



Blast Theory's Karen app is a life coach with a (creepy) difference

DIANE SHIPLEY / OCTOBER 13, 2014 / FUN

If you can't wait for the day when Spike Jonze's ['Her'](#) becomes a reality (hey, who doesn't love high-waisted pants and forming attachments to artificial intelligence?) or you just want to see how insidious data mining can be, this futuristic app is for you.

Called Karen, it's a life-coaching app, but it's a little different from the standard iTunes fare. The idea is for it her to understand how you're feeling using a psychological profiling questionnaire and slowly become your new pocket BFF.

If you're thinking that sounds nice, not so fast. This app's less about making you feel better than making you think about how much information our technology knows about us. Over time, she'll start to ask increasingly intrusive questions based on what she's learned about you from how you use your phone, including the same data Facebook has access to. Or as the [Kickstarter page](#) for the Karen app says: 'Karen is a life coach and she is friendly. Too friendly.'

The app/art project was developed by [National Theatre Wales](#) in conjunction with Brighton-based Blast Theory, a collective that uses digital storytelling and gaming to make performance and interactive art. Their previous projects include [Can You See Me Now?](#) a chase game that took place online and IRL, and [Hurricane](#), a teaching installation at the Red Cross Museum in Geneva. They've shown work at the Sundance film festival and been nominated for four BAFTAs.

Karen will be free to download and it'll be interesting to see how well she it works as both a psychology app and a work of art. If you're intrigued enough to donate, they're [looking to raise £15,000](#) to translate their idea into an iOS app, and will create an Android version if they bring in more money. And if you want to get to know Karen as a 'person', check out [Blast Theory's website](#).

[Via Katherine May on Twitter.]

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If you're not bothered by wearables at all, but still want help with keeping fit, check out our feature on [10 kitchen gadgets, tools and utensils for healthy living](#).

By [Diane Shipley](#) | October 13th, 2014