

RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2018

8:30 A.M. - 1:15 P.M.

WEIMER HALL 3032



UF College of Journalism
and Communications
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students,

I'm pleased to announce this important annual event in our College - the 2018 College of Journalism and Communications Research Symposium and Idea Exchange. It is a place and time for us to showcase and share our research. The diversity of topics, approaches and ideas reinforce how rewarding it is to be part of a college that embraces so many avenues and topics of discovery.

UF is now a top 10 public university and strives to be in the top 5. Our scholars demonstrate that we will play an important role in the University's future and continue leading in our academic disciplines.

Congratulations to all the presenters and best paper award winners!

I'd like to thank Dean Diane McFarlin and Executive Associate Dean Spiro Kiouisis for their encouragement and support of the symposium. Additionally, this Symposium would not have been possible without the tremendous efforts of Yulia Strekalova and doctoral student Summer Shelton. And, last but not least, a special thanks to all of the hard-working reviewers and the attendees of this annual event.



Debbie Treise

Senior Associate Dean | Division of Graduate Studies and
Research Professor | Department of Advertising

CATEGORIES

TOP FACULTY-STUDENT PAPERS

ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

COMMUNICATING SCIENCE, HEALTH,
ENVIRONMENT AND RISK

MASS COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY

MEDIA EFFECTS

TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED COMMUNICATIONS



TOP FACULTY-STUDENT PAPERS



President Trump's Twitter Tirade: An Activation of NFL protest backlash amongst fanatic fans: A conceptual model

AUTHOR

Brett Ball

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze why President Trump's Twitter tirade lead to NFL player protest backlash amongst the fanatic fans. This paper poses a conceptual model offering an alternative explanation for fanatic fans' backlash while introducing a focal concept of American warrior culture. In addition, the cultural-contracts theory and influential variables were posited as guiding-posts leading to backlash of the NFL amongst fanatic fans. Although the categorization of the fanatical fan is redundant, it is used to emphasize the degree of fan-like behavior and is based on motivation and behavior in the sports fan typology. The centralized concept of the model was around American warrior culture, a phenomenon that has been frequently used in other disciplines, but has yet been used as an explanation to Twitter-driven political responses in a sports space, specifically the NFL. President Trump's Twitter tirade was more likely to activate American warrior culture through strong use of emotive language and the embracement of American exceptionalism. However, low expectancy violation would lessen the chances of this activation. Moreover, American warrior culture salience is more likely to trigger backlash when military service salience, high nationalism, and perceived patriotism are present and less likely if the fan poses weak ethnocentrism. Longevity of the protest it has grown in its complexity and therefore, presenting future research opportunities to highlight the influence of financial stakes, the backlash of non-sports fans, and the different type of boycotts between the racially motivated groups and minorities.

Keywords: American warrior culture, sports, identity

Customizing your demons: Affective implications of anthropomorphizing the “Anxious Avatar”

AUTHOR

Daniel Pimentel & Dr. Sri Kalyanaraman

ABSTRACT

People are increasingly spending time within virtual worlds, relying on avatars (virtual self-representations) to interact within virtual environments. Researchers have studied the adverse effects of discrepancies between actual and idealized self-concepts represented by one’s avatar. However, self-concepts can be wholly undesirable, as with the anxious self-concept’s infusion into one’s identity. Implications of creating avatars accurately representing negative self-concepts remain unknown due to two conflicting mechanisms: A desire to reduce discrepancy with a self-concept, and a desire to enlarge discrepancy with a disliked-self. Two experiments explored the effects of discrepancy reduction (study 1) and discrepancy enlargement (study 2). In study 1 (N=90), participants customized avatars representing their anxious self-concept. Customization significantly reduced anxiety compared to the control. Study 2 (N=122) employed a 2 (customization: Y/N) x 2 (destruction: Y/N) between-subjects experiment. Participants destroyed or observed a customized or non-customized anxiety avatar. Destruction of customized avatars led to the greatest reduction in anxiety. Implications are discussed.

Keywords: avatars, virtual worlds, anxiety



ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS



How perceived transparent communication fosters employees' openness to organizational change: a model

AUTHOR

Cen April Yue

ABSTRACT

Organizations are experiencing constant changes in an unstable and unpredictable business environment. These organizational changes pose challenges to management, and, to a great extent, the success of change initiatives depend on employees' support. However, no research has yet examined the role of transparent internal communication in affecting employees' change-related reactions. A conceptual model is proposed to illustrate how perceived transparent communication can foster employee openness to change by decreasing the perceived change-related uncertainty. Drawing upon the social exchange theory, the perceived transparent communication between the management and the employees helps employees better understand the change and develop coping behaviors to handle the change, thus leading to positive attitude towards it. This model further untangles the interacting influences between transparent communication and organizational (e.g., transactional leadership) and individual factors (e.g., internal locus of control). The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the change management scholarship from the internal communication's perspective. Implications on public relations scholarship and practice are discussed.

Keywords: change management, transparent communication, public relations

The spiral model of public interest communications

AUTHOR

Jasper Fessmann

ABSTRACT

Public interest communications (PIC) is an emerging academic field which uses strategic communications to advance social causes (Fessmann, 2016; 2017). Building on prior work, this article proposes a spiral process model of public interest communications campaigns. Drawing on public relations, activism, and social movements literature, the model identifies eight distinct phases that a PIC social movement must go through to achieve sustained social change. Each step of the process requires different communications efforts and thus understanding the various phases will make social movement communications more effective. The article adds to the growing PIC and non-profit PR literature, as well as provides a tool for activists to utilize what Downes (2017) called the power of organizing in PIC. It will be useful in teaching public interest communications and strategic activism communications.

Keywords: Public Interest Communications, Non-profit Public Relations, Activism

Name dropping to the fullest: Examining the effectiveness of brand placements in hip-hop music

AUTHOR

Min Xiao, Dr. Huan Chen, & Dr. Sylvia Chan-Olmsted

ABSTRACT

Brand placement in hip-hop music is a widely used marketing strategy. However, the phenomenon remains understudied compared to empirical research studies about brand placements in movies, TV programs, and even video games. This study examines the effectiveness of brand placements in hip-hop music from the perspectives of brand recalls, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions. A 2 x 2 x 2 online experiment (n = 201) was utilized to investigate how persuasion knowledge, brand congruency, and hip-hop culture involvement influence consumers' perceptions of brand placements in hip-hop music. The results suggest that hip-hop culture involvement is playing a key role in influencing consumer attitudes toward the brand and purchase intentions. The findings from this study not only fill the lacuna in extant literatures about brand placements, but also help marketers to utilize hip-hop music as a marketing tool.

Keywords: Hip-hop music, brand placement, experiment



COMMUNICATING SCIENCE, HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RISK



‘Eradicating’ Down syndrome: How U.S online newspapers frame non-invasive prenatal testing for genetic disorders

AUTHOR

Summer Shelton & Amanda Bailey

ABSTRACT

Iceland’s “Down syndrome dilemma,” a designation given to Iceland due to a connection between the high number of women receiving prenatal testing who, upon discovering an abnormality, decide to terminate their pregnancy, sparked a media frenzy in the United States in early 2017. While doctors in Iceland must provide prenatal patients with information on testing, the practice of offering testing is done on a practice-by-practice basis in the U.S. However, many sources appear to fear that this mandated information about non-invasive testing will soon become the norm in the United States as well. A qualitative framing analysis explored the frames surrounding non-invasive, prenatal testing for genetic disorders in the top five online newspapers in the U.S. A total of 63 articles were coded by the researchers. Thematic analysis revealed 3 overarching themes in the framing of non-invasive testing for genetic disorders including the normalization of testing (describing non-invasive testing as the future or new norm), the ethical and moral considerations surrounding testing (equating testing with abortion or fear of genetic testing going too far), and finally, a discussion of decision-making (emotional aspects and policy and parental decision-making). Exploring the framing of this issue provides information on whether requiring doctor’s to inform women about testing is discussed as a moralistic or ethical issue or an issue of informed choice. Additionally, analysis of these frames shows the multiplicity of factors potentially impacting a woman’s decision to partake in testing.

Keywords: prenatal genetic testing, framing analysis, Down syndrome

I put on my lab coat and wizard hat: Science communication efforts and identity at popular culture conventions

AUTHOR

Vaughan James

ABSTRACT

Informal science communication efforts play a large role in individuals' science learning, more so than even formal schooling. Much scholarly attention has been given to traditional science communication environments, including museums, zoos, and science-focused mass media products. Science communication efforts also take place outside of these traditional environments, however, and some are able to garner large audiences. The present study examined one of these non-traditional science environments: popular culture conventions. Utilizing the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), identity was examined in the context of science communication efforts that take place at popular culture conventions. Qualitative in-depth interviews were held with participants from two different groups: audience members, defined as those that attended any sort of scientific content while at a convention (n=9), and science communicators (n=7). Participants were asked to discuss the ways participants felt they expressed their identities during these events. Results from this study showed that audience members could experience changes in their identity while attending scientific content at a convention. Many described changes within their personal-enacted frame, shifting their views of themselves so they thought of themselves as users, learners, and consumers of science, along with becoming more active science-seekers. Science communicators did not experience any real change in their personal-enacted frame of identity, though they did express growing enthusiasm for participating in science outreach at conventions. These results suggest that important identity shifts can occur as a result of science communication efforts at conventions, especially for audience members. As such, identity outcomes are an appropriate aspect of effectiveness to consider for that environment.

Keywords: Science communication, Identity, Qualitative Methods

First time moms: For vaccine questions, consult your peers on Facebook

AUTHOR

Amanda Bradshaw

ABSTRACT

Why do open-minded, information-seeking mothers engage in vaccine avoidance? In the digital age of information overload and democratization of healthcare, critically thinking parents often research online to make health-related parenting decisions instead of relying solely on an elite authority, such as a physician gatekeeper, for answers (Graffigna, Barelo, Bonanomi, & Riva, 2017). First-time mothers are more vaccine hesitant (Danchin et al., 2017), and information-seeking mothers in the postpartum period turn to Facebook, the largest, most active social networking site in the world, even more frequently after the birth of a child (M. K. 1. Bartholomew, Schoppe-Sullivan, Glassman, Kamp Dush, & Sullivan, 2012). Despite numerous scientific studies affirming the safety and importance of vaccinations for societal good, some mothers are still rejecting childhood vaccines as evidenced by recent clusters of disease outbreaks in the USA, including measles. Thus, examined through the lens of social network theory, Facebook is a significant catalyst in facilitating dialogue that may perpetuate misinformation and lead to childhood vaccine avoidance for avid users. A conceptual model was created describing how mothers with higher levels of education, sufficient disposable income to provide the luxury of choice, and a home in the Western world where vaccine-preventable diseases have mostly been eradicated, may be influenced by their peers on Facebook when making decisions about childhood vaccination. The mediator is elite skepticism, or the idea that distrust of authority may link maternal Facebook dependence with childhood vaccine avoidance.

Keywords: childhood vaccine hesitancy, Facebook health communication, social network comparisons

Tailoring genetic testing communication for patients' stability and controllability attributions

AUTHOR

Amanda Kastrinos

ABSTRACT

The widespread integration of genetic testing into the mental healthcare has the potential both alleviate and reinforce negative stigmas about mental illness. As stigma has been shown to prevent persons suffering from mental illness from seeking or continuing treatment, it is critical that scholars explore how communication can be employed to encourage self-efficacy responses to participation in genetic testing. The typology discussed in this paper applies attribution theory to examine how patients' stability and controllability attributions could predict their emotional response to genetic testing results. Communication strategies are then recommended for each emotional response type based on extant literature. The typology presented here can serve as a framework for both future research and mental health practitioners.

Does natural mean healthy? How natural label contributes to nutritional self-betrayal among health-conscious consumers

AUTHOR

Donghee Lee

ABSTRACT

In light of the recent health and wellness boom, American consumers are health-conscious now more than ever. Despite the awareness, they still eat food without health benefits for pleasure. This study provides a conceptual model describing the process, through which health-conscious individuals experience to justify unhealthy food consumption. Using the Cognitive Dissonance Theory, this paper argues that individuals rely on the loophole effect, which refers to their psychological process of actively self-deceiving the nutritional benefits of unhealthy food with natural labels by capitalizing on the healthfulness commonly associated with the word natural. Once health-conscious individuals recognize a natural label on the unquestionably unhealthy food package, they experience guilt from conflict between their health and hedonic goals. This paper provides a provocative counterweight to the information deficit models by arguing that the unhealthy food choices of consumers are founded neither on the lack of information nor their vulnerability to food manufacturers' deceitful advertising. Rather, consumers are an active agent in control of making self-serving choices and use a natural label as an excuse to attribute blame for their health and hedonic goal conflict. This paper attempts to advance the field of Cognitive Dissonance Theory by presenting possible factors influencing one's food-related dissonance process.

Keywords: natural label, self-deception, food advertising

The nurse won't see you now: How medical dramas lead to misperceptions of nurse practitioners

AUTHOR

Matthew Cretul

ABSTRACT

Nurse practitioners are largely absent from character depiction in televised fictional medical dramas. This study is concerned with how through a set of health and television-related variables they are subject to misperceptions formed about their diagnostic decision-making abilities. Through a review of existing literature, this paper advances a set of propositions regarding each variable as well as creates a model to define just how viewers form such misperceptions of nurse practitioners.

Keywords: Conceptual model, Medical dramas, gender roles

The longitudinal impact of a communication skills workshop on doctors' behavior

AUTHOR

Dr. Carma Bylund & Kelsy-Ann Adams

ABSTRACT

Communication skills education is a well-accepted method for improving clinical communication and patient outcomes in Western medical training programs. However, communication skills education is still fairly new in other areas of the world. Several years ago, an academic medical center in the Middle East partnered with a U.S. program to adapt a communication skills educational program to fit the needs of its multinational community using international best practices (i.e., focused on experiential role play work). As most evaluation research on communication skills education examines only short-term impact, an innovative approach was used to assess how the course impacted providers' knowledge, attitudes and behavior over time. Our three research questions were as follows: RQ1: What is the impact of the communication skills workshop on participant outcomes? RQ2: Is the length of time since course completion associated with participant outcomes? RQ3: Is participant gender or clinical position associated with participant outcomes? Participants reported high impact of the course on their knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. Furthermore, most physicians were able to name something specific that they had learned from the course and were currently implementing in their practice. Positive outcomes of the course did not diminish over time. Future research should identify whether observable communication behavior matches the self-reported behavior.

Keywords: Communication Skills, Patient Centered, Training

Families in crisis: A typology of family crisis communication responses

AUTHOR

Devyn Mullis

ABSTRACT

Family communication research, especially in the area of families in crisis, is an emerging and essential field of scholarly investigation. Family crisis and communication response literature focuses on specific crises in context highlighting effective communication without an overarching theoretical guide. This paper proposes two typologies that fill this gap in research by elucidating the theoretical characteristics that underpin family crises communication responses. Through application of attribution theory and expectancy violations theory to family's perceptions of crisis events, this paper proposes eight family crisis types. In addition, the family crisis types in conjunction with a family's communication orientation results in 16 family crisis communication responses. These family crisis types and communication responses can be used to structure further empirical investigations to increase theoretical and practical knowledge of family communication.

Keywords: Family communication, family crisis, crisis response

Aligning public participants' motivations to participate in science research with scientists' expectations of their roles: A typology of public

AUTHOR

Rachel Damiani

ABSTRACT

Public participation in scientific research is becoming increasingly pervasive because of increased funding, access to digital information, and positive outcomes. Despite these benefits, misunderstandings surround public participation in science due to ambiguity in terminology. Thus, the purpose of this study was to present a typology that provides clarity to this confusing language by aligning scientists' expectations with public participants' motivations to participate in research. Using the Expectation Violations Theory as a theoretical framework to reveal latent expectations, the resulting typology presents five main public participant types: collaborator, research assistant, patient voice, community voice, and bridge builders. This typology is a practical tool that stakeholders can use to facilitate communication and productive relationships between scientists and public participants. Additionally, this typology extends understanding of the EVT by linking one communicator's expectations with the other's motivations. Future studies should examine how this typology can influence the long-term engagement between scientists and public participants to maximize scientific outcomes and resources devoted to their involvement with one another.

Keywords: Public Participation, Interpersonal Communication, Expectation Violations Theory



MASS COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY



Seeing the 2014 Ebola Epidemic through an American lens: A visual content analysis of the *New York Times*, *Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, and *Dallas Morning News*

AUTHOR

Phillip Arceneaux

ABSTRACT

While Western audiences have typically observed African affairs from a distance, the outbreak of Ebola on U.S. soil in 2014 created a unique and unprecedented situation in which Americans intimately identified with African-based concerns and fears. This study investigated what mediated themes and perceptions of West Africa were publicized by American online media, and to what extent those perceptions fell in line with previous news coverage of the region, from both in and outside of the continent. Data were collected from major online newspapers in American cities that hosted an Ebola patient: New York City, Atlanta, and Dallas. Findings showed that online news coverage favored victim-based frames which became significantly less negative once Ebola patients were identified and treated in the U.S. Such findings contribute to existing literature and theories regarding nation and continent branding, as well as the construction and presentation of health epidemics in global media.

Keywords: visual framing, nation branding, continent branding, Ebola, West Africa

Man of the people: A historical examination of the American presidency and television

AUTHOR

Colin Kearney

ABSTRACT

In modern American history, television has played a critical role in both electing new presidents and defining their tenures in the White House. Each individual elected has, in their own ways, created a strategy of how best to use the medium to better connect to his constituents. This paper will examine how, from 1960 to 2017, each of our eleven Commanders-in-Chief have opted to use television, and consequently, how television has used them. It will create individual case studies, including examining Presidents John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump, analyzing how each redefined the purpose of television within the American political landscape.

Keywords: American Presidency, Television, Historical Analysis

Donald Trump in visual dimension: Content analysis of cross-national intermedia agenda setting

AUTHOR

Sofiya Tarasevich, Liudmila Khalitova, Osama Albishri, Dr. Spiro Kioussis, & Barbara Myslik

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the visual framing of Donald Trump's image in the international media during the U.S. 2016 presidential campaign in the context of intermedia agenda setting and mediated public diplomacy. As emotion recognition software was used in the coding process, it expands the body of existing literature on computer evaluation of tonality and facial expression recognition in visual framing analysis. This quantitative content analysis of 801 images from 16 media outlets in eight countries involved scrutinizing several visual representation dimensions, including politician's activities, facial expressions, the surrounding environment, interaction with other people, and social distance. The results revealed complicated structures within the international intermedia agenda-setting process within the visual representation framework, suggesting significant differences between the Russian, Serbian, Ukrainian and Venezuelan samples in tonality, and a significant negative relationship between Trump's image reflection in German and Venezuelan samples. The study also highlights differences among the countries in the reflection of social distance through political photography, discussing theoretical implications, alternative explanations, and prospective directions for future research.

Keywords: intermedia agenda setting, visual framing, mediated public diplomacy

How U.S. news coverage of Nigeria's missing girls exposed frailty in America's ego: A conceptual model

AUTHOR

Yewande Addie

ABSTRACT

In April 2014, news reports about nearly 300 kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls spread globally. Ongoing updates on the tragic incident permeated social media through digital advocacy efforts. Though research on U.S. news coverage generally indicates underreporting regarding missing women of color and negative reporting on African current events, news of Nigeria's missing schoolgirls still managed to make waves in U.S. media. This study explores the phenomenon of how this U.S. news coverage broke from traditional reporting trends. It also proposes a conceptual communications model that suggests the coverage revealed flaws in the U.S.'s national identity due to the country's inability to intervene in recovering the kidnapped girls.

Keywords: U.S. news, Nigeria, kidnapped

Fact-checking and Facebook users' engagement: Debunking fake news and verifying Trumps' claims

AUTHOR

Paul Mena

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explore Facebook users' engagement with fact-checking regarding categories of this journalistic activity and the authors of the claims being assessed. A content analysis of Facebook posts published by two major U.S. fact-checking organizations, FactCheck.org and Politifact, was conducted. The results show that the debunking of fake news by fact-checkers might produce high levels of Facebook engagement, in terms of numbers of reactions, comments, and shares. In addition, this study found that the fact-checking organizations included in this study were heavily focused on assessing President Trump's claims and that fact-checking audiences on Facebook were significantly engaged with posts related to the verification of his statements. These findings contribute to a better understanding of the production and consumption of journalistic fact-checking on social media.

Keywords: fact-checking, fake news, journalism



MEDIA EFFECTS



The great cyber wall: Asian American YouTube videos as perceived by acculturated and enculturated Asian audiences

AUTHOR

Casey McDonald

ABSTRACT

The Asian audience is a growing and important demographic in America and their relationship with Asian depictions in media have traditionally been observed from a quantitative or content centric perspective. The following utilized focus groups of Asians and Asian American students to understand their perceived relationship with depictions of Asians and Asian communicators on YouTube. To further understand psychographic distinctions, subjects were pre-tested for varying levels of acculturation and enculturation as categorized as either integrated, assimilated, separated, or marginalized. Focus groups were then organized and first shown four YouTube videos prominently featuring and discussing Asians in America each representing a different aspect of the relationship with Caucasian Americans. Results found clear distinctions between the four psychographic groups. Differences included alternative perspectives of what stereotyping is and preferences identifying groups of Asians by their race or ethnicity. YouTube was held to a standard apart from traditional Hollywood media by virtue of limited reach and a more homogenous audience. Other differences and similarities between groups are also elucidated.

Keywords: Asian, YouTube, Focus Groups

Order effects in competitive framing: An attitude congruence perspective

AUTHOR

Xiaomeng Lan & Dr. Yuhao Lee

ABSTRACT

2 Abstract Using self-affirmation theory, the present study examines how the ordering of balanced, two-sided news frames can interact with audiences' preexisting attitudes to impact information elaboration, perceived credibility of the message, and attitude strength. The study used a 2 (pre-existing attitude: positive vs. negative) x 2 (message order: congruent-first vs. incongruent-first) x 2 (issues) mixed-design experiment (n=125). The findings showed that when people encountered attitude-incongruent arguments that threatened their identity, they responded defensively by elaborating more attitude-congruent thoughts to affirm their preexisting attitudes. However, affirming the users' identities by showing congruent arguments first did not lead to more elaboration of attitude-incongruent thoughts. The study fills a gap in framing studies by providing evidence that the effects of a mixed-frame message on people's attitudes and cognitive processing can be influenced by differences in the sequencing of attitudinally congruent and incongruent arguments within the message.

Keywords: effects of mixed frames, message order, self-affirmation theory

How Chinese consumers perceive live streaming usage in e-commerce

AUTHOR

Sining Kong & Dr. Huan Chen

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine what motivates Chinese people to watch live streaming videos for the presentation of e-commerce and how they perceive live streaming videos to do e-commerce. In-depth interviews were used to collect data from 25 Chinese millennials, who have watched live streaming videos focused on e-commerce. A model was advanced and depicted that satisfying intrinsic needs such as enjoyment is the main motivation for people to watch live streaming videos with e-commerce. In addition, the model also showed how positive relationships elicit favorable implicit attitudes toward the products and in turn leads to purchase intention.

Keywords: live streaming videos with e-commerce, enjoyment, relationship building



TECHNOLOGY- MEDIATED COMMUNICATIONS



Voices of the unsung: The role of social presence and interactivity in building empathy in 360 video

AUTHOR

Daniel Pimentel, Dr. Yu-Hao Lee, Dr. Shiva Halan, Minji Kim, David McLean, & Dr. Sri Kalyanarama

ABSTRACT

360 video is considered an “empathy machine,” in part because it places audiences in the perspective of the other. Despite its popularity, its influence on empathy is not fully understood. Two possible mechanisms driving empathy within 360 video are social presence (sense of being with others) and interactivity (degree of control over media content). To elucidate how 360 video may influence empathic outcomes through these factors, a 2 (presence of people: high/low) x 2 (interactivity: high/low) between-subjects experiment (N=100) was conducted testing 360 videos about climate change refugees. Results demonstrate that social presence (operated by presence of people) contribute to prosocial behaviors (donations) through empathic concern, whereas interactivity did not increase empathy or behaviors. However, presence of people led to significantly higher perceptions of user control compared to videos without people. Results are promising and elucidate the role of social presence and interactivity in 360 video. Findings and avenues for future research are discussed.

Keywords: 360-degree video, presence, interactivity

Man's best (digital) friend: Using virtual pets as a form of mood repair

AUTHOR

Amanda Bailey, Bruce Getz

ABSTRACT

A large body of research suggests that interacting with live pets can improve mental health and even though virtual pets (i.e. Tamagotchi) are widespread, little research has been done to measure their effectiveness. Virtual pets can serve as a source of distraction from negative media, while also giving the user increased satisfaction and accomplishment through play. Therefore, this research asks if virtual pets can help users improve their mood? If so, what psychological drivers impact this relationship? Using mood management theory, we conducted a seven-day field experiment (N = 39) using a 2 (game type: pet vs. control) x 2 (demand: high vs. low) between-subjects design. Data collection is still on-going to reach a target of 109 participants, but preliminary results suggest that daily mobile-based game interaction significantly decreased participants' depression and anxiety. Additionally, researcher's insight into the novel data collection method is of benefit to the discipline.

Keywords: virtual pet; mood management; game studies; mental health