



# Exploring the linkages between perceived information accessibility and microblog stickiness: The moderating role of a sense of community



Chien-Lung Hsu <sup>a,\*</sup>, Yi-Chuan Liao <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Marketing Management, Takming University of Science and Technology, Taipei, Taiwan

<sup>b</sup> Department of Business Administration, National Taipei University, Taipei, Taiwan

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 4 June 2012

Received in revised form 29 July 2013

Accepted 7 August 2014

Available online 19 August 2014

### Keywords:

Perceived information accessibility

Stickiness

Sense of community

## ABSTRACT

In the context of the exponential increase of information in society, this study examines the relationship between perceived information accessibility and microblog stickiness. The results indicate an inverted U-shaped relationship between perceived information accessibility and stickiness. To determine how to avoid the information overload that can compromise the stickiness of the microblog site, this study examines the moderating effects of sense of community. The inverted U-shaped relationship becomes linear as levels of sense of community increase. The results suggest microblog service providers can increase the sense of community in order to reduce the negative impact of information overload on stickiness.

© 2014 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

The Internet and the World Wide Web have become a major source of information and knowledge [1,58,60,62]. These resources represent a powerful disseminative tool for users to acquire and share information efficiently and easily. The microblog is a new form of communication that has been enabled by a variety of online social networking tools (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Jaiku, and Pownce) [51]. The term *microblog* refers to a set of activities in which users broadcast brief text updates about small events in their daily lives and work, such as what they are reading, thinking and experiencing. Because microblog entries are typically posted via mobile phone text messages and are currently restricted to a limited number of characters per entry, the messages are brief, sharp and to the point [12]. Microblogs are used for a wide variety of social purposes and have rapidly become a popular option for online social networking. Twitter is the best known microblog [10]. Approximately 65 million tweets were posted each day in the month of June 2010—an astonishing 750 tweets sent per second among nearly 174 million users worldwide (Twitter, 2010).

The problem of information overload has become widely recognized [31]. People in today's information society are bombarded with information regardless of whether they actively

seek such information. The particular characteristics of microblogs allow users to receive a variety of messages from different sources via a wide range of communication channels presented in an infinite number of ways. The exponentially increasing amount of information provided by microblogs may result in what has become known as “information overload” [32]. Information overload is the state in which an individual has been presented with an overabundance of information [50,64,86] to the point that he or she is no longer able to process messages [83]. This problem causes the process of discovering and retrieving information from microblogs to become an inefficient, time-consuming activity. Furthermore, users experiencing information overload may easily become frustrated and stressed [57]. All individuals are affected by the ever-increasing number of information sources. The rate of increase in the quantity of available information is both stunning and unpredictable [87]. While too little information may render a virtual community useless, too much information can cause users to feel overwhelmed and frustrated because they cannot find what they seek. Microblog service providers need ways to ameliorate the challenges caused by users' limited processing capacity. Thus, this study addresses the inverted U-shaped relationship between the stickiness of a microblog and users' perceptions of the accessibility of its information.

The literature on communication theory [69,75,76] notes that a user's information seeking motivation and ability are the main factors constituting information processing capacity. Experienced online users have been shown to be more capable of processing

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [alanhsu8399@gmail.com](mailto:alanhsu8399@gmail.com) (C.-L. Hsu).

information efficiently and effectively with less perceived information load than are novice online consumers [24]. A typical microblog provides a dynamic message platform that requires live interactions between members to maintain the community infrastructure and generate new and updated information. When people are highly involved with the topic being communicated and are able to process the arguments, they are more likely to be persuaded. Therefore, the degree to which a user is involved and has the capacity to process information may influence both the user's degree of loading perception [90,99] and the extent to which he or she can provide social or emotional support to other members [77,80]. Thus, this study discusses the logic behind effective communication messages that can increase the stickiness of microblogs without inducing information overload.

Because a microblog is not only an information site but also a social networking service, this study asserts that social interaction is the microblog factor most worthy of investigation. However, surprisingly few studies have examined how social interaction moderates the relationship between the perceived information accessibility and stickiness of a microblog. Therefore, this study adopted the sense of community (consisting of two subfactors: membership and shared emotional connection) as a moderating factor.

This study addresses these issues in the literature by examining (1) the inverted U-shaped curve in the relationship between the perceived information accessibility and stickiness of a microblog and (2) the social interaction factor (sense of community) that moderates this curvilinear linkage between perceived information accessibility and stickiness.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we review some of the literature regarding microblogs, perceived information accessibility, sense of community and stickiness. We then present our research model and hypotheses. The following section describes the methodology used to verify the hypotheses. The next section includes the analysis and discussion of the results, followed by the theoretical contributions of this study and a discussion of the managerial implications. After describing the limitations of this study and making suggestions for further research, we present our conclusion.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Microblog

A microblog is a form of communication in which users can describe their current status in short posts distributed in the form of instant messages (e.g., G-talk, Yahoo!), mobile phones (SMS), RSS, email or websites [12]. A microblog combines the features of social networking and mobility to share thoughts and opinions, to invite discussion, and to tell others about one's life. This form of communication provides an opportunity for individuals to share their activities, interact with others, build a reputation and release pent-up emotions—all in “real time.” Users are becoming “producers and consumers” rather than simply being the audience [19]. While a traditional blog allows entries of unlimited length, microblog entries are typically posted via mobile phone text messages, in which the number of characters is limited. Messages on microblogs are brief, sharp and to the point. Twitter, which was launched in 2006, may be the best-known example of a microblog. Other examples, both active and defunct, include Plurk. Twitter is similar to an instant messenger that allows users to respond to the question “what are you doing now?” Twitter users post short information updates without a headline or additional information on their page. Users can “follow” (i.e., receive feeds from) anyone else using the service, from friends and family to public figures and news outlets. Once users choose whom they want to follow,

Twitter provides them with a live news feed of “tweets” from those sources. Thus, users receive a constant, real-time stream of news in short text bites from almost anyone of interest. Users can also send tweets, which involves instantly delivering messages to their own followers. All of the messages from a member's social network are listed together in chronological order on the member's start page.

The microblog fulfills the need for a mode of communication that is even faster than a blog. By encouraging shorter posts, microblogs reduce the amount of time and thought that users must invest to generate content—one of the key factors that distinguishes microblogs from blogs in general [51]. The second important distinction is the update frequency. On average, a prolific blogger updates his or her blog once every few days. By contrast, a microblogger may post several updates within a single day. The main reasons for microblogging are maintaining contact with others, raising the visibility of interesting things, gathering useful information, seeking help and opinions, and releasing emotional stress [100]. Using Twitter as an example, researchers have defined four types of user intentions: daily chat, conversation, information sharing, and news reporting news.

#### 2.1.1. Daily chat

Daily chatting is the most common intention for Twitter users. The original idea of Twitter was to ask people “What are you doing?”; therefore, most Twitter posts pertain to users' daily routines or current activities.

#### 2.1.2. Conversation

The microblog is not a unidirectional information dissemination website; users can interact in two-way conversations on a microblog. Approximately 12.5% of all posts in our collected data contain a conversation, and almost 21% of the users in the collection have used this form of communication.

#### 2.1.3. Sharing information

Users share information with their friends or followers. Approximately 13% of all posts in the collected data contain a link that was shared.

#### 2.1.4. Reporting news

Twitter emphasized its news-and-information network strategy in November 2009 by changing its question to users from “What are you doing?” to “What's happening?” Since then, reporting the news as it occurs has become an important microblogging activity. Many people now use Twitter to report the latest news or to comment on current events. Some users or agents automatically post updated information, such as weather reports and new stories from RSS feeds [51].

Scholars have categorized microblogs into three types based on their purpose: information sharing, information seeking, and “friend-wise” relationship building. News is posted from information sources that tend to have a large base of followers; these sources may be individuals or automated services. Users who rarely post but who follow others' statuses regularly are called “information seekers.” *Friend-wise relationship* is a broad term that includes relationships with many other users, such as family members, co-workers and strangers. Typically, users are motivated to use a microblog that has a community with which they have developed a strong association [51], that helps keep them informed of activities [73] and that gratifies their need for contact with others [67].

### 2.2. Perceived information accessibility

Perceived information accessibility has been a critical factor affecting information system usage and success [27]. Scholars have defined *perceived information accessibility* as a combination of the

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/555538>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/555538>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)