LiveLink, interactive newspaper content

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LiveLink is a system that allows users to share and interact with online content through traditional printed newspapers.

Barcodes, interaction, content, newspapers, augmented reality, scanning, design.

1. INTRODUCTION

LiveLink is intended to be a system that allows newspapers to exploit online content through their traditional, print format.

This project was inspired by the ongoing trends in the newspaper industry; that is to say broadly declining sales coupled with the increasing importance of their websites, both as a means to deliver content and as a revenue stream in their own right, be it through advertising or paid for content sections etc.

2. BACKGROUND

I am currently completing a Masters in Interdisciplinary Design at Edinburgh Napier University. Previously I have worked as a graphic designer and completed an Honours Degree in Consumer Product Design.

3. TWITTER

In recent years we have seen the rise of Twitter, as a social network, but critically, as a means of sharing and disseminating content. Almost 50 per cent of all Twitter posts are links to content, it has become an increasingly valuable resource for driving traffic to websites and spreading awareness of content.

While the future for the traditional, purchasable newspapers is increasingly bleak, I do believe there will continue to be a role for the newer free papers, such as the Metro.

4. METRO

The situation I envisaged was that currently, people read the Metro on their way to work, university, college etc. They may well come across content that they would wish to share with others, but how likely are they to go on to a computer, go to the Metro site, find the story in question, copy the link then post it to Twitter or elsewhere? Clearly this is a missed opportunity, or even worse a situation that could lead readers to finding their news elsewhere.

I sought to create an easy and effective method for sharing this content straight from the newspaper itself, this led to the use of augmented reality barcode technology.

5. HOW IT WORKS

Barcodes are inserted into content throughout the newspaper, primarily headlines, images and advertisements. For the purposes of making for a more interesting project, a ring like device was envisaged to scan the barcodes, with that data being translated through a mobile device and out onto the internet. It is however more likely that in the 'real world' the barcodes would be read by smartphones equipped with a LiveLink app. The user would use their phones camera to capture the codes, this triggering the relevant response in the app.

Headline codes would create twitter links to the appropriate news story, images could be shared, advert content could download videos, exclusive apps or other downloads, open webpages or online stores to be accessed later etc.

5.1 ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

This system would also offer a number of beneficial side effects. The Metro would be able to see at an instant what their most popular stories and features are, allowing them to tailor future content appropriately. It could also allow for a modified 'Metro PM' with the content reordered to reflect the popularity of stories during the day.

Secondly, advertisers would be able to receive accurate figures as to the number of readers who are interacting with their content, allowing the paper to offer tangible evidence as to the benefit of advertising in the Metro.

6. REFERENCES

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