything For Free!! [read more >>>](#)

MasterDeal
服務至穩陣
專業團隊為您解決任何財務需要

10大服務範圍

- 免費諮詢
- 專業按揭
- 工商物業投資
- 生意
- 中小企貸款
- 房屋轉手計劃 (區區/樓宇/業主換)
- 物業管理 (PM)
- 裝修工程 (COP)
- 保險服務

查詢熱線 **8199 8866**
www.masterdeal.com.hk

MasterDeal
服務至穩陣
專業團隊為您解決任何財務需要

10大服務範圍

- 免費諮詢
- 專業按揭
- 工商物業投資
- 生意
- 中小企貸款
- 房屋轉手計劃 (區區/樓宇/業主換)
- 物業管理 (PM)
- 裝修工程 (COP)
- 保險服務

查詢熱線 **8199 8866**
www.masterdeal.com.hk