

Lecture 13

Human-Computer Interaction: Social Responses to Computer Technology (SRCT)

How People Treat Computers Like People

- New Paradigm: Media Equation
 - Individuals' interaction with computers is *fundamentally* social
 - Media Eq.: Mediated Life = Real Life
 - When interacting with computer interfaces --> Social Rules apply or we interact with the computer as if we interact with other human beings
 - This has design implications for interface designs
- An example social rule: Flattery

Person A: You look great!

Person B: But I just heard you say that to everyone else!

The social rules for flattery

- People are suckers for flattery
 - Flattery is as good as sincere praise
 - Flatterers are as smart as people who praise sincerely
- People are not suckers for unwarranted criticism
 - Unwarranted criticism does not influence perceptions of self
 - All critics are disliked

The thoughts of person B

- Conscious thoughts about the flatterer
 - I don't believe a thing he says
 - I don't like flatterers
- Unconscious (and more important) thoughts
 - Maybe I do look great
 - Person A is insightful and nice

Experimental method

- An experiment
 - Performed a task with the computer
 - Praise or criticism (or non-evaluation)
- What's measured

- Feelings about own performance
- Feelings about the computer

Results

- User's Perception of Performance

→ User's Positive Feeling about Self as well as positive feelings about the computer

Implications

- Social rules are applied to computers
- Findings in social psychology are relevant to human responses to computers
- Computers are social actors, not just tools
- Social responses are automatic and unconscious

How should we design differently?

- Praise very frequently
- Praise even when there is little basis
- Criticize very infrequently
- *Example product*: A better spell-checker

Outlining the Paradigm

1. Pick a social science finding concerning behavior or attitude toward humans
2. Change "human" to "computer"
3. Demonstrate that the rule still applies
4. Draw out implications for design

Why do people respond socially?

- The human brain is not evolved for modern media
- New media engage old brains

Summary

- The human-computer relationship is *fundamentally* social
 - HCI(Human-Computer Interaction) = HHI(Human-Human Interaction)
- These social responses are...
 - Easy to generate
 - Commonplace
 - Incurable