

Acknowledge

At Massart, people rarely knew my English name, **Daisy**, a name of flower. I put a bunch of it here, for people who accompanied me on this long long road.

One for
Jan Kubasiewicz,
for lighting up my
wisdom, polishing
me up to become a
diamond



One for
Brian Lucid,
my advisor,
for directing,
strongly supporting and
giving deep trust



One for
Gunta Kasa, for
motivating all
these happened,
and for the lunch
which brought me
back



One for
Joe Quackenbush,
my thesis advisor,
for telling me that
I'm a good writer
and giving clear
advises



One for
Elizabeth Lawrence,
my life advisor,
for fun, for tears, for
picking up the Sun in
tarot card deck



One for
Lauren Bessen,
for activating first
chapter of this
thesis and the first
conversation of my
school life as well



One for
Albert Woo,
for supporting
production
and never stop
refilling sweet box



Two for both my
roommates:
lu-wai & ha-ha
great spirits sup-
porter,
awesome partners
in U.S. life journey



Four for
my family,
fostering me as
a brave persona
and endless
supporting



Many for everyone
who read my blog,
sent an instant
message and made
a phone call to me.



And the last one is for God "Thanks God,
if there are too many people we have to say thanks."—Chen, Zhi-Fan



Abstract

Leaving my home, my country, a comfortable womb, I start a new communication journey. I'm the person who loves to express myself well. I love to build up relationships with people by talking to them. Having intimate relationships with good friends makes me feel comfortable and happy. As a foreign student in United States, communicating in second language and keeping in touch with friends in Taiwan brought challenges to me in building up and maintaining relationships. For keeping in touch with friends in Taiwan, I used instant messenger intensively. However, the more I rely on it, the more I felt insecure. It seems this communication technology is not the blanket which brought enough warmth for comforting insecurity in mind. In my thesis, I'm going to investigate how the need of intimacy drives us in communication, explore the role of human intimacy in digital communication media, and the role of media in human intimacy. And finally, I'm going to discuss how the understanding the need of intimacy contributes in designing communication media through researches and related projects.

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Introduction



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ladies at

hey! do you hear me?

I'm the one always need to talk a lot and share stories. The reason I wanted to talk to people is that I wanted to be understood. I felt happy, comfortable and secure while being understood. When I was understood by some people and also understand them, I felt intimate with them.

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APT # 16

As a talkative person to live in a foreign country, I have two kinds of new challenges in talking. First, I can't use my native language to communicate in U.S. And the other challenge is to talk to friends who live in my home country Taiwan. Explaining a simple concept that I haven't known the word yet in English took me a lot effort. In order to make people understand what I was talking about, I was pushed to use body language or other visual way to communicate. Instead, talking to Taiwan friends requires almost no body languages. I can communicate with them very well just through text messages. I felt exhausted that I couldn't express myself well verbally, which is much easier. Because of language barrier, I couldn't communicate with people well and feel I couldn't get closer to them easily. Therefore, mostly, I still share my feelings with friends in Taiwan than in U.S. However, I still feel helpless and lonely though I can

talk to friends in Taiwan through various media. Nowadays we have more and more communication channels and all the tools for communicating become more and more fancy and convenient. We do not only save time but have more fun in it. We have webcam to see each other and have emotion icons from Instant Messenger for fun chatting. However, my addiction in using Instant Messenger makes me confused. I always turned MSN Messenger on when I was online, though I didn't want to talk to anyone. I would check everyone's screen name on buddy list many times a day to know what happened to them right now. I often felt lost while checking buddy list and finding no one could talk to. After a while, I found the addiction of using Instant Messenger made me unhappy. I thought I was not a normal person for checking list many times a day. I felt being bothered when I put my status "busy", but there's still some people kept sending me messages. But the real problem is, since I didn't want to be bothered, why not just turn Instant Messenger off? Since I used IM so

intense that I feel uncomfortable for not using it, if there's also a certain kind intimacy between it and I? All the phenomenon I had in communicating through digital media pushed me want to pull out our original needs behind using and inventing communication tools. I become interested in how this need drive us in communication and the relationship between communication tools and human beings.



intimacy to me

In the book "Seven levels of intimacy", Mathew Kelly stated " ...intimacy is one of our legitimate needs and a prerequisite for happiness. You can survive without intimacy, but you cannot thrive without it.....if we have intimacy we can go without an awful lot and still be happy. Without intimacy, all the riches of the world cannot satisfy our hungry hearts. Until we experience intimacy, our hearts remain restless, irritable, and discontented." (P8, "Seven levels of Intimacy", Mathew Kelly)

After I was born, I never had my own room until I came to Boston. I felt so happy for owning large space to breathe until I met a big frustration. When I met the most depressed moment in my life, I asked my roommate if I could move my mattress to her room. I was like a kid who wanted to sleep with parents to feel secure. The first night I slept in my roommate's bedroom, we talked for a long while when we both lied on bed and the light was turned off. This reminded me the time I shared bedroom with

my sister. My sister is the one who knows me well. My sister and I talked very often when we both lied on the beds before falling asleep. We shared everything. In Boston, my roommate is the most intimate person to me. We came to Boston together and live together. We shared everything in life, too. Because I had a nice roommate to share everything, I never had homesick after I came to Boston.

“Life is a self-revelation. It’s about revealing yourself...Relationships are also a process of self-revelation.”(P8, Seven levels of Intimacy) In front of close friends, I feel comfortable to reveal and to express my feelings honestly. I would tell them good things and bad things about my life, and even share some secrets. Meanwhile, people who made me feel comfortable to share lives became one of my good friends, too. My roommate and I became good friends because we both felt comfortable in revealing ourselves.

In the book “Seven levels of intimacy”, Mathew Kelly categorized that people would feel intimate with each other in four aspects:

Physical intimacy: Built up by body contact.

Emotional intimacy: Built up by revealing emotions comfortably.

Intellectual intimacy: Built up by knowing each other’s personal philosophy of life.

Spiritual intimacy: Built up by inspiring each other become the best version of themselves.

Besides knowing each other very well, my roommate and I also encouraged and inspired each other to become better versions of ourselves. We planned many things which would make ourselves better together and feel excited about them. Though we both had experienced frustrations here, we were still ahead to the future confidently for better selves.

intimacy between digital communication media and i

If I rely on having intimate relationships with people, I have to rely on communication tools, too. Before I have conversation with people who I call, I already communicate with my cell phone for demanding making a phone call. In a typical day, I might communicate with people through these digital media: IM, Email, Blog, and cell phone. I'm an active computer user. Everyday I would turn on computer after waking up, and then hooked up internet, turning on MSN Messenger and checking Emails. The next thing I would do is to checking blogs. After these, I started to work. Therefore, all these three behavior become daily routine jobs like having breakfast.

The only difference between having these routines jobs and having breakfast is, I wouldn't feel hunger for a while but I would check buddy list on MSN Messenger several times in one hour. Sometimes I would just check, though I didn't want to talk to anyone. But I wouldn't open the bag of bagels for several times and just check if they were there. Same did check

emails and blogs. I would check emails or friends' blogs many times a day but I wouldn't check mailbox more than once. "Technologies often have unintended or unexpected impacts. I know, for example, that I have watched considerably more TV in the years since I got a Tivo. While I may be fast-forwarding through ads, I see far more ads than before, when I almost never could coordinate my schedule with shows I would have liked to watch." Said by FORTUNE senior editor, David Kirkpatrick. Technology some how changes my behavior pattern of checking status between me and others.

However, I'm not comfortable with the behavior pattern changes which were brought by communication technology. I felt I might be sick while being aware of my repeating behaviors of "checking". I considered seriously seeing a doctor for this. How I could have such an obsessive behavior, checking emails and MSN body list so often. I would check body list

when I felt stuck (that means I would check tons of times a day) in working though I didn't want to talk to anyone. I once tried to get rid of this obsessive behavior by going to studying in a café which has no internet that I can hook up. And then I felt very comfortable without using internet.

What happened to me just happened to many people who are also active computer plus internet users. I've used "MSN+anxiety" in Chinese as keywords to search related information. At the first result page, there are several links from online magazine writers and bloggers wrote about they have the same obsessive behavior in their lives. I'm not the only one who would check buddy list many times without any serious reasons. People all laughed out when talking about how weird the behaviors we have. And we all thought it is "weird" behavior. Then I finally felt free to breathe. I don't have to go to see a doctor, since other people also did this and there's no expert or doctor warned people not to use IM tool on television so far.

However, I still feel a little bit confused about this situation. Is it "I am normal" or "Everybody is sick"? What if I opened mail boxes many times a day or kept looking at phone books in lunch break at office? Is it still "normal" behavior? Meanwhile, I sometimes felt lost in using communication tools from internet. I felt upset when I needed someone to talk but there's no one on body list I could talk to. The people who I wanted to talk to were "away", "busy" or in "offline" status. And others who were available to talk to at that moment were not the right ones to share private matters. It looked like I had many people surrounded me then, but none of them was the life buoy when I was at emergency moment. Therefore, sometimes I would turn IM tool off on purpose, or escape from using computer for certain time. I did feel better to take a break from using IM tools than being with it all the time.

personal communication tools and their influences



Language

Human beings started to organize how they view the world around them through a system with symbols.

Letters

We can send a message to someone who lives too far away from us. This is the origin model of communication tool.

Paper

The character of lightness of paper made knowledge became easy to carry with. It was the key element in global cultural advancement.

Printing press

Knowledge came closer to the hands of the people, since printed books could be sold for a fraction of the cost of illuminated manuscripts.

Telegraph

We start to use electromagnetic as medium. The expense of delivering message is cut down extremely. Electromagnetic becomes the main medium of communication tool.

Telephone

People can talk to each other by phone without any training of Morse code. Due to the population of telephone, we started to have a wide and mature communication connective band.

Cell phone

Now the phone number starts to represent a person instead of a place.

Email

Accompanied with the population of internet, email became a communication way with benefits of low cost, convenience, fast, immediate, wide spread, hidden identity and so on. These benefits brought up the population of one-to-many communication and spam mail. Meanwhile, this is also the start of "text facial expression". After the population of email, all the internet-base communication is based on specializing one character of email.

Chat room

Now this is used in minority to communicate. Chat room is popular in hacker or geek group. The IRC communication in these groups brought the changes of pattern of sharing music, free software and so on.

Message Board

Instead of keeping in touch with friends, exchanging knowledge is the main purpose of message board. The messages here would be organized. Message board is the platform of knowledge exchanging.

Web sites/ HTML

Hypermedia brought revolution of non-linear reading. Hypertext is applying in web pages widely. Nodes of information linked together, typically with some type of structure. Not only linking to text but various media like audio, video, and graphics.

Instant Messenger

Sending a message to "someone" instead of sending to an email address. Now we are heading to message internet age.

Blogs

Simply put makes it possible that everyone can own their opinions online to the whole world easily. No matter how little Internet savvy he or she possesses, to create and maintain a blog. All we need to get started is a name, a password, and an e-mail address. Therefore, those different viewpoints from official news sources and mainstream media started to have equal chance to be heard by public.

VOIP

Low cost communication stimulates phone selling market to have VOIP phones. The Instant Messenger Software companies also develop various communication software for this trend.

who do we communicate with?

So far, we can see the development of communication tools have been improved a lot for its highly mobility and lower cost of it. Some cell phones are even designed too small to hold them in hands. They became new organ of our bodies, and play the role of sending and receiving signals of our existences to people who are not around us. Our friends can reach us no matter we are in restaurants or on bus. On the other hand, in different countries, our friends can still reach us right away through instant messenger with lower cost, as long as we both are online.

Mostly, we interact with machines, like phones or computers. We do not only communicate people but with interfaces. From a cell phone interface, we can't detect a person's emotion while seeing contact information. We see names and communicating records. These information help us manage our social interaction. But it also reveals that media helps us deal with relationship intellectual than emotional, which excludes the fact

of feelings in human communication. "It assists us in structured environments like the workplace, but it difficult to design for the ambiguous, less tangible nature of our social lives"(Steven Blyth). The case study "My social Fabric" stated this interesting point and developed a more emotions included interface for cell phone.

case study: *My Social Fabric*



The Social Fabric is a representation of individual social world, displayed as a single visual array on mobile phone. It does not replace your address book or calendar but keeps you subtly informed about

which relationships are prospering, which you have neglected, and the overall state of your social fabric. The phone's screen shows a crowd of human figures, each an avatar of one of your friends, acquaintances or relatives. The frequency of all digital communications between you and each person, which the system monitors, determines that avatar's posture: an alert stance indicates frequent recent contact, for example; a lethargic posture or turned back means neglect.

This project doesn't only have value on how hard information and personal management tools can also record and the 'softer', more ambiguous and central aspects of our lives with no less elegance and power, but also help us manage social interaction in visualizing relationships more personally. It reminds the emotions we have in dealing with relationships and how emotions revealing affect building up intimate relationship.

in a distance, what communication we can do besides verbal ones?

When we talk to someone "Keep in touch.", we supposed to pick up the phone to hear voices from him, or read the text from his email. We use text or voice communication to remind people "Hey, I'm here. I'm still alive." But are we only aware of each other by saying "Hi"? When we have dinner with friends, we know they are sitting in front of us because we see them. Does interface for communication always need to be on the screen? Now there's a non-machine look interface has been created for communication now. The project "Lover's Cups: Drinking Interfaces as New Communication Channels", which is from MIT media lab creates a new form for us to "Keep in touch."

case study: *Lover's Cups: Drinking Interfaces as New Communication Channels*

Project context

Jackie Lee, one of the inventors of Lover's cups, now studies in MIT as PHD student. He is also from the same country as I. As a foreign student in United States, we face the same issue in keeping in touch with friends, the spatial distance and time difference we need to cross.

The origin thought of lover's cups is based on his missing of his family and girlfriend. He hated to eat alone and wanted to solve the problem he had to face everyday. One cold morning, he swallowed his dried toast with cream cheese alone and looked outside of window. Suddenly, he wanted to go home. However, his home is 7,000 miles away from Boston. Therefore, "Cross distance to have dinner together" becomes a concept he wanted to realize in real world.

The Project

In the project “*Lover’s Cups: Drinking Interfaces as New Communication Channels*”, it has cups as the interface for communicating. A pair of cups is the base set for communicating. The paired *Lover’s Cups* are connected by wireless technology, and enable people to share the time of drinking with someone they care about in different places. When either person picks up a glass, red light-emitting diodes glow on their partner’s glass. When one puts a glass to their lips, the other glass glows brightly. By sensing drinking behaviors and multimodal actuation, it creates the emotional illusion of connecting with other people. The *lover cups* could also be used in various human connective situations besides lovers. It could be used between nurse and patient, between Mom and child, or even in a social party. People use cups communicate and feel with each other in several interactions: attentive illumination, virtual Kiss, connectivity, and shaking hands.



The moment we create and share together

When we were talking in the phone, we were exchanging information about ourselves. I knew what happened to you and what you thought, the same as you did. We felt each other by listening to voices from the phone. In this project, we have another way to feel the existence of each other. The action we did created the memory of “doing something together” at the moment. We have someone drink “together”. We no longer need to make a phone call to a friend so far away and ask him to pick his glass up. We can be aware of our friends’ existence on the cups we hold in hands. Our friends would just be like next to us. We do not communicate with each other verbally, but emotionally.

Non-verbal communication revolution in technology

As the paper of this project mentioned" ...how computer interfaces can enhance common activities and use them as communication method between people..."“In human relationship, not only explicit communication with voices or texts but also recognizing common activities are important; people notice that their friends are walking by, drinking coffee, or sighing, and respond to these common activities to build more intimate relationship. Can such behaviors be part of a computer mediated interaction?" If we said communication is one way for us to keep relationship, it seems we are ahead to develop non-verbal method for communicating through technology.

what's the role of human intimacy in digital communication media?

Feeling intimate with people is human basic desire. We need effective communication to be understood and understand people to feel intimate with each other physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. The communication tools feed the need of feeling intimate when we couldn't be with people we care about.

As a designer, I'm curious about how does human intimacy drive us in developing communication media, and how the digital media development infect us in building up intimacy. I'm curious whether human intimacy can help designers in developing communication media works better for users, like the interface of the media or the functions provided for better communication. In my thesis, I'm going to investigate the role of human intimacy in digital communication media. I cover this topic in

three chapters: Non-Verbal Communication, Verbal Communication, and Closer and Closer.

Non-Verbal Communication Chapter will discuss four issues in non-verbal communication through projects to see its role in human intimacy. I'm going to discuss the start of communication—"invitation" in "Cooking with a meal with ..." project. In this project, we are also going to talk about the language of cooking, to investigate the non-verbal communication environment. The second project is "Story Cube". In this project, I will talk about the role of non-linear navigation in communication. The third project "Something about..." is going to discuss the metaphor using in communication. The last project in this chapter "MF system" will compare the language between human and human, and between human and machine, to investigate the language in communication.

In Verbal Communication Chapter, the project "How are you doing?" is going to analyze this daily dialog, to investigate the intimacy built up by verbal dialog.

The last chapter "Closer and Closer" will talk about the key elements of being intimate comprehensively. We are going to talk about "the fear in being close to..." in "Secret" project. "Erasing" project will talk about how personal experience makes communication effectively and ineffectively. The final project "The corner" will have people experience of feeling intimate physically and emotionally through a video installation. Through this project, people experienced how to build up trust in building up intimate relationship.

Finally, the conclusion will talk about role of human intimacy in digital communication media comprehensively.



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NON-VERBAL AGE

Born in a whole new world, I was bumbling. I knew nothing about “word” and didn’t know how to use it. I communicate with this world with senses and use them to build up my own communication vocabulary. In this age, my body talked better than my mouth. In this chapter, I’m going to talk about the role of non-verbal communication in human intimacy.



COOKING a meal with . . .

What is “cook”? Is it a food? Can I eat it?

How does it look like? Red? Round?

Can I touch it? Will it bite me?



project overview

The “Cooking a meal with...” project is an interactive experience from cooking designed for exploring the role of human intimacy in communication environment.

The cooking process includes the activities of deciding ingredients, shopping, preparing, cooking, eating and also documenting of them.



why cooking ?

The domestic kitchen is used as a domain to place smart technologies and to study visual attention, multi-tasking, food-preparation and disruptiveness. (Jackie Lee, Augmented Reality Kitchen). The abundant interactivities from cooking, like cutting, frying, stirring, and so on, might be a rich source for comparing digital communication interactivities. Although the main function of a kitchen is cooking, it can be the center of other activities as well. The domestic kitchen might be the place where the family eats and get together. Cooking becomes a way to bring the family get together. Same does the virtual communication space, like chat room, which attracts people to join the conversation. People get together in a virtual “kitchen”.

the process

To have another personal cooking experience for helping the common thread of the meaning of cooking, I had my classmate Lauren who grew up from totally different culture from me to co-work.

For gaining completed cooking experiences, I documented the whole process including the ingredient decision.

For preventing the cooking experiences from both of us influences the decision of choosing ingredients. I decided to have a random way like lottery to choose the ingredients.

Having feedback of this cooking experience from Lauren provides reference to investigate the point of view in using ingredients and the meaning of cooking.



the project



1.making decision

For preventing the cooking experiences from both of us influences the decision of choosing ingredients. I decided to have a random way to choose the ingredients. I prepared 30 blank 5"x7"pieces of paper for both of us writing down the ingredients together. Then We separated cards into vegetable set and meat set. After shuffling each set and we made card sets face down. We draw out cards four cards, three are vegetables and one is meat alternately.

Ingredients Decided:

pepper/mushroom/cabbage/salmon



turkey

pepp

2. 1. mei-fen's cooking process



Meals Plan

1. Fried Green pepper with salmon
2. Stewed Cabbage with mushroom
3. Plus : rice

Frying is the easiest way for me to cook a meal with the ingredients we chose. Meanwhile, the meals would taste closer to homemade “Chinese food”.

Shopping Plan

Shopping list/ Green Pepper/ Napa Cabbage/ Salmon Steak

Place/ Stop&Shop Supermarket

It's easier for me to make a dish with green pepper than other color peppers, because it has strong pepper flavor with less sweetness. I chose Napa Cabbage which is almost the same as I have in Taiwan. I planned to use Chinese mushroom, which is used commonly in Taiwan. I used the one I brought from Taiwan.

Dinner time

Tableware: chopsticks

I prepare two servings for this meal and ate the meal with my roommate. We had two dishes accompanied with rice. I didn't separate each dish into two servings to put on our plate individually. We both picked up food from the plate while eating. After dinner, I put my meals in containers to for Lauren, in order to have her comment on my meal. She told me her comment through phone and email. Here's her comments: I like the pepper with salmon and rice but dislike the Chinese mushrooms. They are too chewing. I also didn't like the dried shrimp in a dish.



2. 2. lauren's cooking process



Meals Plan

1. Pasta
2. Grilled Salmon
3. Steamed Cabbage
4. Plus: French toast

Shopping Plan

Shopping list/ Red Pepper/ Salmon

Fillet/ Cabbage/ Mushroom

Place/ Whole Food Supermarket

Lauren didn't have any ingredients we decided at home, so she bought everything.

Dinner Time

Tableware: forks + knives

I went to Lauren's place to document the process and had the meal at the same time. She prepared three servings for this meal. She ate the meal with me and my roommate Meggie. She separated all dishes into three servings, and put them on each of our plates individually. We ate what we had in our own plates. Here's my comments: I like pasta a lot but dislike the steamed cabbage. The pasta didn't have very special taste but just perfect for a daily homemade pasta. The steamed cabbage tastes nothing. The salmon was ok.

cooking as communication for human intimacy

To design an activity of experiencing non-verbal communication environment

1. An environment for producing: While transmitting message which is formed in brain, the body is one of the medium. Sign language explains that we can transmit message in different forms. Making a product is like making a sentence, which is originated from thought and translates it into sentence or product.

e.g. kitchen for cook a meal

2. Verbal language is needless for successful communication: Reducing the influence from verbal information to exam the effect of nonverbal language.

e.g. using taste or smell to modify the "product" before getting it done

3. Eliminating expectable perspective: While using a new communication device like new invented cell phone, users are like baby since they were not the designer. For preventing planner's experience limits the result, creating topic by a random system like lottery to decrease the opportunity to have subject information for analysis.

e.g. Making ingredient lottery

4. Having different background participator: Communication is a universal issue. Having background participators to have objective analysis.

e.g. having Lauren as another in the cooking activity to see what's in common and what's different in cooking in different cultures.

5. Documentation: To have information to analyze the process. Taking pictures, videos, writing down notes and so on.

6. Analyze process and comments of participator



Food as the start of communication


"Eating together" is a good reason to invite people home. Because of this project, Lauren invited not only me but also my roommate to her house to have dinner. Lauren kept hearing nice stories about Meggie from me. She's interested in knowing her more. But they didn't really have time to meet each other. Therefore she thought this is a great chance to meet Meggie by inviting her. We had a great time at Lauren's home.

Oppositely, I only brought the food I made in a lunch box for her, because I don't have space to invite people home to have dinner. I sometimes I felt bad that I don't have public space at home for inviting people home. To be foreign students, making friends here is more difficult than in Taiwan because of language. However, probably we couldn't speak English well, we don't cook worse because of moving to a foreign country. I can deliver

my sincerity through food I made instead of words I said. It doesn't matter if you like the food I made, I just want to have a chance to start the conversation. I want to talk to you and I'm welcome you come into my place.

Where's the pizza?


Except bodily contact, which builds up physical intimacy, as a human, we also need be satisfied in other intimacy. Humans have a highly developed brain capable of abstract reasoning, language, and introspection and are particularly adept at utilizing systems of communication for self-expression and the exchange of ideas. (wikipedia) We need to be comforted from negative emotions resulted from complex mind thinking. Pretend IM provides an environment which has food to comfort me, looking up a person on buddy list is like looking food in refrigerator. We need to be satisfied for the hunger of being understanding.



But the problem on some digital communication media, like instant messenger, is the status of “online” is not reliable. It’s not like a “real” apple in refrigerator that you can grasp it and eat it then feel full right away. Though your friends turned instant messenger on in their office, they might just have a face-to-face conversation with their co-workers at the same time. They might respond you after few minutes. If you are not really hungry, it’s ok to stand for a while to wait for few minutes for heating frozen pizza. But if you are extremely hungry, you would feel pretty frustrated that pizza disappears after you microwave it.

We want to cook and sit together to share

I asked Lauren to help me with this project because I knew she loves to cook meals as I. We both love to cook meals for people we care. We use cooking to “please” people we want to be close to. No matter they are



new friends, old friends, our families or lovers. Cooking for people brings different fun from cooking for ourselves. If I only had to feed myself, I didn't have to care about what I made, as long as I could accept the flavor and feel full. Same does talking. "Intimacy means sharing our story. Sharing our story helps us to remember who we are, where we have come from, and what matters most. Sharing our story keeps us sane"(P10, The Seven Levels of Intimacy, Mathew Kelly) We share food as we share thoughts. We invite friends to join a dinner or a conversation.

Knowing each other without words

To attract people to come to our places, good food or wine afforded is important. The difference between ordering food and cooking by ourselves is "who" make it. When you cooked for me, I probably didn't know your favorite taste accurately, but I might experience the food you cooked for

yourself. I would know what spices you have in your kitchen and remember the shape you slice peppers. I remember the food and you.

I'm the one who like to share personal experience particularly. During this project, I felt excited to make dishes for Lauren. I felt excited because I wanted to tell her "This is the way we Taiwanese cook!" I'm also looking forward the dish she's going to make. Though I can have western cuisine in restaurant, I don't think it's the dish Lauren would make at home everyday. After this project, I know what Lauren might eat in her daily lives by eating the dishes she made. I know how she cooked, how her kitchen look like. I know what music she would play when she cooked. Now when I see the red pepper in supermarket, I would think about Lauren's pasta. I would also tell my friend in Taiwan that I have a friend here cooked pasta with red pepper. I have a visual picture of Lauren's life.

“...while experiences aren’t created equally, all must compete for the attention of the audience and participants. This means that websites don’t just compete with websites, or parties with parties or environments. People search for experiences...”(P5, Experience Design, Nathan Shedroff) The digital communication environment we have now provides limited spatial experience for knowing each other. Because of the space limitation, people are allowed to picture themselves in better images on internet. (Joseph, B. Walther, 1996) But to reach a healthy intimate relationship, people need bodily contact, which means they need to meet each other face-to-face, and have to reveal true selves eventually.

Cooking as a successful communication tool

While enjoy food, we feel warm, relaxed, and comfortable. “A great deal of the nibbling and the food sucking we do is primarily concerned with

symbolic oral intimacies, rather than true adult food-intake.” (P197, Intimate Behavior, Desmond Morris) Feeding food is a symbolic equation of giving baby mother’s milk. “...the oral intimacies of infancy remain an important part of our adult lives.” (P199, Intimate Behavior, Desmond Morris) Just as a baby feels comfortable by being feed milk, we adult would be comforted by feeding food. The interaction between infants and parents forms the attachment model. People who had better care in infancy will have secure attachment working model to interact with others. We feel comfortable while feeling being cared and interact with people more while feel secure. The need of bodily contact to feel secure might explain that though now it’s convenient to communicate with others, and hear their voices or see each others through webcam, face-to-face communication still plays important part in building up intimacy. And the security which is provided by anonymous on cyberspace creates another comfortable environment for people to express thoughts which results the addiction in using internet for human intimacy in emotional or intellectual aspect.





STORY CUBE

Am I using the correct grammar?

If not, do you understand what I meant?



project overview


The “Story Cube” project is an interactive experience designed for exploring non-linear experience.

It includes a 3”x3”x3” paper made drawing cube and an interactive activity between people and the cube. People need to read the story drew on the cube and wrote down what story they see.



why story on cube?

Usually, we wrote stories and edited movies in linear way. From cognitive flexibility theory (Spirou et al. 1987), linear is easier to understand things than non-linear. Beginning learners may have more success with linear instruction (Fugitt 1991; Peach 1996; Jacobson 1991*; Tsai 1989; Mohageg 1992) However, we human also perceived environment nonlinearly. There are many common experiences in which we move about non-linear—that is, where we have choice of how and where to proceed along the way. Driving or walking in a city, for example, are non-linear experiences, as are almost all real-space, physical experiences. There is nothing inherently better about non-linear experiences, though the choice offered, if appropriate, often creates a sense of participation and can be more satisfying. (p220, Experience Design, Nathan shedroff) In digital communication media, the navigation on a cell phone interface also guides us non-linearly.

A photograph of a book with a white cover and a brown spine. The cover features simple line drawings: a person's head and shoulders on the left, and a person's full body on the right. The spine has some faint, illegible text. The book is set against a light-colored background.

We speak in different languages. But we both would feel hungry or anxious. In this project, we both cook with the same ingredients which symbolizes the same thoughts or feeling we have. Cooking a meal with these ingredients symbolizes the language we've learned to express ourselves. Having two cooking processes from different provides the information data to view the cooking objectively.

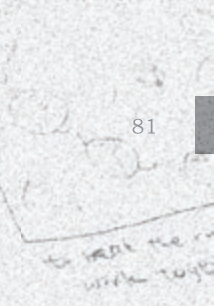
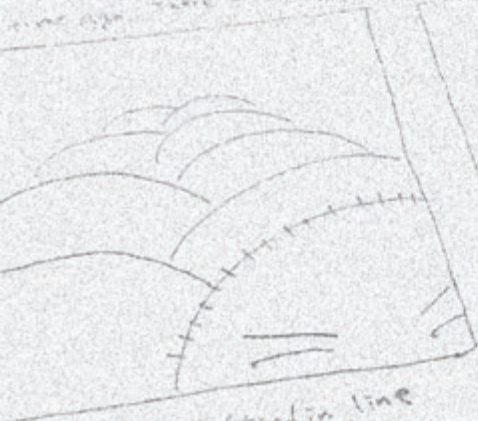
the process

For creating a non-linear experience, I chose cube as platform which could not display content page by page to display a story.

To understand the influence of personal experience in reading, I chose a famous Chinese folk story as the context for referring the differences.

For displaying story extremely random, I draw the defining lines which helped to make cubes on a paper, and then drew all the characters on it like drawing a picture. After drawing, I cut the paper and made it as a 3D cube.

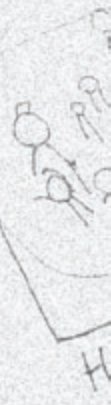
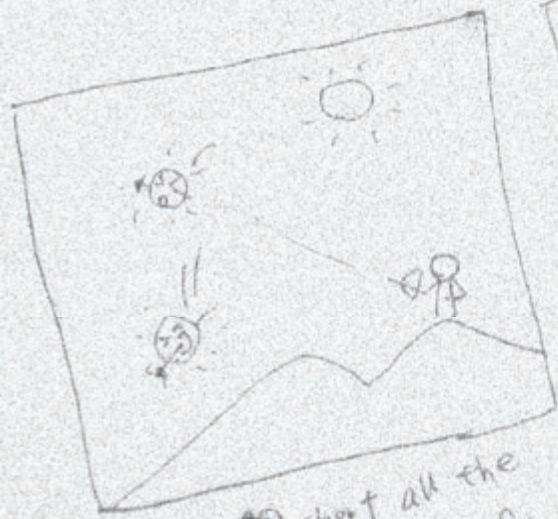
To have responses from people which came from different cultures to investigate the personal experiences, I didn't only bring the cube to meet friends from Taiwan and China in a dinner party, but



usually, they stand in line
to wait for the day

However, these 10 brothers
are tired of being
in the sky

brought to meet with Professor Gunta Kaza and Jan Kubasiewicz.
There were 10 people participating this activity, 8 from Taiwan and
China, 2 from U.S.A.



So he ~~shot~~ shoot all the
down, only left

~~However~~ a big
He ~~became~~ became
And he became
the ~~king~~ king of China.

the project



1. the cube

format

3"x3"x3" paper made box
in white background with
black stroke drawings

context story

Chang E Ben Yue
(The kind-heart queen,
Chang E, flies to the moon)

drawing content

main characters of the
story: Chang E, Hou I, ten
Suns
background: mountain,
withered flower and grass,
dried ground, palace
settings: bow and arrow,
table and chair, poison, bed



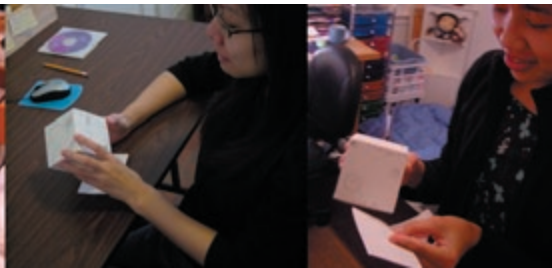
other content

paper clips:
represent
what's hidden
behind the scene

2. the interactive activity

People were required to write down what the story is by reading the drawing cube.





non-linear and the way we think for human intimacy

Design a non-linear reading platform which create interactivity

For creating non-linear/

1..List component: Decide the form you want to present, visually or literally, list its related component. This is the first step to deconstruct linear content.

e.g. I listed the character which I was going to draw from the story

2.Includes equality in displaying medium: Linear storytelling has start and end point to read but nonlinear one has multiple entries and exits to read. Includes equality will be helpful for having multiple entries.

e.g. each side surface on the cube has equal size

3. Content first, frame later: If you don't know where these objects will be positioned, your frame will create another variable of being random
e.g. I drew the characters on paper first and made the cube later.

For interacting/

Designing a connection is to have audience get the sense of whole picture and have frame in mind to puzzle. They follow the connection like following clues.

e.g. I use cross side graphic, same color background as the frame to audience. They then flip the cube by having the frame and following the clues.

Non-linear experience as Personal experience

The intention for this project is not to have each reader write down the story correctly. I want to have stories which were made by people. In learning paths, linear has prescribed path and non-linear has more choice (Slatin 1991). Providing non-linear environment like cube will bring up more different results than linear one. People have to create stories by their own experiences.

I had feedback from Chinese people who might be familiar the story and also from Professor Gunta Kaza and Jan Kuba who had totally different cultural background. Not all of them wrote down a completed story. Some of them just wrote down what they saw and some just gave a sentence back to me. Among the creative response, I especially like Zheng's and Xin's story which totally were far away from the original ones. Their

creativities and humor made me laugh loud. At first, I was disappointed that some people didn't give me creative stories, but after a while, I started to realize, this is the way they are. What they wrote down represent some part of them. Some people are afraid to say something wrong, or lazy. Some are humor people and won't take challenge the thing they are not familiar with. I like stories made by people because they are expressing their own thoughts. Through their thoughts, I know some part of them, and feel more familiar with them.



Comparison of original and Zheng's story

Original

Long time ago, there were 10 suns in the sky. Usually, they worked in turns. Therefore we had one sun in the sky everyday. One day, these naughty suns were tired of working in turns because it's too lonely. They decided to work together. When they all showed up in the sky, the world became extremely hot and people suffered. Everything in the world was dying gradually.

There's a hero whose name is Hou I. He had very strong strength and was good at archery. He had a kind heart also. He didn't want people suffered by the sun and decided to shoot them down. People got rescue after he finally shoot nine suns down and left one for the world. All the people were happy and had him became the king for showing appreciation.

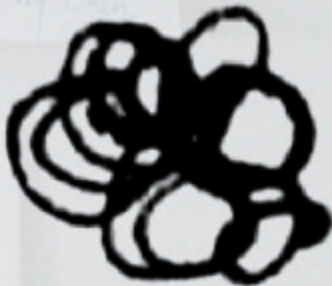
However, after a period of time, Hou I became bad king gradually. He became greedy and also wanted to survive forever. He asked magic medicine to live forever for him and his wife from a fairy. Hou I's wife's name was Chang E. She also had very kind heart. She felt bad that a bad king, like Hou I to rule the world and made people suffered, though he was her husband. She didn't want people suffered forever. One day, she decided to take all medicine. After she swallowed them, her body became lighter and lighter and flied to the sky. Finally, she flied to the moon and lived there alone forever.

Zheng's

A boy falls in love with the princess. But the king disagreed with the relationship and sent her to the moon. He also sent nine suns to let the moon down. Then, the boy can't see the moon anymore. Therefore, the boy tried to shoot the suns. Finally, the boy saw the princess.

A man can only meet his lover at night.
So he tried his best to shoot
all the suns down to stay with
his lover as long as possible.

Xing Chen



Mad suns, a hero and
his wife

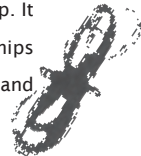
Mathilda

The dinner party I brought cube to have people's responses was hold by my friend Kai-nan. Some people he invited also brought their friends to come. Everyone in the party didn't know each other very well. The unfamiliarity made people shy to talk. The atmosphere in dinner was quiet.

My project then became a common topic for everyone. Writing down stories was an entertainment for the party. They were curious about my intention when I asked them to write the story. Most of them would worry if they wrote down the correct story. They felt interested to read on a new platform which they can play with in hand. They were also so excited to see everyone's story. They are curious about each other.

In digital communication media, the nonlinear navigation is like the cube which requires personal experience from users to interact with. However, personal experience is various from people to people. People look up a

path which is most convenient to them for different motivation. This results difficulty that designing a manipulating system which fits everyone's definition of "convenience". However, during the process, the interesting thing is people would feel happier when they can solve a difficult situation. "Love and hate: two conflicting emotions, but commonly combined to form an enduring, if uncomfortable, relationship. These love-hate relationships can be amazing stable. ...Love-hate relationships offer promise..."(P157, Emotional design, Donald A Norman). Creating personal using path is the process of building up personal relationship. In human intimacy, we spend some time on knowing each other's preference more by expressing and receiving real emotions. We learn from these to have a stronger relationship. Non-linear navigation makes us experience try and error but also provides chance for people to use personal experience and build up relationship. It might be one of the key elements of creating more intimate relationships between users and the devices, and revealing correct "emotions" and rewards to users would be helpful.





SOMETHING about

A: Did you “get” it?

B: Get what?



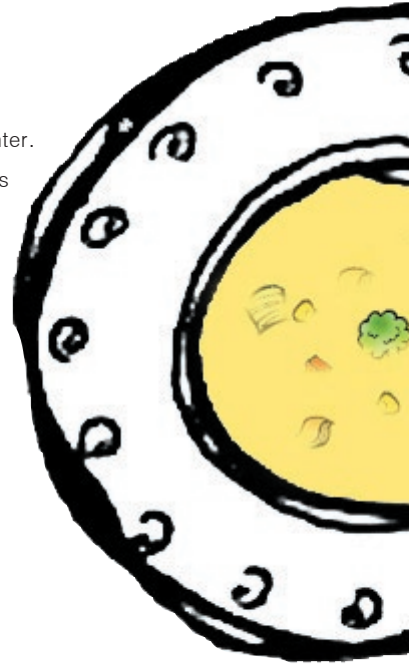
project overview

The "Something about..." project is screen based interface designed for exploring metaphor using in communication media.

This interface is designed for telling a story in non-linear method. The story comprised two meanings to interpret: soup making and love expression.

why soup making?

“The day has the color and the sound of winter.
Thoughts turn to chowder...chowder breathes
reassurance. It steams consolation”
(Clementine Paddleford, American food
editor, 1961)



Something about



In Chinese culture, soup is usually hot. It is good for warming up body while going back home from work in cold winter. Cantonese people especially love making soup. They cook broth with many ingredients for hours and hours to have nice flavor. While we love someone, we would love to give warmth to them. We spend time in selecting nice gift, making a poet, or keeping an eye on the significant one. It might be few seconds, hours, days or even years.



the process

For investigating metaphor, I had two stories for designing this project, one is for surface meaning, and another one is for hidden meaning.

For applying the warmth giving as love giving, I used making soup for the surface story. For having the behind story be intimate, I used my personal story as the context to develop. Personal story is more intimate than a fairy tale while talking to a friend.

For emphasizing the sense of reality of the soup making and the abstract feeling of loving someone in contrast, I decided to use photos to show the surface story. For collecting the visual resource for it, I documented the process of my cooking a soup.

I wanted the interface applied the concept of “feeling being invited”, which is related to motivation of interaction. The interface design was based on the soup story. Having the top view of a plate of soup imitated the view when we had soup on table. I invited people to join the soup, which is the content actually. I also designed the buttons as the graphics of ingredients. While people interact with the “soup” interface, like clicking the “corn”, they then would enjoy one part of the whole story after entering the “corn” page.



the project





1. visual Design

Index Page

Main image/ A plate of soup with spoon from top view, for imitating the viewing a soup on the table. The spoon is for showing the ingredient clearly while user mouse over the subtle ingredient images in soup

Buttons/ Ingredient symbols immersing in the soup, ingredients includes corn, carrot, broccoli, chicken, onion and black pepper.

Inside Page

The story is displayed by a sequence of images. The images are photos of the process of dealing with ingredient, like cutting or slicing. The script texts are embedded within the image with a poetic rhythm.

2. interactivity Design

Index page

The navigation for story

Inside page

Displaying individual part of story

Get into inside page: Mouse over on one ingredient symbol in soup, it will be showed clearly in the spoon for user to make sure the part they want to read, and then clicking it to call inside page, the page will fly from left side and cover the whole stage.

Reading stories: Users can read the script and photos linearly by clicking images and click “back” to go back to index page.



metaphor using for being intimate in communication

Design an interface for expressing feeling

1.Container, not organizer: Finding an object which the content it comprises is not arranged in order as the metaphor you are going to use. Because the component of feeling like sadness are not put in order in mind.

e.g. the ingredients contained in plate are floating

2.The characteristic of ingredient analysis: Giving the ingredients you plan to use descriptions. Describing their appearance, the smell, the texture, the specialties, and the process of experiencing it, like slicing it or eating it. Finding the common thread between their characteristics and the feelings you are going to express. This is helpful for describing abstract feeling.

e.g. I used the process of cutting onions and taste of it to describe happiness comes after tears.

3. Interaction path: Thinking about how you interact with the ingredients in the container. Do you use any tools or just hands? And then use this tool as the metaphor for implying users to use it to take what they want to see.

e.g. I used a spoon graphic to imply users to use it.



Where is metaphor?

I was confused in deciding and making a story for this project under the concept of “interaction” and “invitation”. When I was doing this project, I was also bothered by something and couldn’t be concentrated on developing a story for the context. I talked about this to my classmate Elizabeth. She suggested me” why not do something about what bothered you so much?”

Her suggestion reminded me the method I’m used to developing an idea. Every time when I felt struggled in developing an idea for a new assignment, I eventually selected the issue which bothered me then instead of any trendy topics. Once I decided to take my personal experience again to be the background for the project, I felt I had a lot to say. All the things I wanted to complain became great source to fostering the idea. I spread

out all I wanted to say I the table, and then organize these thoughts. I always find some interesting theories to say finally. Actually they are not anything new. They just came from messy information in my memory I never put in order. Actually, all these things come from subconscious, which we collect information unconsciously. On the other hand, personal experience will be a great source to use for getting recognition by others because human being has collective unconscious. It refers to that part of a person's unconscious which is common to all human beings. It contains archetypes, which are forms or symbols that are manifested by all people in all cultures. They are said to exist prior to experience, and are in this sense instinctual.(wikipedia)

Working model of metaphor

Metaphorical concept is systematic, the language we use to talk about that aspect of the concept is systematic. (P7, Metaphor we live by, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson) We can probably understand it by categorizing the soup project as example:



The issue	In Soup Story	Compared to a movie
How is the soup story revealed? What do we see on the stage in a movie?	Characters: carrots, corns, broccolis, chicken chunks, onions Images, graphics, texts, scripts	Character, Scripts, Dresses, Settings...etc.
What's hidden behind the scene?	The process of making soup, the second story	The story, lighting, process of production, editing...etc.
The zest?	Black pepper	Audience's personal experience

These three parts composed a complete impression to audiences. The only part we can't arrange in advance on the stage is the zest one. It is decided by audience, not us, a designer or a director. Therefore, everyone would have different opinions to the same movie.

According to Backman, referring to Frege (Black and Geach 1952) and W.V. Quine, there are three major factors influencing the meaning of an expression:

- The convention, which is a product of the history of a language
- The personal experience of both the language and the world
- The context in which we place or find the expression (Backman 1991)

Metaphor as expressive tool in communication

We've been told "it's not a correct password" by seeing entry window shaking head as a human in Mac OS. Though we didn't hear it say "Incorrect", we realize we probably make something wrong. "Metaphors have a way of activating previous experiences and associations. (Black 1979) In many areas, especially where instant communication of complex messages must be achieved, metaphors have become more and more important. When using the computer, the user activates a "User Conceptual Model" (Salmon and Slater, 1987), "the set of concepts that the user invents, acquires and infers to explain how to use the system". The User Conceptual Model is part metaphor and serves to explain the meaning of the actions carried out, instead of showing what is happening technically." (Olle Torgny, Metaphor - a Working Concept, May 1997)



Human build up intimate relationship through four aspects, physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. The “expression” created by metaphor made users understand the machine’s reaction not only intellectually but emotionally. In Instant Messenger communication environment, the expression icon sometimes includes other objects like withered flower. People use the flower for representing feeling disappointed or frustrated. At beginning users could only use system default expression icons in MSN messenger. Now the program is open to users use icons which are created by themselves. This might explain the need of expression in digital communication, and there are too many expressions that we need accurate metaphor to communicate.





MF SYSTEM

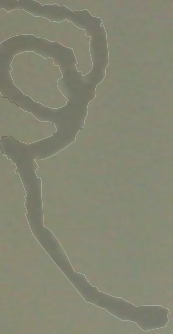
No way, a new language again ? !



project overview

The “MF System” project is a screen based interactive game designed for having people experiencing learning a new language.

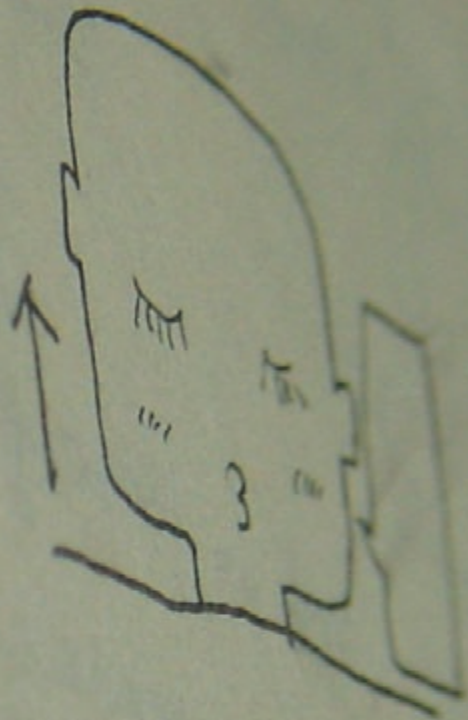
This game has five levels plus opening and ending scene for users to play and experience. The scene sequences of it imitated the situations of my understanding English process.



why human brain & computer?

To be a foreigner in another country pushes me to learn English intensively. I need to improve my English because strong need of communicating with people. There are too many words I need to know to figure out a bill. The strong demand of using computer also pushed me to learn how to communicate with it, no matter being familiar with shortcut "Ctrl+C" or installing a software.

In Taiwan, we said computer as "Electric Brain" in Mandarin. The operating system of computer is complicated like human brain. Operating a computers needs a learning process as communicating with people. We meet troubles and success as well.



the process

For having people experience “learning a language”, I decided to have an interactive game for experiencing the interactivities in the process of learning.

For applying the concept of language learning experience, I used “learning computer language” as the metaphor to design the interface and the progress of the game.

In interface design, I combined my head with the monitor as the main scene to show some messages of the game and left the keyboard blow for people to interact with.



To give people hints how to find the way to pass each level, I used real human reaction like facial expression and voice sound as the response. The facial expressions also imply the situation of communicating with people.

The script for messages showed was written ambiguously for applying both English learning and computer learning processes.

To visualize the feeling I had in struggling with communicating in English, I used animations for each scene in the game.

Because the experience is base on my personal language experience, I used my facial expression photos and my voice sound to emphasize the sense of reality.





the project

the project

the project

the project

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the project

Outline

The head part is bigger size than usual to have a space like monitor, and to represent what's happening in my brain when people were interacting with keyboard.

Function Design

Monitor: Showing the result from people's interaction with keyboard

Keyboard: For people to interact with

Password

ilovemeifen (I love Mei-Fen)

Sound Concept

Using sound source from windows system, to imply a concept of computer



Scenes

Opening

Content/

Click on the power button to enter the system. After welcome opening motion, showing the “login” button to inform user to enter the Scene 1. Question mark button represents user help, users could hear sound hint for the password by clicking it.

Meaning behind/

Beginning: Turing the power button to turn MF system on represents turning on a real computer system and also the start of communication.



Scene 1

Content/

The eyes on the face under the monitor screen would look around unless you mouse over the correct key on keyboard. Each keyword has different sound and motion hint to give users clues. Mostly the reaction comes from eyes or ears plus some marks and sound. The ear becomes extremely big with one big exclamation mark beside, the eyes would look at you instead of looking around. If you take too long while to mouse over the correct key, the eyes starts to look sleepy. Once users click on correct keyword, it would show on the correct character of password in the column. After users key in all correct characters, the screen would start a running motion to show it's under proceeding process. Finally it would pop up a error message: For security reasons, login session is closed



after ten minutes of interactivity. Users have to click “OK” button to enter next scene

Meaning behind/

Attention: Eyes and ears reactions interpret if people didn't say the word I'm familiar with, I wouldn't notice they were talking to me. I also used sound reaction. I recorded my sound of speaking sentences I would say while responding unsurely in communication.

Scene 2

Content/

After clicking the first character of password I, there would be many “I” show up fast and fill the password column up. Finally it would



pop up a error message on the screen: System is overloading, results from incorrect operating.. Users have to click “OK” button to enter next scene.

Meaning behind/

Too much: This scene interprets the feeling of catching up too many new words at the same time. It’s very intense for a beginner to learn new things in very short time. Sometimes we would repeat typing the same character due to some problems of keyboard. We didn’t type in this way on purpose.

Scene 3

Content/ This scenario of this scene is a human figure catching the

password by net. Before clicking any keyword, the figure will linger and stand by. After clicking the right password on the keyboard, the character will fly from the left side of the monitor. The speed of character flying will increase gradually after every catching. After the character “E”, and there would come up the error message: Sorry, I didn’t catch you. Please try again. Users have to click “OK” button to enter next scene

Meaning behind/

Catching up: This scene interprets the feeling of catching up what people said. To be in a English conversation, everyone’s speaking speed is one point for being not understanding. Meanwhile, the logic problem resulted from culture differences is also a key element to make me feel hard to catch it.



Scene 4

Content/

The key characters of the passwords are missing in this scene. The keyboard has some blank keys. All characters on keyboard would show up while mouse moving over except "O", which would show in a heart shape. Users could type in correct password from what they already learned from previous scenes. The Error message in this scene is: The password only consists of a-z, 0-9 and underscores. Users have to click "OK" button to enter next scene

Meaning behind/

The keyword: The most frustrated thing in conversation is to understand each word in a sentence except the key word.



I still couldn't realize the meaning because of this. Usually when we entered password, error also happened often resulted from one incorrect character, which is annoying in entering process.

Scene 5

Content/

When people try to enter password again, I, Love, Mei, Fen would be translated into Chinese in password column. After processing, the scene is going to the last one, which is the ending of this game.

Meaning behind/

Correct Translation: While translating the sentence correctly into Chinese, I could totally understand.



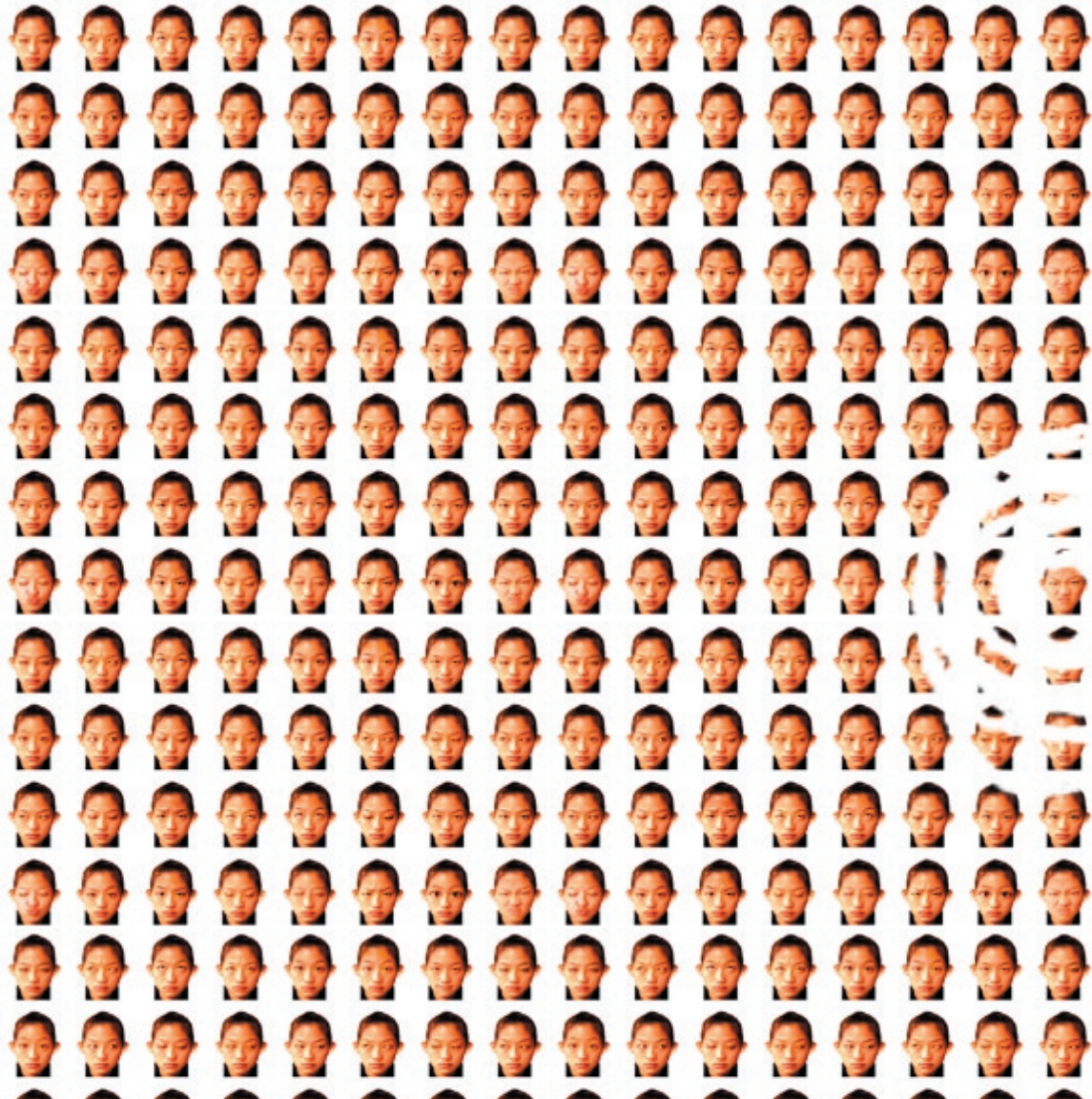
Ending

Content/

After entering this scene, the keyboard would lower and then make the face behind show up. The eyes would blink when the keyboard lowers. After face shows up, the facial expression will be “close eyes, and make a kiss mouth”. There will be a red heart do a flying loop, too.

Meaning behind/

Successful communication: After understanding what people say, I would respond correctly. Saying “love” is something we would like to communicate with the significant one. We like to hear and say it. We like to love and to be loved. This important message needs to be delivered successfully.





learning language for human intimacy

To design an interface for experiencing learning language

1.Linear interaction: From cognitive flexibility theory, Linear is for beginning learner. It's easier for understanding.

e.g. users experience the success step by step in the progress

2.Design reaction for responding users' interaction: To experience the reaction happened in conversation

e.g. eyes blinking in MF system for noticing users that they just hit on right key word

3.Hint of the process meaning: to make users understand meaning of each process and learning language as well.


e.g. the error message in MF system

4.Success experience: to reward users for their hard learning. It's also one part of learning process.


e.g. the MF system responded “ I love you, too.” at the end to inform user they succeed.

5.Using a systematic language as metaphorical context: verbal language is systematic, it has grammar to learn. Computer language is also systematic. This will be helpful to design digital communication device which also has systematic logic for easier using.


“...words dilute and brutalize; words depersonalize; words make the uncommon common.”(Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1844-1900)

A language is a method of communication.(Wikipedia) Languages often conform to a rough grammar, or system of rules, used to manipulate the symbols.(Wikipedia) In this project, there are many things in common in these two communication situations. I spoke English or Chinese with people, and I have to  send a comment to computer through computer language. Each relationship built up its own unique language. Even speaking in English, the language between my classmate and I is also different from the language between a stranger and I. I would say “What’s up?” to my friend as saying “Hi”, but say “How are you?” to a stranger instead.

Now we have cell phone, email, instant messenger or blog to communicate with people. Every time when a new medium invented, we have to learn a

new language. Today,  telephone is still the most popular communication tool. Learning language includes meeting troubles and trouble shooting. The complexity of computer mediated communication tools requires high level educating. In human natural language, it has a vast vocabulary that can be deemed infinite, complex grammatical rules and a sense of ambiguity surrounding them.(Wikipedia) This is why we would take years to learn a foreign language. The purpose of using media is to communicate with "people". The struggle of dealing with complexity became an obstacle for us in self-relevance, the key element of being intimate with others.

Various languages resulted from of different background cultures. Every one is familiar with different media because of different life styles as well. The relying on certain languages forms communities. Before we left telephone number to people, and now we might leave cell phone number, Email address or an Instant Messenger account. Most people I met from

Taiwan in Boston exchanges MSN messenger account to keep in touch. But almost my classmates didn't have one. Some of them used Ichat, which is not available installed in Windows system. The program I installed in my computer to IM with them didn't have the same icon I rely on MSN to express myself. And I already got used to using it. I rarely turn the program on not only because they were not online very often but most my friend were not using it.  Therefore, we communicated through emails more. However, IM tool opened an opportunity to "meet" each other in real time all the time. Chatting would come easier through frequent meetings. It's easier to build up relationships with Taiwanese, but still, I have to be familiar with cultures here then to know which media I can use and how to use it well as speaking English to build up relationships. Media using preference is like slang. If a Chinese learner knew how to use slang well, we would feel surprise and intimate with him. Slang is not a formal way to describe a thing but it includes unique memories for certain groups. These unique

memories created the feeling of belonging. We belong to a group which is not too big to feel it. We belong to a unique group to know the specialty of us. We are aware of our existence by knowing we are different from others. We feel secure and comfortable while knowing ourselves surely. The “slang” which only existed between two people builds up their own language. It could result from the story they had together before. When we can communicate and share the same memories at the same time, we feel closer to each other.

Communication media is not like spoken language which is embedded within us. When my friend was offline, they might only have cell phone in hand. Through integrated communication platforms, I can send a message to a friend's cell phone through IM since typing with both hands was much easier and I was online then. Since everyone has different life schedules and preference in using media, how much we can do in integrating

media platform for communicating well? Learning from learning human language to develop a system for uniting languages among media might be a way to consider.







VERBAL AGE

Now I've learned many languages, but why I still stepped on people's feet while dancing sometimes? In verbal age, I'm going to talk about the role of verbal communication in human intimacy.



HOW R U DOING?

A: Hey, how are you doing?

B: Well...how much do you want to know?



After being in United States for one year, my English is better than before, I gradually communicate with people verbally better than before. However, there's a simple question keeps bothering me since I came here. I still felt confused in answering this question--"How are you doing?" This question equals to "How much do you want to know?" to me. I took this question seriously at the beginning. "Asking" equals to "caring" to me. I would ask my friend if they are fine because I care and really want to know the answer. However, after a while, I found the answer doesn't matter. Everyone would ask you this question even they didn't know you at all. A cashier might freak out if I answered "I feel so frustrated."

Language as a communication medium becomes a screen between two people while both of them wouldn't like lower it to reveal true selves. While communicating with people through media, it doesn't matter we asked "How are you doing?" or any personal questions, we couldn't see other's

very often. We lack message information from facial expression and body language, which reflects human's mind instinctively. This is another screen for us to hide. In this project, I'm going to explore the screen resulted from language to investigate the screen resulted from digita

project overview

The “How are you doing” project designed for visualizing verbal dialog in communication. It’s for helping people understand four levels relationships in communication.

The project is a screen based interface which has an interactive diagram in 800x700 pixel.



why “How are you doing”?

“How are you doing?” is a daily greeting happened all the time. Though we use it as a greeting, it’s asking a question to someone at the same time. It’s a simple but comprehensive and opened question to understand someone, and it’s also a start to build up relationships.

the process

For understanding verbal communication in human intimacy in emotional, intellectual aspect, I took the common greeting dialog “How are you doing” and its answers as the content, a simple dialog which happened very often in our daily lives.

For having people realized human intimacy in emotional aspect, I analyzed the answers to the question “How are you doing?” and categorized them into four levels. I set up the levels according personal experience and the book” The seven levels of intimacy”.

For having visual understanding the point of being intimate emotionally and intellectually interactively, I designed a dynamic diagram of showing categorized dialog information for people to interact with.



Using tongue as the metaphor is to imply the concept of “talking”. The extensibility of the tongue represents how much deep one person express himself. The extendable tongue stretched from side face displays the dialog content and the two little human figures below it shows the mental distance between two parties.



Interface Visual Design

. format: .swf

. size: 800x700 pixel

Upper

Intention/ Displaying the dialog content

Background Color/ Green

Graphic Elements/ The sentence “How are you doing?” is listed on the upper left side. There’s white stroke of human side face with open mouth on the right side. There’s a hidden tongue with 4 tree sprouts behind. These four sprouts on the tongue represent four levels between the questioner and the answer individually. The tongue is around 4 times long as the interface wide. Distance

fine
not bad
great



between each sprout is $\frac{1}{4}$ of the tongue length. All sprouts would become trees with different amount leaf buttons after clicking. The higher level sprout has fewer leaves. While doing mouse over on a leaf, it will open and show an answer text fly out the opening leaf. After clicking on the leaves, the text will have little animation accompanied with voice sound. Some animations visualize the emotion of the answer, like the animation of “Fine” reveals happy emotion. But some animations might reveal opposite emotions, like the animation of “I’m OK” visualizes frustration. There’s also a measuring ruler with “level” button on the bottom of green back ground to visualize “quantifying levels”.

good

very well

couldn't be better

Bottom

Intention/ Showing the concept of being closer to someone

Scroll Bar/ The bar is as long as the ruler in green part

Scroll Control/ A human figure with a hug gesture, attached on the scrolling bar with a line

Other/ There's another human figure standing on the very right side of the stage. It looks frustrated. There are also some gray circles overlapping on the bottom to show the distance between this figure and the one on the scrolling bar.



How to play with it

1. Drag the scrolling bar to make the tongue stretching out of the mouth
2. While dragging the scrolling bar, the closer to the frustrated human figure the tongue would be longer
3. Users could know further level of the answers by scrolling the tongue longer, and click on sprouts on the tongue.
4. After clicking on the sprout, it would grow up and become a tree.
5. Users could mouse over each leaf to display the answers and click on leaf for playing the text motion and sound.
6. Users could also click on level button to stretch the tongue and show the matching sprout.



The meaning behind

Human face with stretchable tongue/

I use human side face for showing the stretchable tongue clear. The tongue stretch out more and more implies expressing deeper and deeper thought of a person.

The human figure below/

These two human figures implies both physical and mind distance between two people. The more we know each other, the closer we are.



Tree branches/

Level 1 / Greetings:

Greetings level answers reveal no emotion or an emotion status without any reasons. We would respond this part with anyone.

We might hide feelings in this level. But we somehow could tell people's emotion through how they respond.

Level 2 / Recent status:

Recent status is the thing we are doing recently. It's nothing about emotion. We would exchange this part with people we already know a little bit.

Level 3/ Consistent thought:

Consistent thoughts are what we are always thinking about. We would like to share this part with friends who we can talk and discuss.

Level 4/ Fantasy:

Fantasy is the thing we rarely like to share with people even friends. When we feel comfortable and secure we would share this part with friends.

medium as the screen within intimacy

To design a dynamic diagram for layering dialog

1. Graphic which could symbolize stretch: Stretchable object implies extending. Users understand levels deeper or shallower consistently by information extending. Consistency gives the whole picture a frame to understand levels.

e.g. tongue and trees used in displaying information

2. Before and After, In front of and Behind: Interaction includes "before and after" action and reaction. Using two different emotions animation on objects designed for interacting. This could help imply the situations of being irony in telling the truth or hiding emotions.

e.g. the animation of "I'm OK" visualizes frustration.



VERY
! WELL
!

The importance as a start

Since the answer for “How are you doing?” is not so important, why do people keep asking? To me, somehow I appreciate this question actually. I’m a passive person in a new environment. Even my classmates are nice, I still didn’t express myself actively. I talked to my roommate everyday about everything because I felt comfortable. But I wasn’t sure if it’s ok to tell school friends the same things. I wasn’t sure how much close we could be. However, sometimes I still took “How are you doing” as a “caring” question. I’m the one who can’t spit words without true feelings. “How are you doing?” provides a chance for me to start to express myself. If people here don’t have habit of saying “How are you doing”, I might keep being quiet. Also, I learned saying “How are you doing” after answering. I learned a start to send care, the art of knocking door. No matter we care about the question “How are you doing?” or not, it’s a start to bridge the gap between two people.

Fine

Real-time communication media like Instant Messenger, created an environment for people to “meet” more frequently. We might just meet a new friend at a party and never had chance to meet again, because we might both be busy to have time to hang out. But we can send a message to say hi through IM and have response immediately. IM has less time occupied in “meeting”, no commuter time and is flexible to “meet”. To prevent bothering, we can see if the other one available to talk by checking status they put. Building up relationship requires time investigating, once we had chance to talk, there will be chances to understand each other more.

Behind the screen



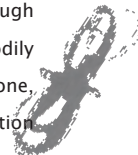
In this project, I analyzed what I was thinking about in the answering moment into four parts---greeting, recent status, consistent thought and fantasy. Usually, greeting answers like good or fine mean nothing. People

I'm OK

still couldn't understand who I am through this kind answer. Through recent status answers, like "I just had lunch" or "I was so tired this week", people might know my life gradually by mapping answers through a period of time. If people have chance to know consistent thought, like "I want to be a good designer", they start to be close to the core. Though we lost some information by communicating through media, we somehow could build up an intimate relationship in emotional or intellectual aspect. The key point in understanding each other is to reveal a true self. Digital communication media didn't only bring convenience but created opportunities in revealing. Some people even become more intimate because they revealed true selves easier while being behind the screen. "Seeing a frown, a shaking head, a sigh, a bored expression, and many other subtle and not so subtle signs of disapproval or indifference can slam the breaks on what people are willing to express. In psychoanalysis, the analyst sits behind the patient in order remain a physically ambiguous figure, without revealing

any body language or facial expression, so that the patient has free range to discuss whatever he or she wants, without feeling inhibited by how the analyst is physically reacting. In everyday relationships, people sometimes avert their eyes when discussing something personal and emotional. It's easier not to look into the other's face. Text communication offers a built-in opportunity to keep one's eyes averted." (The Psychology of Cyberspace, John Suler)

But on the other hand, we can hide information no matter what kind of medium we used to communicate. "Body language is the meaning behind the words or the "unspoken" language. Surprisingly, studies show that only up to an estimated 10 percent of our communication is verbal."(Aaron Jones) Not like using language as medium, we might communicate through bodily contact. The screen we have in communication media includes bodily contact inhibition. Once people are not honest, language plus cell phone, there are two screens. Therefore, we still need face-to-face communication to observe the natural response for reference to build up trust.



CLOSER...AND CLOSER...

No matter what kind of language, there's always something we're afraid to express.

In this chapter, I'm going to talk about the obstacle in being intimate.



the SECRET

I want to tell you, but...



project overview

The "Secret" project is an interactive experience of playing two cubes designed for exploring the fear of being intimate physically and emotionally.

This project includes one 4"x 4" cube with naked body photos, one 3"x3" cube with muddy texture, and an interactive activity between people and them for testing the project's goal.



why secret and cube?

When I thought about what would make people feel intimate, I started to think about what kind of situation would make me feel intimate to someone. I feel intimate with someone because I can express myself more comfortably. Secret here means something we want to hide. It's not necessary that secret has to be very private or ashamed in speaking in public. Secret could be anything we are afraid to tell someone. Therefore, I picked up a story which is a little bit embarrassing for people to tell others as the context. It's about embarrassing to tell people not taking a bath for three days.

To be intimate with a person includes physical contact and mental understanding. I take "touch" sense as the main direction to explore. Touch is the only sense experience which couldn't operate at a distance, and we always have distance with people while

communicating through any kinds of media. In this project, I would also like to have “bath” issue as the project background to experience being intimate physically and emotionally.


the process

For having people experience fear of being intimate physically, I studied a video document project about touch from MIT

(<http://www.jamespatten.com/video/index.php>), and considered many situations about what we want to touch and what we don't.

For taking an issue which is not too private or serious to understand it, I developed the context idea which has humor in it, an embarrassing issue that people usually would laugh at but not freak out.

Providing choices in interacting with box is for investigating the effect of each person's statement in crossing barrier to interact with an object. I designed two indifferent surfaces in visual content and physical texture for boxes.

A photograph of a wooden table with various objects. A black rectangular box is the central focus. To its left, a pile of white paper strips is scattered. To its right, another pile of white paper strips is neatly arranged. In the foreground, a white printed page is partially visible, showing the text 'I didn't', 'take a bath for', and 'three cars'. A pair of scissors is on the right side of the table. A small black square with a white letter 'I' is on the left. The background is a wooden surface.

In designing the “touch a friend’s naked body” box, I took pictures of myself being naked as the visual content. I also adjust photos’ color in warmer tone to create atmosphere of feeling friendly to interact with. I put the script on each surface in very small font size that people have to be close to see it clear. In designing the “touch something gross”, I printed script many times in different size on paper and slice or cut them with completed sentence or uncompleted at first. I paste them on black box randomly. I used soy sauce or tea to make some of them have dirty spots and smell. And eventually I put the box in a muddy ground to make it dirty. The whole box now was mixed with various physical surface textures and comprised various smell. Some script sentences were black for not knowing the answer quickly. People have to flip it to compose the whole sentence.

For having feedback to investigating the fear of being intimate physically, I brought the boxes to meet Professor Gunta Kaza, Professor Jan Kubasiewicz, and also brought them to thesis project class for classmates and Professor Brian Lucid to interact with.



the project

the project

the project

the project

the project

the project

the project

the project

1. boxes design

.format: paper made box

.box content

.the secret – “I haven’t taken a shower for three days”

Box 1

Six naked photos of my body

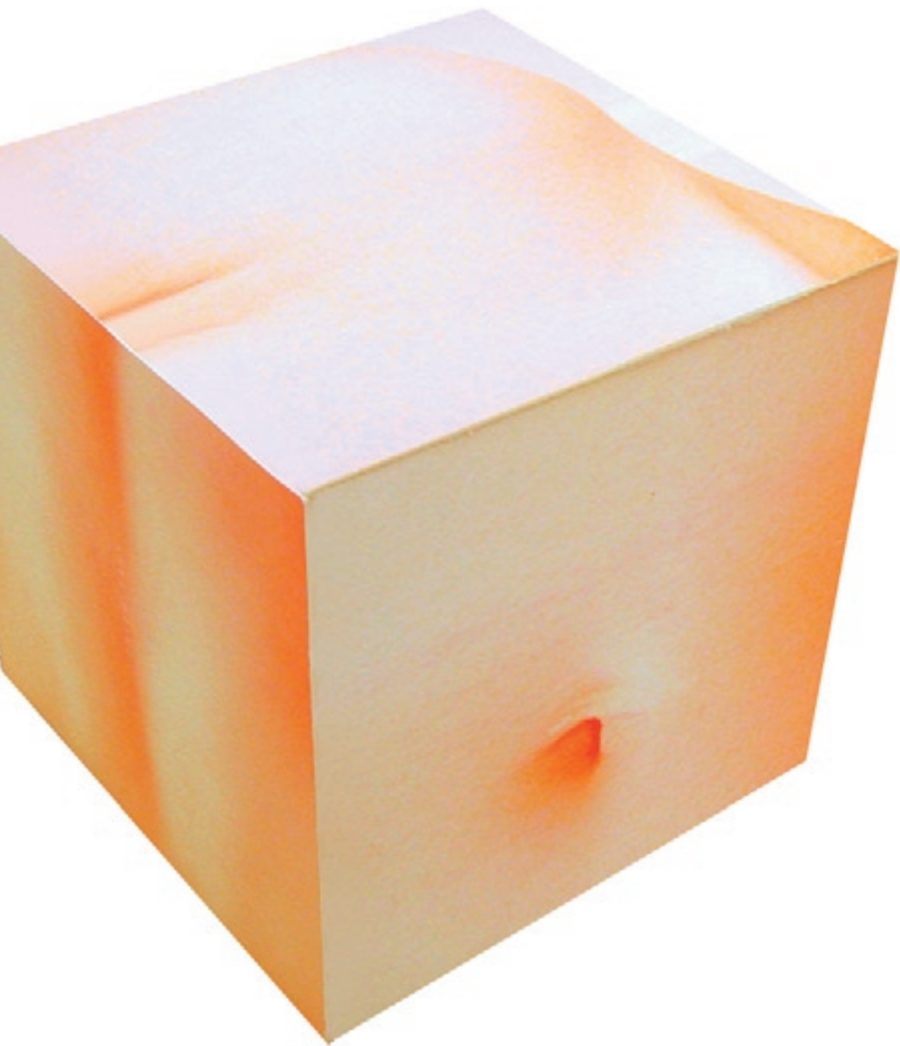
Size/ 4”x 4”

Color/ warm tone of the photos

Style/ clean and neat

Text/ very small with subtle color intergrated with photos

Intention/ people have to take this box very close to their face to find what the secret is.



Box 2

All text, no images

Size/ 3"x 3"

Text/ Printed in various size and different space for many times on paper. The sentences on paper were sliced, tore apart, erasing or blank certain part. These broken parts were pasted and coiled randomly.

Color/ Only black and white

Style/ Dirty + gross + messy

Specialty/ Bad smell, dirt + mud + tea + soy sauce spot

Intention/ Ppeople have to take the dirty box in hand, close to their face, get the answer by spelling scattered information

Thoughts behind Intention

The appearance I choose for secret/

Dirty box implied when we didn't take shower for a long while,
we are not clean. The naked box is about clean our body

When we felt embarrassed to say/

Black and scrape text—We would hide our embarrassed thing.

Clean—When we are telling a secret, we are naked.

Small and subtle text—we wouldn't speak loudly

Why would you rather choose dirty one instead of clean one/

To exam assumption the difference between male and female, the
different concerns to be close to someone and if our emotions be
affected from touch.

2. interactive activity

1. Before people started the process of people interacting with secret boxes, I would tell them: I have a secret to tell you. But I don't know how to say. I made 2 boxes to tell you the secret. One has the naked photos of mine on it. The other one is a little bit wet, dirty and smells bad. You can only pick one to know the secret.
2. Show people the boxes and let them make choices.
3. People have to hold the boxes and play with it, to have their face very close to the box to find out the secret.
4. Feedback from people: the answer and their feeling in playing with box

secret as the milestone of intimacy

To design a medium for experiencing the fear in being close

When I was making these two boxes, I kept thinking the situation when I want to say something which might make me embarrassed in order to make people experience the intention of the project. There were two directions I followed. One started from subject, the boxes and the feeling of the character. Another one started from object, people who were going to interact with boxes. For subject, the key element is the character hesitated to tell the truth. The principle to follow is to hide or to reveal. For the object, the key element is audience hesitates to take which box. The principle is to get them close or stay them away.



To hide or To reveal ?

To hide/

Small: Small size text for being hard to see and not speaking loud

Simultaneity lack: All the words in the sentence were not displayed simultaneously and the medium is a non-linear platform. The sentence was broken apart into words, black out or erased certain parts. The information on boxes was displayed in six directions.

To reveal/

Who—body photos

What—Shower is for cleaning dirty things, I took advantage of the fact of "before shower" and "after shower"

1. Visual information: Simple object photos and design for clean, Complex structure for mess
2. Touchable information: Smooth surface represents cleaned body, Muddy surface for things need to be cleaned
3. Smell information: Plain smell for after cleaning, mixing smell for before cleaning

To get people close or far?—

Get people close/

Small: Small size text is hard to see from a far distance. People “have to” take boxes closer to read.

Simultaneity lack: People couldn’t read broken sentence on boxes simultaneously. They “have to” hold boxes in hand and flip it to puzzle out the answer.



Get people stay away/

Taint: People would get their hands dirty from dirty cube but not body cube.

Personal information: The dirty box didn't reveal personal information, but the body box did. People knew who the character was on body cube but not dirty one.



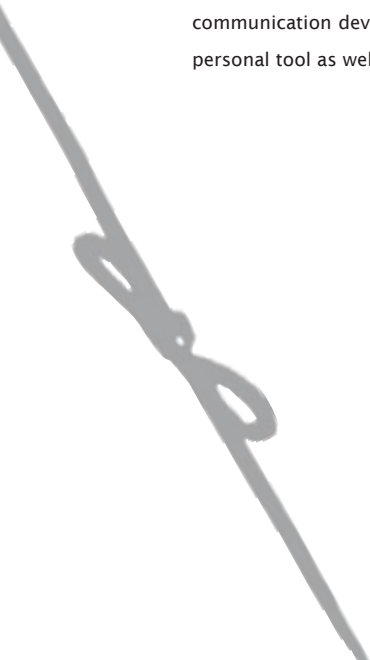
Summary/

Small and simultaneity lack play key elements both in designing for subject and object. They both could play the role of “being afraid to show” for subject and “what is there exactly?” for object. Both of them reveal the characteristics of clues revealing: blurred and subtle.

While reading an email, the communication is not simultaneous. The mail I got might be written in 3 days ago. Even communicating through IM, the communication still might be simultaneous. This might explain why people need talking in phone or having face-to-face conversation to eliminate the uncertainty as blurred information that secret brings up. And some people like to take advantage of simultaneity lack in email to keep privacy.

On the other hand, since size might be the key element of being private,

the improvement of cell phone size, shrinking from pitcher size to lighter size, might be the evidence to explain its population. The smaller size of communication device is, the easier to carry with. And it symbolizes as a personal tool as well.



The meaning of secret

In the book "The seven levels of intimacy", Mathew Kelly mentioned "Life is a self-revelation" (p8, Mathew Kelly, "The Seven Levels of Intimacy").

We all have advantages and disadvantages. It's easy to say good stories about ourselves, because showing advantages and good stories won't bring judgment up. Good things bring us acceptance and hug. We especially want to be accepted by someone who we care about. But we have emotions to be angry and sad. We made mistakes since we are always learning. But we wanted to be totally accepted, including shortages. We want to live with every part of us. And this part we think it's not perfect becomes the secret.



Sharing Secret

When I brought these two boxes to Professor Gunta Kaza, whom I worked with for this independent study, she picked the body one right away. She said the color is so beautiful and warm. Though I already told her the naked pictures were from my body in advance, she just took it. She said the dirty one is gross and didn't want to touch it. Oppositely, when I did the same box experiment to Professor Jan Kuba, he took the dirty one. He kept saying "Oh, this is nice and interesting." while flipping the box and finding the secret out. After he played with the dirty box a little bit, I told him I assumed that males would select dirty box and female would select the body one. He then was a little bit nervous saying " ...but this is your body, and you are here, I have to respect you somehow..." From his response , I think I didn't explain well to him about my assumption, but it's interesting to have this feedback. Because I realize my intention for this project already worked.

The only unexpected response was from my classmate Elizabeth. She took the dirty one instead of body one. She said, "I think the dirty one has more texture and had more interesting to explore". This was to my surprise. In fact, we are very good friends and I thought she wouldn't mind touch my body. But her response and our relationship remind me one point of the intimacy. I can be naked in front of someone in a close relationship, but I can be naked in front of her no matter I'm perfect or not. It's a more intimate relationship.

Secret is a code. Encoding and decoding are two main processes in this project. I encoded the secret on boxes and people decoded it by interacting with boxes. This project is more like a game to design and play. I really wanted people to know the answer because I wanted this idea interesting. People who were required to interact with boxes wanted to know what I was playing. The need of being understood and being curious about answer is also the key element of building up human intimacy.

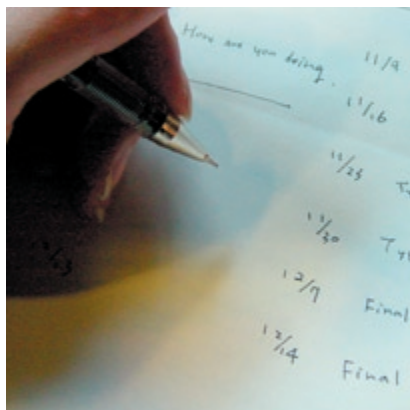
In cyber space, we encode and decode information. People might put very private affair online but encode their identities. Before, people kept diary and might lock it for hiding the thoughts which might not be accepted in real world to keep the relationships they have. Now cyber space provides a safer environment that people can express dark thoughts, or, the thoughts they consider them dark, to anyone but still being protected. People are satisfied for the need of self-revelation, the key element in building up intimacy. People encode identity and decode the secret they have in real world in cyber space. Whatever they say or do can't be directly linked to the rest of their lives. (The Psychology of Cyberspace, John Suler) This guarantees keeping physical intimacy for them. These people won't be separated and lose bodily contact with others because of being known the dark side. Having freedom in sharing secrets might explain the cyber space becomes one of popular communication medium though sometimes we didn't know who we were talking to exactly.

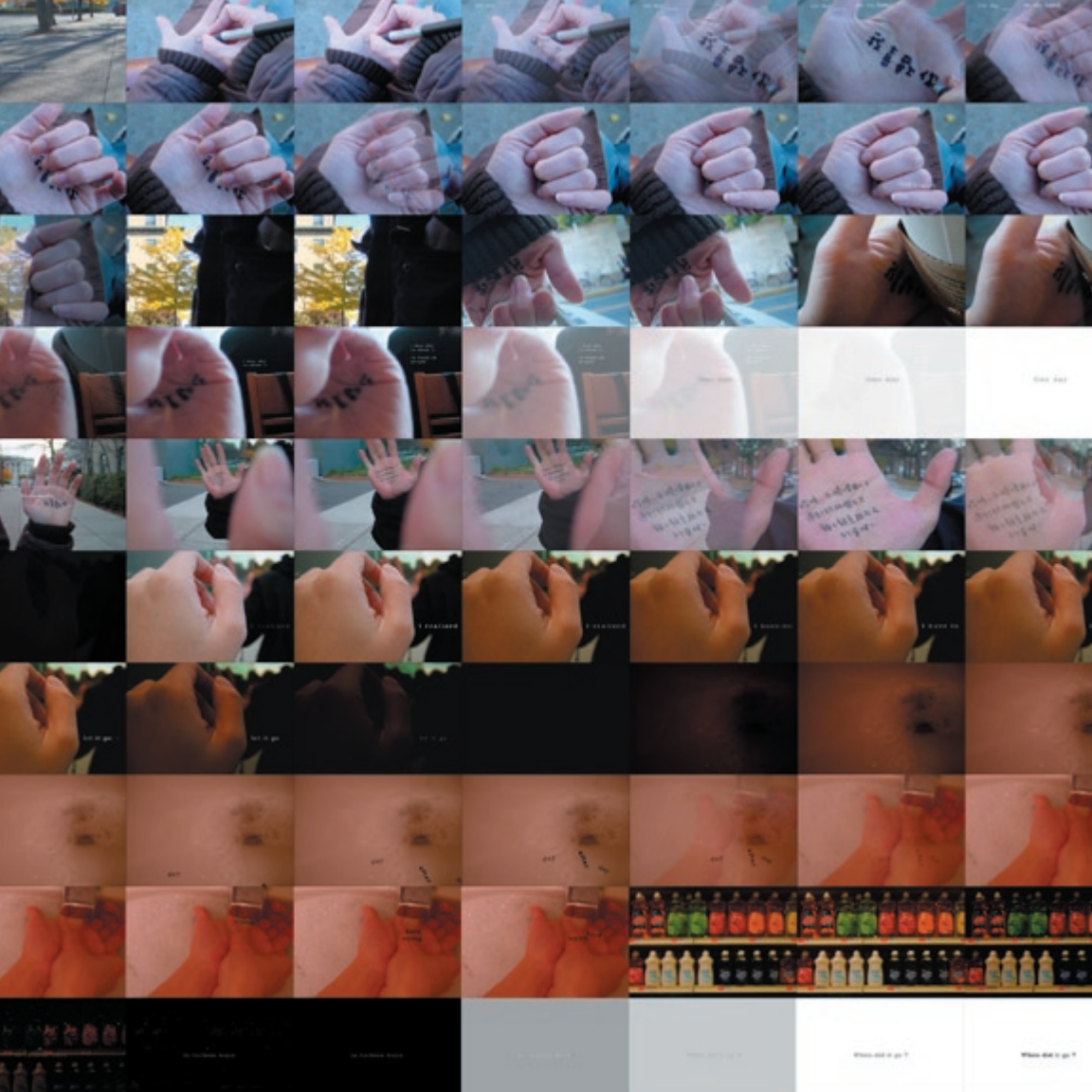




ERASING

OK, this is what I think...





project overview

The "Erasing" project is a 4 minutes movie designed for investigating the role of personal experience in art work.

The movie is talking about forgetting the memory we've cherished, which became a suffering after. I used erasing marks on hand as the main theme to interpret the abstract mental behavior forgetting.

why erasing memory?

Memory is the evidence for us to make sure our existence. We know who we are by remembering where we were from, what we did, and who we were used to be. The evidence we hold in hand might be photos or texts. “...the book is a personal item, an extension of an individual’s memory”(P136, The Digital Dialectic, Florian Brody)

Besides physical intimacy, human beings need emotional and intellectual ones also. Both of them require memory to support. Once we lost memory, nothing to reveal makes insecurity about ourselves. However, we might also be panic because of memories. Life comprises sadness that we are not comfortable with it. But we are in awkward situation in creating and saving memories without struggling sadness. Though the time, dilutes the density of pain eventually.



The background of the page features several hand-drawn sketches in blue ink. On the left, a hand is shown in a fist-like grip. On the right, a hand is shown with fingers spread, and a small, wavy scribble is drawn on the palm. Below these, there are faint, larger-scale sketches of Chinese characters, including 'well' and 'it's a'.

the process

The context idea “erasing memory” came from my personal suffering and the motivation from the movie “Eternal Sunshine of Spotless Mind” by Michel Gondry.

This project is originally made for dynamic typography class. For having ideas about type, I started with hand writing, the origin method for creating types.

For collaborating context and type concepts, I used “writing and erasing something on hand” as the main visual theme of the movie, and made the script and storyboard based on it. The hand writing types in the movie is Chinese, which transfers “text” to graphic to English audience. This “graphic” also comprised the meaning of being unwilling to express the truth of private affair in public.



→ For matching my point of view of “forgetting”, we need time to forget, the storyboard emphasizes on daily lives.

little bit embarrassing → for work
For collecting visual sources, I took pictures of my hands' daily actions, like writing, holding, working and so on. Photos shoot includes cleaning, cleanser, the significant person's hand in action and body interaction between two characters. For having visual dialog between two people, I played the role of main character and asked a male friend to be another one.

how did you feel about it?
what do you think?
For having the slow rhythm as time floating, I cut many scenes from original storyboard that each picture had longer time to show.

→
little bit

embarrassing

To have slow tempo to show a little bit blue, I supposed to pick up a music with subtle blue emotion. But it's hard to find one to match to storyboard. I then decided to use one music from the sound track of Japanese movie. This one is a little bit dramatic but still kept the emotion of feeling blue and released.

how did you feel about it?
what do you think?
if so.



the project

the project is a series of small, interconnected projects that are designed to be both fun and educational.

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. Format: quick time movie

. Length: 4mins10secs

. background music:

The most precious memory, "Be with you" movie soundtrack

Story background

This project is the assignment from Dynamic Typography class by professor Jan Kubasiewicz. I was in a suffering then, and couldn't make any funny storyboard as usual. I then decided to show another side of me, a sensitive and little blue person. It's always "time" rescued me while I met sadness. But the problem is how to stand the pain in passing the process. Let something go, then we can move on.

Music concept

I want to have the movie with warmth and subtle blue. The way I learn to forget and accept the truth I was not willing to have is usually not too strong and drastic. I believe every result is a card with both side. How to live in life happily depends on which side you look at it to form the next step you want to go. Therefore a comfortable blue is more appropriate for this story.

Scenes and Visual Concept

Preface/

:: Image-

A photo of street sight in afternoon sunshine, shows subtle blue and quietness

:: Typography Motion-

Each sentence transfers with fading in and fading out on the screen in scrolling effect as a overture



If it existed as a dust,
flowing away easily with breeze,
we would never know how hard it is to swipe it away.
We might never know the smell of oblivion, and we
might never know,
why we need to forget.

it's a little

one day

I put it in my hand

held it tightly

Scene 1/

:: Image-

1. Writing sentence on hand and closing hand: Using “writing on hand” as a metaphor to represent holding something in hand and putting something in mind
2. Writing the sentence I want to say to some one in Chinese on purpose, for keeping it as my secret

:: Typography Motion-

1. Sentences flies to the palm, shows the intention of holding something in mind
2. sentences flies out from palm strenuously, shows the tightness of hand holding



Scene 2/

:: Image-

Having different background for carrying the word in hand to represent the concept of carrying the feeling always

:: Typography Motion-

Flying from one place to another place by following the actress, shows the concept of carrying it all the time

carried it everywhere

i was shy to show it in front of people

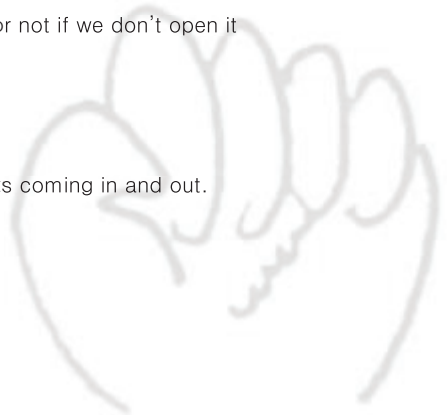
Scene 3/

:: Image-

A photo of the actress held chin by using the hand with text, we can't see the text clearly: "Writing on hand" could also be used in "Revealing something incidentally sometimes". The word we usually wrote down in palm is not easy to be seen obviously. We don't know if people are aware of it or not if we don't open it and show it directly.

:: Typography Motion-

1. Texts fly from bottom to top
2. Fade in and fade out effect for texts coming in and out.



one day, all of a sudden

Scene 4/

:: Image-

1. The photos of waving hands to each other represent meeting up.
2. We wave hand to say hi, this is the time we would open hand widely.

:: Typography Motion-

Showing the script sentence by popping up fast represent “all of a sudden”



Scene 5/

:: Image-

1. A photo of shooting hand from its back, the hand is a little bit close to show the upset.

2. Making the photos darker for transition shows the upset feeling also

:: Typography Motion-

Texts fade in and fade out in turns.

i realized, i have to, let it go

the h

the more h

day after day
trying hard
in various ways

Scene 6/

:: Image-

1. Photos of sink, water falling from faucet and lots of cleansers in supermarket.
2. Washing hands interprets the concept of erasing

:: Typography Motion-

1. floating in the sink, interprets
2. falling down from faucet interprets, texts fade in and fade out in turns.

when did it go?
i can't remember

Scene 7/

:: Image-

1. Adding noise dot on a close shot photo of hand, palm is open and hand waving.
2. the noise dot interprets unclear memory

:: Typography Motion-

Texts fade in and fade out in turns.



Scene 8/

:: Image-

Photos of several scenes from regular lives with the actress,
interprets lives keep going in her life

:: Typography Motion-

Texts fade in and fade out in turns.

life pushed me to move on
pulled me out of the circle of erasing and reviewing

maybe just one morning
or

Scene 9/

:: Image-

Hands are opening the window, interprets opening a window for
life

:: Typography Motion-

Flying from left-bottom to out side of window, interprets the
memories which were gone

but



on that day
we brushed against each other

Scene 10/

:: Image-

Photos of foots and bottom of bodies from two people brushing each other

:: Typography Motion-

1. Texts popping up in two first photos
2. Texts did motion blur in the last photo, for interpret “brushing”

Scene 11/

credit

one day

dynamic typography as personal emotion translation medium

To design a subtle love expressing movie about “erasing memory”

1. Slow rhythm: To release audience and immerse them in the emotion of blue. Slow induce sadness easier than quickness.

e.g. Adagio melody/ Smooth motion path/ gradual transition

2. Visual effect used: Creating abstract and unreal image tone like memory

e.g. noise effect/ warm color tone(like yellow)/ higher brightness/ lower saturation/ blurring effect

3. Daily objects: The daily objects make the belief of a true story and like feeling intimate with a “person’s life”.


e.g. daily life activities images(clothes, scenes etc.)

4. Personal text: Hand writing is not like type, which could be general used by everyone. It provides the personal information about the character.
e.g. my hand writing on palm

5. Subtlety: Creating abstract atmosphere as our feeling that we can't see it concretely
e.g. equivoque script/ no characters' faces images/ images of body language and gestures

Personal Experience in Crossing the Gap

I exhibited the movie in Dynamic Typography class and final review board in 2005 Fall semester. The audience and I had different level relationships. Some are my teachers, and some are my classmates. Some I just met in presentation.



Due to limited time, I couldn't find a music which I felt satisfied for this movie. The feedback from audience reflected this part somehow. The negative feedback from final review board indicated that the music is over top. I was surprised that people could read the story without understanding the Mandarin in character's palm and picked the music accurately. I supposed English audience knew nothing about what's the word that the character wanted to tell the other one. But the audience still sensed that it was a subtle blue story. In fact, the words on the main character's palm were shy

for her to tell the other one. It's not a big amazing love story. The-forepart of the music exaggerated the emotion indeed. Since the Chinese words were graphic to audience, I supposed people might read the movie differently by music. But people still got the point I was supposed to say by reading the motion images. They didn't read it as an epic. I supposed to cover this shortage in this movie by the language gap, and tended to lead audience to another direction.

This movie comprised script, images, motion, and music. Though the music didn't transmit the message completely, the understanding of audience wasn't too far from origin. Through digital communication media, we have text, images, voice and video to transmit information. We might not use all of them in transmitting message every time but still communicate well. Personal experience helps us cross the gap and understand each other while communicating through media.

The Intimacy in sharing thoughts

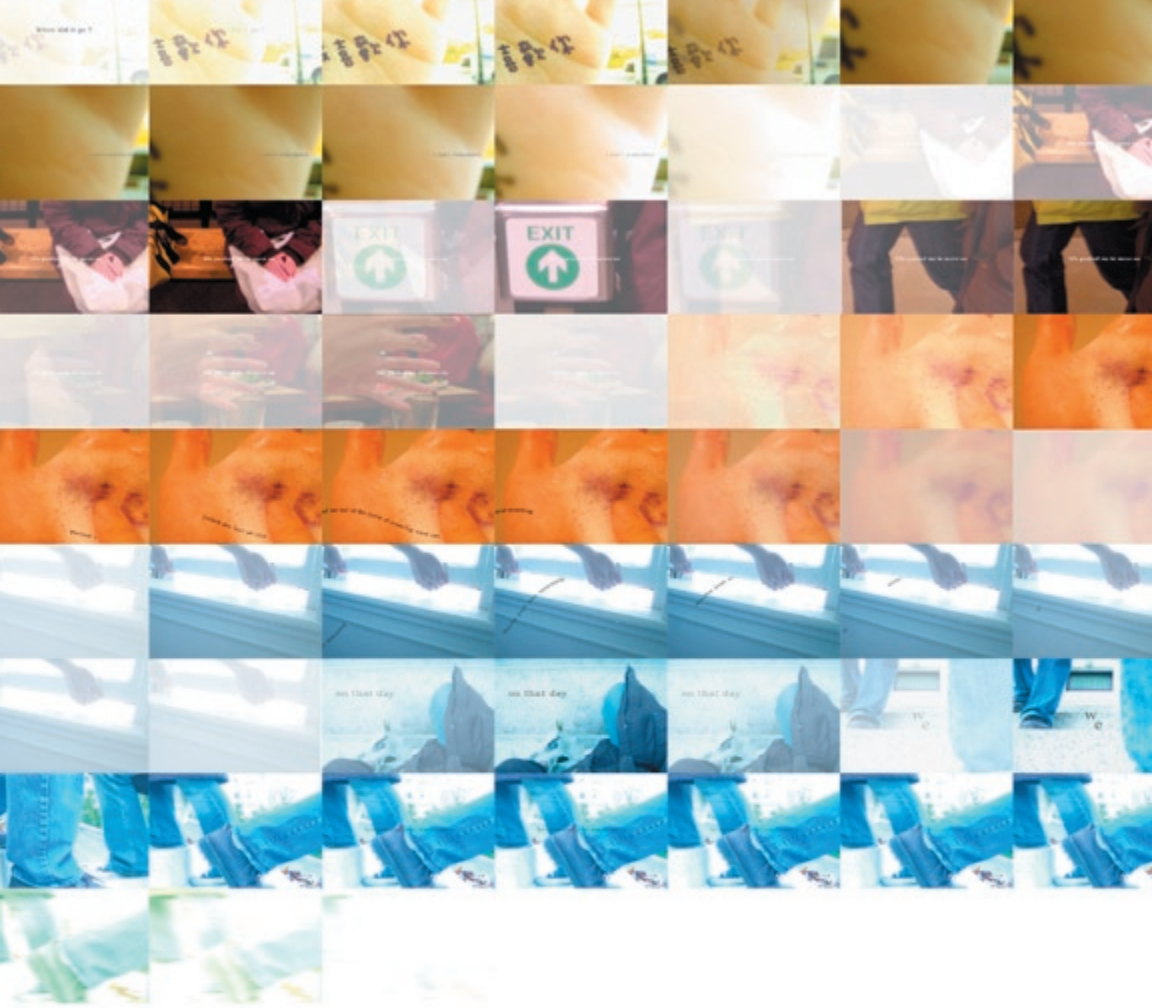
I didn't tell people the key word in the story obviously, the Mandarin word written on hand. People infer the point I had depends on their personal experiences. I like people understand it by a little bit guessing because this would induce them to reveal their stories. If I told the story obviously, I wouldn't know they understand it because they have the same point of view or because I just told them. In building up intimacy in emotional aspect, we understand each other by revealing true feelings we have. And in building up intimacy in intellectual aspect, we go closer to friends who have the same point as us. From presenting this movie, I felt good when people gave positive response, but I felt better when they said why they like it. So did negative responses. When people said something, I knew what they read from the movie and knew part of them. The movie here was the medium to tell my story. Playing this movie in front of audience is



like talking in the phone with friends. I appreciate people who can realize my point, and even can inspire me to think more. In building up intimacy in spiritual aspect, the relationship between two parties help both of them become better version of themselves. Once this aspect has been reached, the relationship between these two people will be strong and stable. In the process of exchanging thoughts through this movie, the communication between me and audience was in public. In other communication media, like cell phone or any Computer-mediated communication (CMC), the communication has higher privacy and becomes more personal. On the other hand, I didn't record response from audience and the audience didn't record my movie or interpretation, either. Now I don't really remember all the details people said at presentation. In cyber space, Blog records author and reader's exchanging thoughts with less effort we have to pay. The Blogosphere now is over 60 times bigger than it was 3 years ago. The need of building up intimacy with people drives people to build

up the "intimacy" between people and blog. This might also reveal that we human beings need stronger communication evidence to support the need of intimacy. Not everyone can make a movie, but can write a story about them self and have audience in the world.

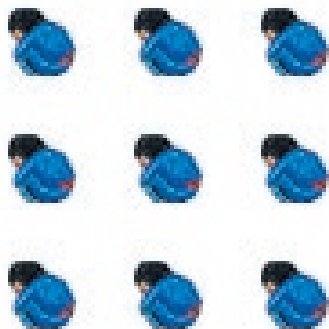






THE CORNER

How much you understand me so far?



project overview

The “The Corner” project is to have people experience emotional and intellectual intimacy through a dialog between picking up boxes and a virtual character. People would experience physical closeness to the subject through moving forward and backward in a space as well.

This project is an installation which includes a projection on the wall and 9 boxes on the floor near the projection and were set in a corner of a room.

why corner?

In a physical space, like a room, the corner in it is the hardest place to clean up. The corner in mind might accumulate dust of worry, sad, anger and so on. To cheer up a person who is in depressed situation is like helping with cleaning his space in mind. To make room totally bright, the detail place like corner needs effort with trying to swipe it different angles or clean it through various method.



the process

For having people be interested in interacting for emotion and intellect aspect, I took the process of understanding a person as the main concept to develop. A depressed looking person is usually the one who people to “interact” with to show their care.

For having an issue which is important but hard to be understood by people, I had the conflict between my goal and responsibility to family as the context. This issue needs understanding the personal history, culture differences and the problem result from distance.

In having people interact with the character physically, I used cube as the medium. The cube is for exploring the role of medium in communication objectively. The cube comprised the media meaning of physical interfaces and language.





For having people experience the intimacy levels through having dialog with the main character, the boxes were divided into five groups. Each group represents different levels of being closer to the character's mind.

For people experiencing having several conversations to understand a person, the structure was designed for requiring people's effort in pick several boxes.

To have the structure flexible for applying the random characteristic random in conversation, I designed the scores counting system according to how many times people interact with boxes. While reaching the standard scores of each level, the content of the box will be played appropriately.

For having people feel the closeness in physical space at the same time, the distance between boxes and the projection were designed according to the intimate levels between people and the character in interacting.

Because I took my story as the background, I recorded my voice and took pictures of myself as the responding sources to reach the sense of reality.

To give visual hint for people, I visualize the content on the box by my hand drawings. My drawings represent my personality as well. The style I had is simple and clean, and it reveals clues subtly instead of obviously.

the project



The setting

The installation includes a projection on the wall and 9 boxes and sensors on the floor near the projection. The boxes will be put on the floor. The distance between boxes and the projection is according to the levels which were set to experience the progress on these boxes. The sensors are right under each box to detect for interaction. All of these will be set in a corner of a room.

Scenario and interaction

The projection is a depressed looking character who crouches and is back to audience. By interacting with box, people will know what bothers the main character and make her turn around to face the audience.

Basic interaction principle

The only required action for interacting with boxes is “picking up” the box. By picking up the box, people will get more information about this character by seeing its visual reaction on the wall and hearing the sound reaction. The visual reaction includes character’s facial expressions and gestures. The sound reaction includes character’s voice and speaking the scripts.



Interaction design for the process

It seems the boxes are put randomly on the floor, but actually the location of box is designed intentionally. Each “picking up” represents “asking a question to the character”. For experiencing the physical distance and mental distance at the same time, the boxes are put in order according to “how close are audience and the character mentally” . The 9 boxes are divided into five groups. Each group represents different levels of being closer to the character’s mind. Each group has different amount of answering sentences. The higher level box has more sentences. For example, the first level, appearance, only has one answering sentence, but the box in the fifth level has ten. The answering sentences of each box have levels. For example, the first level box has one sentence for one level. The answering sentences of fifth level box are divided into five levels.

Each “picking up” gets one point. People need to get more scores to hear higher level answers of each box. For example, they would hear “I want to try new things while I am still young. I want to see the world before I get older.” because they only “pick up” any of the boxes once. If they have got 6–7 scores by picking up other boxes, they would hear the sentence “My parents are getting older and my mother is not in good health. She felt lonely all the time but her health situation doesn’t allow her to go out by herself.” of the fifth level group box while picking it up.



Scores count/

Each “picking up” counts one point. When the box has presented all content of itself, people won’t get any scores from it by picking it up. The reaction would also stick on the last presenting sentence. For example, after they have heard “People here have a positive attitude towards others and tend to encourage instead of discourage.” of the forth level box, they will keep hearing the sentence while picking it up. Their scores will stick on 6 until they pick other boxes which still have effective scores to count.

Box and its score groups/

1st group box: [0]

2nd group box: [0], [1]

3rd group box: [0], [1-2], [3]

4th group box: [0], [1-2], [3-5], [6]

5th group box: [0], [1-2], [3-5], [6-7], [8]



Time out

After the sound of the sentence has been played, the character projection will return to the default setting in 10 seconds.

Pick up more than 2 boxes

The character will say” Hey, I’m stressed out, don’t push me to answer so many questions at the same time.

Box Relocated

In order to preventing relocating boxes and experiencing wrong progress, there will be indication marks on box position, which inform audience put boxes back correctly and prevent they relocate boxes.

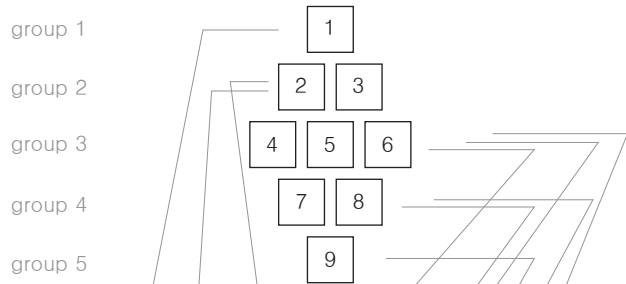
Box content

Default character motion setting: The character is back to the audience, her head is lowering.

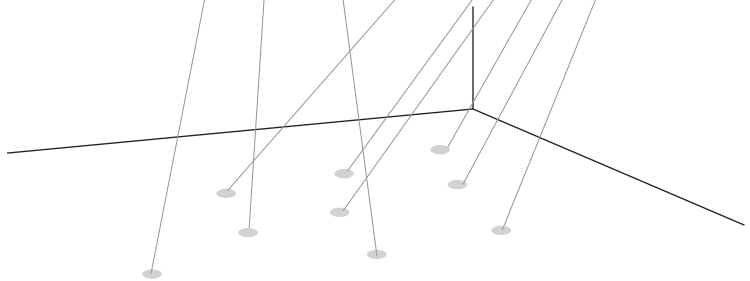
While waiting for audience interacting with box, the projection will play character's representative status motion loop. The motion loop will play depends on what level the audience reach. There will be sound of script and character's gesture motion playing as the response while audience pick up the box.



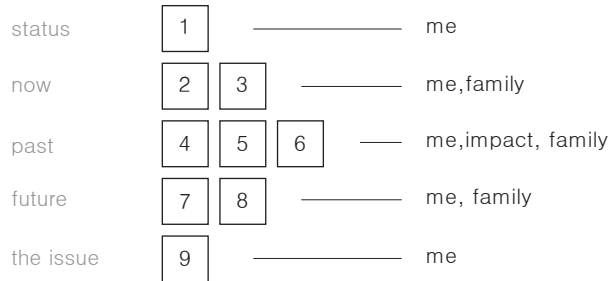
1. Box number



2. Position



3. Representation





4. Level settings

level 1	1	_____	who i am/ greetings	
level 2	2	3	_____ what i do	
level 3	4	5	6	_____ what i did + why
level 4	7	8	_____ what I want to do + how I feel now + why	
level 5	9	_____ how I feel now + why + what I want to do + the question		

building up trust

To design a system with levels for experiencing building trust

1. Content with conflict: Conflict resulted from multiple concerns to make a decision. Each concern brought up a story behind. Storytelling includes time for sequence. It also includes why, what, and how to interpret. This brings content could be layered in levels for experiencing.

e.g. the character was considering to stay in U.S. but also wanted to take care family in Taiwan.

2. Time Sequence for layering content: Each incident result from past and happened in present and has influence for the future. Linear storytelling helps audience understand the story easily.

e.g. the character's background, what she did now and what she wanted to do in the future

3. Multiple using W-question for giving content levels:

e.g. what happened?—the first level of understanding

what happened +Why happened?—further, understand the background

4. Happening, feeling, wanting for levels: Deeper intimacy involved will accompanied with emotional and intellectual understanding. Take advantage of happening for appearance, feeling for emotions, wanting for thoughts.

e.g. What happened> What happened+ How you feel> What happened+ How you feel+ Why you feel this way

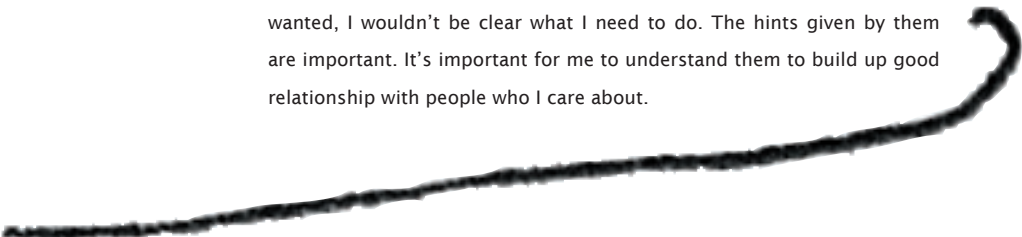
5. Parallelize contents' levels and relative objects physically: Embracing body movement in experiencing intimacy levels

e.g. The box which is closest to the projection represents the deepest level content

Asking a right question

In this project, the hints play an important role to guide audience get the whole story. Hints were designed by character's body language, facial expression, voice reaction and scripts. Hints guided audience to pick up right box and get higher level intimacy with character. Hints guided audience to ask right question.

I'm a passive person more than active. I'm used to be asked question than asking others one. The problem to me is that I don't know how to ask a question. I even don't know I have to. Unless someone told me what he wanted, I wouldn't be clear what I need to do. The hints given by them are important. It's important for me to understand them to build up good relationship with people who I care about.



How do we guess one's mind? By their eyes blinks? Smile? Shake head? Depression sounds? Or the words they told? It's probably not that easy to judge it by several interactions sometimes. Human minds are complicated. It's not either or choices, either good or bad, either on or off, either positive or negative. Machines we designed for life convenience might not need complicated communication cues as human one. Though we might not use various yelling sound to warn users to avoid wrong actions, it might be a good idea to warn users in different volume for different level dangerous situations.

Proximity-Seeking and Medium attachment

Bowlby's attachment theory holds that when humans and certain of the animal species perceive that there is a threat close by, they will engage in

some form of proximity-seeking behavior so as to bring about increased levels of safety, protection, security, and comfort. Just like infants adults also require proximity but only in times of stress or danger and they will tend to differentiate close relationships based on their expectations of finding security within the primary attachment relationship. (E. Langer, 1988)

According to Bowlby's attachment theory, infants develop secure attachment by having sensitive responding from primary caregiver. It involves sensitive responding to infant cues and signals, the primary caregiver's sensitivity in perceiving, interpreting, and responding to the child's needs. For example, parents responded to approach or engage cues, which relate to comforting an infant in distress, identify infant cues that indicate when they want to be attended to or approached, or when they like something about the current interaction.

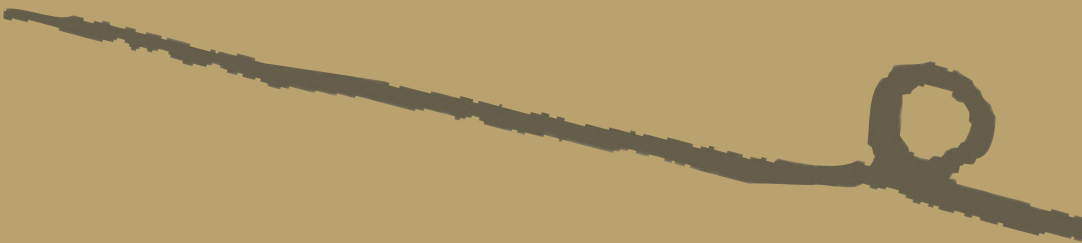
Through this project, people experience learning the signals of an adult infant. We learned these signals by seeing the body languages, facial expression and sounds. In this project, people are required to pick up boxes, move their bodies, tell the signals and make decision for moving further. The character sent the signals to guide audience by multiple reactions. While becoming an adult baby, how we seek proximity to protect ourselves? How much we can do in sending and receiving signals?

Nowadays, we don't worry about high cost or travel to a far place as before. The convenience brought by cell phone and internet makes communication cross distance acceptable easily. While feeling lonely and need support, we might seek for friends' help through medium. Dialing a number or sending a text message might be the signal we seek proximity from attachment figure to protect our safety, security and comfort. However, dialing a phone call, you might meet "There's no signal". Sending a

message through IM, you might meet “unavailable to talk”. According to Bowlby, the attachment system essentially “asks” the following fundamental question: “Is the attachment figure nearby, accessible, and attentive?” Taking these medium as the attachment figures to protect security, the “quick response” medium matched the need of nearby and accessible. But the medium are not attentive totally all the time. The fundamental assumption in attachment research on human infants is that sensitive responding by the parent to the infant’s needs results in an infant who demonstrates secure attachment, while lack of such sensitive responding results in insecure attachment (Lamb, Thompson, Gardner, Charnov, & Estes, 1984). The insecure working models in adult attachment includes preoccupied, dismissing and fearful. These models reveal our anxiety and avoidance in interacting with people. The higher accessibility and nearness create higher expectation in communication. But the weakness of attentiveness in nowadays communication media frustrates the expectation. Therefore,

though we have higher accessibility in sending and receiving signals, the imbalance from attentiveness results insecurity at the same time. This might explain why people now would check if they bring cell phone but no one had thought they need it thirty years ago.





Conclusion



What is in

From the discussion of projects and research in previous chapters, we've known that we need intimate relationships to feel comfortable and secure. It's about physical intimacy like bodily contact, or intellectual intimacy like thoughts sharing and exchanging. As human being, one of the important key elements to build up intimate relationship is the satisfaction of the need of self-revelation. Self-revelation is about "being personal". Self-revelation requires audience as well. It's about personal experiences sharing. Communication media helps us in self-revelation and sharing with people who were not next to us. However, how much capability the media could provide in "being personal"? And what we can do in designing for "being personal"? What we can do for helping people personalizing their message? From previous discussion, I concluded several points for being intimate in communication. We can take advantage from these to personalize message and develop media for being intimate with people and the media itself as well.

intimacy
what is in
communication &
intimacy &

intimacy?

induce touch

Bodily contact is the basic desire of humanity. In human society, touch brings not only emotional but intellectual reactions. Touching comfortable sofa makes us feel nice but also makes us to remember what kind of texture it has. Our hands transmit this message for us. Untouchable fact also makes us lose senses to trust. Touch tells us a true existence of an object through its sense of spatial. We would believe what we touch more sure than what we see. Touch brings comfort and security.

To induce touch, we have to induce get close to first. For example, a "small" book needs to be close to read the title. Small get people close in physical aspect. Small also make an object brought with us available. Tight, not clear or hard to get into also make us do effort in interacting and getting close in physical aspect. We might consider these facts in design an intimate object, but it's also important to prevent annoying people. Just as if we want to be understood, we can't always lock ourselves inside.

friendly exchange

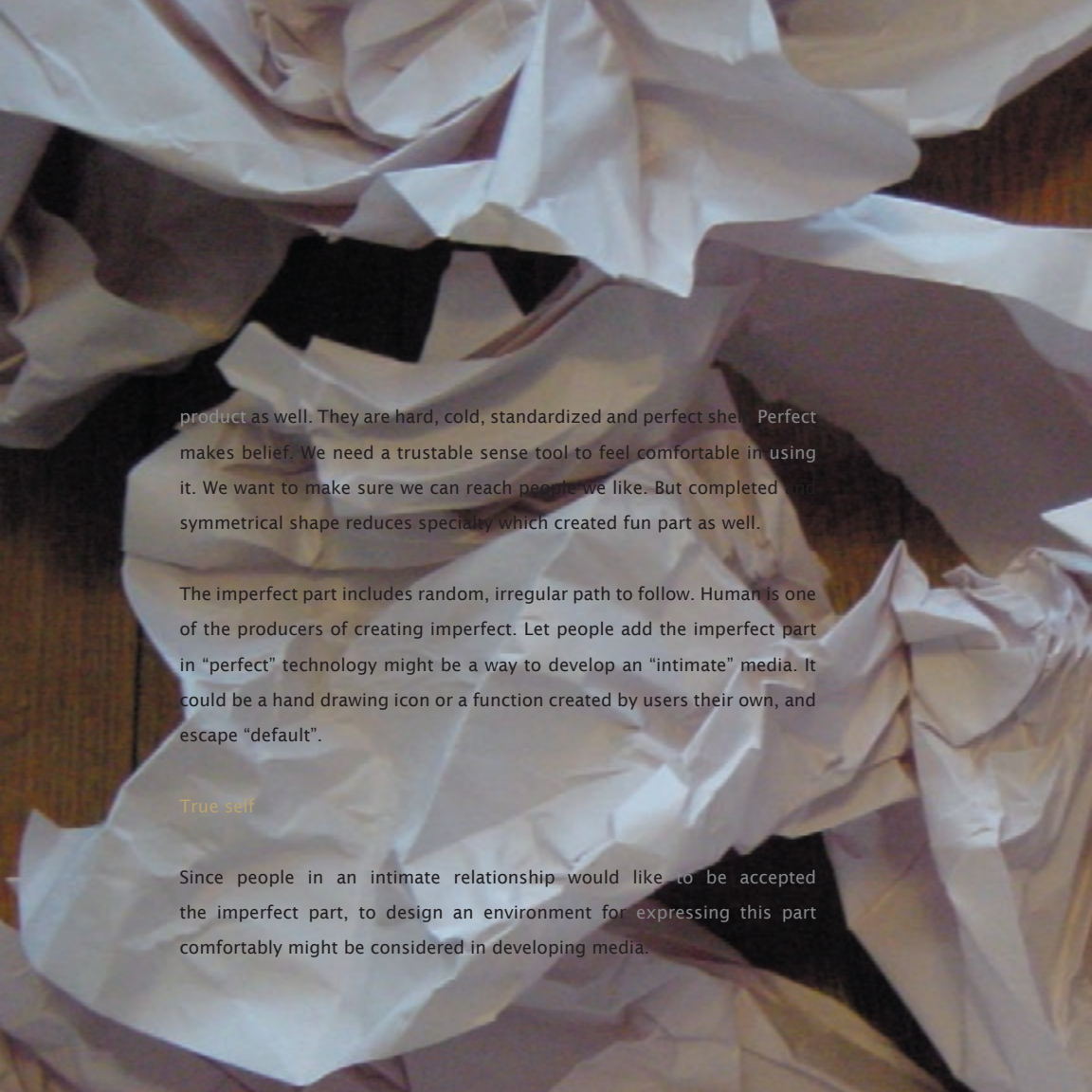
hostile exchange

the imperfect part

Identity given

Personal means not necessary to be perfect. Humanity is not perfect. Perfect font text is professional but not personal. Handwriting is not as "perfect" as font text. We couldn't write a exact 9 point size perfectly. But a longer or shorter line we wrote reveals personality. This "imperfect" part reveals the truth of humanity and the key point of being intimate also. We might yell at parent but not friends because we feel more secure in this relationship. We are more intimate with family than friends. We are not afraid of being dumped by them. But we are afraid that friends would leave because we didn't answer appropriately. A good relationship is we can express each kind emotion comfortably.

Usually, we have standardized cell phone. The appearance of cell phone has nice curve and shining shell. They are beautiful but belong to "cold"



product as well. They are hard, cold, standardized and perfect shell. Perfect makes belief. We need a trustable sense tool to feel comfortable in using it. We want to make sure we can reach people we like. But completed and symmetrical shape reduces specialty which created fun part as well.

The imperfect part includes random, irregular path to follow. Human is one of the producers of creating imperfect. Let people add the imperfect part in “perfect” technology might be a way to develop an “intimate” media. It could be a hand drawing icon or a function created by users their own, and escape “default”.

True self

Since people in an intimate relationship would like to be accepted the imperfect part, to design an environment for expressing this part comfortably might be considered in developing media.

comfortable

Eliminating expectable perspectives of our status

In non-face-to-face communication environment, the expectable perspectives of who we are somehow would be eliminated by not being seeing. We lost the cues of facial expressions and body language. But at the same time, we don't have to be careful of facial expression and body language as well in expressing. We can pay less attention of behaving ourselves. This somehow makes us feel comfortable. In cyber space, our true identities could be eliminated. We are only known by what we say. Some people take this advantage to express another side of themselves, which we called it disinhibition behavior. All these explain that the more information about us eliminated in revealing, the more freedom we have, and more comfortable we feel in getting involved.

Sensitive Responding

Get responding is also an important part for being comfortable. Sensitive responding makes people feel secure for its quickness and correct orientation. The communication tools we have now have higher ability to give sensitive responding for people who need to contact with others. But the expectation for responding became higher also. However, the communication is still controlled by human. The media itself couldn't change the free will of human too much. Therefore, reducing the expectation of media or developing an environment which provides sensitive responding by human might be the direction to go.

storytelling

Not everyone is a good storyteller. We used to write letters to friends. We might attach photos to tell them a story about going picnic last weekend. The benefit from media is that we remind people that they can send images. The “sending picture” icon is a thoughtful assistant. On the other hand, linear storytelling is easy for people to understand. Therefore, except developing a thoughtful assistant, helping people say a story linearly might be helpful for them to be understood well.

participation

Almost each project in last chapter requires audience participation. These participations included not only finger moving, but whole body moves, like cooking. If we just show audience a teddy bear, they don't feel any relationship with the bear. However, if we give opportunity for audience to make the bear become their possession, they start to be involved in the conversation. To design a communication medium, we need to create a chance for the users get involved as well. Make users take this medium as their bear that they want to dress up might be considered in developing communication tools.

audience

Self-revelation is not only about revealing but about sharing. Providing an stage with audience might also help in developing "intimate" media.

take advantage of disadvantage

Though the distance inhibits us for bodily contact, we can use this disadvantage as advantage as well. The future we expect of communication media development might consider coordinating the impact and the specialty of distance itself. For example, there's one time my friend celebrated my birthday through webcam, he lighted up a match, and held it in front of the webcam, and asked me to close the eyes to blow it to make a wish. I did close eyes and blow to the screen. The match did go out but it's because my friend used his finger to put it off. It's not me to puff the fire out. He took advantage of disadvantage of distance to create the magic. Since now we might not change the problem of distance, we might consider to use it to create opportunity of being fun with, which might not be replaced by other elements.

It's easy to see if we communicate with machines well by the reaction of its function. Human is much more complicated to communicate with. Because machine doesn't learn but human does. Human would hide true feelings but machine doesn't have to hide its reaction. We human beings are afraid of getting hurt but machine doesn't. However, we still feel more interesting to communicate with people because of the complex of humanity. We usually didn't feel warm by communicating with machine. The key elements for being intimate in human communication are great source for us to develop media. We learned from intimacy to build up the relationship no matter between human and human or between human and machine stronger and not replaceable. And we will have more chances to tell a story about our true selves.



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