

The Keep-In-Touch Phone

A Persuasive Telephone for Maintaining Relationships

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The **Keep-In-Touch Phone** is a mobile telephone that delivers periodic reminders to encourage users to keep in touch with friends and family. It is designed to address the problem of maintaining relationships despite **increasingly busy lives**.

The mobile phone's screen is ideal for delivering **short prompts with few choices** to the user. Rapid assessment and dismissal of dialogs is important to **prevent inconveniencing the user**.

The mobile telephone is already associated with social contact; we take advantage of this association and extend it to include **proactive social maintenance** through the art and science of persuasion.

Persuasive Dialogs In Action

The Random Reminder and Commitment Dialogs

- ① Randomly-timed **reminder dialogs** invite users to call someone they have not spoken to in some time. In cases where the other party initiated the last call, the user is invited to **reciprocate** by calling the other party (bottom).

You last spoke with
Scott
2 months ago

Would you like to call now?

Yes, call now
No, do not call
Later...

Scott
last called you at
11:32 am Monday
Return the call now?

Yes, call now
No, do not call
Later...

The user has three options: call ("Yes, call now"; see 3), refuse ("No, do not call") or postpone ("Later"; see 2). If ignored, reminder dialogs are automatically dismissed in 30 seconds.

- ② If the user chooses to postpone (see 1), a **commitment dialog** is presented. It is called a commitment dialog because it invites the user to commit to making a call in the future.

I plan to talk with
Scott
At this time:

6:00 am Today
I plan to call
Do not plan.

The user can choose some time in the next seven days to schedule a reminder to call the other person. When that time arrives, a **commitment reminder dialog** is displayed (see 4).

Persuasive Strategies

Persuasive computing¹ explores how computers can evoke **positive behavior change**.

We employ the principles of **reciprocation** and **commitment**² to help people "keep in touch."

- **Reciprocation:** People tend to give back when given to.
- **Commitment:** People strive for consistency in their beliefs and intentions.

Dialog Design

The Keep-in-Touch Phone's dialogs are designed according to the following principles in order to be assessed and dismissed rapidly:

- **Similarity of Dialogs** — All reminder dialogs share the same three options. All commitment dialogs have the same two options, plus a time choice.
- **Salience of Key Information** — The name is the most important piece of information; as such, it is presented on a line by itself, for rapid identification.
- **Personal Language** — First-person options like "I plan to call" emphasize that a commitment is being made.
- **Personally Meaningful Timeframes** — Times like "next Monday" and "two months ago" provide more personal frames of reference on which to base decision-making.

The Post-Commitment and Commitment Reminder Dialogs

- ③ When the user makes a phone call, whether unprompted or as the result of a reminder (see 1), the call is concluded with a **post-commitment dialog**. The user is asked to choose an ideal time to talk with this person again. The user has the option of choosing a time or not. This time can be any number of minutes, hours, days, weeks or months. When that time arrives, the user is reminded again (see 4).

Finished talking with
Scott
When you you like to talk next?

1 hours
I plan to call
Do not plan.

- ④ The user can commit to a call in the future with either a **commitment** or **post-commitment dialog** (see 2, 3). When that time arrives, the user is notified and reminded of the previous commitment with a **commitment reminder dialog**. Like other **reminder dialogs** (see 1), the user can call, ignore or postpone.

At 10:06 pm today you decided to call
Scott
At this time.
Would you like to call now?

Yes, call now
No, do not call
Later...

¹Fogg, B.J. *Persuasive Technology: Using Computers to Change What We Think And Do*. Morgan Kaufman Publishers. 2003.

²Cialdini, R. *Influence: Science and Practice*. 4th ed. Allyn and Bacon. 2001.