The Effects of Curiosity-Evoking Events on Activity Enjoyment

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## The Effects of Curiosity-Evoking Events on Activity Enjoyment Abstract

Whereas prior literature has studied the positive effects of curiosity evoking events that are integral to focal activities, we explore whether and how a curiosity-evoking event that is incidental to a focal activity induces negative outcomes for enjoyment. Four experiments and one field study demonstrate that curiosity about an event that is incidental to an activity in which individuals are engaged significantly affects enjoyment of a concurrent activity. The reason why is that curiosity diverts attention away from the concurrent activity and focuses attention on the curiosity-evoking event. Thus, curiosity regarding an incidental event *decreases* enjoyment of a positive focal activity, but *increases* enjoyment of a negative focal activity.

*Keywords:* curiosity, activity enjoyment, distraction, attention, interest, cell phones, mobile devices