

Another reason to silence your notifications, they could alter your memory

We live in a world of countless tabs, and constant push notifications. There always seems to be something tempting us into distraction.

As it turns out, all this distraction may come at a massive cost — not just to our *sanity*, but to our view of the world and reality. If something distracts you, even if you try to ignore it, it can leave an impact on your memory that you don't even realize is there.

sanity 清醒; 明智

The findings come courtesy of new research at Ohio State University. Participants were given a simple-sounding task. Look at a screen of four colored squares. One will be outlined in white — pay attention to that one. After these squares flash on the screen, pick the color that you remember from a color wheel.

Most of the time, they still recalled the color they were supposed to. But about 20% to 30% of the time, they actually reported the distractor color as the correct one. “They thought it was the right color, reported with just as much confidence as the correct color,” says Julie Golomb, senior author on the paper. And she knows that because subjects were asked to rank confidence of their answer.

She saw results where people mixed up information, confusing what they were supposed to be remembering with what distracted them.

We've long known balancing too many tasks can slow down our thinking. But the fact that it can literally recolor our memories should give us pause, because there's not a fundamental difference between colored squares and real versus fake news headlines on Facebook.