Workshop D

Bridging the New Generation Gap:
Social Impacts of the Internet on Family in
Hong Kong
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Abstract:
The Internet certainly has a great impact on society and family. As computer brings the digital revolution, mankind especially the younger generation, starts entering into the so-called cyber stage of development. Children in Hong Kong nowadays will probably grow up more and more preoccupied with the cyber or net culture. Similar to the TV which has been occupying an important role as an agent of socialization, children in the cyber-society may well be socialized through the computer screen.

Local studies in Hong Kong and China will be reviewed together with a mini-study done by the writer himself. Youth’s and their parents’ Internet usage pattern will be examined. Negative impacts such as net-addiction and exposure to pornographic materials will be addressed.

It appears that the Internet tends to draw adolescents away from their parents. Yet parents can play a role to make the Internet a friend rather than an enemy. In order to bridge the new generation gap, parents should hold an open attitude towards this new technology and try to help their kids establish a proper usage of the Internet. This would make good use of the Internet, and in turn, foster good relationship within the family. In addition, the government and nongovernmental organizations should help promote computer literacy as well as take-up rate among households in Hong Kong.