Agents with Faces:
A Study on the Effects of Personification of Software Agents

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Abstract

It is still an open question whether software agents should be personified in the interface. In order to study the effects of faces and facial expressions in the interface, a series of experiments was conducted to compare subjects' responses to and evaluation of different faces and facial expressions.
The experimental results obtained demonstrate that: 1) personified interfaces help users engage in a task, and are well suited for an entertainment domain. 2) people's impressions of a face in a task are different from ones of the face in isolation. Perceived intelligence of a face is determined not by the agent's appearance but by its competence. 3) there is a dichotomy between user groups which have opposite opinions about personification.
Thus, agent-based interfaces should be flexible to support the diversity of users' preferences and nature of tasks.

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