Chapter 71

Understanding Continuance Usage of Mobile Social Network Sites

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ABSTRACT

Retaining users and facilitating their continuance usage are crucial to the success of mobile social network sites. The purpose of this research is to identify the factors affecting continuance usage of mobile social network sites. The results indicated that both system quality and service quality affect trust, which in turn affects flow experience and privacy concern. In addition, privacy policy can help mitigate privacy concern. Trust, flow and privacy concern determine continuance usage. The results imply that service providers need to improve users' experience and mitigate their privacy concern in order to facilitate their continuance usage.

INTRODUCTION

Mobile internet has been developing rapidly in the world. According to a report issued by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) in January 2015, the number of mobile internet users in China has reached 557 million, accounting for 85.8% of its internet population (649 million) (CNNIC, 2015). Faced with the great market, service providers have released a variety of mobile services, such as mobile instant messaging, mobile social network sites (SNS), and mobile payment. Among them, mobile SNS as a communication application have received wide adoption among users. A few mobile SNS such as Facebook, WeChat, and Renren have been very popular among users. At the same time, there exists intense competition among multiple mobile SNS and they tried to expand their user base. It was found that the cost of attracting a new user is five times that of retaining an existing user (Reichheld and Schefter, 2000). This highlights the need to retain users and facilitate their continuance usage. If users discontinue their usage, service providers cannot make profits and achieve a success.

Compared to traditional SNS, mobile SNS have freed users from temporal and spatial constraints and enabled them to interact with their friends and share ideas at anytime from anywhere. This delivers a compelling experience to users and may help facilitate their continuance usage. Nevertheless, mobile SNS collect much information about users, such as demographic information and location information that is used to push personalized products and services to users. This may increase users' privacy concern and decrease their continuance intention. Users may worry whether service providers can properly use their information and do not share their information with other parties without their knowledge. They may need to build trust in service providers in order to mitigate their privacy concern.

Previous research has examined user adoption of SNS from multiple perspectives such as perceived value (Kim et al., 2011), sense of community (Zhang, 2010), network externalities (Lin and Lu, 2011), and the theory of planned behavior (Xu et al., 2013). Factors such as perceived value, perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment are found to affect user behaviour. However, the effect of flow experience on user adoption has seldom been examined. As noted earlier, mobile SNS may present a good experience to users with the help of mobile networks and devices. At the same time, users' privacy concern may be aroused and this may negatively affect their continuance usage. Integrating both perspectives of flow experience and privacy concern, this research identified the factors affecting continuance usage of mobile SNS. System quality, service quality and privacy policy are included into the model as the determinants.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SNS User Adoption

As a popular service, SNS user adoption has received considerable attention from researchers. They have used the technology acceptance model (TAM) as the theoretical base. Choi and Chung (2013) found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use affect a user's intention to use SNS. Zhu et al. (2014) stated that perceived usefulness is a significant factor affecting SNS users' adoption of location-based recommendation agents.

In addition to TAM, other theories such as perceived value, sense of community, network externality and social influence are also used to examine SNS user behaviour. Zhang (2010) suggested that sense of community, which includes membership, influence, fulfillment of needs and emotional connection, affects SNS users' adoption. Lin and Lu (2011) combined network externality and motivational theory to examine SNS continuance. Kim et al. (2011) reported that perceived value affects SNS users' intention to purchase digital items. Perceived value includes functional, social, and emotional value. Yu et al. (2013) also stated that perceived value affects user adoption of location-based social networking services. Zhou and Li (2014) found that SNS user adoption receives three types of social influences: compliance, identification and internalization, which is represented by subjective norm, social identity and group norms, respectively.

As evidenced by these studies, they have focused on the effect of instrumental beliefs such as perceived usefulness on SNS user adoption, and have seldom examined the effect of flow experience on user behaviour. As mobile SNS enable users to interact with their friends and peers ubiquitously, they may deliver an engaging experience to users and facilitate their continuance. Thus, it is necessary to examine the effect of flow experience on user adoption. In addition, as mobile SNS collect users' personal information as well as location information, users may have great concern on information privacy, which

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