

Honest people more likely to use swear words, says research

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A new two-part study has revealed that having off-colour vocabulary (using swear words) can be a sign of honesty.

Researchers from the department of psychology at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts found that while liars are known to prefer third-person pronouns and negative words in their speech, honest individuals are more likely to use profanity.

The researchers asked a group of 276 participants about their swearing habits as well as how honest they were in different situations.

They also analysed the status updates of more than 73,000 Facebook users, measuring for honesty and profanity.

In the second study, the same team used previous data to compare the integrity levels of US states with how often they swear. All the experiments had the same result: honesty was associated with higher levels of swearing.

According to the researchers, this is because swearing is often used to express one's feelings, and people who do this more regularly portray themselves in a more honest light.

"The consistent findings across the studies suggest that the positive relation between profanity and honesty is robust, and that the relationship found at the individual level indeed translates to the society level," the study read.

The study found that individuals with higher levels of verbal intelligence tended to use more swear words.