



## Digital Divide Working Group

Abstracts of papers accepted for presentation in the Online Conference Papers of the  
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<sup>1</sup> These are the abstracts of the papers accepted by the IAMCR section or working group named above for presentation in the Online Conference Papers component of the 2020 annual conference. This publication will be updated prior to the conference to include the papers that are actually included in the final programme. To be included in the programme, authors must submit their paper by 19 June 2020 and register for the conference.

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# **The ‘Grey’ Digital Divide: Exploring the Relationship between Digital Inclusiveness and Well-being of Seniors in China**

## **Authors**

Xiao Wei - Guangxi Normal University

Lian Pan - Guangxi Normal University

## **Abstract**

With the continuous development and progress in science and technology, information technology, especially the Internet, has become deeply integrated into people's lives. Due to its convenience and low cost, the Internet has been greatly adopted by administrative departments or enterprises as their service platform. The digitization of social participation has brought convenience to people, but with potential unfairness. According to studies regarding the digital divide (Friemel, T.N., 2014; Scheerder, A., van Deursen, A., van Dijk, J., 2017), personal online performances have been correlated with age, gender, education, and income level, which highly influence the social resources available, and the status of individuals in the information society. Researchers found that people with higher social status benefit more from digital engagement than their lower status counterparts. Therefore, inequalities resulting from the digital divide widen the existing social divide and affect people's lives in various ways pertaining to employment, social life, education, political participation, health, and well-being.

With a global ageing trend, ‘grey divide’ and digital inclusiveness for elderly people has attracted much attention from scholars. The seniors’ well-being in the digital age has become a significant cause for concern among researchers. China, as the country with the largest population, is stepping into an ageing society at a rapid rate. The one-child policy from the late 1970s has led to a significant decline in the birth rate, which accelerated the ageing trend (State Information Center of China, 2015). For one thing, the lack of ICTs infrastructure in China, which leads to a low Internet penetration rate, is considered the primary cause of digital divide among the elderly (He & Liu, 2015). Driven by factors such as Internet penetration, income levels, and education levels, the digital access divide between urban and rural areas is particularly acute. For another, an ‘Internet +’ society has been advocated by the Chinese government (the State Council of China, 2015), which entails all industries to be integrated with the Internet under the trend of ‘Internet of Things’. Public authorities and private services turn to the Internet as their service medium due to its high efficiency, convenience, and low cost (Friemel, T.N., 2014; Van Deursen, 2017). All of these make the aged population being lack of digital literacy and facing difficulties of social participation in a digital-based society.

Researchers have made efforts on the determinants of seniors’ adoption of Internet, but most of their achievements are confined to western countries. Thus, this article aims to provide a unique insight into the digital divide among the elderly in China, which has currently been relatively blank in the field of digital divide research. It will explore three research questions of ‘grey’ divide among

seniors in China by questioning their digital preferences and literacy, figuring out the impacts of digital engagements on their later lives, and discussing measures to bridge the 'divide'.

## **Submission ID**

67

# **EVALUATING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTUBE ADVERTISEMENTS**

## **Authors**

Vanessa Liu - Singapore University of Social Sciences

Fei Fan - Hong Kong Baptist University

Sarah Jane Anthony - Singapore University of Social Sciences

## **Abstract**

Social media and video advertising continues to play an important role in increasing brand awareness. According to Statista (2019), the total advertising spending on digital advertisements in Singapore is approximately US\$342million. Out of the amount, US\$63million is from social media advertising and US\$19.2million is on video advertising. Facing the ubiquity of social media and video advertising, scholars have been conducting different researches to deal with this media phenomenon, particularly in the context of YouTube advertising.

Different from extant studies about YouTube advertising, this paper aims to develop and test a comprehensive and feasible conceptual framework about how advertising characteristics and technological interactivity influence target audience's receptiveness of designated advertising messages and even their behavioral intention. To do so, survey was conducted with 172 Internet savvy viewers aged 13 to 80 in Singapore. This age group represents three-quarters of the population in Singapore. Besides, structural equation modeling was employed to deal with the relationship among diverse variables.

The study highlighted that online advertising was different from other traditional advertising formats. Social media and video advertising length influenced communication effectiveness. Surprisingly, shorter advertising length (e.g. 15 seconds) resulted in better brand recognition and brand recall than longer advertising length (e.g. 30 seconds). Besides, advertising viewers were more receptive to watch the full advertisement if it was informative, because advertising value was positively perceived by the viewers. As to message obtrusiveness, watching an advertisement more than 3 times was negatively associated to message receptiveness, because obtrusiveness was usually associated to feeling of annoyance. The ability to skip the advertisement made the advertisements less annoying even though it has the same level of obtrusiveness. Furthermore, target audience was more receptive to the advertisement and more likely to engage in the comments section if the

advertisement invited discussion or technological interactivity. Engagement and attention in the advertisement would improve brand recognition later.

To conclude, advertising length, advertising informativeness, message obtrusiveness, and technological interactivity had a direct positive impact on social media users' message receptiveness. The research implication is that advertisers should consider to create advertisements that are both informative and interactive so that it would positively affect audience's message receptiveness, brand recognition and even purchase intention. Besides, advertisers are suggested to give audience a "skip the ad" option as implementing the skip feature is likely to diminish target audiences' feelings of annoyance which later will result in favorable brand attitude and increased purchase intention.

## **Submission ID**

172

# **Digital inequalities and digital capital in multiethnic Russian regions**

## **Authors**

Anna Gladkova - Lomonosov Moscow State University

Massimo Ragnedda - Northumbria University

## **Abstract**

Previous research on Russia showed that due to its complex and immense territory, economic and cultural development, historical traditions, professional journalistic practices, policy measures, legislation, even geographical and climatic conditions (e.g. Dunas, 2013; Svitich, Smirnova, & Shkondin, 2018; Zorin, 2018; Vartanova, 2019; Vyrkovsky et al, 2019), the country represents an interesting case for the analysis of different kinds of inequalities – socio-economic, educational, professional and others. This presentation contributes to the discussion around digital inequalities in the context in Russia (e.g. Vartanova, 2002, 2018; Deviatko, 2013; Nagirnaya, 2015; Volchenko, 2016; Gladkova, & Ragnedda, 2020) and draws linkages between ethnic diversity of the eight federal districts of Russia and their technological development (access and use of ICTs, digital literacy, etc.) – something that has rarely been in the spotlight of the scholars' attention until now.

Our study shows that although there is no universal correlation between ethnic composition of the regions and the level of their technological advancement, regions where Russians constitute the majority (i.e. Central and Northwestern) more often tend to be the country's leaders in terms of technological development. Following up on this, we use purposive sample of 400 Internet users based in Russia and show how the level of their digital capital varies depending on ethnicity (here we will distinguish between two large groups – Russians and non-Russians, based on self-identification of survey participants) and place of living. Here we follow the model proposed by Ragnedda and Ruiu (2020) and earlier tested in another national context (Ragnedda, Ruiu, &

Addeo, 2019). Results of the digital capital study, despite being indicative, show that those belonging to the ethnic majority (in our case Russians) and those living in big cities tend to have a higher level of digital capital. Given the fact that digital and social inequalities tend to reinforce each other, we argue that those who are more socially advantaged tend to get the most out of the Internet, further reinforcing their social position by using ICTs.

We argue that in case of multiethnic and multicultural Russian setting, Internet and ICTs play an important role in building democratic society, where diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic groups enjoy equal freedom of expression and access to information, possess digital skills and media literacy, and are able to use this freedom in both offline and online communication. In a situation when any group of people is excluded from cyberspace due to lack of equipment, weak access to the Internet or lack of competences and media literacy to use ICTs, one can hardly speak of a proportional representation of different views and voices in cyberspace. Moreover, safeguarding equal access and representation of ethnic groups in online space contributes to saving cultural-intellectual identities (Shi-xu, 2009: 41) of people, which is particularly important in case of multiethnic and multicultural societies such as Russian society.

## **Submission ID**

230

## **Digital divide as a determinant on voting habits in Zimbabwe?**

### **Authors**

Trust Matsilele - Cape Peninsula University of Technology

### **Abstract**

Studies on digital divide have tended to look at issues of access and related effects with regards to democratic participation (Heacok 2009; Mhiripiri & Mutsvairo 2014; Mare 2015; Fuchs 2008; Roycroft & Anatho 2003), employing the digital architecture as a measurement access to economic opportunities and statuses as well a tool for judging the extent of active adoption of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Popescu 2015). Some of the studies conducted have concluded that digital platforms are influencing the changing democracy design all over the world with seminal cases including the uprisings of North Africa between 2010 and 2011 and elections in western Europe and North America occupying centre stage of such scholarship (Shirky 2010; Loader et al. 2011; Diamond 2015). However, little is known on the extent of the relatedness between digital distribution, uses and voting habits in developing contexts. This paper investigates this gap in scholarship in a developing context with the view of bringing a more nuanced understanding. This study explores the relationship between digital consumption, digital distribution, digital access and voting patterns in Zimbabwe with Masvingo province as a case study. Critically, the study seeks to understand if information consumption on digital platforms determines how rural and urban Zimbabweans vote in local and national elections, using the 2018 elections as a case study. A secondary question this study asks is who consumes what on Zimbabwe's digital sphere? This study makes an empirical and theoretical contribution building on

Morozov (2009) and Gladwell's (2011; 2012) studies that challenge the magic bullet effects of social media formats as influencing views and perceptions of citizens on the electoral decision-making process. This study employs the Network Action Theory and a mixed-methods approach that combines structured interviews and document analysis.

### **Submission ID**

336

## **Examining the second level of the digital divide through the lens of Digital Capital**

### **Authors**

Massimo Ragnedda - Northumbria University

Maria Laura Ruiu - Northumbria University

### **Abstract**

This article investigates the interaction between personal levels of digital capital and inequalities in Internet use, known as the second level of the digital divide. Data collected in the UK through an online survey of a national representative sample (868 respondents), shows that levels of digital capital and the type and quality of online activities are intertwined. We used a holistic variable (digital capital), conceived and measured as a specific capital, and which includes a number of aspects related to both digital competencies and digital devices, to shed light on the second level of the digital divide. The analysis shows that digital capital is intertwined with the frequency/intensity of social, economic/financial means, ordinary/daily and entertainment activities, but not with learning-related activities.

### **Submission ID**

758

## **Revealing the Equality in Digital Media through Digital Advertising**

### **Authors**

Edward C. K. Hung - The Open University of Hong Kong

### **Abstract**

Despite the fact that digital advertising is still in its infancy, previous studies have already exposed its importance in representing digital media, especially its ontological properties – rules, structures, features, and biases (RSFB). This preliminary study is to further reveal the relations between these RSFB and the one-way, two-way, and customer-driven business communications that imply the

power and freedom and so the possible equality in digital communication. Nowadays, we are heavily dependent on digital media to attain efficient communication but not aware of its power, enforced by businesses and other authorities, over our communications, limiting our freedom in different respects. How can we resist such power? How can we obtain a balance between the power and freedom – the equality in digital communication? In this qualitative study, we first review the representation of digital media in the form of digital advertising with the aid of ten digital advertising campaigns from Australia, Brazil, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, and the United States, across the Global North and Global South. Then, we discuss the definitions of the three business communications and their relations with the RSFB of digital media in view of the revised discursive interface analysis and network theory of power, alerting readers to the nature of different digital media and their roles in business communications espousing or opposing the equality in digital communication. In the latter part of the paper, we expound how businesses can use digital media to have one-way and two-way communications to achieve business goals and how customers and users can express their opinions and even make businesses change through customer-driven digital communication, pinpointing the possibility of developing a new communication theory depicting the rise of equality in digital communication. We conclude that understanding the underlying properties of digital media assists us in locating the power and freedom in digital communication and therefore allows us to use the right digital media to achieve the equality in it.

## **Submission ID**

760

## **Recovered media in Argentina: a resilient response from a digital inclusive movement**

### **Authors**

Carolina Escudero - University of Missouri, Global Programs

### **Abstract**

This paper is based on how the recovered factories movement, which began in Argentina in 2001, has grown over the past decade to include media companies, transcending digital inequalities and turning them into opportunities for journalists and media outlets. Just like elsewhere, the situation for journalists in Argentina is precarious, with technological barriers increasing digital inequalities and a lack of respect for workers' rights, particularly when political processes such as changes in government lead to new economic plans and market instability. This situation of great uncertainty for the press has given rise to a movement on the increase in recent years, known as "recuperated or recovered media" or "workers' co-ops". Between 2016 and 2017, at least six media outlets were recuperated by their workers after being closed down or abandoned by their owners, including La Nueva Mañana, in Córdoba; El Ciudadano of Rosario; La Portada, of Esquel; and the Tiempo Argentino newspaper and online news site Infonews, both based in Buenos Aires. Tiempo Argentino

is the only national newspaper supported by its readership, contributing 60% of income, which has made it one of the few independent voices of dissent in Argentina at a time of high media concentration and domination.

The Tiempo Argentino newspaper was one of the winners of the first Latin American Google News Initiative (GNI), illustrating how this movement has transcended politico-social difficulties and transformed digital inequalities into digital inclusion/opportunities. The GNI is an initiative that fosters innovation aiming to improve the sustainability of journalism in a digital era by developing open source software, so as to improve user experience on the Web and optimize internal management procedures for members. Once the software is finalized, the co-op will develop a prototype available to other self-managed media outlets in order to strengthen their membership model.

Hence, this explorative study seeks to analyze the phenomenon of the recovered media in Argentina, focusing on the experience of Tiempo Argentino as the newspaper and its workers face a new digital challenge. At the end of 2001, Argentina's political and economic crisis was the main theme in world news coverage. At this period and in response to the economic crisis, workers seized control of many abandoned factories. The rise of these "recuperated/recovered businesses", as they came to be called, was the subject of the documentary *The Take* (Naomi Klein, Avi Lewis, 2004). Although these co-ops are currently on the rise, providing a new way to empower workers, we ask ourselves what will happen in terms of digital inclusion and digital literacy when they share their experience through the GNI.

Consequently, we consider that the Tiempo Argentino newspaper is creating an unprecedented type of digital inclusion that merits in-depth research into its medium and long-term impact. As a South American country opens a new paradigm to the labor market of journalists following the Argentine Bankruptcy Law (1995, 2011) enabling workers to take over bankrupt companies, we consider it of interest to investigate the experiences of these media through that of its workers.

## **Submission ID**

855

# **The Use of Social Network Sites Influences Perceived Social Capital: The Case of Chinese International Students in Barcelona**

## **Authors**

Siyu Zhou - Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Miquel Rodrigo-Alsina - Universitat Pompeu Fabra

## **Abstract**

In recent decades, the development of digital technology has reshaped the way of social interaction as well as the social relationships for international students. Specifically, the use of social media

conduces to enhance the involvement with different interpersonal networks, which in turn improves their gratification in the host society (Chen & Li, 2017). Moreover, evidence has shown that using social media, such as Facebook, leads to enhance the perceived social capital of college students and the satisfaction with their campus life (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). However, only a handful of studies has compared the different ways in which the use of cultural-different social media influences the interpersonal networks as well as the degree of social integration. From the perspective of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1995), this paper compares how the use of different social network sites (SNSs) influences the perceived social capital among Chinese international students in a non-English-speaking European city, Barcelona.

In a quantitative study, 116 Chinese international students in Barcelona answered a questionnaire surveying their intensity of use of six SNSs (i.e., WeChat, Facebook, WhatsApp, Weibo, Twitter and Instagram) and their perceived degree of bridging, bonding and maintained social capital. Three linear regression models were built to explore the relationship between the SNS use and the social capital. The results revealed that the intensity of Facebook use was positively associated with bridging social capital [ $F(2, 113) = 11.149, p < .001$ ]; while WeChat positively influenced both bonding [ $F(2, 113) = 10.506, p < .001$ ] and maintained [ $F(1, 114) = 5.439, p = .021$ ] social capital. Interestingly, the amount of months spent in Barcelona was also positively associated with bridging [ $F(1, 114) = 5.557, p = .020$ ] and bonding [ $F(1, 114) = 14.108, p < .001$ ] social capital, suggesting that besides the SNS use, the length of staying in the host milieu also plays a role in social integration.

In short, these results confirmed that intensively using the host country SNSs (e.g., Facebook) plays an important role in obtaining novel and heterogeneous information, while ethnic SNSs (e.g., WeChat) mainly contribute to obtaining emotional and material support. Further qualitative studies will be dedicated to analyzing how the perceived social capital and different SNSs functions influence Chinese students' cross-cultural adaptation.

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#### **Submission ID**

898

# **Cyber Activism and Political Mobilization-The Internet and Activism: A study on #bansterlite Protest**

## **Authors**

Akilah Lakshmi Ravichandran - Madurai Kamaraj University

Balasubramaniam Jeyapal - Madurai Kamaraj University

## **Abstract**

In March 2018, protestors filled the streets in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi district as a part of the social movement (#bansterlite) demanding the closure of the Sterlite Copper Smelter Plant. Prior to their protest in the streets, #bansterlite was a movement that used online platform as a tool and spread messages across various social media sites like twitter, facebook, youtube, instagram and other interactive webpages. Lately, there has been an intensive discourse and discussion globally that social media plays a major role on opinion building and representation. Some civic movements are said to be stimulated by social media. However, in India, the strategy of utilizing internet communication as a tool for activism is relatively new. The growing use of Web 2.0 technologies in our everyday lives is a topic that is not yet fully researched or understood largely. Hence the study tries to understand how social networking sites has changed the ways of communication and paves way to public to discuss anything fearlessly and thereby becoming a force to form a movement and agitation. Social movements interaction has always been complemented by various media like leaflets, brochures and newsletters to reach large numbers of people. Hajnal(2002) in her work has mentioned that, these medium has only facilitated external communication all these years but it did not revolutionize social movements. Only with the recent rise of internet and their links with world wide web, citizen groups and social movements have reached new level in ways in which they mobilize, build coalitions, inform, lobby, communicate and campaign.

It appears that research community has neglected the role of internet in the 'extra institutional' characteristics and capacities that offers a great potential for increased citizen participation(Donk et al 2005) but the focus on researchers were on how well network-based social movements worked with traditional players such as political parties (Gibson et al.2003; Hoff et all.2000; Hague & Loader1999). Hence this paper focuses on finding the significant strength of social media in creating political awareness and mobilizing political protests among informal citizen groups or the mentioned 'extra institutional' characteristics. #bansterlite movement is examined as one of the case studies to understand the role of social media in order to make predictions for the future. It is done by collecting data by both online and in-person presences of the group. In-person data is collected from the place where the protest happened i.e. in the district of Thoothukudi by interviewing prominent people who were a part of the protest. Online data is collected using the no.of shared stories across social media platforms like facebook and twitter. By analyzing both online and in-person data, a more holistic view and new ways of understanding activism is unveiled.

**Keywords:** Activism, Online activism, Internet, Mobilization, Protests, Social media, Social movements

## **Submission ID**

929

# **The Third-person Perception in Post-truth Era: what is Chinese elderly adults' perspective of misinformation sharing behavior in WeChat?**

## **Authors**

Jingya Hao - Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona

Cristina M. Pulido - Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona

Yi Song - Beijing foregin studies university

## **Abstract**

With the development of digital media, Chinese elderly adults are becoming an active cohort of digital media users. Since digital media not only facilitated people's life but also facilitated the spread of misinformation, here comes the question, what is Chinese elderly adults' perspective of misinformation sharing behavior in WeChat?

In the context of the post-truth era, this study aims to investigate the third-person perception of misinformation sharing behavior in WeChat (a Chinese social media) from the perspective of Chinese elderly adults. The strength of the third-person perception, factors of fact-checking habits, trust degrees, verification ability, and gender are investigated in this research.

Based on a survey on Chinese elderly adults (N=317) in urban China, results confirmed the exists of third-person perception of misinformation sharing behavior in WeChat. Furthermore, findings also indicate that this effect tends to be stronger on people with better fact-checking habits, higher misinformation verification ability, and lower trust degrees on the information in WeChat. There is no clear relationship between self-reported misinformation verification ability and the strength of the third-person perception effect. In addition, the role of gender in TPP and misinformation verification ability has been investigated in this study. Results show that there are no significant gender differences in the presumed frequency of sharing rumors from peers, but female's self-reported frequency of sharing information without verification is significantly higher than that of males. Furthermore, when compared objective misinformation verification ability, men's objective misinformation verification ability is observed higher than that of women.

In general, this study provides many unique investigations for researches on the third-person perception. Firstly, this research expanded the third-person perception into the Chinese context and Chinese social media. Secondly, instead of investigations on the effect of news, advertisements or

political issues, this study has made a connection of the third-person perception and the critical awareness. Thirdly, this research is trying to fill the gap that attention has been little paid but should be paid to the cohort of elderly adults.

## **Submission ID**

942

# **Computational propaganda – friend or foe to South African political party brands**

## **Authors**

Randy Robertson - University of Johannesburg

Corne Meintjes - University of Johannesburg

## **Abstract**

Due to the ideological nature of politics and the norm of online aggression against them, political figures have begun to fall victim to a form of junk news called “computational propaganda.” Computational propaganda is the use of algorithms and automation to distribute misleading information via social media. Instances of this form of political manipulation have impacted democratic processes in many countries globally. Evidence includes electoral influence through automated disinformation in Brazil (Arnaudo, 2017); France (Farand, 2017) and Germany (Neudert, 2017); in America the Cambridge Analytica project (Greenfield, 2018); in South Africa, the White Monopoly Capital campaign orchestrated by disgraced Bell Pottinger, UK based public relations agency (ANCIR, 2017).

Political parties have invested in digital marketing and social media since Barack Obama’s successful presidential social media campaign in 2008 (Aaker & Chang, 2009), and since then, investment of this nature has increased. With the advent of a ‘post-truth’ world (BBC, 2017), the challenge political parties face is to design or regulate social media that reduces electoral interference. In light of the growing influence of computational propaganda and growing social media users, it is unclear how computational propaganda manifest in South African politics. It is also unclear how social media experts see questions of engagement and algorithmic filtering, freedom of speech, and censorship in the South African political context, which is the focus of this research.

Research question: How do South African social media experts understand computational propaganda in the South African political context?

The research is grounded in critical modernism (Habermas & Gramsci), considering the alteration of the distribution of power and listening to excluded and marginalized voices. While the nature of social media embodies this alteration of all types of power relations and knowledge systems of individuals and institutions, computational propaganda could be a hindrance.

This research involved an exploratory approach using eight semi-structured interviews with social media managers in South Africa, followed by an interview of a South Africa political party representative to contextualize findings. Participants were selected based on purposive, non-probability sampling, specifically snowball sampling.

Using thematic analysis (Flick, 2015), the study focused on bots as the most easily identifiable form of computation propaganda. In South African politics, bots manifest in a multitude of ways for a variety of purposes, such as bots used to leak news, agenda-based bots that reply to the specific subject matter, and extensive sock-puppet networks popularized during the “white monopoly capital” leak disinformation campaigns. Because social media platforms value engagement to sell advertising, it is difficult for them to curb computational propaganda as the primary driver of engagement is algorithms. Regulating the creation and spread of disinformation creates a problem for social media platforms and experts, especially where users curate and distribute fake news, not out of malicious intent, but out of belief. Increased legislation may lead companies to over-regulate their platforms, thereby limiting space for debate, art, politics, and other forms of expression. Such regulation could unintentionally galvanize unwitting arbiters of disinformation, believing that they are the victims of hidden agendas.

## **Submission ID**

987

# **DIFFUSION OF TECHNOLOGY FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF NEPAL WIRELESS NETWORKING PROJECT**

## **Authors**

Kriti Bhaju - Communication University of China

## **Abstract**

The remote communities in the villages of developing countries have very less impact of the current global information explosion. Despite the massive rate of telecom penetration in the urban areas, IT services still remain far short of meeting total demand and serving these areas.

To date, however, scholarly discourse on Information Communication and Technology (ICT) use in rural communities in developing countries has, for the most part, been limited to the conventional discussion regarding the gap that exists between the “haves” and the “have nots,” often referred to as the *digital divide* (Onitsuka et.al., 2018). This study therefore will examine the access and impact of the ICT project in rural Nepal, explore how it has influenced the community and study the change in social patterns by taking a case of Nepal Wireless Networking Project. The project has been working to ensure the information access to the people at the grassroots levels. Since 2002, it

has been working to bridge the digital divide in Nepal by providing ICT access to rural areas through wireless technology.

Roger's Diffusion of Innovation theory will help to determine the factors that influence the adoption/rejection of the wireless technology while Sen's Capability approach theory will help to understand whether the wireless technology has enhanced freedom of an individual/ community in the area where technology has been adopted and has influence in the socio-economic development.

This study will help to understand if the development projects related to ICT has helped in the factors that contribute to socio-economic development mainly education, health, employment and income. The study will explore how the introduction of wireless technology in remote villages has influenced the community, helped in reducing or bridging the digital divide, what has been the change in social patterns and its impact in socio-economic development after the introduction of wireless technology.

For the study, methodological triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods will be used. The research will conduct a qualitative case study of the Nepal Wireless Networking Project in Myagdi district of Nepal, in-depth interviews of 10 key personnel, survey of 120 households in the district, 3 focused group discussions and 5 participant observation.

The findings of the study will contribute to understand the adoption and rejection of the new technology, help in analyzing factors that contribute in bridging digital divide and is also expected to provide valuable information on what the government, policy makers, development organizations and private organizations can do to make best use of ICT for socio-economic development.

## **Submission ID**

1267

# **Phenomenon and Impact: The Digital Divide among Algorithmic News Users**

## **Authors**

Guang Yang - Shenzhen University

Jialing She - Shenzhen University

## **Abstract**

This study focuses on the digital divide generated by algorithmic news.

With the advent of the intelligent Internet era, algorithms have become a decisive factor of digital media. Algorithms are opening up new and complex digital divides that have emerged in unpredictable and often overlooked ways in the lives of individuals. In many mobile digital news applications, algorithms connect people with information and determine individual news visibility and reading habits. The performance of the digital divide has spread from the first-level access

divide to the second-level usage divide as well as content divide, bringing complicated and profound impact on the society.

This study took Toutiao app, a pioneer and representative of algorithm news in China, as a sample. Using a quota sampling (gender×age×city level), we conducted a questionnaire survey of its users, to investigate the phenomenon and the social impact of digital divide among algorithmic news users.

The results reveal that differences in socioeconomic status as well as perception of benefits of new technologies will lead to usage divide among algorithmic news users. The socioeconomic status of algorithmic news users also leads to the difference of the content visibility (content divide). At the same time, the stratification of socioeconomic status has a relatively greater impact on the content divide than the usage divide. In addition, the content divide of user groups is more likely to form the information cocoon than the usage divide. In algorithmic news recommendation, the role and function of news as social public affairs aggregator is weakening.

Based on the Knowledge Gap Theory, this study expands the discussion of digital divide under the new media paradigm, focusing on the algorithmic digital divide among different user groups. Finally, it is pointed out that although users are never passive, active users still need to be cultivated. Users' media literacy in the digital media needs to be strengthened urgently. Individuals should make full use of their own initiative to complement the algorithm, assist in adjusting and training the algorithm, so as to realize the harmonious coexistence of human and algorithm.

【Key words】 algorithm news, digital divide, usage divide, content divide, information cocoon

## **Submission ID**

1277

# **The Influence of Knowledge Gap on Older and Young Chinese People's Information Consumption during the Period of COVID-19**

## **Authors**

Jiru Zeng - Beijing Foreign Studies University

Lu Xu - Nankai University

## **Abstract**

As the spread of COVID-19 has turned into an emergency in China, media and information flow has been focusing on the issues concerning virus. Under the highly intensified media flow, knowledge gaps and digital divide are perceived between the groups of the older and the younger. For a long time, education and socio-economic status were commonly considered the demanding factor influencing the knowledge gap. However, the result of quantitative research illustrates that

the older is the group of inequality of information acceptance comparing to the younger group even though they are at the same level of education and issued the same degree. Although the older group is considered taking a higher socio-economic status than the younger does, the relatively aging group behaves slower than and not as rational as the younger. The qualitative analysis and records of interviews show that the empirical factor of the older is one of the obstacles which prevent them from gaining access to newly publicised messages and rapid flow of information. Meanwhile, digital divide between the two groups can be regarded as a significant cause of the gap. As is controlled on purpose, everyone participating in the research has physical access to the internet. However, the older group tends to rely less on the internet to collect information and shows a preference to trust the “more reliable” media such as TV and official press of the authorities, while the younger group rely highly on the internet, which provide faster information, to get awareness of issues about the virus as the data presented. Moreover, the two divides shows different preferences on sources of information even they are both on the platform of internet according to the feedbacks of questionnaires. The differences, or namely the second- and third-level of digital divide, as analysis of interviews indicates, may be consequences of empirical differences between the old and the young. During the spread of 2019-nCoV, the digital divide and knowledge gap have brought a great loss to China, and even to the world. Suggestions on promoting the free flow of information on not only the platform but also other forms of media and increasing the relevance and intimacy of news reporting with individuals ought to be put forward to reduce the gap and ease the divide. And education of public media literacy should be attached importance to in the long run.

## **Submission ID**

1331

# **Rethinking Boundaries of Privacy: A threshold against precise marketing and digital neo-colonialism**

## **Authors**

Aditya Deshbandhu - Indian Institute of Management, Indore

Kanchana M R - IIM Indore

Shatakshi Huddar - IIM Indore

Sudipta Mandal - Indian Institute of Management, Indore

## **Abstract**

### **Abstract**

This paper is an attempt to develop a possible threshold to distinguish between the increasingly overlapping domains of precision marketing and privacy studies. In a context where online marketing efforts draw regularly from repositories of big data and specifically mine data about customers, this paper argues that such activities can no longer be garbed as ‘precision marketing’

(as done in the field of management studies) but is in fact, a more precise targeting exercise that may violate privacy.

We build on existing understanding where most online service providers rely on users' data in order to provide a more personalized experience, to argue that this data is often used akin to a 'dual nature product' (Picard, 2005) and becomes of transactional value to other businesses. We therefore argue that in a country like India where most users of online platforms become members without understanding the multifaceted dimensions of the act of joining and thus the inherent cost, this creates a new kind of digital divide and lays the foundation for a digital neo-colonialism : One that resides in both the architecture and the system that governs internet experience as a whole today.

This paper suggests that it is essential to initiate a conversation about the various strategies used to target customers, and around the creation of a metaphorical threshold that could help regulate indiscriminate usage of users' personal data. By adopting a mixed methods approach which used an explanatory research design: participant selection model (Clark & Creswell, 2008); this study uses questionnaires and focus group discussions to gauge respondents' responses to five specific scenarios of online engagement. In each of these scenarios the respondents' willingness to share data was used to help arrive at a nuanced and more holistic understanding of the proposed threshold. The resultant threshold is then a contextually derived and situationally developed notion which could serve as a guideline and a layer of protection against a system which has become increasingly adept at delivering a useful, significant and relevant experience. An engagement that has considerably subverted the meaningful engagement for users (Selwyn, 2004) as today's user in the global south has an extremely low degree of control in the process.

Keywords: *privacy, targeted marketing, precision marketing, neo colonialism, digital divide*

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## **Submission ID**

1378

## **Panel - De-urbanising digital media studies in China**

### **Authors**

Yanning Huang - Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

### **Abstract**

This panel is formed of researchers who share the common interest in studying the roles of digital media in the everyday lives of different social groups in contemporary China. What we also share is

an attempt to go beyond the parameters largely set by urban users and researchers regarding what it means to “go online” and “use ICTs”. A prominent and somewhat normative approach to studying the Chinese internet has been addressing how “grassroots” netizens are empowered by digital media to participate in politics and resist the party-state’s control in various ways. However, who constitute “grassroots” netizens? Does digital empowerment necessarily mean political participation? Should political participation be automatically associated with resisting or succumbing to the party-state’s control? Without reflection on these questions, studying digital media in the Chinese context can be oriented towards young white-collar workers and university students whose ICTs use is more likely to fit the normative approach. While Chinese internet users indeed mainly consisted of this social group in the first decade of the new millennium, the composition is now much more diverse. With the popularisation of smart phones, the number of digital media users has been particularly increasing among rural migrant workers and other social groups in rural China.

To grasp these trends, it is imperative to “de-urbanise” digital media studies. The title of our proposed panel is inspired by the call for “de-westernising” media and communication research in the past two decades, which means not only bringing in more non-Western cases into discussion, but also questioning certain analytical assumptions that is implicated in Anglo-Saxon epistemology and history. Similarly, de-urbanising the studies of digital media in China on the one hand involves investigating how digital media have been appropriated by social groups other than urban middle-class youth. On the other hand, these investigations need to be grounded in a more comprehensive analysis of the social structure and local histories of China, which can debunk certain epistemic assumptions of urban researchers. The panel's five presentations demonstrate our effort to de-urbanise digital media studies in China.

Chair: Yanning Huang, XJTU, China

Paper 1. The classed practice of self-mockery: comparing urban and rural youths’ engagement with online wordplay in China. Yanning Huang, XJTU, China.

Paper 2. “Talk to dispel your mind”: how and why rural Chinese women manage emotions with social media. Yini Wang, Hunan University, China.

Paper 3. Behind Access: Why does the Chinese rural elderly not use a smartphone? Hao Wu, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK.

Paper 4. Between the factory and the platform: Chinese *nongmingong* confronting a technologically-mediated working-class labourscape in a time of economic transition. Yang Zhou, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK.

Discussant: Prof. Wei BU, Institute of Journalism and Communication, Chinese Academy of Social Science

## **Submission ID**

1379

# **When Twitter does not really like you: how the City of Johannesburg's brand community innovates the dreary messages of local government**

## **Authors**

Maritha Pritchard - University of Johannesburg

Abednico Banda - University of Johannesburg

Abyshey Nhedzi - University of Johannesburg

## **Abstract**

With its reputation for angry mobs and consumer rants, Twitter is a challenging environment for consumer-brand relationships. Likewise, for an African local government such as the City of Johannesburg, engaging about a wide spectrum of service delivery shortcomings affecting a vast metropolitan district is difficult. Criticised for its high crime levels, frequent power outages, and urban decay, living in Johannesburg is not for the faint-hearted. Yet, amidst the angry noise on Twitter, the City of Johannesburg hosts an animated brand community that has often been commended for its innovative approach to engaging around service delivery issues and public service campaigns. Correspondingly, the purpose of the study is to explore how the brand community hosted by the official City of Johannesburg Twitter account co-creates brand innovation.

A qualitative study analysed a purposive sample of 1,232 tweets. To further confirm and contextualise findings, data was also collected by one in-depth, semi-structured interview with the social media manager of the City of Johannesburg. A thematic analysis of the data reveals that five brand innovation practices were evident, namely animation, openness, linking, structuring, and theorisation. As findings suggest, a brand community becomes more lively and loyal when valuing the community as a pool of talent. Here, everyone acts as the eyes and ears of the municipality by reporting service delivery problems. Anyone is free to suggest innovative new brand applications and members reciprocate goodwill by helping one another. Most notably, messages about somewhat dreary issues, such as potholes, crime, strikes, electricity outages, water shortages, and traffic congestion are interjected with humorous, tongue-in-cheek comments. To this end, much of the anger and frustration associated with service delivery shortcomings are diffused by the witty bantering and goodwill that emerge when valuing creative suggestions and collaborative engagements instead of pushing scripted, one-way messages that tend to stifle brand innovation.

## **Submission ID**

1526

# **Rethinking Disconnectivity: Norms, Agency and Affect of Wechat Circle Quitting**

## **Authors**

Songyin Liu - London School of Economics and Political Science

## **Abstract**

In the “always on” networked culture enabled by the Internet and other information and communication technology (ICT), the technology non-use and the discourse on disconnectivity has provoked academic interest and debates on the motivations of and resistance in technology non-use. In the current body of empirical studies on disconnectivity, however, the affect and detailed context of technology disengagement lack enough scholarly attention, which may risk ignoring the structure of feeling enacted by disconnectivity. This article focuses specifically on Wechat Circle quitters for that Wechat Circle is unique as it is the dominating social media platform taking up a vital part in Chinese people’s everyday social life and online self-representation. This paper first delves into the various public discourse on disconnectivity and discuss how these discourses and norms have been articulated to form disconnectivity as a neoliberal lifestyle. Based on 13 semi-structured interviews, this article examines how Wechat Circle quitters narrate their experience, motivation and perception of connectivity and disconnectivity in the digital era. Following Selwyn’s typology (2006), I separate Wechat Circle quitters into lapsed users, rare users and non-users. Despite various motivations and reasons argued by informants, a common observation of the social environment shift in Wechat Circle from a close-relationship-based community to mass media platform formulates a structure of feeling. Early adopter or young users in Wechat Circle conceive the generational or class difference in affordance as a disruption of their affordance and strategically adopt the disconnectivity affordance as a new form of connectivity or online existence. Also, disconnectivity is contextual and profoundly affected by significant shifts in the life course. In this sense, disconnectivity is not only a representation of certain kind of affect or lifestyle but also the representation of media resisters’ reflexivity on subjectivity and networked life in the digital era. As this paper will argue, micro-level studies on disconnectivity should bring affect and life course into research to understand contextually and diachronically the norms, affect and agency of media resisters’ engagement and disengagement of ICTs.

## **Submission ID**

1610

# **Panel Presentation - The classed practice of self-mockery: comparing urban and rural youths' engagement with online wordplay in China**

## **Authors**

Yanning Huang - Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

## **Abstract**

A noticeable component of the online satirical culture in China, which comprises memes, buzzwords, sayings and other forms of parodies, is self-mockery, known as 自嘲 (zichao) in Chinese. This discursive practice was exemplified by the diaosi wordplay, a scatological term which denotes “dick strings” and connotes “loser” in English. Emerging in late 2011, it became a buzzword widely circulated in Chinese cyberspace and embraced by hundreds of thousands of internet users in both online and offline interactions, particularly among the younger generation. Most researchers, despite the different concepts and analytical frameworks they adopt, view the diaosi phenomenon as symbolising the widespread frustration of the “grassroots”, the “marginalised” or the “subaltern” who face mounting life pressure and improbability of moving up the social ladder in a country which has become increasingly unequal and polarised. Drawing on the in-depth interviews I conducted with a cross section of urban and rural youth in 2016, the presentation aims to complicate the extent to which the diaosi wordplay can be seen as a “grassroots” discursive practice. I will demonstrate its de facto orientation towards and identification by young urbanites and the distinct ways in which my rural (migrant) respondents engage with or disengage from the diaosi wordplay.

Though no longer popular, the diaosi wordplay is a valuable case for examining the class ambivalence of self-mockery which continues to be embodied in new buzzwords and memes in Chinese cyberspace. My key contention is: instead of taking for granted that online satire is “grassroots” or belongs to “marginalised” social groups, the social stratification of internet users and the power dynamics between them have to be analysed in a more critical and nuanced manner. As exemplified by the diaosi phenomenon, the apparently “grassroots” practice of self-mockery may conceal class conflicts and further compartmentalise white-collar workers and manual labourers who are similarly situated in the relationship of social production. Therefore, concepts such as “digital divide”, which entails a normative understanding of digital connection and culture, cannot fully capture the divergence between urban and rural youths' engagement with online wordplay in China. The latter's sense of disengagement should be related to their lived experiences and agency to distance themselves from the urban middle-class imaginary that oftentimes underlies online wordplay in China.

## **Submission ID**

1656

## **Panel Presentation - “Talk to dispel your mind”: how and why rural Chinese women manage emotions with social media**

### **Authors**

Yini Wang - Hunan University

Yanning Huang - Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

### **Abstract**

“Talk to dispel your mind” explains in 43-year-old Fang Liu’s words why she used WeChat to chat with her peers when feeling unhappy and stressful. In Chinese culture emotion control is valued more than expressive behaviour due to deep-rooted philosophical and cultural heritage. For elder rural Chinese women who are living in a patriarchal society, their private feelings are usually subject to their husbands and to their families. However, with the use of social media, this cohort seems to find channels to let out their hidden emotions. Based on an original ethnographic study that explored the use of social media platforms WeChat and QQ by 25 rural Chinese women aged from 40 to 52 in Hanpu town in south-central China, the data explored in the present study were collected during a 5.5-month period in 2015. Foucault’s theory of governmentality is used to investigate these rural Chinese women’s daily experiences in using WeChat and QQ. The findings present that rural Chinese women utilised multifarious technological affordances enabled by the platforms to manage their emotions. The findings are manifested by mainly four females’ emotional experiences with either WeChat or QQ: Housewife Jingjing Zhang vented her sadness and unpleasant feelings through writing emotional “diaries” on WeChat *Moments*; convenience store owner Fang Liu chatted with her peers to dispel her mind on WeChat; for catharsis butchery store owner Chang Liu resorted to straightforward words, expressional emojis and affective images on *Moments* and talked to strangers via *People Nearby* and *Shake* on WeChat; housewife Na Li participated in karaoke singing activities organised in QQ groups with a group of strangers to forget the unhappiness and sickness she was enduring. Real life realities brought about multiple challenges to these rural women including financial burden of helping the family as small business manager, educational burden of raising the children as mother, and institutional burden of conforming to housewife’s duty. Whereas social media platforms empowered them in achieving positivity and emotional release. Modernisation and urbanisation have brought fast transformations to China’s countryside in which information and communication technologies (ICTs) are regarded as significantly strategic and effective by the Chinese government. Yet many social and economic problems remain unresolved. Rural women, more socially disadvantaged than urbanites and their rural counterparts came out with their own ways to cope with life challenges. This reflects Foucault’s concept of “governmentality” that ICTs are employed by the Chinese government as “technologies of government”. Social media platforms like WeChat and QQ work well as “technology of the self” that cultivate individuals to effect by their own means to transform themselves, in the case of this paper, to accomplish emotional sustenance.

## **Submission ID**

1665

# **Panel presentation - Behind Access: Why does the Chinese Rural Elderly not Use a Smartphone?**

## **Authors**

HAO WU - London School of Economics and Political Science

Yanning Huang - Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

## **Abstract**

As the first level of the so-called 'digital divide', the physical access of ICTs has long been studied, while now many argue to move beyond physical access since it is 'no longer' a significant issue. However, for seniors in developing areas, such as rural China, physical access remains a 'problem' despite the falling price of ICTs. Moreover, studies that based on large-scale quantitative surveys show that demographical factors including income and education correlate strongly with physical access, but little has known on the deeper social, cultural and motivational causes behind the inequality of access. More importantly, haunted by technological determinism, there are still many studies assume that access can magically fix the problem without asking further about how does inequality of access articulate with other types of social inequality, and how the 'problem of access' is embedded within a historically and socially specific context.

To fill the gap, this study attempts to examine the motivational factors behind the reasons why many Chinese rural seniors do not use smartphones, and how are their decisions shaped by their relations with others and other forms of social inequality. Taking an ethnographical approach, the author conducted 7 months' fieldwork in two rural villages in Hubei, China in 2019. Seventeen seniors (above 63, 8 women and 9 men) were selected according to their family's differential socio-economic status. Among the seventeen people, only two of them own a smartphone while all of their adult children own smartphones. Participant observation was conducted and the seniors were interviewed in semi-structured and unstructured ways.

This study finds that the rural elderly's decision on not using a smartphone is profoundly linked with the socially constructed meanings that associate with smartphone and age, their relational and relatively marginalized position in the family and the society, and their active avoidance in order to protect their self-esteem. More precisely, a) the smartphones are considered by the elderly (and others) as expensive, easy to break, extremely difficult to learn, mainly for entertainment and not suitable for aged physical condition and uneducated people. b) Since they often considered themselves as 'useless' to a family as well as the society, they try their best to be a contributor but not a burden. That means they will save money for younger generations in the family instead of purchasing a smartphone. Also, they found 'playing' (their word) the smartphone is guilty and unappropriated when they should be helping their family in the ways they still can (such as child-

care). Similarly, they are afraid to burden other people in the process of learning to use a smartphone. c) For many rural seniors, the smartphone is a constant reminder of their low education and poor physical condition (such as their poor eyesight, hearing and memory). Also, asking others for help is humiliating and demeaning. Therefore, to protect their self-esteem in such a context, not having a smartphone would be a much better idea.

## **Submission ID**

1673

## **Panel presentation - Between the factory and the platform:**

### **Chinese *nongmingong* confronting a technologically-mediated working-class labourscape in a time of economic transition**

#### **Authors**

Yang Zhou - London School of Economics and Political Science

Yanning Huang - Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

#### **Abstract**

This paper examines ICTs-mediated politics of production among *nongmingong* (migrant workers) in present-day China. A relevant socioeconomic background concerns the post-2008 global economic crisis and local responses centered around ICTs.

On the one hand, dwindling orders from the North because of the crisis effectively challenged the export-oriented growth model that had dominated the Chinese economy since reform, while labour shortage and the introduction of a range of pro-labour legislations and policies led to surging labour price and production cost. In the past decade, these enduring trends have resulted in successive waves of factory shutdown and relocation, massive labour displacement and downgrading work and income conditions.

On the other hand, governments in China have been active in responding to the social and economic consequences thus engendered. Central to their strategy is the deployment of ICTs – mobilizing state and market forces, and the ideology of scientism, innovation and nationalism – to upgrade its industrial structure and economic growth model. This has had a substantial influence on its working-class labourscape, giving rise to not only new working-class jobs, but new ways of labour organization and regulation, and new politics of production.

Based on data collected mainly during 9-month fieldwork in a Dongguan factory, this presentation seeks to put *nongmingong* at the very center in examining and evaluating this digital transformation and explicate the challenges and opportunities it means for *nongmingong* in production. Specifically, it begins by discussing how *nongmingong* engage with the new job and livelihood opportunities afforded by ICTs and why.

The findings show nearly 80% of my interviewees engage with digital jobs. While the majority employs a multi-jobbing strategy, that is, to keep the factory job while take on digital jobs (including *Rijie*, *Weishang* and *Didi*) as sidelines, some, mostly male, are bold to quit factory jobs and switch to digital jobs full-time. The particular strategy they take has to do with their class positions (skilled/managerial or not) and class concerns (for example, work-related rights and benefits) as much as with their gendered concerns, especially as it relates to the three-generation family. It also has to do with the way these jobs are conceived and organised, and the ways in which ICTs are reinvented by market forces in this process.

I further discuss how *nongmingong* experience this ICTs-mediated working-class labourscape. I will first depict the characteristics of the labour regimes they involve in and the ways in which these regimes are technologically mediated. This will be followed by a discussion of their subjective experience of production regimes and the class disposition thus emerging. In this process I will bring out new forms of domination and inequalities thus engendered, as well as new forms of connections (among *nongmingong* themselves; between *nongmingong* and other social groups) and resistance thus enabled. In concluding the presentation, I will contextualize the findings within the historical development of *nongmingong*'s labour conditions and resistance throughout the reform to reflect on the implication of ICTs on class formation in China.

## **Submission ID**

1678

# **Reimagining Digital Equality Policy: Inclusive Technology in a Digitally Advanced Nation**

## **Authors**

Gerard Goggin - Nanyang Technological University

## **Abstract**

What is the state of digital inclusion for people with disabilities? What is the importance of digital inclusion for addressing wider issues of social inclusion and exclusion, and inequality faced in relation to disability? How can research better interact with and feed into policy and practice that seeks to advance social justice agenda, and ensure that disability is at the heart of digital equality as it is imagined and enacted?

To explore these questions, this paper looks at how disability fares and features in digital inclusion policies and how these are put into practice. The paper uses a theoretical framework drawn from critical disability studies, cultural and media studies, global media policy research, and science and technology studies.

Firstly, I provide a brief introduction to disability, digital technology, inequality, and digital inclusion. I then offer a brief discussion of the achievements, shortcomings, and challenges of digital equality and inclusion policy and practice in relation to disability.

In response to the current situation, I advance the proposition that disability is a highly productive intersectional exemplar for thinking about social inclusion, support, and welfare — indeed social futures. To the extent that digital technology is increasingly a key facet of contemporary global societies (consider, for instance, the “digital by default” notion often accompanying digital government policies and service delivery) , and that digital inclusion becomes a major stumbling block for social, political, civic, and economic participation, the many dimensions of disability offer important lessons. This includes the importance of considering and debating how the digital is shaped, what forms it takes, in combination with what other tools of citizenship also, and where the limits and downsides of the digital lie when it comes to equality and social inclusion.

Secondly, I use this account to frame and analyse disability, inequality digital inclusion in an especially instructive case — the city-state of Singapore. Singapore is well-known for its keen espousal of digital technology policies, and especially its many measures to equip its citizens and communities for participation in its unfolding digital society. As I discuss, Singapore aims to be an advanced case of digital inclusion, in which disability and accessibility are increasingly referenced and prominent in measures formulated. After analysing digital inclusion policies in Singapore, I look at how it has been implemented –notably in terms of ‘digital readiness’ frameworks, inventorying, and networks. While Singapore has enacted a raft of important and prescient digital inclusion policies (critical because of its aim to become a ‘smart nation’), in relation to disability and accessibility, there remains a long way to go before digital inclusion and wider social inclusion for people with disabilities is fully realized.

Thirdly, I reflect upon the Singapore case study, in terms of the wider international context, to see how we can reimagine digital equality and inclusion policy.

## **Submission ID**

1752

# **Developing and Validating the Digital Skills Scale for School Children (DSS-SC) in China**

## **Authors**

Xiaojing Li - School of Media and Communication, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Roujia Hu - School of Media and Communication, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

## **Abstract**

As an important indicator in predicting digital divide, the level of digital skills has been discussed and well enough studied by many western scholars. A variety of instruments have been theoretically and empirically developed to measure digital skills of netizens or adults in western countries, such as Internet Skills Scale (van Deursen et al., 2016), Digital Literacy and Safety Scale (Sonck et al., 2011), Digital Literacy Model (Ng., 2012), etc. However, there are still few concerns on digital skills scale for children, esp. in developing countries, like China.

This paper aims to develop a reliable and valid digital skills scale for Chinese school children based on solid theoretical ground and conceptual framework. The definition and construct of digital skills, as well as the validity and reliability assessment of the scale, are all targeted in this study. A cross-sectional investigation was conducted in Shanghai, which is a typical metropolitan city in China, among urban-rural school children by random cluster sampling ( $N = 3217$ ).

Four steps were designed to achieve the research goal. The first step was a literature review to develop the initial framework and instrument of DSS-SC. Then, thirty in-depth interviews (half pupils and half middle school students) were held to improve the DSS-SC items. Next, an exploratory factor analysis with a random sample of 1636 primary and middle school students was executed, to refine the latent scale constructs and the related items. Finally, a random sample of 1581 primary and middle school students was used for confirmatory factor analysis to examine the consistency of the factor structure and refine the items to improve the validity and model fit. Four types of invariance (configural, metric, scalar and uniqueness) were tested, which indicated excellent invariance for comparisons for CFI, RMSEA and SRMR indicators. The test validated that the DSS-SC can be used across different children groups.

The findings are theoretical and empirically consistent instruments consisting of 22 items in 5 dimensions of digital skills, which are Operational Skills, Mobile Skills, Creative Skills, Social Skills, and Safety Skills. Among these dimensions, Safety Skills are quite indispensable for children as it can help them realize online risks properly and attain positive outcomes of digital uses. Moreover, this survey indicated that children were least confident in their creative skills. It implied that Chinese schools should put more emphasis on teaching creative skills to school-age children.

Digital skills are must-have competencies for children to fully participate in educational, social, and cultural life in future. This study proposed and consolidated a reliable and valid DSS-SC in Chinese contexts, which filled the gap in digital divide research. Also, the DSS-SC is potentially promising in other countries if it could be validated in future studies. It provided theoretical and practical significance in future digital education, practice, and policy evaluation.

## **Submission ID**

1970

# **Inequality of Online Social Capital: Evidence from GitHub in China**

## **Authors**

Rongxin Ouyang - HSBC Business School (PHBS), Peking University

WeiMing YE - HSBC Business School (PHBS), Peking University

## **Abstract**

The rapid emergence and dominance of online communities have broadened the imagination of social relationships. Previous studies noted that social capital can be bridged or bonded in heterogeneous online communities like Facebook (Kobayashi and Skoric, 2011; Steinfield, Ellison and Lampe, 2008) and can be also an antecedent factor of recreating “a second digital divide”(Zhao and Elesh, 2007), inequality of online social capital. However, different from bridging or bonding, the latter is a lack of empirical evidence.

GitHub, an international community of software developers, with the GHTorrent Project(Gousios and Spinellis, 2012) provides empirical possibilities. Within the framework of online social capital, this paper explores actors (N=70840) in this homogeneous and heterogeneous community within the data through Social Network Analysis.

Statically, the discrepancy of average degrees(2.703 for developed cities, 0.592 for underdeveloped cities) and average clustering coefficients (0.047 for developed cities, 0.023 for underdeveloped cities) of those communities in different cities shows vivid patterns geographically and economically. Dynamically, though the accumulation of OSC among individuals varies, static geographical and economical divides have been enlarged in six years (2008-2014). Cautiously, this study builds a linear model on the training set (data from 2008 to 2014) and the validation on the testing set (data from 2014-2016, 2017-2019 excluded in data cleaning) also confirms the findings.

The result not only confirms the ubiquity of geographical and economical digital inequality in Chinese developer communities but also suggests the failure of bringing decentralized techniques (Git, a free and open source distributed version control system) into an online community to bridge the digital divide or to realize absolute and ubiquitous democracy.

This empirical study implemented a practical method to evaluate inequality of online social capital, verified the enlarging digital divide in OSC, enriched the definition of online social capital, and furtherly reflected on the rationality of widely accepted “centralized-decentralized” binary opposition.

## **Submission ID**

2143

## **Mobile use of couriers in Beijing: tools for professionalization**

### **Authors**

Pei Huang - Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications

Miao Huang - Department of Communication, School of Digital Media and Design Arts, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications

Wenhong Wang - Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications

## **Abstract**

Online shopping is one of the most prevalent activities in Chinese urban residents' daily life, which substantially relies on a large number of couriers who deliver packages door-to-door. Couriers working in cities can be classified as the new generation of migrant workers, who have few chances of qualified education, acquire high-level salary through heavy labor (Zhuang, 2019). The job has a high turnover rate, which decreases the sense of belonging and professional identity (Zhao, 2017). In brief, the profession of couriers presents new characters of migrant workers in the digital and networked society, which are intensely associated with the use of mobile phones.

The study on the use of mobile phones has been increasingly popular as the fast advance of mobile phones (Chan, 2015; Kim etc., 2017). Empirical studies from different regions have implied a common trend that the usage of mobile media brings the effect of empowerment. In line with these findings, this study aims to examine how the mixed way of mobile use – being a working tool and a private gadget simultaneously – has effects on couriers' professional performance and identification. Based on empirical analysis, two aspects of conclusion were found.

**Firstly, mobile phone use has effects on couriers' quality of professional performance and the subjective well-being of the profession.** Couriers widely agree that the three necessary weapons of their job include tricycle, mobile phone and unlimited online traffic package. The latter two support the convenient use of mobile Internet anytime and anywhere. Their professional performance is related to the skill of using mobile phones. Besides, some entertaining functions provided by a variety of mobile applications can bring happiness to the boring transporting and dispatching time.

**Secondly, mobile phone use can empower couriers' professional competence through improving their identification.** Mobile phones are communicating tools in its essence, which has been upgraded to be a social platform in which not only existing ties in the real world can be re-connected but also new ties originated in the virtual world can be constructed. Couriers build connections with recipients in conventional dispatching processes.

The qualitative data were generated in three months from January to March of 2018. In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 couriers and participatory observation with five couriers. The former method can generate data about 'how' and 'why', and the latter can be used to compare 'what couriers said' with 'what couriers did'.

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## **Submission ID**

2175

# **Advancing Knowledge Gap theory in the Social Media Context: The Mediated Knowledge Acquisition Model (MKAM) and its Pilot Study**

## **Authors**

Youjia Huang - University of Amsterdam

Jacqueline Tizora - University of Amsterdam

## **Abstract**

Social media platforms are evolving into important sources of information that complement their traditional counterparts. Researchers (e.g. Khoo, 2014) also claim it is an important platform for news sharing, and is unique in its users' ability to generate content. Extant literature investigating knowledge acquisition in social media found that knowledge gained via social media is dependent on different factors, this implies that a knowledge gap in social media exists, but here the independent variable Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1970) employs, socioeconomic status, is too general and quite exclusionary. This paper addresses this issue and incorporates personal susceptibilities into the Mediated Knowledge Acquisition Model (MKAM) which depicts the process of knowledge acquisition in social media.

The MKAM integrates existing findings and puts forward four propositions based on Valkenburg and Peter's (2013) Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model.

Firstly, the three differential susceptibility variables, namely Need for Cognition (NfC, as the "motivation"; Cacioppo et al., 1984), New Media Literacy (NML, as the "skill"; Lee, Chen, Li, & Lin, 2015), and Curated Flow in Social Media (as a mix of personal interest, social issues, and media's algorithmic properties; Thorson & Wells, 2016), affect Informational Social Media Use (ISU). These variables take both individual differences and differing social media environments into consideration.

Secondly, Cacioppo and Petty's (1984) elaboration likelihood model is used to define two possible cognitive response states (central or peripheral processing) which mediates the effect of ISU on knowledge acquisition.

Proposition three states that the differential susceptibility variables mentioned in proposition 1 also moderate the effect of informational social media use on knowledge acquisition.

The fourth proposition states that knowledge acquisition has a transactional effect on the differential susceptibility variables, ISU, and elaboration likelihood. This proposition explains **why** the knowledge acquisition gap is widening. People who have stronger abilities to acquire knowledge

will benefit from their stored knowledge. Which illustrates that those that can acquire more information, will acquire more information, and will continue to acquire more information.

Lastly, to examine whether the model is testable, we conducted a pilot study, combining survey, interviews and content analyses. Results show a Cronbach's alpha of .81 for NfC, and of .79 for NML scale. ISU and acquired knowledge were tested in a structured interview with a Twitter-browsing exercise, the screen recording of which was content analyzed along with the audio clips of the interview. Results show that these methods are good measures. The patterns observed in the data indicate that the relationships between NFC and ISU, and as well ISU and acquired knowledge may exist, meaning these hypotheses have the potential to be observed in reality.

The MKAM advances the knowledge gap hypothesis to include social media, where people of all socioeconomic status conglomerate and in a time where acquiring knowledge is no longer incumbent upon class but on personal differences through its opportunistic information acquisition feed feature. This model also implies that to harness social media's power as an information source, social media literacy education is needed.

## **Submission ID**

2335

# **The second digital divide: older people and mobile phones for managing social relationships**

## **Authors**

Mireia Fernández-Ardèvol - Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

Madelin Gómez-León - Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

Andrea Rosales - Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

## **Abstract**

Key functions of communication technologies are the organization and management of social relations and everyday situations. Within the media ecology that surrounds us, different channels could be used to the same purposes as people usually assess the option that best suits their communication needs and style. Thus, while Internet adoption rates in old age are growing at a fast pace (ITU, 2017), the second digital divide or the divide in uses and skills is persistent (van Dijk 2006). Thus, we study the changes in communication media used through the study of the tools used for two basic communication needs.

We explore this differentiated use of mobile phone among individuals aged 60 years and over in relation to the ecology of digital media. This study is part of a broader project that relies on a longitudinal approach and quantitative information gathered using an online survey. The survey was conducted in late 2016 and 2018 in 5 Countries, Austria, Canada Israel, Rumania and Spain. The

samples were designed to be representative of the older online population living in each country in the first year of the study. They are all high or upper-middle-income countries (World Bank, 2018), and they are all in the global north. Thus, it is a timely question to understand the heterogeneity of the uses of mobile phones among older people. In addition, it will allow us to characterize the divide in uses, that is related to the second digital divide (van Dijk 2006).

For this paper, we make an in-depth analysis of two complementary questions. The questions explicitly articulated two concrete situations that can be integrated in (Granovetter, 1973) conceptualization of “weak” and “strong” ties. The first is related to contacting an old acquaintance, referring to (re)establishing discontinued social bonds. The second refers to changing the details of a dinner invitation, which points to a narrower time frame, the physical sharing of spaces and meals, and thus to closer and more intimate social bonds.

In general, the first year of the study the phone call stands out for both changing dinner invitations (96%) and contacting old acquaintances (91%), marking its predominance in the organization of informal life. The second most mentioned channel is instant messaging for the meal invitation change (80%); and email for contacting the old acquaintance (77%), although it changed between countries. The second year of the study, the variegated use of digital media increased in some countries, which will also be analyzed in relation to basic socio-demographic characteristics. Results show the differences in the second digital divide in the populations studied.

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## **Submission ID**

2511

# **Digital communication in a country that turns old: Smarthone 60+ users in Brazil**

## **Authors**

Melissa Streck - PhD Student at Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul

## **Abstract**

The growth of the population over 60 years (known as 60+) and their way of consumption of digital communication is a topic that has been gaining space, especially in developing countries like Brazil.

From a critical point of view, it is perceived that there is inequality in the design of digital media products for those users, especially in terms of elements of the user interface. This issue is highlighted in a scenario where the 60+ want to be increasingly connected through digital media (PNAD, 2018). Thus, the purpose of this paper is to bring preliminary results of a study on digital communication behavior by Brazilian 60+ generations. It also presents a vision of consumption by their children, who are part of a younger generation and grew along with the computerization of the media.

Based on an understanding that digital interfaces are in constant change of cultural and social roles (Andersen & Pold, 2018), this paper tries to elucidate how users familiarized to a more analogical context, with communication medias as telephones, television or radio, can integrate themselves more holistically with the digital media and everything the technology beyond it can offer. Like McLuhan (1964), Flusser (2007) commented that as human hands are used to manipulate objects - tools, machines or electronics serve as imitation of the human hands, functioning as human extensions. That said, that is understood how digital technologies are here to stay and take the place of physical stuff, transforming the physical extensions into a dematerialized world. This has to happen not only for younger users, but also for generations that have experienced different media context and nowadays have easy access to new possibilities.

In order to get consistent data for this study, there were employed three methodological approaches. The first is referred to a collection of mobile data from 60+ volunteer users, using an app developed by UBILAB / PUCRS (Pellanda, Pase, Nunes, Streck, Souza & Pereira, 2019). The second was an in-depth interview followed by card sorting with a group of selected participants that represented the profiles revealed in the data collection. The third step consisted of an online questionnaire for the children of 60+. The objective was to understand the perception of a younger generation about digital communication by older generations

The results showed some very curious behaviors regarding digital communication of Brazilian 60+ users. There is a preference for specific kinds of apps, as well as a lack of general interest in searching or investigating for new apps or resources. The study confirms the hypothesis that many possibilities of the digital world are far away from 60+ users. One perceives that there is a missing dialogue between interfaces and the users, that meets a lack of mediatic literacy. Although there are different user profiles, the main reason for smartphone use for older generations in Brazil goes through social reasons, that leaves behind other kinds of communication apps, like those of information or news.

## **Submission ID**

2857

# **An Analysis of Change in Mobile Media Use of Senior Citizens in Korea**

## **Authors**

SeongIn Choi - Seoul National University

Hyunjung Hwang - Seoul National University

## **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze how the digital divide in Korea changes as the use of mobile media amongst senior citizens increases. First, this research attempted to find out which variables caused significant changes in mobile media usage by using the conditional Latent Growth Model (LGM), which observes changes at various time points by conditions. The analysis was conducted using the KISDI Korea Media Panel Survey data from 2016 to 2018, and the effects of demographic sociological conditions on the change of mobile media usage were identified. As a result of investigating variables such as gender, age, education level, income level, residential area, and smartphone holding in the latent growth model, the higher the demographic status, the higher the initial value of mobile media usage. This shows that the gap in mobile media use is also explained by demographic variables, as seen in other issues of digital divide. Although all demographic factors influenced the initial value of mobile media usage, only the age variable showed decreasing changes at a statistically significant level, meaning that the rate of change slows down as age increases. This implies that there may be limitations in closing the gap as the level of change amongst younger people is rapid compared to senior citizens.

Second, this study also attempted to identify the cause of the gap through a cross-sectional analysis, which was conducted to analyze the difference of these changes between media users under 60 years old and those over 60 years old. As a result, the following results were found in relation to smartphone holding, education level, and income. When all the conditions in the group of users over 60 and those under 60 are controlled, the amount of usage amongst users over 60 was significantly lower than users under 60, even if they possessed smartphones. Also, mobile media usage increases when education level is high, and the slope of the increase is lower in those over 60 than in those under 60. In terms of income level, a slightly different pattern was observed. For the group under 60, the usage of mobile media decreased according to income level. This shows that income levels have the greatest impact on the 'grey divide' in older people than other demographic factors.

To sum up, although the use of mobile media is increasing and there are active mobile media users among users in their 60s, the change in actual usage is not as large and only users with high income show active use, which was confirmed through the cross-sectional analysis. This is different from the general discourse on the rapid increase in the use of mobile media by the elderly, which provides another point of view on the digital divide.

**Submission ID**

2873

**“I Get on Better with Anglo People”: Racial Discrimination in Guest Acceptance Decision-Making Within London’s AirBnB Host Community****Authors**

George Maier - London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

**Abstract**

Research on racial discrimination within the “sharing” economy is still emerging. While large-scale quantitative data has been employed to find differences in acceptance rates based on racial categorisation, little qualitative research has been conducted with hosts to understand how bias enters their decision-making processes on these platforms. In this study I utilise data produced between 2017 and 2018 during in-depth conversations with 18 AirBnB hosts in London.

While the issue of race was never prompted by the interviewer, 3 hosts directly discussed guest race or nationality as an issue that informs their decision-making practices – in these cases, hosts indicated that they would reject Asian guests. Hosts based this decision-making on vague racist or xenophobic generalisation, for example, one host said ‘I had one from Singapore; I would never have anybody from Singapore again.’ In these instances, a single negative experience with the “other” can result in a generalisation that leads to ongoing discrimination.

This study aims to understand the rationality utilised by hosts in guest acceptance decision-making, including those who don’t openly discriminate, and through this, develop an understanding of how racial bias might propagate both directly and indirectly on AirBnB. It is important to see, for instance, how other factors that hosts use to decide if they are going to accept a guest, such as the guest’s use of the English language, might allow for indirect discrimination.

This paper offers some of the first direct evidence of racial discrimination in the “sharing” economy and shows how digital platforms have the potential to deepen (rather than soften) offline racial divides.

**Submission ID**

3003

# **Finland: digital leader standing on mobile feet. Inequality of citizens as digital consumers of public services online**

## **Authors**

Marko Ala-Fossi - Tampere University

Jukka Lempiäinen - Tampere University

Riku Neuvonen - Tampere University

## **Abstract**

Finland scored the highest points in the European Commission's Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) and became the digital leader among the EU Member States in 2019. One of the strongest dimensions of the Finnish performance was digital public services, which are actively used by more than nine in ten internet users. Every second Finn is also using public health and care services over the internet, which is the highest number in the EU.

Perhaps paradoxically considering the investments made in digital public services, the weakest dimension of the Finnish performance is connectivity. This is largely because of lack of fixed broadband connections and excessive use of mobile networks, which results in slower and less reliable connections. We argue that extensive digitalisation of public services together with long-standing government policies favouring mobile broadband have created a new kind of inequality among the Finnish citizens as the users of the digital public services.

More than 90 percent of all Finnish households are using mobile broadband and over 40 percent of them are totally dependent on it as the only internet connection. About 25 percent of the households do not have much choice, as they do not have even available any fixed internet connections, which would meet the EU definition of fast broadband (over 30 Mbps) or the FCC definition of broadband (25 Mbps/3 Mbps). No wonder the monthly use of mobile data per subscription in Finland is currently highest in the world.

Welfare state services in Finland have been digitalised not only to improve them, but to cut down the public expenses. The current government is even planning to finance a new health care reform partly by more intensive digitalisation. So, all citizens should have equal opportunities to access and use also public social and health services online, like digital medical records and prescriptions. But if you are dependent on mobile broadband, the speed and quality of your connection fluctuates according to many variables like the number of users, distance and obstacles between the user and base station as well as to weather conditions. Mobile operators optimize their investments and do not consider all the variations in mobile broadband deployment, and thus several unwanted locations with insufficient connections exists. In 2019, on average about 30 percent of the mobile broadband users in Finland suffered from network congestion.

This multidisciplinary paper will a) study the main reasons for Finnish communication policy choices resulting in priority for mobile broadband, b) analyse the technological limitations of

mobile solutions for digital public services as well as c) examine already existing and also potential juridical problems in providing an increasing amount of digital public services for citizens as consumers dependent on mobile broadband. In conclusion, we will make some suggestions for policy decisions, which would improve connectivity and usability of digital public services in Finland.

## **Submission ID**

3182

## **Towards a new 'digital future' in Northeast India**

### **Authors**

Junali Deka - Tezpur University, India

### **Abstract**

Digital media technologies are an important and enduring feature of the global communication landscape today. Digitization has ushered the power of communication and enabled diverse ethnic masses from both urban and rural sections of the society to 'raise voices' and 'participate' in various socio-economic/political/cultural aspects. In this context, the works of Tapscott and Williams (2007, 15) can be cited who argued that the "new web" has resulted in "a new economic democracy". There is a paradigm shift in the process of news production, presentation, subscription and consumption in India. It can be said that the new web has re-defined and re-structured the process of news gathering to news dissemination. However, the ratio of free-flow of information and access to information by the marginalized communities are to be questioned? The dynamic media ownership pattern, political environment and advertising avenues have interfered in the basic fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression. It is often criticized that the mainstream media has failed to present a 'fair representation' to North East India. Media representation of North East India has had remained a disputed never-ending topic for public discourse among media practitioners, educators, learners and professionals. The way news on North East gets reported by dominant online news platforms often hints on exclusivity. But the emerging digital news platforms promise to fillip 'inclusivity'. It has been observed that the most obvious notion of media misrepresentation of North East India hints at its diverse cultural background, indigenous social practices, geographical and technological limitations. The new digital platforms in North East aims to have reporting on region-centric stories and exclusive indigenous issues. Nevertheless, the social media journalism too comes with certain opportunities, threats and challenges to worry about. It can be said that with the arrival of 'participatory digital media', the communication approaches in developmental discourse has led to a techno-deterministic society.

## **Submission ID**

3330

# **How to improve the unfavorable situation of digital immigrants in information society?—taking the migrant workers for instance**

## **Authors**

Mingrui Ye - Communication University of China

Wenxi Jiang - Communication University of China

Yikang Liu - Communication University of China

## **Abstract**

Digital immigrant can be defined as the person who grew up before the Internet and other digital devices were ubiquitous, and so have had to adapt and learn these technologies. As the result of digital gap between urban and rural area, tremendous amount of migrant workers who receive limited digital information training in their rural birthplace but work in urban area suffered from inconvenience because of highly-developed digitization, in terms of living and personal development. These digital immigrants can also be regarded as information disadvantaged group.

When digital devices are affordable to more and more people, the purpose of this paper is to provide multi-dimensional analysis of considerable digital gap and solutions about making more people benefit from digitalization. The research methods include literary analysis, questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews investigation.

The difficulties of these digital immigrants are slotted into the following six perspectives:(1) Survival in information society, (2) Poverty alleviation in information society, (3) Information security, (4) Information literacy, (5) Internet community governance, (6) Information equilibrium. The reasons are analyzed based on three stakeholders: migrant workers, society including their community or working environment, and government.

Under the status quo that people have less patience to read or participate the courses, but prone to spend time on video watching, the solutions consider three following aspects: (1) Education institutions: provide information training and activities for digital immigrants, including skills, legal awareness and Internet morality, to stimulate their participation on Internet community. The method of training may shift from off-line training to online training with clear description of tangible benefits. (2) Government: provide information infrastructure and user-targeted services to help them get better employment opportunities; designing information poverty alleviation on macro and micro level; introducing rights security laws, and construct information consumption market which are available for digital immigrants as well. (3) Society: providing more information services in community, libraries, universities, holding more activities to help digital immigrants learn information access, upgrading services by fully considering their disadvantage and requirements. The communities and employees should also combine the training and application of disadvantage group with the pattern and incentives they can adapt.

During the case study we find the solutions which combine the government, public institution, employer and experts may assist the immigrant workers more. In this case, the local television station used TV program to attract followers, meanwhile created official account in social media to deliver employment information as well as some suggestions in working or living provided by experts. The organizer of this program also worked together with local human resource bureau, business association, companies, holding both on-line information sharing and off-line recruitment activities, helping thousands of immigrant workers find appropriate jobs and improving their information access.

In brief, improving the information literacy of information disadvantaged group should focus on changing their habits and ideas to utilize convenience brought by digital revolution. which requires the efforts of government, community, employee, etc.

### **Submission ID**

3547

## **The Digital Dilemma and Divides of Small Charities in the UK**

### **Authors**

Ville Aula - London School of Economics and Political Science

### **Abstract**

Social sector charities and non-profits have a major role in supporting the lives of the least privileged parts of the population in the UK, and their role as the last resort of support has increased in the post-austerity Britain although their resources are decreasing. As more and more of social life is happening in an online media environment and digital technologies introduce new sources of inequalities, charities face a dilemma: should they concentrate their dwindling resources on supporting their beneficiaries, or should they direct more resources into developing their capacity to navigate the online world, understand its implications, and invest into digital technologies? The dilemma puts charities on different sides of the digital divides.

This paper presents findings on how this dilemma is navigated by UK non-profit intermediary organisations that support other non-profits in their digital skills. Based on ethnographic observation and expert interviews, the paper elaborates on the role of intermediary organisations such as grant-giving bodies, non-profit sector consultants, and facilitator organisations in making choices about this dilemma. As proponents of digital technology in the charity sector, these actors need to have a position on how they support charities, but they occupy different positions in relation to the digital dilemma and divides of small charities.

The paper argues that charities lack sustained investment into their digital skills because of the structure and priorities of these intermediary and funding bodies. Because these organisations have different rationales to why they exist and who they try to serve, their ways of helping charities are also different. A particular difference can be found between those organisations that try to help the smallest of charities to get started with digital skills and tools, and those who target charities that

already have capabilities and can propose their own development projects. As a result, the divides are not disappearing, but the gap between charities might be widening. Moreover, those charities that have less resources and digital capacities stand in an evermore difficult position with their digital investment dilemma.

### **Submission ID**

3703

## **Critical Reflections on Promises of Privatization in Higher Education: A Case of EdTech Platforms in India**

### **Authors**

HIMANI SHARMA - MICA- The School of Ideas

### **Abstract**

Ubiquitous media presence, technological developments, and policy reforms have led to a paradigmatic shift in the field of higher education. The current epoch envisages privatization, digitization, and marketization instrumental in making the higher education segment a part of the complex education industry. In the course of this transition, educational technology (EdTech) platforms have emerged as powerful agencies endorsing creative commodification of higher education. These platforms promise to not only satiate the need for education and knowledge dissemination but also provide for economic competitiveness and social upliftment in emerging economies like India. With a wide array of EdTech platforms, Indian education system is currently witnessing a high point of the public-private nexus in higher education. However, a much-debated question is whether these platforms are fulfilling their promise of creating an equitable education system or are driven by vicarious profit motives. This paper gives an account of a change over towards an EdTech orientation in higher education. Drawing on ethnographic interviews with the actors associated with higher education EdTech platforms, the paper explores the interplay between technology, ideology and profit in current EdTech revolution. Using the 'Platform' metaphor, it redefines *digitization*, *privatization*, and *marketization* in the context of rising digital capitalism in the education industry. The paper proposes potential propositions for sustainability in higher education and suggests that platform capitalism obfuscates the idea of equitable education.

### **Submission ID**

3765

# **Engaging the future : A study of Higher Education's approach to ICTs in India**

## **Authors**

Niranjana Prem - Independent Researcher

## **Abstract**

At the turn of the millennium UNDP declared Information and Communication Technologies as an integral aspect of development goals to be achieved by nations across the globe. India has diligently engaged in this activity through implementation of various programmes, the current masthead being 'Digital India'. 'Bharatnet Phase 2' is a programme to bring broadband and wifi access to rural areas. The approach to Digital Divide and successful programmes that reported is framed in technological access. School and higher education programmes focus heavily on the technical and implementation aspects of technology when addressing ICTS. This paper will try to uncover multiple approaches to key concepts of ICT for Development in relation to Digital Divide in the Higher Education Institutions across India. These Institutions will be selected from the National Institutional Ranking Framework and National Accreditation and Assessment Council, the two key assessment bodies for higher education in India. Other criteria will be developed, for example, whether the Institution is Science and Technology oriented or has a Social Sciences focus, the relevant courses are offered in Undergraduate, post graduate or Masters of Philosophy programme and so on. The other component of data will be course outlines and readings prescribed in these Institutions. Key concepts like Digital Divide, Digital Rights, ICT and Sustainable development will constitute the search and selection of course outlines. Through the data, this study proposes to map approaches to ICT for D in India's Higher education, the awareness and perspective towards aspects of Digital Divide that engage not only with technological but also social, political and cultural inclusion. This study hopes to highlight the need for a multidimensional approach to these issues in our higher education systems. Then they might be reflected in the larger approach to Digital Divide in India

## **Submission ID**

3771

# **MARKERS OF COMMUNICATIVE- CULTURAL MEMORY OF "ANALOGUE" AND "DIGITAL" MEDIA GENERATIONS OF RUSSIANS**

## **Authors**

Anna Sums kaya - Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education «Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B.N.Yeltsin» (Yekaterinburg, Russia).

## **Abstract**

Communicative and cultural memory is essential for the formation and functioning of communication practices within the boundaries of generations, overcoming intergenerational and intercultural communication barriers. The study relevance is based on the fact that for the first time in the history of civilization, digitalization has led to the emergence of a special intergenerational gap associated with various communication practices implemented in different media spaces. This leads to cultural changes mediated by the media. The work analyzes materials of "analogue" and "digital" media generations in urban media. The analysis is based on the Jan and Aleida Assmann's theory of communicative and cultural memory, the media generations author's concept and methods of statistical analysis.

The study is intended to identify communicative-cultural memory markers of "analogue" and "digital" generations of Russians in mass media texts.

The analysis of more than 551,000 words using Sketch Engine identified two linguistic subcorpora. The manual checking revealed 1400 of the most frequent words occurring in one generation and not included into another. We came to the following conclusions:

4. Thematic markers of the "analogue" generation are lifetime and space (territory), business production activity, training, the state and local government, family dynasty, faith, history, culture, and art.
5. The "digital" generation frequent themes are physical health, business, self-realization, time and place of action, family, the legal environment that is associated with crimes and punishments, civic activism, recreation, and culture.
6. Family is significant for both generations, however, for the "analogue" generation the family is important as a social institution, for the "digital" generation – specific individuals.

Thus, the results of the study show different generational thematic-semantic ensembles and only partially overlapping life worlds due to differences in communicative-cultural memory.

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## **Submission ID**

3887

## **Managing Algorithms: The New Digital Divide**

### **Authors**

Rod Carveth - Morgan State University

### **Abstract**

The early years of the digital divide focused on who had access to computers and the internet and those who did not. By the mid-2000s, digital divide research expanded beyond just looking at access to looking at differences computer and internet usage patterns. As Anjana Susurla notes, with the increasing role of artificial intelligence, there may be a new digital divide emerging – one

between those who understand and manage the algorithms that govern much of the internet, and those who don't.

A November 2018 Pew Center report about public attitudes toward the use of computer algorithms in different situations revealed that 66% of the respondents thought it would not be fair for algorithms to calculate personal finance scores. In addition, while 51% overall thought an algorithm could fairly assess parole decisions, 61% of African Americans think this type of program would be unfair to people up for parole.

Part of the reason for the skepticism about algorithms is that most users are often unaware of their presence. A January 2019 Pew survey found that 74% of respondents were unaware that Facebook maintained an "Your ad preferences" area that showed how Facebook categorized their personal interests and traits. Though majority of users (59%) say these categories reflect their real-life interests, a majority (51%) say they are not comfortable that Facebook created the list. This paper explores the existence and implications of this new digital divide.

## **Submission ID**

3918

# **Digital competencies, experimentations, and a social structural in a whirl: A tale of two generations**

## **Authors**

Namita Nagpal - USMC, GGSIP university, sector 16 'C' Dwarka, Delhi, 78.

## **Abstract**

**Digital competencies, experimentations, and a social structural in a whirl: A tale of two generations**

**Namita Nagpal \* Dr. Sarvesh Dutt Tripathi\*\***

**Key words: online experimentation, young people, social norms, technology, generational gaps, gender marginalisation digital divide**

**Abstract-** digital media has opened doors of opportunities to the last person in the row. However, the picture may not be a rosy one when situated in social system amid ground realities. Technology never works in a void; it works in and through the social system, therefore influencing while being influenced. The study explores online experimentation practices of young people and how parents look at it, in terms of understanding their curiosities and inquisitions, in a world of changing social norms, technological freedoms and diversity. How do parents orient their traditional role play of parental authority to deal with novel hobbies of young people like online gaming and porn watching, which may not contribute to their personality development in a positive way. How the generational divide exacerbates digital divide and vice versa and the spill over effect on gender add a social spin to this modern technological phenomenon. The research objectives are 1) to ascertain

online experimentations of young people and 2) how these practices are creating gaps in family relationships. Looking at the inhibitions of young people the research methodology uses survey of young people to ascertain their experimentation practices and focus group discussions with them in order to triangulate the results. Interviews with parents were conducted to determine the nature of digital divide that prevents them to approach the issue directly with online experimentation practices of young people. Findings of the study suggest additions to the complexity of social picture as new social norms are found to be emerging, supplanting older norms thus creating moments of alienation for the digital immigrants with the gender caught in the crossfire of generations.

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**\*Namita Nagpal is pursuing her Ph. D. from USMC, GGSIP university, sector 16 ‘C’ Dwarka, Delhi, 78.**

**\*\*Dr. Sarvesh Dutt Tripathi is Asst. Professor in USMC, GGSIP university, sector 16 ‘C’ Dwarka, Delhi, 78.**

### **Submission ID**

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## **Exposure to Online Hate in Four Asian Countries (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka) and Individual Factors: A Cross-National Survey**

### **Authors**

Muhammad Awais - University of Management and Technology, Sialkot Campus

Farahat Ali - University of Central Punjab

P. Sivakumar - Alagappa University Karaikudi

Sikder Md Zulkernine - Jahangirnagar University

Thushara Priyadarshana - Open University of Sri Lanka

### **Abstract**

There is a considerable amount of hate material online, but the degree to which individuals are exposed to these materials vary. It is also evident that online extremism and hate groups are significant threat to national security of every nation, and understanding who is exposed to these materials is critically important so they could be emphasized and prevent them from becoming radicalized. Using samples of youth and young adults from four Asian countries (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka), we investigate who is exposed to hate materials. We find support for using routine activity theory to understand exposure at the individual level. By logistic regression, the results from the sample of Sri Lanka (whose youth and youth adults have exposed to the least online hate as compared to other three Asian countries) has taken as a reference value and comparison are drawn with other nations. After taking the individual factors into consideration, it is found that there is a significant variation in exposure to online hate for many of factors. Although there are cyber laws implemented in each of those nations, the study argued that the individual factors can weaken the resistance provided by those laws. It is recommended that such studies should also be carried out in other nations where the extremist groups (like ISIS) are trying to getting their evil needs fulfilled.

Keywords: Hate Speech, Routine Activity Theory, Cyber Laws, Digital Media

### **Submission ID**

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## **Girls Talk Exclusivity: Insights into Young Women's Ideas on ICTs**

### **Authors**

Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh - University of Ghana

Araba Sey - Research ICT Africa

Marcia Abonie - MmaaTech Foundation

Ruth Owusu - MmaaTech Foundation

### **Abstract**

Although information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been identified as tools with immense empowerment potential, especially for girls, research shows low levels of female access, use and industry participation, thus depriving girls of the advantages ICTs offer. This paper explores Ghanaian elementary and high school girls' views on ICTs, with the aim of gauging female acceptance and utilization of ICTs in light of assumed enablers and hindrances surrounding the use of ICTs. Using focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, we derive insights into young girls' interest in careers that involve ICTs, and how this may relate to amount of exposure and experience

with ICTs, access to ICT resources, and the cultural environment. The results indicate generally low enthusiasm for ICT careers, although participants would consider ICT careers as an option in situations of dire employment need. However, the analyses also point to a complex landscape of gendered norms, shifting and evolving attitudes, pedagogical tendencies and constraints, and divergent experiences depending on age, gender and socio-economic status. Of particular concern is the observation that the initial enthusiastic engagement of young girls with ICTs might be curtailed as they grow older and are channelled away from such interests by social norms. Negative stereotypes about young women's use of ICTs, gendered household roles and related misconceptions about the relevance of ICTs to women's wellbeing, and gendered perceptions about ICT efficacy, all contribute to this subtle re-aligning of girls' choices. Resource allocation and curriculum redesign interventions are required at community and societal levels to present ICT usage, study and professions as equally relevant to all genders. Additional support could be provided by increasing opportunities for girls to access ICTs and develop related skills outside the formal school setting. This study contributes a Ghanaian perspective to the relatively limited body of knowledge on gender and ICTs in African countries.

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