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Swiping More, Thinking Less: Using Short Video Apps Hinders Analytic Thinking

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Abstract

The rapid rise and widespread use of short video applications have reshaped our understanding of social media, technology, and human social behavior, with especially young users being caught up in frequent social media usage and swiping endless video feeds. Using dual-process theory, this experimental study explored the psychological consequences of using short video applications from three studies, with altogether 464 participants. Our findings contributed to the understanding of the cognitive implication of short video applications use on adolescent people in the following ways. Watching short videos predicted less analytic thinking that could go beyond initially flawed intuitions in reasoning (Studies 1 and 2). Additionally, the process of swiping through the video feeds rather than the video content itself negatively influenced users' disposition to think analytically; and it was the decrease of positive affect that mediated the effect of short video application use on analytic thinking (Study 3). These results showed that users should be aware that the common daily leisure activity of using video applications increases one's inherent tendency to fast and automatic thinking processing, which can impair their judgment and decision-making in other tasks, such as information discernment.

This study provides some substantive contributions to the existing literature. The practical implications of the findings lie first in the fact that researchers of short video applications (SVAs) focus more on people's motivations for using the emerging short-video sharing platforms and the reasons why SVAs attract a large number of active users in terms of uses and gratification theory. However, this article applies the dual-process theory to find how the thinking process direct and get limited by everyday leisure. Meanwhile, researchers tend to use content analysis and interviews, particularly in assessing the quality of SVAs' content such as on medical topics, with limited discussion to specify the cognitive affects on young groups. Thus we think experiments are needed to measure and clarify the relationship between SVA use and analytic processes.

Swiping is an approach for users to establish the connection between themselves and the application's algorithm, and place trust in the expected content brought by swiping. Existing literature reviewed above treats swiping as connecting the reality of the self into the digital public space, linking the corporeal body to the online community, the everyday life to the transcendent. The downside of this kind of approach is quite hard to draw clear lines between SVAs and other social media. This stems in part from the implicit assumption that the hedonic feature and influence of social interactions embedded within it are similar to those of other social platforms which have been widely discussed. In fact, instead of interacting with other users, the process of

swiping through SVAs can be understood as an effort to invest the users' subjectivity into the personification algorithm, where people expect the platform to measure their long-term preferences, understand momentary decisions and extend them into continuous future content-based responses, achieve matching with users in reflection activities, and thus co-creating the algorithmized selves.

Whether media technologies are viewed as technologies of the self or generic interaction technologies, both the technology and the content of the application need to be examined, as the way the technology creates connections and feedback affects how people assess and respond to engagement with the platform ecology. Therefore, our studies contribute evidence explicitly in the context of SVAs about the psychological consequences brought by interaction technology and content.

Despite the uniqueness of SVA on multiple levels, the findings could also help to provide insights into the individual experience of other applications with algorithmic and short video content. The impact on people's cognitive processes and affective responses in the face of technological updates and rich stimulus cues can be complex, so future research needs to return to the context, and explore the implication of innovative technologies on people. Also, there could be variability in the use and interaction of users across cultural contexts. Future research could address a broader population, combining in-depth interviews to clarify and expand the interpretation of individual experiences and understand how platforms affect individuals, as well as using methods such as tracking surveys to explore the long-term effects of using SVAs.

Key Words
dual-process theory; short video applications; swipe; analytic thinking; positive affect

MARKETING POVERTY IN BRAZIL

Authors

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Abstract

The high level of poverty of a significant percentage of Brazilian is forcing a large number of people to demonstrate on busy corners of the cities wielding signs with appeals to charity. What is being said in these statements implies a discursive strategy that ultimately aims to stimulate the empathy of passers-by. The purpose of these dmonstrations is to overcome the invisibility of the solicitant. The very poor make use of additional resources yet aiming to increase the drama of the appeal. They spread their small children around in the streets and show their injuries, for example. It is estimated that up to 220,000 people survive this way across the country.This study analyzes what is being said in these statements and compares them to the established standards for other styles of expression – personal writing, e-mails, professional writing, social media, business and scientific communication. For this purpose it is used the Linguistis Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC). This system reads and counts the percentage of words that reflect diferent emotions, thinking styles and social concerns. It is clear that the discursive strategy used by the poor aims to awaken the observer's empathy through an intimate and personal manifestation. This speech appeals to emotion by highlighting pain and suffering. Its objective is clearly persuasive. It is a personal appeal from those who suffer and need to break the observer's apathy. The beggar makes no moral judgments, avoids politics, and appeals do God frequently. He announces that he is hungry and that his children are suffering. He asks for help and friendship. He explains that he is unemployed and has lived most of the time in the streets. It is the portrait of pain that affects millions of people around the world. Such manifestations fall into the category of *supplicant letters*. The have become a mean used by a variety of actors who now ask corporations, banks, the rich, benefactors, authorities and NGOs for help. Every *nouveau riche* receives this type of correspondence. Herny Ford is an example of this. He used to receive 1500 of these letters every day. Tribulations included unpaid debts, the death of a beloved parent, a brother in prison, and a widow robbed by a lawyer. The same happened with Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898). The total value of requests reached millions of dollars.

Key Words

Poverty; Beggars; Solicitation; Signs; Emotions

A Study on Privacy Disclosure and Privacy Cynicism of Chinese Youth

Authors

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Abstract

Under the background of digital capitalism, it is difficult for online users to cope with Internet platform privacy threat and keep personal information secure. Privacy cynicism, as an emotion-centered coping mechanism, offers a new perspective for understanding privacy disclosure decisions. This paper measures the level of privacy cynicism among Chinese youth and proposes a theoretical model on the influence mechanism of privacy disclosure intention. Data were gathered from a survey among 1004 people nationwide and were analyzed with covariance-based structural equation model.

It is found that Chinese youth's privacy cynicism is common among Chinese youth, mainly reflected in uncertainty about where personal information goes, followed by a sense of powerlessness in controlling personal information and distrust of Internet platforms, making privacy protection subjectively futile. Privacy risk experience, perceived privacy risk and perceived self-efficacy are important antecedents of privacy cynicism. Privacy cynicism is significantly positively predicted by perceived privacy risk and negatively predicted by perceived self-efficacy.

Moreover, privacy cynicism is an important factor affecting privacy disclosure intention, which not only has a direct positive effect on privacy disclosure intention, but also completely mediates the positive effect of perceived privacy risk on privacy disclosure intention as well as partially mediates the negative effect of perceived self-efficacy on privacy disclosure intention. In other words, Chinese youth, after perceiving privacy risks, reports on the one hand that they will actively reduce their privacy disclosures, but at the same time they will develop privacy cynicism attitudes and indirectly increase their willingness to disclose privacy through the mediating role. Chinese youth's perceived privacy protection efficacy does not directly affect privacy disclosure, but youth with high perceived self-efficacy can indirectly reduce privacy disclosure by reducing levels of cynicism.

The findings of this study support the explanatory power of a rarely-examined privacy cynicism to controversial privacy paradox, which is a strong theoretical addition to privacy research.

Key Words

Private cynicism; Privacy paradox; Privacy disclosure; Internet platform; Chinese youth

Parental Influence and Social Media Addiction in Youth Groups in the Post-Pandemic Era: The Mediating Role of Media Use Motivation

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Abstract

Social media addiction among young people has become a significant problem and has a profound impact on their daily life. Especially in the post-pandemic era, the problem of social media addiction among youth groups has become more and more serious. As an important place for youth's physical and mental development, a good family atmosphere and the parent-child relationship are keys to young people's mental health. While for the youth group, the increasing independence in their thinking and behavior means that the influence of their parents on the youth group may be increasingly limited. So far, the relationship between parental influence and youth's social media addiction has been less explored. Therefore, this study focused on the relationship between parental monitoring, parental attitudes, and youth social media addiction, and also examined the mediating effects of media use motivations (information needs, play needs, and social needs). The results showed a significant positive relationship between parental monitoring, parental attitudes and social media addiction, and the mediating effects of play needs and social needs were significant in this process. The findings of this study not only reveal the formation mechanism of social media addiction in youth groups and provide theoretical guidance for the prevention of social media addiction for them.

Key Words

social media addiction; parental influence; media-system dependency

Social mourning of "strangers": Digital mourning and continuing bonds with Chinese celebrities

Authors

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Abstract

In today's society, death and the deceased are becoming increasingly visible, and the loss of some individual lives stirs up public grief and emotions, resulting in tens of thousands of "strangers" following and mourning on social media. This study takes the Weibo of Chinese of public figures, specifically “celebrity” Yao Beina (a famous singer) and “ordinary celebrity” Li Wenliang (a doctor) as case studies, and explores why “strangers” appear here to mourn the dead celebrities from the perspective of Continuing Bonds Theory, and focuses on the uniqueness and era value of continuing bonds in the Chinese context. Combining the shortcomings of previous studies, this article used Internet Ethnography and semi-structured interview to base the study on "field" observations over a longer period of time (February 2020 to May 2022), the data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method and the three-level coding logic of the Ground Theory.

The study finds that mourners establish connections based on five motives: information exchange, spiritual imagination, emotional release, ritual habit, and helping memory, through which they redefine the identity of the deceased and gain guidance, awakened their sympathy for their own “end”, and renew life experience. The “publicity” and “sociality” of the bonds strengthens the group experience, the mourners enjoy a sense of intimacy and trust brought by the community, fight against forgetfulness with a common writing, and contribute to the discussion of public issues. In addition, the Continuing Bonds have a special time rhythm characteristics in the Chinese context. Unlike the West, besides the moment of the deceased's death, some important traditional Chinese festivals would be used as specific days of the continuing bonds, such as "The First 7th Night" or "Ghost Festival" or "Tomb Sweeping Day", at these moments the deceased are perceived by netizens to be "awake" to their mourning. Secondly, the Chinese have a special image of the deceased. When Chinese netizens mourn public figures, they also place them in identities such as "bodhisattva," "God," and "official," which are closely related to Buddhism, Taoism, and Chinese moral standards. Chinese people agree that the souls of people of excellent character have greater abilities after passing away, and can even take up official positions to bless others and have an impact on the underworld and even the real world. Lastly, this kind of mourning expression has a pragmatic tendency. The mourners regard the deceased as a functional entity that can solve their practical problems, send messages to their departed relatives and bring tangible benefits.

The author believes that we should pay attention to the spontaneity of "strangers" ringing the bell, and see the universal existence and important value of continuing bonds in Chinese death culture. In short, the Chinese characteristic of connection is a kind of behavior that originates from the belief in the afterlife of "Death but alive" and from the imagination of "eternal life" provided by

digital technology. It not only helps individuals cope with the loss and confusion of the COVID-19 epidemic, but also promotes thinking about life and death, and may become a way of emotional resonance in the post-epidemic era and a possibility of rebuilding social trust.

Key Words
Online collective mourning; celebrity; Continuing Bonds; digital death; collective memory

Rappler's Digital Journalism and Initiatives of MovePH as Mediators for Civic Engagement addressing Disinformation and Disasters in the Philippines

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Abstract

Technological development influenced changes in different sectors like that of media and journalism. It affected the analysis of facts, the presentation of journalistic outputs, the access of readers to information, and the collaboration made by journalistic entities with industries and the general public (Strukov 155). Such technologies led to renewing and redefining relationships between content producers and consumers which makes advocacies more integrative and holistic. While developing countries may have limited access to resources, the emergence of digital journalism is still evident through innovative media organizations like Rappler. As a digital media in the Philippines, Rappler grew from being a startup independent news organization to a leader in investigative reporting and fact-checking. Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Ressa, Rappler's co-founder, described the agency as an "uncompromised journalism" owned by journalists with partnership from the public through crowdsourcing and social media engagement. Through MovePH, its civic arm, it has launched a number of fact-checking and disaster relief initiatives that aimed to connect to volunteers, instead of passive readers. Anchored on Computer Mediated Communication Theory, this study investigates how Rappler has communicated its ideals and has engaged the public through MovePH. Specifically, it focuses on: 1) describing the characteristics of Rappler as a digital news platform; 2) understanding the role of MovePH as mechanism towards civic engagement; and 3) analyzing social themes reflected in its advocacies of fighting disinformation and disaster relief in the Philippines. This qualitative study analyzed the websites of Rappler and its civic arm, MovePH to consolidate emerging themes relevant to the rise of digital journalism and civic engagement in the country. Results revealed that accessibility, interactivity, and novelty are the primary features of Rappler as a digital news company. Also, the initiatives launched through MovePH are helpful not only as a mediator but a motivator to increase civic engagement. In terms of fighting disinformation, government-related posts are often fact-checked. Meanwhile, relief operations and call for donations for typhoon victims are the most common themes that emerged from their contents.

Key Words

mediated communication, digital journalism, civic engagement, disinformation, disaster relief

How does a researcher affect thick data interpretation? A Methodological discussion of Online Opinion Research

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Abstract

Most social science researchers use corpus-driven inductive methods to analyze online opinion data. Most studies collect user-generated content on social media through web crawling. Afterward, different researchers interpret the data according to their needs, questions, and phenomena. As each social media has its own unique culture and changing climate of opinion, researchers face reflective questions at the beginning of the data collection process. For example, Reddit, 4Chan, and Taiwan's bulletin board system PTT, all have different cultures, customs, and slang; only users who are familiar with the platform can understand the correct meaning of noteworthy content and information. Are the researchers' interpretations too subjective? Will this lead to unstable reliability and validity? This article will collect and observe a case of public opinion showing how researchers can influence the interpretation of thick data.

The data used as examples are collected from posts on the Gossip board of PTT[1]. By observing the distribution of slang, especially the culture of PTT users, we analyze how PTT users participate in topics that are about to ferment. This paper collects the posts and comments of the gossip board from September 1, 2022, to September 30, 2022. Every post needs to mention "Blood Flowing into a River"[2]. In total, there are 97 articles and 59898 comments. The author will mainly use CORPRO (Chinese text mining tool) to process word segmentation and word frequency and use ctext.org's Text tools Plugins to visualize co-occurrence.

This article will present the researcher's influence at each step of the research design by performing data collection and analysis. This paper hopes that discussing "Reflexivity" can help researchers to have better reliability and validity when devoting themselves to online opinion research in the future.

[1] PTT is the largest terminal-based bulletin board system (BBS) and also one of the most major social media, PTT (ptt.cc), in Taiwan.

[2] This sentence is from the line "Boring! I want to see some body parts." in the SpongeBob SquarePants episode "Spongicus". Taiwan's TV station translated it as "無聊，我要看到血流成河", which was picked up by netizens as a popular slang.

Key Words

Big data, Thick data, discourse analysis, Methodology, Reflexivity

"Attitudes of the media elite towards the impact of robot journalism on the media and freedom of information" "Field Study"

Authors

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Abstract

Information technology has imposed itself on the media scene in the modern era and contributed to the transition from traditional media to digital media, which changed the scales and changed the rules of the communication process and created an exchange of roles between the sender and the receiver, and opened an ample space for freedom of opinion and circulation of information. Still, it imposed many challenges between fear for the future of media functions and aspiration to keep pace with modernity.

The technological development of the world of journalism has created new mechanisms that enhance interaction between the journalist and the recipient through the use of different media and artificial intelligence techniques in journalistic practice, starting in 2010, when Narrative Science developed a new program whose task is to write press reports just as humans write them. Several magazines, newspapers, and even radio and television networks have used this program, most notably the Norwegian News Agency, the BBC radio and television service, Reuters, and Buzz Feed.

In line with the updates, some institutions tended to use robot journalism or algorithmic journalism in 2015, when the Swedish media company "Metmedia" launched the first specialized journalistic robot in the production of news and news reports on the weather and climate and then in 2016, the American newspaper "The Washington Post" used robot journalism experimentally in the elections of the United States of America.

With the diversity of opinions of scientists and researchers about the control of technology and the tremendous development that it will achieve in the coming years, Kirzwell said that by 2040 computers will surpass the human mind, and the nature of enhanced journalistic work has become limited to robots as aids for journalists in all sectors. Despite the spread of robot journalism in many European and Arab countries, especially the UAE, it is still moving very slowly within the Egyptian state, so it was only applied in the Cairo 24 site.

This study seeks to monitor, interpret and analyze the attitudes of the media elite towards the impact of robot journalism on the media and media professionals and the extent of its effect on freedom of information circulation. In addition, this study belongs to the descriptive and interpretive studies, depends on the survey methodology, and uses the questionnaire form tool and in-depth interviews on a sample of 100 individuals from the media elite in Egypt between the heads and editorial managers of various newspapers, magazines, and websites. The researcher relies on the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology and the entrance to the trend.

Key Words

Digital , Media elite, Robot journalism, Artificial intelligence.

The Process and Influencing Factors of Emotional Communication of Hot Events on Social Media: Evidence from Sina Weibo

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Abstract

With the continuous development of media technology, group communication has become the main way of information dissemination on the Internet. People freely share information, spread opinions, and express emotions through social media. As a result, a small event can be indefinitely magnified and quickly become a hot event, and individual emotions can be easily amplified and eventually evolve into social emotions. Negative social emotions are huge risk factors for social stability. It is vital to discuss the process and laws of emotional communication in hot events on social media.

Previous research has claimed that emotional communication is a socialization process of individual emotions under the effect of new media (Sui & Li, 2012). Individual emotions will evolve into social emotions through a process of emotional contagion, reinforcement, and polarization (Wang, 2016). In this process, individual emotions, group emotions, and social emotions will all arise and play an important role. However, few studies have discussed them. Only by clarifying the key elements of emotion evolution can we intervene and control emotional communication accurately. This study aims to describe the process of emotional communication in hot events from the perspective of individual, group, and social emotions and analyze the influencing factors in the process.

We took the case of the “Zhengzhou first aid delay incident” as an example and used the content analysis method to analyze the comments of users on Sina Weibo (a Chinese social media similar to Twitter). We selected the top three topics that users discussed at this event and selected the most popular 200 comments under each topic as the object of analysis. We coded these comments into seven emotions and seven themes.

The results showed that “disgust” was the emotion with the highest frequency, followed by “anger”, “sadness”, “no emotion”, “surprise”, “like”, “fear”, and “happiness”. “Expressing opinions” was the most popular theme, followed by “expressing feelings”, “blaming the operator”, “blessing the victim”, “questioning the government”, “expecting accountability results or institutional improvements”, and “others”. The process of emotional communication included three stages: the

generation of individual emotions, which was affected by media information, individual needs, and individual characteristics; the polarization of group emotions, which was affected by group identity and emotional cocoons; and the construction of social emotions, which was affected by social norms and consensus. The three stages were interrelated and acted together.

This research proposes the three-stage process of emotional communication of hot events on social media and figures out the influencing factors in each stage, which make up for the theoretical deficiencies in related fields and provide a new perspective for studies of emotional communication. It also inspires the intervention and control of public opinion and the prevention and resolution of network risk.

Key Words
emotional communication; individual emotions; social emotions; social media; Sina Weibo

“Human Rights and democracy online”: Actor constellation and communicative practices of the No Hate Speech Committee in Austria from a figuration-theoretical perspective.

Authors

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Abstract

In 2013, the Council of Europe (CoE 2022) launched a campaign “to combat hate speech by mobilising young people to **speak up for human rights and democracy online**”. The No Hate Speech Movement (NHSM), organized in 43 national committees, which bring together partners, coordinate campaigns, support young people in their school/work life including severe situations. We focus on the Austrian Committee (2022) launched in 2016 as agency to “raise awareness of hate online, counteract it and encourage and support campaigns against hate speech”. Fighting hate speech is a major challenge for mediatized societies (Rideout et al. 2021; Williams 2019; Hepp, 2020). In particular, since hate speech not only happens between people but is also spread automatically through social media, algorithms, linking of accounts etc. (Bilewicz & Soral 2022). The importance is reflected in research: For 2014-2021, the CO:RE evidence base (Aroldi et al. 2022) lists 301 publications and 118 studies on *hate speech*, *cyberhate* and *bullying* for Europe. One focus is media usage of hate speech recipients, their respective coping strategies, but also on bullies (Schmid et al. 2022; Šori & Vehovar 2022; Wachs et al. 2022). Affected companies such as Facebook, Twitter (Bilewicz & Soral 2022) and regulations (Bromell 2022; Kaye 2022; Viejo Otero 2022) have been researched. In contrast, organized actors working against hate speech and structural aspects (Dixon 2022; López & López 2022; Krause et al. 2021; Pálmadottir & Kalenikova 2018) have only been researched to a limited extent.

Against the backdrop of mediatization research, we study whether the institutional collaboration and professionalization has triggered a new wave of mediatization (Hepp, Hjarvard & Lundby, 2015) among non-profit organizations aiming to encourage citizens and question the logics of algorithms. The online approach of NHSM in general and the increasing usage of digital media channels for diverse purposes among the Austrian committee and its members can be considered an indicator for processes of “deep mediatization” (Hepp, 2020) in civic and social engagement. This relates to research indicating that social domains, so-called “communicative figurations” (Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017, 363), do not rely on one tool to disseminate information or to communicate but rather apply a whole *media ensemble* with various tools serving different purposes.

Our empirical work started with a quantitative structure-analysis as web screening (Plum, 2010), to capture the entire overarching *media ensemble* of all *actors,* including 44 semi-automated tools and all image, text, and video-based actions and campaigns of the committee and its members. To complement this, we conducted qualitative content-analysis (Welker et al. 2015) of material chosen from members' media repertoires. We selected "*information-rich cases*" (Patton, 2002, 230) to deepen the research and to reveal the complex interrelation between structural conditions and actors' objectives.

With a view to diverse communication tools, methods, campaigns, and multimedia content it becomes clear why activism, citizenship, and civil engagement turn into mediated activism in times of “deep mediatization” (above) and digital forms of activism, algorithmic, and data activism are becoming essential to combat hate speech and enable counter speech.

Key Words
No Hate Speech, European Council, mediatisation, mediated activism, empowerment

Algorithmic Imagination: A Survey of Chinese College Students' Algorithmic Perceptions Based on Q Method

Authors

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Abstract

With the comprehensive arrival of the digital intelligence era, algorithms have profoundly changed today's media ecology, and a series of algorithmic recommendation products, represented by Toutiao, TikTok, and Kuaishou, have become important channels for Chinese audiences to obtain information. The introduction of the concept of affordances has provided a new research horizon for us to observe the interaction between algorithms and people. Affordances were first introduced by American ecological psychologist Gibson(1986) to refer to the value and meaning provided by the environment to animals. Nagy and Neff (2015) proposed " imagined affordance ", arguing that users' technological expectations shape human-technology interactions, in which the materiality of the technology, the interaction experience between the technology and people, and people's emotional attitudes are factors to be discussed when considering imagined affordance. The theory of imagined affordance compensates for the current bias of algorithm research to focus on the impact of algorithms on journalism, and provides us with a more reasonable perspective from user perception.

This study mainly relies on the Q method proposed by Stephenson (1953) for data collection and analysis. 34 Q statements were designed by referring to an algorithmic affordance framework proposed by Shin and Park (2019)with additional corrections designed by two experts and a total of 24 testers (meeting the P-sample criterion of more than half of the Q sample required in the Q method) were selected through snowball sampling involving undergraduate and graduate student groups from universities in multiple locations across China, covering different institutions and majors. The study aims to measure the perceptions of algorithmic affordance among the population of Chinese university students and tries to answer the following two questions: (1) What are the types of perceptions of algorithmic affordance among Chinese university users? (2) What factors affect the perception of algorithmic affordance among Chinese college students?

The study found that the perceptions of Chinese college students on algorithmic affordance can be divided into four categories, namely, those who make good use of algorithms, those who benefit negatively from algorithms, those who are insulated from algorithms and those who resist algorithms, among which the perceptions on the materiality of algorithms and the emotional attitudes of algorithms are the two main perception patterns. A public elaboration of materiality-related affordance such as algorithmic transparency and algorithmic fairness, which may better promote a harmonious symbiosis between people and algorithms.

Key Words

algorithm, Q methodology, affordance

Tackling the Environmental Crisis: multimodal discourse analysis of Uruguayan eco-influencers on Instagram

Authors

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Abstract

The public conversation about the triple environmental crisis -climate, biodiversity and pollution (PNUMA, 2021)- finds a privileged space on social media platforms, where discourses already in circulation on "traditional" media migrate and where new ones are generated, supported in the multimedia and interactive possibilities of digital technology (Pearce, Niederer, Özkula, & Sánchez, 2019). In this communication scenario, new enunciators of the discourse emerge who are neither the voice of the institutions nor necessarily of the non-governmental organizations promoting this agenda, but who become "digital opinion leaders" (Schmuck, Hirsch, Stevic, & Matthes, 2022). The so-called “influencers” are especially relevant for the new generations, less and less exposed to journalistic media as sources of environmental information (Eddy, 2022), or to political leaders´ call to action (Gómez Márquez, 2022; Schmuck, Hirsch, Stevic, & Matthes, 2022).

This paper reports the results of a multimodal analysis of the discourse (Jewitt, 2016) of Uruguayan eco-influencers active on the digital platform Instagram between June 2021 and June 2022. Using a diverse set of tools and strategies to deal with the limitations of advanced searches in the platform, 17 Uruguayan influencers with mostly Uruguayan audiences were identified. Their Instagram activity included around 200 posts related to the environmental crisis and how to respond to it, which were object of detailed multimodal analysis.

Three types of eco-influencers were found in this local sample: Eco-celebrities, Eco-professionals and Eco-activists. The analysis of their online profile and publications reveals that they do not frequently address climate change, but their discourses rather focus on waste pollution and biodiversity loss. The main responsibility discourse is the one of conscious consumption, with publications that place environmental challenges and possible human responses in the sphere of individual lifestyles. Moreover, a high level of brand participation in the environmental and climate conversation performed by these eco-influencers is detected. Thus, the possible solutions are located in the current of environmentalism known as "the gospel of eco-efficiency" (Martínez Alier, 2011), although with a greater attribution of responsibility to citizens/consumers instead of pointing to policy makers or to industries.

Regarding emergent concerns of this IAMCR Section, the technical setbacks faced when trying to search for the sample of influencers and their relevant posts highlight the challenge of dealing with increasingly crucial channels of mediated communication that remain hardly accessible for independent researchers. The numerous limitations imposed by Instagram's architecture for advanced and automated search within the platform might explain why social media studies often

focus on less massive platforms such as Twitter, while everything concerning Instagram is largely unexplored (Pearce, Niederer, Özkula, & Sánchez, 2019).

Key Words
influencers, environment, climate change, digital activism, social media, lifestyle

My Preference My Choice: Exploring Colorism in Kenya within the Twitter Platform

Authors

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Abstract

Colorism is an aspect of discrimination both in the western countries and in the developing nations. Colorism is the regard that light skinned individuals get better treatment compared to dark skinned individuals. In the Kenyan context, discrimination has been experienced from the racial, religion, ethnicity, and gender perspectives. It would be paramount to analyze if discrimination is also experienced from the colorism perspective as this literature is hardly visible. Therefore, this study sort to find out if colorism exists in Kenya and if it does, the themes associated with colorism. It also mapped out the conversations. The study was guided by framing theory and social networking analysis. Framing theory assisted with themes generation while social networking analysis mapped out one frame within the conversations to show its reach and interpretation. The data was mined from Twitter and the study applied both explanatory and exploratory approach using convergent mixed methods approach. Machine learning was utilised to mine and analyze the data from Twitter using NodeXL and Brandwatch APIs. The data mined had 27,382 mentions from the period starting January 01, 2022 to October 18, 2022 and was limited to Kenyan conversations. The themes generated from the data included colorism perspectives, colorism experiences and colorism influence. The results indicated that colorism exists in Kenya. The recommendations made included avoiding biasness in the web by incorporating both interracial and intraracial aspects in machine learning algorithms and developing countries citizens should contribute to developing innovative technologies that are cultural inclusive. Using social networking analysis framework, a video titled ‘side chic vs main chic’ was used as a frame to map out and show the conversations within Twitter for one week period between October 13, 2022 to October 21, 2022 and it was global. The results indicated the framing effect in relation to cultural setting differ as the cultural interpretation of the video varied from the Kenyan context compared to Tweets from other parts of the world. In conclusion, discrimination though associated with the western world exists in developing countries and the discussions take place in the digital space. In this digital space, it is not possible to build a common future as interpretation of messages vary based on the audiences frame of references and there is imbalance in technological innovations from Western and developing world such as machine learning algorithms.

Key Words

Colorism, social media, mediated communication, machine learning, discrimination, SNA, framing

Do ordinary citizens' voices democratize journalistically mediated discourse? Putting forward a research design

Authors

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Abstract

Researchers repeatedly call journalism to consider more voices of 'ordinary citizens' to diversify and democratize news coverage (e.g., De Keyser & Raeymaeckers, 2012; Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2009; Gans, 2003; Massey, 1998). In fact, a large body of research shows that the statements of ordinary citizens increasingly appear in news coverage, but there is great variation between the types of news outlets and topics (e.g., Beckers et al., 2018; Hopmann, & Shehata, 2011; Pantti & Husslage, 2009). According to the mediated social communication approach (MSC), however, this may contradict specific structures of journalistically mediated communication, i.e., the aim to reduce complexity and provide a concentrated overview of diverse perspectives and arguments on a wide range of topics (Author, 2015, 2020). Normally, journalists create such an overview by integrating the statements of formal representatives of various social groups (e.g., official spokespeople, PR representatives, or party leaders). In this way, the audience can more easily identify the various positions on an issue and understand which social groups support the respective statement. This is different when journalists mediate the voices of ordinary citizens, i.e., non-official sources who appear in news coverage as private individuals without a specific role to represent a larger group (Beier et al., 2020; Peter & Zerback, 2020). From the MSC's theoretical point of view, however, the inclusion of statements from non-official sources can be useful when new positions emerge and/or a social group is not yet organized and does not yet have a representative (Author, 2020; Wagner, 1978, p. 85). In fact, research has shown that journalists often use statements of ordinary citizens when no other source is available (Beckers, 2019) or for mainly illustrative purposes (Cushion, 2013).

On this basis we ask, if and in what way the voices of ordinary citizens can shape journalistically mediated public discourse. To explore this question, 1) we theoretically draw from the MSC approach which understands public discourse as an exchange of ideas, arguments, and opinions between various representatives of social groups. 2) We put up for discussion a rather novel research design: the application of relational content analysis and (longitudinal) social network analysis (SNA) to news coverage on a topic over a longer period (e.g., the course of a year). This design allows going beyond assessing who speaks in news media and to what extent. Instead, we suggest analyzing the contribution of ordinary citizens' statements to public discourse in a more differentiated way (e.g., their position in the network). Using the methodological combination of content analysis and SNA, we can examine not only if and how public discourse in mass communication integrates ordinary citizens but also how this might lead to a richer, more

democratic exchange. The design also tackles the question of the role of ordinary citizens in emerging and developing communicative networks in mass communication (Author, 2021). Finally, it permits investigating the communicative relations between actors in mediated discourse by looking at the way representatives refer and react to each other.

Key Words
mediated social communication, ordinary citizens, public discourse, representation, diversity, SNA

From the Military Conflict to the Information War: Spread of Russian Disinformation about the War in Ukraine

Authors

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Abstract

Russian invasion in Ukraine is not only being waged by military means; it is also an economic and very intense information war, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe Europe (Jacuch, 2022). Russia has constantly been one of the key disinformation producers, as its political elites seek to control media communication and spread propaganda. The sophisticated system enables to spread the disinformation through various channels, e.g. traditional and new media, political representatives and influential journalists. Since 2010, "trolls" or even "troll armies" with fake news and propagandist opinions in cyberspace have been coming to the forefront (Doroshenko & Lukito, 2021; Maschmeyer, 2023).

Our research is aimed at the persuasion of the disinformation narratives related to the current military conflict in Ukraine in three former Eastern Bloc countries, which take part in the Visegrad Four and are adjacent to each other – Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland. Although these states have similarities in their development, the differences in the sensitivity towards Russian disinformation were identified by the previous studies. While the Czech government insists mostly on the security dimension, the Slovaks seek to maintain important energy relations with Russia, which is pragmatic but not fully effective in terms of security and protection (Rechtik & Mareš, 2021). Poland has been considered as one of the most vulnerable countries towards foreign, including Russian, influence (Benková, 2018).

To be able to compare the positions and opinions connected to the war in Ukraine that circulate in Czech, Slovak and Polish society, we conducted CAWI (computer-assisted web interview) survey on the representative sample (more than 1000 respondents) of the adult population in each country. All the data were collected in June 2022. We measured the scope of the disinformation by formulating a set of ten statements related to the narratives that commonly appeared in Czech, Slovak and Polish media environments and contained deliberate distortion of reality.

The results show that the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland are susceptible to Russia-related disinformation efforts to a highly varying degree. Contrary to the previous research, our findings indicate that Poles are largely immune to the narrative about the Ukraine war and the Ukrainian state imposed by official and unofficial actors connected to the Russian authorities and their supporters inside these countries. Contrary, the Slovaks are relatively receptive to such sentiments, and Czechs are in between. Examined countries significantly differ in terms of perceived

responsibility for the conflict. While Russian responsibility raises no major doubts in Poland, opinions vary in other countries. In Slovakia, the most popular view is that all parties bear a share of the responsibility. Slovaks blame NATO and Ukraine more often than others, although this opinion is still expressed by a small minority there. The Slovaks have the most concerns about the impact of the influx of refugees from Ukraine on the economy, labor market, and internal security, while the Poles have the least.

Key Words
Information war; Disinformation; CAWI; Ukraine; Russia; Visegrad Four; Central Europe

Twitter Bots: Digital Storytelling Through the Use of Smart Technologies

Authors

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Abstract

The social media environment has been populated by different types of bots that are designed to execute various tasks. Bots are automated software programs that can produce, distribute, and rebroadcast content, and interact with humans on social media, imitating human-like performance to some degree. Bots are created for a number of different purposes, such as news, marketing, spreading malicious content, political campaigning, and entertainment. Although bots have gained a negative reputation and are frequently associated with circulating misinformed content (Shao et al., 2017;), some Twitter bots are merely designed for entertainment purposes. For instance, @TwoHeadlines is a harmless Twitter bot that looks at Google News, takes two different news headlines, and by using the keywords creates a new comical headline. Nevertheless, there has not been any systematic research on Twitter bots' capacity for producing content that can be used in various forms of digital media production such as narrating a trending topic. Therefore, my study, aims to contribute to closing this gap by exploring potential uses of Twitter bots in content creation.

My study will explore the use of Twitter bots in generating automated content that can be used creatively in multimodal storytelling, entertainment, and digital media production. This study will determine to what extent bot-generated content can be used to form co-creative media. The majority of the studies on participatory media focus on user-generated content on social media. By focusing on bot-generated content and how bots can push boundaries through their experimental nature, and by defining bots' ability to form co-creative storytelling practices, this study will advance our knowledge about the socio-cultural transformations afforded by digital media technologies. This study uses the theory of affordances (Gibson, 1979; Khost, 2018; Reed, 1996) as a theoretical framework to clarify how bots employ the affordances of Twitter to generate new tweets.

This study is divided into three phases. Phase 1: A Twitter bot will be created by using the Twitter API, programmed to search Twitter by specifying search phrases based on sets of keywords related to a specific trending topic. The bot will locate every tweet that matches the search parameters, select the four most recent tweets, and by combining these tweets together, generate a new tweet. Phase 2: The tweets that are created by the bot will be collected to assess the capabilities of the bot in generating content related to the theme, and whether the tweets can be used in multimodal storytelling. To do that, this study proposes a categorization of bot-generated tweets into classifications such as, related to the topic (R), humorous (H), and not relevant (N), based on the words and phrases that are associated with the topic within the tweets. This study will use the tweets that are classified as related to the topic (R) and humorous (H) for narrating the trending topic to assess the capability of this technology in forming co-creative media.

This research is timely because Twitter has been experiencing some fundamental technical transformations after Elon Musk purchased the company which will reshape users' communication on this platform. Musk's reformation of Twitter will alter how human and bot users represent, communicate, and navigate in this ecosystem. Thus, it is imperative to conduct research about Twitter bots' capacity to handle different functions and the generative opportunities that this technology and platform can offer. This study will expand our understanding of how bot technology can be used in different innovative ways to achieve computational creativity for human users, clarifying and enhancing individuals' relationship with smart technologies and digital world.

Key Words

Twitter bots, Social media, Digital storytelling, Affordances, Smart technologies

Influence of Social Media Messages on Nigerian Voter's Choice of Candidates in the 2023 General Elections

Authors

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Abstract

Social media platforms are fast becoming the most frequently used channels for the dissemination of political information to potential voters during political campaigns globally. The increased penetration of mobile technology in Nigeria has widened the scope of users and created an online army of followers for leading political parties and their candidates. Different social media platforms have therefore become convenient tools for the dissemination of different messages about leading political candidates; extolling their virtues or condemning their vices. Media scholars are however inconclusive on the influence of such messages on voters' choices during elections. This paper therefore investigates the influence of different messages posted on *WhatsApp* on the choice of Nigerian voters among three leading presidential candidates during the coming 2023 General Election in the country. The investigation will be based on the predictions of the selectivity theory about what individuals pay attention to from the myriads of information they get. Using descriptive survey design, the paper will use a self-designed questionnaire to gather quantitative data from eligible voters across South West States in Nigeria. Purposive sampling will be adopted to select 1,500 voters who regularly use *WhatsApp* and belong to *WhatsApp* Groups where political messages are actively discussed. The data will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings will give critical insight into the degree of influence political messages exert on eligible voters in Africa. It will provide empirical evidence on how heterogenous groups within the Nigerian society react to different messages about politicians contesting for election in the country. It will further show how respondents perceived their choice of candidates based on messages referring to leadership traits of Honesty (lack of corruption), Competence, Integrity and track record of achievements in office (antecedent). Overall, the paper will be a critical contribution to the debate on attitude consistency in attention to social media messages and the effectiveness of social media messages in critical decision making among online users.

This ongoing research will be concluded before the general elections in Nigeria. Data gathering is currently ongoing.

Key Words

Keywords: Political information, attention, social media messages, attitude consistency, perception.

A Surprise under your Fingers! The Communication Mechanism of "Body-Interactive" Videos on Bilibili -- from the Perspective of Interaction Ritual Chains

Authors

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Abstract

Following the instructions of the stick figure on the left half of the screen, you cover your fingers on the red circle on the right half of the screen. After a while, the stick figure tells you to remove your fingers. And that is when you find a surprising gift under your fingers. This is a "body-interactive" video on Bilibili (China's leading video platform for young audience). Many derivative videos based on this video have received millions of views and bullet comments. In recent years, with the gradual popularization of the UGC (User Generated Content), interactive videos have increasingly appeared in public eyes.

As mass communication is becoming more personal and bidirectional (Negroponte, 1996), the popularity and applied range of interactive video extend. The diverse digital forms and interaction possibilities have a strong attraction for users (Hammoud, 2006). 2019, when Bilibili introduced the video interaction function, was known as the first year of interactive video in China, which quickly flourished in varied forms such as interface interaction, content-based interaction, and exploratory interaction (Wang, 2020). However, the monotonous platform functions, which have been widely discussed, such as branch selection, QTE (Quick Time Event) or interactive bullet comments interrupt interactive video narration (Zheng, 2020).

This research innovatively focuses on “body-interactive” videos that can trigger audience body movement and facial expression by instructions. The concept is defined by excluding interactive videos that rely on platform functions.

“Body-interactive” video has several characteristics: first, it includes real-time interaction; second, the video itself actively provides complete motivation for interaction, i.e., they do not simply create an environment under which audience can decide their behaviors freely; third, the narration of the video cannot be interrupted by audience behaviors.

This paper will focus on the following questions:

- RQ1: Why do producers make body-interactive videos?
- RQ2: How can videos interact with the audience body?
- RQ3: What are audience attitudes toward body-interactive videos?
- RQ4: Why do audiences get these feelings?

The research adopts mixed methods including textual analysis, survey and in-depth interview. In answer to the research questions, a model, which integrates the theory of interaction ritual chains into explaining the communication mechanism of body-interactive videos, is established. The model consists of the following three sectors:

In the producer sector, the research has to deal with questions of why producers are willing to make body-interactive videos and how they achieve virtual presence. We conducted 10 constructed in-depth interviews with Bilibili uploaders who had uploaded body-interactive videos to find answers to the two questions above. Findings confirm that producer motivation concerns media character, personal interest and audience preference. Moreover, they achieve virtual presence relying on visual effects and utterance choices to weaken the existence of screens.

In the video sector, the research observed 50 body-interactive videos and drew commonalities from them. Videos can be classified into different types: imitating, challenging and animation. They also create common concerns among audiences with discourse attitudes including provocation, consolation and amusement, passing on emotional energy.

In the audience sector, we collected bullet comments from the 50 videos mentioned above, analyzing word frequency and sentiment orientation. Frequently occurring words (e.g., so cute, don’t move away) present strong interactive features. We also carried out an online questionnaire survey on audience preference. The data we gathered from 342 questionnaires provide insight into attitudes and feelings of Bilibili users toward body-interactive videos. The majority of respondents are appreciative of this type of video and can develop identity recognitions.

Frontier virtual reality technologies provide users with interactive experiences featured in realism, immersion and transportation, which technically improve virtual presence, but at the same time, call for better content. This research concludes the experience of successful body-interactive videos paves the way for content production in the future of metaverse.

Key Words
interaction ritual chains, interactive video, virtual presence, video production, Bilibili

Return to Chinese-style family via WeChat: digitally mediated family in liquid China

Authors

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Abstract

China has been transformed from a relatively static society to a liquid pattern after the state launched modernisation reforms from 1979, making the landscape of migrant families and separated kinships ordinary in today's China. Owing to the present Chinese polymedia environment supported by smartphone, contemporary Chinese mobile population can use alternative technologies to always connect to their distant kins and residences. Most of such connections are concentrated on WeChat-the most dominant Chinese super-sticky platform, which integrates abundant existing media into itself and functions as a central joint node to tighten external platforms. Based on this background, this research investigated how Chinese polymedia environment contributes to digitally converging Chinese *Jia (Family, Home)* on smartphone in today's China.

The data was collected by the in-depth interviews and ethnography with 48 Chinese internal migrants. Through a thematical analysis, this research firstly depicted the entire structures of their digitalised families on smartphone, which inherit from the traditional model of Chinese family. The traditional Chinese family is a kind of Confucian patriarchal institution consisting of individual's nuclear family, extended family, *Dajiating* (*Chinese large family)* and clan, and the involved kinships constitute a hierarchical system based on gender and generation position.

Secondly, this research revealed the strategies that Chinese modern migrants digitally act their family roles to comply with a set of Confucian family ethics and rules, sustaining their entire and hierarchical family structures at a distance. These ethic practices allocate distinct duties, etiquettes, rules, and authorities to different genders and generational positions, which assisted Chinese families to be harmonious and continued in traditional society. Meanwhile, this research explored how Chinese mobile population digitally do intimate relationship with their kins accompanied with the ethical kinship practices, discussing the features of digitally negotiating Chinese-style intimacy practice for doing family in modern China, since intimacy should be avoided and implicit according to the traditional Confucian family ethics.

Lastly, this research illustrated how Chinese mobile population use smartphone to distantly do their homeplaces because home is incorporated into the concept of family in Chinese sociocultural context. The single Chinese word *Jia* simultaneously refers to family and home.

Overall, this research argued that Chinese polymedia environment owns its locally cultural and technological affordances, making it offer alternative interactive tools and domains with the local sociocultural characteristics for Chinese mobile population to converge their *Jia (Families, Homes)* on their smartphones in today's China. This research unfolded the comprehensive process of their

remotely doing their institutionalised family structures, doing ethic and intimacy practices with their kins, and doing their homes. It is different from the previous polymedia studies on migrant families, which focused more on mediated kinship and intimacy. This research emphasised the significance of doing digitalised family based on systematically traditional structure, ethics and rules for stabilising family in a liquid society, which offers new views for family study. The features of Chinese polymedia environment described by this research also challenges the western perception of polymedia theory.

Key Words
polymedia, digitally mediated communication, mobile convergence, migrant family, Chinese family

To live in a world with(out) racism: Everyday reflexivity in long-lasting debates about race and racism in the Netherlands

Authors

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Abstract

This study examines the production of reflexivity in the context of a long-lasting public debate about race and racism in the Netherlands. Taking the public debate around the Dutch tradition of Zwarte Piet as a topic for discussion, we ask how older White Dutch critically reflect upon race and racism concerning their own lived experiences of (the transformation of) this tradition. Secondly, we ask what factors spur or constrain reflexive engagement with race and racism.

Reflexivity refers to a cognitive disposition towards subjecting taken-for-granted ideas, preferences, and behaviours to critical questioning (Giddens, 1991; 1993; Mezirow, 2000). It is best understood as a process, as people's views and the societal context within which these views develop are constantly revised. Analytically, reflexivity is approached here as a complex process reliant upon the intersection between personal experience and the transformation of socially accepted worldviews. In that sense, reflexivity remains a site of ideological struggle where opposing agendas rhetorically pull and push public opinion in different directions on the question of 'race' (Giddens, 1991; Kluttz et al., 2020; Mezirow, 2000). Thus, reflexivity is driven by and drives social change, often coinciding with "transformative learning" (Giddens, 1991; Kluttz et al., 2020; Mezirow, 2000, p. 8).

Reassessing one's assumptions can lead to different outcomes, including avoidance of critical inquiry and retreating into accepted worldviews. There is no guarantee that reflexivity generates socially progressive conclusions. An individual may reflexively question their views of race and racism while also falling back upon personal experience and taken-for-granted ways of thinking (Giddens, 1991; Rossi, 2014). This is particularly the case when individuals are confronted with increasingly complex social processes and risks to their identity, as at the heart of the Zwarte Piet debate. Importantly, this public debate asks a White majority to recognize its collective racial privilege and question the hegemonic Whiteness lens (Hughey, 2010) in assessing the self and national identity (Balkenhol, 2016; Wekker, 2016).

Informed by this theoretical framework, our study explored the production of reflexivity on race and racism through 15 in-depth interviews with self-identified White Dutch over 64 years old (face-to-face, average 60 minutes, held in spring 2022). These interviews were analyzed through a combination of thematic and critical discourse analysis. Where the first allowed the identification of recurrent themes across the interviews, the second allowed us to recover not only individual nuances and depth but also the linkage between individual and larger discourses in society

(Augoustinos & Every, 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lawless & Chen, 2019; Machin & Mayr, 2012; van Dijk, 2008).

Our findings show that reflexivity on race and racism was produced within three discursive contexts: (1) talking about social transformation, (2) dealing with (perspectives of) others, and (3) assessing the 'Self'. The first two shed light on how one's surroundings influence personal meaning-making processes. The last one showcases how reflexivity is produced by turning this lens inward. We explore the interaction between these internal and external influences, discussing their implications for how reflexivity around race and racism can be analytically understood.

Key Words

Hegemonic Whiteness, Reflexivity, Racism, Public Debate, Race, National Identity, Activism

How the Major Powers Persuade on Social Media: a Clue from Metadiscourse

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Abstract

Under the impact of COVID-19, the evolution of the international political landscape has accelerated. The effect of the interaction between China and America is so profound that it directs international issues and shapes the existing international system. With the contradiction between two sides escalating from trade friction, the contention of discourse has also become one of the focal points. Social media like Twitter has already been a major arena for political discourse, but few studies have focused on metadiscourse under the context of social media. Based on the previous studies, this study uses metadiscourse as a quantitative index to explore the interpersonal and political effect of metadiscourse in the emulative context and its underpinning, the discourse exclusion systems.

Metadiscourse is defined as “discourse about discourse”, which is irrelevant to the propositional content of a text, but it helps readers/hearers understand the meaning of the text according to the writer/speaker’s expectation (Harris, 1959). Hyland (2005) put forward an interactive metadiscourse model, which classifies metadiscourse into two categories: interactive resources, including transitions, frame markers, etc., and interactional resources, including hedges, boosters, etc. Crismore (1993) interprets metadiscourse as the speaker’s “invasion” in the text, thus the influence of the speaker’s ideology on the discourse must be investigated, too. Based on Foucault’s theory of “system of exclusion”, metadiscourse can not only organize discourse and promote the interaction between speakers and readers, but also achieves the effect of identity shaping through metaphorical expressions of attitudes and opinions (R. Wodak, 2001).

The research data contains tweets (*N* = 1392) collected by a Twitter parser from the following accounts: Lijian Zhao (@zlj517) and Chunying Hua (@CHNSpokesperson) who are the China official spokespersons, and Ned Price (@StateDeptSpox) and Jalina Porter (@StateDeputySpox) who are the US Department official spokespersons. All the tweets were cleaned and sorted into three categories of issues: pandemic, democracy and environment by unsupervised LDA model. The metadiscourse markers are extracted and counted using Antconc 3.3.

Results reveal that each spokesperson’s use of metadiscourse is relatively stable and robust. Accordingly, US spokespersons’ use of interactive metadiscourse (55.50 per 1000 words) is slightly higher than that of China spokespersons (46.63 per 1000 words), while the use of interactional

metadiscourse(67.77 per 1000 words) is significantly higher than that of China spokespersons (26.51 per 1000 words), which shows that US spokespersons are more inclined to use emotional persuasion. In contrast, China spokespersons operate their power behind discourse more in the way of logical reasoning. The underpinning of the US spokespersons' metadiscourse markers is the division & rejection system, which serves as the the privilege and right to speak. Different from the division & rejection system, the China spokespersons mainly uses the opposition system to restrict the metadiscourse on what could be said, which achieve the demand for power by clarifying the difference between truth and fallacies. Division & rejection and opposition are two antithetical systems. The use of metadiscourse to exclude the unfavourable discourse in their power terrain is essentially the discourse power contest between the spokespersons of China and the United States.

Key Words
Metadiscourse, Twitter, spokespersons, Foucault

Research on the Public Opinion Expression of Short videos about the Spring Festival in Chinese Mainstream Media

Authors

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Ms. 毅然 巴 - Communication University of China

Abstract

"The Spring Festival is the most important traditional festival in China, which means a lot to social functions and cultural symbolization in the way of philosophy, ethics, social relations and psychology " (Chen, 2004). In the new pattern of converging media communication, the short video platform has developed rapidly. "Visual cognition plays a significant role in the creation and inheritance of Spring Festival" (Hu, 2016). Diversified communication subjects and visual communication technology enrich the traditional festival landscape, however, fragmentation, entertainment and consumerism tend to impact the connotation of traditional festivals. Mainstream media has vital influence on building good public opinion ecology for the Internet communication of traditional festivals and enhancing identity in modern society. With the short video transmission of the mediatized Spring Festival, how can the mainstream media guide public opinion? How to illustrate the action? What social impact does the action have?

Parsons' social action theory provides a research perspective. He believes that "action" includes the simultaneous existence of actor, purpose, situation and normalization (Parsons, 1967/2008), whose most important function is to promote social integration (Wu, Wang,&Sun, 2017). According to this theory, we propose a theoretical framework: field-action-function. “Field”, as the background for actors, is the application of “situation” in social action theory, which contains the irreversibility of the existed environment and the plasticity of actors. According to the situation, social actors choose appropriate means to achieve their goals, which constitute the process of “action”. From this perspective, we take the short video public opinion expression of mainstream media as an action and deconstruct its action process. “Function” is the effect of action.

TikTok is the most popular short video platform in China. We select the Spring Festival short videos of mainstream media in the TikTok as the research samples. Seven Chinese comprehensive, central and representative mainstream media such as People's Daily, Xinhua News Agency and CCTV News are chosen. The video release time is limited to one week before and after the Spring Festival, which is from January 14, 2023 to February 4, 2023. 604 short videos are selected. The methods of content analysis and text analysis are used. In terms of “field”, short videos’ camera language expression, background music and duration are analyzed. In order to explore how the mainstream media build the public field, short videos’ high-frequency words, collocations and semantic networks are analyzed. In the aspect of “action”, we analyze the short video public opinion from the perspective of visual framework. As for “function”, based on the above research and the characteristics of Chinese society, the article explains the influence of the action.

Our findings show that the mainstream media deconstruct the privacy and shape the publicity through the collage of "nobody"; "Cute words", homophones and catchwords with postmodern characteristics are used to attract young users; On the basis of self-shaping public field, the other-shaping narration of international friends are introduced to re-public the construction. In this public field, the mainstream media use the folk culture to reflect the national strength through the integration of different visual frameworks, which mainly contain “economy framework”, “culture framework”, “politics and military framework”, “emotional sociology framework”; The visualization of space-time strengthens the "rites of passage" of the Spring Festival; Short video users participate in the Cyber Spring Festival with technological embodiment. Therefore, the mainstream media’s short video public opinion realizes the reproduction of the Spring Festival. Through the inheritance of traditional cultural symbols and reshaping mediated cultural memory, the mainstream media has achieved the cultural integration function to guide the modernization transfer of the Spring Festival; "Kinship affection" and the patriotism are embedded to achieve emotional integration; Along the path of "culture identity - emotion identity", the mainstream media promote social stability, maintain a harmonious society and realize value integration by the "generation structure" (between parents and children)and prosperous national image.

Key Words

Public Opinion; Short Video; Chinese Mainstream Media; Spring Festival

A study of BIRG, CORF and spiral of silence via examining social media activities in 2022 Taipei Mayor Election

Authors

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Abstract

Basking in Reflected Glory (BIRG) phenomenon have been found in many sport studies that when one's favored team win the game, people tend to wear the team's jersey the day after so that they are able to associate themselves psychologically with the winning team, then their own reputation can be bolstered (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman & Sloan,1976). Conversely, if one's favored team lose, CORF (Cutting Off Reflected Failure) phenomenon might occur—people reject to have any connection with the defeated team (Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986). This study applied the BIRG and CORF concepts in the field of political area, tried to explore when one's favored candidate win or lose the 2022 Taipei Mayor Election, whether the BIRG or CORF phenomenon will occur or not. The concepts of BIRG and CORF were examined by when voters see their favored candidate who win or lose the election is mentioned on the Internet, will they press Like, Share and comment to show their support for him or her? In addition, since many studies have proved that people's willingness to speak in public is definitely influenced by the spiral of silence process (e.g., Lin & Salwen, 1997), thus while BIRG and CORF concepts were examined, the effect of spiral of silence was also inspected. The other control variables included political involvement, media use, interpersonal communication and self-esteem. Internet surveys were utilized in this study. InsightXplorer Survey was commissioned to conduct the surveys. About 600 samples were randomly collected from InsightXplorer Survey's Online Panel database which is the largest panel in Taiwan. While some scholars studied if sport fans experience BIRG after the game (e.g., End, Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, & Jacquemotte, 2001), other studies examined BIRG and CORF processes before and after elections. (e.g., Wann, Hamlet, Wilson, and Hodges, 1995). Accordingly, we decided to conduct a panel study. Thus, not only can we see if the winner supporters/loser supporters experience the BIRG/CORF after the election, but we can also figure out whether the willingness of the winner supporters/loser supporters to press Like, Share and comment after the election is significantly higher/lower than that before the election. The results revealed that male, higher self-esteem, higher political involvement, more newspaper reading and interpersonal communication people were more likely to comment on Internet to praise their favored candidate, in other words, to experience BIRG. People with higher self-esteem, political involvement and more Internet using tended to have higher willingness to press Like to show their support for their favored candidates. And the fear of being isolated did influence the dependent variable—the more people were afraid of being isolated, the less willingness they have shown to press Like, Share and comment. Nevertheless, the influence of spiral of silence did not significantly interfere the BIRG and CORF phenomenon. After controlling the effect of spiral of silence, individuals who voted for

the winner tended to press Like and comment to praise their favored candidates, and people who voted for the loser were less likely to have the same behavior. In addition, the results of comparing people's willingness to press Like, Share and comment before and after election showed that voters who voted for the defeated candidates were significantly less willing to click "Like" after the election than before.

Key Words

Spiral of Silence, BIRG , CORF, Social media

Effects of personal traits and robot attributes on perceived human-robot similarity: An empirical study of Mainland China

Authors

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Abstract

Human-robot similarity has long been the pursuit of roboticists and robot designers. It is an important but also complex factor by which people judge robots. The complexity comes from two aspects. On the one hand, the predictive effect of robots' perceived human likeness, as the Uncanny Valley Hypothesis suggests, on their likability can be counterproductive. Previous studies mostly focused on such a nonlinear relation between perceived human-robot similarity and its outcomes (e.g., affective attitude, acceptance). On the other hand, to perceive similarity between robot and human, there can be individual differences from person to person. However, pervious research on this was relatively limited, most of which started with the specific robot shape or function to observe human-robot similarity perception, but failed to reflect the differences among individuals and groups. In other words, antecedents of perceived human-robot similarity need further investigation. Based on unified theory of acceptance and use of technology and other classical models of social robot acceptance, the current study, as an exploratory one, aims to explore factors that affect people's perceived human-robot similarity in terms of personal traits and robot attributes.

A cross-sectional questionnaire survey (N = 1110) was conducted. The questionnaire was divided into three versions, showing pictures of the agender robot (Honda's "Asimo"), male robot (Hanson Robotics' "Han") and female robot (Hanson Robotics' "Sophia") respectively. Respondents answered based on being told the purpose of the study and observing the picture. The independent variables of the study are divided into two groups: personal traits and robots attributes. Personal traits include demographics, self-efficacy and religiosity, while robot attributes consist of robot appearance (agender/male/female-robot condition), perceived usefulness, perceived sociability and perceived enjoyment. The dependent variable, perceived human-robot similarity, comprised two levels, social presence and imagined relational closeness. Social presence was designed to measure the extent to which people perceived robots as real people. Imagined relational closeness was designed to reveal how close people were to robots in their lives. The scales used in the measurement were all adapted from literature. Independent samples t-tests, one-way ANOVAs, bivariate correlations and hierarchical multivariate linear regressions were performed respectively to meet the need of research to test the relationship between different variables.

Research found that gender, age and self-efficacy had a significant influence on perceived human-

robot similarity; robot appearance significantly related to perceived human-robot similarity that humanoid robots were believed to be more human-like than agender robots, and it was believed to be more easier to develop intimate relationships with female robots; all aspects of perceived functionality had an effect on perceived human-robot similarity, especially perceived sociability was crucial for whether people viewed robots as social entities. To sum up, research revealed that the sociability of robots laid an important basis for people to regard them as social entities, while the actual relational closeness depended more on their human-like appearance. Furthermore, the more robots were perceived as tools (i.e., a higher level of perceived usefulness), the less they were perceived as “real human beings”.

Key Words

Human-Robot Similarity, Human-Robot Interaction, Human-Robot Relationship, Social Robot

Social media and electoral campaign in Italy: a multi-platform analysis concerning the nuclear debate.

Authors

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Abstract

The Italian elections held on September 2022 have seen a clear victory of the right coalition, whose government is led by Giorgia Meloni. An aspect of modern electoral campaigns is that social media have become a fundamental instrument for political leaders to vehiculate information to the electorate (Stier et al., 2018; Martella & Bracciale, 2022). The electoral campaign brought back the public debate on the term "nuclear" with two different declinations: concerning nuclear energy for civilian use, and inherently the fear of an escalation in Ukraine and the use of atomic weapons.

This research aims to analyze the debate on social media during the three months of the Italian electoral campaign, from the 23rd of June to the 25th of September 2022. We explored the cross-platform dynamics to individuate narratives and dominant voices that convey information by connecting different social media platforms using bridges. A bridge is a concept taken from the transmedia theory we used to describe the connection between social media platforms.

The methodological approach consists of Digital Methods (Rogers, 2019) to individuate connections between platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Telegram, Rumble, and Mastodon), and apply a qualitative exploratory approach to depict the roles of different actors and narratives at play. Data collection, process, and visualization stages relied on software such as DMI[1]-4CAT, Cortext, Crowdtangle, Gephi, and Tableau.

Primary evidence shows that only a few political parties (Movimento5stelle, Lega, Sinistra&Verdi) discussed nuclear energy for civil use, mainly leaving the floor to activists on different social media platforms (Carlo Gubitosa[2], Umberto Minopoli[3]). The debate regarding the contemporary geopolitical situation and the conflict between Ukraine and Russia saw the participation of the entire political specter. This debate is characterized by affective content which tries to appeal to people’s sentiments. The discussion is fueled by ordinary users that lead attention toward hyper-partisan information channels, fake news, and disinformation (Haug, 2022; Kuźmiński, 2022), which can be described as defective. Finally, bridges with "non-mainstream" platforms such as Mastodon, niche channels on Telegram, or pseudo-informative video channels on Youtube and Rumble have become essential because of the potential to get viral, and infective.

The effectiveness of social media plays an increasing role in the democratic dynamics of a country nowadays.

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[1] Digital Methods Initiative is one of Europe's leading Internet Studies research groups.

[2] Carlo Gubitosa. In *Wikipedia*. https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Gubitosa

[3] Writer and president of the Italian Nuclear Association (AIN).

Key Words
italian elections, nuclear, digital methods, social media, affective, defective, infective

The Battle of Devices: Unraveling the IoT Acceptance and Media Multitasking in the IoT Environment

Authors

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Abstract

This study investigates the actual situation of Internet of Things (IoT) acceptance, media multitasking, and their correlation in the IoT environment. An online survey was conducted with 429 participants in China. A path analysis was employed to test the research model of the study.

First, the results revealed the media multitasking index (MMI) in the IoT environment, which kept similar to the MMIs of traditional media. This result reflected the characteristics of IoT, playing supporting roles in users' media use. In other words, IoT devices are not the primary media to dominate the media using time. Also, according to the limited capacity information processing model, people cannot process too much information or use too many different media devices simultaneously. So that we can understand why the IoT multitasking level does not change a lot compared to the media multitasking of traditional media.

Second, the MMI of IoT was introduced into the IoT acceptance model as an outcome variable to see if other factors impact MMI. The results showed that IoT skill positively influences MMI, which proved that IoT skill is the internal requirement of media multitasking. Perceived ease of use (PEoU) shows a negative connection with MMI. This connection can be explained by the smartness and efficiency of IoT. With higher PEoU, users can maximize the IoT functions without using more devices simultaneously.

Third, media acceptance in the IoT environment in China was tested. And some inconsistent results with prior studies were found and discussed. PEoU showed a slight negative connection with PU, and PU showed no significant correlation with attitude. These results showed that IoT changed the usual pattern of technology acceptance and indicated the necessity of deeply researching this newly emerging technology.

The findings of this study were closely related to the IoT context and shed new light on the reality of IoT acceptance and media multitasking in the IoT scenario. This is likely to be the first study that added the MMI to the IoT acceptance model. The findings of this study are convincing for the extension and theoretical development of new media research in the context of IoT device engagement.

Key Words

IoT environment, IoT acceptance, media multitasking, IoT multitasking, smart devices

Risk Perception, Sociocultural Psychology and Online Public Space in COVID-19 pandemic: A Computer-Assisted Content Analysis on the Topic of #Mask Among Chinese Netizens

Authors

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Mr. Bochen Li - Communication University of China

Abstract

Since COVID-19 was first detected, people have become dependent on digital media to stay informed and interact with others. Masks have occupied an increasingly prominent position in risk issues on social media and triggered a lot of discussion. Risk cultural theory suggests that the public's perception of risk is largely dependent on the sociocultural environment (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983). The cultural value orientation of collectivism versus individualism has been an important explanatory path in comparative studies of the phenomenon of epidemic prevention and control in China and the West. Nevertheless, some Chinese scholars deny this simple binary distinction, and Yang has proposed “guanxilization” and “categorization” to understand the social psychology mechanisms in China (Yang, 2019). Therefore, under sudden disastrous events, what kind of social and cultural psychology do Chinese netizens present in their online speech? Exploring this issue will not only extend the theory of risk cultural theory, but it will also help us to understand social relations in the new technological space.

This study focused on comments on mask-related topics on Sina Weibo and used computer-assisted content analysis as a research methodology. We selected 200 representative microblogs. After crawling, mining, and cleaning, 68,813 valid comments were obtained. To understand the issues that concerned the public, we performed LDA topic modeling on the full stage and conducted semantic network analysis by Gephi on five different stages to illustrate keywords in different periods.

During the period between January 2020 and October 2022, as the virus spread and regular epidemic prevention measures were implemented in China, the discussion of #Mask in cyberspace decreased, the focus became increasingly broad and dispersed, and confrontational controversies became more frequent. Users' concern about masks has changed from having to wearing and taking them off, and the subjects involved gradually shift from state, government, and regions to individuals. The overall tone of the discussion shifted from a nationwide approach to fighting the epidemic to inter-regional cheerleading and mutual assistance and then to the individual's life and physiological needs beyond epidemic prevention and control. Besides, positive and negative emotions have arisen one after another, and the emotional hierarchy has become more complex.

More importantly, with the analysis of specific semantic networks, we found that the cultural psychology reflected in the above phenomenon is not simply a shift from collectivism to individualism. In the later period, the words responsibility, people, and understanding were still repeatedly mentioned. In the context of public health emergencies, Weibo users express their opinions in a "self-narrative" framework based on “guanxilization” and “categorization” mechanisms that are characterized by scalability and morality. The framework of "community narrative" is generated within the boundaries defined by the above mechanism and is derived from the two logical paths of internal solidarity and external confrontation. During COVID-19, the dynamic interweaving between personal interests and national interests has led to changes in one's own boundaries, the process of individual and state from unity to conflict is a process of dynamic transfer with complex practical needs and individual group belonging.

Key Words

Risk Cultural Theory, Sociocultural Psychology, Guanxilization, Categorization, COVID-19, Computational Communication

The Research of Knowledge Dissemination and Media Practice of Chinese Youth: Based on the Analysis of Users in the Knowledge Area of the Chinese Bullet Screen Video Website – Bilibili

Authors

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Dr. Siqi Liu - Communication University of China

Abstract

Background

Under the irreversible trend of the development of Internet video, knowledge dissemination has ushered in many new opportunities and challenges. At present, it has become a media practice for young people to acquire knowledge by watching short videos. Short videos have also become an important channel for knowledge dissemination beyond the entertainment function. This paper, from the theoretical perspective of knowledge sociology and mediatization, has a deep understanding of the interrelationship between media, knowledge, and society.

Compared with general short videos, knowledge-based short videos have the following new features: (1) Knowledge-intensive and professional. (2) Visual deconstruction of "hardcore" knowledge. (3) It has the function of knowledge dissemination and educational learning. (4) Knowledge is fragmented and unsystematic. The short video is a result of the application of network technology, and knowledge-based short videos are the combination of media technology, knowledge production, and cultural symbols, leading to a new type of knowledge structure and a new paradigm of knowledge production.

Research Questions

This paper focuses on typical cases and phenomena of knowledge-based short videos and answering why young people regard watching short videos as a means of acquiring knowledge. What are the motivations and behaviors of young people? What are the effectiveness of knowledge acquisition through watching short video?

Research Methods

This paper used the methods of online participatory observation and in-depth interviews. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 online and offline interviewees, who were loyal users of the knowledge area of Bilibili (a video website with a high concentration of young people in China). And then, the study constructed three-level coding conceptualized the information. The interview time ranged from 40 to 60 minutes. The interview questions include understanding of knowledge dissemination. The motivation, behavior, and evaluation of acquiring knowledge through watching videos. Compared with traditional learning methods, what is the difference between knowledge dissemination in social videos?

Findings

The main conclusions of this paper are as follows:

(1) Motivation includes meeting the need for knowledge, increasing the topic of social conversation, and accompanying scenes.

(2) Through a series of actions, such as watching short videos, clicking like, commenting, forwarding, and posting bullet screen comments, it is the direct behavior of young people to participate in the process of knowledge dissemination. The decomposition and secondary creation of video is a more in-depth behavior.

(3) "Acquire knowledge" is no longer a single purpose, but begins to pursue the added value brought by knowledge, such as whether to increase culture capital, become an identity tag, or highlight their aesthetic taste. This is the result of the interaction between short video media technology, knowledge content, and subject practice.

Theoretical Ponderation

As a symbol of constructing knowledge dissemination ecology and social reality, short video media constitute a new visual representation, participate in the structural interaction between people and society, and become an important force in the transformation of the knowledge society.

Key Words

knowledge dissemination, short video, media practice, Bilibili, youth study

The Impact of Internet Communication on China IPO Underpricing--Based on Xueqiu Investment Community and 360 Index

Authors

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Abstract

On February 1, 2023, China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) publicly solicited opinions on the draft rules of major systems, such as the Administrative Measures for Registration of Initial Public Offerings, which are involved in the full implementation of the stock issuance registration system. The implementation of the registration system will further stimulate the investment willingness of Chinese retail investors. According to iiMedia Research, the user scale of China's securities app is growing rapidly, from 40 million in 2015 to 150 million in 2021, and is expected to reach 180 million in 2023, an increase of 3.5 times in eight years. The Internet financial information service industry has also seen rapid development, and information disseminated online has become a key fact to influence detail investors' decisions.

Therefore, this paper studies the impact of internet users' attention and sentiment on IPO underpricing. The research methods of this paper are theoretical analysis, empirical research, content analysis and literature analysis. Firstly, the underlying theoretical logic is constructed through theoretical analysis in the fields of behavioral finance and communication studies, and research hypotheses are formulated. Secondly, an empirical study is designed to test the hypothesis. The data of the explanatory variable and control variables were obtained from EastMoney Financial Website. Among the explanatory variables, two proxy variables were selected for "netizens' attention", and exposure was obtained from 360 Big Data sharing platform, netizens' discussion was captured from Snowball website; "netizen sentiment" is also calculated from the discussion information. After the data were collected and collated, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis and robustness testing were conducted.

The results of the empirical analysis found that: (1) there is a significant positive relationship between netizens' note degree and IPO suppression. (2) There is a significant positive correlation between netizens' positive sentiment bias and IPO price suppression. (3) Compared with media exposure, the number of discussion posts in online investment communities has a greater impact on netizens' attention and a more significant impact on IPO price suppression. Based on the existing studies, this paper investigates the factors influencing the phenomenon of IPO price suppression in the online securities market by building a relatively complete online communication influence system. The "Internet users' attention" reflects the "information flow" in online communication, and the "Internet users' emotional bias" reflects the "emotional flow". Among the two proxy variables selected for "netizen attention", media exposure and netizen discussion are

measured from mass communication channels and interpersonal communication channels respectively, and their effects are compared.

This study shows the influence of the development of network communication on citizens' economic and financial participation behavior, which has certain supplementary and enlightening significance for interdisciplinary communication research.

Key Words

Network Communication, IPO underpricing, Netizens Attention, Online Financial Behavior

Polarisation and digital mobilization on Twitter. The case of the National Strike of 2021 in Colombia

Authors

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Abstract

Digital platforms are increasingly influential in the movement and dissemination of political information (Campos-Domínguez, 2017) while at the same time contributing to social and global uncertainty due to the disinformative content generated and disseminated by misleading news (Alfonso et al., 2019). Authors such as Campos-Domínguez (2017), Tufekci (2018), and Lingiardi et al. (2019) define the concept of polarisation in social networks based on the association of phenomena, both political and communicative, in which rhetoric, driven by the dissemination of hate speech and disinformative content, promotes the development of a public opinion prone to the dissemination of prejudices against certain groups, increasing social unrest in the face of certain events or phenomena.

The scenario described so far encourages users to participate, willingly or not, in transmitting unverified disinformative content and promotes the polarisation of public opinion (Said-Hung et al., 2021). In high social mobilization, such as the one in 2021 in Colombia, a wide range of social and institutional actors sought higher visibility for their ideological positions. That conditioning access to information due to failures in Internet access or trying to transmit the content of all kinds (disinformative or not) to provide further visibility to their different causes (Karisma Foundation, 2021; Meza, 2021).

Under the scenario described above, this paper aims to understand how the sentimental polarisation observed on Twitter favoured the digital mobilization strategy applied around the protests that took place in Colombia during the National Strike of 2021. From 1,215,646 messages published in Spanish and collected on Twitter from 01/05/2021 to 03/07/2022 were analyzed concerning the leading hashtags used during the period studied (#paronacionalcolombia, #nosestanmatandocolombia, #SOSColombia, #Colombiaalertaroja and #ColombiaSOSDDHHH). The results show an apparent coordination between users located in different countries who digitally mobilized the debate around these protests through the viralisation of thematic axes focused on making visible the evolution of the protests, the violence of the Colombian state security forces and the violation of human rights. These issues were addressed in micro-narratives published on Twitter, with a negative sentimental charge that encouraged the polarisation and conflict in public opinion about what was happening in the country.

Key Words
Sentimental Polarization; Twitter; digital mobilization; Social Media; Colombia; National Strike

So-called Artificial Intelligence for Social Issues and processes? A Theoretical and Empirical Critique.

Authors

Prof. Friedrich Krotz - University of Bremen

Abstract

More and more companies and institutions are using so-called Artificial Intelligence (AI), and human users are increasingly encountering such programs in computer networks. More and more programs of this software type are also no longer used to control technical processes, but to intervene in people's social lives. Therefore, it seems urgent to classify this hardware/software technology theoretically as well as to investigate it empirically. This is done here on the basis of an understanding of humans as "Animal Symbolicum" (Cassirer 2007, 51), of AI as 'Technology and cultural form' (Williams 1990), and in order to grasp, understand, and explain the historical world and its processes "in order to gain insights for our own practice and to change it if necessary" (Hall 1989, 179).

From a theoretical point of view, it thus becomes clear, among other things (Krotz 2022),

- that computers can only collect data about humans in networks according to behaviorism, i.e., pure behavioral data without taking into account human internal processes such as intentions or meaning,

- that so-called learning AI 'learns' by reinforcement according to a behaviorist learning model, whereby one must speak of dressage rather than learning,

- and that the talk of artificial intelligence as a whole is questionable. The complexity of today's software is sometimes surprising, but computers only ever run programs, which must be thought of as sequences of commands. The ideas behind them come from human programmers. In this respect, such so-called AI algorithms are nothing more than complex programs that can run automatically and to which humans must then adapt.

Empirically, the results of a qualitative analysis of an AI program designed to make computer programs empathic are presented (Chen/Wang 2019). Here, it becomes clear by way of example

- that the basic assumptions considered about humans and their actions, to which such programs are supposed to relate, are often absurd and overall insufficient,

- that such HW/SW systems are by no means intended to control processes that are people-oriented, but are programmed for tasks that are defined by the respective companies involved and are intended to serve their interests.

- It is shown that with such automatic programs machines can be operated and technical processes can be controlled, but that they are unsuitable for a shaping of social and cultural processes,

because they can only shape reality in a reduced way and thus usually only benefit their manufacturers.

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Key Words
Artificial Intelligence, automatic software, Social Technology, qualitative analysis, critique

Divert and Converge: Representations and Agenda Interactions of E-cigarettes News, Research and Policy in China

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Abstract

Background

China is the world's largest producer and exporter of the e-cigarette industry. While debates on e-cigarettes' influences are conducted in scientific arguments, media play essential roles in shaping representations and influencing relevant policies. Under the Chinese tobacco monopoly context, by incorporating social representation theory with science communication, this study adopted an agenda-setting approach to explore how various actors (i.e., scientists, the media, and the government) engaged in the construction of representations of the controversial issue of E-cigarettes in their systems (i.e., research publication, news, and official policy) over time.

While many studies have witnessed how the media connects scientists and the public, this study uses big data to analyze and examine how the media has the potential to predict research in the academic system. The discussion of constructing e-cigarette representations in China is not only about tobacco control, but also shows how science and technology are embedded in society and interact with media and politics.

Method

Topic modeling and supervised machine learning were employed to identify attribute categories based on 16,966 news, 318 academic papers, and 29 policy documents from 2011 to 2021. Network analysis was used to examine the degree of similarity of representation across systems. VAR, VECM models and the Granger test were used to explore whose priorities more strongly predict the other and how dynamic interactions appear in different systems.

Result

Results reveal that the salience of debate on e-cigarettes has shifted from *smoking cessation* to *adolescent access* and *regulation* in academic and media systems. The Granger test identified the significant positive effect of news representation on academic representation regarding *health harm,* and the positive significant reciprocal effect between news and academic representation regarding *smoking cessation*. The media, academic research and policy triad have emerged as a long-term stable relationship regarding *adolescent access* and *regulation*.

Conclusion

The representational constructs of e-cigarettes are not identical in academic and media systems, but a high degree of overlap and co-variation of salience exist regarding special sub-topics.

Compared to traditional social representation theory, which divides scientific and social representations into two separate sections, this paper argues that social representations may interact with scientific representations. Facing uncertainty in a risk society, issues among science, media, and politics tend to converge and co-vary. Future research should not only pay attention to the one-way communication of science by the media but also to the reverse influence of society on science.

Key Words

E-cigarette, big data analytics, representation, time series analysis, network analysis

Working with WeChat: Blurring Work/Non-work Boundaries of Interpersonal Communication in the Mediated Work Practice

Authors

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Abstract

Social media platforms, acting as the emerging digital infrastructure, are technological, economic and ideological forces that shape our everyday lives and social practices (Willig, 2022). WeChat, the umbrella social platform with the largest population of users in China, has been widely applied to daily workplace communication and has created platform-mediated work practice and interpersonal relationship. The dual roles of one WeChat account, for both professional purpose and private life, blur the boundaries between work and non-work interpersonal interactions, transform the pattern of relational work (Zelizer, 2018) and reshape the interpersonal agency and subjectivity of workers.

Based on the theoretical framework of mediatization theory and boundary theory, this study aims to explore how social media platforms reconstruct the boundaries of interpersonal communication in the mediated work practice. The mediatization processes, in which media play a key role in social change, include extension, substitution, amalgamation and accommodation (Schulz, 2004). The mediatization of interpersonal communication at work, driven by social platforms, especially Wechat, extends the natural limits of interpersonal communication capacities, substitutes interpersonal activities and thus change their character, merges mediated and non-media working activities, and integrates workplace interpersonal relationship into platform logic. The boundaries, which help individuals preserve personal lives, compartmentalise role identities and limit interference between work and non-work field (Fonner & Stache, 2012), show the interpersonal relationship continuum from formal to informal, from monetized to non-monetized, from role integration to role segmentation on Wechat. The following questions are asked according to the research aim:

RQ1: How does the blurring interpersonal boundary between work and non-work fields arise on social media platforms?

RQ2: What kind of state does the work/non-work boundary of interpersonal communication present in the platform-mediated work?

RQ3: How do workers evaluate their platform-mediated interpersonal boundary state and exert their agency between the ideal boundary state and the real boundary practice?

This study draws on an ethnographic approach including in-depth interview and participatory observation of 25 employees who use WeChat as their main tool of workplace communication to

reveal the practices and opinions related to their mediated interpersonal communication. The walkthrough method (Light et al.,2016) is also used to investigate the platform architecture design for users' construction of relationship.

Preliminary findings are as follow. Firstly, the resonance between the intimacy purpose of non-work interpersonal communication and the efficiency purpose of work interpersonal communication prompts workers to organize their work/non-work interpersonal relationship in one most-frequently-used, always-on WeChat account. The workers' WeChat friends, of different relationship intensity and from both work field and non-work field, share the same interpersonal communication functionality provided by the platform. Secondly, the personal, informal and daily attributes of Wechat and the official, formal, professional norms of interpersonal communication at work mutually reshape each other. The platform-based interpersonal activities, such as clicking likes, using cute memes during working conversations, sending emotional comments etc, become rituals of workplace interpersonal communication. Thirdly, the blurring work/non-work interpersonal communication boundaries are paradoxically considered as both social capital and work burden, setting agendas for the future mediated workplace communication research.

Key Words
social media platform, mediated work, boundary, interpersonal communication, WeChat

Rebuilding Cyberarchaeology: A New Qualitative Process

Authors

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Abstract

The framework of cyberarchaeology was developed by Jones (1997; 2003) for the purpose of examining online networks and virtual communities, and later modified by Zimbra, Chen and Abbasi (2010). Since the modification, the method has fallen out of favor and no longer utilized by qualitative researchers. In this paper, we explore the history of cyberarchaeology, and reasons for its fade from media research. In addition, we illustrate new ways cyberarchaeology can be utilized in qualitative research, and provide an example of this updated method.

In his original thesis, Jones postulates that online, virtual communities should be examined the same way as ancient sites of human habitat. In order for a cyber-site to be considered a virtual settlement, it must meet four conditions: "(1) a minimum level of interactivity; (2) a variety of communicators; (3) a minimum level of sustained membership; (4) a virtual common-public-space where a significant portion of interactive group-CMCs [computer media communications] occur" (para. 15). In this way, cyberarchaeology was less of a method, and rather a lens to examine media technologies and platforms utilized to build community. Later, Zimbra, Chen and Abbasi (2010) elaborated on Jones' initial work, through their examination of social movement networks. The process of their cyberarchaeology involved three steps: 1) research design, 2) classification of artifacts, and 3) visualization of the network. In this way, then, the researchers were moving away from an analytical lens, to a more concrete method that could be reproduced and replicated by other scholars.

The most problematic change to cyberarchaeology was Zimbra et al's second step. The classification of artifacts involved the use of web crawlers to follow links from an initial set of primary documents provided by the researcher. We find that there are two key problems with this step. First, the web crawlers described by Zimbra et al have become obsolete, making the second step difficult. Indeed, such web crawlers cannot collect data from modern social media. Second, the shift in emphasis from Jones' conditions for virtual community to links discovered by web crawlers makes this method much more reminiscent of network analysis used in quantitative research.

In order to rebuild the method for qualitative research, we engaged in a cyberarchaeology that examined websites and social media that included three steps: 1) mapping through slow-crawling, which involved close reading of sites, coding for general characteristics (e.g., interactive v.

intertextual); 2) refinement of coding for specific categories that address the research question (e.g., user-to-user, etc.; few, moderate, several); 3) search for patterns in the data, and collection of descriptive data through qualitative content analysis (see Altheide & Schneider, 2013). This process is demonstrated through our examination of networks that spread Qanon conspiracy theories in the United States. Overall, we feel that qualitative media scholars who choose to explore online networks and virtual communities can use this method in their future endeavors.

Key Words
Cyberarchaeology, virtual community, qualitative research

Live Commenting in News Streaming: Platformed and Fragmented Public Opinions

Authors

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Abstract

The live commenting feature, also called “bullet chat”, provided in the leading Chinese video-based social network platform Bilibili for the young generations, enables video viewers to send anonymous live comments that fly across the screen like bullets which can be seen instantly by other viewers. This platform-based feature is specifically powerful in news streaming as it promotes instant interaction among news viewers by sharing time-sensitive opinions and feelings on the screen.

Live commenting technology used in the platform facilitates and forms a novel news view-and-share experience in a digital environment. The experience resembles the traditional living-room television watching experience with families and transforms it to an individual-screen watching experience with strangers. The live comments, the bullet chats, are short in length and fragmented in nature. They are not well-developed arguments, as they are time-sensitive, but are spontaneous first-sight opinions that can be influential to others’ viewing experiences and opinions to the news. Thus, this platformed feature provides a new ground that presents socio-cultural contexts and fragmented public opinions.

This study seeks to understand the role of live commenting technology in the digital communication processes regarding COVID-19 news videos and this feature’s influences on forming public opinions for the young generation in the Chinese socio-cultural context. Specifically, using Bilibili website and app as the research site and taking COVID-19 news videos as cases, this paper first interrogates how the interface and the settings of the platform regarding live commenting feature promotes users’ interactive news watching. And then this study asks: What do users comment on COVID-19 video news? Are those emotions or opinions? Are the comments unitary or diverse, and how does the live commenting feature contribute to this? How does live commenting technology effect digital news reporting and watching? What are the differences between bullet chats and comments under the videos in terms of content, ways of expression, and ways of interaction?

This study uses the framework of reception theory, as well as affect theory. Using Stuart Hall’s encoding and decoding model of communication (1973), this paper analyzes the preferred, negotiated, and oppositional readings of the digital news videos, and then demonstrates bullet chat users’ readings of other chat postings. Using Eve Sedgwick and Lauren Berlant’s critical theory perspectives of affect theory, this paper understands the role of affect and emotions in shaping social values and public opinions, as well as social interactions.

This paper conducts comparative analysis on bullet chats and under-video comments on the three most viewed domestic COVID-19 digital news videos posted by CCTV News Channel in Bilibili website and app, up to October 30, 2021. The analysis concentrates on the differences between live commenting and under-video comments regarding their content, emotion expression, and dynamics of interaction. Ultimately, this study aims to investigate the roles of live commenting technology in the forming of fragmented public opinions among young generation community.

Key Words
Public opinion, live comment technology, platform, covid-19

Videoconferencing Fatigue: The Loss of Subjectivity and the Rise of Technology

Authors

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Ms. LIU Yang - Communication University of China

Abstract

Introduction:

Exploring how to transcend the obstacles brought about by the limitations of time and space to human development and social operation has always been the driving force for the development of communication technology. Under the shadow of the epidemic, online office software represented by video conferencing has profoundly changed people's living habits, even today when the haze of the epidemic has gradually receded.

However, the negative effects of video conferencing are emerging, and some scholars have proposed the concept of "video conferencing burnout". Researchers usually use positivist methods to measure the causes of burnout from a psychological point of view (Andrew A. Bennett & Emily D. Campion, 2021), or associate video burnout with the occurrence and changes of other behaviors (Benjamin J. Li, Shruti Malviya & Edson C. Tandoc Jr, 2022).

These research traditions are still the logical starting point of this study, but this situation is unique in China. The enthusiasm of the offline humane society is in sharp contrast to the indifference of the online rule-based society. The deep-rooted collectivism and altruistic dedication of traditional society have created hostile contradictions with the intermediary communication characteristics and interaction methods of the Internet age. Therefore, in the Chinese society that has really begun to enter the "post-epidemic era", how can users use their "body" to describe the relationship between people and technology in the intelligent communication scene? This research hopes to reflect on the changes in the relationship between people and people, and between people and society brought about by technology affordability from the critical perspective of technology ethics, rather than from the perspective of specific technical solutions.

Method:

Starting from the specific phenomenon of "burnout", this research adopts the research method of in-depth interviews. It is expected to interview 20 subjects in depth. Starting from the personal perspective and personal experience of the interviewees, we will examine the experience of using video conferencing at different stages, and then get a deeper understanding. understanding. The interview adopts a semi-structured method, and the interview questions mainly include three aspects, the basic information of the interviewee and the use and experience of the video

conferencing software; the reasons for the experience effect; and optimization measures. Then, through the coding of the in-depth interview text, the deep-seated causes of "burnout" and the unique meaning displayed in the Chinese context are interpreted. This research will focus on "technology and the body" to explore the "presence" and "exit" of technological social interaction in the post-pandemic era.

Preliminary conclusion：

Human society is accelerating into an era of digital, networked, and pan-media immersive communication. The importance of the body in the process of information flow and reception is becoming more and more prominent. It is a development trend that the human body is deeply embedded in the Internet scene.

While the media avoids the limitations of the body and uses technological inventions as proof of its detachment, users are also urgently calling for the return of a new type of "embodied" presence. Perhaps with the development of technology, it is expected to realize the full sensory integration of listening, touching, and smelling in the fusion space of the real physical world and the network digital world, and involve, transmit, reproduce, and even integrate the real society and embodied cognition, experience, and memory. Shared to its digital body, to meet the leap of human beings from body perception, neurocognition to consciousness and imagination (Yu Guoming, 2022). This technology embedding and the extension of human consciousness under the fusion of virtual and real will bring about the expansion of individual perception boundaries, which will help users eliminate information asymmetry, enhance the sense of control in the network society, and emphasize the subjectivity of the group in the home field.

At the current stage of the digital development process, focusing on the "virtual remote presence" under the burnout of video conferencing will stimulate rethinking of the research on human subjectivity. The re-examination and discussion of the body concept in communication is based on the new media environment. Sort out the bridge between technology and people, and at the same time be alert to the invasion of human subjectivity by the development of technology.

Key Words
Videoconferencing fatigue,techno-social,embodiment

The Lost Space Media: A Study on Historical Evolution of Beijing’s News Kiosk

Authors

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Abstract

From the aspects of policy management, operation modes, and functional orientations, this paper traces back to the development process of Beijing’s news kiosks as space media. Taking Beijing’s news kiosk as an example, this paper is dedicated to clarifying the complex entanglement between the news kiosk as a space media and the society in different historical periods. Reproducing the multiple interweaving behind the news kiosk, politics, economy, culture, and society, helps to expand the possibility of reimaging the significance of the news kiosk’s existence.

This paper has found that in China, the news kiosk has been involved in politics since its birth, and adapted to the needs of the country’s development by continually renewing its social roles, from the early political interaction space to the Anmin kiosk (refers to the kiosks that provide employment opportunities for jobless people and gather some decentralized peddlers to maintain social stability) serving laid-off workers and even the cultural window of the city. Therefore, it's a narrow way to discuss the rise and fall of the news kiosk merely by economic standards. As space media, the news kiosk was born in a specific background and social environment, whose media form is deeply rooted in social life and always changes accordingly. Nevertheless, its spatial characteristic of citizen interaction remains invariable.

Based on historical archaeology, this paper attempts to respond to the current decline of the news kiosk. The transformation of the news kiosk from an active constructor to a passive obsolete object is not purely an economic consequence caused by the transformation of media ecology but has a deeper policy relationship with urban planning and regulation’s changing from public orientation to economic orientation. The government's resource allocation and management intervention are the dominant force in the development of the news kiosk in China. The government did not regard the news kiosk as necessary public facility in the urban development planning, or reserve a place for it in the new planning, which led to the result that the news kiosk gradually becomes an entryman of space, and this planning orientation also reflects the change in China’s social characteristics, which means the transformation from an "organic society" to an "atomic society". Therefore, the demise of the news kiosk is a symbol of shrinking citizen public space, which relates to the loss of organic connections and atomization of the city. Taking news kiosks in Beijing as an anchor point of space, we call for reconnecting localized social relations and thus restoring the original vitality and cohesion of urban space.

Key Words

News kiosk, Space media, Urban space, Organic connectivity.

Representation of Identity through Instagram Images: A Study on Digital Behaviors and Media Information Literacy

Authors

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Abstract

Social Media Identity and Media Information Literacy are two interrelated and increasingly important aspects of digital literacy in the modern age. Social media identity refers to the representation of oneself on social media platforms, and the impact that this representation has on one's offline identity and relationships. Media information literacy, on the other hand, refers to the ability to critically evaluate and make informed decisions about the information and media that is encountered online. Both of these areas are crucial for individuals to navigate the complex and rapidly evolving digital landscape, and to use digital technologies in responsible and ethical ways. This study uses the lens of Identity theory propounded by James Marcia and examines the representation of identity status through images posted on Instagram, with a focus on the intersection of media information literacy and social media identity. The theory focuses on formation of individual's sense of self is and how it evolves through a series of stages influenced by social and cultural factors. The primary data for this study is collected through in-depth interviews with Instagram users, observation of their behavior on the platform, and content analysis of their images and captions. The collected data is analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques such as thematic analysis using software program MAXQDA for qualitative and mixed methods data, text and multimedia analysis. Through analysis of digital behaviors, the study explores the ways in which individuals use Instagram to construct and present their identity to others. The results shed light on the complex relationship between digital technologies and identity formation, highlighting the need for ongoing research in this area. The findings also emphasize the importance of media information literacy, as individuals must be aware of the impact that their digital representation can have on their offline identity and relationships. This study provides valuable insights into the dynamic nature of identity in the digital age and the need to navigate this complex landscape with care.

Key Words

Social Media Identity, Self-representation, Digital Behavior, Media Information Literacy

“Will I be manipulated by the algorithmic gaslight effect?” A moderated mediation model on digital authoritarianism and users' self-censorship practice in Chinese social media

Authors

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Abstract

【Introduction】

While many studies have focused on the multiple dominance of automated platform algorithmic censorship practices on the visibility of social media users and content, it is still unclear how the dual algorithmic censorship practices of the platforms in differentiated contexts within the platform facilitate multi-level self-censorship behaviors by affecting platform users' psychological perceptions of automated censorship practices.

Correspondingly, , this study brings in the concept of gaslight effect as the analytic framework. Cotter (2021) proposed the algorithmic gaslight effect in the field of media research, which refers to the situation in which platforms use algorithmic censorship mechanisms to censor their users under the premise of inequality between control power and agency of users. Users may generate strong self-doubt due to the unquestionable neutrality and legitimacy claimed by algorithmic censorship rules, which may lead users to constantly adapt their identity and content posting on social media to the algorithm's not fully visible censorship rules. Such adjustments may also be dual in the sense of hard adjustments (e.g., directly hiding their identities, deleting their postings, or simply canceling their accounts) and soft self-censorship (e.g., using harmonies, banter, or metaphors, registering another account, etc.). Therefore, this study focuses on how these two different censorship approaches affect users' self-censorship practices in differentiated censorship contexts, with due consideration of the psychological reactions and the role of individual awareness and community discussions in the whole process.

Hence, drawing on the theoretical framework of algorithmic gaslight effect and the S-O-R model, this study conducted a 2 (algorithmic censorship approach: remove content directly vs. make content indirectly invisible)×3 (censorship context: personal page vs. *Weibo* community vs. super topics) between-subject design online experiment (N=1573) on Chinese super social media *Weibo*.

This study proposes the following research questions:

RQ1: How do two different kinds of algorithmic censorship affect user's differentiated choice of self-censorship in *Weibo* a) personal page b) *Weibo* community c) Super topics) ?

RQ2: How does a) perceived uncertainty b) perceived transparency c) perceived affordance mediate the relationship between algorithmic censorship and users' self-censorship?

RQ3: How does a) individual reverse algorithmic auditing b) algorithmic discussion engagement in heterogeneous communities moderate the relationship between users' perceptions and self-censorship?

【Method】

This study recruited participants who have suffered algorithmic censorship through the online experimental platform Qualtrics and divided them into six groups randomly. Six different contextual algorithm censorship interfaces were designed as stimulus materials. Participants uniformly complete a questionnaire about self-censorship psychology and behavior. Their consent was fully obtained before the process. Researchers used SPSS 25.0 for two-way ANCOVA, direct and indirect (mediated) effects, and all tests of moderating effects.

【Findings】

Results show that algorithmic censorship and censorship context can positively affect users' self-censorship practices separately. Of these, the direct removal algorithmic censorship is more likely to lead to users' protective self-censorship practices; while the indirect hidden content censorship is more likely to cause users to engage in resistant self-censorship.

Meanwhile, three different algorithmic censorship contexts have different effects on two kinds of self-censorship practices. Among them, algorithmic censorship of personal pages is more likely to generate protective self-censorship practices, while communities and super-topics may cause more resistant self-censorship. In addition, the two-way interaction between algorithmic censorship and censorship context was also verified. The mediating effect essentially reflects the users' psychological conflict in the face of algorithmic censorship control. On the one hand, perceived uncertainty and perceived transparency facilitate users' dual self-practices, while on the other hand, the awareness that algorithmic censorship helps filter invalid and harmful information (perceived affordance) actually acts as an ambivalence that weakens users' self-censorship process.

Regarding the mediating role, perceived uncertainty, and perceived transparency positively mediated the relationship between algorithmic censorship and self-censorship, while perceived availability showed the opposite. The study found only a positive moderating effect of individual's reverse algorithmic auditing awareness on perceived uncertainty, while algorithmic discussions engagement in a heterogeneous community had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between the three mediating variables and the dependent variable simultaneously.

【Contributions】

This study provides important evidence for studying the micro-power interaction between algorithmic censorship and user self-censorship practices in social media platforms by empirically operationalizing the concept of algorithmic gaslighting.

The differences in the impact of algorithmic censorship on users' self-censorship in the internal segmentation context also need to be considered.

Besides, in practice, dealing with the relationship between platform interests and the openness of the censorship principle is very important to improve the algorithmic censorship mechanism and optimize the overall platform environment.

Key Words

algorithmic gaslight effect

digital authoritarianism

self-censorship

algorithmic censorship

content moderation

I Know You Know Who I Am: Analysis of the Usage of Anonymous Social Media applications among Friends and Acquaintances in China

Authors

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Abstract

Social media application is an efficient tool for communication. However, people are hesitant to share for fear of hurting their image and privacy. This has led to anonymous social media applications (ASMA), which are gaining popularity. Users of ASMA (e.g., Whisper, Yik Yak) cannot discover another's identity or be identified by others, unlike with non-anonymous social media (e.g., Facebook, WeChat), where real names or pseudonyms can be identified.

Uses and gratification theory (UGT) was initially developed to examine traditional media, such as newspapers and television (e.g., Bryant & Zillmann, 1984; Armstrong & Rubin, 1989). Recent research has adopted UGT to explain individuals' use of social media (Flanagin, 2005). Ten motivations were identified for using non-anonymous social media, such as social interaction, information seeking, and entertainment (Whiting & Williams, 2013). An important driver of using ASMA is getting social validation from others, even though they are strangers (Kang et al., 2016). As an ASMA, TAPE will be chosen for the current study because of its surge in popularity.

This study distinguishes two roles of ASMA: repliers (e.g., create posts and share personal opinions) and questioners (e.g., ask questions and receive answers). Furthermore, based on communication privacy management (CPM) theory (Petronio, 2002), the current study argues that the motivations for different roles using ASMA can develop various privacy management strategies. This raises some questions: What needs are users fulfilling by using ASMA among friends and acquaintances with whom they have existing trust and connections? What are the differences between repliers and questioners in terms of seeking satisfaction? How do these motivations predict potential privacy management strategies?

To answer these questions, a mixed-method study will be conducted in China. WeChat is the most popular acquaintance-based social media, so the criterion for the participants is to have used the TAPE among their WeChat friends. In-depth interviews will be conducted in study 1. The following questions will address the motivation categories of UGT adjusted to the different roles. For example, regarding information motives, the questions will cover whether users create, receive or view information. For social motivation, respondents will be asked whether they want to make connections and whether users want to gain insight into the lives of others or have others contact them. Subsequently, users' perception of interaction, perceived privacy concerns, and the strategies adopted will be asked.

The motivations identified in Study 1 will be used in the survey design for Study 2 to examine whether these motivations acted as antecedents to privacy management strategies. The current study may reveal that the motivations that drive people to use ASMA vary and stem from different roles. The components and strengths of each gratification for different roles might also differ, further pointing to specific privacy management strategies in the online environment of anonymous acquaintances.

This study reveals that UGT and CPM remain valuable frameworks for understanding new communication practices. Further research is required to explore the psychological mechanisms that drive anonymous behaviors and delve into the relationship of anonymity, identifiability, motives, and privacy in interpersonal communication.

Key Words
Anonymous Social Media applications, motivations, privacy management, interpersonal communication

The dynamics of toxic communication in online gaming related communities

Authors

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Abstract

Many online game communities now extend beyond gameplay boundaries, with players utilizing satellite platforms such as Reddit to discuss and share knowledge about the game. Prior research on toxicity suggests that it may be more prevalent in competitive games due to designed social rivalry and higher stakes in gameplay brought about by zero sum mechanisms. More exposure to toxicity on a regular basis may thus lead to its subsequent normalization. This cyclical nature of toxicity can be explained through social cognitive theory, in that human actions are contextually enacted with reference to the relevant social environment and prior behavioural acquisition. Experiencing more toxicity may thus increase the likelihood that an individual subsequently perpetrates toxicity within the same game. However, it is currently unclear whether and to what extent this observed normalization of toxicity in competitive games is bounded within gameplay, or whether toxic norms in these communities extend to external social interactions surrounding the game. The current study sought to better understand the potential extent of normative toxicity in games by examining verbal toxicity within game-based discussions on *Reddit*. Online discussion data (N = 138148) over a continuous two-week period in December 2022 was automatically scraped from game-based subreddits (2 competitive, 2 cooperative) on *Reddit* using *pushshift.io* through *Communalytic*, web-based research tool that amalgamates various big data collection and analysis methods. After data collection and cleaning, message content within each data point was scored for toxicity likelihood using *Perspective API*, a machine learning model for toxicity detection. In *Perspective API*, scores are algorithmically assigned to messages based on a model pre-trained on millions of online comments rated for toxicity. Toxicity likelihood scores across messages in the various subreddits were subsequently examined through comparative statistical tests. Findings suggest that normalized toxicity, particularly verbal toxicity, may indeed extend beyond gameplay boundaries. At the same time, the normalization of toxicity may be bidirectionally influenced from sources both within and beyond gameplay. Messages from online discussions in competitive game subreddits had a higher prevalence of verbal toxicity, as well as higher mean toxicity likelihood scores compared than those in cooperative game subreddits. These differences were still significant when grouping and comparing user-appraised messages (upvoted vs. downvoted) between subreddit. These findings provide preliminary evidence that verbal toxicity may indeed be more prevalent and also better tolerated in satellite platforms for competitive games. They also lend weight to the proposed notion that toxicity is socially learned and cyclical. Findings also potentially suggest that competitive communities may be more accepting toward the use of some forms of verbal toxicity (e.g., profanity). In association with these findings, we also raise a couple of

questions to spur future complementary research. The first relates to whether in-group members of communities with higher toxicity thresholds may be less susceptible to emotional harm when experiencing perceived acceptable forms of verbal toxicity when interacting within these communities. Secondly and finally, how can these higher ingrained thresholds of acceptable verbal toxicity be lowered to accommodate more open and welcoming competitive game communities?

Key Words
toxicity, social interaction, game communities, multiplayer games

Consumer's perspective on multiracial advertising: in a South African context

Authors

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Abstract

Introduction:

Nivea, H&M, Dove, TRESemmé, and BMW are among the brands that have recently faced backlash from South African consumers on social media, for what they perceived to be racially insensitive brand advertisements . The publication of the advertisements led to a change in how South African consumers perceive the brands . According to Kapoor (2018), the public sharing of consumer perceptions on social media can harm a brand's image.

Additionally, several studies emphasize the damaging effects that unfavourable consumer perceptions can have on an origination's reputation. In support, Melewar (2008) and Jere and van Niekerk (2017) mention that consumers use social media platforms to put pressure on organisations to give in to their demands because they are aware of the impact that social media has on an organisation.

Problem statement:

Consequentially, in March 2022, the South African Human Rights Commission opened an inquiry following official complaints that were sparked by the publication of racially insensitive advertisements . Despite the above, it appears that advertising agencies continue to publish material that does not represent an all-inclusive approach that considers consumers' perspectives and perceptions of multiracial advertisements. Various authors advocate for the need for advertising agencies to understand how consumers perceive multiracial advertisements to minimise the possibility of offending select racial groups.

Aim/objectives:

Considering the above discussion, this study aims to develop a set of guidelines that can be used as a point of reference when formulating multiracial advertisements to enable advertising agencies to elicit the desired responses from South African consumers. The study’s main objective will be achieved through analysing consumer’s perceptions of three recent instances of brand advertisements that South African consumers perceived as racially offensive. In 2020, Dove depicted a black woman seemingly transitioning into a white woman, presumably after using Doves body lotion; similarly, TRESemmé was in the firing line for dictating white beauty standards as the norm in the brands’ hair advertisement and lastly, BMW’s 2023 5 series model, for being

perceived as undermining black people’s power and superiority with the tagline, "we are our ancestors' wildest dreams."

Methods/results:

A cross-sectional descriptive research design will be used for this study's mixed methods approach. Data will be collected by examining consumer responses to the above-mentioned advertisements on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube), which will then be thematically analysed. This study hopes to advance the adoption of multiracial advertising strategies that are more inclusive and avoid offending certain racial groups in South Africa and globally.

Key Words
Multiracial advertising, consumer perceptions, reputation management, social media.

Third-person Effects of Perceived Slanted Fake News: Platform Monitoring, Media Literacy Education and Legislation

Authors

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Abstract

Concerns over whether to implement various interventions into fake news have prevailed in Hong Kong and other countries/regions. Indeed, it is not uncommon for governments to call for the implementation of legislation to combat the spread of misinformation. Besides, social media platforms cooperate to detect fake news and restrict its spread with platform regulations. Additionally, educational institutions are also making effort in media literacy education to train smart digital users. Nonetheless, public's perception toward these interventions remains understudied.

Utilizing data from a nationally sampled survey collected in Hong Kong (N = 1,654) revealed a tendency for the third-person effect. Also, perceived slant of fake news was found to provide support for all three interventive approaches: platform regulation, media literacy education, and legislation. People with higher level of third-person effect consider themselves more competent on avoiding harm by fake news and are more likely to support for platform regulation but not for media literacy education or legislation. Moreover, perceptions about which direction fake news is slanted towards moderated the impact of the third-person effect on support for all three types of interventions. That is, among individuals who saw others as less competent to handle fake news, those who perceived fake news to favor the government were less likely to support fake news interventions, while those who perceived fake news to be slanted against the government were more supportive of interventions.

This research not only explained how third-person effect interacts with the slant of fake news in people's perception toward fake news interventive actions, but also points out the importance of considering people's political identity when complementing fake news interventions, especially in society where polarization is an issue. Detailed discussion of three kinds of interventive approaches in terms of public's concern and potential consequences are also presented. Both theoretical and practical implications are discussed in this paper.

Key Words

fake news slant, interventions, third-person perception, misinformation, Hong Kong

Potential Noncognitive Impacts of Robots on Children: A Systematic Review

Authors

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Abstract

Background

The application of robots has been prevalent in various areas, including education, entertainment, and other parts of people's daily life. According to the official reports, robot marketing is proliferating, in which the robot for children industry is expected to reach $8 billion by 2028. It is estimated that robots will be a component of children's life. Piaget proposed that the child is the stage in which an individual develops a mental model of the world (1977). Therefore, children are more vulnerable to robots compared with other age groups. Prior studies have explored the cognitive influence of Child-Robot Interaction (CRI). Scholars proved that robots are beneficial in educational settings, like improving children's cognitive efficiency and outcomes (Toh et al., 2016, Lytridis et al., 2019). Regarding adverse effects, Fosch-Villaronga et al. (2023) suggested that robots may make kids overtrust non-human objects and suffer from robots' deception. However, there still exists a scarcity of exploration about the robots' noncognitive influence.

Purpose

This systematic review aims to synthesize the noncognitive influence of robots on children. It will provide a detailed demonstration of the consequences of robots' usage among children, which can shed light on future studies.

Methods

We searched keywords on WOS on 3 Jan 2023 for studies published between 2013 and 2023. The keywords contained "robot" AND "children" NOT "learning" (for the popularity of studies in education, "learning" was excluded). 1505 articles were found. Studies were included if they: (1) explored robots' noncognitive impacts, (2) focused on general children (excluded children with Autism spectrum disorder or physical impairments because robots for them are specially designed), (3) were peer-reviewed journal articles or conference papers. After checking titles and abstracts, 28 articles that met inclusion criteria were involved. Then, full texts were screened.

As for the coding scheme, the coding criteria involved basic characteristics (i.e., year, method, sample size) and noncognitive outcomes (dependent variables and relationships).

Results

Three research contexts were identified: health-related situations (N=17), education-related situations (N=8), and daily life (N=3).

First, robots can improve children's health literacy in a pleasurable way. They can be a powerful tool to help children develop awareness about diseases. Meanwhile, applying robots under specific situations (i.e., blood collection, vaccination, and other medical procedures) contributes to mitigating anxiety and decreasing feelings of pain. Also, robots can strengthen children's perceived empowerment in hospitalized environments. Second, CRI has a significant positive relationship with augmented creative thinking, higher learning motivation, and environment empathy in educational contexts. Finally, existing studies showed that robots are seen as emotionally supportive by children. They are critical in cultivating children's ability to manage emotions.

Conclusion

Most robots for children have positive non-cognitive influences on children's development, varying from decreasing negative individual perceptions and reinforcing positive mindsets. Furthermore, these influences can cause children's possible behavior change, which clarifies the benefit of robots further. But previous studies lacked examinations in family communication situations. The influence of robots on children in such a personal environment needs more attention.

Key Words

Key Words: Child-Robot Interaction, Noncognitive Influences, Systematic Review

Digital Nomads and Interpersonal Relationships: A Study on the Influence of Platform-swinging Behavior among Generation Z in China

Authors

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Ms. Anny Fan - Communication University of China

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Ms. Zhuo Li - Communication University of China

Abstract

Background:

With the development of information and communication technology, social media platforms have proliferated rapidly, forming a communicative environment in the form of “polymedia”. The integrated environment provides Generation Z with rich social media choices and allows them to switch between platforms to achieve their purposes, which is defined as “platform-swinging”(Tandoc Jr, et al. 2019). As is shown in a study, by “swinging” back and forth, Generation Z manages and classifies their interpersonal relationships， thus building up diverse social networks on these platforms(Li Yuanyuan, 2022).

Research Purpose:

It can be seen that the coexistence of social platforms has created an communicative environment, but many studies still focus on independent media or technology, lacking attention to their internal connection. Especially when it comes to youth interpersonal relationships, fewer studies focus on the perspective of polymedia environment. As for the research object, we focus on Generation Z in China because this generation has been profoundly influenced by the Internet and witnessed the booming development of social media, which makes them more likely to engage in platform-swinging behavior. Based on this, the paper intends to take polymedia environment as the starting point to explore how does Generation Z in China manage interpersonal relationships on social platforms by platform-swinging? What impact has platform-swinging on online interpersonal relationships among Generation Z in China?

Research Questions:

This study is based on a review of mediated communication and focuses on how does Generation Z in China manage strong ties on social platforms by platform-swinging? How does Generation Z in China manage weak ties on social platforms by platform-swinging? What impact has platform-swinging on online interpersonal relationships among Generation Z in China?

Research Methods:

This study uses cyberethnography as approach to conduct qualitative research. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 20 online and offline interviewees. And then, with MAXQDA as a tool to construct coding and conceptualize the information. The interview time ranged from 40 to 60 minutes. Interviewees were selected to ensure that they had used more than one social media platform to communicate with other people. The questions include social platform usage habits, social platform usage purposes, the content of communication, and views on the interpersonal relationships formed on different social platforms.

Research hypothesis:

There exists difference between strong ties management and weak ties management in interpersonal relationships through platform-swinging. Generation Z in China tends to use more platforms to connect with each other when they relate intimately and the platform-swinging may promote the intimacy. In contrast, when people are only casual acquaintances, they use less platforms to contact each other and platform-swinging may intensify alienation because of audience-segregation as well as relative deprivation.

Theoretical Ponderation:

In an article published in the American Journal of Sociology, American sociologist Mark S. Granovetter introduced the concepts of strong ties and weak ties. He found that the strength of a tie depends on the amount of time, the emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocal services which characterize the tie. It is generally believed that strong tie is a closer interpersonal relationship with a homogeneous social network, such as close friends or family members, while weak tie is a relatively distant interpersonal relationship with a heterogeneous social network, such as strangers or colleagues who are usually out of touch.

Key Words

Platform-swinging ; Interpersonal Relationships ; Weak ties ; Strong ties

Ripples of empathic expression: algorithmic visibility and empathy generation in the Digital Age

Authors

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Abstract

Empathy, a fundamental aspect of human society, is rapidly changing in response to new technologies and its widespread in online social networks. Previous research has shown that visibility in the digital era affects people’s social interactions, political content consumption, and public discourse expression (Davis & Graham, 2021; Huszár et al., 2022). However, the influence of algorithmic visibility on expressions of empathy and empathic polarization online has yet to be fully investigated.

This study aims to examine the impact of algorithmic visibility, as operationalized into two dimensions: rating visibility and temporal visibility, on empathic expression related to social justice issues on the internet. Using computational communication and content analysis research methods, we analyzed 1.2 million comments on social justice topics to understand the empathic expression among internet users.Our findings introduce the concept of "visibility empathy" and demonstrate how the visibility of comments (based on the author's interaction and user ratings) connects commenters and impacts the expression of empathy discourse.The Variable-Lag Granger Causality analysis of comments reveals that visibility (the number of likes) predicts subsequent expressions of empathy and highlight the differential presentation of empathic and anti-empathic discourse, anger, and other emotions over time.

This study concludes that social media is transforming the nature of empathic experiences and expressions in digital public spaces, emphasizing the importance of continued research on the effects of technology on empathy and human emotions.

Key Words

empathic expression, algorithmic visibility, ratings

Alleviating or Radicalizing? A Study on the Impact of Smartphone Use on the Emotions of the Elderly During the Period of COVID-19 Positive

Authors

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Abstract

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically accelerated digitalization among the elderly. From 2020 to 2022, the number of Chinese elderly internet users grew from 60.58 million to 119 million, with a growth rate of 96.4%. However, many of these seniors lacked the necessary digital literacy to handle the influx of information, leading to information overload. Existing research has shown that health-related COVID-19 information was linked to the anxiety and disease risk perception of the elderly (Curtis et al., 2022).

As China declared a nationwide loosening of COVID-19 restrictions in December 2022, the living and information environments of the elderly underwent rapid changes in a short time. Information related to COVID-19 was streamed through various smartphone applications. The impact of smartphone usage on the emotions of the elderly has become increasingly evident. Therefore, this study aims to examine the correlation between them.

The research questions are as follows:

- How does the use of smartphones affect the emotions of the elderly during their COVID-19-positive period?
- Do different smartphone Apps have distinct influences on their emotions? To what extent?

Research methods

This study applied In-depth Interviews as a research method, interviewing 30 people aged 60 or above, with due consideration of gender, region, and occupation. The questions focused on their smartphone usage habits in daily life, health status, usage behavior during the COVID-19-positive period, and emotional changes. The interview transcripts accumulated 290,000 characters.

Findings

- **During the COVID-19-positive period, the use of smartphones by the elderly meets their information needs.** It shows a high reliance between the elderly and their online communities (especially group chats). They were more willing to express themselves on social media.
- **During the positive period, there are significant differences in the emotional impact of different information obtained from smartphones.** Media reports concerning severe illnesses, deaths, and drug shortages are key factors of anxiety and fear. The sharing and comforting of infectious experiences by family and friends are more effective in the emotional appeasement of the elderly.
- **The effect of smartphone use on the emotions of the elderly has a phase-by-phase character and is closely related to their physical experience.** Before the infection, the impact is the deepest and mainly negative. During the severe stage, the frequency of smartphone uses decreases while the emotional impact drops. In the later stage of infection, based on first-hand experiences, the elder's ability to discriminate information increases so that the emotional impact rebounds but is weaker than pre-infection.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has deepened the integration of the Internet with the lives of the elderly. The interviews show a correlation between the emotions of the elderly and their experience of using smartphones. The impacts differ in types of applications, information sources, and modes of interaction. Specifically, one-way dissemination of COVID-19-related negative information tends to generate anxiety, whereas interpersonal communication and entertainment help to alleviate emotions.

In the long term, positive emotional guidance can be provided to the elderly through online interactive communities, audio content production, digital literacy training, and other means.

Key Words

COVID-19 positive; Smartphone use; Digital literacy; Emotions of the elderly

Moral panics and social media: a structural approach to the media framing of poor suburbs in France between 2010 and 2020

Authors

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Abstract

The concept of 'moral panics' was developed in the 1970s to describe the role of the media and other institutions in stigmatizing groups of individuals (the 'folk devils') episodically labelled as a threat to the social order and in developing social and political responses to that threat (Cohen 1972). It has since been frequently used to understand the mediatization of various groups or social phenomena such as juvenile delinquency, immigration, pornography, video games, social and health crises, etc. The framing of poor suburbs in the French media has many characteristics of moral panics (Mucchielli 2007; Sedel 2009; Berthaut 2013).

This concept is often applied to phenomena whose mediatization fulfils proper criteria: a sudden and ephemeral increase in media attention, the emergence of new actors such as experts, representatives and, more generally, groups of individuals in the position of intermediaries who can amplify the visibility of the 'social issue'. On a substantive level, moral panics happen with a shift in the register of framing of the 'folk devils'. These are labelled during the moral panic as a social threat and are subject to negative stereotyping.

However, the literature on moral panics has not investigated much of the interactions between the different actors involved in the panic. They often focus on the media and political elites who trigger the panic, but do not take much account of the individual-level interactions with the people who are victims of the panic or with the media audience is considered a passive audience (cf the criticisms of Goode and Ben Yehuda or Chas Critcher). In specific, media involvement in moral panics is often analysed in regard to the structures of the media and political field rather than to the networks of individuals that are increasingly important in the contemporary public space for circulating media content, for example on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or YouTube. Our approach through the concept of moral panic enables us to deal with new forms of digital activism from a diversity of actors and their contribution to a stigmatization of individuals. We question how social media transformed the concept of moral panics.

In our paper, we examine how the concept of moral panic can be operationalized using analytical tools from structural network analysis to understand the role of social media in sustaining a diffuse moral panic on the poor suburbs in France around 2010–2020. We test this relational perspective on moral panics using a dataset comprising 103,531 tweets issued between 2010 and 2020 about one of the 16 main French suburbs. Using proper criteria, we identify a total of 189 peaks of mediatization in these data and analyse the networks of actors contributing to this mediatization during these peaks in comparison with the preceding periods. These networks are described from

a double perspective: 1-mode networks of direct interaction between platform users (mention, reply or retweet) and 2-mode networks of URL sharing.

Key Words
moral panics; audience; poor suburbs; social media; Twitter; network analysis

Examining public acquisition of Metaverse knowledge from social media in China : Toward an integrated view

Authors

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Abstract

Background: As a new trend of technology, Metaverse is growing quickly in China and even foreign countries. Social media also play a vital role in concerning Metaverse progress and acquiring Metaverse related knowledge for the public. While research interest in social media platforms and new technology (i.e., AI) related knowledge has increased in recent years, little is known about the relationship between social media attention and public's metaverse knowledge. To fill the gap, our pilot study explores how surveillance gratification and subjective knowledge are linked with perception factors (i.e., elaboration), media factors (i.e., social media attention), and demographics (i.e., gender, age, education and income).

Methods: Cognitive mediated model (CMM) was used to assess the surveillance gratification and public's Metaverse knowledge issues and thus obtain an understanding of Chinese public's perception about Metaverse related content in present study. Based on a online survey (N=609), this pilot study explored the linkages between surveillance gratification, people's elaboration, social media attention, and subjective knowledge acquisition of Metaverse.

Results: Results from regression analysis showed that respondents' surveillance gratification was positively associated with social media attention(β=.41, $p<.001$), elaboration(β=.57, $p<.001$) and subjective Metaverse knowledge(β=.13, $p<.01$). Partial correlation analysis shows that social media attention and elaboration would be two sequential mediating mechanisms in the relationship between surveillance gratification and subjective Metaverse knowledge (δ=.16). Another key finding pertains to the knowledge gap about subjective knowledge acquisition of Metaverse: when there are sufficient and balanced distribution of motivation, as well as media exposure, social media attention and elaboration will enhance individuals' knowledge acquisition and may help narrow the knowledge gap.

Discussion: The result of this research updates the media background and knowledge type of knowledge gap theory, which can provide guidance for us increase our understanding of the process of learning from the social media as well as provide an important contribution to research on learning from the social media.

Key Words

Social media, metaverse knowledge, cognitive mediation model, knowledge gap

A Study on the Relationship Between Social Media Use and Parenting Anxiety

Authors

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Abstract

Purpose: With the advent of information society, modern child-rearing concepts and information have widely influenced modern family child-rearing through convenient social media. More and more parents tend to learn about parenting through the Internet to gain appropriate guidance, so as to relieve their anxiety, while the risk information about children's health, safety and development widely exists on the Internet, which also makes parents widely surrounded by anxiety. In this context, this article tries to answer the question of why social media, while helping young parents by popularizing more and more scientific parenting knowledge, is also creating parenting anxiety. This study takes "the relationship between parents' online information exposure and parenting anxiety" as the entry point, analyzing the extent to which social media use affects parents' parenting anxiety and its influence path and consequences.

Methodology & hypothesis: Based on the communication perspective of new media and the current situation of family parenting in China, combined with the EPPM framework, this paper constructs an integrated model of parenting anxiety on social media, which includes "parenting information type – information acquisition pattern – perceived threat – parenting anxiety", and proposes the following hypotheses: (H1) Information acquisition pattern is related to parenting anxiety. Exactly, active/passive information acquisition mode is positively/ negatively correlated with parenting anxiety. (H2) Parenting information type is related to parenting anxiety. Exactly, conveying-risk/relieving-risk information is positively/negatively correlated with parenting anxiety. (H3) Perceived risk positively affects parenting anxiety. (H4) Perceived efficacy negatively affects parenting anxiety. (H5) Perceived risk and Perceived efficacy mediate the effects of information acquisition patterns and parenting information type on parenting anxiety. An online questionnaire survey for parents in first-tier cities and new first-tier cities in China was conducted in August 2021 (N=305). SPSS 26 was used for analysis.

Findings: 1. Social-media has become an important factor affecting parents' parenting anxiety, and the frequency of parenting information acquisition positively predicted overall parenting anxiety. Parents who use social media as their primary source of parenting information are also more anxious than those who do not. 2. Both active and passive information acquisition modes

positively predict parenting anxiety, and positively affect perceived risk and perceived efficacy. Parents' perceived risk positively affects parenting anxiety, and perceived efficacy negatively affects parenting anxiety. Perceived risk and perceived efficacy play an intermediary role. 3.Conveying-risk information can enhance parenting anxiety, while relieving-risk information can reduce parenting anxiety. Perceived risk and perceived efficacy play an intermediary role.

Conclusion: The mass dissemination of knowledge and information without systematic interpretation on social media platforms will cause parents to feel confused and worried about not being able to keep up with others when receiving information, which may lead to parenting anxiety in the process of using social media. Besides, no matter how the information is obtained, parents' anxiety is still significant. Therefore, to reduce parenting anxiety, social media should not only show more information to ease the risk of parenting, but also minimize the comparison between parents.

Key Words
Social Media, parenting anxiety, EPPM

Research on Self-presentation Online of the Elderly ——Take Antu County, Jilin Province, China as an example

Authors

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Abstract

1. Introduction

In recent years, silver online celebrities have become popular on various Internet platforms, which makes the actual digital image of the elderly conflict with the stereotype that the elderly are "digital remnants." The research found that some elderly netizens actively present themselves on the Internet to better integrate into the digital society. So how to make the elderly actively access digital life is the absolute path to truly alleviate the digital survival dilemma that the elderly may face. The study takes Antu County, Jilin Province, China, as an example to explore the willingness of online self-presentation and related influencing factors of the elderly.

2. Methodology

It is worth noting that Antu County is a county under the jurisdiction of the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture. Diverse ethnic composition promotes the diverse characteristics of individuals in Antu County. Throughout seven months of study (From January to August 2021), we used semi-structured interviews, participatory observations, and logical inductive deductions as the primary research methods. A total of 100 older adults in the county were interviewed. The sample structure is proportional to the age and ethnicity ratio of the local elderly population and has a certain representativeness.

3. Findings and conclusions

(1) **Older adults in the 60-65 age range are more willing to present themselves.** On the whole, the elderly in the advanced age stage has a weaker willingness to show, compared with them the 60-65 years old group showing a more obvious willingness and behavior.

(2) **Education level will significantly affect the willingness of the elderly,** and the correlation between education level and self-presentation willingness of different age groups is different.

(3) **Ethnic factors have a significant impact on the willingness of the elderly.** Influenced by the language and other national attributes, Chinese Korean have formed a unique way of life and have a higher willingness to show themselves than the Han nationality.

(4) **There is a paradox of risk perception in the self-presentation willingness and behavior of the elderly.** The perception of privacy risks and the vigilance of false information will negatively affect the self-presentation willingness of the elderly to a certain extent. That is, the elderly with a higher level of content risk perception in terms of personal privacy and false information will show a relatively negative willingness to present. However, simple and rapid ways to increase profit, such as watching videos to earn money, drive the elderly with self-protection awareness and risk perception ability to still choose to actively present themselves, and their subjective will and objective behavior have a paradox of risk perception.

(5) **Gaps in intimacy structure make the elderly have different types of presentation models** in the unfamiliar, less intimate, and intimate network groups.

(6) Individual psychological level, self-representation, and identity recognition are the obvious functions achieved by the elderly group's network self-disclosure.

Key Words
The elderly group; Self-presentation online; Active aging; Social identity

Ambivalences of News Avoidance Alternative media use between dissatisfaction, a search for happiness and radicalization

Authors

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Abstract

The public sphere is regarded as a coordinating, governing and self-monitoring instance of society and news media are still one of its main constituents. In democracies, participation in the public sphere is essential for involvement in the political process and participation in society. Avoiding the news is hence regarded as a departure from the public sphere and seen as detrimental to (social or civic) participation. In recent studies (Toff & Kalogeropoulos, 2020; Damstra et al., 2023; Schäfer et al., 2022) news avoidance was often studied based on the differentiation between intentional and unintentional avoidance (Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2020). While unintentional news avoidance is associated with relative preferences for other content over news, intentional news avoidance is a deliberate and active act of opting out. In this paper, we argue that either form of avoidance can be indicative of political stances or sentiments and ultimately an act of resistance; even when the media alternatives news avoiders consume (instead of traditional journalism) are not partisan or not even political at all.

We build our argument on findings from the first two waves of a 3-year qualitative panel study with 33 users of alternative media. In the project we triangulate qualitative interviews with media diaries and a sorting exercise regarding individual information repertoires. For this presentation we focus on a sub-sample of users who qualified as news avoiders. These users described alienation from news and considered it a political decision and form of political expression to no longer support legacy journalism and seek out other media platforms, news formats and representations of politics instead. We find that the decision to avoid traditional news sources is stimulated by an interplay of three dimensions: First, it is discontent with content features (perceived political bias, worldviews, or a purported political agenda) that makes users avoid the news. Second, we find dissatisfaction with media forms (style, quality, negativity, or sensationalism), as well as third, the emotional impact particular forms of coverage have on the prospective avoiders (e.g., anxiety, anger, and annoyance). Avoiding the news for them is more than just discontinuing to use some media, but rather a way of expression of criticism and political protest; especially when they feel that their voice would not be heard (otherwise). Some users would then resort to partisan political offerings that rather matched their ideologies or allegedly unbiased alternative outlets. Users whose alternative media diet was not explicitly political, but for instance was heavy with spiritualism, mindfulness or “positive” (news) content could be regarded as articulating discontent with politics, its mediation, or its impact on individual or collective wellbeing. In our presentation, we discuss the complexities and ambivalences of avoidance and how it is not necessarily a

departure from the public sphere or civic participation, but rather a critique of its current form and indicative of the aspiration that another public is possible. We find news avoiders being torn between avoiding the unpleasant, articulating legitimate criticism and participation, and the lurking perils of radicalization.

Key Words
avoidance, resistance, alternative media, politics, qualitative panel study, participation

What affects public opinion: The three-wheel drive of "issue", "subject" and "emotion" based on a time-dynamic perspective

Authors

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Abstract

[Significance] The evolution of online opinion dissemination in risky situations is influenced by the coupling and disturbance of multiple complex factors, among which, online social emotions play a crucial role in the development process. Focusing on the main emotions presented in public opinion events, the study focuses on the interactions between emotions and various factors and their effects on the evolution of online public opinion dissemination in risky situations, so as to better raise the awareness of risk prevention, grasp the direction of public opinion, and provide reference for relevant departments to prevent risks and guide public opinion. **[Theoretical Perspective]** According to complex dynamics modeling and the theory of public opinion ecosystem in cyberspace, online public opinion is mainly influenced by public opinion information factor, subject factor, and information environment factor, while the information environment factor is closely related to online social emotion. Based on this theory, the logical perspective of "event attributes - communication subjects - emotions" is extracted to explore the factors influencing online public opinion. **[Methods]** Thirty typical cases of online public opinion in risky situations from 2020 to 2022 were selected for the study. The fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) method was used to analyze and derive conditional groupings. **[Results]** The higher the level of government response and the higher the number of important media coverage, the faster the average dissemination speed during the duration of the event, and the "presence of sadness" is the core condition for fast dissemination of public opinion. "High involvement of central media" is the core condition for high event fever, and the event fever is higher when the three emotions of "disgust, fear and surprise" appear at the same time. **[Insight]** Different types of online social emotions have different impacts on the development of public opinion, so we need to be aware of different predictions when monitoring and identifying them, and when the emotion of "sadness" accounts for a large proportion, the development of public opinion is fast and uncontrollable; when the three emotions of "disgust, fear and surprise" are monitored at the same time, the event is more heated. When the three emotions of "disgust, fear and surprise" appear at the same time, the peak of public opinion is higher and the volume of public opinion is bigger, so we should take measures in advance to prevent the damage and loss caused by public opinion.

Key Words

Online public opinion, Online sentiment, Risk events, fsQCA

"Public Cage" : Homogeneity and Logic of Information Cocoon in Social Media User Content — An Empirical Study on Sina Weibo Data Based on BERT Model

Authors

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Abstract

With the development of social media, the social and cultural threat of information cocoons has become an important issue. However, its convergence and logic still need to be investigated in a concrete and in-depth practical study. This article focuses on the deterministic correlation mechanism between the measured degree of information cocoons by individual users and the similarity between their posts and "public information", and analyzes how user content convergence enhances with the increased degree of individual information cocoons. People who seem to be self-selected fall into "information cocoons",but in fact, this is freedom without choice. Under the personalized "information cocoons" which were deemed "everyone has their preference"on the surface, we need to attach importance to information cocoons' homogeneity phenomenon and logic.Based on the BERT model, we analyze 2143 users randomly selected from the typical social media platform Sina Weibo. Through text mining and statistical analysis method, from public and similarity viewpoints, we proposed and confirmed the convergence effect of "Information cocoons" in social network user content.The measure of the degree of individual information cocoons is the content similarity of their tweets in a given period time,the measure of "public information" is the collection of the content of all individual users' tweets. Data results show that: (1) with the increased degree of user's information cocoons, their tweets become more similar to "public information", to the user with the highest "public degree" and to the user with the strongest degree of individual information cocoons; (2) with their degree of individual "information cocoons" goes up, the above effects are closely related, forming a common coherent whole, which eventually leads to the enhancement of "public degree" and homogeneity of different users; (3) there is a tendency for different users to show lower content uniqueness and higher "public degree" when the degree of their individual "information cocoon" rises, which makes social media platforms converge and all users fall into the "public information cocoons". The users are not only locked into their own "information cocoons", but also become more homogeneous with the increased degree of individual "information cocoons", and eventually they will be caught in "public information cocoons".Finally, we discussed the strong effect of "public information cocoons" from information cocoons' producing mechanism and original environment,we believe that the convergence logic in the personalized service of the platform and the strong narrowing and assimilation power in the social media platform will make the "public information cocoons" cage very formidable.Individual information cocoons' convergence and its logic reflect how the "platform machine" contributes to the reproduction of people's content

preferences, and builds the "public cage" in the context of cyber-balkanization. The public domain of network and social information should follow closely the shift of focus from the "information cocoon" of the individuals to that of the society, and fully examine the risk of a public cage where individual information narrowing leads to overall information narrowing. And it’s necessary to be cautious about the phenomenon and consequences of personalized service in the context of the social media platform in which it fades its original connotation and meaning, constitutes and leads the alienation of itself.

Key Words

Information cocoon;Echo chamber;Users convergence;Content convergence ; Platform logics ; Social media

The Mediated Lives of AI errors: Critical Insights from European News Media (2020-2022)

Authors

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Dr. Philip Di Salvo - University St. Gallen

Abstract

As we inhabit our planet with ever more AI agents it is becoming more and more evident that AI systems are often fallacious when it comes to human profiling. These AI errors cannot be understood as technical issues that can be easily fixed, on the contrary they need to be understood for all their complexity as the result of systemic inequalities(O'Neil, 2016; Eubanks, 2018; Broussard, 2019; Crawford, 2021;) and of an inaccurate and human reductionist understanding of human behaviors (Barassi, 2020; Milan, 2020). The paper positions itself amongst those scholars who have called for a qualitative study of AI errors (Aradau and Blanke, 2021; Munk et al., 2022). It is based on *The Human Error Project*, which was launched in 2020 to analyze how different sections of society (journalists, civil society organizations, and critical tech designers), understand and experience the relationship between AI errors, algorithmic profiling, and human rights.

The paper focuses on the findings of one part of the project, which investigates the crucial role played by news media in shaping the moral debates around AI (Ouchchy et al. 2020) and critically considers how journalists often act within public opinion as *translators of technical knowledge* (Sun and Zhai, 2022) when it comes to making sense of AI errors. The findings reported in this paper are the product of a two-year-long critical discourse analysis of news media in Germany, France and UK. Overall, 15 general interest newspapers have been studied and 520 news stories were analyzed.

The paper sheds light on the narratives about AI errors and algorithmic profiling and on how controversial data practices, technologies and policies are being mediated. It also shows that within different media, we are seeing the rise of juxtaposed and contradictory narratives on the relationship between AI errors and ethical implications of profiling, where sensationalist reporting often overrode more in-depth and critical discourses on AI failure. Yet it will also demonstrate that media narratives created a fruitful terrain for ethical debate and reflection on the difference between human and machine intelligence and whether algorithmic technologies can really grasp the complexity and diversity of human experience.

Key Words

media narratives; ethics of algorithms; public opinion; journalism; AI errors

Dynamic Polarization: Cumulation of News- and Opinion-Based Echo Chambers on Twitter

Authors

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Abstract

Opinion cumulation on social networks has been widely researched upon; however, we still lack knowledge on its dynamics. In particular, political polarization that leads to echo chambering with democratically inefficient homophily of views is mostly studied in terms of resulting echo chambers and factors shaping it, but not in terms of formation dynamics; this may misinform understandings of the nature of echo chambers. The concept of cumulative deliberation implies opinion divergence and growth of clusters of posts/comments that may contain differing opinions in online discussions, where a 'tug-of-war' model of winning the dispute may be traced. However, in our earlier work, we have shown that user discourse may diverge into neutral vs. politically opinionated clusters, rather than, e.g., left vs. right or loyal vs. oppositional. Our other research shows that, in case of global or nationwide events, news content spreads first, and then, with a time lag, is-sues of public importance raise in the discussions. Combining this knowledge, we use Twitter data from Russia and Germany to reveal the dynamics of echo chambering as cumulation of neutral/news-based vs. opinionated/polarized content in time. For that, we use a multi-step research pipeline that includes, i.a., web graph analytics, k-means clustering, creation of frequency vocabularies, Granger testing, and visual mapping. We show that echo chambers of news-based and opinion-based nature form in different time and depend upon the lifestyle of their main actors. We detect cumulative patterns in formation of echo chambers, including one where the spread of news leads to discourse radicalization and one which we call 'the spiral of influence' in terms of interdependence of opinion clusters. We add to the theory of echo chambering by showing that echo chambers are highly dynamic, which is why seeing them as stable discussion modules may be misleading. We also pose a question on whether echo chambers are actually user-based, and show that they are conglomerates of posts of certain opinion and style, rather than user clusters.

Key Words

polarization, dynamic polarization, cumulative effects, opinion cumulation, Twitter, echo chambers

Cumulative Discussion Milieus as Ad Hoc Media: COVID-19 Collaborative Posting on Instagram

Authors

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Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, non-native speakers experienced difficulties in accessing and understanding government messaging and were also more likely to endorse misinformation about the coronavirus and vaccination. Non-surprisingly, social networks were in most cases the primary source of information about COVID-19 among transnational migrants, including those with migration background. In particular, social media influencers with migration background perform a significant role in development of migrants' agendas and communicative connectivity.

Instagram provides users with several affordances that allow for collaborative content creation, including co-author marking. These affordances have led a new structure in user relations and meaning creation via building shared mediated discussion milieus gradually created by networked micro-publics. As we showed earlier, they are based on collaborative efforts of content creators who aim at gaining attention of limited groups of users. In this paper, we explore how female Russian-speaking Instagram bloggers formed a global Instagram-based 'weak' public, in Nancy Fraser's terms, and created an alternative arena where people from different countries shared information and perceptions of pandemic, including judgements of governmental action against COVID-19 and on migrant care.

We formed a dataset of six cases of collaborative posting in March-April 2020. It included 113 posts published under unique hashtags and their comment sections with more than 10.000 comments altogether. Based on social network analysis, we reconstructed a networked public that coalesced around the key bloggers in the dataset in its temporal dynamics, including ties between bloggers and ties between bloggers and commenters in different countries.

Our results show that the Russian-speaking 'Instamigrants' initiated a global information exchange of varying degrees of user involvement, with a 'quazi-editorial core' that included circa 10% of authors responsible for the continuity of this micro-public. We also show that authors of posts, unlike traditional media, played an important role in commenting, since every third actively commenting user also participated in the collaborative posting as an author. Continuity of the milieu, including repetition of hashtags and the 'quazi-editorial core', have led us to the idea of discussion spaces as ad hoc media, since, for non-core users, the milieu also played informational, agenda-setting, and policy-critical roles.

Key Words

Instagram, cumulative deliberation, ad hoc media, online discussions, platform affordances

The representation of the "only yes means yes" law in the Spanish digital media landscape

Authors

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Abstract

The “only yes means yes” law in Spain, officially called the law of “integral guarantee of sexual freedom”, is one of the star projects of the Equity Ministry controlled by the Socialists’ left-wing coalition partners Unidas Podemos. According to the law, any sexual act must have clear and unmistakable consent from all parties involved. This means that silence or the absence of resistance does not constitute consent and that all parties must actively agree to engage in sexual activity. The law aims to protect individuals’ rights and promote a culture of respect and equality in sexual relationships. This law is essential in addressing sexual violence and promoting a more equitable society. Since its implementation in October 2022, Spain’s “only yes means yes” law has sparked controversy and generated public and media debate. Unifying abuse and assault under the law have resulted in unexpected side-effect. In some instances, penalties may be less severe than before the law’s introduction. This sparked much debate between the coalition partners, with equality minister Irene Montero defending her law and blaming the reduced penalties. In February of 2023, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced the reform of the law without reaching an agreement with the Equity Ministry controlled by Unidas Podemos.

This research examines the media’s handling of the “only yes means yes” law, focusing on the central concept of consent and the accompanying public debate. In addition, the study will analyze the media’s coverage of the law’s approval and the subsequent discussions surrounding it. From a methodological perspective, this study was conducted by examining the opinion section of six Spanish digital media outlets, consisting of editorials and columns, with varying political leanings: eldiario.es (left-wing), elpais.com (left-wing), elmundo.es (right-wing), elconfidencial.com (right-wing), abc.es (right-wing), and lavanguardia.com (right-wing). The analysis period includes August 25th, when the law passed, and February 2023, when the Prime Minister of Spain announced the reform of the law.

The results of this study shed light on how the media shapes public perception and understanding of the law. The media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and understanding of important issue of a democratic society, as this law is. By analyzing media coverage, we can gain insight into how the law and its related issues are framed and communicated to the public. Media representation can also impact policy-making by shaping public opinion and political discourse. Understanding how the media presents the law can inform policymakers about the public’s perception of the law and help identify areas for improvement. Furthermore, the “only yes means yes” law addresses important issues related to consent and gender equality. By examining the

media’s representation of the law, we can assess how well the law is being understood and implemented, and whether the media is promoting or hindering gender equality. And, finally, it enhances media accountability because research on media representation can also promote accountability among media outlets by highlighting areas where the media may fail to provide accurate and balanced coverage.

Key Words
violence against women, consent law, media representation

Authenticity, class, and visibility: How Chinese migrant workers perform their identity on social media

Authors

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Abstract

Despite accounting for 21% of the Chinese whole population, rural-to-urban migrant workers have long been suffering from structural socio-cultural inequalities and were typically under-represented as well as misrepresented in mainstream public discourse. However, thanks to the explosive growth in video-sharing social media platforms, short videos produced by migrant workers have gained unprecedented visibility on the Chinese internet, thereby enabling them to construct and share their own self-representations. Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of class distinctions and Goffman's understanding of identity performance, this study investigates migrant workers' visual self-presentation drawing on a multimodal discourse analysis of a sample of 30 videos posted by them on Kuaishou and Bilibili (two major video-sharing platforms in China). The sample was determined based on the initial quantitative content analysis of a larger corpus of videos (600 in total) collected between October 2020 and December 2020.

The analysis shows that migrant workers actively utilise certain visual performance strategies to project themselves as "authentic workers" including emphasizing the rawness of their bodies, presenting the working-class way of life, and constructing working-class visual aesthetics. It is interesting to consider whether and to what extent these practices manage to challenge established stereotypical representations. On the one hand, they mobilise the established, stigmatised identity markers, which are used by mainstream media as fixed signifiers of them, to make their performance consistent with stereotypical impressions and thus gain approval from the audience. On the other hand, their appropriation of dominant media discourse is not a rigid repetition, but a creative process in which they provide their own definition for the pre-existing stereotypes. Their re-semantisation practices, which confer new meanings to established labels and images, thereby have the potential of redefining the dominant conceptions of the authenticity of their identities.

This then allows a previously mis/underrepresented social group to normalise and make their identities a familiar presence in public space, thus brewing the potential to resist the wider hegemonic hierarchies of visibility. However, this study also discovers that the increasing visibility and the subsequent intensified scrutiny constrain migrant workers' performed authenticity. What they present as authentic is not merely decided by themselves but is expected to be in line with the normative class-based distinctions and ideological scripts; otherwise, they might be deemed as "fake/inauthentic" by other social media users. This means that the extent to which they can subvert conventionally agreed-upon boundaries regarding what is considered an authentic migrant worker is restricted.

This study contributes to current scholarships by 1) revealing that authenticity can function as a weapon for the reproduction of class-based social inequalities; 2) arguing that for migrant workers and other marginalised social groups, visibility can provide a tool for contesting dominant socio-cultural hierarchies while simultaneously making them more vulnerable.

Key Words
rural-to-urban migrant workers; identity performance; social media; class; authenticity; visibility

No more silence online: A moderated mediation model of pro-attitudinal selective exposure, online corrective participation, online cross-cutting discussion, and weak-tie discussion during the COVID-19 pandemic in China

Authors

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Abstract

In an age of big data, algorithms can prioritize homogeneous information based on people's usage habits (Lin, 2022), in turn, to expand the trend of selective exposure which refers to a situation in which individuals intentionally search for information that is parallel to their prepositions to defend their beliefs (Olson & Stone, 2005; Iyengar & Hahn, 2009). But simultaneously, the inevitable thing individuals can meet online is encountering weak tie people who presumably hold opposing viewpoints. To discuss with people who hold conflicting opinions on a particular controversial event, is called cross-cutting discussion (Mutz, 2002). It is considered an essential component of facilitating the diversity of information and the democratic process (Castro & Hopmann, 2018; Lu & Myrick, 2016). Conflicting opinions can engender perceived media bias (Barnidge et al., 2020), and to counteract the potential hostile effect of the media bias on others, people may take more corrective actions (Rojas, 2010). But according to the spiral of silence theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1974), individuals will track the opinion environment (i.e., interpersonal relationships and media environment) to distinguish whether their opinions are the majority due to the fear of social isolation. If people perceive their opinions are incongruent with the majority, they will stay silent, but if not, they will speak out (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). However, China's online environment does not remain silent especially as the increasingly stringent epidemic prevention measures since 2022 have stimulated much of the public to question the government's ability and flexibility to face the ever-changing COVID-19 online. Therefore, it merits a deep exploration of the spiral of silence process on Chinses social media during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the results from 525 questionnaires, this study provides a significant sight to better understand the spiral of silence theory on social media by exploring the moderated mediation model of selective exposure, online corrective participation, online cross-cutting discussion, and weak-tie discussion in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in China. Findings of this study reveal that people who are exposed to homogeneous information are more likely to engage in online cross-cutting discussion, which can lead to more corrective actions. Additionally, weak ties can enhance the mediating effect of online cross-cutting discussion, thereby breaking the silence of the opinion climate. The relationships found an echo in the Chinese online public opinion climate under the strict COVID-19 epidemic prevention policies of China. Theoretically, this study

emphasizes the significance of weak ties in the spiral of silence process on Chinese social media under a special context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Words
cross-cutting discussion, selective exposure, corrective actions, weak tie

A comparative study on fertility attitudes of Netizens under different types of opinion leaders on social media

Authors

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Abstract

The concept of opinion leaders was first introduced in the 1940s. With the development of media technology, opinion leaders in the online environment play an increasingly important role in disseminating information. In information-rich social media, the opinions of opinion leaders have a significant impact on the attitudes of ordinary Internet users and guide the trend of public opinion in the discussion of key issues.

In 2022, China officially entered the era of negative population growth. Since the release of the three-child policy in 2021, the fertility rate has fallen instead of rising, and people's willingness to have children has shown a clear downward trend. In discussing fertility issues on social media, opinion leaders, such as mainstream media, experts and scholars, and grassroots vloggers, each has different positions and express rich and diversified views. The feedback of netizens' comments also presents other fertility attitude tendencies. Accordingly, we took the opinion leaders and their Weibo comments on fertility issues in the Weibo platform as the research object.

The main questions of this study are as follows.

1. What types of opinion leaders exist in discussing fertility issues on social media?

2. How do the opinions of opinion leaders relate to the comments of ordinary Internet users?

3. What are the similarities and differences in fertility attitudes presented by the Weibo comments of different types of opinion leaders?

The researcher adopted the method of computational propagation, selected Weibo as the research platform, took the earliest time when the "three-child policy" appeared as the node, searched the childbearing-related topics from May 31, 2021, to now, and selected the opinion leaders under the topic of Weibo fertility by crawling all the popular microblogs under the issue. Then, the researchers classified opinion leaders and conducted agenda network analysis on blog posts and comments of different opinion leaders. At the same time, to more accurately analyze the fertility attitudes reflected in netizens' comments, researchers use the theory of planned behavior

as the framework and the supervised classification method to build a deep learning model for extensive data text analysis of fertility attitudes.

The study found that opinion leaders on the birth issue on the Weibo platform mainly fall into four categories: official media, experts and scholars, government officials, and we-media bloggers, representing three discourse systems, respectively: official, elite, and ordinary people. Among them, the agenda of netizens' comments is highly similar to the agenda of opinion leaders' blog posts. Netizens' attention and discussion on fertility topics mainly focus on the opinions of opinion leaders. In terms of fertility attitude, netizens' comments, on the whole, show a low fertility intention, which is mainly reflected in personal fertility values and the difficulties faced by fertility.

Key Words

Opinion Leader, Fertility Attitude, Agenda Network Analysis, Supervision Classification

Avatar and uncivil behavior in metaverse: the mediating role of identification and self-concern, the moderating effect of bystander

Authors

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Abstract

Based on the proteus effect, the purpose of this study was to explore whether perceptions of one's avatar and surroundings in a metaverse space influence online uncivil behavior intentions. Specifically, we examined whether identification with one's avatar in the metaverse and the perception of social norms would affect intentions to engage in uncivil behavior (i.e., the intention to click and read an article containing hateful content). In this process, the mediating effect of immersion and the moderating effect of self-concern in the metaverse were tested. An experimental design was organized to test the research hypotheses and research questions (n=80). The experiment was conducted in a factorial design with avatar condition 2 (user-tuned avatar to resemble their own personality vs. a given avatar that is completely different from their own personality) and the presence of other avatars in the metaverse condition 2 (presence of 5 or more avatars vs. no presence). A metaverse space for conducting the experiment was constructed, and each participant participated in the metaverse space under given conditions and responded to the key variables. As a result of the analysis, it was found that uncivil behavioral intentions vary depending on the degree of identification with avatars and perception of social norms within the metaverse space. The mediating effect of immersion and the moderating effect on self-concern were significant in the process of identification and perception of social norms affecting uncivil behavioral intentions. This study presents a model for psychological mechanisms operating in three-dimensional CMC spaces such as metaverse, and proposes methods to reduce the uncivil behavior that occurs in online spaces. Theoretical and practical implications of this study are discussed.

Key Words

metaverse, avatar, identification, social norms, online uncivil behavior

Emotional expression in social media: Analysis of the emotions expressed by netizens on Weibo and Twitter during the “Xinjiang Cotton” incident

Authors

Ms. Yan Xu - None

Abstract

On March 24, 2021, news that Swedish fashion company H&M, a member of the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), had refused to use Xinjiang cotton starting in September 2020 because of reports of forced labor of Uighurs in the production of the cotton sparked a discussion on Chinese social media. In response to these allegations, Chinese official media and private citizens mobilized to support Xinjiang cotton producers and boycotted companies that had joined the BCI. This Chinese boycott of foreign goods was the largest since the 2012 anti-Japanese demonstrations in China. Subsequently, Chinese celebrities began announcing the termination of their contracts with brands within the BCI organization, which led to intense discussion on the Chinese social media site, Weibo. Simultaneously, netizens took to Twitter to discuss the matter spontaneously.

The main focus of this study is to assess the emotional expressions used by Weibo and Twitter users in their comments on the Xinjiang cotton incident and to determine the extent to which social media influences public opinion. In this paper, three research questions are posed: 1) What emotions were expressed by Weibo and Twitter users regarding the Xinjiang cotton incident? 2) How do the expressions of emotions differ between Weibo and Twitter users? and 3) Do social media platforms such as Weibo and Twitter contribute to the difference in emotional expression? In terms of methodology, this study uses hashtags related to the Xinjiang cotton incident to collect posts from Weibo and Twitter, with thematic and discourse analysis employed to analyze the data.

Results show that Weibo and Twitter users from China expressed their nationalist sentiments differently with regard to the Xinjiang cotton incident. First of all, Weibo users focused on support for national products and affirmation of the celebrities who terminated their endorsement contracts, while Twitter users tended to condemn the actions of BCI. Secondly, the analysis of emotional expression found that users on Weibo presented their emotions more directly, with patriotic feelings and aversion to BCI, while Twitter users presented their emotions more rationally. For example, Twitter users were more concerned with clarifying that forced labor did not exist in Xinjiang. This study considers whether this difference in emotional expression is related to the social media platform. In particular, Weibo is primarily used within China, whereas Twitter users come from all over the world, with Chinese users referring to Twitter as an extranet. This article contributes to current research on emotional expressions of social media, comparing the expression of emotions in response to the same event across different platforms and elucidating the influence level of social media platforms as a mediator on users’ emotional expressions.

Key Words

Mediated communication, Emotional expression, Social media, Post-truth, Public Opinion

Social Compensation or Social Enhancement? A Path Model Connecting Rejection Sensitivity and Loneliness for the Chinese Online Dating Applications Users

Authors

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Abstract

As online dating has been a worldwide dominant form of dating, more individuals, especially rejection-sensitive people tend to use online dating applications to seek romantic relationships. The current study aims to test the two conflicting theoretical hypotheses- social compensation and social enhancement hypothesis in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic for Chinese adults. The study contributes to the existing literature on online dating by constructing a path model connecting rejection sensitivity and loneliness, through the use of online dating applications and cyberbullying victimization.

Social compensation hypothesis, or the poor-get-richer hypothesis (Zywica & Danowski, 2008) postulated that individuals lower in social competence went through issues building face-to-face social relationships, and using online intermediary therefore became an efficient way for them to compensate for the lack of the offline social networks. Conversely, social enhancement hypothesis, the rich-get-richer, or the poor-get-poorer hypothesis (Valkenburg et al., 2005), revealed that people with high social competence will engage in more mediated interaction to enhance their existing social networks.

Findings from an online survey of 459 Chinese adults reveal that people higher in rejection sensitivity use online dating applications more frequently to alleviate loneliness, which supports social compensation hypothesis. However, the online dating environments could not provide them with an efficient way to find a partner, they might become the victims of cyberbullying, causing their increased loneliness, which confirms enhancement hypothesis. The current research suggests that for those individuals with deficit social competence, online dating applications could compensate for their limited offline social networks and benefit their psychological well-being; however, online dating applications could increase the possibility of cyberbullying victimization, enhancing their psychological ill-being. This research may be helpful for the development of online dating using strategies to protect specific groups, especially for those individuals with deficit social competence from being cyberbullied during their use of online dating applications.

Key Words

Rejection sensitivity, Loneliness, Online dating application, Cyberbullying victimization

Anthropomorphism Dimensions of Technology Imagination A Comparative Study of Media and User Discourse with Word Embedding

Authors

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly active in human-machine communication. When people interact and use AI-agent, people tend to anthropomorphize them. Anthropomorphism is the psychological response that humans attribute unique human characteristics to non-humans (Epley et al., 2007). In addition, it also represents a form of discursive practices related to technology imagination (Cousineau, 2019). This sense-making process would be mutually and dynamically constructed by different viewpoints, including professional media and ordinary users. Correspondingly, word embedding becomes a powerful empirical method for comparative discourse analysis (Arseniev-Koehler, 2021), while relevant studies remain limited. Therefore, this study uses this novel method to compare the anthropomorphism discourse of different types of AI between technology media and ordinary users.

Method

Word embedding represents for machine learning model to project semantic relations of words in a high-dimension vector space. In other words, words contextually-related would be positioned nearby. For example, if “poor” is close to “girl”, this pair of the word is more likely to share a similar context and captures some potential stereotype (Garget al., 2018). This study trained the model on the text from TechCrunch (an online technology media), and user answers from Quora (an online Q&A community). The validation of model was tested by comparing its relatedness scores with human scores (Schnabelet al., 2015).

As for AI-agents, we adopted classification from (Sundar & Lee, 2022) to identify them as mass mediator (e.g., Algorithm), interpersonal mediator (e.g., ChatGPT), mass communicator (e.g., AI-generator) and interpersonal communicator (e.g., Chatbot). After that, we identified three anthropomorphism dimensions corresponding to animacy (i.e., being alive), agency (i.e., ability to decide autonomously), and experience (i.e., sentient feelings)(Gray et al., 2007), constructing three dimensions by six pairs of antonym words from anthropomorphism scale (Bartnecket al., 2009)(e.g., responsive vs cold) according to Kozlowski et al.(2019). Lastly, we calculated the cosine similarity between dimensions and AI-agents and then used PCA (principal components analysis) to visualize them.

Results

We concluded imagination pattern by comparing the cosine similarity scores. Regarding media discourse, it’s unsurprising Chatbot is viewed as the most humanlike in all dimensions, while the

GPT is regarded as the coldest and most mechanical tool. In comparison, the algorithm obtains a similar position as Chatbot, although it's also designed as a mediator rather than a communicator. Additionally, AI-generator has agency but is less alive. User discourse exhibits a slightly different pattern. Besides Chatbots, the technology supporting Chatbots like GPT and ChatGPT is also evaluated as natural and smart. However, controversial judgment (aware but cold) was presented around the algorithm. Furthermore, AI-generator is detached from all anthropomorphism dimensions.

Discussion

Overall, the results suggested that technology media envisaged AI with more imaginative and prospective narration, while users are more technologically sober-minded and described AI as less anthropomorphic. Otherwise, these findings may capture potential patterns of AI-agents' engagement and anthropomorphism. When users anthropomorphize AI, an intimate AI-communicator is a responsive creature and activated by actual cues, while a distant AI-mediator is a digital artifact to project users' uncertainties and speculations.

Key Words
Artificial intelligence, Anthropomorphism, AI agency, Word embedding

Digital citizenship in Nigeria: twitter and political contestation during the 2023 general elections

Authors

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Abstract

In Nigeria, enthusiasm for dissent, sousveillance, and digital opposition peaked in parallel with the #EndSARS movement in October 2020. Since then, Nigeria has been on the cusp of an upsurge in citizen participation, with citizens emerging as front-stage actors asserting civic rights. Social media, particularly Twitter, drives this activation as an alternative public sphere, enabling political discourses and dissent in a space less dominated by mainstream media and more open to broader public participation. This paper explores the complex forms of civic engagement and citizenship performance on Nigeria's Twitter spaces between April 2022 and February 2023, leading to the country's 2023 national elections. It uses the lens of digital citizenship that situates the citizen as a politically engaged subject who gathers and shares information and makes rights claims online, potentially altering the balance of power. Given the political tensions, repression of communicative freedom, ethnic and religious violence, and widespread gender inequality, the study explores Twitter as an alternative public sphere and platform for back-channel meaning-making in Nigeria. It underscores how political discourses, social justice activism, and civic agency become articulated on social media platforms like Twitter. With data collected using Twitonomy and Tweet deck software over eleven months, the study examines the nature of mediated citizen practices using a sample of twelve hashtags selected based on the trending hashtags on Nigeria's Twitter during the months leading up to the 2023 general elections. These include #NigeriaDecides2023, #BAT2023, #PeterObi4president, #Atikuokowa2023, #NairaRedesign #Justice4Deborah, #Ujuanya, #FemCoScam, #FreeAminuMuhammed, #AtikuGate, #FakeBisopChallenge, and #jagabanArmy. These hashtags show how Nigerians use Twitter to engage in political discourse and social justice activities and to practice and perform citizenship online.

In theorising and analysing digital citizenship practices in Nigeria, the study moves away from technological determinist-thinking implicit in an ideology that emphasises the liberating potential of social media to counter state control or any hegemonic order to emphasise the possibilities and limitations of deploying Twitter as a tool for expressing dissent, and civic engagement. The study shows how prevailing cultural, regional, and religious contexts and the peculiarity of shared practices across ethnicism, class, gender, and political leanings matter for the ways digital citizenship is understood, reimagined and reinvigorated among African digital publics. On Nigeria's Twitter, citizenship claims are expressed without rights, reflecting contextual peculiarities often conflicting with new digital practices and Western liberal notions of citizenship. Ultimately, the study recognises that while it may not always serve as a revolutionary or transformative space,

Twitter remains a transgressive site for civil disobedience and the subversion of hegemonic platforms and ideologies. Nigeria's Twittersphere also emerges as a contested space within which hierarchies of belonging and exclusion are formed even within counter-publics. Still, Nigerians deploy Twitter for civic engagement and meaningful collective forms of action to potentially expand their country's democratic political space.

Key Words
Twitter, Social media, right claims, digital democracy, social justice activism,

The Barometer and Dissolver of Anxiety: Danmu-mediated Interaction of Tarot Reading on Online Video Platform Bilibili in the Perspective of Interaction Ritual Chain Theory

Authors

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Abstract

Bilibili is one of China's largest video sharing platforms, especially popular among youth (users aged 25 and below reached 42.9%). It facilitated the publishing of a new form of interactive videos that would allow users to trigger different plotlines and arrive at different endings. Users on Bilibili enjoys sharing emotions by sending Danmu with others because it scrolls the real-time user comments across the screen, presents social emotion visually.

China has just gone through a three-year epidemic period, and at the same time, young people are facing increasing social pressure. The uncertainty and anxiety have made Tarot videos on bilibili a good place for young people to relieve anxiety and pray for good luck (Fu, et al., 2023). In special times, danmu may help people vent their emotions, and therefore also have the potential to become an important barometer for exploring social emotions.

This study zooms in on the presentation of anxiety in China on the Real-time Danmu-mediated Interaction of Tarot Reading on Bilibili and tries to investigate the mechanism and features of this phenomenon through the conceptual lens of Interaction Ritual Chain Theory.

Method

Since May 2022, field notes, including danmu from the videos and live broadcasts of 10 representative and diverse uploaders on this platform and other valuable materials, were collated and coded. The researcher also followed the uploaders during this period, participated in their live broadcasts online, and sent danmu in person. Digital ethnography and content analysis of data (including wordcloud, LDA, etc.) are applied to analysis.

Findings

This study finds that, as a result of sending danmu, the audience generates co-presence, the joint focus of attention, and shared emotions, which form ingredients of the interaction ritual chain and produce outcomes such as group solidarity, symbols, and emotional energy. Ulteriorly, the real-time danmu-mediated interaction of Tarot reading on an online video platform can be considered as the barometer and dissolver of anxiety in contemporary China. In other words, danmu can be used to observe and monitor common concern and shared emotions of Chinese youth.

1. Audiences send danmu at high density twice (at the beginning and the end) with the content "Receive good luck." -- It is formed spontaneously by the audience in the early stage of this

type of video dissemination, and become the symbols representing the group, then used as the typical ritual.

2. If controlling for other variables, interactive videos have more danmu than non-interactive ones. -- The former sets higher boundaries to outsiders and forms more intimate group assembly.
3. Issues about education, work, intimate relationships, and the COVID-19 formed a common concern. -- As the mutual focus, they also reflected the social problems linked to the anxiety of Chinese society.
4. Participants showed similar emotional states in response to certain problems, or showed convergence. -- Social emotions were resonated and amplified in the interaction ritual chain, thus generating more intense personal emotional energy.

Key Words

anxiety, danmu, interaction ritual chains, Tarot reading, online video platform

Social media news use drives nationalism among politically interested dogmatists

Authors

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Abstract

Many countries around the world have recently seen a significant resurgence in nationalism characterized by right-wing politics, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Germany, Japan, and India, to name just a few (Enyedi, 2015; Fuchs, 2020; Udupa, 2019). The growing nationalist ideology across many nations of the world portrays the country as being threatened by outside groups that must be protected to preserve purity. Outside groups include immigrants, minorities, and political opponents who are portrayed as enemies of national interests (Fuchs, 2020). Importantly, nationalism is often propagated and spread through social media platforms in the current digital era—a phenomenon termed by some scholars as digital (or internet) nationalism (Eriksen, 2007; Mihelj & Jiménez-Martínez, 2020; Schneider, 2018; Udupa, 2019). Moreover, although digital technologies were initially seen as drivers of globalization, scholars increasingly recognize their role in the rise of nationalism and right-wing populism (Schneider, 2018; Zhang, 2020a, 2020b).

This study argues that news consumption through social media news can drive nationalist ideology by promoting dogmatic thinking (H1 and 2). It also explores how political interest moderates the effect of social media news use on nationalism via dogmatism (H3).

We used Qualtrics, a well-known survey agency, to conduct an online two-way panel survey in India. The final sample size was 860. The sample was designed to reflect population parameters with specific quotas, which enhances the ability to infer the findings more generally.

Mediation analysis shows that frequent social media news use (wave-1) leads to greater nationalism (wave-2) by advancing dogmatism (wave-2), such that social media news use develops dogmatic thinking, which in turn induces nationalist ideology (mediation index; B = .013, se = .005 LLCI = .004, ULCI = .024). According to Hayes (2017), an indirect effect is significant when the bootstrapped CIs do not contain zero.

Moderated mediation analysis shows that political interest conditions this indirect effect of social media news use, such that the relationship is more substantial for individuals with a high level of political interest (B = .019, se = .008 LLCI = .004, ULCI = .039), followed by a mean level of political interest (B = .011, se = .005 LLCI = .002, ULCI = .022), but the relationship is insignificant for individuals with a low level of political interest (B = .004, se = .004 LLCI = -.002, ULCI = .015).

This study contributes to the scholarship by highlighting the role of social media news use in facilitating nationalism through dogmatism, particularly from a non-western context. It also

advances the need to consider political motivational factors, e.g., political interest, in conditioning the outcomes of social media news use.

Key Words
social media news use; nationalism; dogmatism; political interest; panel survey

The spiral of silence on Chinese social media: Examining the impact of platform, social ties and face on one’s willingness to express in online discussions

Authors

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Abstract

Nowadays, social media plays an increasingly important role in public discussion and potentially influences individuals' willingness to express. In this context, the spiral of silence (SoS) in computer-mediated communication has returned to the forefront of research, while its existence in the digital media space is always under controversy. With the diversification of social media platforms, online opinion expression varies across platforms. The frequency and content of comments are different on strong tie dominated platforms such as WeChat (a Chinese social media platform based on real-life contacts) and weak tie dominated platforms such as Weibo (a Chinese social media platform based on users’ relationships to share information). However, in previous research on SoS, few studies have investigated the impact of platform features on opinion expression. Besides, although some studies have considered the influence of specific social context and cultural differences on SoS theory, few studies have taken the perspective of social ties and face culture, which are unique in Chinese society and weigh out in Chinese daily communication. Therefore, the aims of this study are twofold. First, we aim to introduce the perspective of social ties to explore new explanatory predictors of SoS theory by emphasizing technical & perceived strength of social ties and saving face. Second, we aim to bring the attention back to the media itself by examing the impact of platform features on opinion expression, refresh the framework of SoS in social media era, and eventually understand the interactions of platforms, face culture and SoS theory in the Chinese social context.

This study examines the impact of social media platforms and face on the online "spiral of silence," using "Can disaster reports interview the families of victims" as the public issue to test the SoS phenomenon through a 2 (technical feature of platform: strong-tie, weak-tie) × 2 (opinion climate: positive, negative) experiment. This study builds the model by using platform’s strength of social ties and opinion climate as the independent variables, saving face and fear of isolation as the mediating variables, willingness to express as the dependent variable, and demographic information as the control variables. The research conceptually distinguishes strong-tie and weak-tie platforms corresponding to Granovetter's definition of strong and weak ties, and then conducts questionnaires to participants under the four manipulated social media scenarios to measure the variables. Finally, this study utilizes structural equation model to analyze the raw data with maximum likelihood as the estimation procedure to examine the significance of each pathway in the proposed model, and uses PROCESS Procedure for SPSS to test the mediating effect of saving face and fear of isolation, aiming to reveal a subtle path of the strong and weak tie platform, face, and SoS.

The results show that the platform’s technical strength of social ties was positively correlated with the individual's perceived strength of social ties, but only the latter significantly increased the individual's desire to save face and weakened the willingness to express. Furthermore, saving face mediated the effect of unfavorable opinion climate on one’s willingness to express, while "fear of isolation" only had a tiny effect which refutes the initial theory of Noelle-Neumann. Finally, this study verifies that strong-tie platforms reinforce the online SoS phenomenon, while weak tie platforms do the opposite. According to the previous results, strong-tie platforms can lead to stronger perceived strength of social ties, thereby stimulating individuals' desire to save face. Due to the mediation effect of saving face, the negative impact of unfavorable opinion climate on one’s willingness to express is exacerbated, intensifying the silence on social media.

Key Words
social media platform, social ties, face, the spiral of silence

The European public communication in the post Covid-19 scenario: towards a European Public Sphere?

Authors

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Abstract

Although over the past 60 years Member States have transferred a large part of their power to European institutions, they do not enjoy a widely accepted democratic legitimacy. In the 1990s, especially following the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and of the single currency in 1999, part of the project constraints became evident. As a consequence, the climate of opinion towards the emerging European Union changed from an initial condition of 'permissive consensus' to a 'constraining consensus'. Numerous studies carried out to investigate the causes of this change, that over the years has taken the form of a growing scepticism towards the whole EU system, provided the theory of the so-called 'democratic *deficit*' (G. F. Pasquino), strictly related to another form of deficit: the 'informative' one (M. Belluati). Within this context, debates and studies about the European Public Sphere (EPS) acquired more relevance and the issue of the EPS for many years restricted to almost exclusively professional circles, recently re-emerged on a larger scale.

Paradoxically, when the health emergency caused by Covid-19 drew the attention of EU citizens to the importance of shared values (solidarity, acceptance and the valorization of cultural diversity, but also dialogue and discussion, all prerogatives of the Habermasian model of the Public Sphere) academics, professionals, researchers, but also EU officers started debating once again about the necessity of the EPS. As a result of the Covid-19 outbreak and its drastic consequences, European policy makers and media, alongside with actors of other nature, focussed on the same issue at the same time. As a result, EU citizen were reached by communication and information flows mainly pivoted around the same core: the pandemic. These are the steps behind the research hypothesis, according to which Covid-19 pandemic has marked a turning point in the history of the European integration, providing solid evidence that EU institutions recognized the necessity to improve the quality of the European public debate through citizen engagement, digitalization (considering the potential coming from the 'platform society'- Van Dijck, Thomas Poell and Martijn de Waal) and media pluralism in the perspective of a European e-governance prototype. Evidence to that is provided by EU institutions: examples include the Media Action Plan and the European Democracy Action Plan, both adopted by the EU Commission in December 2020. One aimed at regulating the European media ecosystem, and the other at redefining European democracy, these official documents define suitable conditions for the emergence of the EPS.

Referring to the so-called 'information *deficit*', which alongside the 'democratic' one, weighs on the European project, the debate about the EPS tends to polarize around a major question: does it exist a EPS or do national public spheres persist? If so, would the EPS model differ from the

national one? If so, in which way? To what extent would the EPS result from the Europeanization of the national Public Spheres? Could we think of a digital EPS?

Key Words
European Public Sphere

Covid-19

Digital

Quantified Self, Disciplinary Power and Survival Aesthetic Path: Mediated Time Management Practice from the Perspective of Power Discipline

Authors

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Abstract

The flexible time structure of post-industrial society has made the time of daily life increasingly compact and the advent of mediated time has reshaped people's experience of time, which makes time an extremely important object to manage.In the era of intelligent media, time-tracking apps as an emerging media technology have become an effective way for young people to self-track their limited personal time. Previous studies have analysed the design and development, behavioural motivations and formation mechanisms of mediated time management from various theoretical perspectives, but the relationship between mediated technological development and human subjectivity has been less explored, and the issue has been less analysed from the perspective of power regulation.

This paper critically examines how college students in China manage their time with time-tracking apps during the epidemic through the perspective of power discipline theory, so as to provide insight into the reflexive control in the quantified self. The study used qualitative research methods of in-depth interview and participant observation. For the in-depth interviews, 20 college students who have experience with the time-tracking apps in 2019-2022 were interviewed offline through open recruitment and "snowballing"; for the participant observation, I conducted participant observation in the official communication group of the well-known time management software Forest as a long-term user. I argue that users tend to achieve self-empowerment and regain the subjectivity of the subject in front of media technology through time-tracking apps. However, this quantified-self technology prompts users to self-discipline and invite monitoring, without achieving complete liberation of subjectivity.Nonetheless, In the process of interpreting data and self-regulation, the technological scripts set by apps are not fully accepted, and users can domesticate the apps and regain subjectivity through functional simplifying, limited disconnection and data “strike”. From the perspective of human beings as the subjects of desire, the survival aesthetics that emphasizes "returning to the self" can become a value orientation and effective path to domesticate quantified-self technology and maintain the status of human subjectivity.

Key Words

quantified self, social acceleration, disciplinary power, time, mobile apps, autonomy

Rumors, Conspiracy Theories and Media Credibility in Public Emergencies: A Comparative Study of Two Bizarre Cases about Disappearance and Death of Chinese Teenagers

Authors

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Prof. Liao Weimin - School of Humanities and Communication, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics

Abstract

With the continuous development of mobile internet and social networking media, in the reporting of public emergencies, self-media, as a double-edged sword, has, on the one hand, significantly increased the freedom of the press by under its interactive and autonomous characteristics, resulting in an unprecedented change in the media ecology; on the other hand, due to its time-sensitive and wide coverage characteristics, it allows any individual in society to participate in the discussion of the event, arousing public opinion. On the other hand, because of its timeliness and wide coverage, it also allows any individual in society to participate in the discussion of the event, arousing public opinion. Therefore, exploring the changes in media credibility under different scenarios in reporting public emergencies is conducive to considering a new paradigm for crisis communication management, alleviating social grievances and public anxiety, and satisfying the public's deep-seated demand for the functioning of the media.

Rumors and conspiracy theories both originate in ambiguous and uncertain social contexts and are more or less linked to real-life events or situations. Their dissemination processes mostly rely on shared narratives, are collective, participatory, and speculative, and often reflect a strong desire to persuade in the texts. The change from 'rumor' to 'conspiracy theory' therefore tends to reflect a decline in media credibility. An analysis of the existing literature shows that there is a growing body of research on media credibility, but fewer studies have examined changes in rumors and conspiracy theories in the context of crisis communication. Therefore, this paper compares two typical crisis communication events that occurred at a similar time and were highly publicized by society, both of which were caused by "youth suicide" - the "Chengdu 49 middle school student's death" and the "Hu Xinyu's disappearance". Using the social network analysis method, this paper explores the main components of negative public opinion and their impact on media trust in the two incidents and proposes countermeasures to optimize crisis communication management in light of the comparative results.

"The "Chengdu 49 Middle School Student Falling to his Death" incident occurred on the night of May 9, 2021, when Lin Moumou, a sophomore student at Chengdu 49 Middle School, fell to his death on campus. The incident quickly became the focus of public opinion, and was subsequently escalated by the lack of detail in the official briefing, which led to an escalation in public opinion;

eventually, the mainstream media was able to guide public opinion more successfully by listing the detailed timeline, monitoring evidence, answering public doubts and reflecting on the issue, and gradually defusing the subsequent impact. The incident lasted for four days and 14 hours, with a peak spread rate of 1,730 articles/hour and an impact index higher than 94% of social events.

The "Hu Xinyu disappearance case" occurred on the evening of October 14, 2022, when Hu Xinyu, a 15-year-old student in the senior class (5) of Zhiyuan Middle School in Shangrao County, Jiangxi, was strangely lost from campus and was found 104 days later, and was confirmed to have committed suicide, triggering a lot of attention. In the 104 days since the incident occurred, the missing boy has not been found, although the relevant authorities have conducted several searches in the vicinity of the case and even carried out four inspections near the place of his death, and because of the many doubts surrounding the case, such as the "unlikely possibility of a shoelace hanging for more than a hundred pounds" and the length of the ferment, even though the mainstream media Even though details have been revealed in the mainstream media, some people still choose to believe in conspiracy theories and claim that there is another reason for his death.

The study focuses on the following three questions: First, by looking at the similarities and differences between the two reports, the impact of different forms of reporting on the public opinion environment is summarised. Secondly, it compares the different impacts and consequences of "rumors" and "conspiracy theories" in the reporting process of the two incidents. Thirdly, we propose effective countermeasures to optimize media coverage concerning the factors that may generate 'rumors' and 'conspiracy theories in crisis communication.

Key Words

Rumors; Conspiracy Theories; Media Credibility; Public Emergencies; Youth Suicide

The Mediatization of Diseases：Analysis of an online help-seeking community for COVID-19 patients based on a conceptual metaphor perspective

Authors

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic in Wuhan at the end of 2019.In January 2020, due to the highly contagious nature of the virus,the number of infections is rapidly increasing, and far exceeds the capacity of local hospitals that can take .In the Sina Weibo platform (China's version of Twitter), together with Wuhan's local government and the Chinese Communist Party's central media, set up a "COVID-19 Patients Seeking Help" online community. It is hoped to collect information on patients who have not been admitted, to assist in the equal distribution of medical resources and to increase the cure rate of the COVID-19.

This study collates the help-seeking messages in this online community and finds that the messages in the community are not only about help-seeking, but also about attitudes toward the virus and the government. This study collected all extant text samples, including 3532 help-seeking posts, and used conceptual metaphors and corpus linguistic research paths to identify help-seeking messages, and the identification results showed that discourse expressions in the community differed from official militarized metaphors, with patients adopting more personal and vitalized metaphors.

The findings show that in China's highly politicized public opinion environment, the central call still holds the highest discourse power and holds the power to define the virus in the jurisdictional area.As real patients, although the attitudes of members of the online help-seeking community can only be expressed metaphorically， but the officially dominated military metaphor briefly fails in the online community, and the community becomes a field where both sides compete for discursive power.Although the online community is officially created, the mediatization features contained in the platform make it impossible for the government to enforce complete domination, remodeling the original traditional power structure.The media logic is involved in the activities of defining the COVID-19, proposing a new framework of understanding the disease, becoming a link between the social culture and the governance model, and is reconfiguring the relationship between the patient, the government, and the disease.

Key Words

Mediatization; COVID-9; Online help-seeking; Conceptual metaphor; Corpus linguistics

Boundary Crossing: An Experimental Study of Individual Perceptions Towards AIGC

Authors

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Abstract

AIGC (Artificial Intelligence Generate Content) has been applied in the production and life of human society. Chatgpt reached 1 million users within a week of its launch, and AI paintings reached a bidding price of 1.1 million yuan at an auction. Judging from the realization results, the generation of artificial intelligence has already reflected the intelligence of creation, generating unexpected effects under the framework of the algorithm. But whether to accept the artistry and autonomy of artificial intelligence-generated content is actually a cognitive issue (Gu & Wang, 2021: 102), and it needs to be tested in actual scenarios.

This paper takes AIGC as the research object and carries out a grouping experiment based on 240 participants. the following hypotheses are first proposed:

H1: People who experienced high anthropomorphic AI rated the painting higher than those who experienced low anthropomorphic AI.

H2: Compared with low anthropomorphic scenarios, people who experience high anthropomorphic artificial intelligence are more likely to recognize the artificial intelligence as a painter.

H3: Paintings created by artificial intelligence with high autonomy will receive higher ratings from the public than those with low autonomy.

H4: Compared with low-autonomy scenarios, AI with high autonomy is more likely to be regarded as a painter by the public.

H5: The public's ratings for artificial intelligence painting works and their recognition of the machine painter's social identity have a positive impact on their adoption and use of artificial intelligence.

H6: Ratings on paintings and recognition of AIGC will jointly positively affect individuals' willingness to use AIGC paintings.

In order to test the above hypothesis, a 2x2 experiment was designed and conducted. The independent variables are all categorical variables, and the assigned values are high (1) and low (0). In the specific operation process, AI human-likeness (high anthropomorphism and low anthropomorphism) and AI creative autonomy (high creative autonomy and low creative autonomy) are controlled. The dependent variables of the study are the respondents' ratings on

the content of the paintings, their recognition of the identity of the AI as a painter, and their willingness to use AIGC for painting. All three dependent variables are measured as continuous variables. In addition, respondents' overall acceptance of AIGC and the style of the paintings were covariates.

To test H1-H4, the study conducted two sets of a two-factor analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Another set of analysis of ANCOVA tested H2 and H4. To test H5, a pearson correlation analysis was conducted between the "rating of painting" and the "recognition of AI painter's identity". To test H6, the independent variables were "rating of painting", "recognition of AI painter's identity" and "rating of acceptance towards AI", the dependent variable was "willingness to use AIGC for painting", a multiple linear regression model was constructed.

Finally, we found that H1-H4 were not confirmed. H5-H6 was confirmed. Anthropomorphism and Autonomy have no effect on the evaluation of AI paintings and AI "painter" identity, but in together their have a combined positive impact on both independent variables. The existence of moderating effect reveals the phenomenon of on-the-spot stimulation similar to the strong effect theory. Meanwhile, the evaluation of paintings positively affects the perception of AI "painter" identity. The subjectivity of AI comes from the double superposition of its external and inner characteristics, which may suggest AI with both human-like appearance and function can be regarded as a person with social role identity.

Key Words

AIGC, mediated communication, Human-computer interaction, Anthropomorphism, Autonomy

"Traffic-driving" Platform or "Video-replay" Platform? Understanding the Role of YouTube in Cross-cultural Communication

Authors

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Abstract

Background：

The acceleration of digitization has made Internet platforms become a new mode to construct society. Platforms are increasingly becoming a crucial way for cross-cultural communication. YouTube, with over 2.3 billion users(Statista, 2021), enjoys the mechanisms of datafication, commodification, and selection(José et al， 2018), attracting numerous TV operators from different countries. We found that some of these operators take YouTube as a "video-replay" platform, replaying the main TV series on it. While others only upload TV series clips and informative videos， then attracting users to their own APPs. We defines this role of YouTube as "traffic-driving".

Method：

This study takes the dissemination of Chinese TV series in Thailand as an example to investigate the impact of YouTube in the cross-cultural communication. Firstly, we established a multiple linear regression model on the number of account followers to explore the role of YouTube. After that, in-depth interviews were conducted with Thai users (N=20) who had been driven by YouTube to analyse the mechanism of YouTube’s "traffic-driving" role. We used historical influence and user behavior data from five video accounts and its 104 Chinese TV series on YouTube Thailand channel until August 31, 2022, including the number of account followers, TV series clips and informative videos, main TV series, and the time difference between TV series uploads.

Results：

The empirical results show that the "number of clips and information" is positively correlated with the "number of account followers", while the "number of main TV series" and the "time difference between TV series uploads" are negatively correlated with the "number of account followers". This suggests that the uploading of TV series clips and fresh information will attract more Thai fans. It’s the choice of Thai users that determines the main role of YouTube is a "traffic-driving" platform, rather than directly acting as a replay platform. The "traffic-driving" mechanism of YouTube is summarized as follows.

1.The huge user scale of YouTube creates numerous potential "diversion" audiences.

2. As a medium-length video platform, YouTube is suitable for the dissemination of clips and informative videos, which stimulates Thai users' interest in Chinese TV series.

3.YouTube's algorithm mechanism makes TV series clips appear repeatedly, which constantly reinforces users' impressions and drives them to look for ways to watch main TV series.

4. TV operators prefer to leave a link of their own apps in Thai region under the posted clips and informative videos, encouraging users to download it and remain in it. Since then, YouTube has completed its role of "traffic-driving".

Conclusion：

This study provides a platform perspective on cross-cultural communication in Chinese context. YouTube sets the agenda through incomplete information display, prompting users to flow across media. It also introduces algorithmic mechanisms and incorporates the operational logic of business profits and cultural exchanges, playing an irreplaceable role in cross-cultural communication under globalization and informatization.

Key Words

YouTube, cross-cultural communication, "traffic-driving"**,** platform mechanism, multiple linear regression

Consumers' Avoidance of In-feed Advertising

Authors

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Abstract

In-feed advertising refers to a type of native advertisement placed inside consumers' newsfeeds to help monetize the website/platform and provide a better user experience (*In-Feed Ads - Google AdSense Help*, n.d.). It has been found that in-feed advertising is particularly effective in generating click-through rates and comments compared to other forms of advertising, such as banner ads and pop-up ads (Fulgoni & Lipsman, 2014). One typical example is when consumers scroll through a Facebook page or a Twitter feed, they may encounter those posts labelled as "promotion". It is important to note, however, that some pitfalls are lurking behind the apparent success of infeed ads, such as advertising avoidance, actions that media users took to minimize their exposure to advertising (Speck & Elliott, 1997). For example, 70% of respondents of young Facebook users often ignored the in-feed advertisement and chose to skip them quickly (Chung & Kim, 2021). Research on advertising avoidance has been conducted extensively, but advertising avoidance may differ from traditional ads in in-feed because in-feed advertisements are dynamic and native (Ferreira et al., 2017; Kanuri et al., 2018), which may influence consumers' reactions.

RED has become a major platform for advertisers to place in-feed advertisements, due to its social, algorithmic recommendation and mass user characteristics (Li, 2021). Consumers may usually feel that they are being targeted and perceive a stronger commercial inference that the sponsor is seeking to earn revenue. This paper uses psychological reactance theory as a support, and combines prospect theory, customer perceived value theory and social influence theory to explore the influence of review valence (i.e., whether the review contains positive or negative information) (Qiu et al., 2012) and tie strength (i.e., the closeness and breadth of the relationship among communicators) (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008) on the avoidance of RED's in-feed advertising from the perspective of social context. Two experiments are designed with review valence (positive vs. negative) as the independent variable, perceived intrusiveness as the mediating variable, relationship strength as the moderating variable, and two dimensions of ad avoidance (ad perception avoidance and ad behaviour avoidance) as the dependent variables. Experiment 1 adopts a one-way between-subjects design to verify the main and mediating effects. Experiment 2 uses a 2 review valence (positive vs. negative) x 2 tie strength (strong vs. weak) two-factor between-group design to verify the interaction effect.

This study explores the avoidance of RED in-feed ads from the perspective of social context, providing a new perspective to explore the avoidance of social media in-feed advertisements. Previous studies have examined social aspects such as interaction frequency, likes, comments and tie strength, and community influence (Kang et al., 2021), but have not analysed the specific

textual content and commenting tendencies in friends' comments. Therefore, this research contributes to the development of an ad avoidance model that is more in line with the effectiveness of in-feed ads in emerging social media by analysing review comments as the independent variable.

Key Words
advertising avoidance, in-feed advertising

Discourse on populism in Europe: circulation of the world populis* between Spain and France and its relation with their national contexts (2019)

Authors

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Abstract

The meaning of the word *populis** has been described as uncertain by some authors (Canovan,1999; Mazzoleni, 2003) while others have shown that it varies depending on the national context in which it is used (Herkman, 2016; Hamo, Kampf, & Weiss-Yaniv, 2018). Starting from this point, our proposal, which builds on a constructivist perspective, has three objectives. First, it seeks to understand how different discourses about *what is populism* or *who is a populist* circulate between different national contexts in Europe. Secondly, it aims at showing how the political reality of third countries and of the European Union condition (or not) the conception of populism in a given country. Finally, we aim at explaining how and to which extent different arenas of public discussion (Jasper, 2019; Badouard, Mabi and Monnoyer-Smith, 2016) contribute to the circulation of messages between European countries.

In order to do so, we study the circulation of the word *populis**, that is, the transposition and re-elaboration (López Meri, 2015; Alloing and Vanderbiest, 2018) of messages containing that word between our three case studies: France, Spain and Belgium. We focus on the year 2019, when the European Parliament elections were held. For each of the countries studied, we analyse messages produced in three arenas of public discussion: the parliamentary arena, the traditional media arena and Twitter.

Our analysis combines a quantitative and qualitative methodology. Quantitative, insofar as for each case study we look into different data: number of uses of *populis** referring to third countries, messages circulated from other countries, arena in which messages were produced, moment in which messages were produced and topics to which they refer to. Qualitative, because we analyse the trends and the exceptions observed in the quantitative analysis in order to offer an interpretation that explains (1) why uses of *populis** circulated between countries at specific moments in 2019, (2) why the word *populis** was associated with political realities of third countries and (3) the role played by arenas of public discussion regarding circulation beyond the national context. We hypothesize that messages with *populis** mostly circulated during events linked to the European scope such as the EU elections; that the circulation of messages from third countries is explained case by case by the national political context of the countries studied; and, finally, that only Twitter and, in a lesser degree the traditional media arena, contributed to circulating messages to and from other national contexts.

By* populis we mean the words populism(s) and populist(s), as well as their Spanish, French and Dutch variants.*

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Key Words
populism, circulation, arenas, discourse, Europe, Spain, Belgium, France

Making Friends or Maintaining Friends: A Study on Social Interaction Behavior of Online Game Players

Authors

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Abstract

As a way of entertainment for people to release pressure and adjust emotions, games have always been closely related to the concept of social interaction. As Marshall McLuhan (2011) indicates, "all games are a medium for human interaction", game practices, especially for online games that gather multiple players at the same time, are usually seen as a social experience. The researchers view online games as a social space and emphasize the interdependence of players through the game system (Dong, 2022).

The theory of communication was put forward by Marx, while Habermas further explained social communication, holding that social communication refers to two or more social subjects establishing and maintaining relationships with others through language and other symbols, and interacting based on mutual understanding. Existing research has focused more on how players expand online social interactions through games, that is, how they meet new people and develop new friendships. In fact, with the development of online games, people are more likely to transfer their existing offline social relationships to the online game space. Some scholars believe that social behaviors in online games will positively contribute to the influence of offline social behaviors (Chao, 2015), and playing games together with offline friends can also consolidate their offline relationships (Kolo & Baur, 2004).

This study believes that online game players have two-way social behavior in games, that is, to expand online social relationships and to develop offline social relationships. Social behaviors of different orientations are closely related to players' game motivation and identity cognition. In this paper, 10 players of the mobile game King of Glory are selected as research objects, and semi-structured interviews are conducted to explore how players' game practices affect their social interactions and how games, as a field of social interaction, affect players' other fields of social interaction.

King of Glory is a phenomenon mobile game developed by Tencent Games Tianmei Studio. It has over 100 million daily active players in China and has won various awards. We select players who spent more time than the monthly average as the potential interviewees to ensure that they had sufficient engagement and social experience in the game. Meanwhile, based on the overall user data of the game, 7 male players and 5 female players from different age groups were eventually selected as the interviewees.

Key Words

online game; game player; social interaction; social relationship

User agency in networked media environments

Authors

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Abstract

Agency, a key concept in theory of action, has received growing attention in recent years owing to the popularity of actor theories as well as changing media environments (e.g. Eichner, 2014). In conjunction with symbolic interactionism, agency forms the theoretical foundation for consistently understanding media usage as a social, meaningful activity embedded in users' specific lifeworld. This does not mean that processes of media selection, media reception, and media appropriation become obsolete, but they only describe the middle level of media action as a whole. By integrating approaches from media psychology and cognition theory, it becomes possible to analyze media reception at the perceptual level and hence to integrate the micro level (Eichner & Prommer, 2017). A useful approach to understand media use and agency in today's networked media environment is offered by Picone et al. (2019) and their concept of small acts of engagement (SAOE). The authors define activities such as liking, sharing, commenting as "productive audience practices that require little investment and are intentionally more casual than the structural and laborious practices examined as types of produsage and convergence culture" (p. 2011).

This contribution takes as a case TikTok, a social media platform that has experienced enormous growth and popularity lately, to trace user's agency within a media environment that is structured by the logics of algorithms. The study is based on a close analysis of the dynamic structure of TikTok and 20 qualitative interviews conducted in different student and class environments on different aspects of user engagement with TikTok. The particular interest with regards to agency is to more comprehensible understanding the dynamics that the increasing possibility of user generated practices in combination with the "structuring forces" of algorithms create. The study thus contributes to the general theory building within the field of media agency.

Key Words

agency, user engagement, networked media environments, qualitative reserach

Intimacy versus Privacy: Understanding Evasive Behaviors and Compensation Strategies in Intimate Video Calls

Authors

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Abstract

Background: From theories of interpersonal communication, we know that people form, enhance and maintain close relationships by giving up their own privacy. It has been believed that video call, as a medium of high visibility, can break the limitation of space and is conducive to maintaining and enhancing intimate relations. However, we noticed that many people have the idea of escape or avoidance behavior during their video calls with intimate ones. What causes the rejection of video callers, even if they are facing the most intimate person? This study uses the Communication Privacy Management theory to explore this issue.

Methods: The data consist of semi-structured interviews with video call users. We found 18 initial interviewees who had video calls with their parents or partners recently and experienced privacy turbulence in the process. We then recruited 12 additional interviewees via snowball sampling. The interview questions explored the evasive strategy used in the video call and reasons for hanging up a call, as well as the mechanism of compensation during the one-to-one video call with their intimate relationship.

Findings: We observed the tension between privacy disclosure and privacy maintenance in video call context. Specifically, evasive strategies can be divided into different levels according to the degree of avoidance, from eye dodging to ringing off the call. The technical characteristics of video call make it possible to "see" across space. In this new situation, the privacy boundaries of individuals are invaded by the visibility of video calling technology, which leads to the idea and actions of escape. Meanwhile, due to the influence of social norms, when individuals perceive that their avoidance behavior seems to violate the expectations of others, they will feel guilty and take compensatory actions, such as calling back by voice after hanging up the video and sharing their daily life moments in the form of pictures or text.

Conclusion: To conclude, in the context of a video call with a close relationship, individuals struggle to establish a dividing line between positive disclosure and negative privacy protection, which

often fluctuates back and forth. The establishment and coordination of privacy boundary in video calls is the result of the combined effect of technical factors and social and cultural factors. Based on the social norms in the Chinese context, this study supplements and develops the Communication Privacy Management theory from the perspective of East Asian culture.

Key Words

Video-mediated communication, video call, intimate relationship, Communication Privacy Management theory

I choose to die publicly: self-realization from the viewpoint of existential media - A case study of Bilibili’s memorial account

Authors

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Abstract

Digital technology has been deeply embedded in everyday life. People live in the shadows of digital media, leaving behind traces and legacies of their presence and eventually awaiting death. Numerous communication studies have been conducted to comprehend the emotions and memories of the living toward the deceased from the perspective of the mourners. Simultaneously, surveys have revealed that the younger generation is increasingly prioritizing the management of their digital legacy throughout their life. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the value and implication of digital legacy as existential media from the deceased’s viewpoint.

This study conducted research on Bilibili, which is not only the largest youngsters community in China but also the first of its kind among Chinese social media platforms to have recently launched new guidelines for managing memorial accounts that grant disposal rights to the living. Based on a list of memorial accounts published by @Uploaders Memorial Hall from 2020 to 2022, this study selected 35 cases of deceased platform users who experienced physical or psychological stress throughout their lifetime. Content analysis was applied to encode the videos of deceased Uploaders, supplemented by word frequency analysis and time series analysis of bullet comments and comments; Through virtual ethnography, participant observation in the Memorial's workgroup was conducted; Semi-structured interviews were used to organize in-depth communication with several Uploaders battling illness.

Following the theoretical lineage of existentialism, the paper examines how people explore the meaning, purpose, and value of self-existence when confronted with limit situations by using the digital media represented by Bilibili from three dimensions: material, behavioral, and spiritual. After a thorough description of the selected cases, the study discovered a strong relationship between emotional factors and users’ strategies for exploiting platform functions in the material dimension. Positive emotions are mostly expressed in videos, while negative emotions are primarily expressed in pictures and texts. Users often encounter criticism and abuse of showmanship. In this context, the audience’s initial outpouring of sympathy and grief is frequently short-lived, with their content going unnoticed shortly after. Consequently, existential vulnerability may pose a double risk to ethics and memory. In the behavioral dimension, although the outcome of the result is uncertain, lifeline communication is a ritual that indicates the quest and affirmation of the subject's self-significance. In the spiritual dimension, where the subject’s absolute freedom and absolute responsibility coexist, the boundary between life and death is now less distinct due to

technical mediation, thus prompting individuals to ponder further the nature of humanity and the purpose of existence.

Key Words
existential media,self-realization,memorial accounts,existential philosophy,death online

'Type a Concise Question' : Exploring the Technological Enchantment and Affordances of Chatbot-mediated Communication in Digital Money Services

Authors

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Abstract

Chatbot communication favours the use of language that reflects a clear understanding of technological developments and a high level of language proficiency. Supported by natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning (ML), chatbots are trained with dominant world languages, namely English, and have a semiotic nature. Chatbots require machine-understandable phrases and reduce communication to instrumental forms that detect and react to the exact technical terms, which enhances existing digital and technical divides. In digital money services, chatbots are designed to make initial screening assessments to reduce wait times and provide support without the usual downtime. However, research has found that communicating and navigating with these chatbots is often challenging and problematic. For example, the Revolut chatbot Rita requests 'a concise question' (2022) but users may not have the expertise to do this. It is contradictory to require users to be technically literate in order to access technical customer support. The dynamics of communication are changed from largely dialogic and interpersonal to mediated, and somewhat, monologic which requires an intermediate level of digital and technological literacy (Thompson, 2020). Additionally, media affordances of chatbot-mediated communication may also correlate to existing social exclusions and injustice embedded in the institution of banking and finance (Zelizer, 1994; Maurer, 2014). Existing issues concerning gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status may be emphasised and institutionalised in an algorithmic framework.

This paper argues that the mediating power of money and associated services, i.e., banking (Simmel, 2004; Kant, 1990) can be examined from an intersection of communication studies and science and technology studies (STS). The paper draws from classic and contemporary economic sociology, STS (Latour, 2011; Wajcman, 2015; Jasanoff and Kim, 2015; van Dijk, 2020), and critical data studies (Gillespie, 2018). It asks: a) how do chatbots change social communication concerning money and its services? b) what are the emerging socio -economic and -technical barriers and affordances in chatbot-mediated digital money services?

This paper is based on ongoing PhD research. In this paper, we present the findings of extended digital walkthroughs of seven digital finance services from pillar banks (Bank of Ireland 365 and Barclays Online Banking), born-digital banks (Starling Bank, N26, and Revolut) and alternative social banking services (An Post Money and Klarna) from initial registrations to day-to-day use. We evaluate the role of chatbots in these services using five different user scenarios (ID verification,

facial authentication, fraud reports, budgeting, and general navigation issues). Responses, feedback, and assistance are recorded and assessed using auto-ethnography for readability, friendliness, efficiency, and degree of difficulty to connect with human agents. Initial findings suggest communicating with chatbots results in varying and distinct experiences, as many digital money services require authentication based on state-issued IDs and facial recognition. Thus, many immigrants and people of colour might experience multiple unsuccessful attempts at verification with chatbots and struggle to reach a human agent. The challenges resulting from innovative media technologies are beyond mere communication, this research intends to identifying socio-technical barriers and contributing to a more careful and inclusive design for future computer-mediated services.

Key Words
chatbot, digital banking, mediated communication, socio-technical, social exclusion

Consequences of the Endless Scroll: Exploring the Relationships between Social Media News Use, Doomscrolling, and Negative Affect

Authors

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Abstract

Recent research has identified the media phenomenon “doomscrolling”, characterized by a “habitual [and] immersive scanning for timely negative information on social media news feeds” (Sharma et al., 2022). Studies have shown that doomscrolling is associated with poorer emotional well-being (Shabahang et al., 2022), yet the mechanism underlying this association remains unclear. Additionally, little is known about the antecedents of doomscrolling. Therefore, this study aimed to extend our understanding of the phenomenon by examining how social media news use influences doomscrolling. We also investigated the mediating roles of doomscrolling and perceived threat on the association between social media news use and negative affect. Individuals may engage in doomscrolling to cope with feelings of uncertainty from exposure to negative news online. The overwhelming volume of negative news while doomscrolling may amplify the perceived threat of the event and eventually result in more negative affect. Intolerance of uncertainty (IU) is also proposed as a moderator of this serial mediation.

The following hypotheses are proposed:

H1. Social media news use is positively associated with doomscrolling and negative affect.

H2. The relationship between social media news use and negative affect is mediated by a) doomscrolling and b) perceived threat of the issue

H3. Doomscrolling and perceived threat serially mediate the relationship between social media news use and negative affect.

H4. Intolerance of uncertainty moderates the effect of social media news use on negative affect via doom scrolling and perceived threat, such that the indirect relationship is stronger when intolerance of uncertainty is high.

Method: 700 US citizens completed an online survey administered via Qualtrics LLC. Participants were asked to report their doomscrolling behaviors and perceived threat concerning frequent exposure to adverse news events (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic, BLM protests etc.). They were also asked about levels of negative affect, social media news use, IU, and demographics. We ran a serial mediation model to test the proposed mediating roles (Model 6; PROCESS-Hayes). The conditional

effects of intolerance of uncertainty were also tested by running a moderated serial mediation model (Model 92).

Results: The results showed a significant total effect of social media news use on negative affect. This relationship was significantly mediated by doomscrolling (b = .357, se = .079, 95% CI = .215 to .516, but not perceived threat (b = .059, se = .070, 95% CI = -.080 to .203). Additionally, doomscrolling and perceived threat sequentially mediated the association between social media news use and negative affect (b = .063, se = .024, 95% CI = .021 to .115). Finally, IU moderated this serial mediation process, such that only individuals with average to high levels of IU reported more negative affect.

Conclusion: Results indicate that social media news use leads to higher negative affect, through an individual's heightened perceived threat resulting from doomscrolling. Individuals with higher levels of IU may be especially vulnerable since they are likely to engage in doomscrolling as a coping behaviour. Collectively, these findings have practical implications for developing strategies to alleviate the negative emotional consequences of doomscrolling.

Key Words
doomscroll, social media, news consumption, wellbeing

Beyond multiple divides to digital breakdown: A content analysis of newspaper framing of the electricity crisis in South Africa

Authors

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Abstract

In his 2019 State of the Nation Address, President Ramaphosa of South Africa explained that the country was trying to “effectively and with greater urgency harness technological change in pursuit of inclusive growth and social development” through the Fourth Industrial Revolution Commission (Research ICT Africa, 2020). On the contrary, three years on, the crumbling electricity infrastructure, which is the main source of energy for all digital technologies in South Africa has plunged the country beyond multiple divides to an almost digital breakdown, with adverse socio-economic implications. The current study seeks to analyse how the media, as the fourth arm of the State, has framed this energy crisis and its impact, with the goal of drawing some suggestions from the voices. A qualitative content analysis of three newspaper articles from different categories of the privately owned South African *Daily Maverick* was conducted to identify themes that could point to measures for dealing with electricity and the country's consequent socio-economic crisis. The articles were purposively sampled based on recency and detail of the purported efforts being put in place by the steward, Eskom, versus an overview of the present effects of the energy shortage that has resulted in continued electricity load-shedding in the country. An editorial, a business news story and a citizen opinion piece were analysed, underpinned by the news framing theory. The themes emerging from the analysis are entrenched in equivalency frames where logically similar content, the effects of load-shedding, from the editorial and opinion articles, is presented in different ways, and emphasis frames in the news story presenting qualitatively different but relevant frames, Eskom’s recovery plans. The major theme identified is the conflict between Eskom’s contradictory and long-term recovery plans in the news story versus the current adverse socio-economic effects of load shedding on the citizens, with the health sector being the hardest hit, as presented in the citizen and editorial stories. The three articles’ frames concur that there are no immediate measures to curb the effects of the energy crisis, thus crumbling the country into a digital cripple, with multiple effects on business, health, communication, and majority sectors with largely digitised equipment, and this has impacted human rights and beyond. We conclude that the newspaper frames appeal to citizens who appear to be despairing, to mobilize for immediate and short-term contingency measures to save the country from digital blackouts and the impending socio-economic peril rather than wait for the government’s purported long-term plans amidst a crisis. We suggest a more practical than policy or theoretical intervention where all stakeholders collaborate to curb the effects of the power crisis in the interim.

Key Words

digital breakdown, news frames, load-shedding, socio-economic development, fourth industrial revolution

News reacts to Laws: How social media indicators and governmental affect news coverage in Singapore

Authors

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Abstract

Social media platforms have increasingly become the top sources for news consumption in the US (Barthel & Shearer, 2015) as well as other countries, such as Singapore (Newman & Tandoc, 2019). On social media, news outlets are often seen to "soften" the news agenda to appease casual news browsers and incite greater audience engagement (Lamot, 2021). We anticipate this effect is achieved firstly through the types of news stories that news outlets selectively post to social media, and secondly through the tonality of the news content. For instance, among the different types of news stories typical of a newspaper (e.g., local politics, international affairs, entertainment, crime, and finance), we expect that news outlets would selectively choose entertainment and crime rather than politics and finance for their social media feed. This motivates our first hypothesis:

H1a: News outlets are more likely to publish soft news as compared to hard news on their Facebook pages.

H1b: Facebook posts about soft news articles receive greater audience engagement as compared to posts about hard news.

By selectively curating news for social media platforms, news outlets appear to be setting the agenda – that is, they appear to be determining what the public should think about by selecting and emphasizing certain topics (McCombs and Shaw, 1972 as cited in Neuman et al, 2014). However, this is no longer true, as the decision to soften news is made while keeping in mind the audience engagement that it would incur on social media (Ragas et al, 2014). The emerging research on the reverse agenda-setting nature of social media has examined how coverage on social media provides a boost to news media coverage for some presidential candidates (Wells et al., 2020), but there is a need to further examine these trends to see whether they apply to the social media feed of the same news outlets, and whether they generalize to all types of news stories. Furthermore, it is not known whether many of the original findings from the United States would generalize to other contexts. This study focuses specifically on Singapore, which is classified as having "very bad" press freedom in the World Press Freedom Index 2021. Accordingly, we raise the following hypothesis:

H2: The number of future posts on a topic is positively associated with the proportion of audience engagement on similar Facebook posts in the past.

There are, however, other factors at play in the Singaporean context. Singapore enacted laws to counter the proliferation of fake news, known as the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act. It is possible that the POFMA law, enacted in Singapore to counter the proliferation of fake news, would lead to greater caution in publishing content online, and a lower reliance on soft news and editorials when they are matters of speculation, as that may render news outlets vulnerable to legal action (Tumber & Waisbord, 2021). Anticipating their impact on the social media feed of news outlets, we posit a research question:

RQ1: How did the enactment of POFMA (on different dates) affect the news coverage of hard and soft news on social media?

In this study, we adopted a media system-oriented approach which considers how news outlets' digital and social media feeds influence and compete with each other (Wells et al., 2020). We disaggregated the media system in Singapore based on their perceived credibility, which enabled us to build a refined picture of how the media agenda responds to audience attention and local laws. Media agenda was operationalized as the coverage of topical themes over 5 years (2015-2019), and these themes were identified through unsupervised topic modeling (Blei, 2012). The unit of analysis was a single headline or Facebook post, and each unit's story type was coded according to its topic using neural network-based transformers. The social media metrics of engagement were operationalized as the log-transformed likes, comments, shares, and other reactions to the Facebook post. We modeled the coverage of each topic relative to others by each outlet and category of news credibility with time-series regression models using Prais–Winsten estimation (Wells et al., 2020).

Our findings indicate there is a greater volume of soft news compared to hard news on social media. Further, the reverse agenda setting effect was detected for both soft and hard news and stronger for news outlets with greater brand trust than lesser brand trust. Finally, the passage of POFMA in Oct 2019 dampened the coverage of both hard and soft news, while increase the rate of audience engagement.

Key Words
News, Facebook, Singapore, POFMA

AI Stakeholders in US- and German Twitter Discourse: Who is Shaping AI Debates and Trajectories?

Authors

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Abstract

We are currently witnessing the formation of 21st century Artificial Intelligence (AI). Although the notion of AI has been around since the 1950, it has become omnipresent in many domains of society only over the last decade: the private sector grapples with integrating what appears to be an irresistible technological innovation, the public sector discusses potential applications and future legislation, and the public at large deals with media narratives and AI systems already deployed. As in other technological fields, stakeholders compete for attention in order to influence public perceptions and decision-makers, not only for critical appeal but also in order to shape the developmental path of the very technology (Schäfer 2009). While current research has focused on specific AI industries stakeholders or considered general concerns around AI, a detailed reflection on different stakeholders in the AI environment within the broad public discourses is still missing. AI is a sociotechnical phenomenon that is still very much in formation, thus the imaginaries and narrative of potentially diverse sets of actors and institutions contribute to shaping trajectories and characteristics of future AI.

This paper builds on a multinational project comparing imaginaries and stakeholders in the US, China, and Germany in debates around AI in a 10-year longitudinal perspective. In this paper, we present (a) a conceptualization of stakeholders in the public debate, and (b) empirical results from analysing the Twitter debate on AI in the US and Germany from 2012 until 2021. Based on network analyses of Twitter data, the preliminary results show clear indication of an institutionalisation of stakeholders in the German discourse throughout the years: whereas in early years civil society actors and individuals dominate the debate, since 2015 there is an increasing shift towards stronger business and legacy media involvement, with policy and governmental actors joining the lead stakeholders since 2018. In contrast, the US dataset reveals slightly different dynamics, with industry and media already strongly involved since 2012. While there is a trend towards established institutional actors, recent years display a more diverse picture than in Germany, with much more international and civil society actors taking lead roles in the discourse.

In sum, the paper contributes conceptually and empirically to the interrogation of how 21st century AI is being shaped. Conceptually it builds on literature on sociotechnical imaginaries, and on stakeholders in technology policy and discourse, and offers a multi-level category system for the

analysis of stakeholders in the AI discourse. Empirically it uses this taxonomy to surface clear indication that the AI discourse in Germany is institutionalising on Twitter with increasing shares of company and policy stakeholders dominating the debate, while data on the US is more complex and diverse. Future research will be able to use the category system and the empirical analysis for systematic comparative approaches globally to better understand who is dominating and shaping AI discourse and development at this decisive stage.

Key Words
Stakeholder, Twitter, Artificial Intelligence, Social Network Analysis, Platform Studies, Imaginaries

Exploring the Interplay of Emotional Emancipation, Catharsis and Self-Disclosure in the Use of Memes on Social Media

Authors

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Abstract

Previous studies have demonstrated internet memes can function as activism and opinion expression. However, the impact of internet memes as a means of emotional catharsis from a social psychological perspective has not been fully explored in previous research. Despite the evolution of memes from a simple unit of information(Dawkins, 1976) into diversified forms such as text, image macros, GIFs and videos (Shifman, 2013), they have increasingly become a tool for expressing emotions. Self-disclosure of personal information can evoke positive emotions in the encoder, such as perceived social support (Haber et al., 2007), and positive impressions in the decoder (Archer, 1980; Cozby, 1973). However, the motivations behind the use of memes for emotional self-expression have yet to be fully understood.

To address this gap in the literature, this study aims to explore the effects of various forms of meme self-expression on emotional catharsis and perceived social support. The study consists of eight experimental groups, each of which is presented with stimulus materials to express feelings (positive or negative) through different forms of memes (textual, image macros/GIFs, or video). Two control groups are also provided with stimulus materials to express emotions through plain text only. Ultimately, 398 participants read the stimulus materials and complete duplicate questionnaires to self-report their attitudes in each section.

The study measures self-disclosure using established scales, including the Perceived Social Support (PSS) scale (Zimet et al., 1988) and the Catharsis Effect Scale (ECS) (Liao & Wang, 2021). Data analysis was performed using statistical techniques such as ANOVA and SEM to uncover the connections between the use of memes and the motives behind user self-disclosure. Preliminary results suggest that meme usage can serve as a facilitator for the expression of both positive and negative emotions, and that users' desires for perceived social support and catharsis can both significantly predict meme usage for emotional expression.

This study offers a fresh pragmatic perspective on memetics by examining the content-generating behavior of users through the lens of social psychology. By combining these perspectives, the study sheds light on the motivations behind the use of internet memes for emotional expression and provides insights into their role as a lubricant in emotional communication online.

Key Words

memetic, self-disclosure, social media, self-(re)presentation, digital self, quantitative methodology

The Proving Ground of Etiquette——the Media Function of Chinese Dining-table

Authors

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Abstract

There is a Chinese saying that "eating together, living together". Dining-table and banquet have gradually become the main means for Chinese people to communicate and enhance friendship. Banquets are even important social occasions in Chinese daily life. Chinese dining-table etiquette has a long history. As early as the Zhou Dynasty, relatively complete dining-table etiquette customs have been formed. Chinese dining-table etiquette contains the pursuit and spread of "courtesy" in China for five thousand years, and shape the cultural temperament of Chinese people. Obviously, the dining-table and banquets are the fundamental place for these etiquette practices in China. Therefore, we should return to the dining-table itself and examine the media characteristics of the dining-table itself from the perspective of communication.

This paper takes Régis Debray's mediology as its methodology, and uses the research methods of literature research, in-depth interview and participatory observation.The author consulted 13 local chronicles of different regions in Shandong Province, recorded the customs of eating, drinking and feasting, and conducted a participatory observation of a wedding banquet in eastern Shandong, and conducted in-depth interviews with three participants. This paper returns to the dining-table itself and discuss how to understand the dining-table from the perspective of communication and media. It summarizes the media characteristics of the dining-table, the media functions of the dining-table in the dissemination and inheritance of the "courtesy" culture, and how the spread of the dining-table etiquette affects the maintenance of the society.

According to the research, in China, the dining-table is a symbolic medium with the attribute of relationship, and it is a media for exchanging information and having relations with the people at the banquet. In terms of space, the dining-table plays a media role in spreading the culture of etiquette. People who participate in the banquet is both the receiver and the transmitter. The communication of the culture of etiquette is constantly strengthened through interaction. In terms of time, the dining-table plays the media function of inheriting the ritual culture. In the daily repeated practice, Chinese people have rooted the idea of "courtesy" in the depth of consciousness, formed a tacit consensus within the group, and thus created the cultural temperament of a group or region. In China, as a medium, the dining-table conveys the concept of etiquette culture of building order, respect and humility, passion, love, unity and harmony.

Key Words

media, mediology, dining-table, China, etiquette, society.

Big Tech Philanthropy: Accessing techno-philanthropic initiatives for global communication in the case of Tencent and Meta

Authors

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Abstract

Advancements in communication technologies enabled tremendous growth of digital philanthropy in the past years. With a wide range of digital products, platforms, and services introduced by tech companies and entrepreneurs, philanthropy has become more digital and instant by reaching a wider range of people, creating new modes of donation, and changing the mindset and behavior of NGOs across the globe. The COVID-19 pandemic triggered even more implementation of new ways of digital giving. According to the Charity Digital Skills Report (2022), 82% of charities see digital as a much greater or more of a priority due to the pandemic. And 48% of charities have seen demand for digital services increase, with 53% offering new online services.

With big tech companies taking a leading role in this field, digital philanthropy has been significantly reshaped by adopting innovative giving vehicles and integrating data-driven decision-making across nonprofit organizations. Big tech companies' empowerment for humanity and progress and the use of technology in creating a digital-giving-ecosystem extended scholarly discussion from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) theory (Carroll, 1991; Smith, 2001; Agudelo et al., 2019) to Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR) theory (Herden et al., 2021) when looking at the branding and rebranding of the corporate culture of big tech companies as well as the philanthropy communication in a digital world. However, very few studies are found in articulating how big tech companies utilized techno-philanthropic initiatives as part of the platform logics to justify their corporate culture and facilitate communication with the public. By understanding philanthropic contribution as one level of traditional social responsibilities to companies (Carroll, 1991) and by observing the recent shift of entrepreneurial responsibility due to technology innovation and mediated social networks (Lobschat et al., 2021), this paper applies a comparative case study of the philanthropic initiatives introduced by Tencent and Meta.

The Tencent Charity platform (https://gongyi.qq.com) and the Meta Social Impact Tools (https://socialimpact.facebook.com) are chosen with consideration of the different philanthropic environments in China and in the United States. A web scraping analysis is applied as the first step to extract data from the two platforms. Interviews with developers from the two companies as well as NGOs associated with the two platforms are conducted to analyze further the recombinant capabilities and formation of social networks offered by Tencent and Meta for improved value creation (for NGOs) and improved value recognition (for the companies' corporate culture). Based on the significant difference identified between the two cases—as Tencent tends to empower

individual NGO projects and the implementation of fundraising (“result” oriented) and Meta tends to empower digital transformation for NGOs (“path” oriented)—further investigation will be carried out to answer: 1) how techno-philanthropic initiatives are used by Tencent and Meta to strengthen their corporate culture and to enhance their social impact; 2) how the philanthropic initiatives are supported by or interacted with the two companies’ social media networks, namely, WeChat, Facebook, and Instagram; and 3) how Tencent and Meta leverage innovative ways for cross-border philanthropic efforts and ultimately impose technological progress as a new form of connectivity that benefits both domestic communities and international societies?

Key Words
digital philanthropy, technology company, NGOs, corporate culture, society, Tencent, Meta

Smartphones by the dining table: Domesticating smartphones in daily dietary practices and being domesticated

Authors

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Abstract

Smartphones have been changing people's daily dietary practices in many ways. Locating restaurants on maps, taking photos of food, posting food reviews, ordering takeout, and group buying online……those behaviors appear to be natural and thus often are taken-for-granted. However, when looking back to the history of human's dining practice, there were no other media like the smartphones that had a "seat" by our dining tables. It has only been in the most recent decade that smartphones have fundamentally been embedded in our daily dining practices. Phenomena like "smartphones first" (taking food pictures before eating), "food selfie" (taking pictures with food), "food porn", and various types of food videos and bloggers have been unprecedentedly visible on digital media worldwide, while academic research on the relationship between dietary practice and smartphone usage is largely inadequate.

This study attempts to examine how people strategically use, domesticate, and integrate smartphones into their dairy dietary practices, and how smartphones as indispensable embedded parts of daily lives have changed people's dining process, eating habits, and dietary preferences. We employ the domestication theory to investigate the mutual influences between humans and technologies.

Semi-structured interviews and auto-ethnography are used to collect empirical data about daily smartphone use related to dining practice. We select 40 interviewees by the method of snowball sampling and try to maximize their demographic differences in terms of age, gender, career, educational level, and region, etc. In the meanwhile, we as the authors of this paper are frequent users of various food media, and have accumulated sufficient food blogs and reflective experience to complement the interview data.

The study finds that there exist mutual ways of domestication between smartphones and their users. On the one hand, people use smartphones as major tools to help them in cooking and dining process, and to create convenient, efficient, and diversified urban lifestyles. Moreover, by embedding smartphones in nearly all types of dining process, they also incorporate digital media logic into dietary practice. One of the major changes is the rising salience of strangers' views, particularly in what, where, and how to eat and cook. On the other hand, smartphones are not merely functional, but serve as an emotional companion and memory bins related to food and life.

Nevertheless, the other side of the coin comes that smartphones seem to take lead in people's dining process. A new ritual before eating is taking photos of food, which shows people's

appreciations and satisfactions. As such, taking food pictures are no longer individual behaviors, but more about generating new types of social interactions and social etiquettes. Another side-effect of smartphone usage in dining practice is strangers' excessive virtual presence by dining tables, in ways of food reviews, restaurant ratings, food bloggers' commercial promotions and so on. In that sense, the more we use smartphones to refer to strangers' views, the less we become independent, autonomous, and creative in deciding what and how to eat. That in the long run could gradually distance our personal and intimate experience with food.

Key Words
dietary practice, Domestication, smartphone usage, Semi-structured interview, auto-ethnography, digital media

Effects of an explicit and implicit narrative on the evaluation of stereotypes

Authors

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Abstract

Stereotypes about mental disorders can lead to public stigma (Scherr, 2019). A strategy to combat stigma is a direct contact (Rüsch et al., 2005), which can lead to the evaluation of stereotypes (Rothbart & John, 1985). Therefore, references to group categories is essential (Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

Likewise, indirect contact via media is considered helpful (Maunder & White, 2019). Accordingly, we assume that an explicit narrative reference about a mental disorder leads to stronger evaluation of stereotypes (H1). A mechanism behind the effect of narratives on stereotype reduction is empathy (Igartua & Frutos, 2017). We assume that an implicit narrative reference leads to less empathy (H2). Following, we postulate that empathy leads to an increase of parasocial interaction (PSI) (Schiappa et al.,2005) (H3). Evaluation of generalized outgroup assumptions is related to the expected quality for outgroup contacts (Schäfer et al., 2022). We extend these findings and assume that higher expectations of contact quality (QoCE) lead to a decrease of stereotypes (H4). Studies investigating the Parasocial Contact Hypothesis (PCH) not consider expectations for upcoming contacts (Banas et al., 2020). We therefore examine whether the expected quality of upcoming contacts is pronounced by a stronger PSI (H5) and if PSI predicts the quality of the contact expectations, which in turn leads to a decrease of stereotypes (H6).

Method and Results

In an online experiment, participants (N = 95) were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions. They were asked to complete a questionnaire before and after watching the movie S*ilver Linings Playbook*, manipulated to either frame an explicit or implicit narrative reference of a mediated contact to a person with a mental disorder. Stereotypes, QoCE, PSI (α = .69 to α = .86), and sociodemographic variables were measured.

Results (see Figure 1) of a multilevel mediation analysis show significant effects for pre-measured on post-measured stereotypes (β_{EG} = .82, β_{CG} = .59, $p_{EG+CG} < .001$), stereotypes on empathy (β_{EG} = -.54, $p < .05$) and empathy on PSI (β_{EG} = .42, β_{CG} = .55, $p_{EG+CG} < .001$), confirming H1, H2 and H3. Furthermore, QoCE leads to a decrease of stereotypes (β_{EG} = -.29, $p < .001$) but only in the experimental group, which partially confirms H4. A significant mediation from PSI over QoCE to stereotypes (β_{EG} = .52, β_{CG} = .70, $\beta_{M:EG}$ = -.14, $p_{EG+CG+M} < .001$) confirms H5 and H6.

Discussion

This study investigated the impact of a thematic reference of outgroup categories and the expected quality of further outgroup contact on stereotype reduction. Explicit narrative references enable a conscious contact experience and can reinforce cognitive processing, therefore stimulating an evaluation of stereotypes, while an implicit narrative reduces empathy. This study shows that quality expectations can lead to a stereotype reduction. Nevertheless, the depiction of mental disorders is challenging for public opinion. Explicit reference and the expectation of contact quality does not have to lead to more empathy or to a reduction in stereotypes in society if the observed interactions contain stereotypical assumptions. Future research should additionally investigate the quality of the observed intergroup contact.

Key Words
public stigma, mental disorders, quality of contact expectations, narrative reference

What are communication scholars talking about on Twitter? – A comparison of national and international research communities

Authors

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Mrs. Isabel Kleefeld - University of Greifswald

Abstract

Twitter is an important tool for scholarly communication, but usage patterns differ by discipline and nationality (Collins, Shiffman & Rock, 2016; Weller et al., 2014). Research shows that public engagement of science is less established in European countries such as Germany or Italy, where universities are highly financed by public resources. This is not the case in the US, Canada or Great Britain, where universities have to actively compete for paying students and are therefore communicating more actively online and via social media (Metag & Schäfer, 2019). Qualitative interviews with communication scholars from DACH (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) countries and the US displayed that the former considered being visible in their local community and creating social ties more important to gain reputation in their field than the latter (Thiele 2020), possibly leading to a more actor-centered communication and tweets focusing on scientific topics in the DACH community. There is little research on how content of Twitter posts differs by national background, nor do we know, if the membership in different research associations is a predictor of certain patterns of communication. We looked at three international associations in communication science: the ECREA, the IAMCR and the ICA. Those organizations differ regarding their foundation history and objectives. For example, the IAMCR has much stronger political ties as it was founded with support of the UNESCO as a result of the Cold War (Meyen 2014). It remains an open question, whether different orientations are reflected in the online communication of associated scholars. From these findings we derived the following hypothesis:

H1: Scholars in DACH countries write posts, which are more content-centered, while posts by US-American scholars are more actor-centered.

H2: Scholars in DACH countries rather write about scientific topics and US-American scholars about non-scientific topics.

H3: Scholars following the ICA account rather write about scientific topics and those following the IAMCR account about non-scientific topics.

For this study a total of 35.091 tweets of communication scholars were gathered in May 2021 using the Twitter API, collecting tweets of followers of the twitter handles of the international communication associations IAMCR, ECREA and ICA as well as national communication societies in all four countries. 2.652 of their latest tweets were randomly chosen for analysis. They were coded

using the codebook by Jünger and Fähnrich (2019) in which they analyzed topics and speech acts of the tweets.

While our first hypothesis could not be supported as the speech act patterns of the scholars hardly differed, the chi-test results of our H2 show that DACH scholars more often wrote about scientific topics (54%) than US scholars (45%) (x^2= 7,34, df =2, p = 0,03). Finally, our third hypothesis was not supported, as there was little difference between scholars following the ICA and the IAMCR, but scholars following the ECREA handle showed a clear focus on scientific topics, so the research association scholars follow is a possible predictor of topics they write about.

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Key Words
Twitter, content analysis, communication scholars, nationality, Germany, USA

Art or Theft? Analysis of the Networks of Euphoria and Desperation around Generative AI in Twitter

Authors

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Abstract

Generative AI (GenAI) has had a dramatical impact on digital content and art creation. Text-to-image tools such as Stable Diffusion, Dall-e or MidJourney allow people the generation of almost any sort of images based on models that have been trained with billions of previously created images. The capacity to generate an uncountable number of high-quality images has been interpreted as a final step in the democratization of digital content creation by ones, and as a theft or misappropriation by others. The euphoria provoked by the use of text-to-image has been expressed by a myriad of users that have published their creations in social networks. At the same time, those who have dedicated their entire life to digital illustration have expressed their concerns, claims and finally desperation, accusing the companies that have created the models of ruining their careers. This work analyses more than 4 million tweets published between the 21st of December 2022 and the 7th of February 2023 that contained any of the most used hashtag in the debate about the impact of AI art, such as #humanartists, #notoaigeneratedimages, #noaiart, #aiistheft or #aiartcommunity. Assuming the coherent behaviour of users when retweeting, this research analyses the community structure of the retweet overlap networks (Guerrero-Solé, 2017; 2018). The networks are formed by the top 1,000 users in terms of retweets received, that have been labelled as pro or against AI generated images. At the same time, we also analyse the content of the most influential accounts in the networks in terms of their support or their refusal of AI generated images, as well as the most used concepts to express they relationship with GenAI. Preliminary results show a clusterisation of users in terms of this support or refusal (Figure 1).

Figure 1. RON network formed by the 1,000 top users in the conversation about AI art in Twitter (threshold=0,05).

The results of this research help us understand the reaction of digital artists to the irruption of GenAI, and the evolution of the community structure formed by the users that show their euphoria in relation to GenAI, and those who express their desperation and their feelings of hopelessness.

Key Words

Generative AI, Twitter, Digital Art, community structure

Crisis Visibility Justice of Internet Celebrities: Awareness, Practice, and Strategy

Authors

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Abstract

Internet celebrities refer to those who gain considerable traffic data through the Internet and can exert influence over their followers (Du & Wagner, 2018). Under the logic of the digital platform, more traffic data brings more visibility, which means gaining attention and influence and having the power to impact the distribution of social resources and interests. Especially during the public crisis, information visibility can promote the diffusion of relevant messages, alleviate the fear of the public, and assist social governance.

In 2022, Shanghai, one of the biggest cities in China, was under Covid-19 lockdown for over two months, affecting more than 25 million people (BBC, 2022). Amounts of Internet celebrities became influential information nodes, posted or forwarded help-seeking messages, and spread social support information to help people trapped in Shanghai, which showed their ability to distribute traffic data for the purpose of the public good. Previous studies have mostly discussed this from the perspective of social responsibility, while limited ones focused on the context of the digital platform. Therefore, this study proposes the concept “crisis visibility justice”, and examines how Internet celebrities on Weibo strategize their crisis visibility justice during the Shanghai lockdown.

This study conducted in-depth interviews method from June to August 2022. Through purposive sampling, researchers interviewed 15 Internet celebrities who posted or forwarded at least five help-seeking messages on Weibo during the Shanghai lockdown, each has more than 500,000 followers. The interviews were conducted through online voice, each lasting 60 minutes. The audio recordings were transcribed into text data and then processed by the qualitative analysis software Nvivo12.

This study finds the strategies of Internet celebrities to realize crisis visibility justice mainly include four dimensions. 1) Adherence to algorithmic logic. In the platform society, given that algorithms are the underlying structure driving changes in visibility, it is inevitable for Internet celebrities to take active data and text action in crisis relief based on the algorithmic rules for quantifying and ranking public attention. For example, Internet celebrities focused on those help-seeking posts with less metric public attention by ordinary users and give them more “likes”, “comments” or “forwards” to increase the content weight in the news feeds. 2) Keeping close contact with followers is also an important way for Internet celebrities to transfer their traffic data influence on the platform to obtain first-hand help information and scale up help-seeking information diffusion. Emotional narrative strategies enable Internet celebrities to gain datalized attention quickly. In

addition, initiating a dialogue with help-seeking users and followers through direct message chat is also a daily routine to get connected. 3) Collaboration with the platform. Internet celebrities strived for clearing up ineffective information that distracted the public and direct Internet traffic data to trapped groups and specific regions by seeking help from the platform on content moderation. 4) Political risk avoidance. Due to the strict network censorship in China, they try to avoid posting politically sensitive information to ensure that their accounts could provide continuous support for people in need in crisis relief.

Key Words
visibility, Internet celebrity,social justice , crisis, algorithm,

Emotion and event promotion: Research on the mechanism of emotional contagion from the perspective of social network in non-Western context

Authors

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Abstract

The Xuezhou Liu incident is a social public issue that has received widespread attention in early 2022, and it used Weibo, the most important social media platform in China, as the medium of communication. The incident has gone through the development process of emotional promotion and reversal of public opinion from seeking relatives on the whole network to distorting facts by a certain official media. It presents a bottom-up communication mode and emotional contagion mechanism with a large group of netizens spontaneously paying attention and reposting. It has important research value for the dissemination and control of public events in non-Western contexts, and has certain innovations in the application of methods and the combination of events.

The research has crawled and mined more than 20,000 pieces of data from fermentation to subsidence process of the issue , and used computational communication research methods such as sentiment analysis, LDA topic modeling, semantic networks, and social networks analysis to explore the communication mode of social events and emotional contagion dynamics of social events based on spontaneous communication, and to further verify the significance of the conjectured emotional contagion mechanism.

According to the study, the traditional cultural thought of "the dead are the greatest" still spreads in China's domestic online space, and the demise of embodiment in cyberspace will lead to a sharp turn and rationalization of public sentiment and discourse; both media and opinion leaders will It is an important source of news diffusion, but the social functions of the two are obviously different. Sadness and disgust can significantly promote forwarding behavior; the emotional intensity value and fluctuation degree of the original post are significantly greater than that of the reposted post, and with the multi-layered forwarding of information and the increase of cascading depth, Weibo users’ repost and the original post Emotional intensity and type of posts are gradually concentrated. In addition, long-term spontaneous mourning between marginal nodes will form small circles, constituting a unique writing practice of collective memory. This provides enlightenment for the dissemination and control of spontaneously disseminated social events in non-Western contexts where social media is more developed: it is necessary to use the relevant theories of network science, pay attention to the role of netizens’ emotions in information

diffusion, and government agencies and authoritative media need to strengthen communication with them. Public information docking and verification, to avoid the spread of fragmented small groups of social events, resulting in negative impact and harm of information asymmetry.

Key Words

fact-checking,public,emotional contagion,Sentiment analysis,Social Network analysis,LDA

Health misinformation, ideology polarization, and digital literacy in Taiwan

Authors

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Abstract

Recent studies show that health misinformation on social media generates conflicting views, exacerbates vaccine disputes, and amplifies negative sentiments (Broadbent, 2019). Social media algorithms facilitate the spread of misinformation and worsen people's perceived threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. On top of that, false claims about coronavirus and vaccine fuel government distrust, political polarization, and conspiracy theories (Faris et al., 2020). When health misinformation is related to polarized partisan beliefs, the politically biased coronavirus narratives likely influence people's preventative behaviors that comply with their partisan preferences (e.g., vaccination) (Zhao et al., 2020). With the two-party democratic system, Taiwan faces polarization challenges in controversial sociopolitical issues. After the coronavirus third-level alert in May 2021, Taiwan's government distrust increased when COVID-19 misinformation was virally disseminated (CNA, 2021).

Health literacy is critical for navigating coronavirus information environments by identifying disinformation and making well-informed decisions (Okan et al., 2021). Hence, improving digital health literacy is the key to infodemic preparedness (Naeem & Kamel Boulos, 2021). To mitigate COVID-19 risks, increasing research has investigated how people fall for misinformation and improve their abilities to identify falsehoods. Some recommend promoting social media literacy (Zhou et al., 2022) and developing effective health literacy strategies (Montagni et al., 2021). To the best our knowledge, scarce scholarly research has been conducted to examine the impacts of health misinformation, polarization, digital literacy on COVID-19 vaccination in Taiwan. To fill the research gaps, this study aims to investigate the relationships among attitude towards misinformation, media literacy, ideological polarization, and COVID-19 health literacy, which likely influences COVID-19 misinformation detection and vaccination intention.

The web survey recruited 750 respondents fitting the demographical quotas (i.e., gender, age, and education) of Taiwanese social media users. Structural equation model (SEM) analysis was deployed to examine the relationships among three latent variables (i.e., attitude toward misinformation, media literacy, and COVID-19 health literacy) and three observed variables (i.e., ideological polarization, COVID-19 misinformation detection, and intention to take the COVID-19 vaccine). All measures were adapted from past studies. The proposed research model consists of eight hypotheses showing positive associations between variables. Age, gender, monthly income, educational attainment, and political tendency were treated as control variables.

The SEM model shows a good fit with the data, $\chi^2/df = 3.60$, $p = .000$, TLI = .91, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .06 (90% CI = .056 - .061), SRMR = .03. SEM results show that attitude toward misinformation and medida literacy are positively related to COVID-19 health literacy. Next, COVID-19 health literacy and attitude toward misinformation are significantly associated with COVID-19 misinformation detection. In addition, COVID-19 health literacy is a positive predictor to intention to take vaccine, even if COVID-19 misinformation detection shows no influence. Finally, ideological polarization that strongly predicts COVID-19 health literacy has a moderate negative association with vaccination intention. Implications are further discussed.

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Key Words

Health misinformation, polarization, media & health literacy, misinformation detection, vaccination

SOME THINGS DO NOT CHANGE FAST: A QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING FRAMES IN GERMAN PRESS

Authors

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Abstract

The slave trade has not disappeared and lives under a different name „human trafficking“. According to the 2021 Global Estimates, the number of its victims is only growing and stands at 49.6 million in 2021. In Germany, the same situation is observed: the number is increasing, “judges’ sentencing of convicted traffickers remained lenient”. Media could be a reflector of current criminal acts. However, not enough is known about media coverage of the issue in Germany. This paper, a quantitative content analysis of articles in German press analyzes human trafficking coverage during the pandemic period. The aim is to identify the impact of the pandemic on the dynamics of articles and to reveal media frames regarding the issue. This study uses quantitative content analysis based on the Entman’s approach consisted of four dimensions (1993), supplemented by us with calls to action, visual framing. A total of 144 out of 439 materials were selected for the study. To get the whole picture of the issue different printed editions (“Bild”, “taz”, “Der Spiegel”, “Die Welt”, “FAZ”, “Süddeutsche Zeitung”) have been analyzed. Although the number of articles in total and individually increased compared to 2018, there was a decline by 2021 in the 2019-2021 segment and in most articles human trafficking was not considered as a main topic, the phrase was usually only mentioned. The most informative occasions for journalists were political, administrative, authority action, then criminal action, especially in 2019. During the pandemic, coverage has become international. In the materials, cases of first sexual exploitation, then labor exploitation were more often revealed, women acted as victims, and men as criminals. The main actors as speakers were media, government, law enforcement authorities, however there were less voices of criminals. The topic was analyzed in the course of such dominant themes as crime, its prosecution, victim, human rights, legislation and prostitution. During the coverage, reasons such as lack of legislation, religious and economic issues were more often listed. Although the majority of articles did not contain remedies or solutions to the problem, prevention ways were mentioned more than prosecution, protection methods, partner ties and others. In more than 60% of published materials, the actors blamed for the occurrence and consequences of the problem, however the state, journalists and legislators focused more on the call to action. Materials are currently being analyzed to determine visual frames. Media representatives show less interest in topic as a separate criminal offense, which is not perceived as important on the agenda as such. In fact, media in Germany constructs its own reality of human trafficking, shaping the audience's perception and knowledge of the issue. In addition, the media acts as a platform for meeting opinion leaders even during a pandemic (e.g. discussions about banning the purchase of sex), which can serve as a visual instruction to make decisions about human trafficking and related

topics at the state level. Based on the results of this study qualitative interviews with journalists of the given editions are planned.

Key Words
German press, human trafficking, framing analysis, pandemic, Entman's approach

Go Against The Social Tide: Exploring The "Ebbing Users" of WeChat Moments in China Based on Grounded Theory

Authors

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Abstract

With the fast progression of information and communication technology, social media platforms that are characterized by communication, interaction, and real-time sharing have emerged as important components of social connections. However, the increasing number of social media users, the resulting social overload and fatigue, as well as the exposure of personal information within friend groups, have led to some users engaging in a temporary or even permanent "detox" or discontinuous use of social media. The medium is a metaphor, and the technology's non-use also represents the mutual shaping of technology and society. The availability of the Internet, the completeness of functions, and the ease of use do not guarantee user loyalty to social media. The use and non-use of technology is not a binary opposition but rather a complex and subtle dynamic change. Consequently, non-use is equally significant for users, designers, and product providers. Based on this, this study takes China's WeChat Moment as an example and explores the specific social fatigue behaviors of "ebbing users" and their potential causes under China's unique cultural context.

This research employs the grounded theory approach to examine the phenomenon of "ebbing users" on social media. The grounded theory, developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, is a comprehensive set of procedures for inducting and constructing theory from primary data. It has gained widespread usage in academic research for concept formation and theoretical development. The grounded theory approach enables the identification of factors that may be easily overlooked without preconceived conditions, the induction of experience summaries from primary data, the construction of systemic theory through an inductive analysis process, and the explanation of "what" and "why" questions through bottom-up analysis.

Based on the grounded theory, this study employs semi-structured interviews to obtain experiential evidence from 20 WeChat users aged 20-30. The interview outline is structured in accordance with the research objectives and consists of two parts: WeChat Moment usage and perceived experience. The usage section focuses on daily Moment behaviors such as posting, liking, commenting, and setting visibility, and seeks to identify instances of "ebbing behavior" and its specific practices. The perceived experience section delves into three aspects: 1) the potential factors or situations that trigger the ebbing behavior, 2) the negative emotions associated with it, and 3) the social avoidance strategies adopted by the users. The raw data obtained from the interviews will be subjected to open coding to extract keywords, axial coding to integrate the

keywords into a conceptual whole, and selective coding to logically connect the dimensions and form a meaning system of social media usage ebbing.

Through the above research path, this study uses the concept of "ebbing user" to focus on individuals who are no longer posting on Moment or are voluntarily reducing their usage of it. The study aims to comprehend the underlying reasons, characteristics, and consequences of such behavior by analyzing the dynamic practices of these individuals in the Chinese context. The research will shed light on the modes of communication, negotiation, regulation-formation, and self-regulation among non-users of social media.

Key Words

Social Media Fatigue, WeChat Moment, Non-use, Social Avoidance

When epistemology, axiology and ontology make no sense? Understanding the research behaviors of post-proposal-defense doctoral students of communication studies

Authors

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Prof. Andy Ofori-Birikorang - University of Education, Winneba

Abstract

Academic interactions with doctoral students in communication studies in the West African sub-region indicate that, meeting deadlines and beating timelines in anticipation of graduation, the phenomenon of having to navigate the labyrinths of the research field in the last phase of the doctoral training, assumes new epistemological and axiological dimensions that pose huge challenges to research skills and approaches. The issue becomes even more pronounced in the aftermath of the proposal defense when doctoral students adorn the research garb and journey into the research field with a carry-on-bag of fieldwork behavioral assumptions and expectations to produce high-quality research. This study investigates the research behaviors of post-proposal-defense doctoral students in the Ghanaian context with an eye towards unpacking the diverse research approaches deployed during field work within this complex and virtual-world-obsessed fieldwork ecology. The study appropriated the Boundary Work theory and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy of Higher Education to investigate the phenomenon. Through the deployment of in-depth interviews, observations, as well as analysis of turned-in fieldwork notes and other documents, the evidence revealed that post-proposal-defence doctoral students in communication studies in Ghana: displayed novice rather than expert research behaviors; worked within individual committee's research boundaries established as guide for quality and efficient output; worked through a self-contested epistemological and axiological research positions; adopted contrasting strategic exploration positioning; and, blurred the research inquiry disposition in order to achieve the research goals. Furthermore, the contrasting and converging research behaviors of the students in the post-proposal-defence phase were: 1) anchored on the boundary work theory; 2) influenced by supervisors' direction and approval of research approaches; 3) moderated through faculty input on the research during reviews at seminars; and, 4) affected by cohort influence and admonitions. This study offers insights into the research behaviors of doctoral students in the field of communication and also serves as a basis for pedagogical transformation of the curriculum on doctoral training and research within the West African sub-region.

Key Words

Research behaviors, Doctoral Students, Boundary Work, ACRL Framework, Pedagogical Transformation

How is online identity defined through communal building of popular practice? Understanding reception and appropriation of popular texts via intertextual structures in user-generated remixes on TikTok

Authors

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Abstract

As the rising star of social media platforms TikTok bases its communicative structure on short videos, providing an innovative and appropriate access to a media form that has been developing steadily over various social media apps and networks since 2011. Thus, it closes a gap in demand within the international media landscape and puts Chinese technology on the map as a counter development towards the dominance of US-driven social networks (Kaye et al. 2022). On the one hand, the success of TikTok can be explained by its platform characteristics and affordances that set an increased focus on the integration of mimesis, followed by the establishment of a meme culture which manifests itself in a particularly high occurrence of viral trends and challenges (Zeng & Abidin 2021).

In terms of content, mimesis within the network emerges out of many short user-generated contributions in an overarching communicative frame of reference, according to which the users orient themselves and which they help to shape collectively (Schellewald 2021). A platform-specific communication culture can be identified in the formation of "imitation publics" (Zulli & Zulli 2022) and dynamically emerging "communicative forms" (Schellewald 2021) - videos that can be grouped into reference topic clusters. Re-mixing as both imitating and referring to content can thus be observed as a core practice of TikTok, both on a structural-technological and communicative-participatory level. In the context of TikTok, it can be seen as a community-based media practice in which users get into contact with each other on the basis of a "radical intertextuality" (Jenkins 2011) to create their own ephemeral intertextual communication and reference network.

It can be assumed that the communicative and mediatized actions on TikTok not only lead to a remix of content, but also to a remix of (trans)cultural practices and (transnational) popular texts. Furthermore, the short video format plays a crucial role, as through its multimodal communication properties, cultural identity can be communicated at a low threshold and within a short time frame. It is therefore highly relevant for further consideration of both the platform and of user-generated shorts in general, to take a closer look at the remixed content, for as soon as transculturally connected imitation publics can be identified, the question arises: What are they actually imitating? Working with the concept of civic imagination (Jenkins et al. 2020) this research approaches the radical intertextuality prevailing on the platform within the frameworks of cultural identity and the (re)negotiation and appropriation of popular texts.

The paper focuses on a first development of building clusters of user-generated shorts that reference primary texts of popular culture (Fiske 1987) and therefore creating insights on the cultural artefacts that are used within the remix and imitation networks of TikTok. The findings are derived from a qualitative sample study of young German TikTok users collecting content clusters based on data donation of short video pieces out of the participants' individual TikTok feeds and a participatory developed framework of defining and applying intertextual analysis towards the participants' individual For You pages. This study is connected to a larger research project of understanding intertextual means of building online identity and serves as an entry point in understanding interconnectedness of the reception of popular texts and their role in the creation and renegotiation of popular practices via user-generated shorts.

Key Words
intertextuality, meme, remix, popular culture, online identity, TikTok

A Critical Inquiry into Computational Photography : Race and/as Technology in Google's Real Tone

Authors

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Abstract

Innovations in computational photography techniques employed in smartphones have fundamentally changed the ontology of the photographic image in our hyper-networked lives. Automation has been a key player in the history of photography. The current 'algorithmic turn' in photography is something which is not entirely new but only a matter of change in modality of that automation (Taffel, 2021). Yet, there is more: from film to digital to computational - it has always been a complex of sociotechnical assemblages albeit differing in scale and paradigms. Going from its history of being a technology of colonial power (Sealy, 2019), to being the primary mode in which we mediate our relationship to the various platforms we find our simultaneously fragmented and reconfigured affective selves to be tethered to. The belief that our voices have any power today is intrinsically tied to the idea that we are leaving an old world behind and currently find ourselves in a world where our agency is primarily evidenced by our ability to act online: something mediated more and more through configuration of images. Indeed, the way we envision history and therefore our present, is deeply tied to our relationship to technical images (Flusser, 2011) which is an active, almost dialogic one. It is no longer possible to see the relationship between human and machine agency to be not in a state of entanglement in the process of seeing and meaning making.

The digital photograph therefore ceases to be a site of indexicality, the direct relationship between the 'scene' and the 'photographer' has been decisively problematized (Palmer, 2015). It is now better understood as an example of Human Machine Communication where producing the image is being said to be a collaborative process where the human-smartphone-algorithm-infrastructure assemblage is creating the image through a socio-material process where the camera also is "seeing" what is in the frame and making certain key decisions along with the human photographer (Zhang, 2022). In the context of platform capitalism, the computational camera is a key actor that mediates our relationship to the platform that is constantly capitalizing on user generated data, sorting it through certain neoliberal logics which is feeding the larger complex of gathering more and more data to feed the monster of fossil fuel powered Artificial Intelligence futurity.

In this article, I examine the relationalities of consumer level computational photographic practices in the vast complex sociotechnical assemblage of the platform and the processes of meaning making inscribed therein. The observations that flow out of this examination will hopefully add to the current efforts in critical software studies, visual cultural theory and human machine communication studies to think critically about the relationship between specificity of algorithmic

processes in computational photography and production of meaning in an increasingly data-image intense world.

Key Words
computational photography, smartphone photography, automation, platform, artificial intelligence, algorithms, data

"Opting-out" in the Digital Age: Towards a Techno-logical Framework of Refusal

Authors

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Abstract

This project examines the efficacy of “refusal” as a strategy of everyday resistance against surveillance capitalism, and asks how we can more effectively refuse in the digital age. I put forth that, in order for refusal to be truly effective as a political strategy, we must shift away from a humanist conception of existence as physical presence, and towards a machinic conceptualization which understands human identity as pattern. This shift allows us to explore “noise-based” strategies of everyday resistance in which data-veillance regimes can be transgressed against via practices such as signal jamming and server overload.

As a result of recent critical work, general users are becoming increasingly aware of the data-based control structures that exert enormous influence over our everyday lives. With this growing awareness comes an accompanying desire to “opt out”; to “escape” the purview of a system which strips away our privacy, sells our data without true permission or recompense, erodes our autonomy, and makes us vulnerable to gender and race-based abuses.

As such, refusal as a strategy of political resistance has gained traction among non-expert users. While refusal has the potential to deprive powerful corporations of the raw material needed to power their operations, it is not always effective in practice. To begin with, attempts at complete disconnection are often not feasible, as services critical to daily lives are often only accessible via some kind of engagement with corporate platforms. As such, the political efficacy of refusal is diminished when it is taken up by only a select group of users; those who have the privilege to disconnect. In addition, discourses of refusal may be appropriated and commodified by corporate platforms and tech companies, and thus recuperated back into the economy of surveillance capitalism. Moreover, attempts at refusal may incur additional harm in the form of heightened surveillance and control. Such examples lead to two entangled questions: why does refusal fail, and what can we do about it?

This project considers these questions from the lens of selfhood and subjectivation, and puts forth that the failure of refusal is in part a result of an incommensurability between human and machinic conceptions of “being-there”; of absence and presence. I propose that, in order to more effectively ‘opt out,’ we must engage with dataveillance structures on their own terms, according to a “techno-logic” that understands “presence” as the existence of a continuous pattern, and “absence” as noise. In this schema, “exit” is no longer figured as physical absence or disconnection as it typically is in humanist logics, but rather is understood as chaos; a lack of detectable signal or communication.

This project draws from legacies of cybernetic theory and theoretical work on digital embodiment and brings these ideas into conversation with modern activist projects in order to explore how fantasies of exit can become viable within an information logic. It concludes by exploring a range of “noise-pollution” practices such as radio-jamming and zoom distortion, and proposes strategies for the implementation of such pattern-disrupting practices in daily digital life.

Key Words
refusal, surveillance capitalism, algorithmic governance, resistance, digital identity,

Breaking the Silence: Examining the effect of decriminalizing homosexuality on the media agenda and public attitudes towards LGBTs in Asia

Authors

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Abstract

Existing studies on LGBTQ discourse focus on public discourse, private conversations, and communication in small groups (Baker et al., 2013) and focus on newspaper articles and political debates (Nartey, 2022). While much of the literature analyzes the language used (Nartey, 2022) or ascertains the influence of media on the framing of LGBT issues (Parthasarathi & Kumari, 2019), there is no cross-national research to examine the influence of press freedom. For instance, Singapore is known to be a conservative state (Ong, 2021) with low levels of press freedom and high levels of censorship, while Taiwan has a “free” press (Reporters without Borders, 2022). However, besides press freedom, governments may control media coverage in other ways, such as through its penal code (Harlow, Camaj, & Pijesivac, 2022). For instance, we anticipate that the laws repealing homosexuality would have a direct or a domino effect on public attitudes. However, the literature lacks a study of how the interplay of judicial systems and press freedom influences how LGBT issues are covered in the media and how it manifests in social and personal attitudes. For instance, in countries like Singapore, Thailand, and India with low press freedom, we anticipate that repealing the 377A law may change news coverage and public opinion to become more accepting of LGBTQs.

In this paper, we audit the media coverage of LGBT issues in terms of the representation gap they incur as compared to other minorities and its consequences on public opinion. The lack of representation in the media lowers opportunities for audiences to gain tolerance and mass-mediated contact, and negative frames may increase negativity bias toward LGBTs (Jacobs & Meeusen, 2021). Prior work on representation gaps has focused on binary gender inequality across the digital world, such as in the editing community, resulting in a content gap on Wikipedia (Langrock & González-Bailón, 2022) or the binary gender gap in news consumption (Mak, 2021), without the inclusion of LGBTs. Moreover, studies on representation gaps and LGBTs examine the framing of LGBTs on TV (Jacobs & Meeusen, 2021). Therefore, our research contributes to the existing literature by identifying representation gaps of LGBTs in the news and their influence on public opinion measured through social media and surveys. The spiral of silence would explain why people feel deterred from talking about controversial opinions (Ong, 2021), especially if they are low in attitude certainty (Matthes et al., 2010). Conversely, when laws are repealed, people may feel more freedom to express their opinions that are misaligned with the law. However, the chilling

effects of laws may be observed in face-to-face or self-reported surveys alone, and the findings may differ in other modes of expression, such as anonymous social media posts.

Motivated by the research gaps in the government-media interplay effects on LGBT representation and the ensuing public attitudes, our work will test the following hypotheses:

H1: Representative gaps in the news media predict negative attitudes towards LGBTs in (a) surveys (b) social media.

H2: Repealing the 377A law predicts higher and more positive news coverage of LGBTs than before the repeal.

H3: Repealing the 377A law predicts more positive public attitudes towards LGBTs (a) on social media, (b) in self-reports in surveys than before the repeal.

H4: The greater the press freedom of the country, the lesser the effect of the repeal of laws restricting LGBT freedom on the expressed support for the LGBTs in (a) the news, (b) surveys, and (c) social media.

Our data comprises news headlines, survey responses, and social media posts. First, we will audit the representation gaps and the affective polarization regarding LGBTQ communities in the national media outlets, using news data comprising the articles published (2018-2022) by 166 multilingual news outlets of four countries – India, Singapore, Thailand, and Taiwan (four countries that have recently repealed draconian colonial-era laws that criminalize sex between men). Next, we include social media data, triangulating these findings against attitudes towards reactions towards news on LGBTQ issues as well as views expressed in geolocated Twitter and Instagram posts. Targeted sentiment will be extracted through deep learning approaches on multilingual data (Gonen et al., 2020). Finally, we will apply an interrupted time series analysis framework to measure the effect of the repeal of 377A in these countries on news coverage and public attitudes in 2022 (Singapore and Thailand), 2019 (Taiwan), and 2018 (India). Our analysis is in progress and we will present our findings at IAMCR.

Key Words
LGBTQ, news, public opinion, Section 377a, social media

The Analysis of Dissemination of Health Misinformation with Conformity on Social Media——Based on an Empirical Study of Sina Weibo Users

Authors

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Abstract

Conformity means that individuals change their behavior to adapt to the response of others under real or imagined group pressure, which is a widespread social psychological and behavioral phenomenon. The information shared due to irrational conformity is usually mixed with rumors and misinformation, which affects public opinion and causes social panic. As the Chinese government loosened control over prevention of the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation about the pandemic and health on social media has increased dramatically. Due to the viral spreading character of social media, the causes of dissemination of health misinformation with conformity has become an urgent research issue.

The research samples are users who spread health misinformation with conformity on Chinese social media Sina Weibo from December 2022 to January 2023. The study draws on the categories of causes from covariation model, which is an attribution theory. The theory holds that causes of an outcome can be attributed to the circumstance, the stimulus, the person (internal), or some combination of these factors. The research questions include: (1) How do the circumstances, the stimuli, and the person influence on users' dissemination of health misinformation with conformity? (2) What is the specific impact and mechanism of each factor？ The research collects 859 questionnaires, and focus groups are conducted to assist the research. The study sets independent variables based on the three aspects of attribution and establishes a structural equation model (SEM) to analyze the influence of single and interactive variables.

The research findings demonstrate that first, in terms of the circumstance, the nature of social media plays the most significant role in the dissemination of health misinformation with conformity. The social media subjective norms and group cohesion of users have a significant positive impact on users' dissemination of health misinformation with conformity. Second, in terms of the stimulus, the credibility of information sources has a significant positive impact on dissemination of health misinformation with conformity. And the more ambiguous the context of the misinformation, the less the user will follow the crowd. It is worth noting that the higher the degree of public attention to a specific event, the less misinformation related to it will be spread. Third, in terms of the person, risk perception and information judgement self-efficacy have a significant negative impact. The degree of user involvement indirectly affects the dissemination of misinformation positively by affecting the experience of information forwarding. The more useful the user perceives the information to be, the more dissemination of health misinformation with conformity will be.

This study not only provides a reasonable explanation for the behavior of social media users to spread health misinformation and discovers the role of social media in it, but also provides a reference for building a benign public opinion ecology on social media. The study is conducive to strengthening individuals' resistance to the spread of health misinformation and helping departments and social media to take measures to reduce the negative impact of health misinformation on society.

Key Words
social media, health misinformation, conformity