

'Tipflation' explained: Professor explains explosion of tipping prompts at restaurants, cafes and businesses

In a trend that some pundits are calling "tipflation," many Americans are being asked to tip more and far more often than they have in previous years, especially before COVID.

"Tipping requests have been around for a long time, but the surge began pretty much right with the pandemic, because that's when we decided to use the digital payment process a lot more than before," Karabas said. "All of these requests are coming through those digital payment systems," also known as "POS [point of sale] devices."

The explosion in tipping prompts has also spread to "other establishments, like cafés, chain restaurants," and even other businesses that do not usually rely on tips.

And while some customers may feel "upset and confused" at the sudden explosion of tipping prompts, "on the economic side, it is providing additional help and additional wages to employees."

Americans are growing weary of tipping expectations and admit they don't tip as much as they used to, according to a study from February.

Over three-quarters of Americans surveyed believe tipping expectations have "gone too far," citing the increasing presence

of gratuity requests at self-service kiosks, convenience stores and the like.