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DISAPPEARING INFORMATION ON PAPER: RETHINKING THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA OVERUSE IN DAILY-LIFE.

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DOI: 10.63442/ZYDF1264

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SPECULATIVE
PERSPECTIVES



Interactive Exhibition
Disappearing Information on Paper
NICE 2035 Neighbourhood, Shanghai, China

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, digital media devices have become an integral aspect of modern life. Electronic screens displaying dynamic images and vast amounts of information have become the main focus for most people. However, the overuse of digital media has decreased individuals' perception of daily life in physical situations, leading to a decline in the quality of real-life communication and community connection. "What if all information disappears from daily life print media?" This hypothetical scenario involves erasing all text and pictures from print media, leaving only digital media as a source of information. It raises concerns about how over-digitization affects our perception of the physical world. Parallel to this, research also explores the potential role of print media in creating and strengthening community life. This research uses speculative design methodology to curate the interactive exhibition "Disappearing Information on Paper" in the NICE2035 neighbourhood on Chifeng Road in Shanghai, China. The exhibits gathered from the local area employ playful visuals to trigger the audience to engage in interactive experiences. Such an interaction triggers a reflection on the over-digitization in daily life and imagines the future landscape of daily life in the NICE2035 neighbourhood. The exhibits refocus on the lives of social groups such as vendors and residents to strengthen new community connections in the neighbourhood. This research aims to discuss the effects of excessive digitization on daily life pictures at a time when virtual technologies are growing explosively and using print media to offer new insight and opportunities to strengthen local community connections.

Research Objectives

Digital media overuse has weakened people's attention and perception of real-life situations. It has also reduced community communication and emotional connection between individuals. In today's digital technology era, we researched using speculative design methodology to examine the effects of digital media overuse on our perception of daily life pictures. We also explored the role of print media in strengthening community connections. Our research aims to start a conversation and raise awareness about the effects of excessive digitization. Parallel to this, our research provides new perspectives on using print media to strengthen local community bonds.

Methodology and Tools

The project involves conducting field research to gain insights into print media usage in the NICE2035 neighbourhood. Information on paper-based media frequently found on Chifeng Road is gathered, which includes its location, function, information content, paper type, and print media ownership. Observing and conducting semi-structured interviews, we investigate how individuals living or working in the neighbourhood utilize digital and print media here.

After conducting research, the curators organize an interactive exhibit on print media in the NICE2035 neighbourhood. The exhibit aims to encourage visitors to reconsider the overuse of digital media in daily life and explore alternative reality. The exhibits encourage participants to pay closer attention to the print media in their neighbourhood, including the messages and emotions it conveys. Through this process, they gain a new perspective on the picture of daily life around them. By stimulating their imagination about the community's future, the paper-based exhibits prompt participants to reflect more deeply on real-life scenarios affected by digital media and how they might evolve.

Research Process

During the field research, we visited the Chifeng Road neighbourhood in Shanghai, China and gathered information on the various print media frequently found in the area. This included job postings, rental advertisements, restaurant menus, and pharmacy receipts, which provide a snapshot of the people who live and work in the neighbourhood. We captured images of these paper-based media to document their location, content, and paper type. Additionally, we interviewed vendors, residents, teachers, and students who work and live in the area to learn about their digital and paper media usage. We also collected paper media provided by the interviewees.

Using speculative design methodology, the research curated an interactive exhibition based on print media collected from the NICE 2035 neighbourhood, Disappearing Information on Paper. The research used silver ink to conceal all text and images on paper media, rendering it useless as an information medium. Silver ink is a material that can be scratched off to reveal the information written underneath while still covering the original content on the paper.

As visitors step into the exhibition space, they are drawn towards an assortment of neatly arranged papers in various sizes - the textual parts covered with a silver-coloured coating. Visitors, driven by curiosity, scratch off the coating to reveal the text underneath. This text is closely related to the daily life on Chifeng Road and includes advertising slogans from fried chicken restaurants, information about houses for rent, job announcements in print stores, and more. Despite being relevant to daily life, these texts are often overlooked in a world consumed by digital media. The richness of the content on these print media creates a collage of everyday life on Chifeng Road. As the viewer scratches away the coating, which is the hard way to access the textual information overlooked in everyday life, they read the content of these messages carefully and begin to reflect on their value to the Chifeng neighbourhood. This tactile interaction prompts participants to notice the daily life captured by paper media and evokes them to contemplate a future where digital information dominates the community.

Obtained Results

Our research has curated an interactive exhibition called "Disappearing Information on Paper" in the Chifeng Road neighbourhood of Shanghai, China. The purpose of this exhibition is to encourage participants to reflect on the effects of overusing digital media on our perception of daily life pictures. Through interactive and tactile means, the exhibition aims to spark visitors' curiosity and draw their attention back to the print media still in their community's daily life and the critical information and emotions it carries.

In today's world of explosive growth in virtual and digital technologies, this study takes a speculative design approach to discuss the impact of over-digitization on our perception of daily life. In parallel, it provides new perspectives on using print media to strengthen local community ties.



Field Notes on Preparing for the Exhibition.

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This contribution was presented at Cumulus Budapest 2024: P/References of Design conference, hosted by the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest, Hungary between May 15-17, 2024.

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ISBN Volume 1: 978-952-7549-02-5 (PDF)

ISBN Volume 2: 978-952-7549-03-2 (PDF)

DOI Volume 1: <https://doi.org/10.63442/IZUP8898>

DOI Volume 2: <https://doi.org/10.63442/TADX4016>

Conference Organisers

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest (MOME)

mome.hu

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