

Digital Mourning: The Retention Significance and Realistic Dilemma of the Online Social Media Platform "Cybercemetery"

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Abstract: With the advent of digital technology and the development of social media, the original individual and private death and mourning have entered the public space, and the increase in the number of accounts of the deceased has gradually turned social media platforms into cyber graveyards, where digital residents mourn online. In order to deeply understand this special communication phenomenon, this paper explores the significance and ethical dilemma of the account retention of the deceased from the perspectives of the deceased, mourners and society. The study found that, as a new memory device, social media platforms store a large number of digital records of the deceased, extending the length of people's lives, providing open space for the living to mourn and talk about their emotions, and the discussion of de-taboos also helps people to "desensitize" to death to a certain extent, but it is accompanied by privacy invasion, emotional trauma and pseudo-memorial problems. This paper puts forward some solutions to these problems.

1. Introduction.

Over the course of history, the patterns of death and mourning have changed. Tony Walter made a diachronic distinction between death and mourning and divided them into four types: In the pre-industrial agricultural society, the death of an individual was publicly disclosed in the family and community, mourners were crowded in a small space, and the probability of interference between behaviors, feelings and reactions was very high, which was called "traditional death"; With the urbanization and industrialization of the 20th century, people separated from work and family, mourners no longer lived together, and the more dispersed their social networks, the more private grief caused by death, known as "modern death"; In the late 20th century, the combination of celebrity culture, mass media and the Internet made public figures and ordinary people who died tragically due to unexpected events widely and high-profile condolences both offline and online, but in most cases, the mourning for the death of ordinary people was still private and individual, called "postmodern death". The fourth period is based on the rise of social media and the popularization of mobile Internet technology with user-created content as the main feature, the mourning and memorial for celebrities and ordinary people are presented in the "online mourning" written by the public, that is, the "return of community", and this period the world has become a "everyone can see

the mourners, Everyone can hear the death knell "in the former industrial countryside [1].

The development of media technology affects the consciousness of death in the digital age. As an intermediary, media itself is an excellent cross-border "threshold object". In addition to dealing with information, they also involve life and death and sex. In many cases, the carnal karma of the propagator has passed away, but the propagator is still present. The common feature of online social media platform messages and cemetery condolences is that there is distance from the human world, but also similar. Looking back on the history of the development of the Internet, it is not difficult to find that people's early imagination of the Internet is full of space, the so-called cyberspace is actually to imagine the Internet as a world of travel, distance is generated; Personal accounts of the deceased's social media profiles form vivid digital incarnations. The network social media platform itself is a kind of non-instant interactive media, which makes the communication between the living and the dead produce a feeling of chatting with distant friends, and the media has become a "holy way of channeling".

John Peters points out that it is difficult to distinguish between "communicating with the dead and the dead" and using modern media "communicating with the living far away" because the two "look similar at this end". On the one hand, the characteristics of "weak connection" and "back to face interaction" of network social media platforms determine that the interpersonal interaction environment created by them is limited to a certain extent. Unbalanced dialogue is allowed here, and the attention relationship between users is also asymmetrical. On the other hand, unlike face-to-face conversation or telephone communication, non-synchronous release and non-real-time interaction are the norm on online social media platforms, and ordinary users except opinion leaders have formed psychological expectations that they will not respond to speeches and receive no reply in communication. Based on this, the network social media platform, as a communicative "distant" image, integrates people's multiple imaginations of the alien world after death, and Outlines an illusory and clear space-time door connecting the deceased.

2. The significance of the retention of the deceased's account

2.1 Digital soul: Extend the length of life

Marshall McLuhan, a scholar of the media environment school, put forward that "media is an extension of man" in the age of electricity, "we find ourselves increasingly transformed into the form of information, increasingly close to the technical extension of consciousness", that is to say, human beings can more and more transform themselves into other forms beyond themselves. Nigro icholas Negroponte, the author of the book, believes that with the impact of digital technology on all aspects of social life, people will "live in computers, wear them and even eat them" in the future. Now this prediction of "digital survival" has come true. In the era of social media, media content has become the record of personal history, the way of self-expression and self-construction, the direction of realistic behavior and life, the weaving means of social relations, the reference or representation of rights and power practices, and the way of releasing cultural productive forces. People's existence is moving toward full media."

In the world of life, there will inevitably be an intersection with other living beings and beings, and the information generated in this process will be extracted by the human brain, encoded to generate memories and be stored. However, due to the limitations of the biological structure of the human brain, the capacity of memory is limited, and over time, biological memory may fade, blur, distort and be completely erased. However, the daily life of members of society is gradually enriched by digital media, and human memory storage has also entered a new era. Media, as the third persistence, can "seize those moments that are passing or have already been lost" and "remain in an object", making up for the shortcomings of the memory storage capacity and duration of the

human brain. This part of externalized memory is all-encompassing, permanent and has the conditions to exist independent of physical life [2].

Aristotle said, "Memory is the best proof of the existence of the soul." Digital residents continue to broadcast their own life paths and emotional connections on the Internet, and social media accounts have engraved detailed fresh marks, not only to collect information, but also to record a person's actions and thoughts. At the end of the physical life, these trivial pieces of the digital universe are enough to piece together a complete "digital soul", allowing their lives to extend to a certain extent in the parallel world of the Internet. For the living, the social media accounts of the deceased are the kiosks of joy and sorrow, and also the storage place of nostalgia and care. The living maintain the "communication relationship" with each other in the interaction with the digital soul of the deceased. The coupling resonance of the biological memory and digital memory of the deceased interprets the "immortality" in the era of social media.

2.2 Interactive inscriptions: provide emotional space

The media has changed social relationships and the relationship between the living and the dead. Although they know that death cannot turn around, many people still visit the social media page of the deceased every once in a while, sharing the ups and downs of their lives under its past dynamics, which is a way to obtain comfort, by "talking" with the deceased to reach a reconciliation with themselves and better accept their departure. At the same time, the social media accounts left by the deceased become a wall of tombstones, where both "cemetery keepers" and "passers-by" are allowed to share the life stories of the deceased, and private memories from different perspectives are merged and engraved with inscriptions that belong to the deceased alone.

In the general established cognition, offline mourning is generally subject to the social norms of the time, and after the death of a period of time, relatives and friends of the deceased should restrain their mourning and return to the normal state of life, that is, the so-called "sorrow". According to the "traditional grief model," grief is to restore oneself to a stable state, and mourners choose to "leave behind" the deceased to "move on." Grief should also be restrained, and mourners are asked to "let go of the past" in due course. In fact, since ancient times mourners have not stopped talking with the dead, they pour out their guts to the tombstones and portraits, and meet the "dream" of the deceased again in their sleep. Personal belongings of the deceased, old agreements, and symbolic entities can be used as "identity preservation strategies" to integrate information about the deceased into the daily life of the bereaved in order to establish long-term connections. Grief expression and healing changes from an instant, time-bound "task" to an open, drawn-out "process."

The online social media accounts of the deceased happen to create an open-ended space for mourning. Through the observation of the dynamic comment area of the home page of the deceased from different circles, it is not difficult to find that people's mourning behavior did not end with the fading of heat and the dispersion of focus, but the text content gradually changed from mourning expression to daily greetings, thoughts, mutual comfort, etc., and this cyber cemetery has become an emotional tree hole to some extent. Some scholars have named the online mourning space after the hot moment as "malleable emotional space", which represents the time extension and function expansion of this space, and opens up a new path for the maintenance of the connection between the living and the dead. In addition, it is full of tolerance and goodwill that are hard to find elsewhere, and the sadness of those who are disenfranchised due to inadequate and entry barriers is released here. The "weak connection" nature of Weibo greatly expands the scope of interaction, and mourning becomes a part of social activities, including marginalized groups who cannot get immediate support in real life. Through self-disclosure and interpersonal interaction, negative emotions can be buffered and social recognition can be obtained.

2.3 Open cemetery: Disenchantment death issue

In the traditional culture and past context of most countries, "death" is like a cloud, and until today, people are still reticent to talk about death. To some extent, this open cemetery is a death education material that we can reach [3].

Social media has released death and mourning from the private sphere to the public space, allowing platform users to face the moments related to death and participate in digital mourning, which reflects the change in people's concept of life and death, and the "taboos" of death. Martin Heidegger says: "Death hangs over the landscape. It haunts, it follows." As the last link in the life process, death is not experiential, that is, the feelings about death cannot be learned from those who experience it. The binary opposition of life and death has existed in ancient times, and this tension dominates human's understanding of "death", which makes death always in a state of derogation. Social media balance the two ends of the ethereal heaven and the real reality, and build a middle zone of slight perception of the living, which allows people to maintain more understanding of the life of the deceased, explore the truth of themselves and reflect on the existence of life in the comparison of death presuppositions, and to some extent, help relieve the fear of death.

New media is a bridge that brings individual death into the collective realm. Network social media, as a platform to participate in people's socialization process and daily life, can provide an important window for people to understand death, "distance and death are always the two major obstacles to love, but also the two major stimuli for the birth of desire", which is the so-called "life and death" can always trigger a strong emotional experience. The fear of death and grief in the depths of the emotion underlie the connection of love to the real world. The avatar of the digital self-Bridges the gap between life and death, alleviates the fear and concern brought by death to the dying to a certain extent, and soothes the missing and mourning of the living for the deceased. Through this window, you can not only see the pain and regret brought by death, but also see love and better survival, and provide help to stabilize the social order.

3. The hidden advantage of digital sorrow

3.1 The risk of privacy loss of the deceased's account

The actions and thoughts of digital residents will be broken down into a large number of digital fragments, through the human brain or technology to restore, these fragments can make the number of Spaces that are almost the same as the life itself, so everyone in the digital space can escape under this invisible gaze. There are many difficult to define the "gray area" on the Internet, where the user's right to information management and privacy have not been clearly defined and strongly protected, but the Internet is open, users can only be able to maintain their own "front image", and the information left behind after death may become uncontrolled.

Previously, some mainstream social media platforms dealt with the strategy of retaining the ownership of the deceased's account, only handing over the right to use the account to the "heir", and allowing relatives and friends of the deceased to apply to become the heir of the account, because the relationship between relatives and friends has dual advantages in the sense and jurisprudence level. Although this mainstream scheme appears to properly dispose of the deceased's account, in essence it still ignores some practical problems: the platform is the actual controller of the deceased's account and has the discretion to dispose of their private information, even in order to fulfill the obligation to protect user privacy and information security, it is still unfair; As an independent individual, everyone has more or less secrets in his heart that he does not want others to know. If the deceased has not made a will before his death, it is impossible to confirm whether the successor chosen by the platform to take over social accounts and disclose personal information

really conforms to the reasonable expectations of the deceased for his own privacy and sexual privacy, and in extreme cases, it may even run counter to the wishes of the deceased. There is a general contradiction between social media users' privacy risk perception and their privacy actions, which means that the privacy paradox still exists after death. In addition, the heir of the account is different from the deceased himself, and if the main difference is used by people with ulterior motives, it is enough to create and incite opposing emotions, and the collapse of context and over-interpretation of the issue will also increase the risk of distorting the image and intention of the deceased.

3.2 Digital immortality causes secondary emotional trauma

People have passion, so when relatives and friends and other "strong connection" with their own people die, this life "unfinished" obsession is often difficult to put down, and social media accounts with memory as the carrier to retain the soul of the deceased, this online memorial space can be used as an emotional buffer area, to help the living from the loss of friends and relatives of the grief [4]. However, the chaotic boundary between the living and the dead may become a hindering factor for people to move forward, making their minds trance, and sinking into it while awake is also a painful torture for the living.

It's hard to deny that perpetuating the social media accounts of the deceased risks exacerbating grief. The presence of simulated relatives and friends can alleviate grief for the living to a certain extent, but such presence is the virtual image of media technology after all, and in the long run, the nihilistic chito will inevitably lead to the infinite continuation of grief.

In the era of social media, the dead return to the world in the form of media existence, giving the living imaginary comfort, so that the painful scars of relatives and friends who died repeatedly scab but difficult to heal, which is undoubtedly a kind of emotional trauma. Since the development of human civilization, cognition is still marginal, and the birth and death of all things have their own laws, if too much

Indulging in the illusion of technology, the sad touch will become more intense, lasting, will be difficult to let go.

3.3 The sincerity of the pseudo-memorial space

When we talk about mourning, we are not only talking about the subjective emotional experience experienced in the face of loss, but also about the expression and action conditioned by social norms. Under the rule, the way we express our emotions is often inevitable with some traces of deliberate, and they cannot fully grasp the helplessness, the "RIP" in social media is frequently subjected to sincere interrogation.

First of all, the emotional orientation of individuals in online mourning behavior has shifted greatly, from the body of the deceased to the symbol of the deceased. People consciously and selectively extract some representative characteristics from the social media records of the deceased, and through idealization, the deceased actually becomes a symbolic symbol, and the mourning ceremony is realized with the help of symbolic symbols. Opinion leaders on any network social media platform greatly enhance this effect because they have a large following group. The connection between online mourners and the deceased is very fragile, and the mourning texts created, forwarded and commented by users on online social media platforms are, in a sense, the product of some symbolic imaginary empathy formed by externalization with the deceased, expressing the identification of the deceased's "spirit and world view."

Secondly, the expression of condolences on social media platforms may be one of the means by which individuals "set others up". Erving Goffman likened life to a drama. Everyone in life is an

actor, and people divide the front and back stages of the performance according to the specific situation of social interaction: the "front stage" performance presents the audience with an image that is in line with their expectations and easy to be liked by the society, while the "back stage" activity breaks away from the restrictions and allows spontaneity to reveal itself [5]. In many cases, online social media platforms are used as choreographed demonstrations, and people's online mourning for the purpose of "impression decoration" is reduced to an empty form that lacks connotation and is also labeled as symbolic.

Finally, there is a tragic pleasure in seeing suffering from a distance, free from connection with ordinary reality. Similar to literature, social media inserts a distance between death and the mourner, and through the filter of the media, death has the "ideal character and form of the beauty of the great tragedy", which is the inducement of aesthetic attitudes. Some scholars have pointed out that the emotional performance of online collective mourning may be mixed with varying degrees of entertainment nature. The widespread media coverage has been described as "grief porn", and the flood of emotions has been described as "mourning sickness", that is, the interest and desire to peer into the disaster of others. Its behavior is not motivated by the real emotional pain of loss, but to meet the needs of the white self to experience grief.

4. Thoughts on solving problems

4.1 Enhancing the right to self-determination in personal information

After death, individuals have real expectations for sensitive information related to their own bodies. At the same time, in the social situation where the life industry has disappeared, the dissemination of graphic data of the deceased should be carried out in accordance with the social norms appropriate to the situation at that time.

Based on this, some scholars have proposed the concept of the right to privacy of the deceased, arguing that a person still has the right to retain and control his or her "reputation, dignity, integrity, secrecy, or memory" after death, which means that a "reasonable expectation of privacy" can transcend death. Only by extending the free will of individuals to dispose of private information after death can personal privacy be fully protected. Since we know that people's privacy does not depend on life and death, the discussion on the privacy protection of the deceased should be based on the right of information self-determination.

On the one hand, encourage social media sites to follow the testamentary trust system as a fundamental principle, take the user portrait of the platform as a guide to action, take the initiative to innovate the program, and open up ways to realize the privacy autonomy of users after death by embedding service agreements and drafting contract terms. Previously, Facebook launched the "memorial page" function, the account left by the user after death will be cancelled or handed over to the designated "entrusted contact" according to the privacy Settings agreement before the death, the platform is based on the dynamic release of the deceased, and supports the trustee to continue to update pictures and posts on the homepage of the account to commemorate the deceased. Replacing "inheritance" and "sequestration" with "management" compromise is obviously a more reasonable privacy protection strategy, which conforms to the idea that the deceased also enjoys the right to make independent information decisions, and is conducive to helping them realize reasonable privacy expectations.

On the other hand, every digital resident should consciously improve their digital literacy and take the initiative to plan digital heritage. Data reflection and data strategy are important aspects of digital literacy, and they require users to have a proper understanding and control over the state of their personal information, which naturally includes the state after death. As mentioned above, although most users have preliminarily awakened their awareness of privacy and can anticipate to a

certain extent the damage that personal information infringed after death may bring to their reputation and the psychology of relatives and friends, they are not very clear about the transmission status and pre-control methods of personal privacy after death. Therefore, while enjoying digital life, we should also do a good job of self-guidance, in the death atmosphere created by digital mourning, regular management and planning of social media accounts that will inevitably become digital heritage in the future, and strive for greater self-determination and higher freedom for the proper placement of digital remains.

4.2 Set a life cycle for the digital soul

Digital memory destroys biological forgetting, making time useless. "Full digital memory destroys history, impairs our judgment and our ability to act in a timely manner," leaving us helpless between the permanent past and the neglected present. The past events engraved on digital skin like "tattoos" have broken the law of human history that "forgetting has always been the norm, and memory is the exception." In order to combat this form of data surveillance and staring, some people have proposed the concept of the "right to be forgotten", that is, the data controller should delete the user's personal data at the appropriate time, so that it is free from outdated negative information, so as to express the current self without restraint. The death of the body does not mean the death of the personality, so the control of the life subject over the personal information should extend to the death.

On the one hand, although the deceased has left a trail of fascination on social media, they can be active in cyberspace

Before, however, people are the fresh life of the objective world, not the digital code of the virtual world, simulated presence and material reality are different after all, and the significance of death itself cannot be ignored. For the living, on the other hand, communicating with the digital soul of the deceased can cushion the feelings of grief, but it is like "a dream" that will wake up one day, and they must return to reality[6].

Given this, it is important to set a "life cycle" for the information left behind by the deceased. Some scholars have proposed that initiative: The deceased's footprint on the Internet should be automatically destroyed or hidden on a specified date to protect their data and privacy from legitimate, accidental or intentional attacks. Human memory is not mechanically rigid, and setting a storage period for information should refer to and simulate the forgetting mechanism of the human brain, so that digital memory is further aligned with the natural forgetting process, rather than permanent recording or simple deletion. This idea not only helps to optimize the efficiency of information management, but also helps the deceased to exercise the "right to be chosen and forgotten" rationally, while allowing the living to better balance the past, present and future.

4.3 Repairing the trust gap

Deepening the understanding of human nature is an important part of curbing false commemoration. The desire for recognition, the ability to empathize with others and empathy are the basic preconditions that distinguish human beings from other living beings, and are also the necessary conditions for the development of communication. In the course of the development of human civilization, the long-term experience of living in groups has shaped people's habit of choosing to follow the waves, and it is also human nature to follow the trend and participate in digital mourning on social media. In fact, there is no reason to blame it too much. A large number of "emotional passers-by" participate in the mourning of the deceased, which can maximize the value of ordinary people's lives, and also let the achievements and spirits of public figures be more widely broadcast and remembered.

In the process of multi-level communication of mourning information, individuals, as a node of communication, should cross-verify the authenticity of information in the mourning community, consciously enhance the moral sense and ritual sense of the subject, and reject "formalism". Punishment for transgressions should fall on specific individuals, rather than simply raising the overall participation threshold, otherwise it will have a negative impact on the communication and integration between circles. Human beings have never stopped thinking and searching for the value of life, and there are too many influencing factors behind death in the digital world, which is difficult to see. Therefore, only by calming down in this dark current of the Cyber sea and examining the issue of death with a more flexible eye can the power of community identity be awakened and the temperature of humanity be preserved in everyone's heart.

5. Conclusions

Digital mourning on social media platforms, as a kind of communication activity, is increasingly appearing in people's eyes. Personal social media accounts serve as a place for new memories, holding countless digital memories, and erecting monuments for natural people after their death. Over time, this new space will also be filled by old souls, becoming a cyber cemetery for the memory of the living.

This paper explores the significance of retaining the account of the deceased, and holds that the account retention within a reasonable limit can prolong the life of the deceased to some extent; it can provide an outlet for emotional relief for bereaved people and those with weak connections who mourn online. Based on the society as a whole, this discussion on the topic of life and mourning is conducive to demystifying the issue of death, speaking about death in the context of removing taboos, making up for the absence of death education, and promoting a virtuous cycle. At the same time, the investigation also found that the long-term existence of these accounts may cause negative effects, including violating the privacy of the deceased, causing secondary emotional harm to their relatives and friends, and weakening the sincerity of the mourning. Finally, this paper analyzes the causes of these problems and puts forward some suggestions to solve the problem. We should think about the privacy invasion from the grasp of information decision-making right, and set the life cycle for digital soul to help the bereaved family out of grief. For the mourning behavior following the trend, individuals should improve their media literacy and reduce the position questioning with an inclusive attitude. However, these methods are all theoretical assumptions in the ideal state, and how to maximize the positive value of digital mourning remains to be further discussed in practice.

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