

How to visually create clear personalities with Blogs?

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Abstract

In this study, one of the primary goals is to define important psychological dimensions of cyber-personality that is unique characteristics of individual on the cyber space. The other goal is to identify graphical design elements used to create cyber-personality in the second generation blog.

1 Introduction

One of the most fundamental motivations for users in the Internet it to make them unique compared to other numerous users (Wallace, 1999). This motivation is a strong counter movement against the anonymity of the Internet, which tends to render an individual similar to everybody else. A representative example of people's endeavor to express their uniqueness on the Internet is avatars. Internet users spend considerable amount of money and time for decorating their avatars so that their personality can be expressed clearly on the Internet. Personality can be defined as a set of human characteristics that can distinguish one from the others (Mischel, 1993). Accordingly, we define cyber-personality as unique characteristics of individual on the Internet.

A recent trend in cyber-personality is to expand its scope from individual avatars to the second generation blogs, called mini-homepage. The first generation blogs usually consist of textual information that are to be shared with other people on the Internet. On the other hand, the second generation blogs are usually formulated by combining numerous graphical items (such as avatars and buildings), and their primary goal is to convey the owner's personality rather than sharing information, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Graphical Cyber-Personalities for the Second Generation Blog (www.cyworld.co.kr)

The second generation blogs have become dominant communication channels for individual personalities on the Internet (Stone, 2002). However, few studies have been conducted to suggest effective ways to create clear cyber-personalities through combining graphical items on the Internet (Kim et al. 2003). The primary goals of this study are to define important psychological dimensions of cyber-personality and graphical design elements used to create cyber-personality in the second generation blog. Three consecutive studies are being conducted as below

2 Methods

In Study 1, we have defined important cyber-personality

dimensions. Our research question was what kind of personalities people wanted to express and usually felt from the second generation blog on the Internet. We first collected 1520 basic personality adjectives from psychology, design, and marketing literatures. Then a professional group evaluated relevance of these adjectives with cyber personalities. The evaluation left 1203 adjectives, which were then used in a survey to come up with 181 personality adjectives, converged into 20 distinctive cyber-personality dimensions.

In Study 2, we analyze cyber-personalities of sample blogs. First we select 80 blogs and mini-homepages, which are as various as possible in terms of their visual appearances and cyber personalities. About 1600 users are asked to evaluate cyber-personalities of each of the sample sites, using the personality adjectives set collected and evaluated in Study 1.

In Study 3, we identify significant visual elements when users feel cyber personalities. To collect the data, we conduct the following experiment. Eighty participators are asked to accomplish two kinds of tasks. The first task is to effectively create cyber-personalities in their blogs, and the second task is to catch other cyber personalities when viewing other blogs. All experimental procedures take less than two hours and the entire experimental session is recorded. Then, the verbal and action protocols in the experiment are transcribed and coded. Finally, we statistically analyze the coded data to identify important design elements when users feel certain cyber-personalities. For example, in order to convey a sincere personality though a blog, the visual composition of the blog should be balanced and avatars in the blog should be represented with low saturated hue and tone.

3 Conclusion

This research has both academic and empirical implications. For academic implications, this study identifies cyber-personality dimensions and develops the theoretical model for a cyber-personality. This research also has empirical implications in terms of suggesting a graphic design methodology for creating cyber-personality effectively. That result will be also useful to graphic designers when they create avatars and games characters. Finally, blog owners benefit from the study results for improving their personalities on their blogs, which will be the dominant platform of conveying their individual uniqueness.

References

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