

The Positive Friend

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Technologies have reshaped how we interact with particular objects, leading to new and enlightening experiences. In particular, mobile text has opened up new levels of engagement with information. My project, *The Positive Friend*, shows two friends sending each other postcards but not in a traditional way. *The Positive Friend* shows how we can use mobile text to enhance our messages and interaction with friends through the use of augmented reality.

One of the unique aspects of creating and reading mobile text is that it has the ability to be built upon, unlike other types of text content. For example, interactivity can be promoted through mobile text objects like postcards through augmented reality. Embedding augmented text, images, or videos within postcards can enhance the still photos and words already on the postcard. It can bring the still aspects of the postcard to life and create a more personalized experience. Additionally, enhancing a postcard with augmented reality can make deeper connections between the sender and receiver.

My postcards illustrate a friendship where one friend encourages positivity and wellness towards their other friend who is in a rigorous nursing program. My first postcard is aimed to provide the nursing student with happiness and laughter. The postcard includes two pictures of my cats, Meeko and Rage. The image on the back of the postcard and the text trigger an augmented experience. The augmentation on the cat postcard is a video of my two cats play fighting each other. My second postcard aims to encourage my friend, a nursing student, to stay active and make time for the hobbies they love despite having to spend hours sitting at a desk every day. The front of my second postcard holds the trigger image and text, which is me posing with my hoop with text on the bottom left that reads, "sending positive energy, again!" The photo of me

with my hoop takes you to an augmented video of myself performing a hoop routine. Hooping is a relaxing type of “flow art,” a perfect activity for a stressed nursing student.

My artistic and conceptual goals within this project were to implement the things that bring me joy in life and share that with others. I wanted to show my “joys” in action because simply adding a photo of my cats and hoop wasn’t enough. Adding a video of my cats play fighting and a video of me hooping brought meaning to the images on my postcard. I designed my postcards with an augmented video with the hopes of igniting an internal and external reaction from the receiver, something I think just text or images could not do in this scenario. Though I was physically hooping myself and my cats were physically fighting in real-time, I could turn my physical experiences into a virtual experience for someone else.

For my final project, I created two more postcards for a total of four. Creating two more postcards continued the two friends’ conversations and exemplified more of a process. My third postcard included an augmented video experience where I share a new hobby with my friend in nursing school while also encouraging them to pick up a new activity. The image on the front of the third postcard is the trigger image for the video. Finally, my fourth postcard included an augmented experience through the text on the back of the postcard. I motivated my nursing student friend to finish the semester strong and get excited about the annual friends’ mountain trip. The fourth postcard included an augmented slideshow video of images from previous trips to get my nursing student friend excited.

Additionally, I made some small but necessary changes to my two original postcards for my final project. In the cat postcard, I added audio behind the augmented

video of my two cats play fighting. I decided to add audio to the cat postcard because I wanted to keep it a theme for all of my postcards. I felt that it made the postcards more engaging and unique. Plus, including audio adds to the augmented reality experience in general and allows one to make the augmented content they include more personal. Furthermore, I also confined my writing on the two original postcards. I felt that my original postcard text was too wordy and didn't flow together too well. With the edits I made, the mobile text on my postcards reads better and is more appealing to the eye.

This project is interactive beyond the augmentation through the process and product. According to Stromer-Galley (2004), interactivity as a process is two people sending messages back and forth, but interactivity as a product is when you use an application to retrieve information. The idea of my project was to show a process of two friends sending postcards back and forth, where one friend would update them about their time in nursing school, and the other friend would send them encouragement. Additionally, the nursing student must interact with a product, "Artivive," to help them view the augmented reality within the postcards.

This project comments upon the affordances of mobile text because it produces more than words. The mobile text allows you to build upon itself with augmented realities, and when you put mobile text and augmented reality together, it changes interactivity. In terms of the postcard, I was able to produce more than just text, and I was able to do it with privacy, something postcards are known to lack. I commented upon the affordances of interactivity by changing how someone interacts with a postcard. When looking at the postcard, everything seems normal, but you can change the normalcy of postcards with augmented reality. This made the process of receiving a

postcard go from simply reading a text and looking at an image to doing that, plus pulling out your device and opening an application to view a video that enhances the personalization and interactivity of the postcard.

My final project contains four augmented videos within the postcards. To me, videos are much more personal and intimate. My four videos were physical representations of myself and my joys in real-time, and they are not something I let just anyone see. As Milne (2010) explains:

The disjunction between the imagined privacy of communication and the actual or possible dissemination of this message to a wide audience suggest that the latter must at least in part be occluded if epistolary communication based on the former is to continue (p. 117).

With the creation of augmented reality, we can occlude certain information in epistolary communication. Though my augmentations are videos and not communication in the form of letters, they are still meaningful pieces of information that I chose to hide within my mobile text. The basis of what Milne addresses in chapter five is intimacy within postcards and their privacy concerns in which they may be read by people other than the intended receiver (2010). By hiding an augmented video within my postcards, I could openly share the text I felt comfortable with on the postcard and then hide the intimate piece of information I didn't want anyone else to see besides my friend.

I could have stuck to the traditional way of sending postcards, but I didn't. Instead, I used mobile text for its ability to possess more areas of interaction with information. Arceneaux and Kavoori (2012) said: "novels on phones do not replace conventional print versions but rather complement them and offer readers an increased

opportunity to engage with the text” (p. 107). My postcards made clear that my augmented videos are a bonus piece of content made possible with mobile text and additional products. I could have kept the same communication process with my friend without using mobile text or augmentation. Still, it shows that there are multiple ways to engage and interact with friends through textual information.

The Positive Friend demonstrated a different and more personalized way to interact with friends. Using augmented reality within mobile text made it possible for my friend to get a glimpse of the world around me while being at nursing school. Additionally, with augmented reality, I was able to share my joys with my friend as a form of positivity and encouragement to keep them moving forward as a nurse. With the use of external products, specifically augmented reality and “Artivive,” and the help of course readings, *The Positive Friend* shows how mobile text can be enhanced to promote more opportunities for interaction.

References

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