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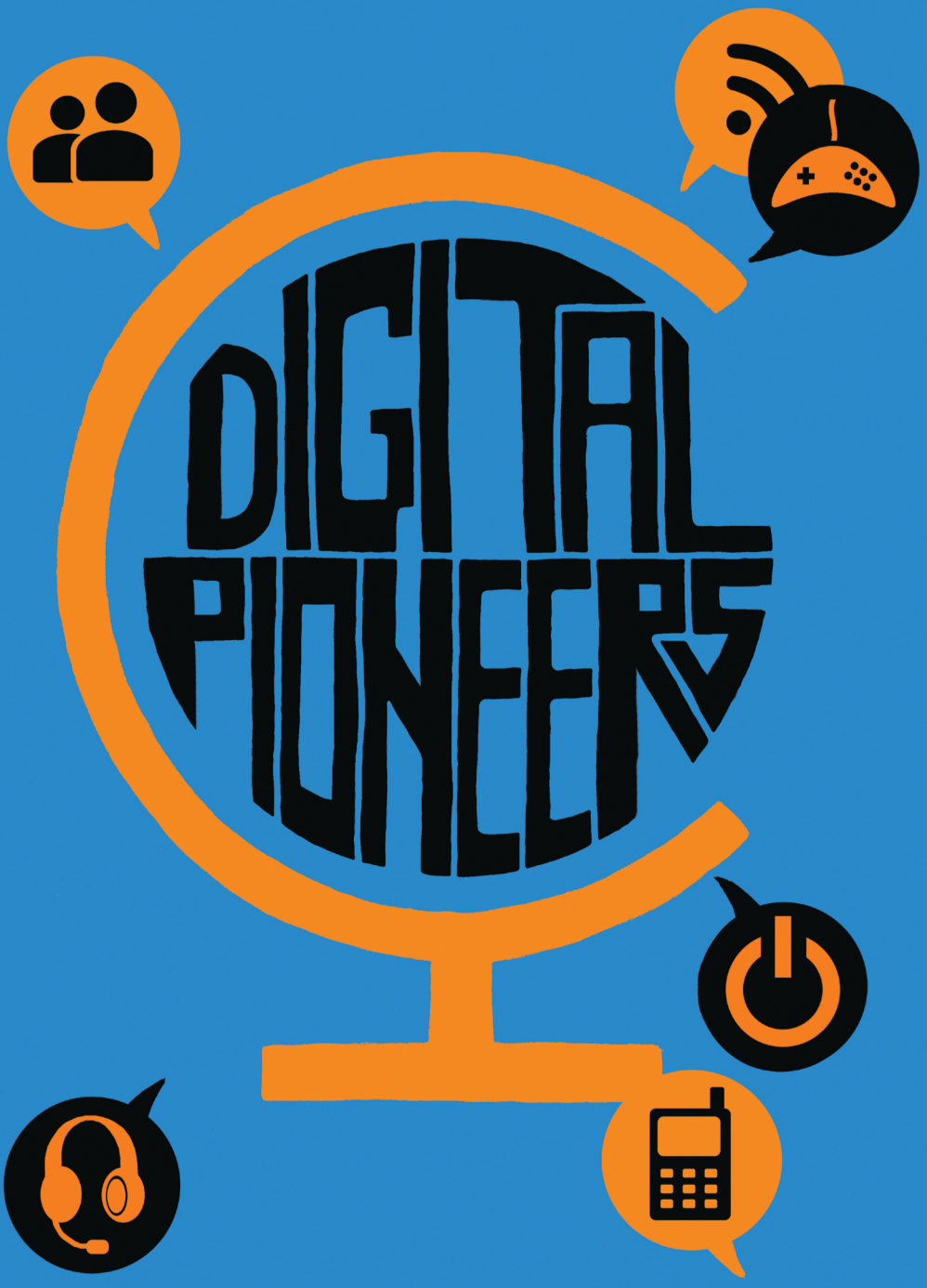

Tracing the cultural drivers of future media culture

NUORISOTUTKIMUSVERKOSTO
VERKKOJULKAISUSARJA

Digital Pioneers

Cultural drivers of future media culture

Sonja Kangas (ed.)

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INTRODUCTION

The parents of a 15 year old girl urge her to look for a summer job. She does not want to spend the whole summer indoors packing vegetables or selling ice cream, and begins to wonder if it would be possible for her to work in a virtual world. As a Facebook addict and an active participant in virtual game worlds, she wonders if she could create a virtual business of her own. Designing virtual outfits, organizing tours in game worlds or writing for Facebook Vogue could be fun. She could become a brand parasite, making use of existing brands and their online worlds but operating inside existing virtual worlds. That way she would not have to set up an entirely new system for herself and develop her own customer base, but could focus instead on an existing user base and in-community advertising. That way, instead of simply earning a bit of money from a summer job, she could learn about online business, social skills on the net, marketing, punctuality and the constant need for digital creativity, and could improve her self-esteem by doing something unique to make herself stand out from the masses.

Collaboration and participation in the mixing cultures of digital media is at the core of the networked activities that our 15 year old jumped into. This book has been written in the same way. Quantitative material from Japan, South Korea and Finland was gathered in 2006-2007. Researchers interested in the subject matter were contacted through different networks, and soon there were more than ten participants. A couple of writers dropped out along the way while new ones joined the group, which only highlights the true collaborative and self-organizing nature of activities from writing all the way to layout and publishing. The articles are all based on the same research data. Some other research materials and literature have also been used.

Digital media are central in youngsters' lives, both time-wise and culturally – creating meanings, strengthening relationships and pondering values. Digital activities are gaining a bigger share of youths' everyday life. The Internet provides several ways for them to express themselves, find friends or dating partners and likeminded people. It is a mass medium for everyone, providing the possibility of becoming a celebrity, being politically active, joining international networks, watching television, chatting with friends or just spending time online. It is a channel for expressing where I am, what I plan to do and what type of information or contacts I am looking for.

Ten years ago young communication acrobatics in Japan, South Korea and Finland were sovereign, fearless and experimental pioneers of mobile phones and the Internet. Back then, mobile communication was new and online cultures were just beginning to evolve. A key finding in qualitative Communication Acrobatics research (1999-2001) focusing on thirty 16-18 year olds Finns was that mobile phones were becoming survival tools for daily life and a focal media for communication, entertainment and information, alongside other devices and applications. The personal nature of mobile phones was highlighted, while the Internet was used merely for meeting new people. Japanese and Korean communication acrobatics have developed their digital communication and pastime skills by providing real-time communication and multitasking on a mobile. I-mode in Japan and broadband PC Bang online cafés in South Korea enabled a rich and youth-centric culture to evolve around digital devices.

In all these countries, youngsters' use of these media has been described as snack size or remix culture in that they combine pieces from here and there, follow several information

and communication channels simultaneously and utilize active social networks on the net. Ten years ago the Internet was losing the competition with mobile phones because phones enabled easier connectivity with friends. Now mobiles, too, have become online tools, and the net provides a central channel of communication by providing free Internet phone calls, instant messaging services and rich online communities to work or spend time in. It also provides an arena for making oneself heard and gaining acceptance and admiration.

This book looks at social networking among the youngsters, covering a wide spectrum of topics from media use, social networking, trust, and friendships to motivational factors. The book also looks at the development of so-called gaming lifestyle. Japan, South Korea and Finland are no longer far ahead of the rest of the world. But do these pioneer countries of the 1990s still have some special qualities that can generate novel digital cultures in the 21st century? Where will the next generation of online brands develop?

The first chapter of the book focuses on media use in South Korea, Japan and Finland, highlighting some of the factors that enabled them to generate pioneer digital culture in the 1990s. The Internet is constantly evolving and changing. In the mid-1990s it started to become a more generally used information channel by utilizing the first graphical browser, Mosaic. Back then the Internet was an information highway where binary digits – 1s and 0s – floated along an imaginary information highway. The sources of information were typically large media houses and corporations that had the tools, channels and knowledge to share data. The creation of personal home pages was possible but was not mass media, just stabile information about one person and his or her life and interests. While users typically did not reach a mass audience, publishers had difficulties reaching the target groups they were pursuing. The most common approach was to display a banner on a popular site or portal and hope that users would find that particular service. Consumers were scattered. There were no clear methods or reasons for grouping users until communities such as Facebook, Stardoll and Habbo were introduced.

The Internet has now evolved into social tipping networks where anyone can be a central node: a source of information, filter or opinion leader. Becoming a hub is now easy because tools are available to generate meanings. One great example of this is fashion blogs where high school girls write about their style and their latest discoveries in fashion. Such blogs can attract several tens of thousands of visitors daily. And the information provider – a 15-year-old girl from a tiny village in the South Korean countryside – can influence the global fashion industry. At the same time, people have a lot of power to verify and comment on news or others types of information. What should I think about a specific CD, book, game or hotel? Am I hot or not? Instead of reading marketing messages, people log onto a site where anonymous people have rated goods and services. Even though users have no idea who these people are, they still have a radical trust in other people's opinions because their reasoning is good enough, or, for example, a majority of people have given a particular hotel four stars. It is no longer a one-to-many type of model but a many-to-many or even many-to-one model in the sense that one is just a single person – a "prosumer" as researcher Charles Leadbeater put it. The second chapter delves deeper into these types of topics, focusing on technologizing youth from the standpoint of virtual friendships, and generating trends and subcultures on the net.

One can choose to follow blogs, official news sites or other types of sites, or all of them in parallel through web services in which logos and unique layouts are no longer present. The difference or believability and trustworthiness of one source of information compared to another is no longer

as clear. The iGoogle home page is an example of such a web service. All information sources have the same font, layout and colors. There is not a single logo on the page other than Google's.

Information is layered and people utilize different layers of media simultaneously. The layers are flattening, and consumers are given the power to choose. A consumer can choose which channels and web sites to follow, and what type of information to trust. According to the survey carried out in Finland, Japan and South Korea, only 10% had a strong trust in the content of traditional encyclopedias, in contrast to Wikipedia. And, interestingly, only 10% of respondents believed everything that teachers told them. Social networking services enable people to choose between different channels, viewpoints and opinions. Sometimes trust may be based on an average of opinions of anonymous people with different backgrounds from all over the world. If the opinions are strong enough or something is quantitatively likely, it becomes equal to truth. Facebook and other social online community services will flatten these layers by bringing different actors together and integrating different services into one, offering services from e-mail to content sharing and chatting.

Youngsters have learned ways to use media and its tools in their free time. Discussions about generation Y, generation Net or Millennials suggest that youngsters will also do this at work. How do experiential, fun, social, collective and entertaining aspects reflect the use of media, and what effect do those factors have on the use of media and on a user's experience? For many, the Internet is not just a playground. It is used more and more often as a way to connect and put oneself in the limelight, or for networking with like-minded people around the world. One such success has been the "Netari" virtual youth house pilot project in Finland.

Chapter four highlights that all digital devices will be networked and people will live more mobile lives than ever before. People will keep in touch on social networks via their mobile phones, but will also use phones to do everyday things, for example paying for subway tickets and other small purchases. Japan and South Korea have recently been leading this development, but due to easy access to devices and service development the next ground-breaking mobile innovation could even come from Africa, where, for many, mobiles have enabled affordable and easy access for communication and business.

The Internet is a way to communicate that one exists, to organize business, contact friends and strangers, and search for help, trends, ideas and values for life. The Internet is changing from the World Wide Web into personal tipping networks. How social is daily use of the net? This book will provide an overview of the online life and values of 15-25 year olds in countries that were pioneers of digital services at the end of 1990s. And answer the question: "Is the Internet a place where I could have a summer job in the future?" Perhaps our 15-year old will be just one of today's digital pioneers on the cross-platform, agile and mobile Internet, inventing new ways to utilize digital communication channels. Alternative answers can be found in the articles included in this book.

MEDIA USE

One of the first questions when we started to learn pioneer qualities in Finland, South Korea and Japan, was about the ways youngsters have used and are using digital media. Media use and first native generation in it was the point of change at the end of 1990s that made these countries stand out. The differences have narrowed during the last decade, but there is still many things we can learn from early digital pioneers. Today's youth has used the Internet for most or all of their lives. Currently networked computers are as common as newspaper or TV at households. Pioneer culture has evolved differently in Finland, South Korea and Japan. Attitude towards digital media and communication was changing the way youngsters did their daily routines. The research data highlighted that Finnish kids are more receptive and sensible towards complete strangers, where as different cultural codes apply in Asian countries. One reason is differences in devices. Finns use personal computers and have learned to use chat and online banking from the start. Youngsters in Asian countries focus on mobile use of the net and mobility – and other needs people have on the move. This is one reason why mobile social networking and mobile entertainment are so popular and widespread in Asia. It was not mobile -- it was just common. Not until now current smart phones are bringing the same possibilities to western countries and even more.

When analyzing factors for becoming pioneers, we find common issues in all of these three countries. Homogenous culture, established policies and strong presence of leading cellular phone or Internet broadband companies, had a strong impact on the development of digital subcultures in these three countries. New culture started when teens came up with new ways to use digital devices for their own purposes. Digital devices provide teenagers a entirely different domain and digital area of their own. That was the starting point for current social networking, also known as the second phase of Internet or Web 2.0.

Top 5 take aways:

- Netizens, hikikomori, otaku, 2channeler and neet-jok? Where goes the line between positive lifestyle and problematic behavior?
- The change came from within the countries – media use and new ideas
- Cyberfams – the future of family?
- Is online space masculine or feminine? How does that impact on peoples behavior?
- Trust and anonymity is experienced very differently in these three pioneers countries

YOUTH AND THEIR MEDIA USE: DISCUSSION ON HABITS, ATTITUDES AND TRUST

Sonja Kangas & Outi Cavén

Youngsters' pioneer digital culture emerged in Finland, Japan and South Korea in the mid-1990s. In northern Europe, mobile SMS messaging was invading urban youth culture even faster than Internet services. Japanese youngsters were being introduced to iMode, which enabled mobile communication similar to e-mail. At the same time, South Korea was recognized as a super power in online gaming. Online gaming culture was blooming in Internet cafés known as PC Bangs, where massive game tournaments for fun, fame and money were held. The novel mobile and online culture developing in these countries was soon recognized throughout the world, which was lagging behind in both commercial online content and mobile penetration. The introduction of digital communication tools was suddenly having a major impact on youth culture in these countries. Parents were monitoring and keeping track of their children remotely via mobile phones, and youths started to have a highly mobile, networked life with new friends they had met online or via mobile communities. Finland, Japan and South Korea were techno-savvy countries, but technically they were not notably more advanced than other highly technological countries. Still, digital pioneer culture and youth culture quickly started to bloom in these countries. In this article we look at the use of the social web and investigate why pioneer activity emerged in just these countries, what factors enabled pioneer culture to emerge and why the differences have narrowed during the past ten years.

We will posit reasons for the development of pioneer cultures by answering three questions. First, do the pioneer countries of the past decade have special qualities that generate novel digital cultures? Second, what will be the key areas of development in the future? Third, how will trust and attitudes change as the process towards social networking progresses? We will provide answers to these questions based on a vast amount of quantitative data gathered in Finland, Japan and South Korea in 2006-2007. The research data focus on 15-29 year olds, and represent a random sample of youths in these countries. In addition to the primary data, we also use national statistics from these countries.

The web is an interactive backbone of everyday life

Social networking services (SNS), online entertainment and virtual collaboration are currently some of the key terms in online culture on the global scale. At the end of the 1990s, only hints of this were visible. E-mail was considered the killer application of the Internet and the only service that generated money for its providers. At that time, home pages with user-generated content were state of the art, and instead of SNS people used discussion forums, Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and character-based chat environments enabling simultaneous discussions. Despite the novelty of mobile communication, it was interesting to note that at first, the killer application iMode was also an e-mail and personal communication tool. In other words, mobility,

youth cultures and local cultural aspects did not have a clear influence on the development of digital cultures and the spread of networked and mobile devices. Instead, it seemed to reflect more general technical development of mobile and Internet technologies in these countries. All three countries foresaw the rise of digital communication and social networking and developed information society strategies. In addition, all these countries had at least one large company that provided the necessary technical devices or network services to consumers. In Finland that company was the mobile phone developer Nokia, in Japan the mobile operator NTT DoCoMo and in South Korea broadband operators such as Korea Telecom (KT). It seems evident that technical enablers played a critical role in the development of digital youth cultures. Due to the strong presence of communication technology companies leading the development, prices were relatively low and devices or networks were widely available, quickly making use of broadband web connectivity and mobile phones common in these markets.

Despite the initial rather obvious use of social networking and notable technical limitations, unique user cultures developed very early in these countries. Japanese youngsters moved quickly from mobile e-mail to picture messaging, finding directions, handling finances, mobile social networking and games. Finnish youth evaded technical limitations by using emoticons as part of their unique SMS language, and instead of calling or using SMS they used signaling. They would let the phone ring once or twice. One ring or two rings would have different meanings. Mobile phones also dramatically expanded youngsters' range, giving rise to the idea of remote parenting. Broadband Internet connections were rapidly becoming common in South Korea and advanced the transition to rich media services in the public sector, as well. The development of a pro-gaming culture also separated South Korea from the rest of the world. Public video game tournaments were common at malls and even at subway stations, where enthusiastic and skilled gamers played for money.

Today's youngsters have used the Internet for most or all of their lives. In households, networked computers are now as common as newspapers or televisions. The collected research data confirm National Statistics' notions that use of the web is equal among young men and women when measured by frequency of use. In selected Asian countries both PC and mobile Internet use is very common. In northern Europe mobile connection to the Internet is just now becoming more common. PCs continue to be the main device used to access the net in Nordic countries. Ten years ago Asian mobile operators successfully started switching to mobile Internet, whereas European operators, including those in Finland, failed to promote Wap as a chosen mobile Internet technology. Wap was too limited, expensive and technical for average consumers. It also did not meet expectations and was soon condemned as a failure. Due to challenges with wireless connection, wired Internet via personal computers was an obvious choice at that time. Due to faster connections, graphical interfaces and ease of use, mobile use of the net is currently on the rise. Still, only 30% of men and 14% of women in Finland use their mobile phones to access the Internet. We estimate that this number will increase rapidly with new generations of mobile phones. Social networking and other uses of mobile Internet will become more relevant. For example, microblogging, map services and social networking are already widely used on mobiles.

High device penetration and early development of user cultures especially among youths advanced the transition of technical devices such as mobile phones and personal computers from nerd-gear to everyday consumer electronics, and computers became trendy. Youths started decorating their mobile phones and expressing their personalities and interests with ringtones

and icons. Internet connectivity is rapidly changing the role of digital media in youngsters' lives. Networked computing and game consoles quickly became crucial parts of youngsters' social lives. As mobile and Internet technologies became more common in everyday life, information technologies started to become commonplace – like using a television. According to the survey, 42% of 15-29 year old women and 56% of men in Finland like to use computers. Even though computers have become common in households, there are still clear qualitative differences between men and women. When it comes to ways of using the Internet or self-confidence as a user, bigger differences can be found. The majority of young men, but only a minority of women, considered search engines one of the most typical uses of the net and easy to use. The differences become even bigger when moving to more demanding tasks such as downloading files. Only one fifth of women, but over half of men, considered managing a file download from the net. Men also named themselves as skilled computer users more often than women. One explanation for the difference could be cultural. Even though a computer is an everyday tool for many, it still carries historical weight as a masculine technology, with men being the developers of machines and having a better knowledge of machines in general.

The differences visible in the level of use and confidence narrowed when focusing on the purposes of using the net. Reading e-mails, using search engines and instant messaging are the top three motivations in northern Europe, whereas in Japan and Korea reading news, using search engines and communication were most common. Over 90% of Koreans used information portals whereas in Finland and Japan portals were not as popular, with about 50% penetration. Significant gender differences cannot be found. The biggest differences between Finland and Asian countries were found in online banking and instant messaging. The majority of Japanese and Koreans did not use online banking, which was almost the opposite in relation to Finland. Also, instant messaging was not popular in Japan or Korea. That may be due to different communication conventions and a mobile-centric communication culture in Asian countries. In Asia, mobile Internet messaging is done without popular instant messaging solutions such as MSN Messenger.

Among those using instant messaging, e-mail is used more often than instant messaging services in the 25-29 year old age group. There is a clear difference when comparing that group to 15-19 year olds. E-mail is often used for communication at workplaces, where-as 15-19 year olds prefer communicating with friends via mobile or instant messaging services. Other popular uses of the net are reading news, downloading and/or listening to music, reading discussion forums, using online banking services, doing school work or work, watching and/or downloading videos and movies and playing free online games.

In social media or web 2.0 discussions people often focus on blogs and other social collaboration services but forget the huge popularity of discussion forums both in Northern Europe and in Asia. Among respondents to the survey about 20% write blogs at least once a day, but more than half read them. The percentages regarding discussion forums are much higher. An average of 70% of the respondents in each country read discussion forums, and over half of them write in discussion forums. Lately, novel types of SNS', online community features and the like have changed the center of focus. Local services have kept their position but global community services such as Facebook and Myspace have become common throughout the world. The most popular community services have remained local. These services are Mixi in Japan, CyWorld in Korea and IRC Gallery in Finland. The Mixi community entertainment service has 10 million users and an 80% share of the social networking market in Japan. According to statistics, 90%

of South Koreans in their 20s and 25% of the total population of South Korea are registered users of Cyworld. Cyworld is an active community with 20 million visitors per month. South Korea is also the center of MMOGs. At the beginning of 2000, the Korean games Lineage and Mu Online attracted over a million players and generated prominent business. Concurrently, western competitors such as Ultima Online and Everquest had a significantly lower number of registered users. Finland's IRC-Galleria has over 500,000 registered users, and is the biggest photo sharing and blogging community in the country. Over 60% of Finnish 15-25 year olds have registered with IRC-Galleria. Local services were started before the biggest wave of global SNSs, including services such as Flickr, YouTube, MySpace and Facebook.

The center of pioneering is now changing rapidly because different data sharing and community services, such as microblogging and video services, enable various phenomena to globalize quickly. Factors in being a pioneer have shifted from technology enablers and key companies to speed of communication and activity of individuals. Currently, many highly popular community services have started as hobby projects and developed for personal use.

See and be seen is a motivation for using the net

The Internet has proved to be an easy, comfortable, fast and fun channel to search for information and follow news. The information does not only refer to news-related or official information but also to personal opinions and views about a particular topic. In addition to searching for information regarding global or local events or news and information about products, youths also search for information about their friends' status, where they are, what they think and what is happening, or what the most popular videos at YouTube are at the moment. The motivation for using the net instead of other sources of information was ease, fun and the fact that, according to the respondents, information is hard to find elsewhere. Community and social activities also motivate use of the net. Nearly half of the respondents use the net to follow what their friends are doing or to tell others what they are doing or planning to do. The Internet was used to strengthen communication with friends, though belonging to a web community was not a key motivation in and of itself. Only a small minority considered that to be a motivating factor for using the net. This can be seen when looking at popular networking services. In Finland, image galleries and graphical social communities are the most popular. People want to gain respect and admiration online, get comments about their photos and generate self-esteem – are they hot or not.

Similarly, social networks have strongly encouraged self-expression and user-generated content. Publishing texts, music or photos was marginal, as expected. The majority of Internet users are active in enriching content by ranking and rating, but are not willing or able to contribute content of their own. Only a few users said that a desire to make themselves better known, become a celebrity, or show they exist were among the reasons they use the net. Social networking and web 2.0 have not yet completely captured the interest of average users when measuring production of new content. From the standpoint of discussion forums or commenting and rating content, social activity is very well established and the Internet is already very social, real-time and interactive. To elucidate on the type of users of the social Internet, we have identified five types of users: developer, critic, collector, linker and viewer.

Critic	Enrich online services by reviewing, rating and ranking news, book, movies, hotels and other products and services.	Active user of video sharing services and online stores
Collector	Collects interesting informational and entertainment sources for their own use. The content can also be shared within their personal networks.	Social bookmarking, blogging, microblogging
Linker	Active user of Social Networking Services. Actively sends invitations and reminders to other users within the channel, forum or social network.	Social Networking Services, e-mail
Viewer	Actively uses the Internet but does not want to register to any service, do not want to produce content or even share ratings and rankings of things.	Browser

Image 1: Different types of internet users. Source: Kangas, Lundvall & Sintonen (2008).

One interesting finding from the research data was that teenagers are more likely to meet their friends in real life than those over 25, and spend more time chatting with friends online. In addition to age, education also seems to have an impact on the amount of time spent with friends both in real life and online.

One third of 15-19 year old Finns spent more than 20 hours a week with their friends. Users older than 25-29 spent less time with friends than younger age groups did. As presumed, single people spent more time with friends than people in a relationship did. It was also interesting to find that people with a university degree spent only little time with friends. Out of those without any vocational education, one fifth spent more than 20 hours per week with their friends. The frequency of online time correlated with time spent with friends. Almost half of 15-29 year old Finns spent more than 10 hours per week with their friends, and estimated that they are online more than 120 minutes per day. That would lead to the conclusion that they probably spend time online with friends, too. Qualitatively, they spend time with friends both offline and online. Time spent online and with virtual contacts has raised questions about both the nature of friendships and issues of trust. In chapter two, Pauliina Tuomi will discuss the definition of friendship in online communities. The following chapter will take a closer look at the issue of trust.

General trust in human relationships

With an increasing amount of time spent online, trust has become an issue. How do people deal with friendships in virtual worlds, or build trust online? In the questionnaire, the primary theme focused on trusting the acquainted and the unknown, trust in general, and the possibility to abuse those who trust others. The second theme was: What does a person feel and experience when trusting and dealing with others? The third theme was the content of a relationship: the goals and benefits of trusting. In this chapter we aim to develop an up-to-date picture of trust in general, and, secondly, of the existence of trust in virtual interaction.

Over half (54%) of Finnish respondents said that in the long run, one can trust friends more than those who are unknown. In the Japanese data, 76% of respondents felt the same way, as did the 77% of South Korean respondents. At the same time, fewer than half said that most unknown people cannot be trusted. The younger the respondents were, the more likely they were to agree. People seldom trust others as much as they claim to.

Surprisingly, many – more than half of the respondents – said that most people are basically good and kind. Especially young Finns (15-18 years old) strongly agree, in contrast to older respondents. A similar deviation is seen in trusting people. A little less than half of respondents said that most people trust others. Again, especially young Finns agreed most. Typically, people who can be trusted are longtime friends (Finland 83%, Japan 76 %, South Korea 81 %). Even though there are differences between real-life and online communication, pastime activities and social bonding are expanding among everyday activities online and in real life. Social networks and communities are used more and more often as ways to strengthen relationships and connections with friends. This gives rise to discussion about how much computer-mediated communication has affected attitudes toward trust.

Youth is well educated about the challenges and threats of the Internet. Pedophilia is often discussed in the news media and peer support systems are widely in use. As in real life, youngsters trust their friends more than anonymous people in social communities online. What was surprising was that the risk of identity theft is not considered as big a threat as computer viruses. According to the survey, the biggest threat is that a virus will infect a computer. In other words, the biggest threats are still technical or target skilled users instead of other users in an online community, even though virtual identity theft is more common than computer viruses or hacking. Theft of virtual goods is also considered a big threat (22%) especially if it involves money, i.e. stealing credit card numbers. What was also interesting was that the findings did not differ greatly between men and women, although women are more worried about things in general.

Enablers of the early pioneer culture

In the 1990s, technological development in Japan, South Korea and Finland had an important effect on generating pioneer cultures. Development of digital youth cultures has been driven more by technological capabilities than by actual needs. Youngsters' enthusiasm played an important part in making new digital devices and user cultures in these countries more common. Online networking and mobility served youth cultures and youngsters' communication and mobility needs. In general, youngsters live very active lives. They use many digital communication devices

and computers, but they also take part in sports, go to school, enjoy entertainment in its many forms, build their identities and have various hobbies. According to the study, sports were the most common hobby among 15-29 year olds. Listening to music, watching movies, reading and travelling were also among the top five activities. Playing digital games was in seventh place. In other words, digital communication provided added value to youths, supporting their other activities, development of their identities and social networking.

In this article we focused on three questions: Do the last decade's pioneer countries have special qualities that generate novel digital cultures? What will be the key areas of development in the future? How do trust and attitudes change during the process of social networking? Networked cultures and solutions for sharing videos, ideas and comments have become a global youth culture with many similarities from country to country, even though local languages and cultures have an impact on the popularity of online services. Communication in microblogs or blogs and discussion forums has brought about similar development trends in both the East and West. There are still some differences, however, for example preferences in online communication or networking.

The early pioneer youth culture was enabled by local technological development with support from device manufacturers and network solutions. The needs were somewhat similar in these three countries – communication, having discussions or chats with friends, building identities and strengthening relationships. Digital devices provided fast and easy connections with peers and also supported other everyday activities and communication among various groups. Discussion forums, e-mail and virtual worlds became easy channels or places to deepen relationships or share ticklish secrets among friends. Youngsters came up with innovative ways to utilize technical possibilities. Still, in the beginning the most important factors in generating pioneer cultures in these countries were the availability of technical enablers, the politics of technology and homogenous cultures.

In the beginning of the 21st century, similar development took place in many other countries, as well. Additionally, social networking gave rise to new types of cultural development which, thanks to the availability of technical solutions, could take place almost anywhere in the world. YouTube hits and teenage girls' fashion blogs are examples of this. With the right kind of content and buzz generation, certain services, ideas or topics could easily spread throughout the world. The issue of trust is evolving with the development of various ways of communication, self-expression and networking.

INTERNET, YOUTH AND TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONE

Haejoang Cho

Who owns the Internet? Until recently, nobody. That's because, although the Internet was "Made in the U.S.A.," its unique design transformed it into a resource for innovation that anyone in the world could use. Today, however, courts and corporations are attempting to wall off portions of cyberspace. In so doing, they are destroying the Internet's potential to foster democracy and economic growth worldwide.

*(*The Internet Under Siege, Lawrence Lessig 2001)

Since the year 2000, the Internet has changed South Korea in ways that are hard for people to fathom. Just a decade ago, people were marveling at the emergence of popular voices on PC bulletin boards. But in the twinkling of an eye, broadband networks came to undergird the entire nation and portal sites, carrying wide swaths of knowledge and information, form part of everyday life. While one in three Koreans, or about 10-million people, with rooms of their own in the online space, mainstream newspapers have given way to web-media, including web-radios, where people can download free music, putting the music industry into a deep slump that it has to yet recover from. In 2002, young voters became a force in the political and cultural arenas, mobilizing voters through text messages on Instant Messengers and cell phones, during the presidential election, and creating instant hits of various television dramas through the activity of online fan clubs. One person who practically lived on the Internet, even became a best-selling novelist, not only in South Korea but also throughout Asia. With such events becoming everyday fare, news of online members forming cyber-families while real- life families disintegrate, due to the adulterous behavior of spouses in cyberspace, no longer have the power to shock. Rather, those who already spend an enormous amount of their time and energy online are waiting impatiently for a new space and time of digital convergence.

In South Korea: Heading Towards a Sci-Fi Future, Kim Hyun-dong of e-daily news, reports how the country's high-speed connectivity has made headlines around the world. South Korea is a country where 72 percent of households enjoy high-speed Internet and 17- million out of 48-million people are registered in Cyworld. It is a technological powerhouse where its citizens have started viewing television through cell phones in January, and the world's first high-speed Internet service for cell phones, Wive, was introduced to consumers in April 2008. The New York Times reported how the South Korean government chose to pursue economic growth after the financial crisis in 1997 through advanced technology, relaxing governmental regulations for the Internet and communications industry, and installing a nation-wide infrastructure for high-speed Internet. To illustrate how developed the Internet is in South Korea, the Times used the examples of how, two hours after the announcement of a motion to impeach President Noh Moo-hyun, a couple of years ago, his supporters created an anti- impeachment group on the Internet. The paper also mentioned the introduction of a Parliamentary bill to curtail slanderous writing on the Internet after a witchhunt was carried out on the Internet against the Dog Poop Ladyi.[1]

Judging from its share of shocking events, it's clear that Korean society, after 2000, has been one of the test beds of the Internet. As a member of this society, which has survived this initial round of experiments, I received frequent requests for interviews and seminars from scholars and journalism both in Asia and abroad. Groups, ranging from Internet entrepreneurs in the United States to educators in Japan, wanted to know how the Internet was turning South Korean youth into enthusiastic netizens or integrating the entire Asian culture. In response to this international attention, Kim Yong-sup, the author of a book on the digital age (2006:10), stated that South Koreas were a blessed group, with the country becoming the world's most interesting benchmark for digital technology. If the Internet was developed in the United States in the mid-1960s, it was probably in the 1990s that it started becoming a part of people's everyday lives around the world. South Korea, which accomplished the so-called economic miracle in the 1970s and engaged in the pro-democracy movement in the 1980s, began in the late-1990s to be classified as part of the advanced countries in terms of broadband connectivity and Internet users.[2]

Even though the sheen around the Internet began to fade in 2003, when stocks in the Korean Internet and communications industry took a major beating, that proved to be part of the bursting of a worldwide technological bubble, not confined to South Korea. Even now, in 2007, leading foreign IT companies are establishing research centers or branches in South Korea, and researchers visit Seoul every year to understand South Korea's online citizens. Having installed a functional broadband infrastructure more quickly than any other country, and equipped with expert personnel in many areas, the chances of achieving technological breakthroughs in the Internet are quite high in South Korea. Important to keep in mind, however, is the fact that the cyberspace, which Korean citizens was able to construct after 2000, is not an add-on to real-life, but is rather, in its own right, a bona-fide social field affecting social change.

I wish to pose two sets of questions. The first set of questions asks how Korean society was able to put an Internet infrastructure so quickly into place. Using that infrastructure as their base, what are Internet venture companies and online citizens doing? I am especially interested in how Internet pioneers are opening up new types of network societies, and how they are participating in the global order being currently constructed. The second set of questions has more to do with the specific activities of online communities and the impact that these activities are having on society. I wish to examine the meetings and experiences netizens are having in the new Internet space, and how these meetings and experiences are changing their life-worlds. The ultimate goal of this article is to question if, through the Internet, democratic society has become more mature. Have youth and women, who were previously excluded from the mainstream society, become more empowered? Through the active sharing of information, has it become easier for citizens who were previously utterly dependent on the state to become global citizens? Can the Internet create a new public sphere, befitting a network era?

Accordingly, this article focuses on the period between 1998 and 2002, when there was vibrant activity around the Internet. Through carefully examining activity during that period, I wish to identify the possibilities of a new order. Here, I use the concepts of compressed modernization, cyber democracy, temporary free spaces and alternative publics to analyze the rapid movement of South Korean citizens to online space. South Korea, which quickly transformed itself from an industrial to an information society, is a specific case that modified the logic of modernization as it played with the logic of being advanced and behind in novel ways. The resources that I relied on most, as I wrote, were not essays by colleagues or published papers. These resources are too

slow to chart change occurring at breakneck speed. Instead, I rely on newspaper articles and short responses from my students in classes that I taught, and interviews and discussions that I extemporaneously conducted with experts whom I met during various seminars and meetings. As someone who used the first UNIX system in the 1980s for email, computer editing, and working-at-home, and as an activist involved in women's and social minority movements in the early 1990s and, as an educator teaching online classes in the late 1990s I, more than many, have experienced the benefits of PC-communications. From using online space to incubate a youth cultural community in 1999, to experimenting with an online ecological system for the younger generation, who were already growing weary of cyberspace in 2007, I have used online space to maximum advantage to create a vibrant public sphere and improve everyday life.

This article thus emerges out of the reflexive investigation of a researcher who had the opportunity, both as an online user and a concerned citizen, to be present at many of the key settings in which the Internet was discussed and shaped in Korea. The fact that this article arises chiefly out of both my personal and public experiences is likely to be both its chief strength and weakness, and is also a question that should be discussed in terms of developing methodologies to study rapid change. Believing that other researchers will engage in rigorous argumentation and provide experiential evidence later, I have placed my emphasis on establishing the larger framework, and how to maintain an ability to read reality, even in the midst of breathtaking change. That is my concern as I chart the beginning of the Internet's development in South Korea.

"A laggard in the industrialization process but a forerunner in the information age": The breathtaking transformation into an Internet Powerhouse in the 1990s, one of the keys slogans for Korean society was "A laggard in the industrialization process but a forerunner in the information age". Many foreigners are already aware that South Korea's digitalization occurred under the umbrella of a strong state. Though it is true that the state was responsible for formulating many of the Internet policies,[3] the pioneers of the Internet also remember the state being a great hindrance. It is more accurate to say that the Internet was part of a modern nation-building project, accomplished through the unified efforts of the state, the market, and ordinary citizens.

Looking at the timetable for the establishment of the broadband network, it began in 1982 with the opening of SDN, the nation's first Internet connection. In turn, the opening spurred the government effort to integrate all its institutions into one communication network, and enabled the use of the kr domain for the first time in 1986. The establishment of the Korea Network Information Center a year later also enabled the government to pursue digitalization in earnest in 1995. From the perspective of users, the first efforts by the state to mobilize their participation began through Internet-based clubs on Chollian and Hitel, two representative companies of Dacom, a quasi-governmental organization, responsible for starting PC-communication services in South Korea. With the development of the Thrunet cable modem in 1998, the Hanaro Communication's use of this modem to develop its ADSL service in 1999, and the beginning of KT's ADSL service in 2000, the number of Internet users rapidly expanded. Four years and 2 months after the introduction of the broadband, South Korea registered its 10-millionth Internet user in October 2002 - setting the world record for the highest number of users per capita (21.3 out of 100 users). The mood in South Korea turned jubilant as it became hailed as an Internet Powerhouse. The ownership of the world's finest infrastructure in terms of Internet and mobile communications brought other prizes for semiconductors, mobile phones, displays, digital TV, and Internet games.

Let us take a moment to consider some of the reasons for the speed at which the broadband infrastructure was implemented in South Korea. Even though opinion is divided on this issue, it can be organized as follows. One view is that the information society is an extension of state development that was powerful during the industrialization process. In contrast to United States, China, and Japan, which had monopolistic companies impeding their plans, South Korea faced no such barriers. For instance, the United States had a difficult time establishing a nationwide broadband network due to competition between the communications companies, which held monopolies in each region. The Japan, in turn, had its NTT, and China its Chinese Telecom. In contrast, in South Korea, the strong state was able to efficiently install an Internet infrastructure, by coordinating the actions of companies, including KT, SK, LG, Hansol, and Shinsegae, as cooperative units. In addition, due to the special privileges and respect that Korean scientists and technicians received, under the government policy promoting technological development since the 1970s, they made voluntary sacrifices in developing the Internet. Even in the latter half of the Internet's development, when Internet venture companies and netizens began to play a bigger role, the state continued to be active. In particular, it is said that the foot- soldiers of the industrialization process, which played a key role in constructing a rich and powerful motherland, also played a key role in promoting the growth of the computer industry, central to the information society. There is still much debate about the side effects of their participation, worthy of another study.

Even though one could argue that the rapid growth of the Korean economy in the 1980s provided the basic conditions for the construction of an information society, if one looks at the commercial sector, the actual catalyst was the IMF financial crisis in 1997. After the explosion of the IMF financial crisis, when the whole nation went into a state-of-emergency, both foreign and domestic investment became concentrated in the Internet sector. In an environment, where there was high distrust of both government and chaebols and growing social support for young entrepreneurs and technicians, IT venture companies sprouted quickly after the crisis. Some of the representative companies were Daum Communication, Ahn Anti-Virus, NHN, Cyworld, NC Soft, and Nexon Game. Not only young and creative entrepreneurs but also young and capable workers started converging around venture companies, creating a mood that resembled the Klondike Gold Rush in the late 19th century, spurring the phenomenal growth of the IT sector. Even though the government, in the midst of neoliberal restructuring, set up relief programs to help the growing number of unemployed, they had minimal effect. Early retirees, who had little social support, jumped into setting up their own businesses, including PC-Bangs, the foundation for the Internet industry. While the broadband-wired PC-Bangs became spaces where one could email, chat, engage in online searches, and play computer games, such as Starcraft and Lineage, the online space started becoming crowded, especially with the expanding number of unemployed youngsters produced by the economic crisis.

There is even greater dispute about the cultural factors. They include the folk theory about Koreans valuing emotional ties, the personal and social network-centered nature of organizational culture, and the collective experience of participating in the pro-democracy movement in the 1980s.[4] I would consider some of the culturalist factors linking the behavior of Internet users to the particular lifestyles and attitudes developed during South Korea's modernization process. For instance, one could argue that the attitude of "Just do it", habituated during compressed economic growth, and the homogenization of desire, displayed in the competition to buy one's own apartment, have played key roles in the digitalization process as well. One could say the anxious desire not to fall behind, displayed in the habit of buying a refrigerator even without

anything to put in it, or the conspicuous purchase of a piano as a status symbol, also played a key role in implementing the broadband network. One can also point to the desire of Korean parents to provide the best for their children as having played an important role in the wide distribution of computers and the Internet. Parents who didn‘t even know what computers were, but who were confident that they must be good since they were foreign-made, bought computers and sent their children to computer institutes. In other words, South Korea‘s educational fever played a key role in promoting the growth of the Internet industry. Finally, one can point to other miscellaneous factors, including the early development of Korean word processing programs, the 24-character <Hangul> keyboard, high population density, and Koreans‘ preference for living in high-rise apartments, grouped into crowded apartment complexes. All these factors transformed Korean citizens almost instantaneously into netizens. Among the complex interplay of these various factors, however, I consider the most important to be the state‘s pursuit of an information society during the 1990s, in the manner of a developmentalist state, and the civic movements of citizens, determined to become the world‘s number one nation.

In the 1960s, with the building of a national highway, the entire country became a construction zone, littered with new houses and roads. With rapid economic growth in the 1980s, South Korea further became a civil engineering and construction nation equipped with an impressive hardware at its core. Even though the era of military dictatorship has been superseded by the era of citizen and culture, the civil engineering and construction nation‘s style of pushing development on its people has not changed much. In a period of economic and social crisis, the Internet became another goal that the state, market, and citizens could strive for, as they each felt the need for new spaces. After overcoming the era of military dictatorship, South Korea went through successive administrations, including the people‘s government of Kim Dae-jung, and the participatory government of No Moo-hyun, which have attempted to open up a new era of civil democracy. However, in the dizzying pace of adapting to a global economic environment, the development of the Internet became the number one national goal, through the quiet pact of both an embattled government and anxious citizens.

In the development of the Internet, the energy of the older generation who possessed both a developing country‘s complex in wanting to become an advanced nation, and the belief that anything was possible if one put one‘s mind to it, combined in unexpected ways with the eager desires of the younger generation to find a time and space autonomous from the supervision and control of the older generation. In particular, high-speed netizens emerged quickly as a phenomenon, due to the days and nights that the younger generation spent hooked to the Internet, in order to escape both familial and social pressures.

With the collapse of social relations during the economic crisis forming the backdrop of the Internet boom, it is possible to read the development of the Internet as part of the process of turbo capitalism, which destroys, without hesitation, existing ways of life. With a great number of people craving, rather than fearing, change; with little resistance to the foreign, due to the lack of entrenchment of local culture; and with lack of protocol with respect to intellectual property, an active exchange of information became possible, as did diverse forms of social relations among people with weak existing ties. In short, with concepts of sharing and individuality markedly different from advanced countries, and with the cultural infrastructure of the previous industrial society poorly established, the movement to online space became all that much quicker.

With the establishment of a broadband Internet network, the Korean society changed rapidly. Using new technology, people, who craved new forms of organizations and culture, created new myths about national venture companies and their captains, as well as new social fields. While Daum Communication introduced its own hanmail email account, preventing Korean market penetration by Yahoo or Hotmail, the Daum Café service, started in 1999, promoted the growth of cyber- communities. Still, even though Daum Communication has produced world-class programs, such as was anti-spam software, at 2007 present, it has not been able to engage in the same level of competition as Google or Microsoft. Despite tough competition from Microsoft, Hangul and Computer, meanwhile, has been able to hold its own, through popular programs such as: Are-a-hangul, which made it easy for Koreans to use the keyboard since the beginning of the Internet‘s popularity Cyworld, which began to offer communication services for personal networks in 2001, became successful by offering Korean citizens, who craved their own space, rooms of one‘s own. Compared to the American MySpace, which began around the same time, Cyworld has shown a faster rate of growth, with one in three Koreans currently a Cyworld resident. The online game industry, which began in the 1990s, has continued to produce leaders in the world game industry, including NC Soft and Netson, which developed the Lineage game. The Naver Intellectual service, started by NHN, counts as part of the successful epoch-defining experiments, opening up a new era of democratic knowledge production and circulation.

What are the future prospects for Korean Internet ventures, which have engaged in such epoch-defining projects? At 2007 present, many of the venture capitalists, who were active after 2000, have retired, and the passion for the online civil movement has also cooled. The movements, which focused on diversity, have now been subsumed under various large portal sites, and the Internet is now taking shape, mainly in terms of consumption and entertainment. The efforts by portals to commercialize their services in 2001 have also failed and many now survive on revenues from online ads and page views. Since 2003, the land grab, started by the Internet, has reached the point where much of the property is now owned mostly by chaebols, which are also in the process of buying up the smaller ventures. Describing the quantitative growth of South Korea‘s Internet industry after 2003 as unique, Huh Jin- ho, the head of The Association of Internet firms, summarized it using the two words, exclusivity and homogeneity. Noting that the Korean Internet industry developed, indifferent to global standards or to the free flow of information, he remarked on the remarkable fact that the Korean societies did not embrace blogs, and their unique capacity for democratic freedom of expression and distribution, like the rest of the world. This fact, he stated, spoke not just to the unique history of the Korean Internet, but also to the particularity of Korean culture. Finally, he pointed to the lack of proper training for Internet workers, the lack of exchanges with foreign companies, and the practice of scouting workers only within South Korea, as significant factors retarding the development of the Korean Internet.

On May 17, 2007, this issue became a cover story on News Maker. The main point was that the Korean Internet sector, which had once dreamt of becoming an Internet Powerhouse, was, in fact, losing much of its steam. Reporter Jeong Yong-in stated that South Korea‘s Internet sector was in a crisis, pointing to the rankings of various Korean Internet companies in Alexa, which rank sites around the world in terms of traffic. Compared to three or four years ago, when Daum and Naver shared the number one to three spots, in May 2007, the only Korean site to be included in the top 100 sites was Naver at 83, while Daum placed 158, and Nate at 178. Quoting an expert, he stated that South Korea being an Internet Powerhouse was a myth from the beginning and that, if anything, it is only an Internet Broadband Powerhouse. He grouped the symptoms

of South Korea‘s crisis into five categories. The first was being caught up in the dream of being the world‘s best, despite not having cultivated a firm technological and philosophical basis; the second, the growing uniformity of portals which, having failed to produce global brands, were now focused on controlling the domestic market; the third, the portals having a closed rather than an open attitude in pursuing a commercial model and trying to maximize their profit; the fourth, the portals dismissing the users as mere consumers; and fifth, not meetings the desires of consumers, many of whom crave innovative global web systems like 2.0. Criticizing the Internet industry leaders for wasting the chance to become an Internet Powerhouse by developing Korean entertainment services, he concluded that Korean society, which was late in reaching industrialization, could also be very well behind in the information age.

It is too early for such hasty conclusions. Not only is there news of a research team formed by Daum Communication and Apple Computer Korea to standardize the web, Abdul Karam, the Prime Minister of India, also stated in a visit to Seoul that with South Korea‘s hardware and India‘s software, we can create the world‘s best products.[5] If South Korea and India‘s universities use the Internet as the basis to create a communication network to share capable professors and educational materials, he continued, we can provide the world‘s best education. At this moment in history when the so-called second-generation of experimental web projects and products such as Web 2.0, Second Life, and YouTube are appearing, one becomes curious about how the Korean Internet industry and citizens will participate in these worldwide projects. In fact, with a relatively small market and very little historical experience in being a world leader, the goal of South Korea becoming number one is unrealistic. Comparing South Korea‘s excitement about temporarily becoming the object of the world‘s attention through its Internet experiments to its excitement about the recent popularity of Korean culture in Asia, known as Korean Wave, Internet expert Jun Gil-nam warned that this type of impatience threatened to hinder more than help South Korea in calmly analyzing and planning for its future. Better results, he suggested, might come from the Korean Internet industry moving out of the influence of the discourses controlled by the modern nation-state and developing both active collaboration with foreign institutions, and encouraging the activities of specific language communities.

In fact, there are few Korean companies that engage in transnational collaborations. Exceptions are companies like NHN, which experiments by buying up small companies, and NC Soft, which engages in collaborations with American companies and game developers that it invites to South Korea at a high cost. Even though there was a lot of criticism in 2004 of chaebols like SK buying up small venture companies, the act of creating global alliances in a period of rapid movement towards a global network society is in itself meaningful, and enables the companies to engage in new experiments. It is necessary especially for Korean companies, which have a strong sense of national identity, to develop a sense of multiculturalism and communicative competence through collaborating with foreign ventures. Interestingly enough, while American companies such as Yahoo or Google have succeeded in establishing themselves in Japan the only non-Western country to be granted the position of an honorary white due to its ability to catch up to the temporality of Western modernity they have not been able to do the same in South Korea or China. The future of Korean companies, which have been able to grab the lion‘s share of the domestic market, is something to keep in mind. Will they be able to engage in creative mergers and alliances? For instance, will NHN be able to cross national borders to create a time and space for Asian people, through allying its Naver search engine with China‘s popular search engine Bydu? Through such collaborations, will they be able to break into the tightly guarded ranks of the world order, which is being currently globalized through the Internet?

Interestingly, the July 2003 issue of the global magazine Forbes is presented as a peep show into Korean society. Though long, let us look at parts of the article, Korea's Weird Wired World: Strange Things Happen When the Entire Country is Hooked on High-speed Internet.[6]

Currently in South Korea, which is connected through broadband, strange things are happening. South Korea, which is smaller than Virginia and which has a population of 45 million, is the world's most connected nation. From the perspective of politics, cultural industry, sex, mass media, crime, commerce, the world is quickly changing as a result of people who are spending as much time online as they are offline. Seventy percent of households or 10-million people are connected, while two-thirds of the population owns a third generation cell phone. It is unlikely that the United States will reach even 50 percent by 2004. In South Korea, where is it possible to have cheap access to the Internet anywhere in the country, strange things are happening. Regardless of whom one grabs on the street, their rich experiences online are likely to be valuable, either as warnings or tales of success, to many countries around the world which have entered the competition for broadband distribution. While cases of divorce are rising between couples who have engaged in extramarital affairs after video-chatting, there was even an incident where a young man died from a heart attack while playing an Internet game, pointing to the growing seriousness of Internet addiction.

After the presidential election in 2002, Koreans knew for certain that they had entered a new era. On December 19th at 11AM, the central voting body announced that the reform party of Noh Moo-hyun, the favorite of young people, was losing. Minutes after receiving a text message on their cell phones to go vote, the previously apolitical young people gathered in voting booths and voted for Noh Moo-yun so that he started leading the polls from 2PM and eventually won the election. Due to the help of the Internet, Noh, who had no support from either the mainstream media or the chaebol, was able to stroll into the Blue House. That day, overturning the traditional Confucian order, the reins of power symbolically changed hands from the older to the younger generation.

The Forbes article also introduced the online game Lineage, which takes place in a fantasy space that takes six hours to walk across and contains 50 islands'. It not only described how the game has over 320,000 gamers, and over 3.2-million members who paid $25 a month to play it, but also how the company, which owns the game, had taken over an important American game company in 2002 and was now preparing to enter the Chinese market. He also went on to report how AIG, an American insurance company, had invested a huge sum in Hanaro Communications, a broadband communications company, and how Samsung and LG were collaborating to produce Internet-related sound-recognition and screen devices. When Microsoft invested 500-million dollars in Korea Telecom to test its ubiquitous communication, it is said that Microsoft made this decision, after observing how a sex video, containing a sex scene with a female star, made its rounds in South Korea in three days, thereby confirming KT's potential. The reporter ended the article by quoting a KT spokesperson, who stated that when the communication system was temporarily down by an Internet virus, the whole nation went into withdrawal, and a psychiatrist who stated that 10 percent of the entire population and 40 percent of youth from ages 13 to 18 were addicted to the Internet.

Even though I didn't feel good after reading the article, it demonstrates how the Korean society has experienced the violent effects of compressed economic growth without having a proper system in place. Isn't it the case now that Koreans, who were able to play like crazy in the online

space because there was no system in place to check their behavior, are now dropping away exhausted? Just as foreign colonial powers were able to easily wrestle away land from natives who had no sense of private property, it is possible that Koreans were able to play senselessly in the online space of the Internet because they didn‘t know any better? For Koreans who find it increasingly difficult to create a sense of community, isn‘t it possible that the Internet is playing a role similar to the alcohol that Native Americans enjoyed? Just like Malaysian aboriginals who prayed fervently for airplanes to drop off supplies believing that they were riches from their ancestors, isn‘t it the case that Koreans also built, worked in, and played in cyberspace, believing that, once the broadband infrastructure was put in place, a brave new world would greet them?

Finally here, we return again to a philosophical issue. Technology is not innocent, not neutral, and inextricably linked to power relations as another social system that both constructs and changes social relations. The more organic the process of modernization for a society, the fewer gaps there is likely to be between technology and culture. In contrast, in the case of late-developing countries that underwent forced modernization, technology is likely to lead culture and everyday life, especially when politicians and technocrats who wish to see quick results turn a country into an engineered society. If a society is stable, naturally it will take time to import technology and digest it. Sometimes, there is likely to be resistance. However, a colonized country is always ready to import things, and that importation, as superficial as it is, is likely to be easy. South Korea‘s Internet phenomenon is thus a good example of problems that arise when a country imports technology without overcoming first its colonial past. Internet is a technology that shapes not only business but also the whole society.

From that perspective, now is the time to engage in a reflective process and for that process to be adequately recorded. The type of change that the Internet has brought is much more than what we bargained for change that was brought into being by people who dreamt of change. While Cyworld members wished to create a world of positive relations, the creators of Daum Cafes and Naver dreamt of a world, which could be created by individuals, with their respective dreams, desires, and willpower. Both as a form of progressive culture and a subculture, these worlds will soon become the basis for the next generation‘s politics, economy, and culture. Ultimately, however, the most important elements are the Internet users and their respective roles, created through personal histories and experiences. The next section will take a closer look at these Internet users and social movements.

Civil society and the multitude: The diverse desires of subjects in cyberspace and the social field

Who are the subjects who, more quickly than anyone else, moved to the new time and space created by this technology, and what did they pursue in the online space? The netizens, who actively sought out cyberspace, are likely people who weren‘t satisfied with the existing system and wanted a different time and space. Through communicating with others like themselves, what did those people, who possessed desires slightly different from the ordinary, accomplish? Kang Myun-goo‘s research team, which archives materials for an Internet museum, notes how, from the first emergence of the online space within South Korea, there was more emphasis placed on communities than on databases (2005: 168). That is more obvious when we look

back to the era of PC-communications.[7] PC- communications, which emerged just after the end of the political democratization in South Korea, drew the attention of youth towards the issue of democratization of everyday life providing them with a forum to express themselves and to create their own identities. The youth who spilled out of the schools and system into the streets and squares, emerging as the main actors of the 1990s mass consumer society, naturally also became the leading agents of the information society.

Here the term agent refers to groups formed within particular social conditions, with particular desires, who engage in particular social behavior, resulting in particular social fields. Calling netizens, who became active in the online communities at the time, digital cultural tribes, cultural studies researcher Lee Dong-yun (2005: 37-92) analyzed the Internet phenomenon using the following categories: 1) participatory democracy through bulletin boards and posts; 2) the relaxed space of meetings, chatting, and messenger; 3) the era of personal media ushered in by Cyworld and blogs; 4) blogs as sites of new media and cultural production; 5) Internet nomad —DC Inside; 6) the free movement of digital tribes through flash mobs; and 7) the transition from netizens to thumb tribes. Even though it is not easy to understand the diverse and fragmented activities of various groups through one narrative, I will attempt to do precisely that using the concepts of subject and field.

Examining the online activities from 1998 to 2004, one observes three basic types of subjects. The first group is the so-called 386 generation, who emerged under the banner of cyber democracy, and who has been most frequently discussed by academics (Kim Yong-cul and Yoon Sung-yee 2003; Yoon Young-chul 1999; Hong Sung-gu 2001; Hong Sung-tae 2000). The second group includes youth, who were treated as minor, and women, who both felt oppressed within the dominant system. The third group is unemployed youth who emerged in the late 1990s after the economic crisis and during the current period of high-unemployment and continued economic instability. Of course, these groups all overlap and are divided only for heuristic purposes. I classify these subjects using a concept similar to Hardt and Negri's multitude (2001), which can be contrasted to the term mass. Viewing the 21st century as the era of American empire, they introduce the concept multitude to refer to the subjects who potentially have the ability to crack the global order ruled by transnational corporate bodies and governed by a single logic. As a group that resists the rules and logic of this ruling order, the multitude has the ability to engage in multiple postmodern projects, based on different values and independent interests. The members of Internet communities that formed in South Korea's online world after 2000 have the qualities of this multitude. They not only possess goals and organizing methods that are very different from previous political groups, they also demonstrate creativity and flexibility in carrying out their campaigns of networked activism.

386 generation: the expansion of public discussion and cyber democracy

The 1980s were a period of pro-democracy struggles in South Korea. While the fierce anti- dictatorship struggle based in universities managed to defeat the military dictatorship, the movement quickly weakened with the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the ushering in of a global consumer society. With the emergence of the new generation, which had no experience of poverty, the heavy atmosphere of the older generation was expulsed. During this period, the emergence of cyberspace provided a space for the younger generation to overcome the oppressiveness of the older generation and communicate with each other. While the meta-discourses of the activist

generation grew weaker, other groups with activist tendencies made their smaller voices heard online, forming diverse activist communities. Looking back at modern history, one can see many instances of social reform movements becoming rigid and conservative, even inciting popular backlashes. However, in South Korea‘s case, the sudden opening up of online space, rather than cutting off the democratic movement, enabled many people to continue the movement using different aims and methods.

From the era of PC-communications, the online space was full of Enlightenment voices who wanted to improve society. The first group of people to go online was citizens who had formed their social consciousness and criticized the structural contradictions through the pro-democracy movement. Meanwhile the wall poster culture of the movement, with its straightforward pronouncements, also reproduced itself online through the bulletin board culture. The important thing to note is how the bulletin boards enabled multiple individual voices to emerge into the public. At the time, many of the online posts were by people, who attempted to distinguish right from wrong, and who wanted to expose social wrong-doings. Accordingly, at times, the online space became one of tremendous violence. The introduction contained in this June issue of the college students‘ magazine [Intellect and Aspiration] reveals one aspect of the online culture during this period.

I was flooded with emails. There were too many to read one by one and, in any case, I felt that to read them all was a waste of the connection fee. Not only that, most of the emails was diatribes full of violent words. I wondered what I had done to deserve this. No matter how long I thought, it did not make sense. The problem was the fact that I had said something on a bulletin board that everyone read. Even though all I did was to express an opinion that was different from everyone else‘s, it provoked an avalanche of criticisms, in front of which I could not even raise my eyes to read. In cyber-forums, everyone turns into a mini-dictator, I concluded. In the face of an opinion, different from their own, they criticize, censure, and swear, so that you can‘t even get in a word edgewise. When will the sun rise in cyberspace?

If the pro-democracy movement in the 1980s succeeded in opposing the military dictatorship and achieving political democracy, in the new time and space of cyberspace, the people who were either not part of the movement, or who were, on the contrary, oppressed by it, were able to express themselves. Especially with the use of IDs and fictitious names, the naming culture started to flower and online polemics and personalities like Shin-Jung-Mo-Ra, following the new feminist convention of including one‘s mother‘s surname in one‘s name, also appeared. With everyday life becoming more democratic, the activities of those people with different sensibilities became more visible. In continuously politicizing the younger generation, the online space performed the role of an expansive democratic forum.

Broadly speaking, four types of activity occurred under the banner of cyber democracy. First, the youth-led political activists, through cyberspace, succeeded in radically changing South Korea‘s mainstream politics. While the Nakson Movement, organized through netizens in the late 1990s, succeeded in making visible the chronic problem of social corruption, the small civic group, NoSaMo (referring to people who love Noh Moo-hyun), which chiefly operates online, helped to get him elected, demonstrating the considerable power of the Internet. The transformation of a funeral for two female middle-school students, run over by U.S. army trucks, into a nation-wide political protest was also due to the efforts in cyberspace. The Anti-American candle-light vigil, held in Gwanghwamoon, was at first suggested by a netizen, becoming the basis for a larger demon-

stration three months later. While online parodies of George Bush entertained young Internet users, an anti- American song by an anonymous singer on the Internet later got heard all over the country. Occurring during the US-Iraq War, these activities later became the basis for both an anti-American backlash and the anti-war movement. The spontaneous and unorganized social movement, created through the participation of diverse citizens, had expanded into an inclusive democratic cultural movement. While women, people with disabilities, and sexual minorities used online bulletin boards to discuss their oppression, young activists, in their teens, emerged to use the Student Welfare Committee, formed during the PC-communication period, to push for a movement for students to have the right to choose their own hairstyles, to lower the voting age to 18. The second example of cyber-democracy comes from the activities of alternative media.

The Internet has provided a space for the appearance of alternative media, and for one or several people to create media. After 2000, a number of Internet newspapers appeared, the representative examples being [Ddanzi-Ilbo][8] and [Ohmynews].[9] The distribution system of media sections of portal sites and personal media blogs, which appeared soon afterwards, also contributed greatly to breaking up the concentrated media system, and changing the authoritarian language of the Cold War system into a democratic one. After the timely opening of satellite broadcasting and cable TV, the information network became even more diversified, challenging the power of the established newspapers and broadcasting stations, and opening a new experimental stage in the media industry.

The third field of cyber democratization occurred with the growing ability to sift through masses of information. Sites such as Naver Intellectuals were able to create a knowledge production system where ordinary people could easily participate in the production and circulation of information. With regard to this activity, it is important to note that it is not the case that a large amount of knowledge could now be accumulated; rather, a paradigm shifted in terms of understanding knowledge. With growing suspicion of the authority of the expert, more people came to directly participate in the production of knowledge. The open source for knowledge production and sharing in turn enabled new experiences and a shift in collective consciousness. The fact that the masses could now participate in the production of knowledge, previously monopolized by a minority, signaled an impressive democratization of information.

The fourth outgrowth of cyber democratization occurred through the celebration and festivalization of what Emile Durkheim has termed the community for itself, resulting in its politicization the representative example being the street celebrations during the World Cup. Diverse groups of netizens including youth and women took the 2002 World Cup as an opportunity to gather on the streets and celebrate as citizens for one whole month. Completely different from the somber mood of social movements in the 1980s, the citizens who spontaneously gathered to celebrate were surprised to find new aspects of their selves. These celebrations became an opportunity to turn the top down formation of citizen-subjects on its head. Both the mobilized and working subjects of the modern disciplinary system became transformed into spontaneous and playful subjects through the World Cup festivities (Kim Hyun-mee 2003, Lee Dong-yun 2002, Cho Han Hae-joang 2003). These large-scale civic festivals which brought the serious 386 generation together with the consumer generation was likely possible because of the long period of training in self-expression and solidarity in online spaces. As an effort to complete the incomplete project of modernity, this type of space/time of the festival can be said to have been instrumental in cracking the previous authoritarian system and transferring power from the neo-Confucian older generation to the younger generation.

The temporary autonomous zone of marginalized groups

Other groups who were instrumental in forming the online space in Internet were youth and women who had led oppressed lives within the patriarchal system. The number of youth using the Internet was very high, with the Korean Internet Information Center reporting that the highest users of the Internet were those in their teens at 8.63-million (or 94.3% of the age cohort using the Internet). The next group were users in their twenties at 7.67-million (91.3%), followed by those in their thirties (78.5%), forties (50.8%), fifties (23.2%), and sixties (5.1%). At the same time, the fasting growing cohort of Internet users were those in their forties (August 5, 2003. Joong-ang Ilbo). The highly curious younger generation is likely to be the first group to adopt new things. However, in addition to this natural desire, Korean teenagers are also strongly motivated to use the Internet to try to escape the oppressive social system.

In contrast to the social activists of the 386 generation, the products of consumer society the new generation attempted to escape from the oppressive society and enact personal transformation through diverse forms of play and relationships formed online. Their efforts to create alternative families, their own rooms, and their own stars bring to mind the concept of temporary autonomous zone, coined by Hakim Bey (1999: 97-106), to describe the anarchist counter-culture of the West in the 1970s. This concept, which brings to mind such formations as pirate‘s utopia and tribes without families, refers to new space of freedom, imagination and creation, created through forging new relationships with people who are dreaming of change. Even though these are temporary spaces, by the virtue of the fact that they are autonomous, people can change them as they experience these spaces. Even though the issue of whether these spaces can become an alternative public sphere still remains in question, what is clear is that the Internet has provided a temporary autonomous zone for Korean youth and that they have used it to their maximum advantage.

Let‘s now examine the three main forms of Internet activities of South Korea‘s marginalized groups after 2000. The first is the creation of families of choice (cyberfam) through online spaces; the second, the use minihompies as spaces of self-expression and social networking in Cyworld; and the third, the activities of individual-centered clubs and fandom of popular culture.

Creating cyberfams: from blood families to families of choice

Even though cyberfams have become less popular, around 2002, they were the one of the best ways to examine how youth were actively forming the type of relations that they wanted in cyberspace. Jeong Hyun-ju (2003) brings up several interesting points in her study of cyberfams. In South Korea, where the family is considered to be the most sacred unit, the idea of being able to freely choose one‘s father or mother is almost unthinkable. However, in youth chatting sites or community portal sites, users often received requests such as “Do you want to be my mom?” and, through them, new forms of families were created. There were even cases of people recruiting members to be families. Receiving replies to an ad for family members, one person would establish the family roles, then introduce everyone through emails, creating a new family (Jung Hyun-ju 2003:344). Jung‘s informants gave a variety of reasons for pursuing these voluntary intimate arrangements, which used the image of the family as their basis. Some stated that they wanted adults to give them advice on issues; others responded that they were lonely

with just having brothers and sisters; still others said that, as they started creating cyberfams, they wanted to create a storybook perfect family.

Once a cyberfam is formed, the members exchange Instant Messenger IDs and cell phone numbers so that they can contact each other any time. Of course, other forms of interaction also occur online. Sending greetings through online notes, asking about the minute affairs of everyday life, and sending text messages of birthday greetings through are considered to be the fundamental duties of cyberfam members. To the extent that they use the image of the family, the pace at which they get to know each other is rapid, as is the degree to which they support each other. For instance, if one creates a mother-daughter relationship, the daughter has to come home and report everything that occurred at school, as a real daughter would do to her mother. The cyber mother, who listens to these accounts, will give advice or compliments. From gossip about the opposite sex to talking about one‘s stress from tests, minute accounts of everyday life typically form the basis of cyberfams‘ sense of intimacy.

The maintenance of cyberfams depends entirely on the individual members. If a member gets busy from tests and is unable to go online, the cyberfams naturally dissolve and one is not criticized for this dissolution. This type of natural dissolution signifies the desire to be free from the strength of family ties; and the merit of cyberfams lies is the fact that family relations can be made, dissolved, then made again. Even though these relations sometimes deteriorate to include sex with minors and other negative consequences, most fundamentally, cyberfams emerge out of the desire of their members to either give or receive emotional support. As such, they reflect the desires of youth to create intimate relationships using the metaphor of the family. Jung (2003:353-355) argues that cyberfams are an instance of intimacy previously confined to the biological family that has found new avenues for expression through the reliable communication of the Internet. Moreover, if the intimacy of the blood family created rules and couples, cyberfams, she argues, create freedom and couples. This type of active play in forming family relations has greatly diminished in 2007. This change is related both to the fact that there are now already many new forms of relationships, as well as the new conservatism of youth who believe that they must rely on the existing families as their lives become increasingly more difficult.

Cyworlds “Minihompies”: Self-centered social relations and network

The Internet was, in the beginning, an anonymous space and many took advantage of this anonymity to attack and slander other people. Observing this phenomenon, a number of people, who wanted to create a beautiful world, gathered in September 2001 to create a community site for personal networks. This minihompy became a huge success. Cyworld made it very easy for people to get rooms of their own online. The main activities in minihompies include writing diary entries, creating albums, uploading music files, recording visitors, and pirating pieces of writing or music from other minihompies. Using music that one bought online as background music turns one‘s minihompy into a mini-broadcasting station, while displaying one‘s artwork turned it into a gallery (Kim Hee-won 2005). While the highly sophisticated display of one‘s thoughts and tastes encourages others to visit one‘s minihompie, one is encouraged to do the same. In short, one can imagine a minihompie community as a one-room apartment complex where the residents can freely visit each other‘s rooms/homes. The popularity of Cyworld was so high as to cause a drop in the participation of college students in online classes. Even until

2000, if one opened a cyber course, the rate of participation was very high, with the college students exchanging a lot of information online. However, with users now owning their own homes and blogs, the bulletin boards of cyber courses became relatively empty, as they channeled their efforts to decorating their own homes or acquiring information.

In 2003, when I asked the students in my qualitative methods class to write about why Cyworld was so popular, one of them, Han Jin-sang, stated that it was to overcome the feeling of loneliness. Just like the expression poverty in the midst of plenty,' in a song, though there are many people around me and many people to call, the feeling of being lonely is the same. That's how Cyworld was able to burrow itself into the hearts of people and they became addicted. Using the concept of 1 chon, a traditional method to measure relations between relatives, Cyworld created a system to maintain social relations. Han Jin-sang stated that he had 40 people registered per 1 chon whom he felt really close to and whom he felt that he could rely on.

Another popular feature of Cyworld is wave surfing, which enables people to easily meet other people. It is easy for people who live in contemporary society to become isolated. However, through Cyworld, they can meet anyone simply by crossing two or three bridges and thereby receive fresh stimulation as well as gain a glimpse into other people's lives. It is said the ability to find anyone anytime through wave surfing and being aware that many others are also worried about the same issues become a source of comfort. Han Jin-sang described Cyworld as an inexpensive way to maintain relationships and, like the phone, a medium through which unpolished meetings are possible. As a medium where all one has to do is not log in, if one doesn't like someone, it is a clean but cruel way to maintain (or sever) relationships. In contrast, Gang Un-ryung considered having a room of one's own less important than the fact that this room was part of a large village. The fact that continuous communication was possible through the site was an important source of comfort for modern people who are constantly on the move.

More than anything, Cyworld provided those who craved their own space with a room of their own. When the representative feminist novelist Virginia Woolf advised women to find a room of their own, she referred to the minimal amount of space that women needed in order to become modern subjects. Modernity can be considered a process of becoming an individual and citizen, armed with one's own sense of sovereignty and integrity. For women and youth, who found it difficult to have rooms of their own during South Korea's modernization process, Cyworld provided those rooms. In short, the Internet provided the tools and support, along with a self-centered web, for users to create a room of their own, where they could voice their opinions and recreate themselves.

An interesting point is how women outnumber men in Cyworld, which has been successful in creating a space where women can feel comfortable. Cyworld is presented as a feminine space, more relationship-oriented than online games or search engine sites. Female netizens have remarked how their own understanding of other people has deepened, and how they are learning the manners and ethics of living in an information society. Whether it's respecting someone's privacy or expressing gratitude for sharing information, people often comment on how they have learned to respect the new online order through this site. Cyworld has given Korean youth a space where they feel centered and where they are able to create relationships with others.

Minority culture and fandom: the active intervention to create an alternative culture

In early 1990s, after South Korea's transition to a mass consumer society, the new generation of consumers made their appearance. Youth who started to express themselves through popular culture also started creating new identities as members of fan clubs, through participating in the consumption and distribution of popular culture. This activity naturally moved online and, in the online space, diverse forms of fan club activity took place. Even though the fan club activities of major stars became more active, so did the activities of fan clubs for emerging writers whose dramas captured the mood of an era. The fans of these writers not only helped to make their dramas a success but also raised the overall quality of popular culture. For instance, active fan support for dramas such as "Do as You Like in 2003", Damo in 2003, and Island in 2004, continued even after these dramas ended. The fans kept up their fan activities, including fan-oriented events and discussions, creating an audience-oriented popular culture. Through activities ranging from media monitoring to star creation, fans lent their support to new stars and writings. Moreover, through making unrestrained criticisms of popular culture, they helped to make it more creative and original.

Bernie Cho, who has worked for ten years in the field popular music and satellite broadcasting, says that the past 10 years of online activities has impacted the popular music scene in a big way. He classified the Internet's impact on the music industry in three ways. First was the raising of consciousness about music piracy through the active online discussions of netizens. At the same time, the fans also raised their voices against the heavy-handed behavior of radio and television PDs who took it as a matter of course to take bribes to play the songs of certain artists. In other words, through the efforts of netizens, the music world was cleaned up. The second stage came when netizens used MP3s and Soribada to listen to music for free, radically undermining the music industry. From 2002, with the shrinking of the music market, popular singers, who used to make a lot of money from selling their albums, could no longer expect to do the same. Cho expects the music industry to change in a radical way for the third time with the convergence of Internet and mobile phones and UCC (User Created Content). New producers are expected to emerge and new distribution networks created when digital music enters the era of digital convergence.

The most ardent fans of popular culture tend to be women more than men, and youth more than older people. Able to adapt quickly to change, these groups created worlds of their own in cyberspace, and displayed their experience at opportune times in the public sphere. These groups created their own identities, empowering themselves as they created their own alternative culture. At times, their activities also expanded beyond national borders to include Asia. While the efforts of fans to popularize the products of their favorite stars helped to stimulate transnational cultural exchanges, these diverse online popular cultural activities also contributed directly to producing the Korean Wave.

Baegsoo and Internet Paine: The main actors of the Internet industry and the life style of youth during the era of youth unemployment

After the IMF financial crisis, the Internet venture boom became even bigger, which suggests that the unemployment situation and economic crisis played an important role in the development of the Internet industry. Other than government policies, which helped to rapidly expand the Internet, other factors were also at work, including the rapid concentration of investment capital, which had nowhere to go after the crisis, in the Internet venture sector, and the movement en masse of many workers, who were suddenly forced to retire, to opening PC-bangs equipped with high-speed Internet, which provided the public with ready access to the Internet. With jobs difficult to find, many unemployed youth gathered in PC-Bangs to kill time so that the ability of Korean gamers to compete at an international level can, in fact, be also attributed to the countless unemployed people who gathered online to play computer games. These active or passive unemployed thus played a very important role in the development of the Internet, while the Internet, in turn, cultivated the growth of the unemployed. As a result, even though the Internet is infamous for producing addicted paines, from another perspective, it is a filial industry, producing high exports.

In reality, the Internet games become a means for people who cannot find work in an era of high unemployment to escape to a world of fantasy. In England or Japan, where it has already been almost ten or twenty years since the economic slowdown in the 1980s and the growth of youth unemployment, the term NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) has been coined to describe youth who are not seeking employment. In fact, in South Korea, there is not a small number of youth who cannot find a job, even though they want to work; and the jobs that others find, they do not want. The situation of poverty, where employers find it difficult to find the right employee, vice-versa, has become a grave problem during a period of mass restructuring. In Japan, at one point, many youth, called freeters or parasite singles, led part-time lifestyles, doing what they wanted, while depending on their parents for a small fixed income. Recently, the phenomenon of Hikikomori, who refuse to leave the house and spend all their time indoor, has become a serious social problem in Japan (Hootakami 2005).

A similar trend of Neet-jok prevails in South Korea. However, in Neet-jok‘s case, their lives are much more tied to the Internet. Some youth become unemployed because they are so infatuated with the Internet. However, their futures are not so clear. Some turn their online gaming into a fulltime job while others pursue a late modern lifestyle in which they work little and play a lot. Among these youth, individuals who are uninterested in work and who choose to become unemployed call themselves paines. As a new tribe of youth, who depend on their parents or others, as they pursue the kind of work that they want to do, they use the Internet, once again, as their primary stage.

Let‘s look at an article published on November 2003 about Baegsoo.com. When Song Kyung-min (27) became unemployed, he wondered whether there might not be a community for baegsoo. Finding none, he established Baegsoo.com, which currently has with over 3,000 unemployed youth members. Song considers the Internet a good friend. Without the Internet, life would be very difficult for many baegsoo, he said, with many falling into a state of depression.[10] The members of this site enjoy many cultural benefits, such as being able to download movies,

listen to web broadcasts and chatting all for free while training themselves or looking for a job. Members of Baegsoo.com, of course, also help and support each other. Though baegsoos are different from paines, according to Song, they are, in fact, almost indistinguishable.

One finds many statements in dcinside[11] a world of paine, that as long as paines have high-speed Internet, they are happy eating ramen noodles every day. When they're bored, they can download and watch movies. When they're anxious, they can receive free job training through government programs. As paines say, they can spend 24 hours feeling productive and self-satisfied as they keep up with social trends. Moreover, in the Internet's anti-market, they can acquire all the resources and information that they need to lead satisfying if temporary lives. Through online games, web surfing, and even creating their own mania sites, the large army of unemployed youth in late-modernity is forging their own lives through the Internet.

With less people willing or able to enter the unstable job market in late-modernity, characterized by widening class divisions and high unemployment, the number of people, who spend their days quietly in front of the computer, will likely increase. Will new visions of social change emerge from these unemployed youth who struggle to maintain their sense of self-respect as they fight off depression and engage in various online activities? Fresh visions are undoubtedly necessary to solve the current unemployment problems in South Korea. From this perspective, the task of solving the unemployment issue is closely related to the Internet.

The first stage of the experimental era and afterwards

It's been a decade since high-speed Internet provided an experimental space in which South Korean youth could create a sense of diversity and individuality. Through the sudden opening of online space, these youth could experience the process of becoming differentiated civic subjects. While the 386 generation, captivated by the dream of a democratic future, used the Internet to engage in the democratization of politics and media, marginalized groups, including women and youth, were also important actors in cyberspace. Possessing different sensibilities and languages, they have, nonetheless, worked together to resist the patriarchal order. While the online actions of enthusiastic fans changed the face of popular culture, the actions of ordinary individuals changes the means of knowledge production and distribution. With volunteerism, spontaneity, and gestures of goodwill replacing acts of violence, which used to run rampant in cyberspace, the signs of Internet becoming a large community, fit for a new era, are everywhere apparent. In fact, many netizens have employed the Internet to build their own communities and their own self-reflexive and upright lives. Nowhere has this type of experiment (Lessig 2001) been more successful than in a developing country like South Korea, which faces more challenges in engaging in social innovation and change.

Contrary to the dreams of temporary autonomous zones becoming alternative public spaces, after 2004, many sites are becoming organized into large portal sites and becoming rapidly commercialized. With large-scale social experiments deteriorating into zones of consumption and entertainment, cyber democracy, rather than maturing, appears to be regressing, as it converges with commercialism and popular nationalism. Experiments in new familial relations, such as cyberfams, appear to have been nothing more than play, failing to produce for new alternative families. With portal sites and Internet news media failing to make a significant dent in the 2006 elections, there was growing criticism that alternative media were becoming

another form of commercialized media, offering sensationalist news and standardized stories, aiming for long-term profit.

As for the netizens in Cyworld, have they become more self-reflexive, creative, and happier as a result of getting rooms of their own? Is it just one social scientist's cynicism to opine that that these one- room apartments in Cyworld are not much different from the apartments that their parents' generation used to clean and decorate? As for the unemployed youth who say that they are happy just eating ramen noodles, how long can they survive the era of youth unemployment? While the number of netizens, who drop in and out of the online world, reorganized to become more portal-centered, has dramatically increased, they have also become more conservative, displaying the elements of cho-ding-hwa. While the effects of neoliberal restructuring are becoming more apparent, the social is disintegrating and the level of social anxiety rising. With the conservative desire to hold onto an unshakable identity grows stronger at the center, the growing social homogenization and conservatism of society are showing their effects in cyberspace as well.[12] On May 5, 2005, Chosun Ilbo carried an article with the headline, "The Counter-attack of Internet Conservatives". The article was about how users in their 50s were becoming the most active netizens. This was confirmed by a research center team, which concluded, after a month-long survey of netizens and analysis of Internet sites in April 2006 that the idea of the Internet being a pillar of progressive society was unfounded. In 2004, after observing the power of the Internet in the presidential election of 2002 and the impeachment hearing in 2004, the conservatives have started to reclaim the Internet. The article attributed the growing conservatism of netizens to the counter-attack by the older generation.

Along with this counter-attack, the number of attacks by cyber machos, who respond argumentatively to posts and who express animosity towards everyone and everything, is said to be growing. The victims of these hostile replies tend, more often than not, to be women and sexual minorities. The phenomenon of growing conservatism can be evidenced on university campuses. Even though diverse efforts have been expended to create alternative forms of pedagogy, including online courses, the most successful online site has proven to be a site for tutorials. Under the slogan Joyful Study Room, Mega Study has become the most successful site in helping students pass their college entrance exams. To the extent that one invests the money, Mega Study, which appeared on Forbe's list of one hundred top businesses in South Korea (Son Yong-suk, April 24, 2007), undoubtedly offers excellent tutorials and study-aids. However, the problem lies in the fact that the highly capitalized education site, geared towards a 21st century education, doesn't depart much from the investor-oriented model of learning. Despite diverse efforts to create alternative educational systems in South Korea, the highly problematic educational system geared towards college entrance exams is becoming stronger, while alternative forms of education are languishing.

There are also assertions about the choding-hwa of online spaces, along with their growing conservatism. Here, the term choding-hwa, doesn't refer to the idea that more elementary school students are using the Internet; rather it refers to the infantilization of the Internet, as homogenized masses drop in and out of the sites. Some of the signs of this trend include low level questions and answers that are posed in the search engines, the online games that circulate in the Internet, along with pornography and gambling, and the ubiquitous sites of gossip about famous stars. Related to this phenomenon is the term zzijili, which refers to youth who float through life, without a strong opinion about anything. In contrast to self-enterprising and creative youth like Seo-taeji, it refers to youth who post immature replies and engage in

senseless behavior in the Internet. On May 19, 2007, in an article entitled Internet‘s New Humanity: Zzijili‘s Power, Kim Byun-suk reported in Dong-ah Ilbo how this group of youth were having a large impact in shaping popular culture. According to the article, most zzijilis, whose ultimate goal in life is to be an object of attention, spend most of their time bored, staring at a computer screen. The article also asserted that one could be zzijili as long as one had an IQ of 100 or above. An attached photo showed a young man gazing at the computer screen, with one hand on the keyboard and the other on a mouse, waiting for the next spark of stimulation. To find out more about zzijilis, I searched the Internet and, on November 2004, found this one surprisingly self-reflexive article in a blog.

I am also a zzizili (as you can see by what I am doing now). With the popularization of the Internet, even people who don‘t know much about a topic can participate in public discussions, giving rise to the phenomenon of zzizilis. One memory comes to mind. In middle school, I remember asking the members of a web site a question about the English grammar of a lyric in a song. I was certain that the grammar was incorrect. One person calmly indicated my mistake; another asked me how I could be stupid as not to know such a simple thing. I did not forget the incident. First, I had not disclosed the fact that I was a middle-school student. That is one of the zzizili‘s characteristics. Why do they pretend to know what they don‘t? In fact, there is no particular person who is a zzizili. We are all zzizilis. Even though someone who participates in a conversation without even knowing the topic of a conversation is a zzizili, so is someone who does know but does not participate. Let‘s throw stones at a person who‘s not a zzizili. The reason I say this because of some people‘s attitude towards zzizilis. Perhaps I am more sensitive because I have personal experience.

If one is human, it is always possible to sometimes make mistakes. No. If one is human, one often makes mistakes. In the Internet, where there is no distinction between a child and an adult, the zzizili can be a middle-school student or someone young, who wishes to learn something. If one feels that that a person doesn‘t understand something, all one needs to do is to correct them. Nine times out of ten, that is all that one needs to do. If that doesn‘t work, go and think. The true zzizili is one who goes around making fun of and stamping out zzizilis as they appear. (Hmm..if that‘s the case, perhaps I am also a zzizili?)

In the above piece, written in 2004, we can see that zzizilis refer to people who lack social skills, but who still have the time to mature because they are young. Three years later, in 2007, the zzizilis referred to people who, regardless of their age, had a big impact on society through their collective zzizili-like behavior. With the online space becoming a space of mass consumption, we have reached a point where the masses are driving out the multitude. At this point, I quote the words of one anthropologist who have observed the changes in South Korea from a slightly different degree. Jin Su- young, who comes to South Korea every year to study the changes in Korean society, due to the Internet, said the following, as she departed one year: Korean youth: they know so much but understand so little. With information so easily available, they don‘t bother looking for information. Because they are so busy, they don‘t bother trying to understand the bigger picture. Always busy chasing one trend or another, or arguing about trivial details, they appear to be losing the ability to see the bigger picture, she said.

Perhaps it is wrong to reach this kind of conclusion, based on the phenomenon of choding-hwa. For the sake of argument, however, it is important to acknowledge that this phenomenon of choding-hwa arises out of the tragedy of too hastily installing a hardware-centered infrastruc-

ture, resulting in an unbalanced development. In the face of growing social conservatism and new levels of low participation from the masses, the progressives who expected some kind of alternative spaces to emerge from the Internet are disappointed and asking the following questions. Where are the spaces and experiences of freedom and sharing, experimentation and creativity? Is it possible to create spaces of enjoyment for those netizens who are self-directed and engaged in collaborative projects? Not that there are no efforts in this direction. Companies such as agile[13] are developing software where individuals can create loose networks that privilege the logic of collaborative learning over the logic of profit. Recently, Daum Communication also announced the introduction of an open ID verification system, which will allow the possibility of opening up closed portal services. Meanwhile, while the creative commons project has begun in earnest in South Korea, new global tribes are also forming through events such as bar camp and Pechakucha. Along with these collaborative projects is the possibility of collaborative learning once again re-appearing.

Within South Korea, there are many netizens who have spent over a decade in the online space as consumers and producers. As youth who have the ability to find information and use it, they have cultivated the skills and wisdom to live nomadic lifestyles. These youth, who one day will have a keen sense of this world, will want to go beyond the existing job market to engage in niche activities that will establish a new world. Rather than becoming cogs in the giant capitalist machine, these youth, who prefer autonomous zones of spontaneity and creativity, will use cyberspace to create new civic subjects of the information society. In a situation where class divisions are widening, in a society where, as Shuman and Harold (1997) have argued, 20 percent of the population will feed the remaining 80 percent, many people are already learning the methods to lead happy lives by reducing their desires and buying only what they need. From this perspective, the rapid digitalization of South Korea has produced beings, which have learned to joyfully engage the process of learning, as members of both a network society and society of life-long learning.

Early adaptors, who have embodied the job of learning advanced technologies; site webmasters who have experience turning their lives into free and creative spaces; the self-described paines and fan club members who have opened up a new world production, consumption, and circulation. All are members of a new generation who have used the autonomous spaces of the previously unregulated Internet to cross cultural borders and accumulate long experiences of engaging in diverse and unique forms of communication. As both citizens of a particular nation-state and members of a global cyber- tribe, they think and live freely as easily as they cross national and regional borders. Lessig argues that the binary of autonomous space and regulated space, which was created in industrial society, has collapsed with the introduction of the Internet. Instead, we are now seeing the creation of large spaces of shared creativity. However, with neoliberal transformations, he also warns that these spaces are becoming rapidly commercialized, endangering humanity‘s future.[14] Confronting a reality where intellectual property clearly refers less to the objects of artistic creativity than to commercial corporate activity (2006:9), he states that we can no longer put off the urgent task of exchanging the concept of free use with fair use. Stating that it is neither a case of all rights being reserved nor no rights being reserved (277), he suggests instead the use of the concept of some rights reserved, in order to construct a creative defense zone through the active sharing of information.

In South Korea, there are probably many who have experienced Lessig‘s ideas with their bodies. The activities in portals started from an open source concept at the beginning of the Internet.

The expanding Internet space was free, and whether it was industrial society or information society, the netizens could engage in spontaneous and creative activities because no rules existed. Through these activities, a new collaborative culture and definitions of ownership could form. As someone who worries about sustainable development from the perspective of national community, I hope to see the creative activities of self-propelled netizens overcome the current trends of homogenization, macrotization, and conservatism to create a network society. I hope to see Korean netizens, who have over 10 years of Internet experience, transform the temporary autonomous zones of the Internet into bona fide alternative public spaces. However the Internet intellectual rights bill that passed in 2005 is either shrinking or making illegal these spaces of collaboration and social reproduction. Rather than using people's taxes to create new public spaces, the Korean government, which has chosen the ideology of neoliberalism, is using the funds to prop up token industries that can serve as measures of being an advanced nation.[15]

As Anthony Wallace (1970) stated, social change within a problem society' starts with the dissatisfaction of its members. When people who are unsatisfied with society acquire spaces, they can naturally start imagining a new society and heading towards change. In the 1990s, people who were unsatisfied with society were able to escape society through the Internet, and both collectively discuss and create the type of democratic society that they wanted. I hope to see progressive netizens who have now undergone a long period of experimentation as they aimed to reactivate civil society, continue to create creative spaces of collaborative, rather than drop out from exhaustion. In other words, I hope to see them continue to create spaces of community in a network society, which tries to overcome the gaps in communication between the generations and the genders, while easily crossing the borders of the nation-state. Observing the activities of people in neighboring Asian countries who have undergone similar processes of compressed change, I am preparing to engage in collaborative projects with other Asian academics, as well as with self-directed netizens, who have created a network society with their own bodies.[16]

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LACK OF DYNAMICS BETWEEN ONLINE AND OFFLINE ACTIVITIES AMONG THE JAPANESE: HOW CULTURE CONSTITUTES CYBERSPACE

Tadamasa Kimura

Technological innovations and social diffusion of varieties of ICTs in the 1990s and 2000s, specifically those of the Internet and mobile communications, are really stunning. With the diffusion of the Internet and mobile communications, large amount of attention is being paid to the concept of "information society" and "the network society" not only in engineering and business field but also in various branches of social sciences.

Technologically speaking, ICTs are universal and global in nature. So, when we talk about "information society" "IT revolution" or "network society," we unconsciously assume that the same kind of information society develops as far as major industrialize countries are concerned. However, as ICTs are getting into society and interwoven into daily social life, awareness of "plurality" of information society has also been growing. For example, Castells and Himanen claim that "the information society can exist, and indeed does exist, in a plurality of social and cultural models" (Castells and Himanen 2004:2; see also Castells ed. 2005).

In fact, our previous comparative research among the Japanese, the Korean and the Finns in 2002 and 2003, which I would like to call "JFK survey I,"[17] showed us substantial and significant differences across these different societies, in terms of the kind of IT equipment and service that is diffused, how it is used, socio-psychological attitudes toward cyberspace and so on. However, the subject of JFK survey I was only undergraduate students. Furthermore, because of several constraints, we conducted our survey research in one university in each society. Therefore, we tried to expand our collaboration further to make research on wider range of people in each society. The result of this research, which I would call "JFK survey II," endorses the findings of JFK survey I and reveals other insights of cultural differences of (under)development of cyberspace formation. So, in this article, I would like to report the results of this research.

Brief overview of three societies as "advanced information society" and some precautious remak on "mobile Internet"

Needless to say, Japan, Finland and Korea all are the societies which could be called pioneering and advanced information societies along with the United States. Before the main discussion, let me take a brief look at the diffusion of advanced ICTs in each society. Northern Europe is a leading area of ICT development and its social diffusion since 1990s (Castells and Himanen 2004, Kimura 2004; The Economist Intelligent Unit 2008). Finland has led innovations in telecommunications, especially mobile communications, with the world's largest cellular phone company,

Nokia. Finnish developers have had a strong influence, for example, on the development of GSM and UMTS standards. As to the Internet-related field, Linux and Internet banking services, for instance, are originated from Finland.

As for Japan and Korea, remarkable is the commercialization and social diffusion of FTTx (Fiber to the home, curb, building etc.) and advanced mobile technologies. As of September 2006, the number of FTTH subscribers in Japan was 7.15 million, and in Korea almost 3 million people living in high-rise apartments subscribed to FTTB, fiber to the building, or FTTC, fiber to the curb,[18] coupled with high-speed LAN connection. They are by far ahead of Europe and the United States. Both societies are also leading in the spread of 3G mobile services. According to ENTER, a Spanish research agency, and IDATE, an European consulting firm, as of June 2006, the number of 3G customers is estimated to be just over 100 million, all over the world put together. The Asia-Pacific region accounts for 50%, or 54 million, of which 29 million are in Japan and 11 million in Korea. Therefore, it is of great significance to compare these three societies from a cross-cultural point of view when information society studies are undertaken.

Before proceeding, I would like to make a precautious remark on mobile Internet. Some would say that mobile Internet and PC-based Internet, i.e., the Internet accessed through PC,[19] are the same; it is just a matter of the path. Or, functionally, mobile Internet might be a miniature of PC-based Internet; a mobile device is just equipped with a smaller display, slower computational power and memory; on the other hand, mobile Internet liberates people from the constraint of location. However, I contend that mobile Internet is not just a matter of technology but deeply woven into cultural practice; so mobile Internet in Japan is distinctively different from that in other societies as well as different from PC-based Internet. Take a look at Table 1. The table, based on JFK survey II, shows social distribution of PC-based Internet use and mobile Internet use among the twenties in each society.

What is obvious is that mobile Internet is used to a remarkable extent by Japanese youngsters. The large number of those who use both could mean that they use each differently; each has its own function or niche to fulfill. In fact, in Japan, when people use mobile Internet, many do not think it is a part of the Internet. They do not use the term “mobile Internet” or “Internet through mobile devices.” Mobile carriers charge the use of e-mail or weblike-browsing based on the amount of “packet.” People know when they use e-mail or weblike-browsing, they are charged “packet charge” and if they use much, they are charged much. However, they do not know what “packet communication” means. Mobile Internet fulfills quite different functions or needs.

In contrast, many Koreans do not seem to see mobile Internet as something necessary to have, in addition to PC-base Internet. As mentioned above, the subscription of 3G mobile phones is large in Korea; and yet the use of mobile Internet is almost the same as that in Finland, being far behind from that in Japan. What is more interesting, there is no one who use mobile Internet alone in Korea or Finland. This could mean that they consider PC-based Internet as an essential tool while mobile Internet provides them with additional functions which small number of people find interesting. In fact, mobile Internet has not caught on in many advanced information societies before smartphones have come. Thus, development of cyberspace is almost identical of that of PC-based Internet so far. Therefore, I use the term cyberspace to refer to online social activity created through the use of PC-based Internet and take mobile Internet on its own in this article.

Table 1 PC-based Internet use and mobile Internet use in JFK survey II

	Both PC-based Internet and mobile Internet	PC Internet only	Mobile Internet only	none
Japanese Females	73.2	7.3	14.6	4.9
Japanese Males	79.6	12.2	4.1	4.1
Finnish Females	17.5	82.0		0.6
Finnish Males	32.4	65.7		1.9
Korean Females	22.0	76.3		1.7
Korean Males	24.0	74.4		1.7

The argument of this article is based on two comparative surveys, JFK survey I and JFK survey II. JFK survey I started in 2002. We Japanese and Korean scholars were very interested in socio-cultural differences in the use of collective online communication services such as BBS, instant messenger and online community, between the Japanese and the Korean. We set out the comparative research project[20] and planned and carried out the survey of undergraduate students at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan, and Korean University in Seoul, Korea in December 2002. Both universities are private and have got high reputation in each society for a long time. Questionnaires were distributed and collected mostly in class. The numbers of respondents were 487 in Japan and 490 in Korea.

Then, Teppo Turkki was intrigued with the project; so, in close collaboration with me, he managed to conduct the survey with almost identical questionnaire in Finland with the help of Finnish Youth Research Network. The Finnish survey was carried out in 2003. The questionnaires were distributed amongst undergraduate students of University of Helsinki. The number of respondents was 315. In the analysis of JFK survey I, taking various researches we conducted into account, we were struck with a variety of socio-cultural differences across three countries. We have discussed them in a number of publications (e.g., Kimura 2004, 2008; Kim 2004; Saito and Kimura 2004, 2005, 2008; Ishii 2004, 2006; Ishii and Ogasawara 2007). However, as mentioned above, JFK survey I is the survey of undergraduate students in a single university each society due to small budget. Therefore, we felt it necessary to conduct another comparative survey to encompass larger population, leading to another comparative survey study, JFK survey II.

JFK survey II was planned and conducted by the same collaboration of the Japanese-Korean research team and the Finnish one. The outline of the survey in each society is as follows. In Japan, those who reside in 23 special wards of City of Tokyo, 20 to 69 years old, answered the direct-visit and self-completion questionnaire between November 29 and December 16, 2005. The number of the respondents was 455. The sampling method is two-stage stratified random sampling. In Korea, those who reside in 25 special wards of City of Seoul, 20 to 69 years old, also answered direct-visit and self-completion questionnaire between November 4 and December 5, 2005. The number of the respondents was 1013. The sampling method is geographically segmented random sampling method. The Finnish survey was a national survey for 15 to 29 year olds. The questionnaire was sent via mail and collected between May and July, 2007. 1307 people answered it. The sampling method is geographically segmented random sampling method.

We wanted to carry out the survey in each society in the same framework as much as possible. However, our research fund could only make the Japanese survey and the Korean one possible in 2005[21]. Finnish Youth Research Network managed to conduct the Finnish counterpart in 2007. Then, the Japanese and Korean survey and the Finnish one were different to some extent. In the former, the objective of the study is to find out the development of ICT use among adult population in metropolitan area in Japan and Korea. So, the sample is aged 20 to 69 and limited to those reside in 23 special wards of City of Tokyo and 25 special wards of City of Seoul. On the other hand, In the case of Finnish, the focus is on the Finnish youth at large. Thus, the sample is 15 to 29 years old nationwide. As a result, those in their twenties can be compared across three societies. The number of respondents in their twenties in each society is 90 Japanese (41 females and 49 males), 240 Koreans (118 females and 121 males) and 855 Finns (536 females and 319 males). Thus, Japanese sample is considerably small compared with the other societies; still, in spite of the small Japanese sample, we have found significant statistical differences across three societies and it is possible to confirm all the differences we have found, comparing between the whole sample of the Koreans and that of the Japanese.

Negative socio-psychological attitude toward cyberspace among the Japanese

First of all, compared with the Koreans and the Finns, a strong negative attitude toward cyberspace among the Japanese is remarkable. The Japanese feel that the Internet and cyberspace is dominated by anonymity and consider it as a very hazardous place. In JFK survey II, we asked to what extent people worry about various risks associated with Internet use. Each of the items below has a five-category scale, from “very worried” to “no worried at all.”

a. Other people get to know which web sites I visit and what type of e-mail I have send/receive.
b. Other people can find out my name and address or credit card number, etc.
c. My machine will be infected with a computer virus
d. Someone can steal the information in my computer and the contents of my hard drive.
e. My passwords will be stolen and abused.

As Table 2 indicates, young Japanese, especially females, worry greatly about such risks. In order to measure and test the extent of such differences across the three societies in terms of their fear of these risks associated with Internet use, I created a “fear of the Internet risk index” from the five questions above. For each item, the response “very afraid” is coded as 5; and “not afraid at all” is assigned a value of 1. Then the index is calculated as a simple average of the five items.

The result of a Tukey HSD multiple-comparison test[22] of the index shows that Finnish males and females are significantly less afraid of Internet risks than the Japanese and Koreans and the Japanese females are significantly more fearful than Korean and Finnish females. The average of the index among the Japanese females is 4.58, which is astonishingly high.

Table 2 Frequency distribution of the question items related to risks of Internet use, JFK survey II

In using the Internet, are you afraid that ...		Japanese females	Japanese males	Finnish Females	Finnish males	Korean females	
(a) Others will come to know the web sites you have seen and what you write in e-mail messages?	very afraid and afraid to some extent	78.1	69.4	47.6	43.9	75.4	58.7
	hard to say	9.8	14.3	11.3	16.1	16.1	20.7
	not so afraid and not afraid at all	12.2	16.3	41.0	40.0	8.5	20.7
(b) Others can find out your name and address or credit card number, etc.?	very afraid and afraid to some extent	97.6	89.8	72.2	61.6	85.6	74.4
	hard to say	0.0	6.1	5.5	9.4	11.0	14.9
	not so afraid and not afraid at all	2.4	4.1	22.3	29.0	3.4	10.7
(c) You will get your PC infected with a computer virus?	very afraid and afraid to some extent	97.6	71.4	83.0	64.2	74.6	68.6
	hard to say	0.0	12.2	4.4	8.1	17.8	17.4
	not so afraid and not afraid at all	2.4	16.3	12.7	27.7	7.6	14.1
(d) The information on your computer and the contents of your hard drive will be stolen?	very afraid and afraid to some extent	95.1	71.4	49.4	40.6	71.2	62.0
	hard to say	2.4	16.3	13.5	14.8	18.6	19.8
	not so afraid and not afraid at all	2.4	12.2	37.1	44.5	10.2	18.2
(e) Your passwords necessary for various Internet uses will be stolen and abused?	very afraid and afraid to some extent	97.6	75.5	57.9	52.6	83.1	70.3
	hard to say	2.4	12.2	11.7	9.7	11.0	16.5
	not so afraid and not afraid at all	0.0	12.2	30.4	37.8	5.9	13.2
		Unit: %					

As to the anonymity in cyberspace, we asked whether "one should participate in online discussion with one's own name, not anonymously" (Table 3). The results show that Koreans feel the most positive about this proposition and that Japanese males are the least positive.

We have a corroboration of the assertion that cyberspace is considered to be dominated by anonymity for the Japanese. That is the percentage of anonymous edit of different language versions of Wikipedia. Any edit of an article in Wikipedia can be made either by the registered user name or by anonymity; in the case of the latter, the IP address from which the anonymous edit is made is recorded and shown on the article and its edit history. I collected the data of Wikipedia of several different and popular languages (Table 5). As Table 5 shows, Japanese Wikipedia is outstanding in that the number of anonymous edit is almost half of the total edit. This is even more astounding because even English Wikipedia, which the most heterogeneous populations may well gather and suffers from vandalism incessantly, only 30 % of the total edit is anonymous.

Table 3 Frequency distribution of the question item, one should participate in online discussion with one's own name, not anonymously, JFK Survey II

	Japanese females	Japanese males	Finnish Females	Finnish males	Korean females	Korean males
agree and partly agree	14.6	8.2	14.2	24.8	50.9	57.0
hard to say	41.5	44.9	15.2	27.7	25.4	20.7
disagree and partly disagree	43.9	46.9	70.6	47.4	23.7	22.3
	Unit: percentage					

Table 4 The number of anonymous edits and its percentage of total edits in different language versions of Wikipedia

	The number of anonymous edits, i.e., with IP address (thousand)	The number of total edits (thousand)	Percentage of anonymous edits
Japanese	6,831	14,517	47.1%
English	17,779	57,880	30.7%
German	7,664	27,083	28.3%
French	3,373	17,923	18.8%
Dutch	1,094	8,087	13.5%
Spanish	3,198	10,531	30.4%
Finnish	612	2,924	20.9%
Russian	679	4,965	13.7%
Chinese	664	4,221	15.7%
Korean	117	985	11.9%

Note: the data of the English Wikipedia is as of October, 2006; the data of the others is as of February 1st, 2008.

The way people are engaged in online activity and the dynamics between online and offline activity is distinctively different among three societies. Among the Japanese, the negative socio-psychological attitude toward cyberspace keeps people from being involved in social communication over the Internet and leads to little network activity, which is another significant

characteristic. The JFK survey I shows that Japanese youth use the Internet for information-related and leisure-related or pastime-related purposes, while they rarely use it for communication to expand new social networks or for self-expression activities. Table 5 summarizes the use rates of 13 different purposes among Internet users in each society classified into five categories: information-related, leisure- or pastime- related, communication with those already acquainted, communication to expand new social network, and self-expression-related. The result shows that Japanese college students are as much active as Koreans in the Internet use for information seeking and entertainment and more active than Finns in online communication with those already acquainted. However, few Japanese are engaged in online activities to expand new social network or to express themselves.

JFK survey II also proves that the Japanese are engaged in little network activity. Even though broadband network is widely available in Japan, the Japanese do not use the Internet for audio-visual content, nor are they engaged in online commerce as frequently as the Finns and Koreans (Table 6). It is astonishing to see that half of Japanese males in their twenties do not use e-commerce at all.

Table 5 Use rate of different purposes of the Internet use, JFK survey I

Categories of motives	Specific question items	Japan	Korea	Finland
information-related	To explore information	98.7	98.4	98.8
	To broaden my knowledge	78.4	84.2	66.4
leisure- or pastime-related	To have fun	79.4	87.1	45.0
	For entertainment	86.9	78.4	62.0
	To kill time	67.2	73.1	57.0
communication with those already acquainted	For activities in a group of the same hobbies and interests	33.9	68.3	26.3
	For closer relationships with my acquaintances	37.9	74.1	25.5
	For activities in a group of the same hobbies and interests	33.9	68.3	26.3
communication to expand new social network	To make new acquaintance with people	4.0	25.0	11.7
self-expression-related	To make people aware of my presence	5.5	28.1	27.1
	To express my feelings and emotions	11.3	36.8	15.8
	To make what I think known to more people	9.0	38.3	40.5
		Unit: percentage		

Table 6 The percentage of those who make a specific use of the Internet, JFK Survey II

	listening to or downloading the music	online gaming	online banking	e-	Access to online communities	search engines	reading news articles
Japanese females	34.4	25.0	12.5	65.6	53.1	93.7	78.1
Japanese males	60.0	46.7	24.4	51.1	59.1	95.6	91.1
Finnish Females	70.3	55.0	96.0	80.6	76.3	94.6	92.1
Finnish males	87.0	73.3	95.1	87.7	83.7	99.0	95.8
Korean females	92.2	50.0	48.3	88.8	75.9	80.2	85.3
Korean males	84.9	79.8	47.1	71.4	74.8	88.2	88.2
	Unit: percentage						

Since the Japanese tend to avoid being involved in social communication over the Internet, the social network in the real world and that in the cyberspace are separated; and the dynamics between online activities and offline activities are lacking. The use of community sites underlines this point. In JFK survey I, the respondents were asked whether they accessed any community site where people could exchange information, messages, ideas, opinions, and so on. 71.3% of Japanese respondents, 97.8% Koreans, and 59.9% Finns answered that they did. Then, it was inquired as to whether people on the community site each respondent visited most held offline meetings or not, and if they did, whether each respondent had ever participated in an offline meeting. The result shows a significant cultural difference (Table 7). In Korea, almost all community sites held offline meetings; in Finland, one half, and in Japan, a third. Furthermore, Japanese college students are the least likely to participate in offline meetings.

The respondents were also asked whether there was any person whom they had gotten to know on the community site that they accessed the most frequently (Table 8). While half of the Korean and the Finnish respondents had at least one person whom they had gotten to know online and came into contact with via e-mail or telephone, only one out of ten Japanese had such a person. Thus, the JFK Survey I suggests that the Japanese do not use the Internet as a means to expand their social networks in general. And yet, as far as those respondents who access community sites are concerned, Japanese respondents were equally active compared with the other countries.

Table 7 Participation in offline meetings, JFK Survey I

	Japan	Finland	Korea
I have participated in an offline meeting.	18.8	22.4	70.0
Offline meetings are held; but I have never participated.	14.0	26.9	23.0
No offline meetings in my online community	67.3	50.7	7.0
	Unit: percentage		

Data: JFK Survey I

Table 8 Comparison of those who get to know others on community sites and get in touch personally, JFK Survey I

	Do you have at least one person you get to know online and get in touch with via e-mail or telephone?		**Do you have at least one person they get to know online and actually meet offline?**	
	Percentage of those who have at least one such person.	Average number of such online acquaintances among those who have at least one such person.	Percentage of those who have at least one such person.	Average number of such online acquaintances among those who have at least one such person.
Japan	9.2	5.29	11.0	12.38
Finland	50.0	11.83	40.8	15.16
Korea	49.0	10.57	46.6	13.24

Data: JFK Survey II

The data of the JFK Survey II further endorses this point. We asked the respondents whether they had any person whom they had gotten to know online. Whereas more than forty percent of the Korean and the Finnish respondents had at least one person whom they had gotten to know online and came into contact with via e-mail or telephone, only one out of six Japanese males and one out of eight Japanese females had such a person (Table 9). Then, we asked those who had gotten to know people online how many such friends or acquaintances they had, and how many of those they communicated with personally via e-mail or telephone. We also asked how many of these online acquaintances they had actually met offline.

It should be noted that the Japanese who reported that they did have such online friends had as many as the Finnish and the Koreans; it can be said that they were just as active in expanding their social networks as the others. However, as a society at large, the Japanese generally refrain from involvement in online activities. The use of the Internet as a medium of self-expression, information-dissemination and information-exchange is limited. In other words, the interconnections between online activities and offline activities, especially those fostered through online communications are lacking; they are isolated or divided from one another.

Table 9 Comparison of those who get to know others online and get in touch personally, JFK Survey II

	Do you have at least one person you got to know online and have gotten in touch with via e-mail or telephone?		Do you have at least one person you got to know online and have actually met offline?	
	Percentage of those who have at least one such person.	Average number of such online acquaintances among those who have at least one such person.	Percentage of those who have at least one such person.	Average number of such online acquaintances among those who have at least one such person.
Japanese females	17.1	11.9	12.2	13.2
Japanese males	12.2	31.2	12.2	34.2
Finnish Females	44.4	5.8	35.8	5.2
Finnish males	48.3	10.6	41.1	9.3
Korean females	31.4	9.4	25.4	9.5
Korean males	43.0	24.6	35.5	18.4

Data: JFK Survey II

Avoidance of synchronous communications and self-expression with strong self-effacement: web diary and blogs as a "detour" communication channel[23]

Another curious characteristic of the way the Japanese use the Internet is their avoidance of "synchronous communication." Online chatting and instant messengers have never caught on in Japan. Table 10 shows the frequency distribution of the use of instant messaging and that of online chatting according to JFK survey II. The Japanese are the least active in both means of synchronous communications on the Internet[24]. The Japanese also make a voice call over the mobile phone far less frequently. According to JFK survey I, 71% of Japanese college students make a voice phone call once a day or less whereas only 16% of Korean students and 25% of Finnish students do so.

According to the ethnographic research I conducted in Tokyo metropolitan area from 2007 through 2009,[25] the simple average number of outgoing voice calls via the mobile phone was 0.7 per day and that of incoming voice calls was 0.9 per day. Those with whom the participants make frequent voice communications are limited to only three or four persons, i.e., their family members and very close friends, usually significant others. In other cases, they make voice calls for business reason. Even between friends few voice calls either via the mobile phone or via the fixed land line are made. Thus, the default means to communicate with ordinary friends is text messages via the mobile phones. Even with friends, the socio-psychological distance in association with voice communications feels too close to keep. So, many young Japanese send a text message to ask friends whether they could make a voice phone call before they actually do so.

Table 10 Comparison of the use of synchronous communications, JFK Survey II

		a few times or more a day	once a day	a couple of times a week	a couple of times a month	once a month or less	no use
Instant	**Japanese females**	3.1	9.4	3.1	6.3	6.3	71.9
	Japanese males	11.1	2.2	11.1	4.4	11.1	60.0
	Finnish Females	17.3	15.0	17.7	10.2	13.2	26.7
	Finnish males	25.0	13.3	16.6	7.5	12.3	25.3
	Korean females	29.3	10.3	14.7	6.9	8.6	30.2
	Korean males	27.7	18.5	10.9	5.0	9.2	28.6
Online chatting	**Japanese females**	0.0	0.0	6.3	6.3	6.3	81.3
	Japanese males	6.7	6.7	0.0	0.0	11.1	75.6
	Finnish Females	1.9	2.7	3.1	3.5	15.9	73.0
	Finnish males	7.8	5.8	4.6	3.9	22.7	55.2
	Korean females	11.2	3.5	7.8	2.6	8.6	66.4
	Korean males	9.2	6.7	5.9	5.0	11.8	61.3

Data: JFK Survey II.

In fact, even though mobile Internet enabled handsets equipped with a great variety of advanced features are spread widely in Japanese society, the mobile phone is predominantly used for text-messaging with friends and practical purposes particularly while commuting such as, public transportation timetables and accident reports.[26] According to JFK survey I, around 95% of the respondents in Japan and Korea answered that they sent or received an e-mail per day via mobile phone, and the number of e-mails they sent a week reached 60 in both societies (Table 11). Table 11 also shows that in JFK survey II more than 60% of the Japanese respondents aged 20 to 69 send at least one e-mail over the mobile phone per day.

Table 11 Comparison of e-mail or text message use via mobile phone, JFK Survey I, JFK Survey II

JFK Survey I					JFK Survey II[a]		
		Japan	Korea	Finland	Number of e-mails sent	Japan	Korea
Number of e-mails sent a week		61.1	60.0	17.4			
Frequency of sending or receiving e-mails via mobile phone	several times a day	87.8	92.2	52.1	more than a few messages a day	40.9	43.0
	once a day	6.5	4.4	28.0	once a day	19.9	10.5
	a few times a week	4.0	2.0	14.8	a few messages a week	17.6	6.9
	a few times a month	0.4	1.1	1.9	a few messages a month	5.1	4.1
	once a month	0.2			once a month	3.2	3.5
	never	0.6	0.2	3.2	never	12.7	31.9

Data: JFK Survey I and II. The data is based on the whole sample of JFK Survey II, aged 20 to 69.

Given that text messages of mobile phones become the default means to engage in interpersonal communication with their friends, even with close friends, how can they carry out interpersonal communication with rather distant friends or acquaintances? Web diary and blog seems to function as a means of such a distant communication. In fact, in spite of the limited use of the Internet as a communications tool, there is a medium the Japanese make considerable use of when compared to the Koreans and the Finns. That is online diary and diary blog. In JFK study in 2002, in order to examine the use of personal homepages as a self-expression and social communication medium, we asked the respondents of the JFK study whether they had their own homepage and what kind of information they had on it. The percentage of those with their own homepage was 10.1% in Japan, 13.3% in Finland and 25.3% in Korea. Clearly, the Japanese were the least active.

Two findings made us curious when we turned to self-disclosure on one's own homepage (Table 12). The one was that the Japanese students surveyed are astoundingly self-effacing. They did not put their real name, e-mail address, portrait, telephone number, or family on their homepages. The other was that there was one item the Japanese who possessed their own homepage made more use than the Koreans and the Finns: diary. Based on the results of different surveys conducted in the early half of the 2000s, more than half of Japanese homepage owners said they had diary on their homepage (less than one-third of Korean owners and a tenth of Finnish owners had diary), even though the number of homepage owners in Japanese society was limited (around one out of ten Internet users).

Table 12 Self-disclosure on one's own homepage among those university students who have their own one, JFK Survey I

	Japan	Korea	Finland
facial portrait of my family	0.0	12.1	15.8
home address	2.0	12.9	18.4
home telephone number	4.1	37.1	26.3
introduction of my family	6.1	16.1	15.8
my facial portrait	12.2	51.6	57.9
my real name	20.4	87.9	78.9
links to the sites of my friends or acquaintances	38.8	54.8	34.2
diary	55.1	32.3	5.3
my e-mail address	57.1	83.9	81.6
my hobbies and interests	69.4	73.4	63.2
	Unit: percentage		

Actually, such a strong presence of online diaries or online journals on personal homepages among the Japanese has drawn much attention from certain Japanese social psychologists interested in CMC, computer-mediated communications For example, Kawaura, Kawakami, and Yamashita, pioneering scholars in this line of research, conducted a rather comprehensive survey on online diarists in Japanese as early as 1997 (Kawaura ed. 1998), well before Philippe Lejeune's "Cher Ecran ...: Journal personnel, ordinateur, Internet" (Lejeune 2000), which is regarded as the groundbreaking and profoundly influential work on online diaries. According to Kawaura and other prominent scholars in this field, online diaries in Japanese began to appear on the Web in 1995 at the latest. A website containing a collection of links to online diaries, "Tsuda Nikki (diary) links," named after the creator of the site, was made in May 1995. On another collection site, Japanese Open Yellowpage (http://joyjoy.com), approximately 17,000 homepages were registered as of October 1997.

However, online diarists were still rare among Internet users, still less among the population at large. It required a certain amount of knowledge of HTML and technical skills of web servers to set up and develop a personal homepage in the late 1990s, even though homepage hosting services became available widely. It was weblogs or blogs that finally make online diaries widespread and an active research object in the 2000s. The growth of the blogosphere in the middle of the 2000s was tremendous. What is most significant here is that the expansion has owed as much to Japanese as to English. According to Technorati, in terms of blog posts by language, Japanese numbered at the top spot, with 37% of the total posts as of the fourth quarter of 2006. English occupied the second with 36%, followed by Chinese at 8% and Italian at 3% (Sifry 2007). Thus, Japanese and English dominate the blogosphere; given the number of speakers of different languages worldwide, this share of Japanese in the blogosphere is outstanding.
However, a significant difference is found when it comes to anonymity. The blogger callback survey of the Pew Internet & American Life Project reported that 55% of the bloggers surveyed said they blogged under a pseudonym or made-up name, while 43% said they blogged using their real name (Lenhart and Fox 2006). On the contrary, according to the web survey conducted by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japanese government, 31% of the bloggers

surveyed said they blogged under anonymity, 59% under a pseudonym or screen name, and 6% under a pseudonym or screen name suggestive of their real name, while those bloggers using their real name was only 2% (MIC 2009). In the ethnographic study mentioned above, the strong self-effacement of the Japanese in blogging is again obvious. Five out of 24 participants possessed their own blogs and no one put their real name, portrait or e-mail address.

The same applies to the use of social networking sites. In fact, for most Japanese Internet users, the distinction between social networking sites and blogs as a social communication media has been blurred. One need make registration to get full access to social networking sites and one usually has privacy controls that allow the member to choose who can view the member's profile or contact the member. Blogs need no registration and have no privacy controls. However, for most Japanese, the main function of social network sites and blogs to write and to read is diary. 31 out of 45 participants in the ethnographic study get access to a social networking site and all keep their diary. Furthermore, what they did in getting access to social networking site was almost nothing but writing diary and reading diary of friends.

In addition, people on social networking sites are as much self-effacing as bloggers. Only two of 31 participants use their real name and none put their portrait. As to blogs, some Japanese write filter blogs with their real names or nicknames and artists, entertainers, politicians and others write blogs for publicity. However, most ordinary Japanese bloggers keep diary without disclosing their identity. Five participants who possessed their blogs were no exception.

What communications, then, are the Japanese who have homepages or blogs or access social networking sites engaged in? I contend that online diaries work as "detour" or peripatetic communication means with acquaintances. Japanese bloggers and uses of social networking sites record their daily happenings, everyday affairs, feelings, and emotions in their life and workday. Since there is little self-disclosure, what they put on their site makes sense only to those who already know the individual and the web address of the person's blog or nickname on a social networking site in particular: their family, friends, and offline acquaintances. Such people will access their blogs or social networking sites occasionally so that, when they meet, they have shared things to talk about.

Low general social trust and poor self-estimation of social skills among the Japanese

We have discussed several characteristics of the way the Japanese use the Internet compared with the Koreans and the Finns: strong negative socio-psychological attitude toward cyberspace, dominance of anonymity, limited online activities, lack of the dynamics between online and offline activities and networks, avoidance of synchronous communications and development of web diary and blogs as a "detour" communication channel. I believe that behind all these characteristics above are two significant socio-psychological factors: low general social trust and poor self-estimation of social skills among the Japanese. Japanese society has been well known for its strong social trust among people. Contrary to this image of Japanese society, the data of JFK survey I struck us with the low level of general social trust among Japanese students (Table 13). They tend to trust others themselves; however, they do not think people at large are basically good-natured and kind or people trust each other. Even, as to the extent to which

they tend to trust others, when the four-category scale is coded as 4 for “agree” through 1 for “disagree,” the average score of the Japanese students is significantly lower than the others (Tukey HSD multiple-comparison test with a 0.05 significance level).

JFK survey II asked the same questions about general social trust as JFK survey I (Table 14). It appears that the Japanese are the most negative as to all of the three items. To test this, Tukey HSD multiple-comparison test with the five-category scale coded as 5 for “agree” through 1 for “disagree” is applied. Certainly, the average score of the Japanese is the lowest for each item. However, as to the first item, even though the average score of the Japanese is the lowest, the difference is not statistically significant even with a 0.1 significance level. That is, the Japanese think they usually trust others by themselves as much as the others. As to the evaluation of human nature (the second item), the Japanese are significantly more negative than the Finns with a 0.01 significance level and the Koreans with a 0.1 significance level. Then, the result of the third item (social trust as other people’s attitude toward others) shows that the Finns are significantly more positive than the Japanese and the Koreans. We cannot say any difference of statistical significance among the others because of the large variances. Thus, putting the findings of JFK survey I and JFK survey II together, the Japanese trust others by themselves as much as the Korean and the Finns; however, social expectation of trust of others is the lowest in Japan while it is the highest in Finland.

Table 13 Comparison of perception of general social trust between the Japanese, the Koreans and the Finns, JFK survey I

		Agree = 4	partly agree = 3	partly disagree = 2	Disagree = 1	Average
I tend to trust other people.	Japan	19.9	42.8	28.8	8.5	1.74
	Finland	29.0	46.6	22.5	1.9	2.03
	Korea	24.8	44.1	27.7	3.4	1.90
Most people trust other people.	Japan	2.9	28.2	53.4	15.5	1.18
	Finland	17.1	57.7	23.3	1.9	1.90
	Korea	7.6	41.7	47.3	3.4	1.53
Most people are basically good-natured and kind	Japan	7.4	32.7	38.3	21.5	1.26
	Finland	27.3	56.3	13.9	2.5	2.08
	Korea	22.2	54.5	21.9	1.4	1.97

Table 14 Comparison of perception of general social trust between the Japanese, the Koreans and the Finns, JFK survey II

		agree = 5	partly agree = 4	Hard to say = 3	partly disagree =2	disagree =1	average score
I tend to trust other people.	Japan	11.1	34.4	33.3	16.7	4.4	2.31
	Finland	10.0	50.8	19.0	16.5	3.7	2.47
	Korea	4.6	53.6	25.9	13.8	2.1	2.45
Most people are basically good-natured and kind	Japan	7.8	26.7	50.0	13.3	2.2	2.24
	Finland	13.6	56.6	20.7	8.2	0.8	2.74
	Korea	5.9	52.3	26.4	14.2	1.3	2.47
Most people trust other people.	Japan	3.3	13.3	46.7	30.0	6.7	1.77
	Finland	2.6	51.7	34.0	11.4	0.4	2.45
	Korea	2.5	36.8	18.0	37.7	5.0	1.94

In addition to the matter of general social trust, the analysis of JFK surveys suggests that low estimation of social skills among the Japanese might well have much to do with Japanese way of Internet use and (under)development of cyberspace. Table 15 is the data of some questions related to social skills in JFK survey I and Table 16 is that in JFK survey II. As these figures show, the Japanese are characterized comparatively by negative self-estimation of social skills and strong reluctance of self-disclosure, possibly leading to social isolation and retreat to oneself. The result of Tukey HSD multiple-comparison test confirms that the Japanese are constantly the lowest in self-estimation of their social skills in various aspects, while the Finnish are the highest, which corresponds with the result of general social trust above.

Table 15 Comparison of the self-estimation of social skills between the Japanese, the Koreans and the Finns, JFK Survey I

		Agree = 4	Somehow agree =3	Somehow disagree =2	Disagree =1	average	Groups of HSD test
I am able to present my own views regardless of listeners' reactions.	**Japan**	6.9	31.5	48.3	13.2	1.32	C
	Finland	18.0	56.3	23.2	2.6	1.89	A
	Korea	13.7	32.4	46.7	7.3	1.52	B
I can talk with my friends about pretty much anything.	**Japan**	9.2	33.5	42.4	15.0	1.37	C
	Finland	61.1	29.9	7.7	1.3	2.51	A
	Korea	25.4	45.8	23.3	5.5	1.91	B
I do not feel anxious in talking with a stranger.	**Japan**	20.2	26.2	33.2	20.4	1.46	B
	Finland	25.8	48.4	20.0	5.8	1.94	A
	Korea	27.9	35.5	27.1	9.5	1.82	A

Table 16 Comparison of the self-estimation of social skills between the Japanese, the Koreans and the Finns, JFK Survey II

		agree =5	Somehow agree =4	Difficult to say =3	Somehow disagree =2	disagree =1	average	groups of HSD test
When I am blamed, I am able to manage the claim well.	Japan	2.2	21.1	48.9	24.4	3.3	1.94	A
	Finland	4.8	62.6	25.8	6.4	0.4	2.65	C
	Korea	5.0	34.7	35.6	23.0	1.7	2.18	B
When I get into a sour relation with my friends, I am able to make friends again quite well.	Japan	4.4	25.6	48.9	20.0	1.1	2.12	A
	Finland	10.1	69.4	15.0	5.0	0.5	2.84	C
	Korea	6.7	45.2	28.5	18.8	0.8	2.38	B
I am able to join into a conversation which is already going.	Japan	3.3	22.2	40.0	30.0	4.4	1.90	C
	Finland	11.1	58.7	15.3	14.0	1.0	2.65	A
	Korea	8.4	39.8	31.0	18.4	2.5	2.33	B
I am able to express my emotions and feelings without hesitation.	Japan	11.1	31.1	36.7	17.8	3.3	2.29	C
	Finland	16.4	61.8	12.9	8.8	0.1	2.85	A
	Korea	11.7	46.0	28.9	12.1	1.3	2.55	B

"Kan-media-sei" or "inter-media-ness": Strong co-dependency between the mass media and the Internet[27]

Given the arguments of general social trust and social skills above, here, I contend that low level of general social trust and poor self-estimation of social skills are linked to the negative socio-psychological attitude toward cyberspace and dominance of anonymity and lacking of dynamics between online and offline activities through another important characteristic of Japanese way of (under)development of cyberspace. That is what Kaoru Endo calls "*kan-media-sei*," strong co-dependency between the mass media and the Internet (Endo ed. 2004). Literally translated, "*kan-media-sei*" is "inter-media-ness." By the term, Endo points out a rather twisted relation between the existing mass media and the emerging Internet as a new and counter media in Japan.

The existing mass media and the emerging Internet refer to and rely on each other, even though they do not like, or even hate, each other. The mass media feel threatened by the Internet's taking over them; but, it has to rely on the Internet for seeking for fads incessantly. Those who

are deeply involved in, one might say addicted to, the Internet are very critical of the mass media; and yet, to find fault with the mass media and criticize them online is the objective in itself for them; so, ironically, they need the mass media and they have to wait them to make any mistake in its way of constructing social facts, through their depiction, reporting, edit, analysis and so on. Besides, though they do not admit explicitly, they would like the mass media to pay attention to and cover what is happening on the Internet. Thus, there exists a strong twisted co-dependency between them.

One of the most illustrative instances of this relationship is the feud between Mainichi newspaper, one of the five largest national newspapers in Japan, and "2channel," the biggest BBS in Japan. All started on January 1st, 2007. The front page of the first day of the year is the most significant for newspaper. Mainichi started a special feature, "*Net Kun-Rin* (Reign of the Net)," on that day and made a declaration of hostility against 2channel.

2channel was founded on May 30, 1999. One of its most important features is that almost everything can be done anonymously and voluntarily. They can make a posting anonymously without any registration and most verbal abuse is allowed. Since then, 2channel has caught on and grown rapidly in Japan. According to Nielsen/NetRatings Japan, the number of Internet users who get access to 2channel in September 2005 is 9.9million, one fourth of the total Internet users at that time. The number of posting at 2channel is over 2 million a day as of the middle of 2008. Hundreds of active boards of a variety of topics such as "breaking story," "news," "computers," "school life," "underworld," and "cooking" and thousands of threads at each board makes 2channel the most comprehensive forum in Japan.

Those who get access to 2channel very frequently call themselves "2channeler", or "neller," which suggests that a self-identity emerges among its frequent users. Even though topics vary extensively from thread to thread or board to board, they also develop and share some norms and manners to behave in, e.g., "2ch slang," "2ch AA" (Shift JIS encoded ASCII art) and "2ch Flash," which could be called "2ch culture." One negative and serious problem with 2channel is its relentless and exhaustive personal attack and assault on misconduct. The target of attack could be anyone, any organization, any misconduct, whether big or small; attack takes place spontaneously, uncontrollably and collectively. When 2channelers find something offensive and postings are made literally like a flood, they call it "*matsuri* (gala or festival)," and the recognition of *matsuri* should accelerate the assault for some time. Even though such illegal postings as slander and defamation are said to be deleted, postings are too large to be corrected promptly. In fact, Nishimura, the founder of 2channel, has been sued for slander and defamation so many times. According to Yomiuri Newspaper, the number of lawsuit is well over 50 as of September 2007 and he has lost at least 43 cases. Allegedly, he has never shown up for any trial and rarely paid reparations, ignoring every court order.

For another, those posts which declare intentions to commit a serious crime or commit suicide are abundant in 2channel. There are some incidents where crime or suicide is actually committed after posting. The mass media usually refers to such an incident in a very negative tone, as if the crime or suicide itself is caused by the existence of 2channel. On the other hand, 2channel also gives birth to a number of characters and stories which get popular in Japanese society at large. Some of them are merchandised, adapted to novel, manga, film, TV program and so on. One of the most famous stories is "*Densha Otoko* (Train Man)." *Densha Otoko* is a nickname of a 2channeler who is extremely introverted and "*Otaku*," nerd. He finds himself hard to adapt

to society. He began to tell his romance with a girl he fell in love with accidentally on a thread in March 2004. His story touched other 2channellers' heart and thousands of pieces of advice and encouragement were posted. The story and postings drew public attention. They were edited into a book, adapted to a series of manga, a feature film, which hit the number one box office on its release, and dramatized as a TV program and broadcasted on prime time of a national network.

There is a strong *kan-media-sei* between the existing mass media and 2channel. Mass media often depicts 2channel as a sink full of defamation, verbal abuse, underground and crime-related information and accuses it on some crime or violence, on the one hand. On the other hand, the mass media also constantly watch 2channel for some classified and secret information and hot stuff. Even though 2channel does not have any organized body to search, collect, edit, disseminate and publish news and valuable information, any user happens to get news and valuable information no professional journalist knows and let it out on 2channel. In that case, the existing mass media depends on the information on 2channel for hot stuff and such coverage of the mass media makes the news far more public and stimulates further investigation and postings on the part of 2channel and other Internet communities. Such dynamics actually are expanding and plagiarism from the Internet by professional journalists is also becoming common.

2channellers are very critical of the mass media and try hard to find fault with it; for they have a deep distrust against the mass media. This could be interpreted as a battle over social creation of reality. The existing mass media has enjoyed the dominant power to determine social reality. Among not only 2channellers but also those who are active on the Internet, the recognition that the mass media manipulates social reality and abuses its power is shared. They do not believe that there is the social reality to be revealed and reported as the social "fact." They admit plural social realities and they are against the mass media in that it seems to claim it can find and present the social fact and it can tell what is right from what is wrong. At the same time, 2channllers depend on information provided by the mass media to find something interesting, offensive and emotion-evoking to them. Certainly, some of them feed on the mass media and its criticism just for kill-time, fun or stress-releasing.

It is certain that those in the existing mass media, especially seniors, strongly feel the Internet, especially 2channel, disgusting. On January 1, 2007, Mainichi newspaper set forth the assault on 2channel in a special feature article. It was three-page article and just the beginning of the trilogy "*Net Kun-Rin* (Reign of the Net)." The title of the first volume, which was composed of nine chapters, is "what is getting lost"; and the title of the first chapter is "'*matsuri* (Gala)' which ridicule fund-raising for children of incurable diseases." There, Mainichi harshly criticized 2channel and 2channelers for their irresponsible speech, verbal abuse to infringe human rights with themselves hiding behind anonymity.

The 2channelers got furious and got into at war with Mainichi. In 2008, a decisive incident occurred to the battle. It stemmed from series of articles on the column, WaiWai, of MDN, Mainichi Daily News, English web site of Mainichi Newspaper. MDN carried the Wai-Wai column on its web site since April 2001. A short essay was added to the column almost every day. The essays were basically light reading about the Japanese and Japanese society. Editors picked articles from yellow papers, tabloids and gossip magazines in Japanese and translated and wrote essays based on them. Among the essays, a number of them are quite obscene and disgusting. For example, some titles of the column were "how to pick up schoolgirl prostitutes for a small

amount of money," "Gals refresh body and soul by 'recycling sex' with old beaus," "Fast food sends schoolgirls into sexual feeding frenzy," and so on. It is said that it is Ryann Connell that wrote essays of this type of topic. To make matters worse, they used articles from other information sources published in Japan without permission from their publishers. They completely lacked the sense of copyright law, which is outrageous as a journalist.

Many foreign people would consider them as a kind of joke and something just for fun to read. In fact, the column had a disclaimer since September 19, 2002: "WaiWai stories are transcriptions of articles that originally appeared in Japanese language publications. The Mainichi Daily News cannot be held responsible for the content of the original articles, nor does it guarantee their accuracy. Views expressed in the WaiWai column are not necessarily those held by the Mainichi Daily News or the Mainichi Newspapers Co."[28] And yet, because the column is a part of the web site of Mainichi Newspaper, which should be a reliable news source and journal organization, others, who are not familiar with Japan, could take them seriously. They are certainly misleading and could give foreigners inaccurate and shameful misunderstandings about Japan and the Japanese.

Though such obscene essays had been put on WaiWai for many years, little attention has been drawn or few cautions have been made against its obscenity. According to the report of the investigation Mainichi made later, there were at least two e-mails, one on October 2007 and the other on March 2008, to warn the column from some Japanese. However, they did not take them seriously and did nothing particular. Finally, in April 2008, some 2channellers found out something wrong and offensive with the column. The number of threads related to this issue were growing in April and May in 2channel. Then, J-CAST, an independent and popular alternative online news site in Japan, made the headline, "Mainichi Newspaper English site disseminate 'deviant news' to all over the world" on June 20, 2008, which triggered much wider attention of the public. On 2channel, a *matsuri* took place and Mainichi was bombarded with a barrage of claims and criticisms and the swirling "public opinion on the Internet." [29]

Mainichi was forced to realize the situation and to deal with it. On June 21, the very next day, Mainichi shut down the column and took measures to block access to past articles in the column. Then, the Mainichi editorial board put their official apology to MDN readers on their site on June 25. Three days later, on 28th, Mainichi made official announcement of punitive measures. At first, the announcement seemed a usual remark of apology; however, it also contained something incredible. They added that "on the Internet, we find incessant posting of slanders and defamations using video against several female correspondents and our staff who had nothing to do with this affair. We have the intention to take legal action against illegal activities like such defamation.[30]"

Though they did not mention 2channel, it was beyond any doubt that they meant 2channellers. It is natural that 2 channellers considered it as the war declaration from Mainichi. The "*matsuri*" was escalated. More than a hundred thousand postings were put against Mainichi's declaration by the end of June 30 and a protest demonstration was organized on July 2 in front of the headquarter of Mainichi. The demonstration went on live on the Internet and more than eleven thousand people accessed. Finally, they went so far as to fire the most deadly final weapon: a barrage of complaints by e-mails and phone calls to those companies which post advertisement on Mainichi web site, both English and Japanese. It actually worked. By mid-July, advertisements of big business such as Nissan (car) Kirin (beer), JCB (credit card) and Fujitsu (computer) were

gone from the Mainichi site. Even in the middle of September 2008, the front page of Mainichi Newspaper carries few advertisements but Mainichi's own and there are no ads on MDN's revamped site in January 2011, when this subsection is being written.[31]

On July 20, Mainichi raised the white flag in surrender. They shut down Mainichi Daily News site, and again, officially apologized, with their own explanation of what happened. However, the 2channellers do not seem to forgive Mainichi and continue the battle campaign. Mainichi is now at the verge of breakdown. Of course, the column Wai-Wai was outrageous and a deadly misconduct as a journalist organization Mainichi Newspaper should be blamed and they have to apologize and make thorough investigation of the incident and learn their lesson. However, the tense battle between Mainichi and 2channel described above seems to be too far. The 2channellers do not seem to forgive Mainichi until it goes bankrupt. Why? The postings related to this issue tell.

> "Mainichi once said *"the wound (caused by verbal abuse on the Internet), once made, will not heal easily," in its feature article "Net Kun-Rin." What burden will Mainichi ever bear to eliminate the stigma put on Japan at large."*
>
> *"You continued to put the disgusting column for X years, continue to put your apology on your site for X years." "Persistent and relentless accusation against Fujiya by Mainichi and TBS forced Fujiya bankrupt. Then, it is your turn, Mainichi."* [32]

Some commentary is necessary for the last posting. Fujiya is one of the most well-known confectionery companies in Japan. Its character, Peko-chan, is an adorable figure as famous as Kitty-chan. Then, in 2006, it was revealed that Fujiya often sold sweets left unsold by changing the label of the expiration date for the new one. The mass media accused Fujiya persistently and relentlessly. Many franchisees went bankrupt. TBS, Tokyo Broadcasting System, is a terrestrial TV station and has a close relationship with Mainichi. TBS was the most aggressive to accuse Fujiya on this misconduct.

As is evident in these posting, they believe that Japanese mass media enjoy accusing people or companies who make mistakes, and often times, they even take up trivial things and extend it to extreme, until the accused companies go out of business. The media's hype against the accused itself is outrageous and insensible. So, as mentioned above, the battle between 2channel and Mainichi is a kind of the battle over constructing social realities and strong and deep resentment against the existing mass media exists among Net people. Certainly such resentment motivates them to do another extreme action.

Then, what makes them so resentful as to do that kind of action? I believe low level of social trust and self-estimation of social skills has much to do with the emergence and development of *kan-media-sei*, which, in turn, contributes to the formation and the (under)development of cyberspace discussed above. Take a look at Figure 1. This is a framework or a model of communicative landscape in Japanese society I postulate to interpret the relationship among them. The mass media constructs its own social reality. Because of lack of general social trust and low self-estimation of social skills, a certain number of Japanese have little social participation in their real world. They live in another social world created by media to some extent. Even though they live in the media-created environment, they know the social reality the mass media claims is lacking authenticity and though the mass media acts based on realism model, the model has

lost its meaning. The mass media itself recognizes it in a sense; but they have to act as if they believed in it. This makes Net people skeptical and critical against the mass media. However, since they lack social participation in social world and social interactions with friends, family, relatives, acquaintances, they have to live mediated world. So, they actively participated in online world anonymously.

Such anonymous activities and *kan-media-sei* dominate the Internet as a social activity space in Japan, the other Japanese remain silent, i.e. lurkers to peep into the strange world and confine themselves to get in touch with those are already acquainted through mobile text message.

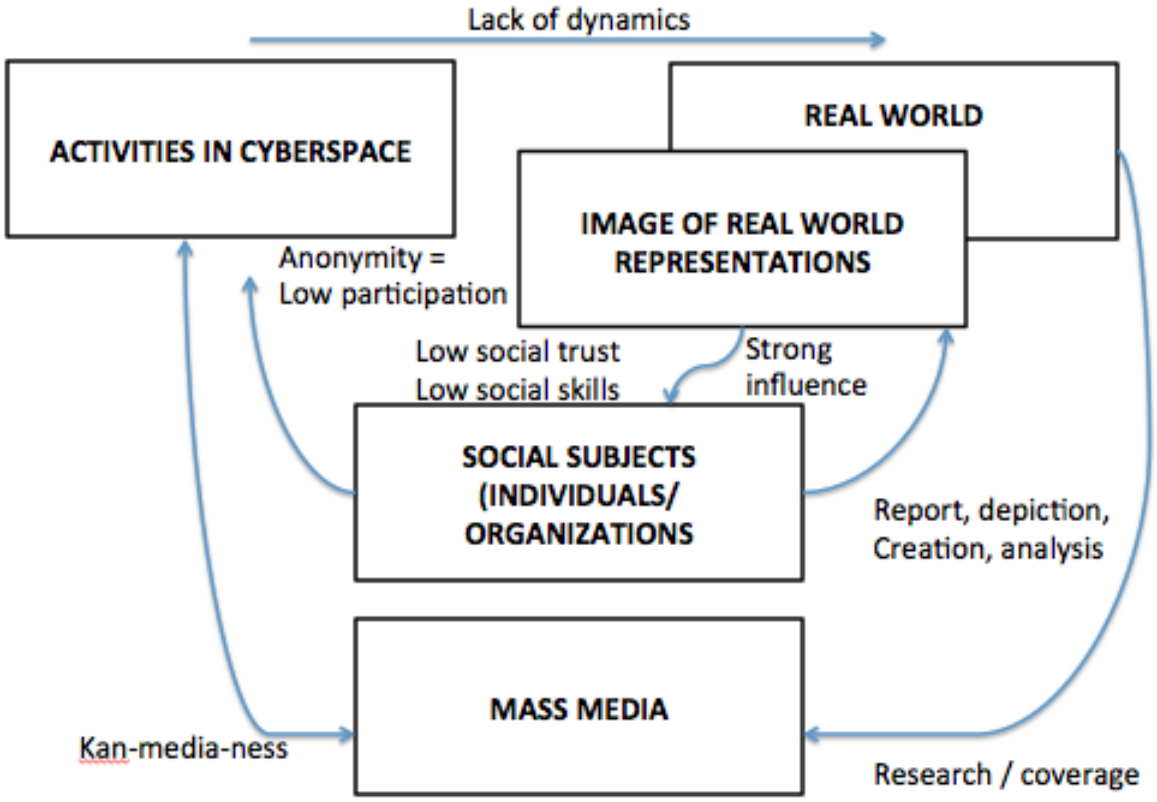

Image 1: Communicative landscape between online world, offline world and mass media in Japanese society.

Culture matters and the way culture constitutes cyberspace

Most of the discussion of ICT use is within-society and they try to find out what variable contribute any difference in specific ICT use. Furthermore, as I pointed out in the introduction, when we talk about "information society," "IT revolution" and "network society," we unconsciously assume that the same kind of information society develops as far as major industrialized countries are concerned. Especially in Japan, the United States is taken for granted as the prototype of the advanced information society. Little consideration is usually given to qualitative differences among industrialized societies in terms of the development of information society.

However, as I discussed in this article, we have found substantial differences across different societies in the kinds of ICT equipment and services that are diffused, how they are used, socio-psychological attitudes toward cyberspace. Thus, "information society" should be taken not in its singular, but plural form, "information societies," and we need a conceptual framework to analyze and describe comparative differences between different information societies. I hope this article could make any contribution to the development.

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TECHNOLOGIZING YOUTH

Youngsters in Finland, Japan and South Korea have been the early adapters of technological development. The situation is twofold. On one hand, there is fast information delivery, novel possibilities for participation and tools for learning. On the other hand, technology always carries risks regarding inequality and ungoverned behavior – the world invades in front of the youth to be viewed and bought. Networking is both social and technical trend shaping the way people consume digital media. This chapter discusses the concept of friendships and other relationships on the net. New technology and web 2.0 are changing the whole 'let's get friends' – phase as well the whole idea of friendship. Level of friendship is changing in to a form when one no longer needs to see ones friends face to face. Besides friendship, social activity and trust the chapter also takes a look at collaborative content creation.

Urban development in Korea was fundamentally guided by the government's need to make its authority and legitimacy visually manifest in modernization—amidst a broad concomitant suppression of nature, history, and human right'. Network technology has been avidly welcomed, expanded, and become quotidian as a result of intricate interconnections with locally germane cultural and social bearings.

Top 5 take aways:

- The time of the Internet has forced us to re-determine friendship. Public ranking and rating of friends is part of the picture
- Participatory activity is changing the roles of a producer and the audience
- Virtual or digital development is part of everyday life interlinking with urban lifestyle
- Diverse ubiquitous environments have been developing in different parts of the world with locally specific characteristics, blending the existing and new cultural, social, and technological aspects unique to each community
- In the short term, we may expect large displays to become more pervasive in both private and public spaces, in the longer term, every object may become a screen connected to the net with the whole of built space eventually becoming a set of display surfaces.

EOMJIJOK – THE KOREAN THUMB TRIBE- REFLECTIONS OF YOUNG AND URBAN KOREANS' MOBILE COMMUNICATION

Jukka Jouhki

On April 16th, 2008 I left my apartment on Seoul National University Campus, went to Nakseong-dae, the nearest subway station and headed downtown on subway line number two. I sat down and started taking notes on people using their cell phones and other hand-held media. I got plenty of notes. No one seemed to just sit or stand: people watched TVshows on their DMB (Digital Media Broadcasting) televisions or cell phones, read e-books on their mobile phones or other hand-held devices, browsed through the picture folders of their cell phones, or listened to the music they had downloaded on their phones or other devices. A surprisingly large number of people, children and adults, were playing mobile games. Perhaps the most common action with the phone, though, was text-messaging, especially among the younger Koreans. However, the paper media were still pretty much in evidence too, as many people were reading free newspapers, bibles or comics.

In the subway car there were six TV screens with commercial shows but, to my surprise, no one seemed interested in them. Young people, at least the ones who were traveling alone, were immersed in the worm-holes of their own mobile media. It seemed as if they were only half present. One teenager held both his cell phone and a DMB television in his hands, keeping track of the action in both of them. Six high school boys sat opposite to me, all holding their cell phones with similar huge decorations (a doll) and *T-money* radio frequency chips for the subway fare dangling from them. The boys touched and fiddled, closing and opening their shiny phones without any apparent reason other than that of enjoying the feel of the device. The decorations (one boy even had two dolls) were so large that they didn't even fit into their pockets along with the phone, but were left hanging out. A girl beside me was asleep with a cell phone in her hand. Every now and then she woke up to check her phone or to send an SMS and then fell asleep again. Two policemen stood beside the doors, one of them calling his girlfriend and the other one just holding his phone in his hand, as if it were an additional security measure.

I arrived at a station in downtown Seoul, got out of the train and went into a café. I ordered a coffee but instead of a cup I was handed an electronic device that looked something like a hockey puck. I was told to go to my table and wait. After I had spent a few minutes wondering what was going on the device started to blink and vibrate and I realized this was a sign that my coffee was ready to be picked up. I traded the puck for my coffee at the counter and went up to the second floor, where I passed between tables of young Koreans showcasing their phones on their tables. I sat down at a table close to a window opening onto one of the busiest pedestrian streets in Seoul. After watching the young people socializing with each other and their phones, I decided to count how many people on the street were talking on a phone. It was surprisingly few - only about two out of ten, while the rest were just holding their phones while walking along or standing in the street. Only a few people either did not have a phone or were keeping it out of sight in their pocket or bag.

I started to get more intrigued by everything I had seen about the use of mobile technology in Seoul in that hour or so. After mulling it over I ended up giving my students an assignment in which they were to observe and discuss the way young Koreans use their mobile phones. In retrospect I could not have gotten better help for writing a paper about young mobile Koreans.

Introduction to a mobile culture

Whatever it is called, and wherever it is used, this simple, accessible technology alters the way in which individuals conduct their everyday lives. It has extensive implications for the cultures and societies in which it is used; it changes the nature of communication, and affects identities and relationships. It affects the development of social structures and economic activities, and has considerable bearing on its users' perceptions of themselves and their world. (Plant 2000, 23.)

It took some time for researchers to consider the mobile phone a worthy object of research and something more than a telephone that one can carry with one. In fact, from a cultural anthropologist's point of view the mobile phone is an outstanding technological innovation, a r/evolution in communication and a cultural influence at least as significant as the Internet (e.g. Horst & Miller 2006; Goggin 2006; Katz 2006). It has already changed and it will continue to change the way we talk to each other not only remotely but also face to face. Moreover, today's mobile phone is a source as well as a transceiver of media, a music and video player, a game station, the Internet, a clock, a thermometer, a GPS device and a camera, to name just a few of its functions.

Today's mobile phone is not only a media hub but also a fashion accessory with visual and haptic qualities similar to those of magic charms and tribal totems. In its miniature symbolism the phone is an everyday personal crystallization of its carrier, used to construct and communicate identity. Whether we see the mobile phone as revolution, evolution or just another new invention is a matter of choosing a discourse. At any rate, we should not "hype the phone" and be seduced by the utopian anarchism that mystifies rather than enlightens the meaning of the cell phone. Skepticism, it seems, is relatively rare in the field of mobile phone research, which deals with the acclaimed revolution of information and tends to revolve around the idea of communication technology changing our human capacities. It is hard to find a critical attitude, especially in the context of the phone's sociocultural meaning; "the imperative to connect, however fantastic, cynical, or moral has always overlooked the possibility of its own irrelevance" (Green, Harvey & Knox 2005, 817). However, we should also beware the "hopelessly romantic technophobia" often noticeable in critical cultural studies. (McGuigan 2005, 46 & 55; Green, Harvey & Knox 2005, 817).

In this article, the mobile phone is considered to have important effects on the sociological configurations of modern cultures. Hype or not, the phone is not just a phone; it must be viewed as a unique emergent entity in techno-evolution and a lot more than the sum of its parts.

Leading Question about the Korean "Eomjijoks"

"What is the mobile phone to young Koreans?" is the leading question of my article. In answering it, I will first introduce a few interesting points from studies on Korean mobile phones (Section 2) and then go on to shed light on the quantitative data produced by the Finnish Youth Research Society on Korean youth and their values (Section 3). Finally, I will present and discuss the observations and reflections of fifteen undergraduate students of communication at Seoul National University (Section 4). In the observation activity the students observed mobile phone use in a public place and reflected on their own use as well as on the significance of mobile phone culture in Korea. Rather than explaining causal connections and assuring validity by measurement, I attempt to reflect on the system of meaning inherent in mobile phone culture.

Korea enjoys the prestige of being "an IT powerhouse", "global digital test bed," "the most wired country" and "online games' heaven", which has resulted in Korea ranking first in the ITU's Digital Opportunity Index for the last decade. As an early-adopter culture Koreans have become an IT saturated nation. The technology-oriented cultural superstructure has benefited from the infrastructure. For example, the simple fact that Korea has a high density urban population has made it easy to wire the country. The high level of educational achievement together with the constant public discourse on the sociopolitical importance of ICTs have created a population ready to follow anything new in the field. There is a strong institutional and systemic push for digital media literacy. (Ok 2011, 320-321; Shim et al 2008, 112-113.)

Young people in Korea are clearly the most eager and versatile consumers of the new media. (See e.g. Webb 2007; *Ubiquitous Network Societies* 2005; See e.g. Jouhki 2008b, 173-174; Choi 2008, 190.) "If mobile phones are the driving force of the convergent media culture in Korea, then *Eomjijok,* the Korean version of 'Thumb Tribe,' is behind the wheel," says HyeRyoung Ok of the University of California. According to Ok, the Thumb Tribe are the East Asians who have exceedingly swift texting skills that are used to communicate in an idiosyncratic code language, understood only by the young people of the area. (Ok 2011, 329; see also Shim et al 2008, 116-117.) Within the East Asian countries, Korean young people are the most active mobile phone users, especially for texting (*Children's Use of Mobile Phones and Personal Relationships* 2010, 4).

Although Ok's description of the *Eomjijok*s is very accurate, I would like to add that on the one hand, it includes a more general attitude to mobile technology and on the other hand, a special attraction to mobile phones as haptic objects. I will elaborate this in the last section, so suffice it to say here that being a member of the Thumb Tribe means that mobile technology has a core value or existential significance in one's life. The mobile phone is not just a necessity; at least in Korea it seems the phone is like a sacred tree or a stone to an animist or shaman, as if it was partly a living thing. If this is an exaggeration, one must at least accept that to Korean young people a phone is almost a fetish.

The Thumb Tribe in Literature

Although there is a major quantitative bias in Korean research on mobile media communication, some researchers have founded their research on qualitative and even ethnographic material (see e.g. Hjorth 2008). For example, Lee Dong-Hoo (2005) has combined gender and communication research in the context of mobile phone culture in a rather interesting way.

Contrary to popular conceptions, young Korean women are rather active in adopting certain of the technological novelties brought by multi-media mobile phones. The apparatus itself seems to be an encouraging counterweight to the patriarchal ideology that reproduces gender inequality. Korean phone advertisements show women using mobile phones for security and relation-maintenance and men using the phone to symbolize masculine power and virility. Men in the advertisements are active phone users who exploit the phones' many functions, while women are presented variously as attracted to men using phones, or to display the glamor of the phone, or as the objects of male phone use (e.g. posing for camera phones). Lee's examination of women's phone use reveals that the reality is at odds with the world of the advertisements. Unlike the analogue phone, mobile phones for women are not an escape from their confinement to private spaces but rather a reinforcement of their active social womanhood. Camera phones allow young Korean women to explore themselves in a novel mode, for fun and play, and to replace the male gaze by peer gaze, perhaps even narcissistic gaze. (Lee 2005; see also Choi 2007; Hjorth & Kim 2005.)

Yoon Kyongwon's studies on Korean young people and their mobile phone culture represent the pinnacle of qualitative youth studies in Korea. Yoon has set the mobile phone culture of Korean young people against the backdrop of common images of globalization in Korea. According to him, globalization has evoked images of Koreans being forced to enter a world where western individualism is destroying their traditional values of communality. In the mass media and academic literature Yoon finds representations portraying Korean young people as estranged from their families because of their use of personal communication technologies. The cell phone has been seen as an apparatus causing young Koreans to diverge from the norms of harmonious communality and destroying collective and affective relationships. (Yoon 2003, 327-328.) Yoon also found two opposite hegemonic representations, "youth in cybertopia" and "youth at risk." In the research literature young Koreans are generally depicted as having a natural affinity to new technologies and innovations. However, many Korean studies see young people in crisis because of the new technologically mediated environment and its perceived negative impact, for example greater individualism, disembodiment, inauthenticity and being out of parental control. On the surface the moral panic and cybertopia seem to contradict each other, but on a deeper level they reproduce the representation of "a recurring duality", which means that young people are celebrated as the precursors of a bright future and at the same time denigrated as evidence of moral disorder. (Yoon 2006, 754-756.)

In Korea mobile communication is most evidently a tool for enhancing communality and collectivity (see e.g. *The Mobile Communication Society* 2004, 247). Although many fear the diminishing of collective values among these young people using new media, there are countless studies that could show how groundless those fears are. The new media are indeed a tool for enhancing communality and collectivity. For example, in using a mobile service, such as purchasing a ring tone, young Koreans tend to want a lot of secondary information on the service, like content-ranking, because they want to download the same ring tone as others have. "[H]aving a popular ring tone is a good way to be connected with other people," they explain. In general, using high-popularity content was seen as significant for friendships and for feeling connected to other people. (Lee, Kim & Jeon 2005.) Young Koreans are also careful not to ignore their peers in the context of mobile communication. For instance, ignoring calls or messages from someone (which is called "chewing out") is seen as "really not cool" and indeed as irritating, because it breaks reciprocity within the network. One girl interviewed said that when she was tired of getting calls and messages she would discharge the battery of her cell phone (rather than ignore

the messages) because she "would rather die than chew out messages from others". This is a culturally specific practice which derives from the strength of Korean social networks, which attach special value to reciprocal communication. (*The Mobile Communication Society* 2004, 247.) Compare this to Yoon (2003, 331-332), who interprets SMS exchanges between young people as reciprocal gift-giving in a way which reminds the reader of classic anthropological work on exchange in archaic societies (e.g. Mauss 1980).

In official announcements by the Korean government the everyday use of information technology is connected to national development and successful globalization. "The Second Establishment of Korea" is going to happen, thanks to the tech savvy "New Intellectuals". The government wants the Internet in every household and the major newspapers support the government's vision of a "wired country". Korean salespersons emphasize how valuable information technology is in advancing Korea's access to the global economy. However, so far the hegemonic Korean discourse has represented the computer as the only application of the new information technology leading to cybertopia. The mobile phone has been seen as more connected to global consumer culture. In the 1990s Korean mass media did portray the mobile phone as contributing to the information society, but the media gradually changed its tone to emphasize the negative aspects of the mobile phone, especially among young people. Government sources and the mass media linked the mobile phone to young people's economic and moral problems consequent upon globalization. (Yoon 2006, 757-758.)

In negative representations of Korean young people, mobile phone use is compared to a disease; it is represented as a problem and an addiction in a way similar to moralist imagery of masturbation, isolating those who do it from the rest of society and depriving them of a sense of reality. The media have not defined the criteria for unhealthy mobile phone use, but they nevertheless feel able to claim that one particular age group – the young – is more likely to develop pathological symptoms. At one time the moral panic even went so far that government surveys implied that "personalized" ownership of mobile telephones might lead to teenage prostitution and other adolescent delinquencies. Especially young girls were seen as vulnerable to the "unsound environments" the new technology made accessible, and the technology was thought to separate young people from their family and local communities. Recently, sales teams have tried to reduce social concern over the nation's youth by promoting cheap Korean products and producing positive images of the technology using a range of different strategies, such as humanizing the technology by the use of mascots and localizing the technology within specific cultural norms using local visual and linguistic formats. In advertisements foreign languages have been avoided and localism emphasized. (Ibid., 761-763; see also Kim & Jung 2004 and Lee, Ann & Jeong 2004.)

Fears about Korea becoming part of a global, over-materialistic culture are evident. As Yoon insightfully acknowledges, in Korea […] new technology is perceived and consumed through local filters, including social relations and norms. Indeed, the current conceptualization of youth and technology in Korea appears to rearticulate the "cyberkids" rhetoric on the basis of neo-Confucian norms and social relations. (Yoon 2006, 764-767.)

Statistics: young Korean and their mobiles

Before going into the students' observations it will be helpful to take a look at what it is to be a young person in Korea today, according to the results of a questionnaire (N=1093)[34] which the Finnish Youth Research Society made available to me. The questionnaire is an impressive penetration into the everyday life of Koreans as new media users but the data also shed light on all kinds of values, of the young and the old. According to the data times are changing also in Korea, although the differences between the values of younger and older generations are not serious. Still, there are some interesting differences and many trends are indicative of either a temporal change in values or cultural differences between the young and the old. The young adults and the elderly form groups that seem to be different especially in their values, culture and social life. In this section I am dividing Koreans into two groups, 20 to 29-year olds and the over 30s. The biggest differences between the two groups seem to emerge in the areas of politics, friends and social collectiveness. Not surprisingly, there are also differences in the way the two groups use the mobile phone.

Stable Life, Cool Attitudes

Take life satisfaction, for example. Although there are no great differences between the two age groups, it is interesting that there were twice as many older Koreans who were *very* satisfied with their lives. Older Koreans were also more often disappointed with their lives than younger Koreans, so the scale of satisfaction was in a way narrower among the young people, which might mean that young Koreans are more stable, more uniform and perhaps plain "cool" or less extreme about their lives. This seems to go against the stereotype of the young being more extreme in their evaluations. Or maybe the young people had not yet lived long enough to experience either great happiness or great misfortunate in their lives. Perhaps the bosom of the native family was still warm and close to them but not exciting enough, and this made the youngsters feel pretty much OK about their lives.

It is not surprising that young Koreans, like the young of almost any country, were politically less active than older Koreans. The number of young voters in parliamentary elections was only half that of older voters. There were five times more politically "very interested" older Koreans than younger Koreans, and the older people also believed more in the value of political participation. Young people did not believe that political participation made much difference, nor did they believe that honesty mattered in Korea's ruling circles. In their political stance (as in life satisfaction) the young were also less extreme than the older Koreans. On a political scale ranging from conservative to progressive there were fewer hard line conservatives or strong progressives among the young. However, the young generally tended to be more progressive than the older Koreans. Again, the young people seemed to avoid the extremes.

Of Friends and Information

As for friendships, Koreans have been said to be a nation that believes in collectivity and connections (see e.g. Paaso 2008, 37-38). Friendships are thought to be particularly important for the young, and this is corroborated by the data, which showed that those in their twenties

were slightly more connected to their friends than Koreans over thirty. However, although it is commonly believed that in Korea classmates stick together virtually for ever and that former school ties are important in work and politics (ibid., 109), the younger Koreans felt fewer bonds than the older Koreans did to their class mates. The reason for the surprising data may be that the value of class mates actualizes when one enters the world of work. The younger group also did not believe as much as the older Koreans did in the benefits of having good contacts or that contacts were essential to success in Korea. Interestingly, there were no significant differences between the younger and older groups about the value of bonds with co-workers. Perhaps even more interestingly, bonds between colleagues were not considered very relevant in either group. Almost a half of all respondents did not really feel any bonds with their colleagues. The younger people spent more time with their colleagues but were not so attached to them as their elders were. In a way, it seems like the older Koreans had more quality time with their colleagues.

However, the importance of friends or at least the frequency of meeting them was higher for those in their twenties. The percentage of younger respondents meeting their friends outside school or work 2-3 times a week was double the amount of older Koreans doing this. On the other hand, the time spent with family was more or less the same in both groups. The older Koreans, however, felt more (ca. +50 %) bonds with their neighbors and also with the people of their native town. The older Koreans were also more nationalistic, as they felt more at one with their nation than did the younger Koreans.

Information technology is a booming culture in Korea and one might assume differences between the old and the young in relating to information. As far as trusting information was concerned, there were no significant differences in relating to magazines, newspapers or TV among the Koreans who took part in the questionnaire. When it came to friends, however, the younger group trusted their information a little more. As for the information gotten from users on the Internet, the younger people trusted it twice as much as the older ones. The younger group were also not shy about sharing personal information with their friends and were more willing to go into very personal subjects with their friends, either on the net or face to face. The younger group were also less eager to believe that in Korea important information is withheld from outsiders. Against this background it is helpful to turn our attention now to mobile culture.

Mobile Relations

When we compare the mobile phone culture of Korean young people (20-29-year-olds) to that of the older Koreans (30-69-year-olds), there are some interesting differences. Firstly, the number of non-users among the older Koreans was more than four times higher than in the younger group. Only two young people in a hundred did not use a cell phone at all, whereas the figure among the older Koreans was one in every nine. However, in the frequency of making mobile phone calls there was no significant difference as almost all Koreans used their mobile phone to call or receive calls at least daily. The younger people were slightly more frequent in their use. However, text messaging seemed to be the culture of the young as the frequent (more than daily) use of text messages was almost double among those in their twenties what it was among the older Koreans. The number of younger people who texted 2 to 3 times or more during the day was more than twice as many as the number of older Koreans who did so. In contrast, almost half of the older Koreans never sent text messages, a number that was five times higher than

the comparable figure among the younger group, where it was 8.5%. Over four times more younger people used the Internet through their cell phones than older Koreans (23% to 5.6 %). For older Koreans the mobile phone seemed to be considered more for calling only, whereas those in their twenties made much more use of the different functions of the phone.

When examining the use of mobile phones among the younger Koreans, some interesting intracultural elements emerge. The young men made and received more phone calls than the young women but the young women texted more. The young women did not see their friends as often as the young men did, which seems to indicate a lower level of social activity, a result that might go against many assumptions but which on the other hand is telling of the domestic role of women in Korea. Less surprisingly, the youngest of the younger respondents used their mobiles the most. Another interesting discovery was that the less the younger Koreans used their phone (e.g. only once a day), the more likely they were to be "very unsatisfied" with their life. Moreover, if a respondent used their phone 2 to 3 times or more in a day, he or she was more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with life. The more messages a respondent sent, the more likely he or she was to be satisfied with life. Frequent phone use seems to correlate also with higher level of sociability, which, in turn, seems to correlate with general satisfaction. In other words, we might ask whether young Koreans who are happy with their lives get more friends and end up calling them a lot, or whether frequent mobile phone use and/or more friends result in a more satisfying life?

Korean students on mobile phone use

During the spring term of 2008 I held a course introducing the culture of digital communication at Seoul National University. The course was called *Global Communication: Messages of the Digital Age* and as a part of the course work the students had to observe the details and general tendencies of young Koreans using a mobile phone in a public place (see Attachment for the observation instructions). The students (14 women and one man) were required to first observe the public mobile phone use for at least an hour, then reflect on their observations, also in relation to their own phone use, and finally discuss their views of the significance of mobile phones to young Koreans. In other words, they were to observe and reflect on their observations. No interviews were conducted. The students had two weeks to write their four-page (Times New Roman, 12 pt, line 1.5) reports, which were then further used as data for this paper.

Obviously, the method used poses several problems. Firstly, the students were not trained observers. Moreover, their observations were part of course work, which might have led them to color or exaggerate their observations to suit something they imagined a foreign teacher such as myself would find proper and interesting. On the other hand, as members of Korean culture, they might have suffered from home-blindness and failed to notice unique elements of Korean mobile behavior they found simply natural, obvious and not worthy of mention. Further, in the reflections of their own mobile phone use and that of Korean young people in general their personal interpretations and use of language (academic and English) might have led them to misrepresent their thoughts and ideas. For my purposes this kind of questioning of reliability is not very significant because I am less interested in the "reality" behind all the observations, interpretations and discourse than in the discourse about the reality. Although the students produced interesting data as observers, they also functioned as informants who were themselves analyzed.

To summarize the observations, the students who did their observations in a restaurant or a café noticed how most people set their phone on the table and kept checking it regularly. Women and young people did this the most. While on the move or standing, most people also carried their phone in their hand. When waiting alone, the mobile phone was number one pastime. People texted, played, or just fiddled with the phone. In groups also the phone was constantly checked and caused an accepted interruption. The phone was according to all observations a device with fashion value and a significant part of one's identity and prestige. The phone had esthetic value, and especially young women were seen to be active in decorating their phones. They had jewelry, stickers and colorful covers on their phones, and they seemed to check the phones and use them more. Most people used their mobile for texting, calling, watching TV and movies, listening to music and playing games. Texting was considered to be the "cooler" way to communicate rather than plain talking on the phone, which seems to be something older people do – and often too loudly. Older Koreans were not aware of the strict phone etiquette that young Seoulites obeyed: no high ringing volume (preferably only vibration) and no loud talking. Older people also checked their phones only when they beeped or rang, not out of habit. Everyone, but the young especially, had external appliances like a subway pass or USB-extensions in their phones. The most popular phones were white and shaped like a shell or with a sliding cover. Practically no one used the phones' hands-free facility. Watching television was a very common pastime for young people traveling in the subway or bus, but not elsewhere.

The observed use of mobile phones was also significantly that they were not used - non-use - as the mobile phones were often actually not in use although they were explicitly present, uncovered and showcased. And if they were used, they were surprisingly often just fiddled with and touched. Most of the time the phones were on call, so to speak, available, potentially used, handily to hand, frequently checked for possible missed calls, text messages, the time or multimedia messages, and constantly physically in the hand or within reach. What was interesting to us all was that most Koreans carried their phones in their hands and not in their pockets or bags. Perhaps it was because of the crowds or the noise that hearing the phone ring or feeling it vibrate in the pocket or bag was difficult if not impossible. Checking the phone seemed to be close to a compulsion, a sign of the imperative of not only being connected but also being connected instantly. The older generations seemed to keep their phones tucked away, in their bag or pocket, even in the cell phone holster, which seemed generally to be considered unfashionable.

These were the informative observations made by my students but in the following personal reflections they went on to interpret the observations, explain and bring reason to them and construct their image of Koreans using mobiles.

The Students' Reflections

"A brand new, cutting edge mobile phone is always envied," a student explained, as "[p]hones are a matter of self-expression, style, and personality for Koreans." She went on to reflect on the significance of mobile phones to Koreans who "seem to have an emotional and social dependency on mobile phones that make them want to have their gadgets forever in their reach." It was also a question of security as "[m]obile phones are central to both social life and personal life, and having the device under control seems to provide people with a sense of security." The phone is a multifaceted tool and the convergence of different kinds of services embedded in the handset is obvious in Korea. "In a sense," she continued, "cell phones have become a

reliable 'being' that provides connection to other people, recreation, schedule management, and so many other functions that are crucial to everyday life." (Student A.) Another student reflected on how the cell phone can be used as a subject of conversation when small talk has run out. People can quickly turn to each other's phones and talk about their brand, celebrity endorsers or functions and browse through pictures taken with their cameras. When young people socialize, the mobile phones are usually "on stage" also because they are expensive and stylish, she concluded. (Student B)

Most students mentioned how in Korean culture it is important to be social and open to social connections regardless of what one is doing. This gives special significance to the mobile phone. One student recalled how surprised she had been to see French people turning off their phones whenever they felt like it. Turning off a mobile phone was close socially close to impossible in Korea. (Student C.) Another student considered the mobile phone an integral part of her life. "Every day and every moment of my daily life, I definitely realize the significance of the mobile phone. It is the main tool of communication, information and entertainment." In her view to young people in Korea the mobile phone is "a requirement to function effectively in a culture" as they fear "isolation and separation" and "hope to reassure themselves of their bonding with the rest of society". (Student D.) Many students agreed with her, one reflecting on how especially young people and women could not be separated from their mobile phones. She also reflected on her own close relation to her phone.

I also regularly check my cell phone even though I do not get any signals from my phone. If I do not have my cell phone in my hand, I feel very nervous and kind of isolated from the society. (Student E.)

One student pointed out that the young generation "seemed to make the most out of it" and older generations still regarded the mobile phone as a mere phone, "in the traditional sense." She went on to talk about the scheduling of everyday life and how for example making a date had become more flexible, without the need to decide beforehand on the exact place or time of meeting. Breaking a date had never been easier either – a quick SMS did the job. Also, time spent waiting for someone was often spent with a mobile phone. Especially young people were conscious of the way they appeared to others, she explained, and thus "just fiddling with [the phone] seems like at least doing 'something'." A crowded subway train was also a good place to use a mobile phone and the phone was somewhere to rest one's eyes when it was not proper to look around at other people. In addition, the phone brought safety to a public place. In a place such as a busy subway station holding a phone in one's hand made one feel more secure. "It feels like it protects me from […] getting lost among people." She also wondered if people who carried phones in their hand feared losing contact, as to her the thought of leaving the phone at home was terrifying. In the student's view, young Koreans considered their phones to be of the utmost importance and the mobile phone was clearly an extension of themselves as human beings. (According to Student J, people held their phones while asleep on the subway.) Moreover, it is acting like one's other self, a part of a body. Since there are various colors and designs that we can choose from, it is one way of representing our identity and style. The mobile phone sometimes is a friend who easily helps us not to get bored, and a protector who gives us some sense of security and saves us from being isolated. It is a way of not getting lost in this popular and crowded place, and not [looking idle]. (Student F.)

Many other students mentioned the subway as the place for making "the most out of the mobile phone" because the advanced infrastructure makes it possible and the user is not distracted by other things such as walking or driving, but has to stay put. One student remarked that the tendency that people are usually alone in [the] subway affects the use of [the] mobile phone. While being alone in [the] subway with strangers around, people might feel bored and even lonely and that can lead to mobile communication with their family or friends. (Student G.)

The observations revealed that the mobile phone is also, simply, just a pleasant thing to hold and touch, and the "fiddling" and the extension-of-body aspect came up often in the observations. To Student G, for example, [t]he most surprising finding [was] that people were almost always holding [the] mobile phone in their hand. Even though people were not using the phone and even when they were sleeping, mobile phones were kept in hands. […] From this I got the impression that mobile phone was a part or extension of their body. I could also assume that people were greatly dependent on mobile phone or they have [a] strong desire to communicate with others or fear of being isolated or disconnected.

A mobile phone was a communication device but also a device for entertainment and to "kill time" with. It was a pocket-sized machine that contained media convergence and had immense entertainment value. Moreover, the aspect of fashion came up in every report. For example, Student G had observed how young Koreans are very sensitive to trends. […] People seem to think that mobile phone is worth the high price because it plays a significant part of their daily life or it represents their identity. Young people's sensitivity to fashion works as a fundamental driving force for Korean mobile phone industry to prosper. There was also a lot of gaming going on in the subway. However, one student found it interesting that hardly anyone took any mobile pictures in the subway – it would have been "too shameful" – not to mention taking video calls. (Student H.) According to the students' reflections, there seemed to be strict etiquette limiting mobile photography in a closed public space. For example, one student noticed how a few girls started to take pictures of each other in the subway and attracted disapproving glances from other passengers (Student C).

The "vibration syndrome" was observed in many reports. It means that people in a (often noisy) public place check their phones constantly, even if they do not ring or vibrate. As for the widely observed use of mobile phone decorations, Student D noticed how some boys have more decoration on their phones than others. She explained that although it was the girls who usually decorated their phones, boys who have girlfriends often had to wear the decoration given them by the significant other. Couples tended to decorate their phones uniformly, and the function of the decoration was similar to that of engagement rings. The perhaps feminine decoration hanging from a boy's phone was a message from the girl to others meaning "Lay off, he's taken." She also wondered why people did not decorate their MP3-players or mobile televisions and suggested that it was because the cell phone was a more public device and people were more attached to their phones. She thought the strong decoration culture in Korea was a sign of restricted self-expression in other areas of life. In Europe people hardly ever decorated their phones, perhaps because they were more open in general and allowed to express themselves in various ways, including speech and dressing. In Korea young people were more conformist and uniform (e.g. school uniforms), obeyed rules and feared being isolated. In this climate the cell phone was one of the few tools available to young people as a means of self-expression. Moreover, one could not have much time with friends because school and studying took up most of the time, so the cell phone was the main tool for networking. (Student C.)

The fetish under the thumb

In the light of the students' observations one could say the mobile phone has become a culturally *essential* device for young Koreans, who seem to be in constant physical touch with the phone. It is in reach, in sight and in touch and it enables (or requires) being in reach and sometimes even in sight of one's peers. According to the observations, young Koreans greatly value their personal multimedia, a hub of essential elements that together build up a sociocultural configuration producing entertainment and sociability as well as security, comfort and esthetic (and haptic) pleasure. The mobile phone was observed to be on display while the phone itself displayed and transmitted information from and for the shared web of meaning of Korean youth culture. The fear of being isolated was apparent in the students' reflections and in a way the phone had become an extension or *intension* of the person. One student even thought that "a person who does not have a mobile phone can be considered as not civilized (Student I)." To be a part of the greater whole required constant connection and not missing any text messages or calls. Moreover, expressing one's fashion through the phone was appreciated and shared by the community.

Extending Hye Ryoung Ok's (2011) description of the text-messaging generation, the Thumb Tribe, I would suggest that not only have the Thumb Tribe in Korea (and perhaps globally) taken up a new communication culture but they have adopted a significantly new way of life in which culture is inextricably intertwined with technology. The fusion of the digital and the physical manifests itself in the cell phone, the nerve center of Korean youth culture. The thumb is not only for messaging but also for caressing the fetishized object and for commanding it to communicate one's position in the new system of meaning. The thumb, one might say, is an agent of collective identity as well as of communication. Although Korean parents fear otherwise (see e.g. Shim et al 2008), the technology does not rule the young but remains firmly under their thumb.

Timo Airaksinen's techno-philosophical idea that new technologies and especially their marketing convey a simple image of "The Machine" as a pure, innocent and attractive companion seems to be easily applied to Korean mobile culture. Airaksinen suggests that the user gets to share the machine's properties, not unlike the way rockstars share their charisma with their fans. According to Airaksinen, humans are happy prisoners of the technological system. (Airaksinen 2006, 311-316; Jouhki 2008b, 179-180.) If this seems too deterministic, from another angle the Korean enthusiasm for technology can be seen as a sort of positive anarchy which increases the individual's liberty to define the Self and its existence (see e.g. Hall 1980, 134). Obviously, the phone also confers prestige. The mobile behavior Sadie Plant observed in the West indicates a high show-off value for the mobile phone (Plant 2000, 33-44). Technologically savvy men in public places such as a bar liked exhibiting their phones and engaging in psychosexual competition. Setting one's phone on the table seems to be a universal habit but in Plant's studies it was more a male than a female one, perhaps a gesture comparable to claiming territory. Also, western women were more discreet in their phone use than western men, who more often liked to flash their phones around and make their phone conversations public. (Plant 2000, 33-44.)

'The young Koreans seemed to regard "mobile flashing" a little differently. They shied away from the loud phone calls and ring tones of the older Koreans, and were careful not to draw attention to their phones in public places. If anyone, it was girls rather than boys who, at least in the reports produced by the students, were more eager to show off their phones. In a way, flashing one's phone around seemed similar to wearing a particularly fashionable piece of clothing; it

was not the bragging about equipment associated with western men by Plant. In Asia, the cell phone fits the communication culture like a glove. In contrast to Americans who, for example, are reluctant to consider the phone an essential part of their lives, Asians feel comfortable with the apparatus. (Plant 2000, 78-79.)

Another element that comes out of the literature as well as the observations and reflections of the students is the haptic dimension. Fiddling with objects, like beads, cigarettes, keys, and so forth seems to be a fundamental part of human nature, and a means of obtaining pleasure. The fiddling with the phone might even be a part of a messaging ritual. (Brown & Williamson 2007, 4-5.) And it simply feels good to touch a prestige object like the phone. Heidi Rae Colley reflects on the "special fit" she describes as being "the particular relationship" between the hand and the mobile device which "occurs at the instant of contour when the hand forms to the [device] and the [device] gives to the hand."

There is a becoming-one, an experience of bonding that "produces a 'mystical feel' rising from 'a combination of a good mechanical marriage and something in the nervous system'." (Wilson 1999, 63 & 94.) The fact that people frequently hold their phones even when they are not using them has something to do with design but it also indicates a special bonding between the human hand and the device. No wonder the surfaces of mobile phones are also called "skins". (Cooley 2004, 141.) If we go deeper into an analysis of the haptic quality of the bond, we might come to agree with Jim McGuigan, who claims that the cell phone's value is more than is usually believed, and the device could indeed be viewed as a modern day fetish, "which is certainly the message of much advertising. The mobile is a symbol in itself, an obscure object of desire and a sign of the times." (McGuigan 2005, 46.) To young Koreans the device seemed more like a way of being than a tool for communication. Koreans could even be considered to be living in a communication environment that is a hybrid of the physical and the virtual worlds, enabled by the ubiquitous digital networks accessed through mobile phones. It is difficult to imagine a device that would be more popular or more frequently used and could have as intimate a bond with its carrier. Perhaps this kind of new technological ontology deserves further examination.

Raul Pertierra said that some time ago the hottest thing in culturally oriented information society research was the virtual world, where people are disconnected from the physical world and live in a state of simulation. Recently the virtual world has acquired a challenger, namely the mobile devices whose users have formed something like diasporic communities, their members inhabiting embodied but trans-human mobile space. Bodies themselves become tools of writing when "phoneurs" negotiate new urban spaces. Urbanity itself becomes a new quality of mobility. This new urbanity is augmented by other communication technologies like video, DVD and other multimedia interfaces. In a way we can say that with the help of nomadic technologies like the mobile phone, the present-day virtual communities that exist in an everyday diaspora materialize in physical space. (Pertierra 2005, 25.)

For the "neo-Confucian cyberkids" (Yoon 2006) the phone is a carry-on nebula of information, a micro entertainment center, a portable media hub, or a pocket-size convergence of a plethora of social, cultural, political and economic elements signifying the modern or postmodern human being. Whichever concept one chooses - "mobile individual," "the neo-nomad," "the neo-tribal," "the virtual human" and "networked presence" - one is bound to acknowledge that the modern human is essentially tied to his or her mobile communication technology.

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(VIRTUAL) FRIENDS WILL BE (VIRTUAL) FRIENDS?

Pauliina Tuomi

In the 21st century the Internet has increasingly become a social medium - a way of meeting people and making new friends. Social networks, utilities and virtual friend books allow people to share their daily lives not only with those they already are familiar with but also with people they do not know or might never have seen before.

We have witnessed people finding partners and old friends re-uniting. Unfortunately, at the same time we have started to learn about the negative aspects of the social side of the Internet. It has become obvious that the Internet, being such an anonymous place to act, is lacking in security, laws and even in some kind of universal rules. In the Internet one can be whatever one wishes. First it was a blessing, afterwards it became a threat? Has the new means of meeting people turned into a scary place where no one can be trusted? Like many times before, the main concern are children and young people, due to their lack of experience and their naive way of thinking.

Still, at this very moment, millions of people are chatting, e-mailing, using messenger, IRC, social utilities and other ways of communication. Virtual friends are here to stay. In my article I am going to discuss virtual friendship and people's opinions on meeting such friends made on the Internet in real life. The article will be divided in following sections: 1. The use of the Internet and its social side 2. How does the Internet affect relationships 3. Meeting new people - the trust in the Internet.

Is a virtual friend as good as a 'real' friend? How do the respondents feel about the trust-issues on the Internet - is age related to maybe naivety or cynicism? How big a role do virtual friends play in the respondents' lives? Do the respondents consider the Internet a place to make new friends, even to meet a partner? After all, virtual friendship is based on trust and the virtual friends' trustworthiness - just like in IRL (=in real life) friendships.

In the beginning

"I have good friends now all over the world who I never would have met without the mediation of the Net." (Rheingold, 1993, 10)

Table 1 Clarification of different social utilities

Type of service	Common	Special	Level of interaction	Example
Large social utilities	Enable communication/ contacts between hundreds of users	Play/game features available	Both; synchronous and asynchronous	Facebook, Twitter, Myspace
Business networks	Enable to share one's business profile and contact with colleagues	Profiles can act as CV's and can lead to employment opportunity	Usually asynchronous	LinkedIn
Online Dating services	Enable one to create a profile and seek for a partner that meets one's eye	Possibility to let the utility decide who's the fittest partner	Both; synchronous and asynchronous	Date.com, match.com
Photo galleries	Enable one to share his/her life through photos.	Communication is mostly carried out in photo comments	Usually asynchronous	Flicker, IRC-gallery
Collaborative writing/blogs, discussion forums	Enable the freedom of speech to take place on the net	Hundreds of different forums, under hundreds of different topics	Usually asynchronous	Wikipedia, Blogger,

This is a quotation from Howard Rheingold from the year 1993. This statement could be from today as well. At Rheingold's time the net was seen mostly from the utopistic point of view. It is important to keep this in mind when reading text from that era. All kind of euphoria is typical for that age when the net was seen as sparkling light in interaction between people. (Wellman 2004, 124, Heinonen 2008, 55) The utopian views (e.g. Rheingold, 1993; Turkle, 1995) celebrated the dream-like possibilities of the virtual world for connecting the whole globe into a community where everyone can be whatever they want and communicate with whoever they like. (Lehtinen 2007, 16) Anyway, still in the 21st century the world of communications is changing with the introduction of the social media phenomenon. (Postman 2009)

Nowadays we are constantly hearing lots of different kinds of opinions and comments concerning Internets social side, so called Web 2.0[35] version. We are talking about various ver-

sions of social services and technologies. Products change rapidly and there is always one more popular than the others at the time. At the moment the hottest social utility is probably Facebook or Twitter[36]. In fact, there is a wide range of different social utilities on the net at the moment. See Table 1.

Already before Facebook we have had lots of different social utilities but during the couple of last years there clearly has been a buzz of social networks. Social media are the latest graze on the Internet and have become increasingly popular in recent years. (Konijn et al. 2008, 5) The umbrella concept describes applications that enable people to interact with each other and build social networks that increase their social capital. Social media include photosharing sites such as Flickr, social network sites such as meetup.com, collaborative writing as in Wikipedia, or weblogs. (Konijn et al. 2008, 5) We have utilities that enable social messaging for staying connected in real-time like Twitter and MySpace. We also have different photo galleries that advertised their selves as social meeting places. On the whole, these virtual friend books let us show our life to millions of people, they enable possibility to share our lives with people we already are familiar with but at the same time with people we don't know and ever had seen before. Internet makes all that possible. There are, however, different viewpoints' regarding what is social utility, what the level of communication is and furthermore, where today's friendship may be located on this dimension. A great deal of interpersonal communication[37] is now mediated by technology, for example computer-mediated technologies such as SMS, chat rooms, msn, email, virtual group work, weblogs and mobile social software. (Konijn et al. 2008, 3) The term-mediated communication refers to any situation where a technological medium is introduced into face-to-face interaction. In the beginning of the personal computer era, we were concerned about the fact that computer isolates us from other people. First we were afraid that one could get lost inside of the computer game and lose the normal way of life. Computer was seen as an anti-social medium. This new medium aroused worries about the deteriorating effect of mediated interaction on close relationships and psychological well-being (Lehtinen 2007, 15) People were worried about the fact that social relationships would diminish and get poorer. (Heinonen 2008, 57)

Then, in the mid-nineties we started to worry about the new kind of challenge – Internet-addiction. Was technology set to break us humans apart? We strongly suspected that until the 21st century when Internet started to carry a label as a social medium – a new way of meeting people and getting new friends. We could read happy stories including people coupling and old friends re-uniting. Unfortunately, at the same time we started to learn negative aspects of the social side of the Internet. It soon became obvious that Internet being such an anonymous place to act was lacking in security, laws and even some kind of universal rules. In the net you can be what ever you want – first it was a blessing. Afterwards it became a threat. How could you be sure whom you were talking with? Was this person exactly what he/she was saying? It did not take long before the first news spread through the world. Internet enabled a playground for sexual abusers, pedophiles and cons in many ways. The negative aspects of the net were seen from the media: it seemed that the net's dating services and the chat rooms were full of rapists and pedophiles. (Wahlström 64, 2004) One factor that commonly adds parents' anxiety concerns the Internet as potentially dangerous, threatening intrusion of pornography or even – through chat rooms – pedophiles, into children's lives. (Lister 2003, 239) The danger posed by strangers who use social networking sites to prey on children became real; there have been several such cases. This danger was highlighted for example in July 2007 when MySpace booted from its system 29,000 sex offenders who had signed up for memberships using their

real names. (Rosen 2007) Once again tables had turned. The new way of meeting people turned into a scary place where no one could be trusted. Like so many times before, the main target of concern was children and adolescents, due to their lack of life-experiment and a naive way of thinking. Social networkers, particularly younger users, are often naïve or ill-informed about the amount of information they are making publicly available. (Rosen 2007) Still, at this very moment millions of people are chatting, mailing, using messenger, IRC, social utilities and other ways of communicating with each other. Virtual friends are here to stay – whether we are afraid of them or not.

Background of the study

Communicating with friends and family members via the (cell) phone or email, working in a virtual team, seeking a partner on an online dating site, looking for support in an online social support groups, interacting with an avatar while visiting an online store, watching "Sex and the City," and perceiving the girls as friends, or spending some time in Second life – activities like these have become part of everyday life for many people. (Konijn et al. 2008, 3) A study of the Finnish youth was conducted 2005-2007 by carrying out a survey that contained questions concerning their digital lifestyle. The survey included background questions, questions conderning the amount of net usage and how was it used. The survey also included a wide range of different questions concentrating on general attitudes towards 21st century's digital lifestyle. Overall 1089 Finnish teenagers participated in the survey. The overall data on youth and their digital lifestyle in whole also consists of fairly similar data from Japan and Korea, but unfortunately these datas could not be weighted since they are not equal and there are certain questions that have not been asked in all of the countries. This is a pity, since comparison would have brought much needed information concerning the differences and similarities between youth in Europe and Asia. However, the Finnish data itself gives valid information as well, since this data has not been used in any publications before and it still offers detailed facts of Finnish youth's use of the Internet.

This article concentrates on youth's virtual friendships and relations that occur online. The different dimensions of friendship and friendly relations were analyzed and discussed to answer these questions: what is a virtual friendship? What kind of bonds of friendship net offer? How virtual and online-friendships differ from IRL-friendships? What are the different functions that youth use the net for from the social point of view? The article concentrates mainly on the new form of friendship – virtual friend or should it be called Friend 2.0. The Article also pinpoints some facts how people feel toward virtual friends and also meeting unfamiliar people they have met online face to face. Is a virtual friend as good as 'real' friend and can you really trust someone you meet in the net as much that you could really call him/her a friend? How big of a role do virtual friends have in participants' life? How many of the participants have really met their net-friend face to face? Will (Virtual) Friends will be (virtual) friends or something else instead?

Defining a virtual friend

At first we have to define what a friendship is and what it means. It is sometimes difficult to separate for example friends and mates, but in this survey and article friendship could be defined as

something important and social activity that measures up with few particular points. Friendship can be defined as a voluntary, mutual relationship that usually carries a positive emotional band. (Bukowski, Newcombi & Hartup, 1996) The researchers of friendships usually agree that friendships of children and adolescenThe researchers of friendships usually agree that friendships of children and adolescents are based on reciprocity, affection, fondness, having fun and liking of the friend. (Bukowski, Newcombi & Hartup, 1996) In reciprocity, one has to take care of a friend and vice versa, friends do things together and both sides benefit from the social utilities that friendship offers. Of course, friendship is a culture relativistic term; these previous definitions are mostly western. There are also differences between different age groups – friendship carries different meanings and aspects in different ages. Pals and mates differ from friends. In real life friendship differs from being "just friends" in the level of closeness and intimacy that is reached. (Mesch & Talmud 2006, 38) In virtual worlds things might often be different. In this article term *virtual friend* means mainly a person that one has met online for the first time. Friendship created purely online can hereby be stated as virtual. There is however variations on a term virtual friend, just like in the real world where the term friend is quite polysemous as well. See Table 2.

Table 2 Defining different forms of friendship

Type of friendship	Relation	Bond of friendship	Common	Level of trust
A virtual friend	Person one has never seen or known before. The first Meeting takes place online	Considered as a true friend. Someone one can communicate freely	Sharing the deepest feelings, usually seen F2F at some point.	High
Net-acquaintance	Person one has met online, maybe often but briefly	Someone one can say hi to. Considered as a IRL's half-acquainted	A shallow friendship, e.g. a friends' friend	Medium
Online-friend	Person one knows before, sees in a regular bases in IRL as well	Considered as a true friend or a mate. cf. Virtual friend.	The net is used to maintaining the relationship	Very high
Net-contact	Person one has met e.g. in online games	Shared interests on the net	Often one knows contact only by a nickname	Very low
False friendship	Person that has a false profile or who lies everything about his/ herself online	The bond can be very true, it is just based on a lie or the false persona is online just for fun	Usually no F2F-meetings, friendships end quietly. At latest when the truth is bound to come out	High in some sense, on the other hand, low

We all rank our friends, albeit in unspoken and intuitive ways. One friend might be a good companion for outings to movies or concerts; another might be someone with whom you socialize in professional settings; another might be the kind of person for whom you would drop everything if he needed help. But social networking sites allow us to rank our friends publicly. And not only can we publicize our own preferences in people, but we can also peruse the favorites among our other acquaintances. We can learn all about the friends of our friends—often without having ever met them in person (Rosen 2007). With mates one does not necessarily share his/her intimate thoughts so easily and a mate is more of an acquaintance. In the net relationships it is probably more common to get mates than friends easier, but of course these "mate ships" can also evolve to genuine friendships over time. In the virtual world, however, the setting for a relationship can be as complex as the relationship itself. Researchers have found that many teens and tweens actually favour online relationships over face-to-face contact. Online, these kids feel they can be themselves, unencumbered by peer-enforced dress codes, attitudes and styles. Online, they don't need to worry about their appearance and they can freely express thoughts and feelings without worrying about the pitfalls of being judged in person. On the other hand, online kids can just as easily falsify their beliefs, personalities and other aspects of their lives to deliberately mislead others - even if just for the fun of it (Belden 2008).

Ulla Heinonen, who has studied electronic communities and sense of community and wrote her doctoral thesis, which is broadly used as a background for this article, on experiences of social, professional, and educational communities on the Internet, suggests that young people seem to consider online socializing as a sort of game, but to them socializing is a bit more regular. Their activities include a lot more lying. For young people the most common motives for spending time in a virtual space are having a good time and sense of adventure. For them virtual relationships is not that serious? (Heinonen 2008, 236) This is still probably matter of youth, their culture and uncompleted process of maturation rather than matter of technology. (Heinonen, 2008, 156) Lynn Clark (1998) has done her own research of teen's net behaviour and found out similar results. The youths virtual relationships were often shallow and superficial matters were lied because no one could really see. (Heinonen, 2008, 155) Actually, it could be questioned if these are real relationships at all? These could represent the false type of friendship mentioned in the figure 1.

Most people who use social networking web sites do so as a way of keeping up with friends and family in a forum which is entertaining, informative and easy to use. But for others they are treated as some sort of online popularity contest with people striving to attain as many "friends" as possible - some users appear to have hundreds, sometimes thousands of friends. Maybe it all starts with an intention of getting many good friends but often it changes at some point to hoarding of friends and acquaintances. Most people have about five close friends and know about 150 people in total, most of them acquaintances with whom they are on nodding terms. Internet-users have the same number of close friends but many more casual acquaintances. (Smith 2007) Similarly, there is competition to be able to boast the highest number and the most impressive "trophy friends" — celebrities such as Lily Allen who use MySpace and other sites. The practice of collecting friends, dubbed "MySpace whoring", is part of a social revolution that might "change the nature of human relationships". Whereas relationships traditionally started with a face-to-face meeting, fans of social networking sites can make new contacts at the click of a mouse (Smith 2007).

Dr. Will Reader, of Sheffield Hallam University, has stated that the virtual world had enabled people to make many more friends than they would in the real-world. Users of the social net-

working sites say that one in ten of their close friends have been made in the virtual domain. But new research suggests that anyone looking to form new and genuinely close friendships via online social networks is possible going to be disappointed. Naturally, we have take into account the fact not every one is searching for true friends on the net. On the contrary, the net can be a playground, a place where one does not have to take things so seriously at all. Reader suggests that real life meetings are still needed to foster genuine ”real” relationships which are based on trust. Research by Dr. Reader, who has been studying over 200 networking site users, shows that they still have only around five close friends, and that these are almost always forged through face-to-face meetings. Social networking sites allow people to broaden their list of nodding acquaintances simply because keeping in touch with people online is easy. They decrease the cost of maintaining and forming these social networks because we can post information to multiple people. But to develop a real friendship, we need to see that the other person is trustworthy. We need to be absolutely sure that a person is really going to invest in us and is really going to be there for us when we need them. This is an important factor when we are discussing of true friendships but is not necessarily the case in virtual circumstances. Youngsters use online utilities and social meeting places also to get some kind of approval from others, to get some appreciation and admiration and also to gain self-respect. These purposes do not have that much to do with trust but they are as important to all concerned as creating a true friendship is to someone.

Use of the Internet and its social side

Virtual communities are social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace. (Rheingold, 1993, 6) Virtual communities are often considered communities with weak ties especially because of their virtual nature. It is easy to join virtual communities but easy to leave as well. (Nikunen 2008, 188) Net communities are seen as entertainment for adults, good company, today’s bar desks and spark for life. It is also serious relationships and true friendships. (Heinonen 2008, 67) In virtual communities there is also strong feeling of trust and community, which have been proven in many recent studies concerning virtual communities. (Nikunen 2008, 188; Ley, Cooks et al., 2001; O’Connor & Madge, 2004). Friendships start easily and carries often on through e-mail, sometimes even on situations when net acquaintances are seen in real life, face to face. (Heinonen 2008, 72) Like adults, younger people also use the different net services for forming and maintaining social networks, through which they may gain cultural capital. For example Irc-gallery[38], which is a popular Finnish photo gallery, mainly targeted to teen agers but Irc-gallery has a wide range of users of different age as well, offers a way to both maintain existing ties and to initiate new ones. At the moment, in April 2009, there are 507 102 users on Irc-gallery and their average age is 20, 52 yeas. According to Vilma Lehtinen, who has studied developing and maintaining of relationships between the Irc-gallery users, most peculiarly, Irc-gallery is utilized for achieving resources through weak ties: half-acquaintances and friends of friends. (Lehtinen 2007, 90-91)

There are multiple ways to use net socially. It is a place to keep up with old, already known friends but at the same time it is a place where new friendships develop easily. Some of the participants use the Internet because they want to be a part of the Internet communities. They also enjoy meeting new people, people of opposite/different sex as well. At the same time it is

a place to keep in touch with other friends and to get to know what is going on in their lives and a chance to tell them how is it going at the moment. The most distinctive feature for example in photo galleries is the opportunity to "stalk" others and get information about their lives without having to disturb them. This can be interpreted as a way to satisfy one's curiosity, but they are also important ways to keep track how friends and acquaintances are doing. (Lehtinen 2007, 66)

After all, this all suggest that a social use of the Internet is popular and one of the reasons why it is used daily. On the other hand, only small part of the respondents still considers they use of Internet as a way to forget their loneliness. This could emphasise the fact that Internet is, presumable, still mostly a place to communicate with people they are already familiar with. Of course, this does not exclude the fact the youth can still deal with their loneliness with virtual and IRL/virtual friends. Participants just do not feel that the net is primarily used for this purpose. The participants use a wide range of different social utilities and forums in a daily bases.

Table 3 Participants use of network communities

	2-3 times/ per day	Once a day	2-3 times/ per week	2-3 times/ per month	Once a month or less	Not at all
All the participants	14%	19%	21%	15%	15%	17%
Women	11%	16%	20%	15%	19%	20%
Men	17%	22%	21%	15%	10%	15%
15-19 years	11%	23%	24%	14%	15%	12%
20-24 years	17%	18%	20%	16%	12%	17%
25-29 years	23%	15%	18%	14%	17%	23%

There are not really any big differences in the results between participants' sex or age. The most active group seems to be participants that are 25 to 29 years old. Percentages in the category "do not visit virtual communities at all" are surprisingly high. They are clearly under 50 % but still, it is interesting that there are still young net-users that have not ever visited online communities. Of course, there is always a possibility that part of the participants could have misunderstood the whole idea of online community or they have never realised that are actually using a service or utility that could be mentioned virtual or online community. However, this data clearly shows that the most of the Finnish youth does use the net for visiting virtual and online communities in regular bases. It can be said that most of the participants seem to visit sites mentioned before mainly 2-3 times per week. Still a lot of the respondents visit discussion forums, blogs and social communities also several times a day.

The most of the participants (81%) use Internet as an easy and fast channel to get information. Nearly half of them (48%) uses Internet as a way of just spend time. The interaction with friends seems to be important. 76% use the Internet to get to know how the friends are doing at the moment. 75% also wants to let these friends know how they are doing and what is going on in their lives. Although, only 13 % use Internet to deepen the relationships with existing friends. Only 7% of the participants use Internet particularly to connect with net societies and 46% denies this kind of a use totally.
According to results, 23% of participants use Internet to get new friends and pals when at the same time 77% indicate that Internet is not used for this social purpose at all. The social pur-

pose mentioned here particularly means getting new friends online. However, one can always socialize on the net easily without planning on it. In addition to other discussions, also playful relationships,"crushes", appear on the net. They are intriguing and favored by youth. It is safe to fall in love virtually, not for real. Relationships from the real life probably feel a bit scary for youngster who is just searching his/her own sexuality. Having a girlfriend/boyfriend is easier in virtual terms because you do not have to take so much responsibility than in real life. You can try and explore 'real life' and real life experiences without the fear of revealing and loosing your face. Virtual world can affect offline world and vice versa and that is why it is online relationships can turn into real offline relationships (Heinonen 2008, 71).

Lynn Clark (1998) has studied youngster's online dating and stated that especially girls are fond of virtual relationships. Mostly because of the possibility to limit heart aches to the minimum and online there are not so many social and sexual pressures. (Clark 1998, 165-168.) But in this survey percent of searching boy or girlfriends is low; 2% use Internet for this purpose when 62% denies this type of use. Again, accidental crushes can also occur whether planned or not.

According to Heinonen (2008) online activities have become more and more popular; it is perfectly natural to handle relationships in the virtual space. Couples that have met on the Internet are usually honest about the way their relationship started. (Heinonen 2008, 178) But according to this survey, the net is seen as a social medium but when it comes to the point when one should acknowledge and admit the fact that net is used because of these social purposes; it does not come out that way. Young people meet lots of new people in the net but only few of the participants admit they use the Internet particularly for this purpose. Could there still be negative associations concerning Internet's social use? In a way, that searching a friend or opposite sex from the net is somehow pathetic and therefore embarrassing to admit? Usually in negative scenarios net date users are seen as lonely, shy and unsocial computer nerds. (Wahlström 2004, 64) Only 14% in this survey use the net to prevent their loneliness and 65 % do not need the net for this function. Naturally, we still have to bear in mind that the material is gathered before the biggest user rates around for example Facebook[39], where communication can endure 24/7 if wanted. In other words, Facebook could prevent loneliness maybe more comprehensively than services that are more indented. Survey made today would probably give us whole different answers.

How does Internet affect relationships?

Most of the respondents seem to feel that a 'real', interpersonal, communication between friends is more valuable than an interaction with friends via Internet. At the same time they really feel Internet as a fine place to expand the circle of friends. One of the reasons for this is the possibility to meet people with same interests and opinions easily. It is quick and efficient to find 'soul mates' under certain topics and situations in life that are similar to respondent's own life. When people are searching for other people with similar values and experiences, and are then getting acquainted with someone they see as new and interesting, they want that special feeling they feel at the time to last for a long time. (Heinonen 2008, 230) The Internet and its use seem to affect relationships between friends and mates. 62% feel that Internet has increased the amount of contacts. There are not big differences between male and female participants. 56% of male participants and 69% of female participants feel that Internet has increased their activity to communicate with their friends. People who did not have the possibility to meet

others physically felt that the connection of net and monitor was really close and intimate. The equipment has overcome the distance. Often people meet people from real life they could not meet because of the geographical distances. (Heinonen 2008, 103)

Only 2% disagrees and feels that the Internet has decreased their activity between friends. There has also been a slight increase in the amount of contacts between people with same hobbies. 36% thinks that the net has increased the amount of contacts with people with same hobbies. This strongly suggests and supports the fact that Internet really eases people to find similar people they are themselves. Patricia Wallace says that people with same kind of attitudes and ideas are usually fond of each other. According to Heinonen, likeness creates feeling of togetherness and lowers the step to form relationships. (Wallace 1999, 141) Anyway, there really are not great changes in decreasing or increasing of contacts between fellow workers, family and relatives or in relationship partners. 62-69% of participants feel that there has not been any change in the amount of contacts at all.

The use of the Internet has clearly expanded the amount of contacts between respondents and their social circle of people. But the amount of contacts between respondents and family and relatives have not really changed that much. The biggest change can be seen in a contact between respondents and their friends. Also contacts with people with same hobbies and societal interests have increased. In age up to twenty years also contacts with colleagues and job environments has grown. There are many powerful tools on the Internet that enable groups to organize and collaborate and to efficiently work together to achieve a means. Scattered work, distant work or distant studying are not phenomena born because of increasing number of computers, they have been here earlier. Once the necessary technology became widely available, forms of work related to the concepts of telework and e-work diffused into everyday practice across the world (Gareis, Lilischkis & Mentrup 2006, 1). A basic understanding of social media, and the ability to use social networks and other tools correctly, is now the new basic business skills. (Postman 2009) Development of computers and networks has also developed forms of working and studying. After organizations have gone international, also working on the net has become more common. A common interest and goal and needed interaction and communication make working organization from people scattered around the world. This all becomes virtual when communication and co-operation happens mainly through information- and communication technology. (Heinonen 2008, 77) This is probably something you cannot avoid in 21st century because a lot of information and important issues concerning work are nowadays transferred through Internet and other online services, which is why the number of work-related contacts have risen.

The least influenced the net has been in contacts between respondents and their local circle of people. This is probably because of the fact that you do not have to contact your local friends particularly through the net. Locality is just something that one is attached to, it is part of ones identity and this can be shown on the net, for example in photo gallery communities. Lehtinen agrees and says that communities based on locality can be interpreted to perform identification with a community which exists in the physical world and constructing togetherness with the others belonging to the same community. (Lehtinen 2007, 72) Of course, we still have to bear in mind that we really can not be sure how many of respondents' friends are indeed local but in this survey it is clear that respondents do not communicate with the local people through Internet that much. On the other hand, the net and mediated communication is not bounded by national boarders, which might emphasise the net-usage to be preferable non-local. (Konijn et al. 2008, 5)

Meeting new people –trust issues online

Mediated interpersonal communication introduces new conditions of attendance. People no longer have to be in the same room to communicate. This characteristic of mediated communication influences issues such as presence or the development of trust (Konijn et al. 2008, 5). Information from the anonymous net communities is usually based on other people's story. There is usually no evidence what so ever of information's trueness. Because of this, trust and honest issues are high. (Heinonen 2008, 106) In terms of the activities of communities, trust, honesty, openness, equality, helping others, supporting others and, a sense of solidarity are essential. Trust develops in various ways in the virtual environment. Sometimes the nature, objectives, and the purpose of a certain activity dictate how trust develops. (Heinonen 2008, 238) Usually in free time communities, and in long-term professional relationships, it is possible to develop trust slowly, over time, and by meeting face to face. Years of working together or spending time together otherwise, may develop into a friendship, which gives trust a solid foundation. (Heinonen 2008, 239) Honesty goes hand in hand with trust. These two are emphasized in the virtual space. In free time communities, lying is often seen just as the liar's problem. This is especially true with temporary acquaintances, which are not yet considered friends. However, in mutual relationships lying is seen as a violation of solidarity. (Heinonen 2008, 239-240)

Trust issues are strongly linked to creating friendships. This is something that belongs to the process when you are getting involved with another person. It does not matter if this person is confronted on the net or in the real life. Trust is one of the key points when you define if some one is actually your friend or not. If you cannot trust your friend it is probably a buddy or a mate rather than friend. This is also something we cannot be certain with; we should know how respondents define a friend in the first place. Kolko and Reid say that white lies, abusive words, straight decoys concerning age, race, gender and 'word masquerades' that hide real identity cause problems. This leads to the point where no body trusts anyone. Everything can be lie and nobody tells who they really are. (Kolko & Reid 1998, 213–218.) According to Heinonen, Finnish people are not this sceptic on the net. (Heinonen 2008, 106) Little lies can be forgiven in relationships started on the net if relationship turns into a 'real world' relationship. When meeting someone, relationship is usually already based on stronger values. Trust is still there in virtual communities. (Heinonen 2008, 107) Anyway, the respondents were asked in which these following groups they trust when it comes to passing along information; friends and mates, virtual friends or virtual friends they have seen in a real life. The results are interesting because there really does not seem to be any significant difference between virtual friends and virtual friends they have met already. Still the most liable group is "normal" friends. So in this case this seems to suggest that how ever respondents feel virtual friends as equal as normal friends, there are still differences between normal and virtual friends for example in trust issues.

Respondents seem to have more over positive feelings towards Internet and different social aspects around it. They feel that Internet enhances relationships and contacts between close friends. The Internet is seen as a place where meeting new people is easy and that is why most of the respondents feel that communication between different people is increasing a lot. Nearly half of the respondents seem to feel that the looks, appearance still plays a quite a big role when establishing new friendships. Still, it is probably true that when discussing with each other it does not matter how the person looks at the moment. In the beginning Internet was seen as a democratic place where every one of us could be what ever we wanted. It was said that the Internet gave a chance to shy and socially challenged people to create relationships. Still, only

8% of the participants categorise themselves shy. It was also stated that unattractive people were able to meet opposite sex and by doing that gain relationships that were not based on ones looks. This could be argued with the fact that if you are, at first, pretending to be something else that you are is it not the relationship based on lie then? According to Heinonen, people are drawn to each other's thoughts and opinions at first, not in superficial matters, because sense observations are very limited in the beginning of the virtual relationship. (Heinonen 2008, 58) Virtual communities, also others than peer support groups, offer a forum for people to present themselves as equal, on the body less network. (Heinonen 2008, 76) In net dating outer looks of course matter, but valuation of people usually happens on some other matter. Especially, in net dating most valuated are usually literally or verbally gifted people. (Wahlström 2004, 66)

Participants' opinions on trust

32% of the participants feel that one should not share his/her private and important information on the net. Only 3% disagree. In the other words, the net (and particular people in it) cannot be trusted from this point of view. Identity thefts and growing concern over privacy are today's problem. The information that we post about ourselves on the Web, called "digital litter" by technology experts, is a bonanza for fraudsters and marketing companies. Details such as date of birth and where you work provide valuable clues for identity thieves, while status updates saying you are going on vacation could be tantamount to giving burglars the key to your house. More information on your sexuality, religion, political leanings and favorite movies can provide a depth of detail to marketers that they previously could only dream of. Issues of privacy and social networking sites are being addressed with some urgency by advocacy groups (Delaney 2007). When sharing information on the public net, one should be extremely careful what he/she wishes to share. What kind of image and reputation one would like to represent?

This is a matter of self-expression, which seems to be problematic because of Internets publicity. Often the publicity is totally forgotten as well as the fact that someone can upload an unwise photo and share it forward over and over again. It should be well considered, which material one wish to publish and to whom. Of course, we have to bear in mind that it is extremely easy for example in Facebook to confuse the relations of people listed as friends. Due to the fact that very often people accept half-strangers or unfamiliar people as friends on FB. This same phenomenon was seen in the early days of the Messenger[40] when especially young users accepted basically everyone who suggested it to be on their friend list. The Messenger is seen, partly because of this, often as a place for pedophiles to attack freely, but it is often forgotten that a person first needs to approve a person that is requesting to become added to the list. On the other hand, there also might be some resistance towards this 21st century's friend-collecting frenzy and most of the users probably have some principles concerning the acceptance or request of friends. Such as "would I say hello to him/her if we should meet on a street?" If the answer is no, that person will not qualify as a FB-friend either.

54% of the participants feel that one can rather trust people one already know than people one has just met. 40 % feels quite the same way. Only 6% of participants think that one can trust nearly every one and 1 % feels totally opposite. 12 % of the participants feel that one really cannot trust strangers. 2% feels the opposite. It is seen from the answers that participants seem to trust their 'old' friends and known acquaintances more than completely strangers on the net, but outside of the net as well. In longer relationships trust is developed between us-

ers. Usually in long-term relationships information from the net acquaintances is considered trustworthy. (Heinonen 2008, 107) Trust issues seem to divide respondents' opinions. Half of them trust the people they met online. There are no suspicions concerning for example the real identity of the person and so on. This, naturally, is problematic because blind faith causes occasionally problems especially when meeting new people from the net for the first time. This is an area with lots of problems because now and then we can, unfortunately, read news that handle phedophilia or rapes that has occurred while dating some stranger from the net.

Most of the respondents feel that you have to be more cautious when spreading personal information online. On the other hand, it is easier to talk about difficult matters on the net, totally anonymous. Discussion forums can function as places for peer support – you can read other people's thoughts and from situations in life. You can learn and get a tip of what you should do in the same kind of a situation. Getting to know people in support/peer support –groups is not based on coincident but rather on feeling of 'soul mates', similar life situation or experience (Heinonen 2008, 112). The net offers empathy, support and same kind of company in different crises-, hobby-, fan- or peer support communities (Heinonen 2008, 65). It is likely that adolescents bypass their face-to-face friends in the search for social support, to avoid the embarrassment of disclosing their personal problems to close friends, and they take advantage of a number of major features of Internet communication. Online communication is characterized by anonymity, which apparently allows adolescents to find others who share the same grievances, and to search for social support (Mensch & Talmud 2006, 41). This question seems to have two sides; it is relatively easy to be honest in the net but on the other hand it is dangerous to be too honest with other people online. Majority (52%) shares their lives and important happenings with approximately 3-5 persons they communicate with face to face or by phone. Men do not seem to share their thoughts with unfamiliar people from the net so easily. Only 6 % of men share their lives with people (they have seen before) on the net. Women (29%) seem to trust people met in the net more easily. Still 75% of all the participants do not share their intimate matters with people (they have not seen from face to face) from the net. 74 % of women and men do not share their lives with net friends at all.

Creating a Circle of Friends

It is clear that one meets a lot of new people in the net, daily. One can meet people in discussion forums, social utilities, online games, through chats, messenger etc. The step one has to take to create relationship is very low online. You really do not have to do that much or give any effort to meet new people, that will probably happen wanted or not. It is a fact that nowadays you will have to sign in different forums and services before you are able to join them. Usually, at some point you are going to encounter different people in forums or in services. People become this huge herd of persons that are in some way connected to each other. This can be seen in the six degrees of separation – experiment.[41] 8% feels that the net expands the circle of friends. 25 % feels quite the same way, but also 29% feels the opposite - the net does not enhance or expand the contacts and does not provide more friends. 33% enjoy spending time with other people and 55% enjoys company of friends almost always. 31% can introduce themselves always and 52% almost every time it is needed. 11% of the participants find it easy to start a conversation with a complete stranger as well. 44% thinks it is fairly easy, but 4% feel that it is not pleasant or easy. 26% feel that it is relatively difficult to start a conversation with strangers.

Table 4 The emount of net-acquaintences online

	1-5	6-10	11-50	Over 50	Not at all
All the participants	32%	12%	13%	3%	39%
Women	38%	11%	9%	1%	40%
Men	27%	13%	17%	5%	39%
15-19 years	37%	17%	14%	5%	28%
20-24 years	33%	10%	15%	3%	38%
25-29 years	27%	9%	9%	2%	57%

Table 4. The amount of net-acquaintances online

The percentage of the unfamiliar people participants have met online is naturally huge. 60% of participants have met friends particularly in the net. This means that participants are involved with totally strange people many times during day. 3% have met over 50 people on the net. 5% of male and only 1% of female has met over 50 net-acquaintances online. 5% of 15-19, 3% of 20-24 and 2% of 25-29 years old have over 50 net- acquaintances.

Keeping in touch with net-acquaintances

Respondents keep in touch with virtual friends most likely with the computer and via Internet. It is something that seems to be suitable to respondents' age and with the fact that virtual friends are gathered, in the beginning, indeed from the net. Using telephone/mobile phone is very rare; other ways of communicating are much more popular. We cannot get an answer to question how often text messages are involved when contacting virtual friends. This could be one form of communication that could be used among participants but presumable the use of Internet and its facilities are the most popular ways to proceed when communicating with virtual friends. Net users deepen their friendships in addition to the Internet with other mediums or meeting face to face. (Blanchard & Lynne 2002, 5–6). Friendships develop easily and carry on via e-mail, sometimes even meeting each other. (Heinonen 2008, 72) People participating in discussions often come up with other ways of communicating as well, for example e-mail and phones. (Heinonen 2008, 102) Since the communication technology has developed a lot, facial interaction is nowadays possible via technology. In today's homes people are able to use web cameras, Skype and other utilities, which enhance facial interaction (Heinonen 2008, 135).

Net-acquaintances[42] Face 2 Face

It is highly usual that people participating in discussions on the net are willing to meet each other face to face. (Heinonen 2008, 102) New friendships can be initiated, but this does not happen nearly as often as communicating with friends known from elsewhere. 46% of the respondents had met their virtual friends in face-to-face-situation. The percentage is quite high, but today more and more of young Internet users are willing to meet virtual friends they have initiate in the net.

Table 5 The amount of face 2 face meetings with net-acquaintences

	1-5	6-10	Over 10	Not at all
All the participants	34%	6%	6%	53%
Women	37%	5%	3%	54%
Men	31%	7%	9%	52%
15-19 years	36%	8%	5%	51%
20-24 years	35%	6%	10%	50%
25-29 years	30%	5%	4%	60%

6% of the participants have met over ten net-acquaintances face to face. Also 6% have met 6-10 net-acquaintances from the net 'live'. 34% have met 1-5 net-acquaintances at some point 'for real'. Still, 53% have never met anyone from the net face to face. It seems that men are more active in this field. 9% of men have met over 10 net-acquaintances when the number of percentage with women is only 3%. Still, 37% of women have met 1-5 net-acquaintances when the percentage with men is 31%. In both cases, men/women, over half of the participants have not met any net-acquaintances face to face. The most active groups meeting the net-acquaintances face to face are 15-19 and 20-24 years old participants. Still, half of the both age-groups have not met anyone yet. 5% of 15-19 years old participants have met over 10 net-acquaintances. 8% of the same age has met 6-10 net-acquaintances and 36% has met 1-5 net-acquaintances. 10 % of 20-24 years old participants have met over 10 net-acquaintances. 6% has met 6-10 and 35% 1-5 net-acquaintances.

Is a virtual friend a true friend?

People in virtual communities use words on screens to exchange pleasantries and argue, engage in intellectual discourse, conduct commerce, exchange knowledge, share emotional support, make plans, brainstorm, gossip, feud, fall in love, find friends and lose them, play games, flirt, create a little high art and a lot if idle talk. People in virtual communities do just about everything people do in real life, but we leave our bodies behind. You can't kiss anybody and nobody can punch you in the nose, but a lot can happen within those boundaries. (Rheingold, 1993, 5)

According to Heinonen offline relationships are evaluated more important than online relationships. However, online relationships give support and advice. Like mentioned before, Internet is also a channel to keep up with friends, share ones feelings. It is characteristic for some online relationships that they are quite short-term compared to relationships outside the Internet. This is explained by the fact that the Internet is a place, where people often look for emotional help, support, or company. As people's lives change, or they may start meaningful relationships in real life, online relationships are often left to the background. (Heinonen 2008, 240) It is also said that people want content and communication in short snack-size bites. (Guber 2007) This new trend toward brevity has implications for the next round of popular social media tools. (Postman 2009) Also the social utilities such as Facebook can often be seen as a means to communicate in short term relationships. For online friends the strength of ties becomes considerably higher when the content of personal communication is high. When it is low, the strength of a face-to-

face tie is higher than for online friends. When the content is average, the strength of the tie does not differ according to the place where the friend was met. (Mesch & Talmud 2006, 38)

Many people that socialize online, or belong to the core groups of online communities, feel that online communities are important. They feel that the room they socialize in is like a second home. They socialize online every day or even several times a day. According to Heinonen, men of the target group have stronger and closer relationships to their online friends and communities than the women of the target group. Results show that this is, at least partly, due to the fact that men are more active in the activities of online communities and have participated longer than women. Their virtual relationships may have lasted for years. This means that commitment to the community is very strong, and that they do not want to violate the sense of solidarity within the community. People meet the same people online as they do offline. Surveys participants feel that they are socially active also outside the Internet. They feel that relationships outside the Internet are more important than online relationships. However, online socializing is a manifestation of the need to have human relationships. These relationships provide help and support, but people are also interested in how others are doing. (Heinonen 2008, 240) The Internet has really broken through as forum for socializing and other activities. Heinonen's study shows that many people, who socialize on the Internet, do not see the virtual space any differently from other socializing forums outside the Internet. (Heinonen 2008, 239) From the beginning the net has been seen as a way to contact friends outside the net. Still, it was seen as something not as good as face to face – contacts. Computers were not used for social purposes at the beginning, but nowadays the ways and technologies have developed. Still, there are questions concerning technology-oriented communication between people; is it as good as 'real communication'? Can there be real interaction and communication without physical encounter? Can computer-oriented contacts replace face to face –contacts (Collins 2004, 63; Heinonen 2008, 97)

It seems that respondents do not evaluate their virtual friends by their economic standards, societal status and so on. This probably has to do with age of the respondents – they seem to very open-minded and tolerant. 78 percent of respondents do not mind communicating with a person from another social status. It is something that does not really make any difference when communicating online. Usually, this is not an issue in real life either, this more over an issue of personality, rather than issue of technology. But "friendship" in these virtual spaces is thoroughly different from real-world friendship. In its traditional sense, friendship is a relationship which, broadly speaking, involves the sharing of mutual interests, reciprocity, trust, and the revelation of intimate details over time and within specific social (and cultural) contexts. According to Rosen (2207), since friendship depends on mutual revelations that are concealed from the rest of the world, it can only flourish within the boundaries of privacy; the idea of public friendship is an oxymoron. The hypertext link called "friendship" on social networking sites is very different: public, fluid, and promiscuous, yet oddly bureaucratized. Friendship on these sites focuses a great deal on collecting, managing, and ranking the people you know. Everything about MySpace, for example, is designed to encourage users to gather as many friends as possible, as though friendship were philately. Of course, it would be foolish to suggest that people are incapable of making distinctions between social networking "friends" and friends they see in the flesh. The use of the word "friend" on social networking sites is a dilution and a debasement, and surely no one with hundreds of MySpace or Facebook "friends" is so confused as to believe those are all real friendships. The impulse to collect as many "friends" as possible on a MySpace page is not an expression of the human need for companionship, but of a different

need no less profound and pressing: the need for status (Rosen 2007).

Quite a small amount of the respondents consider virtual friends as valuable and real as the 'normal' friends. There seems to be some kind of a hierarchy between 'real' friends and virtual' friends. If we look back we can see that there has been a tendency to see virtual friends as something that could not be seen as proper and real relationships as friends in face-to-face communication – like mentioned before, spending time on the net has not always been appropriate and having net friends has been seen as a nerdy way of life. Nerd term itself carries connotations like anti-sociality, modest looks and overwhelmed passion for computer science, which all position term negative. (Sihvonen 2004, 120) Still, nowadays youth seem to have changed this way of evaluating their friends. There have also been changes in attitudes towards virtual communities, which have mainly been positive. Nowadays the use of networks is natural part of humans' social field. (Heinonen 2008, 177) This is probably going to be the way of thinking also in the future because more and more of the communication between people is going online. On the Internet the youth are able to create so many different relationships that there really is no need or sense to hierarch friends between real and virtual anymore. Possibly it will become a question of valuating friendships by just how good friends they are, not by the way the friends have become?

There are lots of examples of people who tell the most intimate matters concerning their life to 'strangers' they have met online (strangers that have never seen them face-to-face). It is highlighted that in virtual space it is easier to discuss deeper issues. Heinonen states that one does not have to be afraid of loosing his/her face and can because of this share the most intimate matters freely. (vrt. Saxon & al. 2003) Virtual space also gives an opportunity to leave situation whenever wanted. (Heinonen 2008, 75) Outside the net it is not common to openly share your most intimate feelings, even anonymously, in a public place. (Heinonen 2008, 101) It seems that partial or full anonymity promotes showing intimate, personal things about one's true self. It is easy have a hyper-personal relationship in an online community. People tell intimate, deep, and even painful things about themselves fairly early in their online relationships. On the Internet people do not have to fear losing face, being ashamed or getting embarrassed. (Heinonen 2008, 236) One reason for this is presumable the fact that it is easier to open up with some one who does not know anything about you and is even living in another city or even in a different country. It is safer than to express your inner feelings and secrets to someone who cannot use them against you while living in a same neighbourhood or city. Without the pressure of knowing some one already, talking can be fast and easy. Transparency of physicality reduces boundaries and inhibitions. (Heinonen 2008, 66)

The net admittedly makes it possible to stay in contact with a wider circle of offline acquaintances than might have been possible in the era before Facebook. Friends you haven't heard from in years, old buddies from elementary school, people you might have fallen out of touch with—it is now easier than ever to reconnect to those people (Rosen 2007).

The final verdict

It is a fact that relationships develop on the net nowadays. Young people use network communities a lot and this is one of the reasons why new relationships arise very rapidly. Whether the early Internet research was characterized by suspicion or enthusiasm, it still examined the "virtual" world in isolation from the "real" world (Wellman, 2004). Moreover, it was assumed that the social consequences of Internet use depended on the features of the technology and that these consequences could be applied universally (Woolgar, 2002, 4).

Only recently social scientific Internet research has started to pay attention to the connections between offline and online life and how the Internet is embedded in our everyday interaction (e.g. Wellman, 2004; Boase & Wellman, in press). In addition to Ellison et al. (2006), Boase and Wellman (in press) stress the need to study Internet use in its social contexts, of all social relationships, not just those online. (Lehtinen 2007, 16) The machines and technology haven't replaced face-to face – communication, but rather full-filled and enhanced it. (Heinonen 2008, 10) According to Heinonen, net-acquaintances and friends are different from friends and acquaintances from the 'real life'. (Heinonen 2008, 159) Heinonen still highlights, that her research-respondents felt both online and offline-relationships equally valuable. On the other hand, they felt offline relationships more important than online relationships. (Heinonen 2008, 98) Feelings of community are usually attached to only face-to face contacts. Behind these thoughts is a question of is virtual community real community? (Heinonen 2008, 95) People, who regularly discuss in online communities or people who spend a lot of time on the Internet, do not see online socializing as game, but as a way of spending time with friends and acquaintances. (Heinonen 2008, 236) Online communication is not meant to replace phone or face-to-face communication, but can be used to increase the efficiency of communication with an existing group.

Are friendships changing? It could be said, that they are. The new technology and web 2.0 for example are changing the whole 'let's get friends' – phase as well the whole idea of friendship. Level of friendship is changing in to a form when one no longer needs to see ones friends face to face. It has become more of saying quickly 'hello', than to spend as much time with the friends. Of course, this is a result of technology but it has a lot to do with the fact that people are nowadays extremely busy and the way of life has become hectic. One also spends time on the net – because of work, studying, having nothing else to do, so it is natural to come in terms with the new ways of keeping up with friends. It is common to go and watch friends' gallery photos and comment them, look friends' blogs through so one can be aware what happens in other people's lives. Any of these activities does not require any actual face to face experience. But is that a bad thing? Do friendships become somehow less valid, less valuable or weaker if they are kept alive via Internet? Is online friendship a false friendship; are we just bits hanging around together – we are online, offline – when ever we feel like it.

The time of the Internet has forced us to re-determine friendship. At the same time it re-determines us, people. According to the experiences of Heinonen sense of community is a feeling that is indeed based on solidarity, trust between people, common rules and agreements, shared attitudes, functional social relationships, and stability. It is notable that a sense of community can exist without physical boundaries or locations. (Heinonen 2008, 238) Online sense of community is very real to those who experience it, and virtual communities are a part of people's lives. The phenomenon no longer take place just online or offline, nowadays both are equally real. Online activities spread outside the Internet and activities outside the Internet spread to

the Internet. Two previously separate spaces become boundless. Social relationships and sense of community remain. They become real and personal regardless of the space used. (Heinonen 2008, 243)

The new technologies challenge the more traditional definitions of interpersonal communication. Recent trends in mass communication (such as personalization of messages) and interpersonal communication (such as the increasing use of technical devices to communicate interpersonally) have blurred the boundaries between the two fields, forcing us to develop more sophisticated theories and models. New technologies can be seen as relationship enablers – they not only add new forms of interpersonal communication, but they change how individuals interact. (Konijn et al. 2008, 3) To an increasing degree, we find and form our friendships and communities in the virtual world as well as the real world. These virtual networks greatly expand our opportunities to meet others, but they might also result in our valuing less the capacity for genuine connection. As the young woman writing in the Times admitted, "I consistently trade actual human contact for the more reliable high of smiles on MySpace, winks on Match.com, and pokes on Facebook." That she finds these online relationships more reliable is telling: it shows a desire to avoid the vulnerability and uncertainty that true friendship entails. Real intimacy requires risk—the risk of disapproval, of heartache, of being thought a fool. Social networking websites may make relationships more reliable, but whether those relationships can be humanly satisfying remains to be seen. (Rosen 2007.)

It is extremely difficult to define virtual or traditional friendships. Often virtual friend can be seen as a pseudo- or quasi-friend if compared to relationships initiated in the real life. On the other hand, unfortunately often people are forced to realize that the friends in IRL are not eventually friends at all. At the end, 'friend' means different things to different people, but in every case a friend usually is important and if it is a true friend, then it does not matter where he/she has come from – online or IRL.

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(RE)MAKING SERIOUS CONNECTIONS: UBIQUITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS IN SEOUL

Jaz Hee-jeong Choi

The Internet‘s impact upon people‘s lives has not only been transformative, but also evident in many mundane facets of life. During the past decade, South Korea (hereafter Korea) has ambitiously looked towards a digital future,‘ recreating its image from the land of the morning calm‘ to that of the broadband miracle‘ (Hazlett, 2004). Korea has also created a popular cultural buzz particularly in the Asian region for the new Korean cool,‘ a phenomenon known as the Korean Wave or Hanryu (Hallyu). As a Korean colloquial saying goes, a decade changes the river and the mountain.‘ The past decade may very likely have changed the contour of the Korean landscape as part of its continuing urbanization process. At the same time, it has changed the flow of communication and accrual of knowledge about the self and the world amongst Koreans, especially younger generations.

At this point then, the question of where exactly technology, society, and business meet is a timely one. Exploring ways for a better‘ future – by examining aspects across the past and the present – is one of the main purposes of economic and social reform. In regard to what we call techno-social‘ development, Mark Weiser‘s projection of networked life has been a dominant guiding vision, particularly in the sphere of ubiquitous computing. Weisner‘s seminal contribution was the vision of calm computing, a technological environment that affords autonomous and smooth interactions. The space of ambient intelligence painted by Weiser (1995) continues to remain as what Bell and Dourish (2007) call a proximate future‘; that is, a future that is always within reach yet which remains unfathomable. Moreover, a tendency to imagine future and sometimes utopian environments can take us away from examining the present.

The question of what to do then should be about looking at now: looking beyond what has been collectively imagined as the future of ubiquitous computing to examine its current environment. The presumption here is that the era of ubiquitous computing has already arrived but in ways that differ from the Weiserian picture (ibid; Choi & Greenfield, 2008). Diverse ubiquitous environments have been developing in different parts of the world with locally specific characteristics, blending the existing and new cultural, social, and technological aspects unique to each community. In this respect, Korea presents a particularly fascinating case for examination. Its long history of cultural insulation –and thus isolation – came to an abrupt end during the Japanese occupation (1905-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953); this was immediately followed by a rapid modernization impelled by the heavily authoritarian government starting with the Park Chung-Hee‘s administration in the early 1960s; since then, the chaebol economy has been at the core of economic development in Korea, which is based on a close collaboration between the government and large family-owned conglomerates. This controlled capitalist system led to Korea‘s eleven-fold increase in GDP per capita (The World Bank, 2006) within half a century. The capital region surrounding Seoul is now the generator of approximately half of the national GDP (Fujita & Thisse, 2002, p. 2), home to half of the national population, headquarters of chaebols

such as Samsung and LG, and one of the largest global testbeds for technologies and services (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2007). Today the city exists as an amalgam of many conflicting elements, with its configuration in nuanced and constant micro- and macro-transformation.

To contemplate the future techno-social contour of this city, I contend that it is necessary to look beyond the institutional structure of the system. The Korean system' has been securely maintained by the government and chaebols, but is rapidly losing its validity today as an effective development engine. This was the structure of modernization – or in Korea's case, its industrial period. The serious connections' shaping the society are no longer limited to the dominant gatekeepers. With this understanding, this chapter examines the crucial intersection of place, people, and technology – the three foundational constituents of urban informatics (Foth, 2009) – specific to Seoul in this transformative era of network society. To study a confluence naturally requires examining various streams that converge at the point; in a research context, this refers to an interdisciplinary approach that allows flexibility to employ new and other ways of knowing beyond discipline-specific viewpoints, or in John Law's words, beyond summoning a relatively limited repertoire of responses' (2004, p. 3). In this light, this article is based on a three-year research project on urban play culture of young Koreans that took place between 2005 and 2008. The study involved participation of 44 young Koreans between the ages of 18 and 24 through questionnaires, interviews, and activity diaries outlining their daily lives for one week. During the week, they were also involved in Shared Visual Ethnography (SVE) in which they were asked to take photos according to a given set of 14 themes such as fun,' play,' boring,' and what is important to me.' Flickr was used to share and discuss the photos with other participants, the researcher, and any interested public. In order to balance the user perspectives of Korean youth, I conducted interviews with industry representatives: two chaebols and two small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) representatives. Table 1 outlines the interviewees:

Table 1 Inter-relations of the selected industry representatives

Chaebol	**SME**
Samsung *Yeun Bae Kim, Research Director* Samsung is the most prominent *chaebol* in Korea and trades in a wide range of domains from products to services. Kim is Research Director at Samsung Advanced Institute of Technology, the central laboratory for Samsung Group including areas such as biology and Medtronic.	**10x10** *Changwoo Lee, CEO* 10x10 is an online lifestyle/design products store situated on the border of the mainstream and underground commercial clusters. The company also has offline franchise shops in various cities, its own brand DIY products, and runs hobbies and interests-related classes under *Fingers Academy*.
SK Holdings *Jongchae Oh, Project Leader* As a prominent oil and the largest wireless telecommunications provider in the country, SK Holdings has significant influence in the mobile technology industry in Korea. SK Holdings is also the owner of cyworld.com, the most popular social networking site in Korea (*cf.* Choi, 2006b).	**Yanolja** *Soo Jin Lee, CEO* At the outset Yanolja was conceived as an online community where members come to share information about (love) motels, hotels, and pensions. Now a commercial entity, Yanolja has been expanding its focus beyond the domain of accommodation to the general 'play and entertainment culture' surrounding dating.

The following section provides a brief overview on Korea‘s foundations of the broadband miracle.‘ Following this, I examine mobile technology. This leads into a discussion of the city as a network: What does it mean for the city – Seoul – to be a ubiquitous network beyond the technical infrastructure? I argue that interaction through screens has become the essential thread linking diverse constituents of Seoul as a network. This then leads me to look at the question of technological experience beyond the mere interface level. Following this, I draw a connection between these insights and the commercial sector‘s viewpoint. Finally I conclude the chapter with a discussion on recreating connections in the urban network that is Seoul through micro user interactions at the intersection of place, people, and technology.

Broadband: Hurried and Habitual

The Korean government‘s active role in building a broadband society through policy and market regulation, technology deployment, and education has been highlighted by many scholars (cf. Kelly, Gray, & Minges, 2003; H. Lee, O’Keefe, & Kyounglim, 2003; Picot & Wernick, 2007). The initial drive from the top-down (government to citizens in this case) can be traced back to the pervasively promoted slogan in early 20th century, Eastern Spirit, Western Technology, denoting the importance of protecting traditional cultural values from the foreign influences while seeking to catch up with the superior technological knowledge of the West (Shin, 2003, p. 8). Considering Korea‘s long-standing status as a global Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) until recent years, benchmarking of developed countries – particularly US and Japan – has been a central guidance for the political and business sectors with a plausible effect on shortening the developmental timeframe (copying is easier and quicker to achieve than intrinsic innovation). Recently Korea has begun the fourth – ubiquitous – phase (see table 2, adopted from Ryu, 2004, p. 6).

Table 2 Overview of paradigmatic shift in Korean IT policy

Phase	**Digitisation**	**Network**	**Convergence**	**UbiComp**
Period	1980-1994	1995-2002	2003-2007	2008-current
Project	National Backbone Network	Cyber Korea	Broadband IT Korea	u-Korea
Objective	Computerisation	Data Distribution	Information sharing / Knowledge creation	Intelligent objects

High population density has also contributed significantly to the swift diffusion of broadband in urban areas. In the city with the 6th highest population density in the world (City Mayors, 2007), many Seoulites live in multiunit housing, most notably in massive apartment complexes, which are estimated to comprise 98% of recent residential construction (Cho, 2007, p. 25). The technical convenience of network distribution in such an environment in conjunction with the national ppalippali (hurry hurry) ethos quickly enthused the citizens‘ adoption and adaptation of network technology. Today, availability of broadband connection is ubiquitous not only in homes but also in many corners of the city, some for selective groups but most for general public; they are found in schools, cafés, local council offices, subway stations (Fig. 2) and other places.

Image 1: Public Internet booth in subway station

The research data suggests that amongst such possibilities, personal computers at home were the main Internet access point for the participants. The participants' activity diaries show that they habitually spend a significant time on their computers as a multi-platform for different purposes, but mainly for entertainment – for example, watching films or TV while socializing and information searching, and sometimes working or studying all at once. Having the broadband connection available at any time and anywhere that is relevant to them makes their routine use of digital media possible. However, at many times they see their own such behavior as unconstructive. For example, a participant's statement, —I instinctively turn on my computer as I enter the room, resonated strongly and widely amongst all. Furthermore, it appears that the content of the media consumed matters less than the fact that they are online, which may inflict a view on their computer use as an addiction. One participant spent seven hours watching animation on their computer one night, followed by another six hours of the same activity the next day despite they had found the content – animation – boring. In fact, the diaries demonstrated that spending several hours on the computer without specific purposes commonly occurred in the evening through to early morning. However, as conveyed in their verbal reflection in the diary, such behavior also provoked a negative sense of the self, ranging from apologetic ("Oops"), guilt ("Habitual Internet use is not a good thing"), and to self-disgust ("I'm useless"). Korea's hurried technological development and adoption led to an exuberant embrace of the Internet by youth, which may appear to have become more habitual than deliberate. One may view such

a phenomenon – particularly surrounding the ostensibly purposeless Internet use – as a social problem or as an addiction. In recognition of this issue, the Korean government has recently started a new rehabilitation boot camp program titled Jump Up Internet Rescue School. The New York Times reports: During a session, participants live at the camp, where they are denied computer use and allowed only one hour of cellphone calls a day, to prevent them from playing online games via the phone. (Fackler, 2007) Of particular interest here is the role of the mobile phone as an Internet access device as compared to the omnipresent wired connections. The former has been integrated into the Korean society even more quickly than the latter. A question arises then: does the mobile phone have the same standing as the personal computer as a communicative and media platform?

Mobile: Core and Secondary

According to my research participants, the mobile phone serves three main purposes of (a) communication (text and voice), (b) photo taking (and subsequent storing and sharing), and (c) gaming (to occupy oneself during a reasonably short and/or unexpected free-time). According to one participant, "When I'm alone I take photos or look at the photos I've saved on my phone. I play mobile games as well. Wherever I am – just when I'm alone. My phone doesn't have DMB [Digital Multimedia Broadcasting]. I only text, call, take photos, and play games on my phone". The mobile phone has supposedly become a cyborg-like attachment' (May & Hearn, 2005p. 201) for youth. In contrast to the great expectations of 3G (3rd Generation) technologies, what appears to be lacking from youth is high-volume usage of mobile technology for Internet consumption.

The participants' responses suggested two underlying reasons for their limited use of basic functionalities such as texting and voice call. The first and the foremost reason was the high cost: the financial cost of data transfer and the higher consumption of battery life. This was an interesting aspect, as there are free or extremely low-cost (less than $1) mobile phone chargers in places such as convenience stores, cafés, and supermarkets. Then the response can be interpreted as people's desire to stay connected and to avoid even a minimal time of involuntary disconnection from the network via their mobile phones. One participant states, "I have an mp3 function [on my mobile] but I have an mp3 player so I don't use the function on the phone. It uses a lot of battery. You never know what will happen. Even if I know no one would call me, I still get worried that someone just might". Secondly, some participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the quality of the media experience the mobile phone provides. One participant's statement sums up young Korean's attitude towards the mobile phone: "I don't watch movies on the phone ... because the screen and sound is too small ... I prefer the home theatre system at home. The mobile phone's just a tool for communication. I only use it for voice call and texting". In addition, another participant wrote in their diary, "Suddenly the Internet connection got cut off [in the dormitory], so I played mobile games instead". A computer with a wired broadband connection as well as the processing power that supports multitasking and quality media experience is the first choice. The mobile phone to young Seoulites is an absolutely essential communicative tool that connects the user to their social networks; however, in the context of media experience, it remains a secondary or sub-channel that is used for instant and temporary gratification at an unanticipated free time (to kill) when wired access is unavailable. Introduction of the mobile phone came with a grand promise for a primal transformation in communication and media experience. However, wired access remained as resilient as before;

mobile technologies were an augmentation rather than an alternative. Likewise, the city as a ubiquitous network has already been taking shape – ever gradually and possibly without its occupants' conscious comprehension or acknowledgement.

The City as a Network

At this point then, I think it would be apt and useful to reconsider the notion of the city in regards to networks. The city brings together connections of many kinds across a magnitude of strength, transience, and nature. In this sense, the city has always been a hybrid network of which configuration resembles a fractal pattern: it can potentially have an infinite number of sub-networks while concurrently functioning as a sub-network to create a broader network with other networks through intercommunication. Such a notion of network collectivity has been explored in various domains including urban studies in the past decade. It has been particularly active in contemporary economic research, in which the inter-relational agency of individuals, businesses, and institutions are highlighted (cf. Benkler, 2006; Kirman, 1997; Landry, 2000; Potts, Cunningham, Hartley, & Ormerod, 2008). Such avid interest in conceptualising networks can be attributed to the emerging network technologies that are becoming increasingly crucial in sustaining human society while also making connections amongst various nodes within the network increasingly conspicuous. Today, communication networks have become as fundamental to urban life as street systems' (Mitchell, 1995, p. 107). In this line of thought, the rapid advancement of ubiquitous technology accentuates the imminent and eminent convergence between digital and physical architecture.

Whether digital or physical, the operative sphere of architecture cannot be limited to objects that execute spatial requirements of human transactions. Surely such pragmatic aspects are essential, but architecture stretches itself beyond mere practical necessities of human life and reaches other fundamental realms of life such as aesthetics as well as private and public human sociality. This indicates that urban life exists in and as a network of intricate connections across various domains including technological, political, social, and cultural. What understanding can we achieve about such a complex network? I argue that one of the crucial epistemological explorations must take place in finding the patterns of connection rather than nodes themselves or nomenclature of nodes – in other words, how are the nodes connected in a given network? In this line of thought, I now examine the process of technological and urban – or techno-urban – development of Seoul, one of the most densely populated (Population & Social Statistics Bureau, 2007) and connected (OECD, 2006) networks in the world.

Massive urbanization and urban population growth took place after the Korean War. In 1960, Korea's telephone penetration rate was at 0.36% or one tenth of the world average at the time (Kelly, et al., 2003, p. 1). The rate escalated considerably – 48.8% or three-times higher than the world average in 2002 (ibid), which demonstrates the government's eagerness at restructuring the national infrastructures. During the same period (1960-2002) the urban population ratio also grew drastically from 35.8% to 86.5%, owing to an immense exodus of young Koreans from rural areas in hope of obtaining better education and/or jobs, and eventually higher social status. Interpretation of this phenomenon is two-fold: firstly, this can be viewed in light of the rise of – or attempts at becoming – the new middle class in the post-colonial capitalist paradigm; secondly it can also be attributed to the traditional Confucian culture in which education and yangban lifestyle maintain high social value (Lett, 1998). Yangban refers to the educated ruling

leisure class in Joseon period (1392-1910), the last imperial dynasty in Korean history. Despite rapid development and subsequently introduction and adoption of new ideas– particularly of Americo-European origin – traditional values prevail in the social ethos of Koreans today (Lett, 1998; Na & Duckitt, 2003). In fact, the sociocultural mélange of not only old and new but also other various contradictory ideas was a likely outcome considering the lack of opportunity for Koreans to adequately grasp, translate, and appropriate new concepts and practices within a condensed developmental timeframe of a few decades. Similarly, the physical configuration of the capital city has been a mixture of the planned and unplanned. The former Vice Mayor of Seoul Metropolitan Government, Hong Bin Kang's statement that the city is a paradoxical combination of too much planning and too little planning' (Kim, 2005) clearly reflects this view.

As one of the research participants described during the interview —Seoul is a city where you can do anything. There is no law Koreans imaginatively make anything possible, even those no one has thought of Seoul has everything. All cultures! Such a view from a local youth does not divert far from that of a participant of a USA origin who stated that the city "feels like a hodge-podge of different things. It's a mix of paradoxes and contradiction, modern with old. I like the tethered old messages of Korea. Very present". Given such a dynamic mixture in technological, social, and architectural spheres, Seoul appears to retain an illegible urbanscape with ambiguous connections scantily and peculiarly holding together fragments of the city. However, a closer examination reveals that with the existing wired and wireless broadband networks, one of the essential fabrics connecting place, people, and technology is found in screens in this city of flux.

Screens: Spectacles for All or One

Whether wired or wireless, the current media and communication technologies share a common interface that is inherently visual and increasingly haptic: the screen. Screens in cities have become a regular feature, overlaying yet another commercial surface upon manifold urban layers. As the computer screens have evolved from the flat green-and-black dots to three-dimensional 32-bit virtuality, screens have also evolved in shape and quality all the while percolating into the sphere of urban everydayness. Urban development in Korea was fundamentally guided by the government's need to make its authority and legitimacy visually manifest in modernization—amidst a broad concomitant suppression of nature, history, and human right' (Choi & Greenfield, 2008, p. 22). Screens were brought into the Korean urbanscape for a similar if not the same purpose – visual manifestation of its modernization – to the global audience. According to Lee (2005, p. 159), the widespread distribution of digital screens began in early 1990s in preparation for the Taejeon (Daejeon) World Expo in 1993. Since then screens have been as widespread as broadband connections in Seoul. Across a wide range of sizes and types, screens are found as the façade of buildings, in elevators, public transport, and individuals' hands – on portable devices such as PMPs (Portable Media Players) and mobile phones. The current environment resonates strongly with Lev Manovich's assertion in Poetics of Augmented Space (2006, p. 221): In the short term, we may expect large thin displays to become more pervasive in both private and public spaces, in the longer term, every object may become a screen connected to the net with the whole of built space eventually becoming a set of display surfaces.

In Seoul today, Manovich's vision for the – longer term' – future is happening. In this regard, people who work, play, and live in the city can be perceived as the users of the city. Screens are entrenched in the everyday lives of these users as an image and lived reality at collective

and individual levels. As Manovich also notes, screens were a dominant feature in the futuristic urbanscape as depicted in Ridley Scott's Blade Runner (1982); in the film screens exist as the interface of the city life as well as the medium and the message – in McLuhanistic sense of spectacle (McLuhan, 1994). In such an environment, Guy Debord's notion of spectacle (Debord, 1977) fittingly invoked to the point that social relationship between people is in fact mediated by images. However, Debord's notion of the passivity in genuine human action caused by mass media is not entirely valid in Seoul, the city of screens, for the spectacular' experience does not merely involve mass media. Take media consumption on subway in Seoul, for example (Fig. 3).

Image 2: Subway in Seoul

Many carriages have multiple screens broadcasting television programs and advertisement; some passengers watch them, creating their own spatial experience yet with passivity according to Debord's idea. Those with fixated gaze on their mobile phone may also be consuming media with a similar sense of passivity; however, they may be experiencing personal media as agents of active participation in (re)creating media-spatial experience that is meaningful to them and possibly also sharing it with those to whom it is also meaningful (one example is sending and receiving text messages). Screens have espoused the digital flow that penetrates the hard physical geometric layer of the city, allowing more individualized and subjective spatiotemporal experience. However, this does not suggest that meaningful collective experience in a shared space has ceased or will cease to exist in the future. Rather, it augments it. For example, examine the following picture of a group of friends in a karaoke room (see Fig. 4). Although each may appear to be in their own communicative space, they are concurrently in a collective space of socialization (perhaps more popular form of socialization in Korea compared to other cultures) co-creating the experience that may be shared synchronously or asynchronously through various media; the sharing can take a form of text messages to people who are not present in the room and sharing visual and/or textual recount of the event on their social networking sites or blogs.

Image 3: Socialising in a karaoke room

Therefore, screens augment rather than fragment space because the experience network technologies provide does not end at the immediate multimedia interaction between people and technology. It also includes myriad of interactive possibilities between and amongst people, technology, and place through various types of interface.

Technology: Interface or Interaction

As discussed previously in this chapter, network technology has been avidly welcomed, expanded, and become quotidian as a result of intricate interconnections with locally germane cultural and social bearings. The everyday‘ relation between people and technology leads to a spatial layer created by the users. Even though such a spatial layer can be in a virtual form, it is not an illusionistic figuration; it is as valid and critical as the physical spatial reality. An important question arises at this point: in such a context of spatial convergence, what role does design play? We must consider this question as it fundamentally relays how the future will unfold for cities in which already over half of the world population now reside (UNFPA, 2008, p. 90). In the lexicon of digital media in particular, user experience (UX) design‘ has been gaining much attention, in some cases replacing user interface (UI) design.‘ UI can be thought of a component of UX in that experience encompasses various types of interaction with the object to be used.‘ One of the plausible interpretations of the rising emphasis on UX is the recognition of user‘s specific contexts and user-led innovation. The notion of prosumer (Toffler, 1980) and produser (Bruns, 2005) has been used aptly to describe the convergence between production and consumption/

use afforded by fundamental systemic changes. In other words, such a convergence refers to the experience of iterative development process through which functional and aesthetic quality of the used (service or products, for example) is renovated. This renovation occurs according to the user‘s desires and needs, which cannot be wilfully pre-designed by default (though the user can be persuaded to acquire certain desires and needs - cf. Fogg, 2003).

To put simply, certain needs can indeed be presumed and enfolded in the initial design process. The interface through which the user connects to the used primarily concerns the user‘s need to access it. Once the connection is established, the user then interacts to fulfill their objective. The process may end here as a singular occurrence. However, a sustained use can only be achieved through recurring interactions. Sustainable design then is fundamentally based on the user‘s desire to challenge the system that serves the presumed needs of the user, leading to new needs for reformation of the existing interface. The basis of interaction here takes a form of either conforming to or breaking the boundaries that the interface presents. Such a process can manifest and/or be seen as a harmless playful activity or destructive unruly revolt. In this respect, I have argued elsewhere (Choi, 2008) that it is imperative to not only recognize but also encompass micro-level examinations of desires and needs in urban planning, particularly around the subject of building a ubiquitous network society. Such a fundamental systematic change is likely to be a lengthy process even in the hurried‘ culture of Korea, owing to its long history of authoritarian – top-down – approach to governance. On the contrary, the business sector in its own commercial interest was quick to attempt at realizing this phenomenon. The following section illuminates this aspect in relation to the notion of desire and need as has been discussed so far.

The Business Connections: Desire and Needs

The interviewees noted the condensed development of contemporary Korea as one of the main concerns for the industry. In the case of Yanolja, the concern can easily be understood because the subject matter of the business itself has been a taboo in traditional Korean society where clear gender separation has been one of the most fundamental cultural tenets. Lee (of Yanolja) commented that despite numerous coverage requests from media entities – magazine, newspaper, and television – the outcome never made to being published or broadcast owing to the cultural censorship on the taboo subject‘; Lee said that when the rare occasion of publication did occur, it only evolved around the critique of “what‘s wrong with young people these days?” However, he added that a cultural shift occurred around early 2000s. At this point, dating – whether inclusive of sexual activities or not – moved away from the —dark and wrong side to that of a broader —modern play culture in which the love hotel becomes not only about sex but also about private multiplex for watching movies, playing computer games, and having bath, for example. The digital domain has shared chronological similarities. Oh sums up the history of the commercial technology sector in Korea as follows:

Korea has a long history with a rich cultural soil for content development. However, we opened our gate too late, and we had much interference such as the war, so we had to create everything from nothing with the West or Japan as our role models ... Koreans worked diligently to actually reach a status comparable to these role models, as seen in the frame of OECD and GDP – but until now, it‘s been exactly just that: chasing. There was no need for us to think too hard about what (to produce). For example, if Sony does it, we do it too. Then if Sony makes 10, we make

12 ... then now we have more or less caught up, we have a problem because there has been no contemplation both at the corporate and governmental level on the subject of what ... In terms of the Internet and mobile, after a swift infrastructural establishment, they have become a more entertainment platform than a productive one. It's a market with certainty (for profit generation) so we all went for it. Entertainment should have led to something creative, but instead it has remained on the same level as where it started. (Oh)

What has become clear in both instances is the rise of play culture – of various kinds – in early 2000s, when broadband networks started to be integrated into everyday lives of Koreans. In reference back to the paradigmatic shifts in Korean IT policy discussed earlier in the chapter, this period refers to the convergence' phase (Table 2). It would be plausible to argue that distributed broadband networks allowed more varied and easily accessible means for Koreans to express and share their desires. While all interviewees acknowledged the importance of accommodating such shifts, their response to this phenomenon appears to differ according to the nature of their enterprise. Chaebol entities – Kim and Oh – emphasized the need for designing improved interface: "We have to try to get people addicted to our products, and that's why user-interface is so much more important". For example, you can't really change the layout of the computer keyboard. What we are trying to achieve is for young consumers to remain loyal to our brand until their old ages (Kim). This is attributable to the fact that the effect of chaebol is immensely broad in the domestic market and thus chaebol's imperative remains more intact in maintaining the existing consumers as compared to attracting new ones through the users' sustained need for the familiar interface. Oh's statement clearly reflects this view: "SK is no longer desperate to attract users". On the other hand, Lee (10x10) and Lee (Yanolja) take a contrary approach by encouraging consumers to play – in other words, rather than designing improved interface' for the users, they encourage the users to interactively break and renovate the existing system, the process through which profits are made and more users are enticed to participate to fulfill their own desires.

In regards to the future vision, all four interviewees agreed on the necessity for more open and flexible networks than the current state. However, similar to the divergence discussed above, assumptions about the future were also found to differ between these two groups in terms of the span and extent of infrastructural development. While Kim and Oh assumed real-time technological infrastructure was effortlessly, conjuring up a vision that fundamentally converge the physical and virtual. Lee (10x10) and Lee (Yanolja) placed greater focus on more specific areas within a shorter timeframe, such as stronger inclination towards fast customization and mobile use. The following statements reflect this: SAIT works with a vision of 5-10 years there will not be much change (in technological development) within five years. Most of the things that should have happened have happened. Everything today evolves around the Internet. However, until today, the Internet has remained fundamentally conceptual because of the low bandwidth. Real-time interactions require a high bandwidth. (In the near future) the network may indeed go beyond the level of operating system to become a giant brain. The new 3D Internet will still connect people but with much more realism. (Kim)

"Local interaction will be greatly increased. In our internal (as SK) lingo, it's called the outernet (as opposed to the Internet) the network backbone will be all connected through the central server, but the local networks will also be very active". (Oh) — from the sociological perspective, people have tendency to get tired of things very quickly these days. For example, these days people go to an online portal, read the headlines and don't go any further. They quickly

decide whether something is of their interests or not in this environment, minors (as opposed to major commercial enterprises) can have greater appeal to people. (Lee, 10x10). Around the time teenagers today enter their twenties, mobile networks will be more affordable and open. We are preparing our business for that transition. (Lee, Yanolja)

Therefore, Chaebol and SME function on the elusive equilibrium between sustenance and reframing of the existing system – in other words, by appealing to the user's needs (sustenance) and desire (reframing/recreation). These two ostensibly binary milieux are inherently interrelated and metamorphose through convergence. Indeed convergence was the key term in all the interviewees' lexicon of the future development; and by definition convergence suggests taxonomic obfuscation and thus confusion. However, the rapidity of technical and economic development has caused Korea to lack adequate contemplation and reflection on their own contextual evaluation for what should come next. As Oh asserts, Korea's "sociocultural development has not been parallel to its national GDP". For this reason, the Korean commercial sector is also currently undergoing a period of particularly momentous disorientation similar to Korean youth's hurriedly acquired use of extensive and habitual use of network technology. In this an environment, microscopic changes proliferate, and are likely to bring about broader techno-social transformations. Kim asserts that such an overarching transformation is expected to occur only within several years.

Recreating the Urban Network

The city is a network of many things. Seoul as an urban network – like many others around the world is far from the calm and clean environment as depicted by Weiser, and subsequently by a significant part of the ubiquitous computing research community. Seoul is a messy (Bell & Dourish, 2007) network full of overspills (Choi & Greenfield, 2008). It exists as an image, spatial entity, and reality for those who play, work, live, and use it. This reality is actively (re)created at the intersection of people, place, and technology as a place' rather than space' in Tuan's (2007) term. According to Tuan, the difference between these is that what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value' (ibid, p. 6). The immensely condensed modernization has led to hurried convergence of many facets of Korean existence; this in turn triggered young Koreans' rapid pervasive adoption of and adaptation to communicative and media technologies, in addition to the commercial sector's trajectile disorientation. In terms of the latter, chaebol enterprises who have been working closely with the authoritarian government prefer to sustain the system through gradual changes to the existing interfaces. They also have a longer span of development timeframe yet with an assumed ease of infrastructural deployment by the government. On the other hand, SMEs appear to have a comparatively shorter-term vision and base themselves in the commotion of interactive user-led innovation rather than systemic sustenance.

Seoul is now facing a fundamental necessity for transformation for the first time since its broadband revolution, an aspect more deeply felt here than any other place because of its unique techno-social context. To be a techno-socially sustainable city in the global network in other words, a network with desirable usability – it must accommodate and augment contextually defined needs and desires of its constituents at both macro- and micro-level. Users, particularly young Koreans, are already making new and meaningful connections within the urban network of Seoul as they see fit. The commercial sector has started to embrace this at varied paces. In

particular, youth and SMEs are together creating new connections via various communicative channels reshaping various sub-networks of the parental network that is Seoul. Therefore these seemingly small and trivial interactions are rapidly becoming serious connections of the city. With the current global economic crisis, the Korean government is in a favorable situation to ground systematic adjustments for positive and valuable accommodation of what is likely to be one of the most significant paradigmatic shifts in Korean history, let alone global. Through playful interaction serious connections are broken and mended, thus (re)creating needs and desires, as well as interfaces and interactions. Only through multiplicities of this process can sustainability of the network be ensured. The future of Seoul must be built upon the foundation of such sustainable practices.

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ENABLED BY SOCIAL NETWORKS

Many types of subcultures and other marginal activity development occur in the net. Some marginal phenomenon can anticipate the development of maintream culture. This chapter discusses of subcultures and ways a subculture changes and adapts to local culture. How geographically distinct culture survives online and how to extend youngsters online world to intersect with adults world in the form of youth work.

The different aspects of Internet use, from finding information and taking part in communities to producing and distributing fan production, are all intertwined. Diverse actions happen often on same sites; for example on Facebook or at the same time; communication acrobatics and multitasking. Virtual communities entwine with the communities in real life. As Jenkins (2004, 246) notes, the Web has brought fan cultures from the margins media industry into the center, and spotlight. The fans are forerunners of new, virtual community building. That heralds a new kind of participatory culture. The fans of Japanese popular culture are an excellent example of participatory community or set of communities, which operate both virtually and in real life. Most of the devoted fans are involved both in the virtual fan community and offline.

Top 5 take aways:

- The Web has created a new kind of social playfield where youth is spending their time. Especially for sparsely inhabited areas this new social room is more than a blessing.
- In terms of being socially shy those who play MMOs have no more difficulties as their non-gamer peers in adjusting to society or forming their personality.
- The fandom of Japanese popular culture has a translocal nature. It is a phenomenon that is connected with a global trend and market, in spite of getting its variations and fandom practices in the local setting. There is a continuous and complicated interaction and interplay between cultures and localities taking place in the fandom of Japanese popular culture globally
- While the Internet is essential for Japanese popular culture fans in Finland, the focus of their fandom is not the Internet.
- Game culture is developing socially, technically and economically into an interactive experience environment where constant networking and incompleteness is accepted as part of the culture. Through the evolution of social online media, more ways and levels to participate have been offered. Shared ownership is part of the change.

SOCIAL SHYNESS: A CUE FOR VIRTUAL YOUTH SERVICE AMONG THE YOUNG IN MMOS?

Jani Merikivi

The Internet is playing a noteworthy role in the lives of the youth attracting the young to engage with virtual youth services. These leisure activities online seek to impact and retain the young in coordinated programmes, designed for enhancing the personal and social growth into independent citizen. The emphasis of virtual youth service can be put on a containment of four functional aims: socialisation, personalisation, compensation, and allocation of resources. Socialisation refers to enhancing the opportunities of the young to integrate into the society, whereas personalisation stands for bringing up adolescents to be autonomous and self-conscious adults. The term compensation suggests that those young adults who have difficulties in adjusting to the society or in the process of forming their personality should therefore be supported. The fourth function refers to the importance of directing sufficient resources for the young who are in danger of being neglected and fast becoming marginalized. These functions are enclosed by the voluntary involvement of the young, acknowledgement of the adolescence and parenthood, recognition to support and establish conditions for the young to grow as a full member of the society, and relativistic and pluralistic ideology (Nieminen, 2007).

Besides setting up sites through which the young may seek information and participate in decision making processes especially related to the young, virtual youth service collaborates with privately-owned virtual communities, such as Habbo Hotel, where the young are able to discuss anything with youth workers and other young people. Habbo Hotel is a popular and influential commercial social virtual community among those targeted for teens aged 10 to 18. The adequate and *genuine* social relations between these teens and the youth workers have proved the liaison successful in reaching out to those adolescents who cannot otherwise be reached. While the design of virtual youth service has changed from the tendency to simply mimic its face-to-face equivalency to a model that involves new methods, there are still other virtual environments almost unknown to virtual youth service[43]. These are called massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMOs).

Due to widespread availability of broadband Internet access combined with the development of three-dimensional acceleration hardware MMOs have evolved from text-based Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs) into a significant digital entertainment industry (Seay, Jerome, Lee, & Kraut, 2003), attracting millions of young gamers throughout the world in real time via fictional characters. Gamers are to a number of popular MMOs, such as EverQuest, Ultima Online, and World of Warcraft, in which they voluntarily immerse themselves, navigating the environment to complete a wide variety of game goals that gradually increase in complexity. These MMOs are not only games but also communities around which the gamers form tightly-knit social relationships and interact with each other on a daily basis, and thus, could provide a useful platform for youth workers to identify and contact those in the need for social support, necessary for the most effective plan of virtual youth service.

Supporting the young through MMOs is sure needed. While attempting to achieve success in MMOs, the gamers are enticed to develop their stats, characters, and skills. And the further they gain in levels, the more time it requires. The publishers rewarding gamers for continuous play can thus be extremely intensive and retain gamers even for years. This is supported by recent empirical evidence which show that the young MMO gamers spend a disproportionately extensive period of time on the Internet playing MMOs (Myllyniemi, 2008, 94). At worse, this may lead to extremely stressful situations, including failing school, being unemployed, or gaining family and relationship problems, as the gamers break their connections to those outside MMOs. And once unemployed, low earnings seem not to change the course of life and stop the young from spending a lot of their time playing MMOs (2011). On the contrary, losing their work may even lead the young to play more since they have more time to kill.

Such an extensive play is linked to the anonymous nature of computer-mediated social interactions (cf. N. Yee, 2006). MMOs are likely to provide gamers with a comfortable chat environment not only to discuss the game itself but to self-disclose to other inhabitants about their personal issues they would have never told their closest real-life friends or family. This is especially valuable for socially shy individuals, who tend to avoid risks, lack confidence and hate being the centre of attention during social interaction (cf. Asendorpf, 1990). Having the mutual topic of interest makes breaking the ice easier, as well as the game challenges which regularly call for teamwork with other gamers. It thus seems plausible to believe that these whys and wherefores of MMO use can be especially associated with the social exclusion of young individuals socially shy.

For this article, the theoretical framework through which the young MMO gamers' social shyness is examined builds on the theoretical background of social capital, social incentives as the driving force behind playing MMOs, and qualities that enhance social interaction in virtual environments. The overarching goal is to examine how playing MMOs is associated with the young gamers' social shyness and whether their personality differs from those who do not play MMOs. Given these considerations, an article on the impacts of social shyness on the time young individuals spend playing MMOs will provide decision makers with additional micro-level insight into how scarce resources for virtual youth services can efficiently be allocated. From the theoretical perspective, the article generates new knowledge on the young MMO gamers' personality. Drawing upon social capital and the personal qualities that enhance social interaction, this study proposes and tests a research model using real MMO gamers. As a result, the present article not only integrates the theoretical foundation and empirical investigation but contributes to the external validity of its findings.

The article is structured as follows: First, the qualities that enable positive social interaction and a link to social capital will be introduced. Based on these, a model on social shyness will then be developed. This model will illustrate the relationship between social shyness and the frequency of using MMOs, which can logically be explained through the ability to interact with strangers, an aspect of social competence. The model will then be tested using empirical data. Finally, the contribution and implications of the article will be discussed.

Qualities that Enhance Social Interaction

MMOs comprise an area where social and technological interact. While the social aspects of usage are of particular importance, they are seldom addressed explicitly. However, there is a growing understanding of social outcomes such as support, affiliation, and connectedness, which work to bring together individuals online. Instead of solitary gaming experiences MMOs are particularly built around strong social networks and ties; "they transform computer games into truly social experiences." (Kujanpää, Manninen, & Vallius, 2007, 327) Gamers may spend considerable time in MMOs, maintaining existing friendships, developing new relationships, and participating in group activities in a search for proximal and distal companionship, support, and affiliation. This is partially due to the game design itself. For example, in *World of Warcraft*, the game characters complement each other, making progression through teamwork more efficient (Duchenaut, Yee, Nickell, & Moore, 2006). Sometimes the goals of MMOs would be nearly impossible to complete unless the gamers are willing to group and support each other along the game. Therefore, outcomes related to social interaction can be shown to be one of the major drivers for gamers to play MMOs.

Social outcomes may not be a significant incentive for all gamers. But why would some of them prefer ties established particularly in MMOs? Yee (2005), who has been examining social interaction in virtual environments, found that the gamers' compatibility, the shared desire to join in a cooperative effort toward a common goal, motivates to form a state of long-term connectedness with others. In addition, MMOs help ignore obstacles (e.g., anxiety, nervousness), since they perceive the similarity of interests of others that in traditional interactions may prevent relationships from developing. McKenna and Bargh (2000) who were among the first to assure that the Internet could have no single effect upon all people suggest there are three additional factors that encourage the occurrence of virtual social interactions: anonymity, lack of physical appearance, and control over time and pace of interactions. The communication beyond the workplace or school, and home is in most cases anonymous, allowing gamers to express themselves without constraints set by the reality. Therefore, gamers are likely to easily disclose "in ways they feel uncomfortable doing in real life because of their appearance" or the fear of disapproval and sanction (Cole & Griffiths, 2007, 575) – even to their closest. To all intents and purposes, virtual communication closely resembles non-verbal communication, even though gamers are playing via avatars. For instance, gamers are protected from bearing indiscernible stamps of social status, shyness or anxiety that often inhibit socially less skilful individuals from developing relationships (cf. Armichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006). In MMOs social but shy individuals are thus expected to express themselves to a greater extent with less of a perceived risk than in face-to-face contacts. In real life, situations where individuals have to respond immediately can easily make them distressed. However, these situations are absent in virtual social interactions due to the control over time and the pace of interaction. It is thus well-grounded that MMOs are extremely social games with many gamers making long-lasting friends through anonymity, lack of physical appearance, and extended control coupled with a possibility of non-verbal communication decrease social anxiety (e.g., Wang & Chiou, 2006).

Social Capital, Network Elasticity, and Social Shyness

The factors encouraging the occurrence of virtual social interactions described earlier are derived from the social features of MMOs, which enable the accumulation of social capital. Prior research (e.g., Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000) suggests that social capital exists as a collectively owned common resource used by all individuals within a social network or, alternatively, as a private common resource acquired for personal benefit. In this article, social capital is defined as a useful resource for exploring individual social competence and virtual environments. Therefore, social capital is understood in an extensively broad sense as the accumulation and outcome of the actual and potential intangible resources that individuals obtain from their relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition in their social networks (e.g., Coleman, 1988; Mathwick, Wiertz, & De Ruyter, 2008).

Within the context of MMOs, social capital, a positive consequence of social interaction, enables an individual to accrue relevant resources accessible in existing networks with shared interests. For instance, a gamer with plenty of social ties is likely to be given support by other gamers on carrying out the required tasks in the game, but not necessary information on doing homework. The value of social capital is present in its outcome if it meets the mutual topic of interest. Therefore, it is ultimately a matter of subject; under certain conditions an individual gives up relying solely on existing ties. But as long as the gamers are willing to support other inhabitants by providing the required information in issues outside the topic, there is no need to exit from a limited and safe network of MMO gamers. Due to this *network elasticity* and the qualities mentioned in the previous chapter individuals socially shy may feel inhibited to make new acquaintances and accrue the needed assistance from communities outside MMOs. Suppose an adolescent who has high social barriers to interact with others on a face-to-face basis. Even then she would be willing to accumulate social capital – closely related to self-esteem and satisfaction with life (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). The accumulation occurs only in virtual environments perceived trustworthy and safe, thus limiting the number and type of communities within which socially shy interact.

Prior studies have shown that the Internet enables individuals to connect to others who voluntarily co-operate and share their interests and needs with one another (Bargh & McKenna, 2004). This is also true in the context of MMOs, though there is controversial evidence indicating that, on one hand, the gamers are reluctant to co-operate with each other (Duchenaut et al., 2006), and on the other hand, playing games has fostered sociability since interaction with unknown others feels safe and reliable, and, at the same time, increase social capital due to the qualities virtual environment provides (e.g., Steinkuehler & Williams, 2006). Therefore, compared with face-to-face interactions, individuals socially shy are better able to communicate in MMOs where avatars may feed the glorified qualities in the absence of information to the contrary (cf. Bargh et al. 2002; Griffiths, Davies & Chappell 2003; Murray, Holmes & Griffin 1996). This indicates that such individuals described as reserved, introvert, and shy are likely to discover MMOs as a convenient environment to interact with each other and spend time on the Internet playing MMOs (Figure 1). In the context of personality, it possibly accounts for the risks notably leading to the social exclusion of the youth, creating a demand for youth services.

(H1) ***Therefore, it is hypothesised that*** *individuals socially shy are more likely to spend time playing MMOs than those socially bold.*

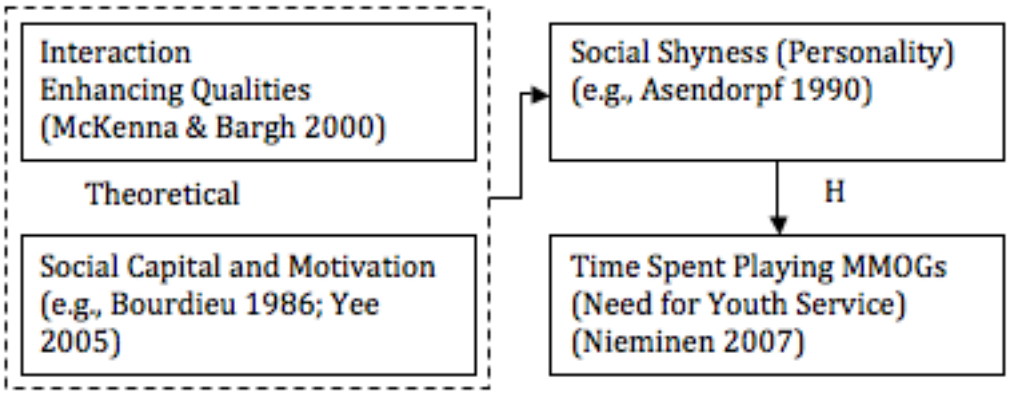

Image 1: Research Model

Collection, Reliability, and Validity of Data

In spring 2007, a postal survey conducted by the Finnish Youth Research Society was prepared and sent to young people aged 15–29 in Finland. A total of 1, 258 usable responses were received. The SPSS statistics program was employed as the data analysis tool. Individual analysis results are discussed below. In order to offer insights into the minds of young respondents, a brief profile of their demographical statistics is given. First, the frequency of playing MMOs was used to measure the current adoption rate among the young respondents. Second, the sample was divided into three different groups on the basis of respondent's MMO experience obtained from their answers. The groups were labelled active gamers (those who played 2–3 times a week or more), inactive gamers (those who played 2–3 times a month or less), and non-gamers. Third, descriptive statistics and the differences in demographics among the three groups were cross-tabulated and tested with a chi-square and a Kruskall-Wallis test. Fourth, to grasp the importance of respondents' social shyness, a more detailed examination to measure and create a construct referring to the ability to approach and interact with strangers was conducted. A study on the respondents' personality was supposed to cast more light on the issue of social shyness in relation to the time spent playing MMOs. Thus, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on items addressing the social shyness at a parsimonious representation. Respondents had to evaluate each item on a 5-point frequency scale. The convergent validity of included factors was assessed by using principal component factor analysis. As shown in table 3, one factor consisting of two items was extracted from the data. Two statistical tests calculated separately for all groups were applied to evaluate reliability of extracted factor, namely Cronbach's Alpha, and average variance extracted (AVE). Finally, the influence of social shyness on the time the three groups spent playing MMOs among the groups were analysed.

Results

The overall analysis revealed that 11 per cent of all respondents (N=1, 258) were currently involved in playing MMOGs. Of these gamers, 54 % were using MMOs actively and 46 % casually. The analysis of the demographic variables demonstrated statistically significant difference among the groups in age and gender (Table 1–2). The results purport that males around their twenties with diverse educational backgrounds were predominantly represented among the gamers.

In addition, respondents younger than the age of twenty tended to spend more time playing MMOs. There were no significant differences in the level of education among these groups.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of respondents

Descriptive Statistics of Respondents		Active Gamers	Casual Gamers	Non-Gamers
General Education	Some Elementary School	36%	48%	32%
	Elementary School	11%	8%	13%
	Some Secondary School	36%	37%	48%
	Graduated	18%	8%	6%
Vocational Education	No Vocational Education	55%	49%	46%
	Vocational Institute	27%	30%	28%
Higher Education	Polytechnic	7%	10%	14%
	University	5%	3%	9%
	Other	5%	8%	3%
Age	15-19	51%	45%	33%
	20-24	27%	28%	34%
	25-29	22%	27%	33%
Gender	Male	82%	69%	31%
	Female	18%	31%	69%

Table 2 Comparison of Demographics

	Frequency of using MMOs									
	Active		**Casual**		**Non-Gamers**		**Kruskal-Wallis Test**		**Chi-Square Test**	
	Mean	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Chi-Square**	**Sig.***	**Chi-Square**	**Sig.****
General Education	2.356	1.147	2.048	1.084	2.279	0.985	3.547	0.170	Not applicable	
Vocational Education	1.795	1.142	1.905	1.201	1.950	1.108	2.556	0.279	Not applicable	
Age	1.703	0.806	1.813	0.833	2.003	0.815	12.091	0.002	Not applicable	
Gender	1.176	0.383	1.313	0.467	1.688	0.464	Not applicable		109.768	0.000

** P-values of Kruskal-Wallis test for equality of means: H-0: Means are equal. H-0 is rejected if p<0.05.*
*** P-values of Chi-Square test for expected frequencies: H-0: Expected frequencies are equal. H-0 is rejected if p<0.05.*

The test results of the reliability of social shyness construct are presented in Table 3. Data indicates that item loadings ranged from 0.886 to 0.916 among the groups, which exceeds

the acceptable value of 0.707 (Chin, 1998). The internal consistency of the construct was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and average value extracted (AVE). Cronbach's Alpha exceeded the threshold value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). Consistent with the recommendations of Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE was above 0.50. Since the three values of reliability were above recommended thresholds, the social shyness construct was deemed to provide adequate convergence reliability.

Table 3 Reliability of social shyness construct

Reliability of Construct	Active Gamers	Casual Gamers	Non-Gamers
Item 1*: Loading	0.887	0.916	0.886
Item 2: Loading**	0.887	0.916	0.886
Cronbach's alpha	0.724	0.789	0.720
AVE	0.611	0.626	0.610

** Item 1: "I feel comfortable initiating a conversation even with strangers."*
*** Item 2: "I feel comfortable engaging in on-going conversation."*

Finally, the hypothesised relationship among social shyness and the time spent playing MMOs was examined with the Kruskal-Wallis test, as represented in Table 4. The results show that social shyness had no differential influence across the groups, thus the hypothesis was not supported.

Table 4 Influence of Social Shyness

	Frequency of using MMOs							
	Active Gamers		**Casual Gamers**		**Non-Gamers**		**Kruskal-Wallis Test**	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Chi-Square	Sig.*
Item 1	2.930	1.081	2.690	1.195	2.640	1.076	4.832	0.089
Item 2	2.290	0.919	2.350	0.907	2.360	0.896	0.349	0.840
Social Shyness	0.105	1.015	0.026	1.095	0.001	0.999	0.429	0.807

* P-values of Kruskal-Wallis test for equality of means: H-0: Means are equal. H-0 is rejected if $p<0.05$.

Discussion

As opposed to prior studies (e.g., N. Yee, 2006), the gamers in this study were in their early twenties. It should, however, be noted that in this article the empirical data consisted only of respondents aged 15–29. At that age, the young are likely to move out of their parents' home and pursue their university or vocational studies, or are in the beginning of their professional careers, which indicates they are learning to take responsibility for their own lives (Nikander, 2009). To offset this responsibility some of the young seem to use their freedom of choice for playing MMOs. The analysis also revealed that active gamers with diverse educational backgrounds were significantly younger than casual and non-gamers, suggesting that MMOs enjoy relatively high popularity particularly among young adults. However, it should be taken into consideration that currently only 11 per cent of the sample in the 15–29 age group play

MMOs. Moreover, compared to women, men were significantly more committed to playing MMOs. The results confirm findings of prior game studies that the content of MMOs may not be directed equally toward men and women who have dissimilar incentives. According to (Taylor, 2003, 124), MMOs would begin to "truly draw in a diverse gaming population and legitimize those already playing" if their designers were to "rise to the challenge presented by a sociology of the body and a more complicated understanding of gender".

More interestingly, the study holds that gamers are as socially bold (or shy) as non-gamers. An ability to interact with strangers is not sufficient factor to explain the time spent on the Internet playing MMOs. Moreover, a post hoc analysis confirmed that when non-gamers were removed, no significant difference was revealed between active and casual gamers, showing that playing MMOs had no negative or positive influence on social shyness – referred to as social competence which can be improved with practice. Overall, there is also little evidence, if none at all, that social shyness would inhibit young adults from accruing social capital both from virtual and non-virtual environments. Thus, on the basis of social shyness, the need for youth services in MMOs to reassert personality is not well-founded.

It is however essential to bear in mind that personality is only one factor that affects social exclusion. Although MMOs do not primarily attract socially shy young gamers, the presence of virtual youth service in MMOs is still justified. As mentioned earlier in this study, game publishers offer various rewards to gamers for staying in MMOs as long as possible. Instead of simply striving to adjust the gamers to the society or form their personality, the point of view should however be more in preventive virtual youth service, including responsible media use. In order to make connections and build strong relationships with these young gamers youth workers are thus advised to play along in *guilds* or *clans*[44] and share their knowledge based on their personal experience. Doing this, the young have at least one person whom to contact for personal problems. Or even better, a person who provides solutions before the problems arise.

Implications, Limitations and Future Research

There are at least two implications for practitioners involved in virtual youth services. First, for individuals responsible for a virtual youth service it is important to define the underlying reasons for an intervention in relation to the functions of the service. Second, the young who are socially shy are not more likely to spend time playing MMOs or gain less social capital outside virtual environment. The qualities of MMOs seem to have no expected impact on enhancing the young socially shy to social interaction. Therefore, reasons to integrate the young people who play MMOs into the society or fostering them into autonomous and self-conscious adults are perhaps to be sought elsewhere than in their personality (i.e. social shyness). The article has shown that in terms of being socially shy those who play MMOs have no more difficulties as their non-gamer peers in adjusting to society or have problems in the process of forming their personality.

In this article, a relationship between social shyness and the time spent playing MMOs was explored and theoretically explained via the ability to interact with strangers and the accumulation of social capital. Ideally, this logic should be empirically tested by measuring the relationship between the incentives to seek for social interaction through MMOs. However, this was not

possible in this case due to the lack of information regarding the willingness to play MMOs. This is in the author's view the main limitation of the article. Another limitation is that the model has been validated by making use of a sample of respondents living in Western culture (Finland), which is likely to affect the extent to which MMO perceptions influence behaviour. Despite these limitations, however, the hypothesis developed in the article is grounded on valid arguments regarding social motivation behind playing MMOs made by prior research.

It is recommended that further research to expand the knowledge of the effects of the young people's personality on the time spent playing MMOs and social capital be conducted. This article stresses the importance of the presence of social shyness in the young when seeking social interaction especially in a virtual environment. As more young individuals join MMOs, other factors may become relevant. In general, more research answering the broader question of what factors influence the ways in which young people seek social capital through MMOs is required.

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"EVERYTHING IS THERE" – INTERNET IN THE LIVES OF JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURE FANS IN FINLAND

Katja Valaskivi

If it wasn't for the Internet, I would listen to Swedish music and dress in grey.
(Female, 17)

This is the passionate statement of a Japanese popular culture fan in response to the question 'What is the role of the Internet in your fandom'. She filled out a questionnaire in a fan convention organized in Tampere, Finland in early 2008. The answer brings out the shared experience of Japanese popular culture fan communities in Finland (and elsewhere): without the Internet, many would not have even known that there was such a thing as Japanese popular culture and gaining information about it would be discouragingly difficult.

Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that the global spread of Japanese popular culture is heavily dependent on the Internet. Without the Internet, the phenomenon would have remained marginal and within the cult fandom realm (about cult fandom see, e.g., Nikunen 2006).

The Internet is important in at least four ways: Firstly, it is a medium of information and new influences. Secondly, it is the place where the actual material (manga, anime, costumes, fashion, fan accessories, etc.) is available – legally or illegally. Thirdly, it is the channel and place for fan communities to meet and discuss. And finally, it offers the means of producing and distributing fan productions: fansubbed animations, fan fiction, anime music videos, manga drawings, etc.

This article discusses the various usages and meanings of the Internet in the lives of the Japanese popular culture fans in Finland. The analysis is based on the Internet Usage Survey results, interviews of fans and distributors of Japanese popular culture in Finland, the abovementioned survey results (from the Tracon III convention organized in Tampere in February 2008), and email questionnaire answers of Japanese popular culture fan associations and hobby clubs in Finland.[46]

Who are the fans of Japanese popular culture in Finland?

Fandom has different stages of intensity and depth. Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998, in Hirsjärvi 2009, 44) have defined fandom in relation to expertise, intensity, and specialization of consumption. They have five categories: *the consumer*, who is attached to the object of interest on a general level; *the fan*, who is emotionally attached to the object and consumes related products in massive amounts; *the cultist*, who has deeper knowledge of the object; *the enthusiast,* for whom the fandom is a central part of every day life; and *the small scale producer*, who has identified opportunities to utilize the related markets. For the German researcher,

Rainer Winter (1995, in Kovala 2003), fan communities consist of *strangers*, *novices, tourists, enthusiasts, and freaks.* Both of these categorizations apply closely to the fandom of Japanese popular culture in Finland.

Categorizing and defining fandom is also important for fans themselves.—In particular, small scale producers who might have their own blogs and write for fanzines and magazines of the field are active in discussing the matter. On the Internet, defining fandom and its different stages is an important theme of identification, self-definition, grouping, and categorizing fandom. An illustrative example was published in the *Otakunvirka*-blog in March 2009, where the alias *Tsubasa* made the categorization of fans into four different levels: *casual consumers,* '*nyypät'* or beginners, *nerds*, and '*jäärät*', which could be translated as *old farts* (Tsubasa 2009a).

Japanese popular culture fandom grew fast in Finland since the turn of the century (Valaskivi 2009, Nikunen 2006), and now it has reached a stage where the largest group consists of *casual consumers*. About 30 percent of the Internet Usage Survey respondents answered that they are very or somewhat interested in Japanese popular culture. The reader survey of the Anime-magazine (the oldest magazine on Japanese popular culture in Finland) indicated approximately 44 000 readers (KTM 2007). In the major recent conventions arranged around Finland, there have been 3000 – 9000 participants. The number of participants has been growing steadily every year. These figures indicate that the phenomenon is known to basically all young people in Finland, many of whom could be defined as *strangers* on Winter's scale.

Fandom of Japanese popular culture in Finland (and elsewhere in the Western world, in the US in particular) began as cult fandom (Nikunen 2005) and a sub-culture comprised of small, devoted groups. These groups were predominantly male, and many of the first official groups were established within student unions at universities. Towards the end of 1990s, the popularity of contemporary Japanese phenomena grew quickly, not least because of Pokémon. With the development of Internet and peer-to-peer (p2p) networks, the amount of available of Japanese popular culture exploded during the first years of this century. The first commercially successful translations of manga in Finnish appeared in 2003 (Dragon Ball and Ranma).

The forms of activities around Japanese popular culture have changed and increased in number in Finland over the last 10 years or so. The changes in practices of fandom can be described with the concepts of Raymond Williams when he talks about dominant, emergent, and residual forms of culture (Nikunen 2009, 189). These different forms can exist at the same time, although some are more influential than others.

Most of the association questionnaire answers note the constantly growing role of Internet communities. At the same time they acknowledge the importance of the Japan-related events and conventions, clubs, and societies. While fandom of Japanese popular culture used to focus mainly on anime, now the popularity of *cosplay*[47] and Japanese street fashion styles is evident in the findings of association questionnaires. It is worth noting here that the Finnish community for Japanese street fashion, Enfant Terrible, is one of the largest Internet communities of Japanese pop-culture, with its 700+ registered members, of whom 99 percent are female.[48]

Currently, of those who in the Internet Usage Survey professed to be very interested in Japanese popular culture, the majority is male. Also, of the 3600 registered members of animewatcher.com, two thirds are male. However, according to the associations, the fan community is going

through a change in terms of both age and gender. Most of the answers emphasised the current young age of the enthusiasts. Some have also noted that, while manga and anime was mostly a young men's hobby in the 1990s, since the beginning of the 21st century the number of teenage female enthusiasts has increased dramatically. The developments and figures indicate that the majority of *casual consumers* and *novices* are female, while most *freaks*, *small scale producers* (and *old farts*) are men. There is also age difference among these groups: the novices are usually teenagers, while small scale producers are frequently well over 20, some even in their 40s.

Nikunen (2006) notes that belonging to a community can be seen as a dominant feature of Finnish fandom. However, a typical feature listed in many association responses was that most of the fans of Japanese pop-culture do not focus clearly on one specific area, but are active in various fields. Thus, one can belong to several communities or hang around in different groups without strong attachment to them. Although cosplay and street fashion are attractive, visible, and growing areas of fandom, most of the fans of Japanese popular culture in Finland focus on anime and manga. Within manga and anime, however, there are great variations of interest groups. One answer noted that the number of j-rock fans who are not interested in anime or manga is on the rise.

As already noted, for the fans of Japanese popular culture, the Internet is in many ways the most important media. Although television has been very important in introducing anime and Japanese visual style in animations to the Finnish audiences, it is apparent that the current fan community mostly relies on the Internet in many ways. However, it is necessary to emphasize that fandom practices cover all media forms and the production and marketing of popular culture aims at the widest possible productization in all possible formats. The production of anime, manga, and video games in Japan aims at gendering the products clearly. Thus, there are 'boy's' manga (*shōnen*) and 'girl's' manga (*shōjo*)[49]. However, the production does not define the gender of the audience. For instance, the manga *Naruto* was first published in Japan within the *shōnen* genre, but in Finland it has been very popular among preteen girls. *Naruto* is also one of texts that have inspired fan-fiction and *dōjinshi*[50]-drawing, in particular from the *yaoi*[51] -perspective. Although fandom has its own ways of functioning and does not always follow the designed logics of marketing efforts, it is nevertheless dependent on the commercial production and distribution systems.

In the Internet Usage Survey, respondents who expressed strong interest in Japanese popular culture are also heavy users of the Internet. On average, their daily Internet use is close to double the time (171.93 min) to those who said to have no interest in Japanese popular culture (101.53 min). All of the "interested" respondents also use Internet in their free-time. Almost all of them have computers at home (on average 4-5 percent of all respondents do not have a computer at home), the majority in their own room (80 percent, compared with the 70 percent average). This group is active in reading news on the Internet, and they utilize mobile Internet more than average.

Of those interested in Japanese popular culture, the majority is active on bulletin boards and discussions. They are not very active in writing blogs themselves, but they are active readers of blogs. They are also more active than average in using peer-to-peer (p2p) programs, taking part in Internet auctions, and buying goods in the Internet. The enthusiasts of Japanese popular culture watch movies and videos over the Internet more than other respondents. They also play Internet games daily more than others (both free and commercialized games). However, what

we don't know is whether the Internet Usage Survey respondents were interested in Japanese popular culture then became heavy Internet users, or vice versa. The other materials, however, explain some of the usage of the Japanese popular culture fans.

The many-sided fabric of virtual and IRL communities

It is important. It is the contact channel for other fans and following the communities. It also provides anime and manga.
(Male, 23)

You can communicate with people and order things in the Internet.
(Female, 18)

The "Internet" has been theorized in many ways. It has been seen as cyberspace separated from the every day life, where communities have a life of their own disconnected from the physical reality. It has also been described as a complex, linked network. Cavanaugh (1997) emphasizes that the metaphors chosen in its description influence perceptions of the Internet. In Finland, one of the leaders of cultural studies of Internet, Susanna Paasonen (2006, 31–32), notes that there has been a tendency to develop holistic theories about the Internet as a phenomenon based on specific empirical cases of Internet usage. She also points out that, in Finland, research of Internet and Internet usage has mainly relied on the concept of rational citizenship; as a result, an information-based perception of Internet has prevailed. This, again, is in conflict with the fact that the Internet is mostly used in ways that are usually categorized into the sphere of entertainment. Kaarina Nikunen (2009, 195) talks about '*höpöhöpö*-culture' by which she refers to the nonsensical and excessive, fragmented, and multiplying properties of fan production.

As Jenkins (2004, 246) notes, the Web has brought fan cultures from the marginal media industries into the spotlight. The nonsensical is thus sometimes perceived not as nonsense; rather, the fans are seen as forerunners of a new, virtual community building—heralds of a new kind of participatory culture.

The concept of community has been used in the research of the Internet from early on. There has been a great deal of discussion on whether or not virtual communities are as 'real' as communities 'in real life.' In the context of this research, however, it is obvious that the Internet is a part of fandom, and cannot be separated from other forms of coming together. This has also been apparent in earlier research on fandom. For instance, in her research on television fans, Kaarina Nikunen emphasizes how the Internet extends the community for the Xena-fans she interviewed for her dissertation (Nikunen 2006, 137–143). Like in the case of Xena fan communities, for the fans of Japanese popular culture, those communities who meet both virtually and in real life are the most intensive ones.

The fandom of Japanese popular culture has a translocal nature. It is a phenomenon that is connected with a global trend and market, in spite of getting its variations and fandom practices in the local setting. There is a continuous and complicated interaction and interplay between cultures and localities taking place in the fandom of Japanese popular culture globally[52]. The Finnish fans are a part of the translocal phenomenon. They take part in different (virtual and IRL) communities both within the language area and in other languages. (On the concept of translocal, see Kraidy 2005.)

Language is an important factor in virtual (and IRL) communities. The Finnish language is only spoken by around five million people in the world, and most of them live in the actual northern European nation state. Thus, often language, cultural identity, ethnicity, and nation are collapsed together in the fan community of Japanese popular culture, although, in relation to the object of fandom itself, negotiations of identity, difference, and belonging happen constantly. Furthermore, Finnish fans are eager and able to take part in discussions taking place in other languages as well, mostly in English. For instance anime music videos are typically published, discussed and circulated in YouTube and other global services.

In Finland, fans of Japanese popular culture have formed local groups, most of which are registered associations, in all major cities and many smaller towns as well. Some of the oldest and largest associations have their birth history within university student organizations; nevertheless, some of the associations have been born in different ways. Some new local associations have been helped out by the Finnish Anime Union. The oldest regional associations were founded after the mid-nineties, but the great majority started after 2002. Altogether, there are nineteen of these clubs and hobby circles; however, the level of activity varies greatly. Some of the older associations have all but died away, while some are flourishing. Most of the associations have a website, and most of them take part in the Finnish Anime Union (*Animeunioni*), a loose community concentrating on the promotion of Japanese popular culture in Finland.

Main activities for the local associations are organizing anime-watching meetings and other get-togethers, like all-nighters, game nights and 'hobby days' to introduce members to each other and to hang around drawing, playing and reading. Some clubs and associations have meetings where they eat Japanese food or have theme nights related to Japanese culture. Earlier, it was somewhat common to make group orders of manga, anime, and other goods through the local associations, but these days most fans do their shopping through the Internet independently, which requires credit card access.

Animeunioni.org combines all major Finnish virtual communities, and the core maintainers of this community are also among the most active ones in the real life communities. The discussion areas of *Animeunioni*, (Aniki.fi), are the largest ones in Finland. Another important community is *Kupoli*, which started out as a virtual community, but formed a registered association in the Spring of 2008. The Animeunioni site has links to all local associations and it also has a buyer's guide for the most important national and international Internet shopping sites of Japanese popular culture. Both Aniki and Kupoli have bulletin boards, in addition to discussion areas. They also provide virtual areas for fan publishing, such as manga drawings and anime music videos.

Altogether, there are about ten larger active Internet fan communities, including communities for Finnish cosplay, J-rock, anime music video makers, and fashion enthusiasts (Enfant Terrible). There are also numerous blogs, which feature the fandom and fan community itself (like *Otakunvirka* and *Mangotarha*) or some sector of Japanese popular culture, like manga or anime, street fashion, or music (for instance, *Bubukuuti*). New associations often form around thematic Internet communities or have sprouted of private friends' groups or Internet communities. The central role of the Animeunioni has been diminishing with the strengthening role of the Internet communities.

A special feature of the Finnish virtual fan community is the fact that they have never lacked adequate server space. A group of active, small scale producer fans—young men working un-

der registered association called “Säätöyhteisö B2”—own or have access to server space and have generously provided all Japanese popular culture fan communities as much server space as they have requested, free of charge. This community has recently also widened its scope to provide technical help and server space for individuals and associations who wish to work for “freedom of speech, cultural diversity, and other individual rights” (Säätöyhteisö 2009).

Among the most visible forms of Japanese popular culture fan activities are the conventions or “cons,” which usually also have cosplay[53] contests. The cosplayers are a visually striking sight who attract photographers and media. Consequently, the media attention of the Japanese popular culture fandom has been greatly emphasizing cosplay. Cosplay fans have their own sub-group of Animeunioni called Cosplay Finland, and their own discussion area in Aniki.fi. Many of those who do cosplay, however, find their discussions, information and communities through international – mostly English – websites and virtual communities. The offline communities are nevertheless almost exclusively local, despite the fact that guests are invited from other parts of the world to attend e.g. conventions.

The conventions also always have their websites, which provide information on location, event details, dates, etc.; these websites are linked in the Animeunioni and Kupoli websites and other websites that provide information on the community gatherings. The interest of these convention goers varies from anime and manga to video games, Japanese street fashion, and Japanese popular music. Many do cosplay, many just dress up streetwise within their genre. Not all cosplayers take part in the organized cosplay contests.

There are three main brands[54] under which manga is published in Finnish language (Egmont, Sangatsu manga and Punainen jättiläinen). All three have named a particular employee whose task (among others) is to hang around in the Internet communities, and Sangatsu manga also has its own fan community. The task of the employees engaged in this work is to keep track of what is going on within the communities, but also to inform fans on new publications of manga and events organized by the publishers, and answer possible questions appearing in discussions and related to particular manga. The presence of the industry within the fan communities is mainly thought of as a positive way of distributing information, although some also consider it ‘lurking’ (Hills 2002, 172–173) and are sensitive towards the commercial implications.

Discussions in Finnish mainly take place at the Aniki.fi discussion area or within Kupoli, but also in blogs, or even on web sites of newspapers or television channels when they publish news on Japanese popular culture. Internet Relay Chat (IRC) is also an important communication channel for the fandom. IRC enables instant and spontaneous virtual discussions and connects people from different associations. It is also an effective grapevine, informing the participants on new publications, events, and news. The exclusivity of IRC reproduces the fan community self-image as an underground culture. There are tens of different related discussion channels in the IRC, including channels run by associations and forum communities. For instance, in addition to the web-discussion areas, almost all associations (as well as Kupoli, Enfant Terrible and Naruto.fi -types of communities) have their own IRC-channels.

There are two main differences between the discussion forums and IRC channels. Firstly, the user communities are different—not all web-discussion members take part in — and secondly, the discussions in IRC are more varied, anarchistic, and direct. Because of this, in IRC, small cliques and inner circles with strong opinions are formed, making the discussions difficult to access

for outsiders. Inner circles function as they will within the channels, as IRC is considered more private than the discussion forums. This has pros and cons. On one hand, there are illustrative and critical discussions on the relationship between the so called official truth and practicalities. On the other hand, the decision makers within the fan community have been criticized for using IRC as a way of keeping the decision making process within the small group.

Internet as a source of information and (legal and illegal) material

No Internet, no anime
(Man 17)

Everything is there
(Girl 15)

If it wasn't for the 'grey material' this hobby would never have become this popular. It would have stayed within male technical university students who would order [anime] in the Internet and watch it among friends.
(Local association in North-Western Finland)

Internet is the place where the fans find the information on manga, anime, and Japanese popular music, street styles, or trends[55]. Finding information on new releases and web shopping in particular often takes place in English, while discussions are usually conducted in Finnish (on Finnish web sites). These discussions can be about anything involving fandom: contents, characters and plotlines of stories, exchanging opinions on products, arranging meetings and conventions, and so on.

For younger fans, whose English ability is limited, news sources in Finnish are important. Information is shared through bulletin boards, but also through discussion areas and chat. Aniki and Kupoli are among the most important web communities for information exchange in Finnish. On the Animeunioni site there is also a buyer's guide, which informs fans on reliable methods of buying manga, anime, and fan-merchandise and warns about unreliable sources.

For many fans, the Internet is a shopping center (among other things). Both new and second hand manga, anime, fan merchandise, Japanese street fashion and Japanese popular music are all bought through the Internet, both on Finnish and international websites. Although publishers of Finnish manga have their own web-shops, the fans mostly buy Finnish language manga in kiosks and grocery stores. English versions of manga and anime are, on the contrary, mostly bought in the Internet. There are a couple of successful Finnish-based Internet shops servicing this need.
For the majority of Japanese popular culture fans, the Internet is not only a source of information but also the source of the actual material, anime in particular. Anime is watched, downloaded, bought, and shared through the Internet (e.g. YouTube) and especially through p2p networks like BitTorrent. In the majority of cases, anime serials or movies available in full over the Internet have been loaded there without the legal right to do so. This applies to both fansubbed versions and to those versions that have been legally located into another (mostly English) language. (Fansubs will be discussed later in more detail.) Some portal-style sites search anime in the Internet and thus provide an easy gateway to finding the anime spread around the Internet

(e.g., animethat.com). The portal-style sites themselves are legal in the US, functioning on the same model as Google and other search engines.

Many active fans are well aware of the property rights issues, and conscious of the matter. Nevertheless, almost everybody admits that the 'grey' or strictly illegal material provides the majority of the material. There are three major reasons for this: the lack of available legal material (together with the vast availability of the grey material), prices of legal material, and the difficulty or impossibility of obtaining legal rights for the material. A great majority of products of Japanese popular culture are never officially licensed in Europe at all.

The abovementioned Anime Union Finland and the adjunct discussion area, Aniki.fi, do not have strict rules, but nevertheless have built clear ethical codes of conduct. At the formation of the community, the founding members agreed that there would be no pirate or X-rated material published on the site. In this sense, the organized fan functions in Finland are aiming to be inoffensive, and through this aim to gain acceptance of Japanese popular culture in Finland. This has also caused heated discussions and a plethora of critical opinions within the community (see, e.g., Tsubasa 2009b)

The point of view of the average fan to the p2p networks and contents shearing is pragmatic. As the availability of legal material is very limited, the importance of fansubbed versions is often essential. Gaining the newest possible material (cf., Allison 2006) is important for the fans; it is possible to get it through the Internet, but the quickest channels are often the illegal ones. For many fans, another limitation is money. Buying legal material is expensive, and the illegal material is readily available, free of charge.

As mentioned above, The Finnish Anime Union's and (it's member clubs') official opinion is negative towards the illegal circulation of anime and manga, mainly fansubs and manga scanlations. However, most of the Finnish anime and manga clubs unofficially recognise that illegal material has (and has had) a great impact on the development of the fan culture in Finland. Only two of the eleven clubs and communities included in our survey refused to comment on the subject.

Most of the answers indicated that, without the grey circulation, manga and anime would never have become as popular in Finland as it is now. In most of the answers, it came out that illegal circulation was and in some cases is still used to cover up the lack of new official releases. The other reason for the popularity of fansubs and music appearing in several answers was the ability to see, read, and hear new and hyped releases before the actual official release, and therefore decide beforehand whether or not to buy the official release (or, in the case of music, go to a concert or buy a record).

Several answers also noted that the illegal circulation is becoming increasingly unnecessary because of the widened selection and reasonable prices of new official releases. Still, the main reason for relying on illegal circulation seems to be that many of the young fans simply can't afford as many DVD's or manga as they'd like to. For some, however, it is also a political issue, and a new, non-commercial logic of distributing contents. These discussions have become even more topical since the convictions of the Pirate Bay maintainers in Sweden during the spring of 2009.

Fan production and distribution in the Internet

I watch anime, look for music and publish my drawings
(Girl 15)

As many writers have noted, the Internet has changed the role of producer and consumer, within fan cultures in particular (See e.g., Jenkins 2004, Nikunen 2005, Hills 2002).
The practices of fandom, such as writing fan fiction or translating and inserting subtitles for anime, happen nowadays in the Internet, where they are immediately available for the fan community to use, evaluate, and rewrite.

Fan production is often time-consuming and requires a lot of work. Outsiders often wonder why fan producers willingly volunteer to invest their time and effort into the production. Sirkkunen and Lietsala (2008, 117) have studied motivations behind participatory communities in the Internet. Their survey on the Star Wreck -movie making community found that the main reasons for voluntary participation were: "It is fun for passing time,", "You always get something in return for participation," "I want to help others," "I like to share my skills and knowledge with others," and "In my opinion, everybody should give something in return to the community". Among the least motivating factors were: "I want to earn money," "To get respect," "I get better work opportunities by participating".

These results indicate that the motivations for fan participation are often rather altruistic: It is fun and you get to give to others. This can also been seen in discussions within the fandom, where motivations of for participation are often pondered upon. For instance, the writer of the *Fanipalvelua* (2009) blog lists possible motivations for doing fansubs as follows:

- Desire to help
- Doing good deeds
- Practicing to become professional
- Learning languages
- Killing time
- Fishing for plaudits (the writer emphasizes that this is rarely a major motive)
- The sites are bustling with one's favorite materials
- Developing as a fan
- Testing one's limits
- Discontent with earlier translations
- The team, doing together
- Spreading one's favorite culture around

Thus, the fans are very motivated, and the motivation is internal. For the fans, fandom is a matter of passion and affect. It is a field of expression, expressed feelings are often strong and opinions aired waspishly. Fan production is the arena where the fans express themselves.

The most extensive fan production currently available in the Internet is the fansubs. Before the age of the Internet, Japanese animations were circulated among the fans on VHS videos accompanied by explanation notebooks. Later, in mid-1995 (in the US), technology was available and developed enough for fans to do subtitling on videos themselves. However, only around the turn of the century did the Internet and especially quick broadband connections made it possible for anybody to make subtitles for animations or to distribute the versions to other fans. (Uusitalo 2007, 43)

Also, manga is to some extent distributed through the Internet as 'scanlations,' translated and scanned fan versions. For *dōjinshi*, or self-made manga and anime, the Internet is now a very important publishing source. *Dōjinshi* manga magazines are also sold at fan conventions; however, the Internet has made the material available between cons and to wider audiences. Especially *hentai*[56] *dōjinshi* spreads around the Internet, and some fans indicate that, without the Internet, it would be impossible to find, for instance, *yaoi* manga in Finland. As in other parts of the world, in Finland some *dōjinshi* drawers have recently managed to find commercial publishers for their work.

Anime music videos (AMVs) are one form of fan production that has quickly gained popularity in Finland. AMVs are published in the Internet and showed in the cons. The point is mostly to edit bits and pieces of different anime or video games to illustrate a (surprising) piece of music. These videos are discussed virtually in great detail and commented on by other fans and fan producers.

The fans are producers not only in the Internet. Some associations publish fanzines, and the conventions are mostly organized by the fans themselves.

As many fandom researchers have documented, fandom can also become—or lead into—a profession. Both of the two commercial magazines of Japanese popular culture also started as fan-organized projects. Most of the small enterprises that sell merchandise have been established by people who themselves are interested in Japanese popular culture. There are also small enterprises that make custom-made cosplay costumes or accessories for cosplay. For these small firms, the Internet is often increasingly important distribution and marketing channel, although a big part of the business comes through the IRL fan networks.

Urge for the medium or the message?

The fans can perhaps be divided into certain groups. There are the young yaoi-fan girls, who read a lot of manga, draw it, and maybe do cosplay. Then there are the computer-boys, who don't necessarily even come to the association meetings and are happy by themselves watching anime. Basic fans can do cosplay, read manga and watch anime, but are not strongly committed to any area. J-rock/pop is beneath all these, since most people listen to it and it shows – at least in the younger groups – also in the way of dressing. Of course there are also J-rock/pop fans who don't think much of anime and manga.

(Description by a local association in North-Western Finland)

According to Henry Jenkins (2006), media convergence alters the relationship between existing technology, industry, markets, gender, and audiences. Convergence happens both as a top-down, corporate-driven process and a bottom-up, consumer-driven process. It is, thus, generated not only by industrial strategies but also by audiences. In the era of convergence, the new audiences are active, migratory, and disloyal to media companies. At the same time, they are socially connected and resistant. And they are active participants of media, taking the media into their own hands. This is how fans and fan communities are often seen as leaders in Internet and other new media usage, forming a new participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006). A common claim and hypothesis is that active fans of Japanese popular culture are among the

leaders of this development; this is confirmed by the findings of the Internet Usage Survey.

Since fandom as such, even these days, is often considered as something suspicious or deviant, focusing on the active Internet usage of fans can be a redemptive project—an attempt to justify the fandom itself. Thomas LaMarre (2007, 383–384) emphasizes that some Japanese writers who have discussed the *otaku*-culture (or the hard-core popular culture fandom in Japan) tend to exaggerate the importance of the media on the expense of the fact that for many (male) *otaku,* the affect is not the *media*, but in fact the *woman* that can be reached—if not in real life—through it.

The claim then is the *otaku* are attracted to the media rather than the contents. For instance, there are Japanese writers who connect the *otaku* phenomenon closely with media and technology. The media is explained to be both the source of pleasure and the affect. Media is an acceptable and even preferable target of fandom, at least, more so than sex or the woman (see Azuma 2007, 2009; Okada 1996). Thus, media becomes an acceptable justification for the fandom, and through this justification, the fandom is redeemed from the deviant and unclear into the category of acceptable and forerunner.

According to Thomas LaMarre (2007,) the approach that, for the *otaku,* the affect is the media (rather than women) reinforces the otaku image as an inverted, unsocial (male) nerd, withdrawn into a dark room with a computer. At the same time, it emphasizes homosocial bonds, the power of men over women, and refuses female creativity (ibid.)

However, the image of the *otaku* as withdrawn male nerds does not apply as such outside Japan. Fans of Japanese popular culture outside Japan have readopted the term, and proudly call themselves *otaku*, connoting coolness, trendiness, and emphasizing the special knowledge they have. In Finland, four of the associations even have the word *otaku* in their name. The affect for many fans outside Japan, then, is the Japaneseness of their interests, which gives the glow of something authentic and particular to them and their interests. Similar findings are apparent in the research of Napier (2007) on American manga and anime fans and Nikunen (2006) on Finnish fans.

As I have discussed in this paper, the different aspects of Internet usage—finding information and material, taking part in communities, producing and distributing fan production— are all intertwined and happen often on same sites or at the same time. The virtual communities are also entwined with the communities in real life.

For many respondents, the first impulses towards Japanese popular culture did come through the Internet. However, as many got their first impact from friends and acquaintances, or other media. Regardless of where the first initiative for the enthusiasm has come, it is apparent that the Internet is neither the aim nor the motivation of Japanese popular culture fandom. Nevertheless, the Internet is, in many ways, necessary for fandom and fan practices. It is a channel, tool, space, and enabler of fandom, but not the crux.

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GENERATING VALUE IN SOCIAL GAME CULTURE

Sonja Kangas

In the past 30 years digital games have shifted from marginal to mainstream both economically and culturally. Playing is no longer an activity of a small group of nerds, but a general pastime for many. According to studies on time, games and other interactive entertainment take up an increasing share of free time (research data for this book, Tilastokeskus 2005). In addition, it has been reported that the global game industry is already bigger than DVD and Blu-Ray sales put together (Elspa 2009). Games are situated at the junction of digital entertainment, computer mediated interactivity, visual culture and information society (Simon 2006), stressing their relevance both as a cultural form and a way of presenting things which is increasingly being utilized in other forms of digital media (Couldry 2004:8, Boellstorf 2006:33). Participation and user-generated content are in the mainstream (Jenkins 2006) and among the current mega-trends of media culture which also influence the general digital games culture. At the same time, the user cultures of digital media and games highlight the multiple roles of a consumer. In addition to consumer and viewer roles, a player is potentially a critic, a producer, an information collector and a linker (Kangas, Sintonen & Lundvall 2008). Playful solutions are utilized, for example, in online services and advertizing. Games adopt conventions such as authorship and active participation which are already common parts of the total experience of online media, highlighting utilization of recombinant media objects as well as expanded player-driven beta test periods. Potential authorship game culture is also defined by contextual flexibility completed by collective user-generated content, personal experiences, self-expression and social interaction within the game. Although gaming has been a social activity from the start, the change presented in this article is distinct. Recent developments highlight that digital games are no longer ready-made and packaged goods where modifications and interpretations are made by fans and other enthusiasts in separate and marginal sub-culture (Postigo 2007). Incompleteness and building is becoming part of game development and the shared experience of a game, thus creating part of the value derived from the game.

This article will discuss the total experience by looking at novel types of consumer roles and forms of collective creativity. I look for answers to the question: How is authorship in contemporary game culture motivated by the value derived from the experience, and what type of value is it? Instead of money earned from virtual object sales or avatar trading, the focus will be on intangible value that completes the total experience and motivates the players. I will utilize the research data when looking at the question through two examples, the Microsoft XNA game development environment and the Little Big Planet game. In the XNA development environment players share player-generated games at the Xbox Live Arcade. Little Bit Planet supports various types of creativity from ranking content to actual development of new content.

From unproductive play to active participation in game

When talking about digital games people usually refer to Johan Huizinga (Huizinga 1944: 93) and Roger Caillois' (Caillois 1958: 23-24) classic definition of play even though naturally neither of them were aware of the special qualities of digital games or of the expanding culture of digital games when writing the definitions. Huizinga's and Caillois' definitions highlight freedom of play, difficulties to predict, unproductiveness, imaginary nature of play, voluntarity, order and creativity of players. Both highlight the fact that play takes place at a certain time and place by voluntarily accepted binding rules. Play generates excitement and joy as well as knowledge of something that is different from normal life (Huizinga 1944: 93, Meier 1986: 271-272). By creativity, participation and freedom classic definitions give starting points to the study of games and game culture, but those definitions lack features central to contemporary game culture. Multiple roles of a player, presenting, remix or snack size culture or combinating are well highlighted in digital play. This is similar to user-generated content, recombinant media objects and participation (Diakopoulos et. Al 2007, Purushotma 2007: 223) in online communities, blogs or Wikipedia consumption and production. On the other hand, games do not offer similar freedom that play does; as opposed to play, one can change the rules of a digital game, but modifying demands technical skills. It has been difficult to play games differently because certain functionalities and spatial limitations are hard coded in the game. Recent discussion about media objects has brought users to the center of the development process. Media objects highlight a game to consist of components a player can modify to create alternative interpretations, make combinations or new types of representations. In games, media object discussion is new and so far has merely been attached to the sub-culture of modding. Instead, many popular social microblogging, networking and content sharing services on the Internet have been developed on top of the idea of recombinant media objects. Users can bring objects from other online services, combine or create remixes or use a particular service through other services. For example the Twitter microblogging service is based on this idea. Besides emergent game-play (Smith 2001, Juul 2005) the media object idea is touching the author-creator model. It highlights that games consist of components such as rules and objects in game worlds, communication tools, practices and goals. It stresses novel types of game development generated by players' activity.

For examination of the above-mentioned consumer roles, David Marshall (2004) has suggested the utilization of a thesis of cultural production. Marshall sees that digital media consumption should be looked at as cultural production, because digital media and novel types of tools have expanded the role of a viewer and consumer to that of co-creator. Marshall has separated the roles of a browser and a player. Browsers of the Internet have turned more and more into players when new interaction possibilities have been presented. The role of the player highlights stronger engagement and devotion to media consumption (Marshall 2004: 26- 27). The boldest researchers have taken this development one step further when talking about playful operation style or even game lifestyle (Buckingham & Willett 2006:1, Tokunaga et. al 2007). Players' multiple roles are developing in games and related to games, in forms of reviewing games or interacting inside brand based fan culture.

Steps towards bringing participation into the mainstream

Since the beginning of commercial game culture consumers have acted to some extent as participants and co-producers. In the 1980s game culture was entertainment, but it was also a serious programming hobby (Herman 2001, Kent 2001). Computers were smaller than before and had become more available and easier to use. The first computer games, such as SpaceWar!, were generated inside a community of programmers whose goal was to demonstrate computers' processing abilities (Levy 2001). Over the next few decades, as microcomputers became common, users' creativity became multifaceted, from games development to cracking, hacking and demo scene which focuses on optimizing programming code and programming knowledge. Participation and creativity were then in the hands of a few, and demanded technical skills. Programming knowledge centricity in the 1980s strengthened the player-developer model. The game market was small and undeveloped, and Atari and other game companies got game ideas from excited programmers. Some of the ideas made it through to the market (Herman 2001).

Lacking development was due partly to available technology. At the beginning of the 1980s, game consoles were considered toys and processing performance of home microcomputers was limited. Performance of computer processors was only a few megahertz, RAM-memory contained some ten kilobytes and sound circuit utilized 3-4 channels. The most common microcomputers, the Commodore 64, Sinclair Spectrum and Spectravideo MSX, fell within these technical specifications. Limited resources defined programming on microcomputer. Programmers could easily turn technical limitations of computers and optimize utilized programming code. Good looking and sounding computer game programming became important individual performance. (Saarikoski 2003.) At the same time the BBS-system (Bulletin Board Systems), focusing on the social web environment, generated a natural environment for participatory design. Programming knowledge and pioneer culture also developed through character based online games or MUDs (Multi user dimensions or dungeons). In MUDs a player could join the developers after advancing far enough in the game (Kangas 1999).

At that time technical skills were attached to authority. Lately, personal motivation and social environments have become more central factors for participation. Even though there are always new ways to participate and participatory digital culture is transforming into part of the total experience of a game, still only a small minority develop content for the net or games. Instead of joining the XNA-development environment or utilizing Little Big Planet tools, more typical ways to participate are to enrich existing content by rating, ranking, personalization of avatars and commenting or guiding other players (Keen 2008). Players took a more active role as a strengthener of a message or a reviewer, but did not participate in the development of shared experience as such and move to the developers' side. Cultural change and social value derived from participation, not the interest of fans and other hobbyists, is at the center of a novel type of participatory culture. This change makes game modifications mainstream, making them a regular part of the total experience of a game play and design process. Similar development continues in social media, where in Marshall's (2004) terms the role of browser has already partly changed to that of player. Change actualizes simple activities such as rating content, sending suggestions to friends and sharing content in services like Facebook and YouTube. In these services developers provide limited ways for consumers to interact and participate in content and service development. Users provide the key content to the service, content such as videos and profiles, and validate interesting content either by ranking, linking or suggesting it to others. At the same time they collectively create value for the service

and enrich the value derived from it. The rise of the meaning of participation refers to an increase in both game experience relevance and dynamic change of value, but also relates to the co-creators' collective/community. Instead of technical competence, linguistic, social and tactical creativity are becoming key factors.

Digital game content intersecting with other digital content

The forms of digital game culture are not set but expand and overlap intertextually with other forms of culture when consumer roles evolve (Harrison, Pile & Thrift 2004), anticipating at the same time more general development of interactive media culture. Intertextuality stresses the mutual reference ratio between media content and products (Agger 1999, Higgins 2001), and is strongly visible on the net and based on content borrowed and modified from other areas of popular culture. Understanding of it requires a broader understanding of the totality of forms of media. Intertextuality in digital games is visible for example in machinima and communicative remix videos popular at YouTube, where existing content is utilized to deliver alternative interpretations, video response or imitation of the original video.

Participation is enabled by integrated tools in games. The tools do not require specific storytelling, programming or visualization skills from a player. In addition to technical skills, artistic, social, linguistic and tactical creativity will become central (Kangas & Laukkanen 2007). With editing tools a player can change and enrich content or, more concretely, develop new content in the shared gaming space, at the same time regenerating others' game experience. In addition to authorship linked with a programming hobby, massive multiplayer communities have for years already enabled modification of avatars and provided tools for becoming involved in fulfilling the game world. In addition, participation in game culture has been more evident or clear outside the games in fan communities (Jenkins 2005, Nikunen 2005), games media and discussion forums, and in children's play (Karimäki 2007). Participatory activity linked with certain types of games and culture is also becoming diversely visible in actual games.

Central factors in the productivity of digital culture are related to ways to describe, archive, modify, group or recycle media content. Technical and cultural change in media production and consumption requires more multiple roles and activity from consumers (Jenkins 2006). In addition to being a consumer or viewer, a role-player is often reviewer, modifier, linker, node or creator (Kangas, Sintonen, Lundvall 2008). In game culture these roles are visible in six types of game production (Haddon 2003). According to Eric Raymond (1994: 283) mod (short for modify or modification) is a term similar to patch. A patch refers to software that can, for example, fix an error in the main code. With digital games, mods usually refer to user-generated modifications to existing games. Development of mods or patches requires technical skills, and by utilizing the game engine will make changes to the programming code. The game Tomb Raider has a very well known version, Nude Raider, where the graphics have been changed, and the Quake game engine has been used, for example, in a game where instead of weapons people fight with kitchen equipment and monster vegetables (Schleiner 2002).

User-generated content is made possible by available tools, programming and graphics or code libraries. Earlier only a few games provided tools for the players, but now tools are becoming more common in games targeted at various player groups. Little Big Planet is an example of a

game that provides rich tools, forms and other starting points for the design. Players can generate small time-based competitions, game levels or utilize the tools provided in other ways to express themselves within the game online community. The Microsoft XNA development environment enables distribution, sales and development by providing an XNA library and developer community. Machinima animations are short films made by utilizing the game engine. Fanfiction refers to, for example, fans of a certain game or game character that develop stories based on the script, events and characters (Jenkins 1992, Jenkins 2006). Combinations of existing video clips, such as news versioning, are examples of remix videos. Various modifications can all be referred to as remediation. Remediation describes how a new device or form improves the old one. For example, the graphical user interface of the Internet improved the offerings of earlier media.

Mods and patches	User-generated content	Fan fiction, machinima and remix videos
Demo culture	Peripheral game content	Performative game play

Image 1: Different types of co-creation in games.

Demo culture stresses programming knowhow and is typically a collective hobby based on the idea of developing impressive audiovisual presentations by optimizing code. In the 1980s and 1990s, demo development was limited by the technical capabilities of computers. Demo culture is now more diverse, and is no longer as dependent on advances in computer technology. Still, technical creativity remains at the core of demo culture (Tasajärvi 2004). Demo developers compete in groups against each other in demo events.

External things refer to various resources players have developed for other players. Those resources do not have a direct effect on the game, but can be utilized to find hidden areas or utilize cheat codes to make playing the game easier. External resources highlight communication between gamers and game related development. All hidden and other content is developed by programmers anyway, so external resources do not have an effect on actual content development. Similarly, in performative playing the game is merely a starting point and an environment in which players develop content and meaning. The most popular such games are dance, playing and singing games that expand game play into social happenings. Show is non-recurring performance of the original in which nothing new is created and the existing content is not expanded, but a song is interpreted or a dance mat utilized differently than the developer had originally anticipated. Various free style performances utilizing the dance game are examples of performative gaming. Free style show is not a typical game play but instead a game, and the gaming devices are used in a performance presented to an audience.

Types presented can be divided by how technically demanding they are and by the user's role and commitment and motivation attached to them. Portuguese researchers Tavares, Qui and Rogue (2007) highlight social experience as the factor of change developed in individual players' actions, especially in multiplayer communities. Every player's actions have an impact on the game, others' goal settings, and ways to act and comprehend the game world. This highlights the meaning of user-generated content in game environments where a player has a possibility to participate in building the experience. Another form is to customize the game environment by, for example, changing textures or sounds.

Modifying of media objects is the simplest form of user-generated content and highlights more personalization than changing the total experience. Tavares et. al. identify third form to be mods and fourth creating new experience by fulfilling the game or utilizing its infrastructure. A game can be equipped with new meanings and interpretations and thus fundamentally change its form and language (Tavares et. al. 2007). The last two forms highlight technical skills and stronger involvement in game development or re-production. Mods stronger involvement can also take place in the form of machinima or demo development.

Collective game development and value generation: Case studies Little Big Planet and XNA

More and more, digital game cultures stress collaboration and sharing as elements of the total experience. The potential of collective creativity is utilized in many ways, from players' inclusive test periods to actual development and enrichment of the game. In this chapter I will look at how value is created in two domains: The XNA game development environment and the Little Bit Planet game. I try to perceive what kind of intangible value is attached to the game experience through motivational factors and collective creativity. Reichwald & Piller (2006) define interactive value generation term partly parallel to mass customization (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), open innovation model (Chesbrough 2003) and Eric Von Hippel's (2005) users as innovators and lead users theories. Further, Reichwald & Piller (2006) have classified motivational factors into external, internal and social factors. External factors include economic and quasi-monetary rewards, product satisfaction, and indirect extrinsic reward. Intrinsic motives include process satisfaction and flow experience, increased span of control, reduced uncertainty and pride of authorship. Social motives include altruism as a basic driver of social motivation, peer recognition, social validation, public commitment and community identification.

Through generalization of collective production, the total experience of digital games advances ideas of co-creation known from social media services (Keen 2008). Digital game cultures are emphatically collaborative environments where collective creativity can be seen as performative, participatory, and inclusive of many types of content development and modification. Here, case studies of Little Big Planet and XNA development environments represent product centric creativity. Neither of them focus on fan cultural development or just technical skills, so gamers are not motivated by demonstrating technical competence or more profound obligations to the product itself or the developers' community, but instead by interest in building their own roles, shared game experience and further value derived from it.

Little Big Planet is a console game for one to four players where in addition to player generated levels, players are provided with many ways to modify the levels or make interpretations by combining media objects. Little Big Planet is the first console game where such player driven creativity and distribution within the players' community is at the center of the experience. The development environment is closely tied with the audiovisual and structural style of the original game. In addition to new game development, rankings and descriptions given by members of the community are at the core of the experience. Through ranking and rating, the games can reach top-lists where they are easy to find. A player of Little Big Planet can join the community by buying the game and hooking the console to the network. The game provides a limited and defined distribution channel but is heavily focused on collective participation. It opens game culture to make it more interactive and participatory by enabling many kinds of tools to be used to create different outputs. Besides

games, development tools in Little Big Planet have also been used to create music, technical tricks common in demo culture and interactive greeting cards. Game development can be assimilated with crafts. Skills grow through the experience, and technical, artistic and lingual-interactional skills become central competitive factors.

The Microsoft XNA development environment provides a set of tools, techniques and an object library with which game development is possible without deeper knowledge of programming. Unlike the previous case, the environment does not limit audiovisual style, representation or structure of the game. Compared to Little Big Planet, XNA requires a more active producer's role, and a higher level of technical competence and commitment. Additionally, it includes a revenue model and marketing channel that hobbyist game developers can utilize to reach preferred target groups. One central value of XNA is the fact that players can develop games for a game console, which was not possible earlier. The XNA development environment provides a set of code, graphics and functionalities to be utilized and modified. Without programming skills the utilization of XNA is limited. If Little Big Planet is a craft type of activity, XNA is more strongly handcraft from the start.

Through motivational factors of Reichwald et. al. (2006), in the Little Big Planet game value is generated through gaining recognition and status in the community, but also through participation, ranking and rating and achieving broader visibility with a game within the community. Individuality enriches the total experience and creates new ways to interpret the game and new ways to play the game. Central intrinsic motivational factors are ways of strengthening one's own identity and network identity. One cannot get actual economic benefit from the game, but intrinsic motivation and benefit come from a feeling of belonging, and the ability to create one's own game and distribute it in the gamers' community. Social motivation such as peer group recognition and public credit through reviews and rankings or altruism is at the center of Little Big Planet. Value is generated by players' actions, interpretations and authorship within the community.

Value is generated within the XNA development environment in another way. First of all, there is a bigger potential for economic benefit. In addition, central motivational factors include a feeling of belonging, community recognition and recognition within certain communities or social spheres online. Within the community of hobby game developers, recognition is more arbitrary and the distribution channel is not as limited as in the previous case. In addition to one's own game development and distribution, economic benefit is created by the potential to move from hobbyist to professional game developer, take the game industry in a new direction, sell virtual objects or avatars or make money in a gaming tournament as a pro-gamer. Within the XNA development community, social activity is not similar to the Little Big Planet game because recognition does not come from the number of reviews or points, but games can be marketed and classified by, for example, a genre or time. Both cases highlight cultural, economic and social conventions of game development. XNA is focused on tools, whereas the Little Big Planet game focuses on the audiovisual material and interaction modes provided. Both show how, instead of just demo culture or mod development, a broader group of gamers have been provided with many ways to participate in development of the game or to reproduce or modify the game, rather than just through fan culture activity or technical skills.

From technical creativity to multifaceted value generation

The development of digital games is influenced by the general development of media culture. In social media the role of the user has quickly become part of content development, whereas in games the possibilities are still limited. Still, only a small minority of gamers actively creates content for games. The majority of players choose the role of consumer when activity is more strongly focused on fulfilling the experience, for example by drawing caricatures or writing reviews and comments. In this article I suggested that the Little Big Planet and XNA development environments anticipate the strengthening of collective creativity and multifaceted creativity as part of the game development process. Then user-generated content is not only out-of-games type content like fan creations or reviews. At the core of the player-creator role is the shift of creativity from individual performance to collaborative or group activity, from demo development and modding to collective expansion of the game world. Game culture is developing socially, technically and economically into an interactive experience environment where constant networking and incompleteness is accepted as part of the culture. Through the evolution of social online media, more ways and levels to participate have been offered. Over a longer period of time development will be normalized in game development, and participatory culture and content reviewing, creation and modifying will become part of the mainstream game culture. I identified intrinsic, extrinsic and social motivational factors in game development following the differentiation done by Reichwald & Piller (2006). Both case studies strongly brought out the role of peer groups, social evaluation and gaining recognition within the community. Additionally, strengthening online identity and self-branding as a producer, pride in authorship, and altruism motivated players to take part in modifying and commenting on game content. Value generation was linked to motivational factors and ways of increasing competence. In addition to technical knowhow, linguistic, social and tactical creativity were also at the core of the experience.

Creativity combines three processes: future foresight work of game development and the trend of collective design, value generation by collective consumer communities, and information technologies and tools which support this development (Thrift 2006). In digital game culture the value of collective creativity is not based on existing products but rather on methods, tools and alternatives the players can use to generate value (Ahonen et. al 2007).

Shared ownership is also part of the change within a broader cultural context. Terms such as Prosumer (Toffler 1970), ProAm (Leadbeater 2004, Keen 2008) and users as innovators (von Hippel 2005) highlight the change of multiple roles of a player from consumer to participant. Perfomativity and the social and collective or participatory culture of digital games is most effective in advancing the change. Open and agile development has become a norm in game development process. A game can be under development constantly, or forever. Game culture and the experience are thus generated by social composition and game events, as well as by cultural creativity affiliated with a game happening in the game or in discussion forums or online communities. Interactive architecture of games, involvement of the gamers and possibilities for collective creativity radically change games and the cultural experience of playing. Changes highlight value generated from participatory design and game development. The game industry has a history of players who are active in participatory design and development processes. Now, user driven creativity, co-operative action within an anonymous developers' community, social participation and intertextual influences are bringing them into the mainstream.

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ENDNOTES

1 In June 2005, a picture of a woman who left the subway train without clearing her dog's poop made its way into the Internet where an online "trial" of the woman's character opened. This incident became fodder not just for debates in American blogs but also the subject of a Washington Post article. Under the heading, "uproar on the subway testifies to the power of the Internet to slander people," the article in the July 7, 2005 issue of Washington Post reported on the "Dog Poop Girl," as well as the discussions that took place on Internet's power and ethical issues in blogs (Bak No-hwang July 8, 2005, Yonhap News).

2 In 2002, the research team of E-marketer (www.emarketer.com) investigated the broadband services of 29 countries, dividing them into five levels. In the first level were United States, Canada, South Korea, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany; in the second were Netherlands, Finland, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Norway. According to a December 2001 survey, 56.6% of the population used the Internet and 50% or 8-million Korean households were high-speed Internet subscribers (August 5, 2003, Joong-Ang Ilbo, Article reporting the results presented by the Ministry of Information and Communications and Korean Internet Information Center).

3 The Korean society, with a democratic government in the 1990s, defined the 21st century as one of knowledge information and started engaging in massive efforts to enter the information society. Right after the economic crisis, the Kim Dae-jung administration created a blueprint for digitalization, "Cyber Korea 21," and pursued the transition to a "knowledge information society." Looking at the materials compiled by the Kang Myun-goo's team (2005: 40-43), the main issues of digitalization included: a) digitalization education for the entire country; b) construction of a database for national knowledge information resources and construction of an infrastructure for a knowledge-based nation; c) construction of a small and efficient e-government; d) use of digitalization to strengthen the basis of industrial society; e) and other measures including the stimulation of e-commerce and information communication venture companies.

4 There are many folk theories to explain the rapid digitalization of Korean society. Kim Yong-sup (2006: 285-295), a digital culture analyst and journalism, illustrates these theories in his book [Eight Reasons Why South Korea Cannot But be Strong Digitally]: a) Korean are historically powerful technologically; b) they adapt quickly culturally; c) the powerful psychology of "trying to keep up with the Joneses"; d) the aggressiveness and hunger to succeed that come from strong competition; e) the development of the ability to cooperate, which comes from "bibimbap" culture, into convergence culture; f) the strength of cooperatives, rural exchanges, mutual-help societies, and other forms of network culture; g) the dexterity of fingers that come from chopsticks; and h) persistence and adaptability of never quitting. In fact, these are characteristics that can be found in any society that has undergone modernization.

5 Huh Yoon-hee, 이에스스더 인턴. "Abdul Kalam, President of India's Solidarity Speech," Chosun Ilbo, Feb. 8, 2006.

6 Fulford, Benjamin. "Korea's Weird Wired World: Strange Things Happen when an Entire Country is Hooked on High- speed Internet" (Forbes Global, July 21, 2003).

7 According to Kang-myun Goo's research team (2005: 165-167), after the Koran email service began in September 1985, a thousand people subscribed to Korea Dacom Communication's Chollian by May 1988. The 100th BBS appeared in December 1989, and, with the start of the computer communication network KETEL's club service in 1990s, the era of clubs opened, including "BaTongMo," a club with KETEL to promote a "proper" communication culture. In the beginning, elites the technological

elites, in particular were the most active users. Many were heavy users who were eager to experience new technologies. After this period, with the introduction of private BBS and PC-communication services in the late 1980s, various groups of citizens started chatting and discussing in bulletin boards. This naturally led to the vibrant activities of Internet-based clubs. The activities of PC-communication reached its height in 1996, with users of main service providers such as Chollian, Nownuri, and Hitel, engaging in protests to protect freedom of expression and organizing cultural events such as music festivals (October 1996, Nownuri Music Club). The movie "Contact," released in 1997, shows how popular "contact" was even back then. After 1999, online communities moved rapidly to a new time and space, based on the Internet. Daum Communication's "Daum Café" opened in May 1999, followed by Freechal community in January 2001, and Cyworld's "homepies," in September 2001, which became important habitats for online users. In August 2003, Cyworld had 3-million subscribers and, in September 2004, a year after a merger with SK Communication, it had 10-million subscribers. The diverse activities of "online communities" can be divided historically in terms of "BBS," "online clubs," "small groups," "usernet," "cafe," "community," "club," "minihomepy," "blog," etc. In December 2001, a group for blog users was established, and in August 2005, a commercial blog service began. In November 2002, with the commercialization of Freechal community, the era of commercial Internet opened.

8 http://www.ddanzi.com

9 http://www.ohmynews.com xi http://kin.naver.com xii April 12, 2007. Yonsei University undergraduate course, "Cultural Anthropology in the Era of Global Village."

10 Hankyorae, November 4, 2003, "Look at the Baegsoo goes to work on the Internet: During a period rapid rise in youth unemployment, "youth baegsoo" are sharing know-how about baegsoo lifestyle in the Internet."

11 The dcinside site was key in crystallizing the concept of "Internet paine." This site started as an Internet club for fans of digital cameras. Through acquiring the latest information about digital technology and the latest equipment, boasting about their creativity, and transforming their language into neologisms, the members strengthened their sense of belonging. Calling those who were immersed in the Internet "paine," they escaped the sharp gazes of disapproval from the mainstream society by creating new identities. Through neologisms like "hao" and cultural experiments like "ah- hae-hae" syndrome, they tirelessly engaged in efforts to distinguish themselves from the existing society. Using an activity called "Setting Up a Discussion," they searched high and low in the Internet to acquire information for the site, classifying socially important incidents in a discussion board, entitled "Cause for Recommendation." Within this discussion board, unusually deep discussions took place as many became interested in a topic. The discussions spanned society, culture, and politics. At the end of the discussion, an object became identified as the "enemy" and the target of "cyber-terrorism" that included the immobilization of servers. Members called these types of actions "Creating Methods." Park Hee-gyung views them as creating a new culture within the sphere of desire and pleasure, and states that their actions disclose a new political realm.

12 May 8. Chosun Ilbo. Reporter Park, Du-shik and Prof. Yoo Suk-jin (Prof. in Sogang University) "Results of the Internet Political Research Center Investigation." "'Netizen Posts, Copying' People in their 50s are most Active." Reporter Kim Bong-gi. "Conservative Café 4□311, Going Against the Trend".

13 Agile consulting company's ultimate mandate, they state, is the happy lives of "happy people." As a software company, they naturally pursue happiness for people who use the software as well as make it. More specifically, as software developers, they are trying to find ways to create values for both the present and future selves of the users. The director of the company, Kim Chang-june, stated that even though the company says it does consulting, more accurately, it does counseling; including mentoring and coaching (August 2006 interview notes).

14 Chae Soon-ook. "Daum, Open ID Verification Service," Electronics Newspaper. June 8, 2007. xviii Those who have used the concept of "creative commons" to consider humanity's future are mostly part of the legal sphere (Benkler 1998, 2002; Lessig 2001, 2004; Mackie 2003). Holding a bleak view of human civilization's future, Lawrence Lessig, an American legal scholar of the Internet, criticized the buying and selling of copyrights for suppressing creativity and the invention of new products. In a lecture at an anti-FTA civic meeting, Lessig argued that while the strict regulation of copyrights retarded industrial development in the 19th century, the sharing of intellectual rights spurred production in the mid-twentieth century. With computer, Internet, and medical-related sources free, creative activities associated with these fields became very active. However, in the 21st century, with the rise in power of those who are interested in more tightly regulating the digital revolution (especially with the institutionalization into law of the concept of monopolistic ownership shared by the Hollywood entertainment industry), the world, he argues, is in great danger. Identifying the fanatical attitudes toward digital technology among the ruling classes of contemporary American society, and the complicity between the American government and the Hollywood cultural industry, which has long had a stranglehold on world entertainment, as the main problems, Lessig stressed the urgent need for a social movement to create a new free culture. If anarchism is not the answer, then he stated that a new society needed to be creating using creative commons as the basis. Through producing data showing the rise in productivity and economic efficiency when public resources that should be shared are indeed shared, he stated that the present situation of monopolizing all material products and ideas should not be tolerated (2005:8).

15 The "Sea Story" incident, involving emergency political funds, exposed the problems within the online game industry, which had turned the entire nation into a casino. CEO Jang In-gyung, who first got his start in the online game industry, was nostalgic for the past when workers in the game industry accomplished creative feats through friendly competition. Jang argues that with companies wanting to quickly earn money and the government changing the institutional framework to suit their desires, the grounds for creating creative and marketable games has, on the contrary, become barren. He states that the narrative games, created by self-sufficient groups, as part of late-modern entertainment culture, have been replaced by gambling and other one-dimensional games characterized by competition and violence.

16 A recent article, stating that "blogs in Internet space where one can freely share one's opinion and information have made the Internet into a powerful engine changing the lifestyles and ways of thinking of 1.3-billion Chinese people," shows that the Chinese society is changing as fast as Korean society, as a result of the Internet. (Correspondent Song Idal. "The Power Changing China: Blogs." Chosun Ilbo, January 10, 2006).

17 The detail of JFK survey I and JFK survey II will be given in the section after the next.

18 FTTC (fiber to the curb) is a telecommunications system based on fiber-optic cables which run to a platform that serves several customers. Each customer connects to this platform via coaxial cable or twisted pair. Fiber to the curb allows delivery of broadband services such as high speed Internet. While FTTH (fiber to the house) or FTTP (fiber to the premises) technology brings a fiber-optic cable to each customer, FTTC can use the existing coaxial or twisted pair infrastructure for the last mile to the customer, which enables FTTC to provide service at a lower cost.

19 In this article, a PC includes a Mac and PC-based Internet means any Internet connections using a PC or a Mac via either a wired or a wireless connection.

20 The research project was headed by Yoshiaki Hashimoto and funded by JSPS, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. See more details in Hashimoto et al., 2003.

21 The research project was also funded by JSPS, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

See more details in Hashimoto et al., 2003.

22 Tukey HSD (Honestly Significant Difference) test is a single-step multiple comparison procedure to find which means are significantly different from one another ensuring that the chance of finding a significant difference in any comparison is maintained at the alpha level of the test.

23 This section is based on [Kimura 2010b], where more detailed discussion is made.

24 A Tukey HSD multiple-comparison test was conducted with the six-category scale coded as 1 for "a few times or more a day" through 6 for "no use." All statistical analysis in this article is conducted using JMP 8.0, SAS Institute.

25 45 people from teenagers to seventy year olds participated (2 high school students, 28 college students, and 5 each of those in their thirties, forties and aged 50 years old). I asked them to document their use of various ICTs and mass media for four days and made interviews three times for each participant.

26 Schiano et al.(2007) found out the same use pattern as to leisure related information seeking among Tokyo youth.

27 This section is based on [Kimura 2010a:363-376].

28 http://mdn.mainichi.jp/20080720/0720_01.html, accessed on October 4, 2011.

29 Endo paid attention to the role 2channel played in raising social issues and agendas, involving other Internet communities and set the concept of "public opinion on the Internet" to refer to such emergent phenomena on the Internet (Endo ed. 2004:Ch.1).

30 These two sentences were a part of the announcement, MDN "Punitive measures over Mainichi Daily News WaiWai column announced" June 28, 2008, http://mdn.mainichi.jp/20080720/0628.html, accessed on October 4, 2011.

31 The original URL of MDK and that of Wai-Wai was shut down on July 20 but Mainichi revamped MDN on September 1 and its new URL is http://mdn.mainichi.jp/.

32 These postings are from a site that is dedicated to this issue. Its URL is http://gigazine.net/index.php?/news/comments/20080721_mdn_mainichi_jp/, accessed on October 4, 2011.

33 This article is based on my two conference papers (Jouhki 2008b and 2009) and an article (Jouhki 2010).

34 The respondents resided in 25 special wards of Seoul and were aged from 20 to 69 years. The method used was geographically segmented random sampling, placement and collection method from Nov. 4th through Dec. 5th 2005.

35 Web 2.0" refers to a perceived second generation of web development and design that facilitates communication, secure information sharing, interoperability, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. Web 2.0 concepts have led to the development and evolution of web-based communities, hosted services, and applications; such as social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis and blogs.

36 Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to for example send and read other users' updates known as tweets.

37 The most common functions of interpersonal communication are listening, talking and conflict

resolution. Types of interpersonal communication vary from verbal to non-verbal and from situation to situation. Interpersonal communication involves face-to-face communication in a way that accomplishes the purpose and is appropriate.

38 http://irc-galleria.net/

39 TechCruch / Mark Hendrickson (February 12, 2009): http://www.techcrunch.com/2009/02/12/looks-like-facebook-just-took-the-top-spot-among-social-media-sites/

40 Microsofts instant messaging client.

41 Refers to the idea that, if a person is one step away from each person they know and two steps away from each person who is known by one of the people they know, then everyone is an average of six "steps" away from each person on Earth.

42 Here net-acquaintance refers to a person that is not familiar from the real life.

43 In Sweden, a group called *Nätvandrare* ("Websurfers") is network of municipal social workers and NGO representatives who in order to provide the young a direct contact with civil servant on the Internet. Besides maintaining a website, the social workers can be found in *World of Warcraft*, where they guide the young while playing the game. For more information, see http://www.natvandrarna.se/in-english/ (English) and http://www.natvandrarna.se/wp-content/uploads//2011/02/Natvandra_skrift.pdf (only in Swedish).

44 Guild or clan is a group or community of gamers that play MMOs together.

45 The respondents were asked to define their sex themselves. Answers included 'man', 'male', 'female', 'woman', 'girl', and 'under investigation.'

46 In addition to the Internet User Survey, this article is based on a research project (Valaskivi, 2009) on the fandom and markets of Japanese popular culture in Finland. The article makes use of research materials of this research project. All the materials were collected during 2008. The materials include face-to-face or email interviews of representatives of fan communities in Finland (N=5), face-to-face or email interviews of Finnish representatives of manga publishers (N=3), distribution companies or Internet shopping companies (N=4), face-to-face or email interviews with commercial fanzine representatives (N=2); an email questionnaire sent out to all major Finnish local fandom associations, answered by eleven associations (of approx 20); a questionnaire at the Tracon III event on Feburuary 16th, 2008 was answered by 96 respondents. Questionnaires were available during the event and actively distributed to participants. Participants filled out the forms on location. One respondent utilized the possibility to answer afterwards by email. The research materials further included interviews with representatives of manga publishers and anime studios in Japan (3), discussions and interviews with researchers and opinion leaders of this field (10), and participatory observation in Tracon III, Animecon 2008 (July 26 – 27), and in Akihabara in March 2008.

47 Abbreviation of English *costume play*, in Japanese *kosupure*. The practice of fans dressing up as fantacy characters.

48 Finland has a population of only five million; thus, 700 members for a fairly new Internet site and fan group is a lot.

49 Manga in Japan is published in all possible genres and for all imaginable focus groups. Here, *shōjo* and *shōnen* are mentioned as only examples because they are the major genres that get to be translated and published in Finnish.

50 *Dōjinshi* are amateur (fan) manga publications. (cf. Schodt 1996, 20)

51 *Yaoi* is homosexual, erotic manga drawn for women by women. "[In *yaoi*] characters are beautifully drawn, and its plots are romantic and complex. […] characters are almost invariably male, and the main focus of the stories is on male/male sexuality, a focus that runs the gamut from gauzy romance to hardcore erotica." (Napier 2007, 140.)

52 An important and interesting field of study would be to compare IRL and virtual fandom practices in different cultures and societies. This article, however, focuses only on Finland, since so far comparative material is unavailable.

53 Cosplay, or costume play (in Japanese *kosupure*) is dressing up as anime or manga characters.

54 Sangatsu manga and Punainen jättiläinen are currently both brands of Tammi, the second largest publishing company in Finland. Tammi belongs to the Nordic Bonnier group, and acquired Punainen jättiläinen in the beginning of 2009. Egmont belongs to the international Egmont Group and among its owners is Sanoma Magazines, which belongs to the Sanoma Media Group. There are also two other publishers of Finnish language manga: Pauna Media, which mostly focuses in the so called pseudomanga (meaning manga-style comics made outside of Japan), and a new publishing company called Editorial Ivrea, which publishes manga, Korean manhwa, and comic books in Argentina, Spain and Finland.

55 It is also the main news source for the two periodicals published in Finland on Japanese popular culture, magazines called *Anime* (published by H-Town) and *JapanPOP* (Published by Mimiko Media).

56 Refers to all kinds of pornographic and sexually explicit manga and anime, an expression mostly used outside of Japan. In Japan manga/anime pornography is often referred to as *ecchi*, *porno manga* or *ero manga.*

Digital media are central in youngsters' lives, both time-wise and culturally – creating meanings, strengthening relationships and pondering values. Digital activities are gaining a bigger share of youths' everyday life. The Internet provides several ways for them to express themselves, find friends or dating partners and likeminded people. It is a mass medium for everyone, providing the possibility of becoming a celebrity, being politically active, joining international networks, watching television, chatting with friends or just spending time online. It is a channel for expressing where I am, what I plan to do and what type of information or contacts I am looking for.

Ten years ago young communication acrobatics in Japan, South Korea and Finland were sovereign, fearless and experimental pioneers of mobile phones and the Internet. Currently youngster's use of digital media has globally been described as snack size or remix culture in that they combine pieces from here and there, follow several information and communication channels simultaneously and utilize social networks.

This book will provide an overview of the online life and values of 15-25 year olds in countries that were pioneers of digital services at the end of 1990s and describe the change that has happened within the past 10 years. Digital Pioneers book looks at social networking among the youngsters, covering a wide spectrum of topics from media use, social networking, trust, and friendships to motivational factors. The book also looks at the development of so-called gaming lifestyle. Japan, South Korea and Finland are no longer far ahead of the rest of the world. But do these pioneer countries of the 1990s still have some special qualities that can generate novel digital cultures in the 21st century? Where will the next generation of online brands develop?

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