Examining Social Presence In A Professional Online Conference

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22nd Teaching Colleges and Community Online Conference
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Who Am I?

I’m a recent doctoral graduate from the Learning Design and Technology Department at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and the new statewide Hawaii Agricultural Food Safety Program Manager.
Agenda

01 Study
02 Themes
03 Implications
04 Recommendations
Introduction

Professional online conferences...

- interchange of ideas, talking and networking with colleagues, and sharing and learning
- run on a real time schedule over a defined period of time,
- interaction and a community of learning.
Social Presence Theory
John Short, Ederyn Williams & Bruce Christie - 1976

Technology mediating your interaction with Bob

1800s
Telegram
Hello

1900s
Letter

1970s
Telephone call
Text-based Computer Message

Hello

Hello
Video Conference
Mobile-Video Call

2000+

Hello
(Face to face communication)

Your perceived awareness of and distance from Bob

Timeless
What is Social Presence?
Introduction

What is Social Presence?
• the degree to which a person is perceived as a ‘real person’ in computer mediated communication.
Without presenters and attendees being physically at the venue, or being able to stroll through the poster rooms and attend the sessions,
Without presenters and attendees being physically at the venue, or being able to stroll through the poster rooms and attend the sessions, how do they construct and convey social presence in a professional online conference?
The purpose of this mixed-method, multiple case study was to examine how participants manifest their social presence in a professional online conference.
Research Questions

Research Question 1: How is social presence manifested in the volume and patterns of interaction in a professional online conference?

Research Question 2: How do attendees and presenters perceive social presence in a professional online conference?

Research Question 3: How does social presence influence the conference experience of attendees and presenters in a professional online conference?
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Affective
• Expression of emotions
• Use of humor
• Self-disclosure

Cohesive
• Vocatives
• Use of inclusive pronouns
• Phatics / Salutations

Interactive
• Continuing a thread
• Quoting from other messages
• Referring explicitly to other messages
• Asking questions
• Complimenting / Expressing appreciation

Knowledge & Experience
• Academic
• Level
• Personal
• Professional
• Additional Resources

Instructor Involvement
• Response to student
• Class Contribution
• Instructions
• Redirect
• Digression
• Reference to Instructor
Aloha!

The 21st Annual TCC Worldwide Online Conference: April 19-21, 2016
TCC, Technology, Colleges and Community, is a worldwide online conference attended by university and college personnel including faculty, academic support staff, counselors, student services personnel, students, and administrators.

Join our 21st edition of this annual event to share your expertise, experiences, and knowledge relevant to the use of information technology in teaching, learning, innovation, and academic services. This event is very helpful and “friendly” to novices. It provides you with a strong foundation about teaching and learning with modern technology.

We have unlimited site licenses for group, campus and related institutional participants.

TCC PreConference Session #1 - Recorded on February 25, 2016

Make the Future! (Create a virtual Makerspace)
If you are a tech novice, have never participated in an online conference before, or just want to learn how exactly to participate in an online event, this free pre-conference event will give you the knowledge and skills needed.

Pre-Conference Interactive Webinar #1 – View the Recording

TCCHawaii @tcchawaii
TCCfx 2016 will be held on Saturday, November 5! Join us at 1:30pm (HAST) More details coming soon! #tccfx16
(about 2 days ago)

TCCHawaii @tcchawaii
TCCfx 2016 is Coming on November 5 (1:30pm HAST) Keynote by Hana Omar from the UN Development Programme...
https://t.co/0VE0bN1Md1
(about 2 days ago)
Research Question 1
• Word Count & Linguistic Inquiry
• Transcript Content Analysis
• Constant Comparison Analysis

6 Sessions over 3 days

Online Questionnaire
23 Questions
51 participants

Research Question 2

Online Interviews
10 Presenters
9 Attendees

Research Question 3
Research Question 1: How is social presence manifested in the volume and patterns of interaction in a professional online conference?
Thanks for listening and participating.
Thank you.
# Social Presence of Attendees In 6 Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Knowledge &amp; Experience</th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocatives (27)</td>
<td>Personal (19)</td>
<td>Paralanguage (83)</td>
<td>Compliments (142)</td>
<td>Reference to Presenter (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers Help (21)</td>
<td>Professional (17)</td>
<td>Humor or sarcasm (30)</td>
<td>Feedback (120)</td>
<td>Reference to Attendee (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greetings (7)</td>
<td>Academic (6)</td>
<td>Self-disclosure (6)</td>
<td>Appreciation (71)</td>
<td>Session Contribution (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group References (5)</td>
<td>Level (2)</td>
<td>Emotion (4)</td>
<td>Inquiry (37)</td>
<td>Digression (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sharing (5)</td>
<td>Additional Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>Disagreement (3)</td>
<td>Instructions (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Redirect (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Community:** Vocatives, Offers Help, Greetings, Group References, Social Sharing
- **Knowledge & Experience:** Personal, Professional, Academic, Level, Additional Resources
- **Affective:** Paralanguage, Humor or sarcasm, Self-disclosure, Emotion
- **Interaction:** Compliments, Feedback, Appreciation, Inquiry, Acknowledgement, Disagreement
- **Presenter:** Reference to Presenter, Reference to Attendee, Session Contribution, Digression, Instructions, Redirect

**Statistics:**
- Total sessions: 6
- Total interactions: 392
- Total community interactions: 65
- Total knowledge & experience interactions: 48
- Total affective interactions: 123
- Total interaction interactions: 392
- Total presenter interactions: 22
**Social Presence Indicators**

1. **Compliments or Agreement** (142)
   - Compliments others or agrees with the contents of others’ messages.

2. **Feedback/Answer** (120)
   - Response or reaction to another chat post.

3. **Paralanguage** (83)
   - Features text to convey emotion (e.g., emoticons, excessive exclamation, and ALL CAPS).

4. **Appreciation** (71)
   - Expresses “Thank you” to acknowledge the presenters and other attendees.
Total Affective Association Responses

- Paralanguage
- Humor or sarcasm
- Self-Disclosure
- Emotion

Social Presence of Attendees
I just sent you that link in the chat box.

Thanks Lisa!
Great job. Thanks for the info.

To answer your question…

Social Presence of Attendees

Total Interaction Intensity Responses

- Compliments or Agreement
- Feedback/Answer
- Appreciation
- Inquiry
- Acknowledgement
- Disagreement
My K-12 training has helped me to help undergraduates

I personally don’t like Facebook
Trisha, your feedback is so natural and personal.

Great slides and I appreciate the book you recommended.
# Social Presence of Attendees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Total Chat Posts</th>
<th>SP Indicators</th>
<th>SP Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F*</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE A (SPD 96)

DEVELOPMENT
Moderate paced

AFFECTIVE
Very little personal disclosure and instances of emotion

INTERACTION
Used polling but did not post results. Showed appreciation

MONITORING CHAT BOX
No manifestations of acknowledgement or feedback

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Provided some links to URLs and publications

Social Presence of Presenters
Social Presence of Presenters

CASE B (SPD of 106)

DELIVERY
Fast paced, dynamic, visual presentation

AFFECTIVE
Personal and enthusiastic

INTERACTION
High participation with attendees, using guessing games

MONITORING CHAT BOX
Immediate response to attendee posts in chat box

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Provided multiple links to URLs and publications
CASE C (SPD of 249)

- **COMMUNITY**: Highest levels of creating a sense of community
- **AFFECTIVE**: More formal and academic
- **INTERACTION**: High acknowledgement of attendees.
- **MONITORING CHAT BOX**: Absence of co-presenter assistance
- **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**: Shared professional, academic, personal backgrounds
Research Question 2: How do attendees and presenters perceive social presence in a professional online conference?
Questionnaire

Response Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>94.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>3.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>1.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographics
The majority of participants who participated in the survey represented first time TCC Conference attendees.

- **Gender**: 42 women and 9 men
- **Attendance**: First time at TCC Conference
- **Age**: Between 35 and 44
- **Profession**: Professor or Academic
Affective Expression

Online conference sessions are an excellent medium for social interaction.

I was able to form distinct individual impressions of some attendees in this session.

Getting to know attendees gave me a sense of belonging in the session.

Open Communication

I felt comfortable conversing through this online medium.

I felt comfortable participating in the discussions through this online medium.

I felt comfortable interacting with attendees in this session.

Group Cohesion

I felt that attendees in the session acknowledged my point of view.

Chat discussions helped me to develop a sense of community.

Chat discussions tend to be more impersonal than f2f conference discussions.

Perceived Learning

I am stimulated to do additional reading or research on topics discussed in this online session.

I experienced new learning or have new questions as a result of participating.

Presenter Involvement

The presenter(s) created a feeling of online community.

The presenter(s) facilitated discussions in the session.

I was able to form individual impressions of the presenter(s) in this session.

I felt comfortable conversing with the presenter(s) through this online medium.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with the interaction with other attendees in this session</td>
<td>82 %</td>
</tr>
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<td>Satisfaction with participating in the chat discussions in this session</td>
<td>86 %</td>
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<td>96 %</td>
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Satisfaction with the interaction with other attendees in this session: 82 %

Satisfaction with participating in the chat discussions in this session: 86 %

Satisfaction with your learning in this session: 96 %

Satisfaction with the presenter(s) in this session: 100 %
Satisfaction with the presenter(s) in this session.

Satisfaction with participating in the chat discussions in this session.

Satisfaction with your learning in this session.

Satisfaction with the interaction with other attendees in this session.

82 %

96 %

86 %

100 %
Attendees reporting higher perceived social presence in the session also perceived they learned more from the session than attendees with low perceived social presence.
Attendees reporting higher perceived social presence in the session also perceived a high level of presenter involvement in the session.
Attendees reporting higher perceived social presence in the session also perceived a higher level of satisfaction.
Research Question 3: How does social presence influence the conference experience of attendees and presenters in a professional online conference?
Presenter Interviews

- Presenter presence
- Interaction
- Monitoring the chat box
- Online community
- Moderators
Presenters described the need to create a sense of themselves as a ‘real’ person to the attendees.
I think about how do we make someone, who’s not in the same physical area of us, feel like we are near them, listening to them, talking to them, interacting with them, and maybe not as if we were specifically there, but maybe as if we were present in terms of sharing some collaborative space.
Presenters described the need to ensure a high degree of interactivity and participation.
And we also spread our presentation with opportunities for questions. And we tried to engage specifically with what some of the participants said... So we kind of circled back to some of the comments that were made. And even in this short presentation, it was only 20 minutes, we tried to have a bit of participation and connect to people by name, and personalizing a little bit that way.
Presenters viewed their feedback to attendees as an important communication strategy.
And now I see that we should have [monitored the chat box]. It's really hard to present and keep tabs on the chat at the same time...At one of the very worst conference presentations that I had ever attended, nobody paid any attention to the chat window. Nobody answered questions that we were posting, and they just dropped the ball across the board. Presenters need to be paying attention to the chat.
Attendee Interviews

- Presenter presence
- Other attendee social presence
- Monitoring and responding in the chat box
- Online community
- Own social presence
- Audio vs text communication
Attendees were conscious about how the content of their chat posts would reflect on their own presence.
I didn’t want to appear elitist. I didn’t want to appear to be a know it all. I like to have challenging discussions in the chat. I certainly wouldn’t want to be perceived as squashing somebody else’s ideas.
Attendees spent time trying to interpret other attendees through their messages.
When I see people type, or when I read their name, my mind kind of tends to drift to a certain imagination of what they may look like and be like.
Attendees did not perceive the absence of vocal and verbal cues in the chat box to be an issue in creating their presence or perceiving others’ presence.
Attendee Interviews

I am very comfortable to be in the chat and make my ideas clear and to understand what other people actually might mean when maybe their tone is a little bit off.
Implications

Within the confines of time typically faced by presenters in online conference sessions, both the presenter and attendees were able to manifest social presence in a short time frame.
Implications

Appreciation

Feedback
Integrate quick social activities to establish connection and relationships before jumping into the content of the presentation.
Practices for Online Presenters to Consider

Integrate quick social activities to establish connection and relationships before jumping into the content of the presentation.

Provide interactivity within the presentation through questions or polls that invite learner participation.
Practices for Online Presenters to Consider

- Integrate quick social activities to establish connection and relationships before jumping into the content of the presentation.
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- Integrate one or two technology tools to enrich the session content.
Integrate quick social activities to establish connection and relationships before jumping into the content of the presentation.

Provide interactivity within the presentation through questions or polls that invite learner participation.

Integrate one or two technology tools to enrich the session content.

Model social presence cues, such as humor, encouragement and addressing a person by name.
Implications

Practices for Online Presenters to Consider

- Integrate quick social activities to establish connection and relationships before jumping into the content of the presentation.
- Provide interactivity within the presentation through questions or polls that invite learner participation.
- Integrate one or two technology tools to enrich the session content.
- Model social presence cues, such as humor, encouragement and addressing a person by name.
- Include a moderator or facilitator to ensure the active participation of attendees in the chat discussions.
Include a biography that combines professional, academic and personal information about yourself at the beginning of the presentation.
Implications

Practices for Online Presenters to Consider

Include a biography that combines professional, academic and personal information about yourself at the beginning of the presentation.

Include a photo of themselves in the introductory slide.
Implications

Practices for Online Presenters to Consider

- Include a biography that combines professional, academic and personal information about yourself at the beginning of the presentation.
- Include a photo of yourselves in the introductory slide.
- Provide ways for participants to connect with you after the conference ends via email or social media (e.g., twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn).
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- Include a photo of themselves in the introductory slide.
- Provide ways for participants to connect with you after the conference ends via email or social media (e.g., twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn).
- Provide prompt and continuous feedback either verbally or in the chat box.
- Use a tone of voice that is engaging, friendly, and positive to portray a positive sense of self.
Recommendations for Future Studies

- How important are various indicators of presenter presence for attendees in a session?
- What indicators of presence do participants consider to be most important in a session?
- Does the type of presentation influence the type of presence manifested by presenters and attendees?
- What influence does gender have on the conference dynamics?
We want to reaffirm that we are real people taking up space in the real world. Just as a selfie is how we want to be seen…
Have you considered...

I had a similar experience.

I had a similar experience.

Great discussion.

Could I contact you about that?

Last year at TCC....

thanks so much for that data.

What about?

...social presence is how we want to be perceived online.
Questions?

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Linkedin: luisafcastro
#tcc22nd

Join Lucy MacDonald for a special TCC 2017 Pre-conference webinar. March 15, 1400 HST. #tcc22nd

TCCHawaii @tcchawaii
TCC 2017 Pre-Conference: A New Way of Looking at Apps
March 15 at 2pm (HST)
Free
Details: 2017.tcconlineconference.org/pre-conference/
Chat with us!

Private messages can be viewed by Moderators, just so you know.

Type your message here and press Enter to send.
Polls, smiles and handraising
You have a voice!

Click on the Talk button. We won’t be using Video.