

Review of Digital Media Features and Analysis of Professional SNS

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Abstract

Progress on media technology always plays an important role in social development. Since the emergence of digital media has obviously changed our way of life, it is important to grasp the main features of digital media in order to make a better use of it. This paper mainly reviewed some distinct features of digital media, compared to traditional media pattern. As well as carried out two case studies on analysis of LinkedIn (a professional networking service website) and Monster (a traditional job portals) respectively, to find out how do successful digital media products meet those essential properties, or how the incomplete coverage of necessary features may lead a product to fail. Moreover, the comparison of those two cases has been provided in order to analyze particular features in professional SNS.

Key words: Digital Media, SNS, Recruiting-Website

I. Introduction

Digital media is a form of electronic media where data is stored in digital form, created and distributed by digital information processing machines. Digital Media Alliance Florida, defines digital media as "the creative convergence of digital arts, science, technology and business for human expression, communication, social interaction and education." [1]

As digital media could carry transmit and represent information in multiple forms and it is becoming the primary information carrier of our society. It is important to understand the instinct features of digital media so that could

make use of it in a more efficient way. This is the basic concern of this paper, to identify essential features of digital media. This is done by some literature review, to summarize and refine those works from different perspectives. Two case studies were performed in order to show the relationship between the coverage of those features we introduced and the success level of digital media product. Originally we assume that a product with a more comprehensive coverage of digital media features would have more powerful competitive strength in today's society. We consider LinkedIn as an example of successful digital media product, and Monster, on the other hand, as a less successful instance. Specific comparison will be mentioned later.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section II introduces related work, section III provides the theory and research method, section IV introduced two case studies and the comparison between them, section V is a brief conclusion.

II. Related Work

Janet Murray [2] argued "the awe-inspiring representation power of the computer derives from its four defining qualities: its procedural, participatory, encyclopedic, and spatial properties." meanwhile reminded us that digital media should be in line with the characteristics of its digital environment, which are:

1. Procedural
Allow users to specify procedures which will be not merely recorded but executed.
2. Participatory
Allow computer to receive input, to allow manipulation of its processes and data by the user.

3. Encyclopedic
The capability of holding more information
4. Spatial
Capability for embodying dimensionality.

In [3], the author indicates that there are 6 important features of the web and digital media:

1. From Push to Pull
Push media is essentially communications broadcasted from an advertiser to consumers of the message, in contrast, pull media is when the consumer is proactive in selection of the message.
2. How to interact?
Interactivity is essential for all forms of digital media.
3. Who to target?
Traditional push communications like TV or print would be classified as a one-to-many strategy. Where one generic, poorly targeted message is sent to a multitude of individuals in different segments. Now with digital media, marketing can be more personalized and reach exactly who you want to target.
4. How to communicate?
Digital media has allowed for a whole array of communication channels. How to use them properly is an open issue.
5. How to advertise?
The internet and mobile devices has changed where consumers are exposed to advertisements. So that the way to advertise changed as well.
6. Integration
Combine and integrate traditional and digital media together, and find a nice balance between the two.

III. Theoretical Framework

Since distinct features of digital media have been provided by related literatures from different perspective, here to refine and summarize, a complete digital media product should have at least contain these main features :

1. Interactivity
Including the interaction between human and machine, as well as the interaction between users.
2. Encyclopedic
Holding more information
3. Accurate Target
This is an important point since digital media has the ability of holding large amount of data, but how to select those ones we actually need, or how to make a better use of them reasonably, how to hit users accurately are especially important.
4. Multi-dimension
Spatial feature, according to [2].
5. Mobility
specific feature which has been particularly valued these days since mobile devices being widely used.
6. Extendibility
In order to succeed in long-term, a digital media product should have the ability to extend itself to meet the growing needs of market demand.

In order to analyze how these features affected certain digital media products, two case studies were run to map certain function and property of product to the basic social media features. If a product was designed to meet all required features of digital media, it may have more possibility to succeed in this highly competitive society. Lack of any of the fundamental features of digital media may lead to less success of product.

IV. Case Studies

Case 1: LinkedIn.com

LinkedIn is the world's largest social networking website for people in professional occupations. Founded in 2002 and launched on 2003, with over 200 million users of more than 200 countries and territories [4]. Definitely LinkedIn is a typical successful digital media product nowadays. To map its characteristic to those features of digital media, we start with its

function analysis, to bind each of its particular function to a proper digital media feature.

1. **Manage Professional Identity Profile:**

This is a basic function of any SNS, a user can create its own profile and fill it with personal information. The unique point of LinkedIn is that it allows users to create a compelling text-and-multimedia narrative of their life and work. It also allows users adding multimedia, such as slide presentations and links to their examples of work. This function could be mapped to multi-dimension feature of digital media.

2. **Skills/Endorsement:** There is an option available where members can add skills and others can endorsed/recommend this person, assessing its veracity. This function shows it's multi-dimension feature but in a new dimension of other people's perspective. It also shows it's interactivity feature since it allows more people to participate in creating one's profile.

3. **Build and engage with professional networks**

3a. **Invitations:** Members can send invitations to connect and expand their network. In this case, 1st degree contacts can invite each other. 2nd degree contacts can be contacted through messages, not invitations. This function basically shows it's interactivity feature.

3b. **People you may know:** Users receives a list of possible members they might know but they are not in their current contact network. The algorithm behind this function is one of LinkedIn's most valuable work. This shows it's feature of accurate target. This function also depends on its large amount of information of its users so the capability with dealing large amount of data was revealed as well.

4. **Access to Knowledge, Insights and OpportunitiesGroups:**

4a: Members can join groups created with specific purposes and different topics and create discussions. This group function has strengthened its interaction between users.

4b: **SlideShare:** In SlideShare, users can

upload presentations, reports or download them, therefore, sharing files and information in general. SlideShare is a separate Webpage from LinkedIn but is an added service. This is another dimension of its function and also it shows the importance of interaction.

5. **Multi-Platform Access:**

Mobile: LinkedIn is available on cell phones through mobile applications, including IOS for iPhone and iPad, Android, Blackberry, and Windows Mobile. Obviously the mobile feature of digital media was seriously considered by LinkedIn.

API: It is possible to program applications that integrates services and content from the website into another websites or platform. Additionally, the content and display of a profile in LinkedIn can be modified using these tools. This shows the extensibility feature.

Case 2: Monster.com

Monster is a typical traditional job portals which offers employers and job seekers an online employee search tool to fill open positions. It also provides services such as career advice and salary computations. Monster.com's website lists jobs of all levels, connecting a variety of employers with prospective employees.

There was a downturn in their marketshare and user activity these recent years. That's why here I consider it as a less successful product, especially compared with the emerge of social network (a typical instance is the Case 1 above) in view of those distinct features of digital media they might have missed.

1. Even though the company has great searchable software for resumes, but the search in the resume database is not fully guaranteed and not completely successful since it can not match candidates and job positions. (This is a lack of accurate target property). Moreover the resume of Monster is also monotonous since its single-dimension way of expression is far

away falling behind the pace of development of digital media. This shows its lack of feature multi-dimension.

2. The lack of mobility is another problem Monster faced. Since other products with social network property could enhance user magnetism, so that mobile apps are more likely to be popularised.
3. The extendibility is another important feature. The current product form of Monster is not easily to be extended since it does not contain too many diversified interfaces.

| | LinkedIn | Monster |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Interactivity | diverse ways | monotonous way |
| Encyclopedic | complete | not that complete |
| Accurate Target | powerful algorithm based | simple search based |
| Multi-dimension | Web 2.0, allow multiple information form | Mostly web 1.0 based, textual expression |
| Mobility | Provide apps in multiple platforms | web only |
| Extendibility | Provide interfaces to third-party developers | Limited extension modes |

Table 1: Digital Media Features Coverage Comparison between LinkedIn and Monster

Table 1 shows the comparison summary of digital media features between LinkedIn and Monster. Further to say it shows the distinct differences between recruiting SNS and the traditional job portals, LinkedIn and Monster are just typical examples of those forms.

During the last decade, social media such as Facebook and Twitter have revolutionized the technology world and people in how they use internet to interact with other people. This enables billions of people to open their profile online and use it as of communication tool

rather than email. Social media has been integrated in all aspects of daily life as well as in the work.[5] New companies (LinkedIn as a typical example) that have integrated social media in their online social recruiting platform have started to compete aggressively with Monster and other giants in this market. The way in which people communicate is different from the past and social media are becoming and integrated part of personal life. So Monster needs to explore new ways on how to be competitive and regain the market share lost. It may need to reconsider its social media strategy in order to be innovative and regain consumer appeal so to win back customers who switched to a more “social platform” way. [6] Especially it is important to pay more attention in magnificat user’s satisfaction and their skills should be encouraged in order to gain more powerful user magnetism. (like the “endorse” function of LinkedIn). Obviously users prefer to stay in an environment which could provide them more accomplishment and identity, rather than simply search for a job position.

V. Conclusions

To conclude, this paper summarised those distinct digital media features based on some reviewed literatures combined with personal understanding. Interactivity, Encyclopedic, Accurate Target, Multi-Dimension, Mobility and Extendibility are considered to be the six essential properties for digital media products. After that two case studies have been performed based on LinkedIn (a typical Professional SNS) and Monster (an example of traditional recruiting website) respectively. In order to analyse how those distinct features affected the performance of digital media products, I tried to combine each of the product’s function to a certain feature of digital media to see if those properties have been fully covered, as a result I found LinkedIn was designed to meet almost all those important features of digital media while Monster’s product pattern was not that fitted to digital media, so this might be the reason for

Monster's decadency. Furthermore with the comparison of these two product, special features of recruiting platform have been briefly analysed followed by providing suggestions to traditional recruiting websites.

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