Tone it Down.

An app to help you communicate better

When we use digital platforms, we often only communicate with text on a screen. We cannot use our real voices or body language expressions to convey meaning in the same ways we can when speaking to people in real life. As a result of this, a great deal of meaning is often lost and it can be difficult to know how our words will be received by other people when we write them. We also tend to oversimplify our thoughts to avoid typing more characters, exacerbating the issue. Luckily, there is a potential for technology to help us in this area.

How it works

Tone it Down is based on advanced Artificial Intelligence algorithms that securely analyze any text you write directly on your phone to determine the tone and intent of your language. The app integrates as a 3rd-party keyboard, supported on both iOS and Android, to make the process of using it as seamless as possible. As you type, suggestions are automatically generated to help recognize ambiguities in your writing, let you know when your tone may come across as aggressive or disrespectful, and, if the user chooses, fully prevent you from sending texts of posting things online that the app deems overly problematic. The app ML algorithm is trained using a carefully curated sample of online posts determined by psychologists and other communication experts. User inputs are never captured for AI training.

Why it's important

The app helps users work in their long-term best interest and has no other goal besides that. People are consistently more respectful of others in real life. We want to be nice to others online, but digital platforms traditionally do not work in our favor. Social media companies have one goal: to make money. Their objective is not to optimize for kindness and compassion. In fact, Facebook has even published data indicating that more extreme and emoiton-enducing content attracts more views and generates more ad revenue. This inherently conflicts with a user's goals and ability to flourish. In text messages too, we have limited space to express deep thoughts and emotions. **Tone it Down** helps people make their tech work for *them* and *their* communication goals, not the other way around.

Algorithms look for any text field to analyze, across all apps

AI provides intelligent alternatives to reduce the burden on users to "think up" something better every time and help them improve long term by showing good examples

App acts as a 3rd party keyboard to reduce friction of use

By Sam Catania, THINK 66, 2021

Original texts in this conversation have been redacted, but app also uses context of past messages to make suggestions

Gives user insight into how app came to its conclusion

Recommends the more interpersonal option of calling when topic is determined to be serious

Determines if a text is something a user may "regret" later and encourages break (optional feature)

* Original language in text changed for purpose of example

Removes send button temporarily on potentially problematic texts or posts