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Digital Media Credibility Indicators: The Heuristic Approach to Understand the Technology Cues Using MAIN Model

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Abstract

Social media credibility raises the perception towards trustworthiness, reliability, and accuracy of individuals, organizations, or shared the information on digital media platforms. Developing and preserving the credibility is critical for developing an optimistic influence in online and fetching with users efficiently. In general, predominantly digital media platforms are interlinked with dynamic nature so in that concern sustaining the credibility is foundation of significance online presence. Digital media platforms have emerged as most inevitable arenas were individual to organizations

Digital media credibility is how the evaluation of the trustworthiness and accuracy are received from end users' perception. It is generally a complicated balance to attain through the mixed factors which ranges from consistency in communication and content accuracy of transparent and commitment. Since the digital media is evolving with huge impact, simultaneously the opportunities and challenges also associated with accuracy. To analyse the ascendant cues of digital media indicators, researcher was applied Main model and data was processed using SPSS software and AMOS. To analyse the data, researcher used Correlation, Regression and SEM. The study reveals that trustworthiness is completely depends upon the information source to the audience perception. End-users' credibility differs from areas wise like urban to rural due to the affordance factors**.**

Keywords: Digital media, credibility, Trustworthiness, heuristic, technology cues, MAIN model.

Introduction

. In this recent era, most of the users navigating from other traditional platforms to this type of digital media landscape hence, the necessary of credibility cannot be exaggerated. Enhancing the trustworthiness, information reliability and accuracy is not only bounded for personal or brand status but it also critical for predetermine the valuable and meaningful conversations and rendering to an optimistic online environment. Credibility is traditionally determined by analysing the source of information. Conventional wisdom suggests that data attributed to a credible individual or group is likely reliable. However, internet-based the term "media source" can be confusing due to the multiple layers of sources used in online information transmission. For instance, a friend may send you an e-mail from a newsgroup that was posted by another member, which was obtained from a newspaper website that picked up on a wire report. Some claim that, in addition to examining the veracity of sources, information recipients ought to weigh the credibility of the message as a whole.

Heuristics and Cues in the Digital Age

Credibility cues, such as source, message, and medium, provide mental shortcuts for assessing the credibility of information. In traditional media, simple cues could be used to assess credibility. However, due to the multiplicity of sources and layers of online content, it is nearly impossible for an average Internet user to have a clear sense of credibility. Social psychologists have long argued that cues in a persuasion context can lead message receivers to make loose associations between the cue and the message. For example, advertisers often use an attractive source to promote a positive, even if somewhat superficial, association between the source and the product. The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) labels such cues as peripheral cues and the resulting attitude formation as having taken the peripheral route. This is contrasted with the more cognitively effortful central route, which is characterized by attention to and evaluation of message content rather than peripheral aspects such as the attractiveness of the source and font colour. The heuristic-systematic model (HSM) draws a similar distinction, there are two types of judgment processing: systematic, which involves analysing relevant material thoroughly, and heuristic, which uses mental shortcuts to implement judgmental values. heuristics) that are already saved in memory. The expertise heuristic ("experts' statements can be trusted") is a relevant judging criterion for credibility

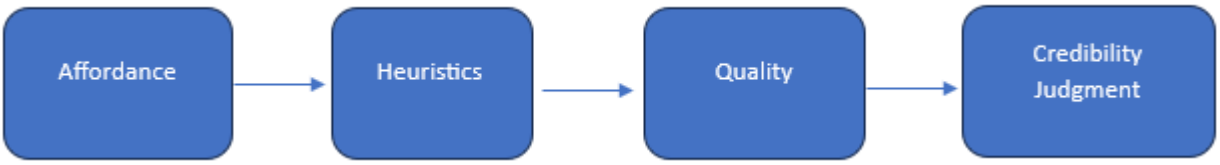
decisions. It is typically used when presenting a message from an expert source. The presence of an expert triggers the expertise heuristic in recipients' thoughts. The expertise = credibility equation is a common assumption based on prior experience, often used to save mental resources. The use of a heuristic can either lead to an immediate conclusion (e.g., safe-sex practices are good) or guide more systematic content processing (e.g., experts like the American Medical Association recommend safe-sex practices, implying an elevated incidence of casual sex). Using heuristics does not necessarily result in heuristic processing. Heuristics are knowledge-based generalizations that can be enhanced through experience. Therefore, they can be really useful.

Technological Optimism and the reality of psychology

Research on technological affordances shows a disconnect between our expectations of digital media's effects and our actual utilization of its possibilities. The goal of introducing and using structural elements is to improve communication by enriching the content experience, based on the belief that greater affordability leads to higher credibility. The digital media universe presents two challenges: (1) an overwhelming amount of information and entertainment to organise, and (2) a lack of consistency in content quality, requiring users to constantly monitor credibility. Research on social cognition suggests that cues are the most effective way to manage information overload. Individuals tend to be "cognitive misers," relying on heuristics rather than expending more cognitive energy than necessary to reach a conclusion, even in non-critical situations.

The MAIN Model

The Media Consequences Study Laboratory at Penn State University has carried out ten years of study on the psychological consequences of digital media, identifying four key affordances: modality (M), agency (A), interactivity (I), and navigability (N). These affordances are present in most digital media and may activate cognitive heuristics for credibility assessments. They are structural features that create resilient first impressions of credibility on a website.



The MAIN model focuses on the technological characteristics of digital media that can impact credibility judgements, while the source and content also play a significant role. The beginning point is the technology's affordance, which refers to its ability to support specific actions.

Modality Cues

Modality is the most visible and structural of the four affordances, as it is related to the medium's structure rather than its content. Historically, media diverged based on their modality: print was largely textual, radio was aural, and television was audiovisual. Computer-based media now offers content in multiple modalities, complicating the traditional boundary between media types. The term "multimedia" refers to digital devices that combine multiple modalities into a single medium, rather than individual media. Many digital gadgets exclusively or primarily output text. Young people mostly consume text through e-mail, social media, and digital devices. Text and images are the most commonly used modalities on websites. Cell phones support both text and voice messages. Text, music, and video are all available on iPods, particularly the newest models. Psychological differences between these modes can be assessed using classic mass communication methods. Literature on intermediary differences, especially perceived believability. Newer digital media modalities may trigger intrusiveness and distraction, resulting in unfavourable credibility judgements. Young users may rely on modality-based heuristics in the absence of strong attachments to material or opinions, as cues that trigger them are highly visible. Younger individuals may be more open to new experiences, as they are less prone to have strong allegiances to specific modalities.

Agency Cues

Digital media allows for the assignment of sourcing to specific entities in the chain of communication, from the front-end box (e.g., computer or television) to an online location (e.g., nytimes.com), from a collection of other users (e.g., polled opinion on Facebook) to oneself (e.g., one's space in myyahoo.com or playlist on iPod), among many others. The

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equipment, such as a computer or interface agent, conveys the sources identify to the receiver. When there is no other credited source for a piece of information, the agent may serve as the source mentally.

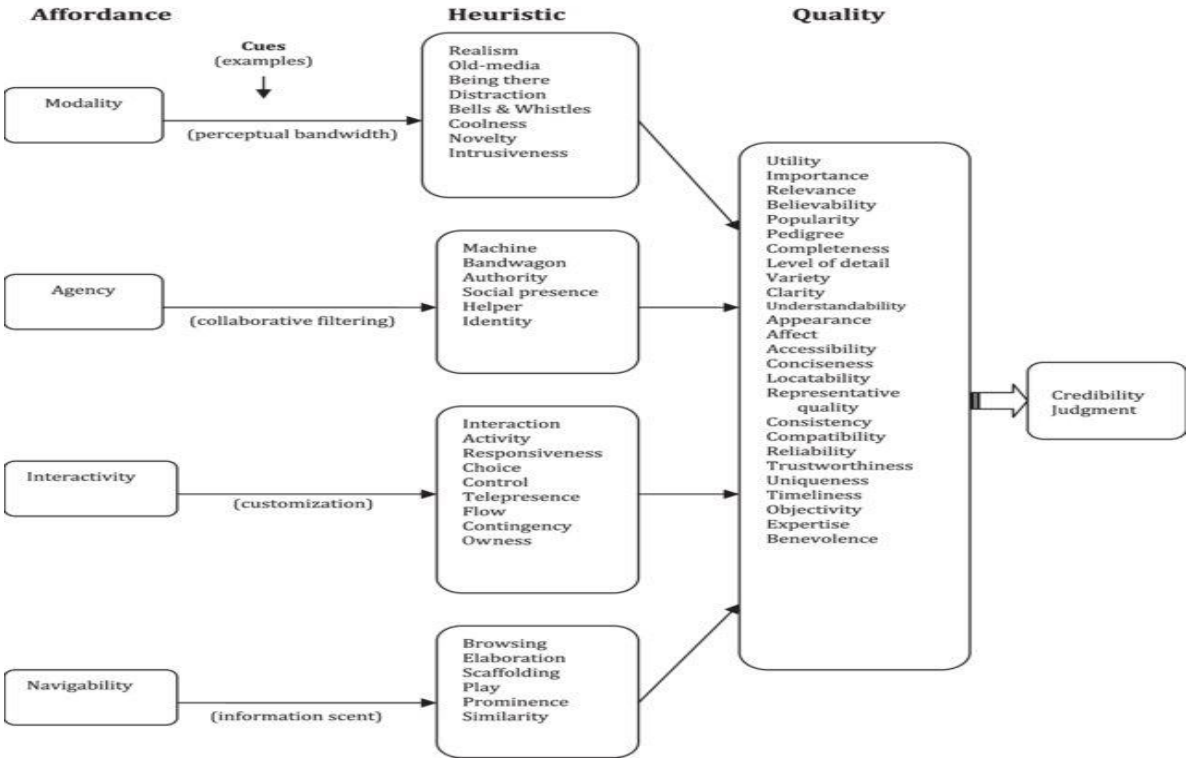
Interactivity Cues

Digital media stands out for its interactivity, which is lacking in traditional analogue media. Some digital media offer more interactivity than others. There is no commonly accepted definition of interaction, with each study emphasising a different component as the core. The term interactivity refers to both interaction and activity. Digital media devices may have unique characteristics that highlight their interactive nature. As heuristics, interaction and activity have a wide range of meanings. The activity heuristic suggests a shift away from passive media consumption, particularly on television. Using a mouse for web browsing is more common than using a remote control for TV viewing. Adding interactive devices, particularly games, can boost activity levels even further. The inclusion of a joystick in an interactive gadget may prompt users to adopt the activity heuristic. Computer-mediated communication technologies, such as e-mail, instant messaging, chatrooms, bulletin boards, and social networking sites, can also facilitate human-to-human interaction. The important heuristic is "contingency." In computer-mediated communication, messages are considered interactive if they are threaded and represent a chain of exchanges.
To be deemed interactive, a communication must be dependent on both the previous message from the interaction partner and the messages that came before it.

Navigability Cues

The navigability affordance, which uses space metaphors like "site" and "cyberspace" in digital media, can trigger heuristics and transmit cues through generated content. The presence of hierarchically organised hyperlinks on a website may trigger its own heuristic (e.g., well-organized, easily navigable sites are more credible). on the website. Effective navigation in digital material requires more than just hyperlinks. Navigational aids are often present on gadgets and websites to guide consumers through a more efficient experience. A well-organized, hierarchical link arrangement that allows for easy visual search is beneficial for navigation, even with a huge number of objects. A navigational tool with proven benefits, and "landmarks" can significantly improve virtual world navigability. Additionally, the words on the hyperlinks may trigger a different heuristic related to the site's content.

The MAIN Model



News aggregators automatically transmit the value of information. Google News provides three "news cues," including source identification, recency, and quantity of connected stories. All of these are known to cue.

The aggregator has its own heuristics for believability, timeliness, and expertise, which aid users in determining the similarity between their desired news and available stories. Similarity can increase the perceived relevance and credibility of the cue-providing device, such as the aggregator. In summary, digital media's navigability triggers several heuristics at different levels. Browsing and play heuristics lead to a focus on variety-seeking and psychological immersion, which is common among today's young. However, elaboration and Scaffolding heuristics encourage a more cognitively demanding approach to the digital medium.
Autogenerated navigational aids use embedded information smell to activate prominence and similarity heuristics in their output. These heuristics improve credibility assessments by highlighting relevant, comprehensive, clear, and useful information.

The list of cues and heuristics is not complete. Not all cues trigger all mentioned heuristics, and not all heuristics lead to quality ratings across all categories. The previous sections explored the heuristics that drive quality evaluations and the stimuli that trigger them.

Discussion

The cues embedded in the four classes of affordances may vary depending on the device, user, and context of use. However, if an interface contains features, functions, or messages that trigger these heuristics, they can have a psychological impact on user perceptions of the interface, system, and content. The MAIN model argues that technology features such as modality, agency, interactivity, and navigability contribute to the perceived credibility of digital media products, beyond content attributes alone.

Researchers can better understand the impact of individual heuristics on credibility judgements in digital media use, rather than the combined operation of several heuristics. As our understanding of cues and heuristics advances, scholars may be able to suggest and test intricate connections between them. It's easy to understand how a heuristic works. Heuristics, unlike other variables in psychological mediation models, are judgement rules that users utilise to make a relationship between the existence of a cue and the credibility judgement.

In addition to assisting researchers, the MAIN model has some design advantages. The technology community now encourages lay users to participate in interface design and development. Interaction Design and Children (IDC), a participatory design trend in the human-computer interaction field, involves collaborating with children to build technology.
Young people's heuristics can provide valuable input for designing new digital devices and venues, as they are more likely to make psychologically meaningful decisions rather than just engineering considerations. The heuristics-based method can be used to develop effective learning systems by assessing young users' responses to current and future affordances, both real and imaginary.

The heuristics-based approach to credibility evaluations is more effective than the checklist approach (which is ineffective, according to Metzger) because it takes into account how youth make implicit credibility judgements when using digital media. The list of heuristics in this chapter is not exhaustive. The popularity of digital media devices suggests that young people tend to link credibility with superficial factors like trendiness, bandwagon, choice, and play (among others).

Understanding how young people apply heuristics to affordances can improve our understanding of the psychological effects of digital media. This knowledge can also help promote critical consumption in the future. These tips can serve as training material for media literacy efforts aimed at youth and new Internet users. Understanding how technological affordances impact perceived credibility can inform policy on adopting design and technology standards to differentiate credible information from non-credible sources in the digital universe.

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