

It is as if you were on your phone (pippinbarr.com)

741 points by bookofjoe 1 day ago | hide | past | favorite | 104 comments

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pmarreck 23 hours ago | next [-]

From the same creator (so funny):

<https://pippinbarr.com/itisasifyouweremakinglove/>

[reply](#)

derangedHorse 12 hours ago | parent | next [-]

That was hilarious. I wasn't expecting to play it all the way through at first.

[reply](#)

tjbiddle 1 hour ago | root | parent | next [-]

I wasn't going to play all the way through - but felt like I'd be a tease if I just stopped

[reply](#)

halkony 21 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

This is excellent I loved this so much. I cant stop laughing.

[reply](#)

testplzignore 14 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

I feel like I played this wrong, but it eventually let me win anyways.

[reply](#)

ciconia 21 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Hilarious!

[reply](#)

logikblok 23 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Related by the same creator <https://pippinbarr.com/itisasifyouweredoingwork/>

More accessible on desktop.

[reply](#)

ricardobeat 17 hours ago | parent | next [-]

This is perfect. Especially the fact that 1) it never ends, and 2) you eventually figure out that the best way to get a promotion is not to be faster or more efficient but the exact opposite - delay ending the current task, and keep making it larger, until the next one comes along. Beautiful.

[reply](#)

wkat4242 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

This sounds like something that needs to be automated with AI ;)

[reply](#)

irjustin 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

haha hilarious, it does end though when you become "CTO". You can read the code and it takes a LONG time to get there by "typing emails" or you can run ``givePromotion()`` or update the variables holding that.

[reply](#)

yard2010 20 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

The sounds made me feel like I live 1998 again. Surreal.

[reply](#)

nickdothutton 20 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

The stuff of nightmares.

[reply](#)

multjoy 23 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Thanks, I hate this

[reply](#)

s1artibartfast 17 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Just like a normal day in the office

[reply](#)

getnormality 23 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Wow, I hated this experience within seconds. So I think it achieved its artistic aims.

[reply](#)

because\_789 21 hours ago | parent | next [-]

Heh, I loved it within seconds. So relaxing while also so darkly funny. Everyone is a bit different I guess. I sent it to some of my art-biz friends.

[reply](#)

kobalsky 15 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

> So relaxing while also so darkly funny

it has that early internet screamer vibes, I was a bundle of nerves all the time.

[reply](#)

svennidid 6 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Thanks! I needed this. My youngest son pointed out to me the other day while waiting in a doctors reception that I was the only adult not on my phone. When I looked around me, everyone was on their phone except for the occasional uncomfortable look they gave me every now and again. Now I can be on my phone without exhausting myself.

[reply](#)

flanbiscuit 20 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Love this. Thank you. I'm eating lunch at the moment, by myself, in a local casual establishment, so of course I pulled out my phone and the first thing I looked at was HN and this was the top post. I started playing and couldn't help smiling. Felt like I was watching a robot mimicking me as it was studying human behavior.

It also got me thinking about what I would do before smart phones. During the dumb phone era I was still pulling out my phone to text a lot so wasn't too different, but I also read books a lot more back then

[reply](#)

jagged-chisel 16 hours ago | parent | next [-]

Knowing I would be out alone for a meal, I would have carried reading material- book, magazine, paper articles. Maybe a notebook to scribble notes.

Now, I have an internet of reading material via my phone. Or my tablet.

My family and I are close. We talk lots and often and tend to have enough context when a sentence or two needs speaking. We go out together, we chat a bit at the start of a meal, and we don't need to speak much afterwards. We don't get awkward, we can be quiet. But my brain continues - write a note, surface-level research on an idea ... so we each look at a device for a few minutes. My daughter is keeping in touch with her significant other, my wife is likely gaming or maybe window shopping. If anyone speaks up, we pull away from the devices to talk.

I'm personally not addicted to the device itself. But I'm like Johnny 5 - my intellectual curiosity is difficult to satiate. The readily available access to "input" is what keeps me plugged in.

Back on topic: these art projects, or statements, or whatever that are designed to bring attention to our attention to our phones ... interesting, fun, perhaps important. But I'm not a fan of the social nostalgia that sometimes appears in the comments. I never did just interact with strangers. Never had a meaningful conversation with a random person. I would have had my face in a book.

In 2025, my phone is my book.

[reply](#)

nicbou 7 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

I went on a trip without a smartphone, as an experiment. You get used to the lack of entertainment. On the second day I got a book and a notebook. I talked to people more, paid more attention to my surroundings. It was a fun time.

[reply](#)

thierrydamiba 20 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Agreed. This is amazing. Really awesome aha moment when you realize what's going on.

I'm going to start reading physical books again.

Thank you.

[reply](#)

jajko 4 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

There was even an era before dumb phones :) Some people buried their heads in newspaper or books, some looked and watched the world go by. I still do it, phone is really last resort since I strongly believe its slowly making me more addicted to it (more like my brain is doing it on its own).

Which is pathetic IMHO, I don't want to be tied to gizmo who is spying on me to sell me more tailored adverts, I want to have it as a servant and nothing more and certainly not reverse.

There is an art in enjoying a situation while doing absolutely nothing, just looking around at the world and people. One shouldn't be uncomfortable when left with oneself alone for a while. This does a lot with stress management and cleaning up cluttered mind.

[reply](#)

Willingham 23 hours ago | prev | next [-]

I love that it tells me when to scratch my ear. I am always confused about when I should be doing that. 11/10

[reply](#)

mattgreenrocks 22 hours ago | parent | next [-]

Is that the phone analog of your nose suddenly feeling itchy when playing music?

[reply](#)

knowknow 23 hours ago | prev | next [-]

The worst part about this is that I immediately thought that it would be useful in awkward transitory moments. Everybody pulls out their phone on the bus, so you could fit in pretty well with this instead of staring outside.

[reply](#)

teamspirit 21 hours ago | parent | next [-]

What's wrong with looking outside? I'm at the point where I treat my phone like it's radioactive, actively trying to limit each encounter with it. I think we should all be staring out the window more often.

[reply](#)

knowknow 21 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

The way the buses are laid out in my city is that the seats are directly facing each other. So staring outside could make it seem like your staring at people if it's too crowded. So it's more comfortable to pretend to use your phone.

[reply](#)

wkat4242 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

People have a pretty good sense of whether you're staring at them or something just beside or behind them. Not really from the angle of your eyes but the way you react (or not) when the other person looks back.

I wouldn't worry about that so much. And I worry about a lot of social things :)

[reply](#)

alwa 21 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

That's kind of the weird trap, isn't it? That it *feels* like there's normative social pressure to do your phone too, right at the moment that everyone who would notice you doing or not doing so has turned their attention elsewhere?

[reply](#)

wruza 15 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

You can simply scroll and tap a black locked screen. No one's going to ask anyway.

[reply](#)

inopinatus 18 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

One of my hobbies when visiting London is smiling whilst taking the Tube somewhere. Oftentimes I am the only person in the carriage not wearing a glum or flat expression.

[reply](#)

hkpack 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Ha ha, I remember I was beaten in USSR when I was a teenager and smiled on a bus without a reason for some time (was daydreaming about some random things).

Was approached with "why are you fucking laughing?"

[reply](#)

nomman-land 21 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Just yell instead.

[reply](#)

jiveturkey 19 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

What's so awkward about that?

Do you also tip just because there's a line behind you and the self-service cashier tells you the machine "is going to ask you a question"?

[reply](#)

dnzm 23 hours ago | prev | next [-]

"Swipe right" doesn't do anything for me (Fennec on Android).

[reply](#)

furyofantares 23 hours ago | parent | next [-]

You press Play Online to play. Swipe Right is just a (confusing) image on the page.

[reply](#)

ddq 23 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Swiping right on that image should definitely start the game.

[reply](#)

olddustytrail 23 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Actually, having a simple and straightforward instruction that you need to ignore and do something totally different instead... kind of sums up the modern computer UI.

[reply](#)

stavros 21 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

For me, it just drags the image elsewhere.

[reply](#)

furyofantares 21 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Yes, by "should" they mean "the site author should have made it work that way."

[reply](#)

stavros 21 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Ahh, I see.

[reply](#)

jeffhuys 16 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Goes to show; you can check every box and try so hard, but still fail and lose lots of people on screen 1.

[reply](#)

wruza 15 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

The trick is to not have screen 1.

[reply](#)

cafeinix 14 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

In the end, it doesn't even matter.

[reply](#)

AznHisoka 18 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

I tried swiping right 10 times like an idiot, thinking I didn't swipe fast enough or something

[reply](#)

fluidcruft 17 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I tried swiping a bunch, figured it must not work in Firefox for Android, tried in Chrome only to find out it didn't swipe there, either.

[reply](#)

BolexNOLA 23 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Same. Firefox iOS

[reply](#)

throawayonthe 23 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

that's a screenshot, you have to click on the link to play

[reply](#)

ludicrousdispla 18 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

is this supposed to work on desktop?

[reply](#)

s1artibartfast 18 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Yes, this is a multiplatform game/art experience.

[reply](#)

Wowfunhappy 18 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Technically yes but absolutely not.

[reply](#)

bmcahren 21 hours ago | prev | next [-]

This is actually perfect for AI robots to blend in waiting in public. Just like bartenders polishing glasses, you can't have them just staring making people uncomfortable.

[reply](#)

autoexec 13 hours ago | parent | next [-]

You can bet that it won't matter if the robot is looking at you, it'll be capturing audio/video and collecting huge amounts of sensor data about its surroundings at all times. A robot looking at a phone would be redundant. Maybe the publishing lobby could push to get them to read physical books instead.

[reply](#)

scottmcdot 2 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Whenever I'm waiting for the bus or waiting for anything, I love to people watch (while not making anyone uncomfortable). People are so interesting!

[reply](#)

nakedneuron 2 hours ago | parent | next [-]

Whenever I spot people watchers , I secretly observe them (not to make them suspicious or feel uncomfortable). They are the most interesting species!

[reply](#)

thinkingemote 23 hours ago | prev | next [-]

It is good to be able to catch yourself or see yourself from another perspective. I liked it.

I wonder about the dopamine effect, could it be made even more boring?

[reply](#)

arjonagelhout 20 hours ago | prev | next [-]

I like this concept! Although it doesn't accurately reflect how I normally use my phone.

Maybe monitoring someone using e.g. some social media app and recording all taps and swipes might make it more realistic :)

Maybe also some directions like "now smile" or "now look awkwardly at someone in your environment like you're hiding something".

[reply](#)

seabass-labrax 16 hours ago | parent | next [-]

Did the creator of the site just update it? Because it definitely has instructions like that now: it told me to narrow my eyes and grimace!

[reply](#)

arjonagelhout 13 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Ah it might be that I didn't try long enough!

It does appear the instructions are randomized, so I might have been unlucky.

[reply](#)

furyofantares 23 hours ago | prev | next [-]

You tricked me into meditating. Thanks, I love it.

[reply](#)

amarant 22 hours ago | parent | next [-]

I also found this weirdly meditative!

Almost made me worry: how much of a phone addict am I when I find *this* meditative?

[reply](#)

larodi 21 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Being non-present on a screen reminds of meditation but is more akin to dissociation and is really dreaming awake. It takes you away but you dream a weird dream which is not yours .

[reply](#)

furyofantares 16 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Well, I used the opportunity to be present. I was being a bit facetious about being tricked into it; it's a state I like to enter instead of being on a screen to begin with.

[reply](#)

praptak 21 hours ago | prev | next [-]

We need this on a device which is *not* a phone. It could be a simple mechanical device which presents the instructions on a slowly scrolling paper tape.

[reply](#)

simojjo 21 hours ago | prev | next [-]

It's incredible how pointless it seems when there's no wall of content in front of us. Great commentary.

[reply](#)

rullelito 2 hours ago | prev | next [-]

This doesn't work on my phone. What is it?

[reply](#)

DecentShoes 18 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Make this 10x faster, add music, and you have Elite Beat Agents, genuinely one of the best games on the DS.

[reply](#)

Lucasoato 18 hours ago | parent | next [-]

Elite Beat Agents changed my life and how I perceive music. What an amazing game. If you didn't cry when doing the You're the Inspiration level, you have no soul.

[reply](#)

DecentShoes 16 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Yeah. I was so sad they nobody ever made a bigger better version for the WiiU.

Wish I could emulate it on my phone with S-Pen too but audio latency killed it last time I checked.

I have been meaning to get a drawing tablet and try Osu, and I will, but the songs in it are unknown Japanese anime stuff and don't appeal to me so it's not quite the same.

[reply](#)

nakedneuron 7 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Author could add 'close your eyes' at some point.

Instant meditation app.

[reply](#)

johnhamlin 20 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Love this. It's the Zen TV Experiment for the 21st Century. <https://adam.nz/zen-tv-experiment>

[reply](#)

raldi 19 hours ago | prev | next [-]

I'm getting a novel optical illusion with the spinning line in the box that shows up near the beginning: Whichever end I'm looking at looks normal, but the other end looks like a split hair, or an open pair of chopsticks. Like what's spinning isn't actually a "/" but actually a very narrow "V" .. only, if I try to look at the split part of the V, that part closes up and the opposite end splits.

Is anyone else getting that?

[reply](#)

atlintots 19 hours ago | prev | next [-]

This is perfect for when I'm awkwardly walking past the huzz and need to seem like I'm busy on my phone.

[reply](#)

aio2 18 hours ago | parent | next [-]

never fail to impress the huzz

[reply](#)

TZubiri 19 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Love it, very creative counterattack on the attention wars.

I remember decades ago, first phones came out, and I was at a party and I had not much to do, so I took out my phone and pretended to send messages with someone. It felt weird, but now it would be such a "natural" thing to do when bored.

[reply](#)

noman-land 21 hours ago | prev | next [-]

I hated this. Thank you.

[reply](#)

inopinatus 18 hours ago | prev | next [-]

This was not a realistic simulation of my usage. My primary glassface activity is reading books. So it should be a continuous slow scroll with infrequent access of a burger menu. Fortunately I can simulate this by reading a book.

[reply](#)

deweywsu 19 hours ago | prev | next [-]

I think it's sad that we've created a society that feels social pressure to stare at a screen when they find themselves somewhere without something to say to someone else. This explains why social skills are on the decline.

[reply](#)

wkat4242 9 hours ago | parent | next [-]

It's always been there. Before the phone we had the walkman. Before that the newspaper. There's always something to indicate 'do not disturb'.

When I'm having a busy day I don't always feel like talking to randoms. I live in a city, not a village and I'll never know everyone.

[reply](#)

Sir\_Twist 18 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Is it a social pressure to stare at a screen or to just pretend to be occupied with something else? Would reading a few pages of a book, for instance, satisfy this social pressure? I do agree more generally that smartphones are borderline essential for many social expectations, though. I personally find smartphones really distracting, being a device that allows for instant information at merely the hint of boredom, and if they were less socially enforced I probably wouldn't have one.

[reply](#)

Ylpertnodi 5 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I'm reading hn - your comment - at the doctors. I'm early, she's gonna be, of course, slightly delayed = free hn time, for me.

[reply](#)

akpa1 17 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Ohhhh, this felt so familiar. Listening to music while mindlessly scrolling and waiting for... something. Yikes. I really don't think I like technology any more.

[reply](#)

dbtc 20 hours ago | prev | next [-]

"Jiggle one leg". This is hilarious and very well done.

[reply](#)

anotheryou 5 hours ago | prev | next [-]

oh you have to click the title and the swipe thing is an image...

that took me.. long

[reply](#)

dailykoder 15 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Ok good, but I don't browse the web on my fone. Thank you for posting this

[reply](#)

EugeneOZ 16 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Repetitive and boring.

[reply](#)

Handler9246 2 hours ago | parent | next [-]

That's the point lol

[reply](#)

personjerry 18 hours ago | prev | next [-]

> Follow the prompts and be free.

Which is it?

[reply](#)

johnea 19 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Why are so many people suffering mental illness?

It's not funny, it's stupid, and sad.

If you find that "you're feeling intense pressure to be on your phone", throw it in the ocean!

[reply](#)

deadbabe 17 hours ago | parent | next [-]

The problem is you can't just tell people throw their phone away. You have to tell them what to do instead.

Otherwise? They'll just open their phone again and scroll Reddit or Hackernews.

[reply](#)

boxedemp 20 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Found that painful, only got a 3 in

Interesting

[reply](#)

keybored 18 hours ago | prev | next [-]

How irreverent and at the same time non-committal. Just right. Instant hit.

Become an instant hit in your Internet subculture with this one weird trick.

[reply](#)

bongodongobob 19 hours ago | prev | next [-]

I want to get caught using this next time I'm at lunch.

[reply](#)

boomskats 14 hours ago | prev | next [-]

Irrationally disappointed that I can't install this as a PWA.

[reply](#)

wkat4242 9 hours ago | parent | next [-]

It won't need much. Just a manifest really.

[reply](#)

computerdork 21 hours ago | prev | next [-]

hee-larious:)

[reply](#)

frostyel 18 hours ago | prev | next [-]



A great addition to this would be if everything was synched from a central server. 20 commuters pressing their toes down and letting out a sigh at the same time. It would be like a multiplayer protest against attention-grabbing phones. Everybody playing the game would know if someone else was playing the game, but no one else. It may defeat the original purpose of the game to blend in, but I think it could be pretty fun to observe something like that.

[reply](#)

seabass-labrax 16 hours ago | parent | next [-]

No idea why this was downvoted; I love your idea. After all, what are social activities but doing things, and sometimes pointless things, together?

[reply](#)

kindeyoo wee 19 hours ago | prev | next [-]

do people not get tired of the ooo phones bad trope?

[reply](#)

praptak 5 hours ago | parent | next [-]

Most of culture is (hopefully) new takes on topics which are much older than smartphones. "The topic is old" is not a sufficient condition to consider something tired/cliche/old.

I'd say this one is different enough to be considered at least mildly interesting, even if you take into account that the genre "purposefully absurd pastiche of attention-stealing tech" is not new.

[reply](#)

256\_ 4 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Welcome to Hacker News.

[reply](#)

themusicgod1 15 hours ago | prev [-]

yet another github project. STOP USING GITHUB

[reply](#)

nerdile 11 hours ago | parent [-]

why?

[reply](#)

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