The Differential Effects Of Technological Cues On Elaboration

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ABSTRACT

There is an abundance of user reviews available online about anything, ranging from commercial products to professors. According to the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), users can elaborate on the relevant information as long as they have the motivation and the cognitive ability to do so. However, the extent of information found online can be so overwhelming that it may exceed the cognitive capacity of its seeker, and cause an overload. We propose that technological cues can help users identify the most relevant and useful information. The hypotheses were tested using 39 students in a study based on a professor-review website. Findings suggest that sorting the reviews by their helpfulness interacts with ability in determining the participants’ extent of elaboration. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.