A Blind Mind’s Eye: Perceptual Defense Mechanisms and Aschematic Visual Information

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This research reports on an eyetracker experiment exploring aschematic perception in visual processing. While eighty percent of those exposed to an urban image containing a woman committing suicide fixated on the woman, only thirty-five percent reported seeing her. Another thirty-five percent reported schema consistent items in her place and were three times as likely to insert other false schematic items into image recall. Schematic responders were also partially protected from the negative affect the image created. These findings suggest that people ignore aschematic stimuli due to top-down cognitive frameworks that transform images between sight and memory, rather than changing the visual search pattern itself.

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virtual world. Our participants argue that blogs can be personalized in various ways to reflect the blogger’s identity and can constitute a medium through which individuals carry their real-life self to the virtual world. The instrumental reasons, on the other hand, are reflected in instances such as the use of instant messenger to discuss schoolwork with classmates and the use of blogs to organize and maintain a record of daily activities.

Consumers’ need for connectedness emerged as the central theme which motivates the use of different communication mediums. Our findings suggest that participants use different technologies to connect with their existing friends, family members, new people and communities of interest. In doing so, they cultivate their existing relations, bond with friends, meet new people and become members of broader communities.

The data also reveals that there are two main factors guiding consumers’ selection of specific communication technologies. These are structural properties of a particular technology and the level of intimacy in social relationships. Informants describe their choice of a particular medium in terms of its convenience in communicating and maintaining contact with others. Convenience of different forms of communication technologies stems from their inherent properties. For instance, participants view instant messaging as suitable for maintaining contact with friends. The structural properties of instant messaging allows participants to create a ‘buddy list’ composed of their community of friends and to engage in different levels of participation ranging from active conversations to merely observing others. Consumer discourses also reveal that participants act quite intuitively in their selection of different modes of on/off line communication technologies available to them based on intimacy in relationships, intimacy of content as well as the interplay between intimacy and structural properties.

Both the nature and the intimacy of relationship determine the appropriateness of the medium. Participants easily delineate among “family”, “friends”, and “acquaintances”. They use different communicative mediums depending on whom they want to communicate with. For instance, some young consumers communicate with email and instant messenger at the start of a relationship, then as the relationship progresses they use communication mediums such as phone. The subject matter of conversation is also found to affect the selection of a particular communication medium. For example, participants use online chat for impersonal conversations, while they prefer using the phone for more personal conversations. Finally, there is interplay between intimacy and structural properties which provides a sense of control and empowerment to participants. For example, they maintain several email accounts not only to channel different kinds of information, but also to differentially communicate with other individuals depending on the level of intimacy in the relationship.

We contribute to the existing literature by illustrating the ways in which intimacy in social relationships influence and guide young consumers’ use of communication technologies. Overall as consumers’ relations with social actors in their lives move along the continuums of impersonal to personal and distant to intimate, the use of particular technological products also changes. Consumer narratives reveal the role of technology in mediating social and personal relationships. These accounts highlight how technology usage shapes and structures, and in turn is shaped and structured by consumers’ relationships. This study has implications for consumer research. Due to changing communication patterns, marketers should consider the role of communication technologies in enabling different patterns of information exchange. These exchanges have implications for diffusion of product information. Given that this is an ongoing study, further work is anticipated to extend the findings.

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‘Do I Know You?’: Constraints on the Recognition of the Celebrity Endorser
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We explore a celebrity recognition framework in which the ability to recognize other-race faces is based upon not only the race of the viewer relative to the celebrity, but also the amount of exposure/familiarity the viewer has had with others who are of the same race as the celebrity. The other-race-effect is pertinent for marketing researchers to understand because it has significant implications for not only multicultural celebrity facial recognition in advertising, but also for other marketing-related issues, including customer service, direct marketing, and personal selling.