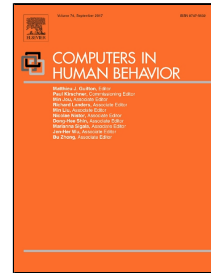


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**A mere holding effect:
Haptic influences on impression formation through mobile dating apps**

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Abstract: Tandem advances in mobile technologies and social networks have given rise to app-initiated romantic relationships. Little is understood, however, about the role of the device in this initiation. This experimental study explored the impact of “mere holding” of mobile devices on impressions formed when consuming dating app content. Mere holding (compared to no-touch viewing) was associated with reductions attraction, ascribed personhood, and psychological ownership. Findings suggest that holding may be experienced as a false realization of potential relationships through physical engagement of devices; theoretically, this realization may be understood as an inversion of interpersonal haptic nonverbals, as holding is less about interpersonal intimacy and more about heuristic engagement with the other as an object.

Keywords: mobile phones, online dating, romantic relationships, haptics, attraction, personhood

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