Title: Two Studies on Strategically Designed Intervention

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Abstract:

Despite the commercial interest in various forms of distractions, research on interface design typically cautions against the use of such distractions. This dissertation, which comprises two papers, is aimed at understanding whether and when "distracting" website features can be constructive if used strategically.

The first paper conceptualizes distracting website features (e.g., pop-ups) as strategically designed interventions to leverage the benefits of unconscious thought. Drawing on the Unconscious Thought Theory, we assert that strategically designed interventions on the website that would induce unconscious thought may help consumers make complex consumer choice in certain environments. The second paper investigates consumers’ affective responses to an emotionally interesting but potentially distracting presentation of user-generated content (i.e., danmaku) in the context of entertainment marketing. Drawing on the literature on affect and word-of-mouth communication, we conjecture that commentary presentation, as an environmental stimulus, is capable of influencing consumers’ affective states, which in turn affect consumers’ approach and avoidance behavior. Furthermore, the effect of commentary presentation on affective states is contingent on the commentary content communicated.

Together, we take an important step toward understanding the cognitive and affective benefits of distracting website features and the contingent conditions in which the benefits would be more salient. It demonstrates that distractions, if strategically designed, are capable of gaining cognitive and affective benefits. This dissertation has made critical contributions to the literature on information systems and a few reference disciplines.