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Hyperreality as a tool for resources optimisation for postmodernist era

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Abstract

As consumer culture globalizes, there is also the sense, then, of the planetary limits to consumption: that we are literally consuming the planet and our human future at an unsustainable rate (an argument made by James Lovelock (2006) in The Revenge of Gaia). To understand the complexity of marketplace it is necessary to understand postmodern consumers especially in civil engineering related market place. According to Firat & Venkatesh (1993, p. 220), the postmodernism was inspired by a desire to become detached from all metanarratives that require conformity to a single way of perceiving reality. Postmodernists call for a diversity or multiplicity of narratives, a liberation from all conformity, and a freedom to experience as many ways of being as desired.

Hyperreality will help the civil engineering industry with an experience like we see in science fictions. Engineers can use the interactive experience and create an ambiance using sophisticated viewers. It will give a virtual experience of stepping into planned structures much before the execution. This paper would focus on hyperrealities as a tool for persuasion for consumers rather than using traditional tools which uses actual resources.

Postmodern world of hyperreality

In this world, the worker lives between autonomy and submission. He is autonomous to find new jobs, to empower himself and to move. But he is compelled to the passivity of induced consumption. He lives, produces and consumes artificiality. The rational activity of the worker is to operate in the hyperreality of the system and to enter the realm of floating significance, floating meanings and meaninglessness. It is to play with ambivalence, since the game has no stable rules (Coulter, 2007), and to adopt risk strategies, abandoning the radical objective position of the subject (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 150). Under the rule of the symbolic universe, we live on seduction and die of fascination (Bogard, 1990).

According to Firat and Shultz (2001) postmodern consumer has these characteristic traits. First is multiphrenic self in which the individual is encouraged to change the image frequently and therefore, he trying to adapt himself to new roles and new identities. Second is decentred subject where openness and tolerance to experience different lifestyle goals is encouraged. Objects would play a role in guiding the desires of the consumer (Baudrillard 1981). And lastly the need for Hyperreality as consumers would more willing to the idea that reality is a constructed singularity. Debord (1992) explains that the "Society of Spectacle" fosters the copy rather than the original, the true becoming a hypothesis and the false acquiring a new dimension. Baudrillard (1976, 1981), hyperreality corresponds to a reality created by simulation, this reality having neither origin, nor real, nor reality. The signs of the real replace the real, without being its equivalent. Thus, the tendency seeking to produce an increasingly real reality leads to a product which is neither false nor real, it is hyperreal. Previously contradictory dimensions, such as the true and the false, the real and the imaginary, can then merge into a same totality. (1985), hyperreality corresponds to a copy as perfect as its original, or even more perfect Cova and Cova (2002), hyperreality offers the characteristics, or even the advantages, of authentic things without their disadvantages. Africa (Shields, 2003:81), leisure spaces (Rodaway, 1994; Crozat, 2005), natural parks (Alessandro-d'Amato, 2008), urban outskirts etc, are only perceived through hyperreal reconstructions. These hyperreal spaces gives an intimate existence to the practised world. It is a sensual (Rodaway, 1994), in-corporated (Crang et al., 1999) or incarnated (De Barros, 2003) experience of the world for subjects who have become consumers.

Hyperreality and its uses

The notion of "hyperreality" refers to the fusion of physical and virtual realities, and the inability to distinguish them. Postmodern consumers adore being individual, they adore continually reinventing themselves through their consumption. They love to develop highly individualised identities, through continually fresh and exciting consumption experiences. In postmodernity, consumers seek different and local experience and they desire to belong to processes and experience immersion in thematic settings rather than merely encounter finished products and images. Therefore, marketing in civil engineering designs has to involve the consumer by considering him as a producer of experiences (Cova, 1996).

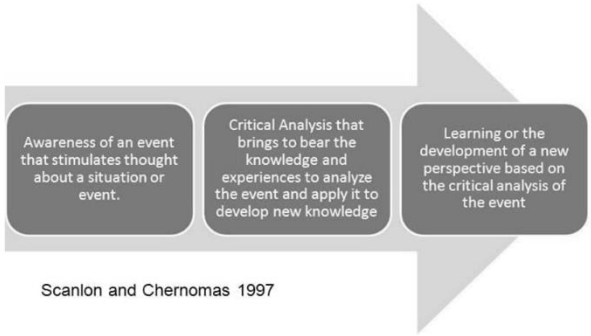
In postmodernity, the consumer is not a passive target for image marketing but an active link in the continual production of meanings. He calls for an experience-based designing that emphasizes interactivity, connectivity and creativity. To consume becomes an act of production of experiences, identities or images of itself and not a fact of destruction. (Cinotti, 2007; Filser, 2002). The consumer is an emotional being, centred on the realization of pleasant experiences.

The universal transformation from Disneyfication (Eco, 1985) to Disneylandification (Brunel, 2006), from cinema to theme parks and heritage reconstructions (Rodaway, 1994; Crozat, 2009), from cyberspace (Kitchin, 1998) to virtual reality (McLellan, 1996), and now to politics (Maigret, 2008), creates a world where image takes precedence over reality: in the transformation of tramps into homeless people, of land into reconstituted GIS reality, of countryside into rural landscape etc., hyperreality offers a reality which is more real and more satisfying than the one that gave birth to it .

The hyperreal world is safe as the contextualisation in socio-spatial systems is risk-free (Spring, 2004) or the perfection of design and the totalisation of an orderly world (Schmoll, 2000:43-44; Shields, 2003:130). Consumers are agile and their experiences crossing channels, combine cognitive and experiential aspects (Collin-Lachaud and Vanheems, 2016). AR involves the real world since it captures the scene in which the user moves and it provides them information (Khan et al., 2015). By using systems and interfaces, it seeks to improve the external physical world by adding contextualized digital information which essentially brings into play the tactile, auditory and visual senses (Smart, Cascio and Paffendorf, 2007).

Model from Literature

For fields like civil engineering and designs which has cultural aspects, hyperreality enables to (re)invent a story, an experience, if the proposed renewal is able to be relevant for new consumers while it still able to keep those previously acquired (Drummond and al., 2018). In addition, value can be created through hyperreality. Organisations can pre-test the consumption of their offer by proposing to live an experience by proxy in other times and places in order to assess its real value, this experience having to be positive and memorable (Edvardsson and al., 2005). Immersion into those realities produced by hyperreality would be even greater if they are unfaithful to the real world, because the individual is not obliged to respect the limits that this world imposes. Therefore, hyperreality is one category of reality among others (Thumser, 2016). To study the effect of virtual reality the three-stage reflection model (Scanlon and Chernomas 1997) can used.



Methodology

The traits identified in postmodernists were assimilated in the questionnaire and a check for minimalistic behaviour was done first. This was done through Belks's model for materialism. The customer segment who showed a minimalistic behaviour were further interviewed in a focus group for identifying postmodernist behaviour. These consumers exposed to traditional as well as virtual walk through of different home designs and then were asked about their perception of hyper reality viz a viz the traditional designs.

The experiment was done in different phases, the first phase only hyperreal prototypes were used i.e. 3D 360-degree video recordings of real situations to intensify a sense of realism in consumers. For our use, we video-recorded an apartment complex which lacked a proper parking, but had a pedestrian crossing to the nearby temple. Importing the recorded videos, the scene was augmented through dynamic overlays which also included 3D-modeled objects of the environment and people cycling around and walking to the temple with visualizations of evening rituals and beggars sitting on the street. The content of the digital offer can therefore be structured in two dimensions. The first one differentiates factual, static information that can be communicated by text or image, and simulations relying more on visual and sound animation, which is usually interactive.

	Objective of Simulation	Customer Satisfaction	Demand for the neighbourhood
Before Simulation	Acquaintance about the apartment	Low	Low
	Attract customers	Low	Low
During Simulatio	Inform the customer	Good	High

n	Give experience to the consumer	Very good	High
After Simulation	Study purchase behaviour	Very good	High
	Referrals	Very good	High

Table 1: Use of hyper reality to check customer satisfaction

Results and Concluding Remarks

Streaming the visualisation gave insights to the various road design concepts, and increased the demand among customers to live in a spiritual neighbourhood as they could sense the issues of dealing with street side beggars and traffic congestion by navigating in the 360-degree video, supported through the VR system. The neighbourhood which was facing a decrease in demand due to its lack of systematic road layout, was now seen as a sustainable co-living space which had a cycle path and a pinch of spirituality in its surroundings. Customers gave recommendation for having a park near the apartment for further enhancing the surrounding and giving a space for the beggars to rest. Digital technology can also be useful after the visit to deepen knowledge about the works of arts, artists, place and/or to explore some of the elements left out during the physical visit.

Baudrillard says that the use value of an object, its utility regarding the satisfaction of certain needs and its exchange value, its market value or price – have become irrelevant in comparison with its sign value. For example, a wedding ring has sign value which is incomparable with its exchange value, and has no use value (Lechte, 2002). The likelihood of purchasing a home where the respondents were given a walk through was observed to be more as compared to the designs which had traditional designs. Satisfaction level of consumers increased with a greater number of walk throughs through. They could remember the details more in case of hyperreality and suggest changes precisely. The probability of referral also increased in case of walk throughs. In Simulacra and Simulation (1981), Baudrillard says that the illusion of the system is to provide a perfect explanation detached from imperfect reality.

Hyperreality interweaves the real-world and visuals to give field workers and civil engineers valuable data such as design specifications, consumer needs etc., making their job on field easy. As changes can be made at conceptual level, therefore the overall cost of manhours and resources reduces significantly.

Virtual Experience + Reflection = Subjective

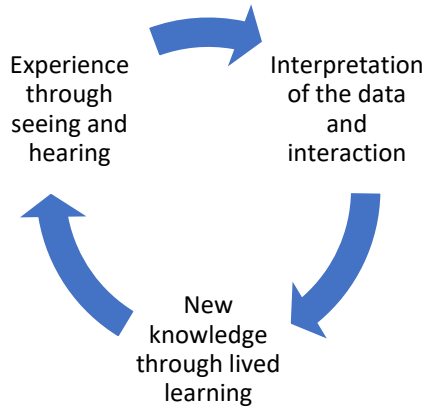


Figure 2. The outcome model of Subjectivity

Every construction project includes design being altered into reality, and intangible ideas being translated into physical objects. Since every project is inimitable, site-specific and labour-based, intensive and accurate "translation" of the design data is essential. The translation process is a constant scuffle. It's inherently complex and allows little room for error, since incorrect interpretation of information often leads to costly errors, quality problems, and redraft. Digital 3D models can make the information less intangible, and help explain the design. Mixed Reality technology hazes the line and the design data itself is superimposed on the physical environment, lessening the requirement for translation and dipping individual interpretation. The user imagines the design in the framework, and can better comprehend, interact with, and implement the required actions in real time. The immediate visual feedback makes the production control process more effective and reveals any deviation in real time.

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