Medium Effects – Write up

Alexae Stone

I thought the article’s approach on communicating between one another was very interesting. I personally have noticed one thing similar to what she has noted. When communicating with another person through instant message, the conversation feels to be more personable when comments are made to be no more than a sentence or two. It feels like you are actually conversing with them, when you talk back and forth quickly, as a normal conversation might go. This must have been true as well in 1995.

I did notice she thought the use of video was not as useful as what was to be expected. She stated that you cannot notice the gestures as well and a large group is difficult to see the users. I thought this to be true when using a regular web cam in a meeting, and when looking onto a large group it is difficult to see who is talking. However, I recently had the opportunity to use Microsoft’s Round Table. This allowed a full 360 viewing of the room, seeing all users equally close, nobody was really as far away like in a straight on view of the room. When someone speaks there face is brought up into another viewing area, while still being able to see the rest of the people in the room. However, I think there is still difficulty with turn taking, as she mentions. You don’t the same atmosphere that face-to-face brings, but it is more similar than in the past.

When communicating online, I agree with idea that it is not the time delay that messes with IM conversations, that it is the ability to have multiple conversations going on at the same time in MUD. If you think of it as you trying to talk to three other people in real life, you can easily imagine why there is some difficulty getting things accomplished online. I usually try to talk to someone in person or on the phone if there is something important to be accomplished. But for the use of just small talk I think it is ok.

I think it’s interesting how its pointed out how she points out that face-to-face talks have different rules than MUD. I feel like that is something that should be obvious, in every different medium, there are different rules. It’s not shocking that the same methods can’t be used in these situations. However, I do think how its interesting how closely they have analyzed the different floor models and how people use them. I have not personally experienced it, but the idea that the user would say “hmm” in a MUD group seems like how it works in a face-to-face conversation. A user is agreeing or thinking of something to say. And bye saying “yeah”, you usually have something to say right then in real life just like in the MUD conversation. It’s a very interesting connection between the two.
Visualizing Conversation – Write up

Alexae Stone

This paper brought about very new ideas of how to make chat more interactive and truly express the writer’s feelings. The idea of using an avatar seems to not show enough emotion, I agree. It does not allow you to get the full tone of the user’s words. I think you can usually understand the basic understanding of a sentence, which is about equivalent to the avatar’s expression. However, I think you gain a lot more than regular chat windows if you are unsure of the meaning. I love the idea of the chat circle though. I think user’s can benefit from seeing this chat circle and see how much they have contributed (or lack thereof) to the group. It’s a great way to have your usual chat but also the ability to learn in the process about yourself.

Like the paper states, I think the circle chat allows for responses to a person’s statement to be seen much easier. It makes me wonder, however, if two conversations are located close to one another, if there would be problems with overlap and not being able to see all of the responses. Something else that might come up in these chat circles is the ability to see former parts of the conversation; I think that might be a useful feature people like to be able and remind them of what others have said. Though I think the idea of knowing the truly active members in the room is really neat – no one can really hide and just view the conversation without others knowing.

This other approach, Loom, I think would be very interesting for a psychologist or someone to take a look at. It seems like it would be useful at work, possibly, except with emails instead of the chat forum. See who is contacting who a lot, maybe if there is someone who keeps getting ignored, they can be offered some kind of assistance? Maybe something along those lines. I also like the ability to see what groups are most active and who is most active visually. Again, I think it’s like the chat circle where you would be able to judge yourself and see if you are talking too much.

I think both of these ideas are very interesting and I think if it was available to users in the chat, I think it would be important to have the user be able to view their history; people are always interested in themselves. I think also the ability, like was sort of mentioned, for whoever the user is to be able to specifically choose the data shown. For instance the actual text of the conversation or something similar. Very interesting ideas! I am intrigued into the actual implementation of each and seeing the interface. I think including all of these interesting features could be difficult within this product.
Managing the Virtual World – Response

Alexae Stone

This paper brings up a good issue of the amount of cooperation and decency that needs to happen in these social spaces for them to function correctly. It is like any other aspect of life, where if a person is taking advantage of a situation, others tend to as well. Or sometimes the person just ruins a good thing for everyone. The world needs harmony amongst its people (or users) to feel comfortable. Like the article states, people need to be respectful to others and the shared space for things like Usenet to work.

It appears Usenet has many ways that it can be brought down by its users, but one up side to it is something that we discussed in class. The idea that people will not want to read things they do not agree with. This would lead to most likely friendlier posts and not as many attacking messages. However, I don’t think that it would discourage users to not post large posts about information they are wanting to get out, some spam.

I think that the idea of having Usenet postings restricted to users only is a good idea. That provides Usenet the opportunity to remove someone for having bad posts, but still allow those just wanting to read the posts the freedom of not needing an account. The ability to kill a user from you seems like a good idea as well because it would keep Usenet out of the need to remove users as often for just a quarrel between two people. However, something I see that could arise is someone creating multiple user names to keep bothering others, so it might not be an ultimate fix. If you could limit people to a certain number of login’s per IP address or something like that, it could be beneficial.

When the paper mentioned having the user’s create their own rules, I immediately am worried about the fact of so many new rules coming in. It seems like a lot of work for Usenet to take on. Maybe if they could keep track of some rules that are the same coming in, that would make the process simpler and give the users the rules they so crave. I agree sometimes the institutions rules don’t necessarily take into account their users. Things like this happen in everyday life, even in the University. Some rules are made and we have things like Town Hall to bring some problems to the forefront and people can make decisions from these talks.

In the conclusion, the idea that as the group gets larger it gets easier to monitor but harder to discipline is fascinating. It makes for an interesting psychological study. It makes you hope people will learn to respect others and public space in the future.