

Research on the Mechanism of the Availability of Livestream Pet-raising Applications on User Persistence

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Abstract: The concept of availability originated from perceptual psychology, which provides an important cognitive perspective for understanding the relationship between humans and technology, and emphasizes the relationship attributes between humans (or animals) and technology (or environment). This paper uses the Street Cat application as a case study to investigate the impact of live streaming pet-raising apps on users' sustained usage. It concludes that these apps can offer users a sense of self-worth, opportunities for interaction with the platform, and a real-time experience. The availability of the platform not only provides users with immersive features but also satisfies their empathy for content. The availability of this type of APP has influenced the mechanisms of sustained user use in the development of new media, elevating positive interactive platforms to a new level and providing new directions for media psychology.

Keywords: Availability, User persistence, Psychological arousal, Perceptual psychology, Usage and satisfaction theory.

1. Introduction

In 1979, American psychologist James Gibson first proposed the concept of "availability." The initial definition of this concept aligns closely with its literal meaning, which is "the possibility of action in a specific environment." The advent of Internet technology in the news communication field led to the use of availability as a means to explain the application of digital technology in media practice and daily human communication. Ian Hutchby defines availability as the "functional and relational aspects, framing rather than determining the possibility of active action related to the object" of a technological object. He suggests that "different technologies have different availability, which limits the way they are written or read[1]."

In early 2016, due to the continuous improvement of the traditional pet industry, the pet market had enormous potential and user demand. A Chinese limited company launched an app and successfully created the first live streaming social platform. According to QuestMobile, as of August 2023, the number of people interested in pets on the entire network has reached 323 million. The data reveals a close connection between the changing life concepts and urban lifestyles of middle-aged and young individuals, and their emotional attachment to pets. Psychologically, proprietary terms such as "warm companionship," "sense of security," and "emotional healing" have become the most popular key words for users. The user base's growth has aided the "pet economy." At the same time, online niche applications have emerged. The "Street Cat APP"

targeting stray cats has only been online for 4 months, and the active users have increased from 47,000 to 1.12 million. The Street Cat app's emergence has shattered people's understanding of the previous "cloud pet-raising" app. The word "pet" has undergone changes, with the focus now shifting from pets to stray animals. The format has also shifted from fixed videos to real-time surveillance footage, which is now available online in the form of live streaming.

In addition, this app also features live streaming for "investment" projects, such as feeding cat food or freeze-drying, with prices gradually increasing depending on the product. Additionally, it features a chat interface similar to multiple social platforms, allowing users to engage in social activities with people who share similar interests. In the era of pressure breeding, people yearn to obtain emotional value and psychological comfort from virtual programs. The emergence of "cloud pet raising" has had a profound impact on the daily lives of pet lovers, and at the same time, it has also brought considerable benefits to pet-raising app platforms. Therefore, the public has quickly accepted and recognized this new and unique "cloud pet raising" app, with its three main usability features—social, interactive, and real-time—serving as the primary motivators for users to continue using it. This study combines a large number of examples to analyse the problems of live streaming pet care applications and the mechanism of their availability for user sustainability through in-depth analysis. Thus, the inherent connection between users and programmers can provide new ideas and directions for media psychology, bringing new experiences and fun to people's lives.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, social media has been an important keyword in the development of digital journalism. Defining social media availability and exploring its impact on news production is an important research topic. Many scholars have provided specific identification and interpretation of the availability of new media, social media, and mobile media.

Pan Zhongdang and others introduced the concept of "availability" to mainland China's communication academic community in 2017, using it as an integrated concept for measuring and comparing different new media. They proposed that new media availability includes three dimensions: information production availability, social availability, and mobile availability. "The higher the level of availability in these three dimensions, the more often the media is 'new'[1]."

Multiple empirical studies on digital news have applied the concept of availability in recent years to explore how digital technology affects and changes the production, presentation, circulation, and reception of news. From a linguistic perspective, the term "availability" currently finds application in two main situations. The first usage starts with media technology, using broad or specific technologies as the attribute of "availability," including high-level and low-level affordances. The second usage is based on the specific fields involved in the effectiveness and impact of technology, such as communication availability, social availability, time availability, democratic availability, etc., highlighting the specific functions of technology[2].

However, it is important to understand that availability is neither an object itself nor a characteristic of an object. It originates from the interaction between the subject's subjective perception of utility and the environment's objective quality. This means that "availability" refers not to the environment or individuals, but rather to the relationship between individuals and their views on the environment. Secondly, availability may lead to different behaviors and outcomes, but it is not a result in itself. A single availability can be linked to multiple outcomes. Even if an individual's goals change, their availability should remain relatively stable.

3. Availability and User Psychological Awakening of Live Streaming Apps

3.1. Availability and Immersion

Immersive experience is a mental state transition process that involves providing users with a fully immersive experience, allowing them to feel immersed in the virtual world. The Law of Design uses flow theory to explain immersive experiences, which create a state of enjoyment for participants through human sensory and cognitive experiences.[3] In terms of time and space, the immersive communication model, which focuses on immersion, has unprecedentedly broken through the constraints of traditional communication forms, integrating mass communication and interpersonal communication more closely. As McLuhan said, "Everywhere is the centre, and everywhere is the edge[4]."

Due to the development of portable devices such as mobile phones, the number of online users is increasing, and the age range involved is also constantly expanding. In recent years, the sales channels for online goods have shifted from ordinary online shopping to live streaming sales. The explosive popularity of live streaming has driven the live streaming industry's development and innovation, gradually expanding into different types of live streaming forms. The Street Cat app, a live broadcast pet app, has enhanced the mundane "cloud cat" platform by utilizing the most widely used live broadcast technology in the Internet society. When you click on this application, what catches your eye is a real-time video of the same model as the live broadcast, with the name of the "live room" and the number of people online marked in the upper left corner. There are also bullet comments and user comments, as well as a feed list that differs from the live broadcast. The flowing screen information offers a wider social dimension, and users on the platform share similar interests, fostering strong relationships within your network. Facing our favorite bloggers and group leaders in our cat circle, as well as those with social status, also provides us with a weak relationship of one-way attention.

Using the "Cloud Cat Care" programme provides a sense of immersion, enabling users to engage in virtual conversations and group chats with nearby community cat lovers. It not only maintains a sense of mystery but also enhances the interaction among online users within the platform. Additionally, a "Change Angle" button is located at the bottom right of the screen. By repeatedly changing the perspective, users can see the front face, back, and panoramic view of the stray animal, as well as the cabin. The new mode offers media technology that provides users with a unique sensory experience and reduces the distance barrier between users and stray cats.

3.2. Availability and Empathetic Communication

Empathetic communication is a new type of relationship between individuals and groups, as well as between groups. The emergence of social media has made the dissemination and transmission of language and emotions faster, making online empathy, long-distance empathy, and group empathy possible. Social media's aggregation ability has promoted the emergence of "groups," and "in groups" has become the popular psychology of the digital media era.

Empathetic communication involves two progressive relationships: firstly, individuals generate similar emotions or emotions based on their understanding of the emotions and emotional information conveyed by others, leading to certain evaluations and anti-lock behaviors; secondly, individuals transmit and spread these emotions within a specific group, triggering emotional resonance and reactions. The propagation path from individual to group, then from group to group, and finally from group to group, determines the aggregation energy of empathetic communication.

In the context of integrated media, the occurrence of empathy has expanded from the presence of interpersonal and community communication to various large and small screens that break through

time and space. The subject and object of empathy have broadened beyond a single person's empathy for another, reaching countless potential netizens and circles after widespread dissemination. The object and content of empathy have evolved from "empathizing" with one person's experience to a city, a culture, a consumption, and an industry. Empathy, through a multi-platform, full-channel, and panoramic dissemination approach, allows people to truly experience all aspects of the world and injects vitality and momentum into economic and social development and continuous innovation in related industries[5].

The Street Cat app is a special live streaming pet-raising cloud platform, and the biggest difference from other "cloud pet-raising" applications is that the pets on the platform are no longer based on cute images to attract users but on product promotion in the form of public service advertisements focused on stray cats. The three major availability levels provided by the platform, namely social, interactive, and real-time, drive and influence the psychological needs of users. Users find satisfaction in the content it offers, and they no longer derive their empathy from humans but from stray animals.

When people talk about stray cats, they think of their social status. Animals do not have the ability to compete with humans. Due to their wandering nature, they often have to endure periods of hunger and starvation. In addition, they face numerous environmental factors, harm, and risks from human activities. Therefore, when people think about stray cats, their experiences and situations often evoke feelings of sympathy. From the start, there is an unequal social relationship between users and stray cats, which is different from the interpersonal relationship on normal live streaming platforms. It is precisely because of status inequality that it further arouses users' sympathy and protective desire. As a result, this application provides users with a sense of satisfaction generated by empathy through social media.

4. Psychological Arousal and Sustained Use

4.1. Immersion and Continuous Use

The Street Cat app's new technology and methods combine the convenience of short videos with live streaming rooms, accurately playing multi-angle monitoring content in an efficient real-time video mode. Given the fragmented and intuitive nature of short videos, users can browse and immerse themselves in various types of videos in a short period of time. When users see no stray animals, they can quickly browse and find the live broadcast room where stray animals appear to feed. During the feeding process, the platform will automatically record a video of the user's feeding time. The stray animals in the video occasionally create adorable and humorous videos, which the feeders use to not only create free advertisements for the platform's promotion but also to establish a sense of social identity. This programme features a variety of stray animals, some exhibiting humorous behaviors and others boasting superior appearances the focal point of the platform, the diverse images will garner significant attention from users. We understand that some users might occasionally visit the platform to watch, anticipating the rise of a popular "internet celebrity cat." The new platform model provides users with a sense of immersion and also affects their long-term use of the platform. The results of Pereira and Tam indicate that satisfaction is the largest influencing factor in the willingness to continue using, and the perceived entertainment of users strongly and significantly affects satisfaction [6].

4.2. Empathy and Continuous Use

The "Cloud Raising Pets" app's availability has stimulated people's inner empathy. Empathy is a process of rising from individual emotional perception to group value stance, then turning into collective practical action, with obvious collective aggregation characteristics [7]. Users can help

the stray cat community at a lower cost, which makes them less hungry. When users witness the stray cat in front of the camera consuming the food they feed in real-time, they experience a deep sense of satisfaction and receive healing in both directions. The friendly interaction and warm dialogue between users generate a call to protect stray cats and speak out for stray animals. Collaborating with people who share the same hobbies and values can also yield feelings of superego. When you are willing to click on the link to contribute a piece of cat food to stray cats, a small action can earn encouragement and praise in the comment section, which makes people who are often suppressed by society feel warm and socially recognized. These psychological awakenings provide users with a great sense of satisfaction, and they are willing to repeatedly use this program, paying a lower price to obtain psychological comfort from it.

5. Conclusion

This article focuses on the research into the "Cloud Pet Raising" live streaming platform, using the Street Cat app as an example. After observing both the platform and its users in a society that is gradually losing its "human touch," we discovered that people are generally seeking psychological identity and self-satisfaction. Stray cats and dogs with unique identities around them can satisfy people's empathy and sense of social value. The platform's various intelligent modes, such as cloud social circles, live streaming cat nests, and distance communication love activities, not only offer users an immersive experience, but also cater to their empathy and social self-worth through content, thereby leveraging this psychological insight to encourage continuous use and enhance platform benefits. The Street Cat app's emergence has sparked the development of a new type of "cloud pet raising" app, turning domestic pets into cloud stray cats. In terms of enthusiasm, it has brought the positive energy of friendship to society. At the same time, it provides a favourable and safe platform for cat lovers, creating a scene where users and programmers are rushing in all directions. Additionally, this article needs to enhance its use of quantitative methods to conduct a deeper analysis and draw relevant conclusions. This underscores the need for the government to intensify its attention and collaborate to foster a positive and healthy society. Behind the explosive popularity of the programme, the author has also realized the psychological repression and lack of resonance of users in society, which requires the government to strengthen its attention and work together to create a positive and healthy society.

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