

How Videos Are Like Books



Research Question: Why are locally developed Korean video-sharing sites used instead of video-sharing sites designed for global use (such as YouTube)?

Introduction

We began our research by looking for culture to be a primary reason for why other countries still choose to use niche video sharing websites as opposed to exclusively using YouTube, which was designed for global use. However, through our research we have determined that culture is not the primary reason for the use of niche video sharing websites. While culture is not the prime rationality behind this, it does play a part in the content contained within these websites, and that specific culture-derived content is what users search for. This project is significant for cross-cultural technology design and the research within it.

Methods

We sought out five people in Bloomington, Indiana that had used both YouTube and at least one other video sharing website regularly in their life in order to conduct interviews. We focused on Korean websites in particular, since YouTube had a low market share of around eight percent in Korea¹. Despite being one of the top video sharing websites in the world, YouTube has struggled with obtaining users in Korea. We considered sites such as Daum, Naver, Nate, and Vn-drama. We interviewed five Korean participants in a semi-structured format, and transcribed our conversations for a data analysis. Using a grounded approach, we employed a hermeneutic theme coding analysis to find meaning in our transcriptions.

"So sometimes I really want to watch Korean news... Sometimes if you go into a Korean website, they don't allow you to play it since you are in U.S."



"... I really want to watch Korean news....Since YouTube is a very universal thing, I was thinking I might get access to that through YouTube....Sometimes I search it, but it's not there."



Results

The interviews showed us that the three main factors governing video sharing website use are: 1) connection speed (infrastructure issues), 2) content, and 3) government regulation. Connection speed contributes to undesirable effects such as lag and long buffering times. Content was also a major concern. The Korean websites had more Korea-specific news, political videos, and discussion. Lastly, we found that government regulation was a major issue. Websites restrict the viewing of copyrighted videos.

Discussion

Our results show us that the design of the website does not influence the user's website preference as much as we had originally predicted. The analysis tells us that speed, content, and government regulations are important factors to using a site. Our analysis suggests that the relationship between videos and their website is similar to the relationship between books and their bookshelf. The design of bookshelves are similar and provide the same utility. What makes bookshelves different from each other are the books they hold. This example of remediation gives insight to the way people decide to use these sites; the content is more important to the user than the framework in which it is stored. We originally hoped to find cultural differences in the design of the website. Instead, we found cultural differences in the content and not much variation in the design.

¹ Yan, Cherry. YouTube still struggles in Korea. Korea-Church.com. Published 4 February 2009. URL: <http://korea-church.com/archive/youtube-still-struggles-in-korea/>