Abstract

Personal blogs have become popular at the age of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). Its emergence grants common Internet users' the authority to express themselves. In other words, blog is an ideal platform for self-disclosure on the Internet. The current study examined how Anonymity, Anticipated Future Interaction with potential audience, the Salience of Personal Identity and Private Self-awareness would influence bloggers' online Self-disclosure. Competing CMC theories covering the relationship between Anonymity and Self-disclosure, such as Deindividuation, Hyperpersonal Theory and the SIDE model, were tested and compared.

An experiment was conducted. Anonymity, Anticipated Future Interaction, and Personal Identity Salience were manipulated in a 2 (Anonymous vs. Identifiable) × 2 (Reply vs. No Reply) × 2 (Salient vs. Unsalient) factorial design. Each participant was invited to write a piece of diary on an experimental blog website. A content analysis was conducted to measure different aspects of self-disclosure and levels of private self-awareness in the blogs. Results showed that identifiable bloggers disclosed broader and deeper personal information than anonymous bloggers; people who anticipated future interactions with audience would strategically disclose certain aspects of themselves in an extensive manner for the purpose of self-presentation; bloggers whose personal identities were salient had higher levels of self-awareness so that they had more self-disclosure in amount, breadth and depth.