Business Blogs for Interactive Storytelling:
An Interpretive Interactionism Perspective

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Abstract—A growing number of established business blogs are now available to shed some light on businesses. They change the rule of marketing and communication media both internal and external and will possibly change their beliefs, behavior, and usages. This study has focused on how to interpret an event through blogs when businesses post new issues or topic through blogs. Therefore, the aim of this paper is according to attempts by Denzin (2001) regarding “interpretive interactionism” to explore relationships of blogs in practice and offer additional understanding; in specific, this study will focus on the interaction process to create new interpretations from previous studies and discuss impacts. In a dynamic interaction process, one must provide another theoretical perspective for the interpretive relationship evaluation and through observation build a theoretical foundation and practical contribution.

Keywords— business blogs; interpretive; interaction; experience

I. INTRODUCTION

The capability of organizational communication systems has proved to be a rich source of insights into the sources of interfirn performance differences. These communication networks are through some media to produce interaction relationship; ways used include formal and informal communication styles. Formal communication translates information would be restrictions, but informal communication reach ubiquitous. In new Internet era, new communication media—blogs that presented informal communication styles, and those diffusion effects go beyond anticipation because of blogs involve life events everyone talks about whether from 9/11 event, politics participation [1], and other happenings around everyday things, which may include personal daily records, senses or experiences and knowledge-sharing [2, 3], not to mention other comments or communication channels [4]. The communication of business bolgs is one kind of interactive process, as an interactive storytelling. The interactive approach to business blogs has been gaining attention in recent years as an alternative to the more traditional persuasive approach. Many people in business and academia are accustomed to believing that a blog makes new internet rules, relationship establishments [5] and changes or new media technologies could also be bringing new marketing mechanisms [6], such as different voices from customers, employees, and senior managers or chief executive officers. Through blogs new products could be re-developed according to customers’ thoughts; in addition, re-planning strategy and vision for corporations include both intra and extra factors more than bearing in mind the voice-shaped new interaction relationship. Yet these developments have been curiously one-side, with the emphasis on communication as a means of announce rather than interaction process. The interpretive interactionism perspective may help to shape our understanding of how business blogs for interactive storytelling create productive results and shape important organizational outcomes.

When you review or post new writings on a blog, your friend or others receive your writings through blog technology such as very simple syndication (RSS) or track back received information [7-9].This connects interactivities including everyone in the whole world, which become a social network among these personals [10] that could create a similar minded group having a similarly viewpoint. This would further make a virtual community where you could comment some of your concerns that could be subjective. However, one must ask what kind of personal interaction through blogs will be created being that one often hears that someone’s blog recorded his/her happenings and the context for something emerged and through this experience’s transformation allowed other people to possibly meet with a similar situation [2]. Not only individual blogs but also business blogs may produce changes of communication [11]; knowledge sharing elicits implicit knowledge including the idea of customers developing new products and shaping new relationships for obtaining new relation outcomes online [12].

In recent years, explorations of the relationships between organizations, employees and customers have been viewed either through relationship marketing or customer relationship management. However, this study has begun to take a broader view of the interaction relationship from blogs that encompasses the impact of the interaction effect on one’s attitudes concerning his/her experience or interpretations of added self-impression. The implication is that an interpretive interaction process not only reinforces the relationship established but also obtains feedback or knowledge believes, as intended through long-term observation and more direct, two-way and dynamical communication through blogs. A business response customers’ expectation would be fast because they know
their wants through customers’ posts or comments [7, 9]; other ways express employees’ innovation and can communicate for free [7, 13]. However, in an interpretive interaction process, effect of interaction from an event that posted on a blog could bring modification of inhabited behaviors, trust development, and reverse beliefs. According to reference [14], “interpretive interactionism” for exploring relationships of blogs could offer additional understanding regarding how the interaction process creates new interpretations from other people and is brought to what effects. To that end, we must understand interpretive interactionism as a performance method and establish a model or framework to analyze interaction between organization, employees and customers on blogs, while examining their roles and benefits for this generation.

II. BLOG IS THE TRIGGER OF CONNECTION

Concerning blogs (Web logs, Weblogs) a great deal has been made of Web 2.0 because of its fast communication without borders and as being an easy-to-use publishing venue for ideas, opinions, politicians’ events, and interesting new products. It brings the effect that you could hear about your business or product and you will have a chance to understand their response [9]. When you create a topic through a blog, this develops a new marketing media that you could build and brand [6, 15, 16]. What’s more, it is possible to find an exclusive business model for your corporation and understand customers to reach customer/market segmentations as a sales research tool [17]. According to reference [16], who published a book entitled Blog marketing: The revolutionary new way to increase sales, build your brand, and get exceptional results, past blog have been brought to the foreground today in particular as regards commercial two-way communication; it would be helpful for all core technicians to make up a successful business through blogs that empower employees and generate innovation. This also adds visibility in that powerful tools touch customers’ minds and solve customers’ questions, which in time build good customer relationships and interactions [18], with the last year having seen growing importance in establishing a corporation’s or business’s blog. Reference [19] pointed out businesses may reach their organizational goals, solicit feedback including innovation from employees and criticism from customers; more importantly, it could connect customers on a completely different level and develop an ongoing relationship simultaneously. Blogs not only play new roles in competition as a marketing game [20] but also produce social influence as identification regarding the influential intent of blogs [21].

Reference [7] argued for the possible use of self-promoting one’s blog so that a business could also comply; blogs play the role of disclosure that uses product experience, information bureau or sharing of knowledge. According to [22], their research pointed out bloggers’ extraversion and self-disclosure traits affect the network size of personal-journal blogs, which shows a blog’s power for social networking and as a critical media for establishing relationships of internal or external networks. To share information and exchange knowledge of business blogs is an important usage factor [22, 23]; in business internal manners it could offer employees an site to express emotion and talk about some project or work task through he blog so that those experienced information could be provided value on experiences, skills or methods to provide new employees the ability to finish his/her job [13]; in other words, a new employee could better understand the culture of the office or organization to help employees as soon as assimilating to the workplace. In the product development phase of a business this is an important source of customers’ voice, as not conforming to customers’ expectations of products will make it impossible to survive in the market. Reference [23] pointed out building developers’ communities must involve interaction between company employees and customers via blogs through socialization, information sharing, help seeking, and teaching. This also involves learning four types for adopting business blog interaction that would include obtaining customer relations, product development and having community-driven innovation in practice; if their can continuously communicate among businesses, employees and customers through blogs, stakeholders’ value thereby obtain mutual benefit and a win-win relationship.

III. INTERACTION PROCESS TO CHANGE

A blog determines success or failure; it looks at a high mood that is the diffusion of high attractions or high effects made after all visitors are exposed. It is not only a measure of hits or times visited but also of click rate, which is how many visitors actually visited the blog in a day. What’s more, an A-list blog could be connecting a common blogosphere, via interest of this visitor’s issue, and that all other bloggers either directly clicked or indirectly known. These interaction processes from direct to indirect develop an internet network between bloggers that takes the shape of a social interaction network. Interaction processes such as identifying included identification and identity may be merely someone’s experience or method of solving and attitudes, but the interaction process could be producing many kinds of interpretations by everyone. In other words, in the process of interpretation of circumstances expressed primary as lived concepts of everyday life and the like reference [14] points out the process of setting forth the meaning of an event or experience (p.52). And this meaning includes the interaction of a person, an object, event, or process and the action taken toward that object, event, or process (p.53). According to reference [15]:

Interpretive interactionism attempts to make the meanings that circulate in the world of lived experience accessible to the reader... The focus of interpretive research is on those life experiences that radically alter and shape the meanings persons give to themselves and their experiences (p.1).

The mediation of the blog bridges this role and power whereby the interaction to sustain its existence is determined by its identified or cohered to reaction to change bloggers both internally and externally especially in business blogs. These characteristics of a business to generate creative and effective responses to emerging change bring new challenges and revise business strategy. In fact, the business blog could
be divided into three dimensions of organization, employee, and customers, which deepens our understanding of the interpretive interaction process of announcing through blogs. In other words, when a business posts new writings about a product, the organization or other information through the blog including the new interaction and new interpretation of this event encourages new cognition and changes someone’s behavior and belief.

Figure 1. Interpretive process [14].

This study proposes an interpretive process according to reference [14] that addresses some criteria for evaluating interpretations. Fig. 1 presents a process of interpretation including five phases of the interpretive process. First, deconstruction that it reads prior conceptions of a phenomenon, which reference [14] pointed out includes having been defined, observed, and analyzed. One could bring critical interpretation and present biases from existing phenomenon, and this phase deals with what has been done with the phenomenon in the past. Second, capturing deals with what is being done with the phenomenon in which could be presented experiences as they occur or as they have been reconstructed, and in one’s mind could be obtained via multiple impression. Third, when one is obtaining an impression, a bracketing of these impressions will be done for investigation and analysis, using someone’s experience or self-story to interpret these impressions and offer a tentative statement. Fourth is constructing the phenomenon, or putting the phenomenon back together in terms of its essential parts, pieces, and structures. Finally, there is a contextualizing of the phenomenon, or relocating the phenomenon back in the natural social world.

IV. DISCUSSION

In fact, it is important that people learn others’ experiences through sharing and also build up interactive relationships imperceptibly. If these experiences then influence some of the self’s thoughts and behavior, the influenced ones may receive these events by different means and interpret them through their own viewpoints and experiences. This process is a repetition of interpretations and interactions, in which people decode, collect personal experiences, compare, recombine and construct new experiences. This also provides new interpretations, as well as sharing them with others, receiving new opinions from others, re-deconstruction, re-collection, re-construction and re-interpretation.

Everyone may reshape his or her own thoughts and cognition during this repetitive process. Of course everyone may hold subjective self-cognition toward the world, but strong connections can be established imperceptibly among homogeneous societies. On the other hand, this enables people to interpret things more deeply and comprehensively through others’ objective interpretations, opinions and criticisms of things while they interact with homogeneous societies on the outside. Interactions and interpretations will become not only individuals’ one-sided thinking but also a reciprocal social relationship that is dynamic and has a feedback mechanism.

A. The Interactional Group Relationship through Blogs

From the organization, employee, and customer interaction process through the blog, first focused on organization, the intent is on showing organizational vision, strategy or market position which could be known by shareholders to be derived from it to make sense of their organizations. Through a blog, an organization could further communicate its views and ideas for shareholders in which they receive and comprehend a meaning and create new comments to offer the organization; consequently, the organization could redefine all of its variable planning to allow the organization to change existing dynamics and further allow it to remain competitive and flexible.

Employees assume an important role in an organization. Internally they can help to achieve organizational goals; externally they can be connected with customers so that they can communicate customers’ wishes to the organization and reconcile misunderstandings of both. Employees expressing some complaints or anecdotes of working or the boss through the blog may attract other people like other employees or customers to also share with each other. Therefore, an organization would be obtaining direct/indirect influences that encourage new marketing activities or new rules of competition marketing.

Finally, customers’ voices are an invaluable source for an organization as they are a medium for diffusion products or business visibility. When customers talk about some product or business/organization with talk about self-experience or other people’s experience through a self-blog this may be developing two direction effects: positive or negative word-of-mouth [24]. In positive word-of-mouth, they make talking points or share relative information [25] for people that want to understand a product or an organization and bring other promotion models. From another perspective, they are a monitor of organizational operations through negative word-of-mouth. Yet, if a business’s response to this activity can be turned back as threatening for an organization to create positive word-of-mouth and value-addition, then both customers and the organization reach a win-win situation.
B. Sequel Research Agenda

Different from the previous research on interactions, quite a few investigations have been focused on symbolic interactionism as the interactions among humans as being symbolic, such as languages, words, gestures, facial expressions, etc., all of which are intended for communication. The “interpretive interactionism” proposed by reference [14] combined traditional symbolic interactionism, Heidegger’s phenomenology and the traditions of hermeneutics, which could deepen the investigation of this study on the interaction among the organization, the employees and the customers. This study intends to answer the following questions. Based on the interaction among the three groups, will we see any individual differences in the way they interpret one specific event? How do they interpret? Do they interpret by individual experiences? How does the interaction process take place when they interpret, analyze and share with each other? Will they change their behavior, beliefs and cognition during the process? Because of the reciprocal influences during the interpretation and interaction process, will they come to an agreement on the interpretation? How do they converge and focus when diverse interpretations are generated? Can investigating the interactive interpretation process through the theory of “interpretive interactionism” really highlight the reciprocal relationship?

Later research of this paper will employ reference [14] in that thought that is only thick description could capture individuals’ voices, feelings, actions and meanings in the interaction, and thus present authenticity and reality. To apply thick descriptions in the interaction among the three groups, the foremost choice of business blogging will be one of the main questions in the investigation. Even though reference [16] proposed 7 types of business blogs, each of which has its own characteristics with each researcher defining diverse categories according to the study but reference [26] suggested that it was hard to categorize blogs because to apply thick descriptions in business blogs you would need to distinguish the subjects to be investigated first. Moreover, types of thick descriptions applied in the interactions would also need to be defined later in the study. Reference [14] proposed 10 types, including micro, macrohistorical, biographical, situational, relational, interactional, intrusive, incomplete, and glossed purely descriptive, and descriptive and interpretive. For example, the micro description only focuses on a simple interaction, experience or fragment of actions. These types have to be differentiated and well-defined in order to fit in with the purpose of the study. Finally, since the thick description is one effective kind of experiential statement, the validity problems in the qualitative research need to be better considered to make it contain thick descriptions that encompass each form and content, or focus dimension [14].

V. Conclusion

The business blog should play a key role in that it can be a communication tool, by which people communicate and exchange information. It helps a business to get in touch with previously unknowable aspects and to hear the voices deep in people’s minds. It is also a trigger that can be used to promote reformations in the organizations and inspire people. What having the blog brings are more directions of leaping thoughts and the discovery of new turning points in the market. This information technique has integrated effects and is much more powerful than the media’s diffusion effects and influences. The interaction among the organization, employees and customers on the blog reveals how the employees might think and respond when the organization proposes some market strategies or changes. It can even allow the customers to express their ideas and opinions when they are notified of the announcements sent by the organization. This reciprocal and interactive communication tool, which helps the business to hear different voices, will bring innovative thoughts and breakthrough to the business and thus keep it competitive.

This article’s aim was to not only establish an interpretive interaction process for the business blog but also to provide another theoretical perspective for interpretation of a relationship evaluation in a dynamic interaction process. Such construction of a framework for future research could deepen our understanding of interaction tugging action which may assist in finding optimal social connections through blogs. In other words, a business can employ this analysis to add to its entirety from long term observation research to allocate employee or customer changes in behavior, not to mention intention and interchangeable information with each other for an interactive process and not merely a snapshot inquiry.

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REFERENCES


