

“Like a person that’s very close to me” – Building and retention of benevolence-based trust in smart technology

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Abstract

We investigate the formation and retention of benevolence-based consumer trust in smart technology. Extending on the conceptualizations of interpersonal trust and benevolence-based trust, we conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with users of smart speakers (n=9). Subsequent structural content analysis and interpretation of findings suggest that building and retention of trust in smart speakers can be understood as a multi-stage process, in which the impact of perceived benevolence increases with prolonged use. It is in these later stages of trust formation that consumers personify the smart speaker by the fictive character they attribute to its voice interface. Implications for marketing are derived.

Keywords: *smart technology; trust; benevolence*

Track: Consumer Behaviour