

"Making 'The Daily Me': Technology, economics and habit in the mainstream assimilation of personalized news"

IAMCR Annual Conference, Portugal, 18-22 July 2010

Neil Thurman





Photograph: Berenice Abbott



Definitions

""Adaptive interactivity"—Deuze (2003)

"Registrational interactivity"—Jensen (1998)



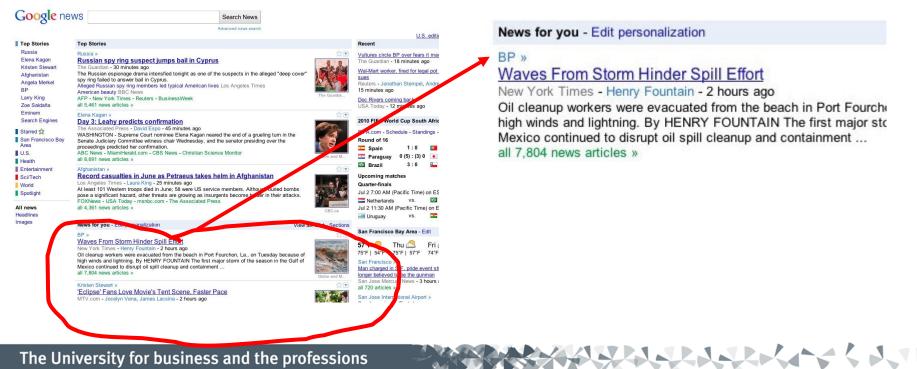
News Personalization: A Definition

"A form of user-to-system interactivity that uses a set of technological features to adapt the content, delivery, and arrangement of a communication to individual users' explicitly registered and / or implicitly determined preferences"



'The Daily Me': has its time come?

"The new heart of the homepage is something we call 'News for you': a stream of headlines automatically tailored to your interests." —The Official Google Blog, June 2010





'The Daily Me': has its time come?

"World's First Individualised Newspaper to Launch" —MediaBizNet, October, 2009







Lack of scholarship

"work has yet to address fully the more contemporary trends towards . . . personalization"

Barbie Zelizer, 2009



Qualitative Interviews





Two forms of personalization

- 1. Explicit personalization—readers register their own content preferences
- **2. Implicit personalization**—readers' content preferences determined for them, by software



Explicit Personalization: RSS feeds

	Politics: Labour + Climate change guardian.co.uk 14 unread	Next unread More 🔻
New V	★ Title ▼ Older Three in four UK voters believe climate change is important problem – poll Ed Miliband attacks Tory climate 'saboteurs' Government gives go-ahead to smart meters Letters: Tory indecision and division over Europe Tories wobble on 10:10 at local level Letters: Climate needs to change before Copenhagen Cheers to the climate activists, it's been a week to remember	M Date 17:02 15/12/2009 09:10 04/12/2 11:46 03/12/2 00:05 06/11/2 14:11 21/10/2 23:05 20/10/2 08:29 12/10/2
	Three in four UK voters believe climate change is important problem – * 17:02 15/12/2009, Tom Clark, & climate change, climate change scepticism, conservatives, copenhagen climate 2009, david cameron, editorial, environment, global climate talks, gordon brown, green politics, labour, opinion polls, uk news, Politics: Labour + Climate change guardian.co.uk •	change conference $^{\circ}$
	New Guardian/ICM survey shows Britons overwhelmingly reject view that Copenhagen conference is panicking about threat	an exaggerated
	Three in four British voters believe Gordon Brown and world leaders are on an important mission at the climate chang Copenhagen, according to a new Guardian/ICM poll.	ge conference in
	Voters overwhelmingly reject the view of climate change sceptics that world leaders "are panicking about an exagger close to half of the electorate believes that the leaders – including Brown, who arrives at the summit today – need to economic growth, too.	
	When ICM asked voters to say which of three statements most closely represented their view, 45% agreed that "wo	orld leaders are trying



Explicit Personalization: RSS feeds

Drive 3% of traffic at BBC News website

"Poor quality . . . lumpy feeds", problems with the accuracy of publication times, some didn't work—**Ed Roussel, Telegraph.co.uk**

"The heat and light has been created by consumers of vast amounts of information who want to keep track of 250 sites a day . . . Levels of consumption among normal people are completely different" —**Neil McIntosh, Guardian.co.uk**



Explicit Personalization: Email newsletters

inage all alerts sent to y	ou by the Financial Times	in one place		
Keyword alerts Com	pany news & price alerts	Portfolio & index alerts		
Velcome to the Alerts	Hub			
lease confirm your del	ivery preferences before se	etting up alerts.		
erting by keyword allows mail when articles are pu		ories published about spec	ific topics. Get notified	via
escription		Delivered		
	ama	Delivered]	00
Description Green Stimulus" AND Ob /odafone AND iPhone NO				00
Green Stimulus" AND Ob /odafone AND iPhone NO		Immediately]]	
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Interactive	Quick links
Video	Special reports
Blogs	Mergermarket
Podcasts	How to spend it
Interactive graphics	Sonicos



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← →) C ☆ http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/interactive/2010/jan/29/big-garden-birdwatch-bird-song	► 🗗 - 🖋 -
🖳 Primary school league 🕒 Back to the homepage 🌔 minimus down trouser 👿 Magento - Wikipedia, 👪 Eldorado National For 🍕 Beaver Creek Nordic 🔧 google products typol 🕒 New Tab	» 📋 Other bookmarks
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Paddy Allen, Jessica Aldred and Roger Tooth guardian.co.uk, Friday 29 January 2010 12.13 GMT

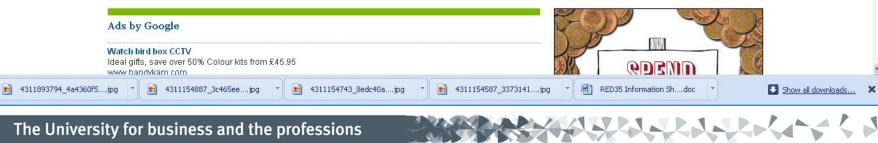
Wren

The wren has a powerful voice for its tiny size - when it sings its whole body quivers with the effort. Individual songs and volumes vary, but generally the song begins with a few preliminary notes, then runs into a trill, slightly ascending, and ends in full clear notes or another trill Photograph: Getty





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Explicit Personalization: 'Non-linear interactives'

BUDGET GAME

How Would You Cut \$591 Million From the D.C. Budget?

The District of Columbia is in the process of balancing its budget for fiscal 2010 in a year when, because of the poor economy, it will collect 13 percent less revenue than the \$5.8 billion necessary to keep spending on services at the current level. Mayor Adrian M. Fenty (D) recently proposed a budget of \$5.4 billion that combines spending reductions with increases of some taxes and fees to close the city's \$777 million revenue gap. So how would you handle the budget? Set your revenue and spending priorities below - **balancing the budget to within \$50 million** - then save it and compare it with other readers' decisions. (Note: Potential budget impacts are meant only as examples and may not reflect city budgeting priorities.)

SET REVENUES		SET	TEXPENDITURES	SAVE AND COMPARE	E		
Revenues (in millions)	Proposed Budget	Your Budget		ken out of personal income, ta: sses. It generally is the most p			
Income Taxes	\$1,486	\$1,412 (-\$74)	2009 Budget for this Are	2009 Budget for this Area: \$1,487M 2010 Preliminary Budget: \$1,486M			
Property Taxes	\$1.854	\$1,854		\$1,412			
	<i><i>q</i> 1,001</i>	+ - ,	MAJOR DECREASE	U	MINOR INCREASE	MAJOR INCREASE	
Sales and Excise Taxes	\$870	\$870	Cut to \$1,263M - City could drop the franchise tax entirely.	Cut to \$1,412M - A 5 percent cut would require trimming	An additional \$74 million would allow the city to	Increase to \$1,709M - Increasing income taxes by 15 percent	
Other	\$1,021	\$1,021	 Alternately, if applied personal and corporate taxes, it could encourag consumer spending an make the city more ention as a place to locate a business. 	the budget, and might increase city layoffs. - It might also prevent	 retain more employees and programs currently facing cuts, such as health clinics in northeast Washington. Higher income taxes could reduce consumer spending and cause more businesses to leave the District. 	would cover more than a third of the District's budget gap. - Increasing the income tax burden significantly could negatively impact the city's middle-class residents.	
Total	\$5,231	\$5,157 (-\$74)	REVENUES \$5,157M (-\$74)	EXPENDIT \$5,82		BALANCE -\$665M You have a deficit.	



Explicit Personalization: 'Non-linear interactives'

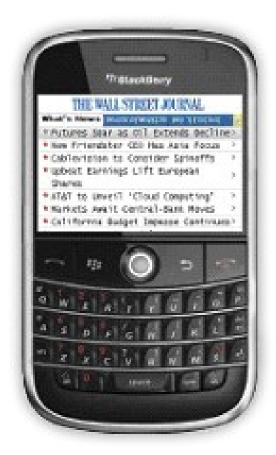
"Enormously popular"—Steve Herrmann, BBC News website

'A priority'—Guardian.co.uk, Sky News online

'Flash skills in demand'—Neil McIntosh, Guardian.co.uk



Explicit Personalization: Personalizable mobile editions







Explicit Personalization: 'Widgets'

Enclose Enclose Times Enclose Build Your Times Enclose	Vidgets BETA
1 Select from the list of options below.	2 View your widget.
FEED 1 FEED 2 FEED 3 C Browse Home Page © Search 10,000+ NYTimes feeds //topics.nytimes.com/top/news/national. Show	BARACK OBAMA LONDON SYMPHO ALASKA NEWS • Recombobulate America • Bringing Sexy Back • In Speech, Obama to Admit Missteps in First Year • Opposite of Bold • Adults Only, Please • Lawmakers Hunt for Ways to Rekindle Hiring • Democrats Put Lower Priority on Health Bill • Obama's Measures for Middle Class • Bernanke Is Gaining Supporters • Obama to Seek Spending Freeze to Trim Deficits

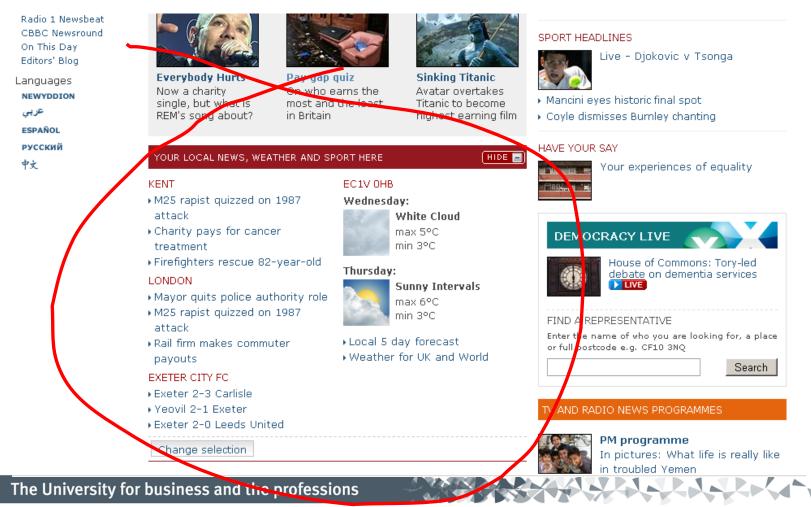


Explicit Personalization: 'SMS alerts'

MY ACCOUNT > CREATE AN ALERT > NE	WS ALERT			My Account FAQs
			AAA	How to Reset Your Password »
Cuasta Vary	and Alant		<u>~</u> \\\ <i>V[]</i>	How to Change Your E-Mail Address »
Create Keyw	ord Alert		~ /	How to Subscribe / Unsubscribe to E-Mail »
				Order Home Delivery »
				How to Update Your Personal Information »
				=
STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR ALE	RT			Contact Us
WITH ALL of the words or phrases	soccer		Anywhere 💌	
	Example: If you are interest	ed in iazz music. Ente	y.	
	Jazz	ow might mucho. Ento		Home Delivery »
AND WITH ANY of the words or	Norwich City		Anywhere 💌	
phrases	1			
	Example: Specifically, about performances. Enter Birdlar			 Use quotes around phrases and names. Avoid common words like "and", "the" and "or".
		, Diao 11010		 Commas are optional .(If you use commas with the
AND WITHOUT ANY of the words or	Arsenal		Anywhere 💌	
phrases	Example: But you don't want any articles about the			marks). * Any field you leave blank will be ignored.
	Utah Jazz: Enter basketbal	l, Utah		
Narrow your topic to articles in one	or more sections: (optional, l	out recommended):		
f you do not select a section, your top	pic will be matched against al.	sections		
🗖 International	Education	🗖 Dining	& Wine	<u>\.</u>
🗖 National / Washington	🗖 Obituaries	🗖 Home (& Garden	
🗖 Business / Technology	🗖 Editorials / Op-Ed	🗖 Fashioi	n & Style / Weddings	
🗖 Science	Letters	🗖 Magazii	ne	
🗖 Health	🗖 Arts / Movies	🗖 Week ir	n Review	
🗖 Sports	🗖 Books	🗖 Automo	biles	
New York Region	Travel	🗖 Real Es	1 - 1 -	18748



Explicit Personalization: 'Homepage customization'





Explicit Personalization: 'Homepage customization'

Radio 1 Newsbeat CBBC Newsround On This Day Editors' Blog

anguages

عربي



Everybody Hurts Now a charity single, but what is REM's song about?



Pay gap guiz On who earns the most and the least in Britain



Sinking Titanic Avatar overtakes Titanic to become highest earning film



PORT HEADLINES

Live - Djokovic v T

Mancini eyes historic final spot

Coyle dismisses Burnley chanting

"Probably the most popular thing we've launched over the last year or so in terms of user feedback"—Pete Clifton, BBC News website

M25 rapist quizzed on

- attack
- Charity pays for cancer treatment
- Firefighters rescue 82-year-old
- LONDON
- Mayor quits police authority role
- M25 rapist quizze attack
- Rail firm makes commuter payouts
- EXETER CITY FO
- Exeter 2-3 Carlisle
- Yeovil 2-1 Exeter
- Exeter 2-0 Leeds United

Change selection



Sunny Intervals max 6°C min 3°C

Local 5 day forecast Weather for UK and World



FIND A REPRESENTATIVE

Enter the name of who you are looking for, a place or full postcode e.g. CF10 $3\mathrm{NQ}$

Search

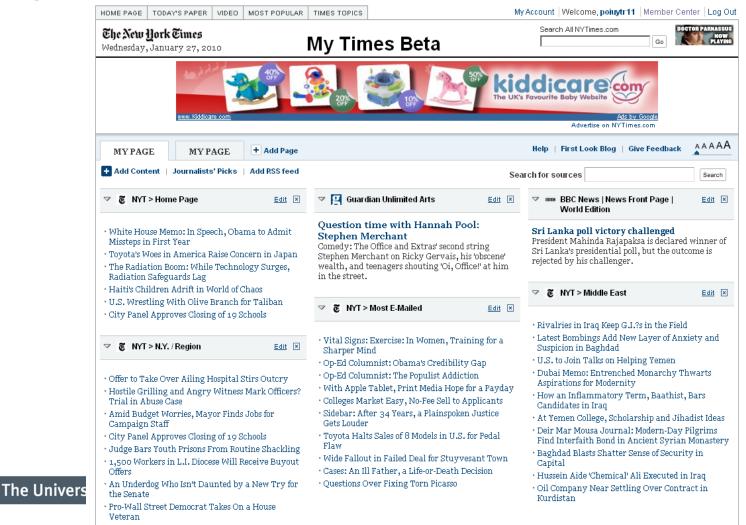
TV AND RADIO NEWS PROGRAMMES



PM programme In pictures: What life is really like



Explicit Personalization: 'My Page'





Implicit Personalization: 'Aggregated collaborative filtering'



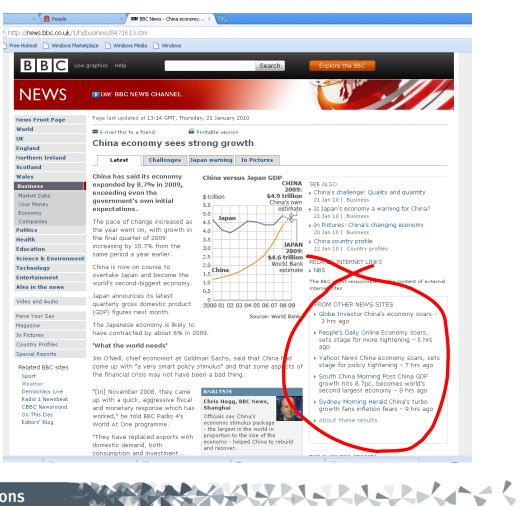


Implicit Personalization: Contextual recommendations—from links to...

FROM OTHER NEWS SITES

- Globe Investor China's economy soars -3 hrs ago
- People's Daily Online Economy soars, sets stage for more tightening - 5 hrs ago
- Yahoo! News China economy soars, sets stage for policy tightening - 7 hrs ago
- South China Morning Post China GDP growth hits 8.7pc, becomes world's second largest economy - 8 hrs ago
- Sydney Morning Herald China's turbo growth fans inflation fears - 9 hrs ago
- About these results

more news more social more often



The University for business and the professions

Autonom



Implicit Personalization: Contextual recommendations

...full 'topic pages'

daylife Organizing and distributing the world's news

ALL CARLER AND CAR

The University for business and



Implicit Personalization: Contextual recommendations

Full 'topic pages'



Autonomy



Implicit Personalization: Contextual recommendations

daylife Organizing and distributing the world's news













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Uptake of explicit personalization:

"Single digit take-up"—Guardian.co.uk

"Hard to quantify"—Telegraph.co.uk

"Very, very little update"—WashingtonPost.com & NYTimes.com



Uptake of explicit personalization:

"deeply ingrained habits of passive, half-attentive media use" — Neuman (1991)

Implicit personalization is "more likely to be used and . . . Perform as well or better than those that require . . . explicit feedback to be collected"—Gauch (2007)



Readers' ability to predict their content preferences :

 "If you determine in advance who 'The Daily Me' is . . . Then you may miss some of the important things that you didn't know you were"
 —Rich Meislin, NYTimes.com

Because news topics emerge continuously, readers' interests change frequently, therefore explicit profiles tend not to work well
Billsus & Pazzani (2007)



Journalists' editing function

"Readers want someone to do some of the filtering work for them" —Neil McIntosh, Guardian.co.uk

"If there's anything we have its our judgement about what people are interested in"

—Anne Spackman, TimesOnline.co.uk



Personalization: positive attitudes

"Extremely important" —Steve Bennedik, Sky News; Almar Latour, WSJ.com

Will become "as big as blogging" —Ed Roussel, Telegraph.co.uk

"Exploratory endeavors"? —Boczkowski (2004)



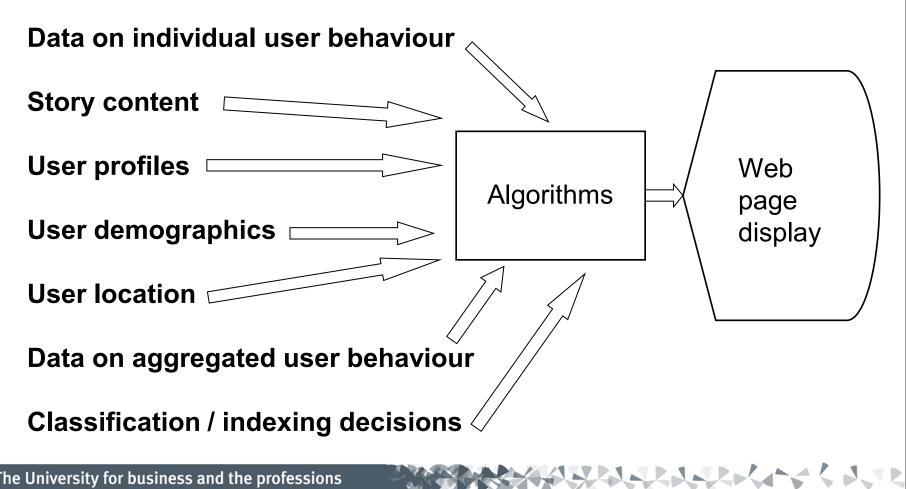
Personalization: commercial drivers

"The Daylife plaform offers unlimited, high-quality, and advertiser-friendly news and content for your website . . . all with little or no staffing."
 —Daylife

 "We will deliver the best campaign . . . and the most relevant content individualised to the tastes and needs of every consumer"
 —Aggregate Knowledge

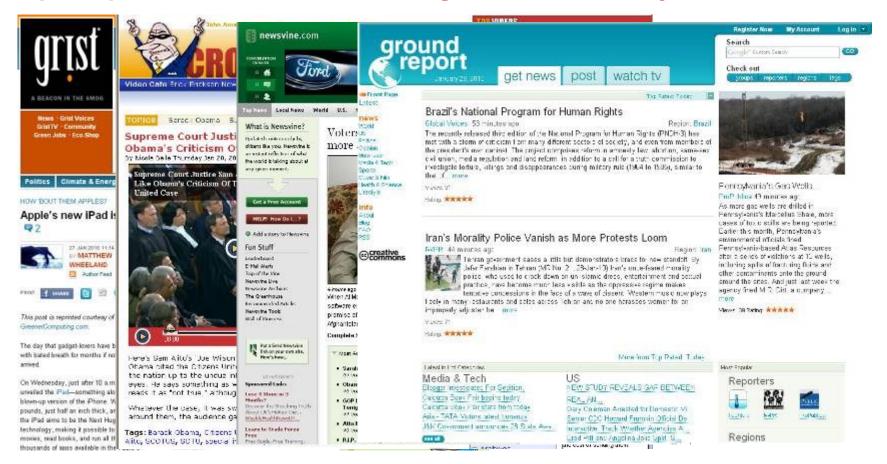


Implicit Personalization





Implicit personalization: increasing content diversity?





Neil Thurman

The University for business and the professions