

The Landscape of



Jessica Grieser
Georgetown University

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AbSTRACT

Social networking websites have made increasingly apparent the degree to which the internet is becoming a communal space. When users get together on the internet, they engage in their own rituals of social practice, creating their own communities of practice (cf. Eckert and McConell-Ginet 1992) around the written word. Within the communities of practice on the internet, ways of making meaning are constantly being negotiated, however, the internet as a location of communities of practice has thus far gone relatively unexplored.

In prior work (Grieser 2011) I have explored the intertextual basis of an interactional phenomenon on the internet. The current study contextualizes the interactional phenomena by looking at the linguistic landscape of the internet forum of livejournal (LJ). On LJ, users interact in written modes and other modes, which may includes still photos, animated photos, and video. I show that this multi-modal interaction, combined with the layout and features of livejournal, contributes to enabling interactional phenomena such as white-knighting but also to the reification of users of livejournal as a community of practice.



A group of fans organized around a single source work, which might be a television show, a comic book series, a film series, or a book series
discussion of the source itself as well as items related to the source (e.g. actors)
instantiate themselves as communities unto themselves, with norms unique to both a particular fandom (e.g. X-files) but also to fandom at large
most of fandom communication currently takes place online in a number of different spaces

- Usenet
- discussion boards
- fan fiction archives
- livejournal communities

Data in the current presentation is taken from the fandom surrounding the *Twilight* saga by Stephenie Meyer.



Twilight fandom has over 100,000 members. Consists of websites for the posting of fanfiction as well as for communication. Livejournal communities fall into the latter category. Each member has her own “journal” which has a blog-like component, but which also allows her to post on communities of which she is a member, similar to the way one might make “comments” on a blog post. One user begins a topic, and other users respond to it and to each other.

The LJ community here has the self-given pseudonym “Mean Girls” and is a community for discussion of *Twilight* fan fiction.



HiERARCHICAL PoSTING

Intertextual (Bahktin 1984) links are made through tiered commentary
Allows for both direct quoting of prior text (repetition) but also implicit quoting/response because the prior text is co-present.

(46 comments) - (Post a new comment)



 
SillyFace

Is this the story with the hairy nipples?

Edited at 2009-08-26 09:56 pm (local)

[\(Reply to this\)](#) [\(Thread\)](#)



 
Gemini

Whaaa?

[\(Reply to this\)](#) [\(Parent\)](#) [\(Thread\)](#)

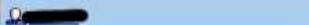


 
SillyFace

I remember someone posting a bit from this story, and Edward's talkin' 'bout Bella's nips, and they have a halo of hair around them.

[\(Reply to this\)](#) [\(Parent\)](#) [\(Thread\)](#)



 
September

Yes, the story was...very realistic. Some people liked it, but I wasn't sure honestly. Sometimes I was like "uhh...TMI...woah."

[\(Reply to this\)](#) [\(Parent\)](#)



 
Sleepy

rofl for real? I don't think I'll be reading this one then. Hairy nips...no like.



MaCRO

Macros are most often created by users outside the community and are used within a community to express certain sentiments considered to be common across the communities. Often used to express sarcasm or displeasure, using incongruity between visual image and text to convey meaning. Often they will employ similar font (block sans serif, white) to further indicate that they should be interpreted as Macros.

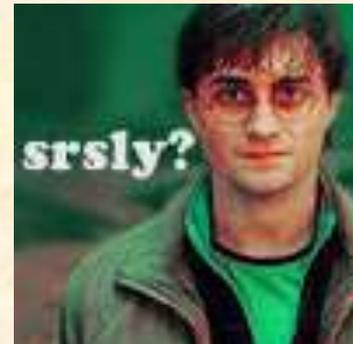




Avatars

Each user of a livejournal has anywhere from 15 to over 200 avatars, which represent them in posts and comments. Avatars may be any image, but users often have at least some avatars which contain photos of people having visually discernable emotive reactions. They can select their avatar for individual comments, and thus avatars can be used to express additional propositional or expressive content to the message. Users often choose animated avatars to add to this effect.

Users may also choose to enter HTML code that allows their content to show up with no text; in this instance, it is understood by other users that the user's entire reaction to the comment being responded to (see hierarchical posting) should be inferred from her avatar.





AnIMATION

Users often choose to use a variety of animated .GIF files to provide additional expressive content to their messages. These may be slideshows of still images, or clips of live-action filming. The use of these moving images allows users to express even more content than they might be able to with a still image, for example, a high-five to show approval, a person hitting another person to express extreme frustration, a person throwing their laptop to show a desire not to engage with a particular fanwork any longer. Animated GIF files are often also used in avatars, with the most common being an eye-rolling photo.

SELECTED REFERENCES

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