

웹상에서 감정이입을 촉발하는 캐릭터디자인의 연구 -아바타를 중심으로-

A study on empathetic virtual character as a critical factor on the web

이지희
한양대학교

Lee, Ji-Hee
Hanyang University

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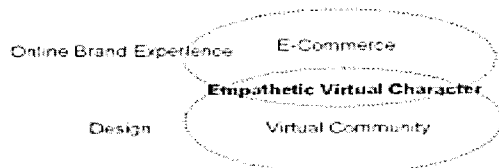
1. Introduction

A couple of years ago, on a Korean website, there was the first appearance of AVATA. Following this, beating expectations, the e-commerce company providing AVATA had tremendous success with this concept. Nowadays most E-commerce's companies have been using this company as a benchmark, recognized as a stable profit-model. However, sufficient study has not done to date, it may be that the AVATA phenomenon will continue to grow, but the history of this case is short. So the researcher would like this paper to contribute some knowledge to people who want to understand the current phenomenon and companies that are about to set up using this model with a more comprehensive understanding. Also, the researcher will furnish certain companies with the outcome of this research, who are struggling to search for a new business model.

This researcher will tentatively use a new term 'empathetic virtual character' to justify this phenomenon.

In addition to that, A future study is expected to cover from the social-psychological point of view, to the interaction of design beyond the computer-human interface. It is because this character will provide not only user' satisfaction to user, but also act as a catalyst in e-commerce to draw attention to the customer and provide fun.

2. Empathetic virtual character



[Figure 1.1] Empathetic virtual character

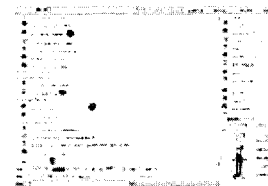
This diagram explains the relationship of 4 major parts of this research involving the Empathetic virtual character.

It is believed that the new character is connected with the personalization of digital relationships in terms of an online brand experience because the new character can be used to

make online customers happy, helping the online brand to enhance customer loyalty. Design is believed to be a key component, especially in interaction design.

On the other hand, there are also connections between e-commerce and the virtual community. The reason why we have to look at this is that the virtual community is reported to be the key factor of value creation, which makes e-commerce successful. The new character must be at the heart of all of those.

3.Virtual character in computer-mediated communication



[Figure 1.2] CMC in collaborative virtual environments(CVEs)

In chat-rooms, the existing Avata is for the presentation of the user or the participant. Users can expose their personality more than with a text based conversation system, through Avata. It is believed that users can communicate effectively and efficiently in terms of computer-mediated communication. It is regarded that these technological tools are the result of the ineluctable drive to thaw the Internet's icy landscape with non-verbal cues, so users can express themselves in a warm, and more socio-emotional way

4. Online brand experience

Marc Gobe, the author of 'emotional branding' used to suggest the Ten Commandments of emotional branding: 1 from consumers to people, 2 from product to experience, 3 from honest to trust, 4 from quality to preference, 5 from notoriety to aspiration, 6 from identity to personality, 7 from function to dialogue, 10 from service to relationship. According to him, it is recorded that communication is telling while dialogue is sharing. He added 'Real dialogue implies a two-way street, a conversation with consumer. Progress in digital media is now allowing this evolution to take place, and finally will help foster

a rewarding partnership between people and corporation.' At this point, through dialogue among the users, the consumer bonding will take place spontaneously as well.

As stated above, community is believed to entail a feeling of membership in a group along with a strong sense of involvement and shared common interests with each other. A group of people can also create strong, lasting relationships that may develop into a sense of community through an engaged and extended exchange of views focused on their shared interests. This sense of community can help encourage users and customers to return to a website.

5. Evolution in e-commerce



[Figure 1.3] Evolution in e-commerce

"While technology, marketing, and business acumen will play a large part in the initial success of the new virtual worlds, it is their creators' abilities to build believable and captivating societies that will keep users engaged. All these worlds are virtual stages, and we are merely players - not directors".¹⁾ Many well-established companies have used the Internet as an additional channel to reinforce brand awareness rather than focus on transactional e-Commerce capability. However, as seen before, thanks to technological developments, it is not longer anymore that the choice of business model is either online or offline. The strategy like multiple platforms needs to be done at the same level simultaneously.

When it comes to building branding in the Web, the research by Kotha et al.(2001) showed that companies with an established reputation are more likely to attract attention online than new Web-based firms. Branding building features such as community groups provided on the Web site allow customers to interact and share information with others, which helps in building up a degree of trust that can partly compensate for the absence of an established retail presence and then result in increased revenues.²⁾

Creating a strong brand both online and offline involves far more than the 'look and feel' of the Web homepage. The very essence of a strong brand philosophy is the way in which the staff serve customers-key part of creating brand convergence. Whether the customers are surfing the web site or using the service offline, the organization must ensure consistency of all 'customer touch points' to create a single, comprehensive and

memorable brand. This involves significant management and staff training, motivation and constant follow-up. Striking the right balance between online and offline delivery systems to satisfy and deepen customers' relationships and maintain the uniqueness of the brand has to be the key to success.³⁾

6. Conclusion

Generally speaking, 'Community' is regarded as a key feature of the new interactive media, as separate from the traditional push media. It is necessary for companies to know what the reality behind the Virtual community is, and how they can deliver the promise of a community. The key to a successful community is believed to be customer-centered communication. It is a customer-to-customer (C2C) interaction. The sites mentioned, using an EVC, are based on a relationship-based community, which is gradually trying to expand their business field, which are e-transactions. Also, in the case of an on-line brand (including an off-line brand having the virtual community), the virtual community is the place which fulfills consumer bonding on the Internet.

Many well-established companies have used the Internet as an additional channel to reinforce brand awareness rather than focus on transactional e-Commerce capability. However, as seen before, thanks to technological developments, it is not longer anymore that the choice of business model is either online or offline. The strategy like multiple platforms needs to be done at the same level simultaneously.

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