

Chapter 15

Collaboration for Supporting the Externalization of the Travel Narratives of the Elderly: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this chapter is to explore a system to assist elderly travelers who are not familiar with computers in externalizing information about their travel experiences and in accumulating this information in the form of travel narratives. To accomplish this, the authors focused on dialogue about travel experiences and proposed a co-creation environment that supports interaction that elicits information about the travel experiences of the elderly. In this environment, an elderly person becomes a speaker, and a person close to the elderly person becomes a listener. Participatory observation and externalization interviews about travel experiences were conducted. In general, this study found that an elderly subject became more involved and responsive with more cohesive stories when paired with a listener equipped with relevant information. The design guidelines of the co-creation environment were formulated based on the findings.

INTRODUCTION

People have many different kinds of experiences in daily life. These experiences are often recorded as narratives by the individuals who experience them, often including information such as the details of an event that made an impression on the traveler and the thoughts they had as a result of the experience (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003). In the past, this content has been recorded and stored using analog media passed on from person to person in formats such as diaries and scrapbooks. This personal content

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has generally only been accessible to people who are familiar with the content's creator, such as family members and friends. For others who do not know the content's creator, access would be difficult or impossible.

This content, based on the creator's experiences, reflects the subjective point of view, or subjectivity, of the content creator. In this paper, subjectivity refers to the creator's personal thoughts, including the creator's knowledge or ideas. People's subjective experiences can be externalized as narratives, allowing others to know them. This can be valuable because experiences like war or disasters do not happen to everyone. Therefore, if a record of the experience is left for others, it becomes a social asset that can be used by future generations. Even if a record is personal, for example, a record describing the daily events of a person's unusual life, it will have value in that it describes part of the culture, customs, and life at that time.

The development of information and communication technologies (ICT) encourages the digitalization and deliberation of such narratives. Instances of ICT development include the expansion of the Internet and technologies' dissemination to individuals with high-performance computers, as well as the introduction and spread of small cameras and sensors. Social media is another example of the development of ICT; today, many people use social networking services such as Twitter and Facebook to share parts of their lives.

This improved ability for people to share their personal experiences increases the opportunity for people outside of a person's central social group, family, and friends to perceive the experiences of others and acquire useful information from those experiences. In addition, these newly shared pieces of information aid in maintaining relationships with friends and in meeting new acquaintances. In this way, ICT expands our means of communication.

Along with the expansion of ICT, however, the "digital divide," the gap between those who can access technology and those who cannot, has become a more and more serious problem (Friemel, 2016), particularly for elderly people. They tend to lack familiarity with communication via the Internet or with the operation of complicated information appliances. As a result, electronic records of the experiences of elderly people are difficult to accumulate. This means that, unlike information about the experiences of younger people, information about the experiences of elderly people cannot be shared and reused.

In recent years, several systems have been developed to help elderly people share their records electronically; however, despite the development of these systems, the problem still remains. One major reason for the persistence of this problem is that elderly people do not recognize the merit of using these systems. They often feel that these systems are not easy enough for them to use by themselves and that the time and cost required to learn to use them outweigh the value they provide. As a result, few systems penetrate their lives.

To change these circumstances, this paper will present design criteria to support the generation of content based on the experiences of elderly people. To begin, the authors will, under no circumstances, take the following approaches: (1) forcing users who are unfamiliar with information devices to use complex systems and (2) forcing users to use the systems alone. Instead of these approaches, this study employs an interaction model that takes the form of cooperative work. In this model, elderly people generate content while receiving assistance from others. The advantage of this interaction model is that the elderly subjects can concentrate on recalling and verbalizing their experiences. This assumes that the articulated experiences are recorded by people familiar with the subject (e.g., children, grandchildren, and caregivers), who, using the support system, serve as listeners and who turn the elderly person's narratives into content.

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