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Smartphone Cultures

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Smartphone Cultures explores a range of emerging issues on the production and regulation of mobile technology and mobile apps and the way in which they have been incorporated into everyday social practice. While a large body of sociological literature already had previously been written on the separate fields of mobile phone and Internet use, in many ways the advent of the smartphone combined these two initially disparate technologies. Although the smartphone is still in essence a telephone, it also provides users with universal access to the Internet and other media (TV, radio, YouTube, etc.). In the words of the editors, Jane Vincent and Leslie Haddon, "no one volume can exhaustively cover a device that has such diverse potential, both in what it can do or support and by virtue of that, how it can be represented and evaluated. However, this book can and does aim to capture the multifaceted nature of the smartphone phenomenon, the different ways it can be analysed, how it can be framed, and identifies research questions for the future"

Over the twelve chapters, the contributors analyse different aspects of smartphone use and the ways in which the devices are employed in personal and family life. The book is divided into five theme-based sections: Infrastructure and applications; Understanding family consumption; Developing domestication through empirical studies; Managing sociability and regulating the smartphone; and Conclusions. Smartphone Cultures is edited by two researchers with extensive experience in the social practices of information and communication technology users, particularly the experiences of children and young adults with mobile communication (smartphones, tablets, etc). Both editors lecture at the Department of Media and Communication of the London School of Economics and Political Science. Jane Vincent has been a member of several EU COST Actions since 2004, and Leslie Haddon was involved in coordinating the international EU Kids Online project and took part in the Net Children Go Mobile project. The authors of Chapters 1, 4, 6, 9 and 10 are also members of the group EU Kids Online founded by the European Union (DG Information Society) through the Safer Internet Programme (SI-2010-T-4201001). Together with Sofia Vandoninck, Marije Nouwen and Bieke Zaman, these same authors also participated in the Net Children Go Mobile project. Ever greater numbers of people are using digital media to download music, view videos, get information, do homework assignments (in the case of schoolchildren), participate in social media and communicate. Although this situation opens up a whole new world of opportunities, it is not free from difficulty and danger. The most serious problems arise from the fact that the new mobile technology has made parental control much more difficult, affording children autonomy of usage. This situation is further compounded by issues relating to the children's right to privacy.

Another problem is that of "addiction". Although the World Health Organisation does not recognise addiction to mobile phones and/or the Internet as a clinical condition, many individuals already display the symptoms common to other forms of addiction — in other words, they are "hooked". At the same time, it is important not to confuse frequent and even abusive use of the mobile phone with problematic use. The distinction between the two depends on the degree to which the smartphone interferes with the person's everyday life. In his *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked* (2017; Penguin Press, New York), Adam Alter offers four identifiers of smartphone abuse: (1) if it compromises our personal relationships (2) if it costs more than anticipated (3) if it results in loss of attention, exercise or physical activity (4) and psychologically, if it changes the way we cope with boredom.

This book is a collaboration between authors from a large number of universities in twelve countries (the UK, the US, Australia, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Brazil and Mexico). Together, they address issues related to the mobile communications market, now that the apps market has matured. From an industry perspective, like the Walkman in its day, smartphones and tablets have been seen or represented as "disruptive technologies". They offer alternative interfaces for human/machine interaction that go

beyond the previous limits on media practice, delivering contents and communication by new means. From the perspective of the social researcher, the very multi-functionality of smartphones, partly enabled by some very diverse apps, has led to a certain fragmentation in the research, separating the experiences of users from what they do or access with their smartphones, or the different and increasing social problems related to their use. This book brings together a variety of research to reflect a plurality of smartphone usage cultures, which together help the reader understand the place of the smartphone in contemporary life.

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