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Critical Reflection One

David Rose contextualizes four categories which are interrelated in the field of computation. The categories being the terminal world of digital screens, prosthetics, animism and enchanted objects. Rose describes that these categories are within the realm of possibility, considering that the costs of these devices decline yearly, “As a result, the cost of processing has become 128 times cheaper in the last decade…” (Rose, 37). Furthermore, Rose demonstrates that interaction will be a primordial factor upon the creation of these objects.

The current, dominating form of transmitting information is via digital electronics, particularly ones with interfaceable screens. The surge of revenue by companies towards creating better screens denotes that the digital display will be a dominant force of interfacing for years to come. “Advocating for the next disruptive technology could mean professional suicide” (Rose 19). Keith Kelsen reveals that communication is a primordial factor which sets humans apart from other creatures, “Rapid advances in technology have transformed human communication faster and to a greater degree than in all the time before” (Kelsen 18). The rise of screens has led communication to be a fast an effective tool than ever before, however, it has also created a world, particularly advertising, of constant data emission. Rose shows that even gas station pumps now contain screens to display targeted ads to entice the customers to buy products. The devices we communicate with lack responses, the user may interact with the device, but the device does not interact with us in return. Rose argues that the device does not contain any meaningful values, rather a cold glass display.

From the 1890’s monocle, to the early 20th century sunglasses, one may notice that fashion supersedes functionality. Rose details that the only way that technological prosthetics will make its way into everyday functionality, is through design. “Fashion has helped many a new technology move from technical device to popular accessory” (Rose 24). Rose demonstrates that the users will not wear unattractive accessories in exchange for functionality. While currently in testing, Google Glasses do not attain functionality as expected. “A little screen floats in my vision, as if it were hanging a couple of feet above me…” (Rose 25). Google glasses require voice and touch to be controlled, simply being another form of a digital screen we possess but on a much smaller scale. An instance of prothesis would be bionic prosthetic hands, for people that have lost limbs in incidents. “The modern prosthetic hand has been designed to closely approximate the natural limb in both form and function” (R.G.E Clement 2).

Modern prosthetics now combine the functionality of a human limb with a design that remains fashionable.

The current practice for interfacing with machines is currently one-way interaction. We attempt to attribute human-like features into robotics, while we elicit an emotional response to neotenous robots, they seldom elicit one back. “We have an uncontrollable habit of mapping human characteristics onto inanimate objects if they show signs of life” (Rose 28). Humans believe that if robots contain humanistic qualities, they will appreciate our morality towards them. “…were much more willing to perform a tedious exercise for helpful computers than for nonhelpful ones (Rose 29). Rose demonstrates that, while robotics should not incorporate humanistic values in their physical features, a way to interact with said robots should be present. A clear distinction should be made between robots and humans, Sophia is one of the first humanoid robots and developed in Hong Kong. Many have attributed human qualities to Sophia, notably her appearance, which was modeled after an actor. However, most attribute Sophia as being “human” due to her appearance and facade of responses. Sophia was featured on Jimmy Fallon and responded with witty and intelligent responses, however it was indicated that her questions and responses were rewritten by her creators.

Enchanted objects are simple objects that have been modified through technology to elicit an emotive response and augments daily life. “As the ordinary thing becomes extraordinary, it evokes an emotional response from you and enhances your life” (Rose 35). Rose evaluates enchanted objects as objects that will aid us in our daily toils of life. Rose utilizes the Livescribe pen as one that still uses its initial function but includes enhancements. “It’s a writing instrument augmented with a camera, a microprocessor, and a wireless connection” (Rose 36). Livescribe pens still include its primary writing feature, but also incorporate characteristics which facilitate our writing experience. Much like the Livescribe pen, enchanted objects will succeed by fulfilling human desires and augmenting our lifestyles in fundamental ways. People will resist the attempts of incorporating enchantment into every day objects, as humans are reluctant to change but overtime, these objects will succeed in permeating into our everyday lives.

Rose brings forth four futuristic categories that will eventually be prevalent in everyday life. He challenges the dominating digital screen, citing that a new form of interfacing must be presented, that fashion and functionality must be present in technological prosthetics, a distinction between humans and robots must be made and enchanted objects will permeate functionality in everyday objects.

Sources

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