

**International Conference Participation**  
**Carol Soon**  
**Doctoral Candidate**

Soon, C. & Cho, H. (2009). Politics online: Who's in and who's out in the network of bloggers, parties and political organizations. Full paper to be presented at *AoIR Conference "Internet Research 10.0: Internet – Critical"*, October 7-10, 2009, Milwaukee, U.S.A.

Soon, C. (2009). "Politicizing blogging: blogging networks as emerging social movements". Panel paper to be presented at *AoIR Conference "Internet Research 10.0: Internet – Critical"*, October 7-10, 2009, Milwaukee, U.S.A.

Soon, C. (2009). "Blogging networks as an emerging social movement: Dynamics in online and offline networks, and implications for engendering change." Proposal selected for pre-conference workshop at *AoIR Conference "Internet Research 10.0: Internet – Critical"*, October 7-10, 2009, Milwaukee, U.S.A.

Soon, C. & Park, H.W. (2008). The emergence of e-research in Asia, its potential and the realities for the social sciences: case studies of Singapore and South Korea. Paper presented at *Oxford eResearch Conference, September 11-13, 2008*, Oxford, U.K.

Soon, C. and Kluver, R. (2005). The Internet and online political communities in Singapore. Paper presented at *International Communication Association 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, May 26 - 30, 2005*, New York City, NY, USA.

**(Local conferences)**

Soon, C. (2007). Exploring online political communities in Singapore: A hyperlink analysis approach. Paper presented at *NUS-Yonsei University Joint Conference, January 31 - Feb 2, 2007*, Singapore.

Kluver, R. & Soon, C. (2003). The Internet in Singapore: Boon, blessing or bane? Paper presented at the *ASEAN Information Seminar Series: Social and Cultural Impact of the Internet at ASEAN, June, Singapore*.

**iAoIR 2009, October 7-10, 2009**

**"Politics online: Who's in and who's out in the network of bloggers, parties and political organizations."**

**Abstract for Full Paper Presentation**

Carol Soon and Cho Hichang

Technological deterministic rhetoric concerning the Internet typically focused on the mobilizing and equalizing effects, especially in terms of how the technology democratizes civil societies in tightly regulated regimes. The ways in which the Internet promotes citizenry participation and engagement have been the subject of study in the fields of political communication, political sociology and new media studies. In view of the growing interest in how new media technology is harnessed by non-mainstream actors, we set out to achieve two key objectives through adopting the lens of social network analysis –identify the key players concerned with Singapore politics in the cyberspace and examine the nature of social networks comprising these players. In spite of Singapore's recognized success in deploying information communication technologies for economic progress, the liberalizing effects of the Internet have been limited. This is due to the effective regulatory measures put in place by the government, justified on historical, political and social grounds.

We employ a descriptive approach to explore the dynamics that are taking place online and argue for their implications on evolving political discourse. The study reveals that political bloggers and political parties dominate the cyberspace, while issue-based advocacy groups and media agencies are relegated to less important positions. In addition, high levels of interactivity are observed among political bloggers. These findings are of significant relevance to countries where media systems are stringently regulated by the government as they point to the existence of alternative networking structures which may exist in the online world. There lies a potential for the creation of an alternative and viable sphere of discourse for individuals or marginalized groups to circumvent offline media regulations and express and disseminate their perspectives online. The paper concludes with recommendations for future research in both areas of social networking dynamics and political communication.

**AoIR 2009, October 7-10, 2009**

**"Politicizing blogging: blogging networks as emerging social movements."**

**Abstract for Panel Discussion**

Carol Soon

Since its emergence in 1990s, the purpose of blogging has taken on a new and unanticipated trajectory. From the personal to the political, blogs are empowering citizens with the power to write, reach out to local and international audiences and call for action. The United States and Asian countries like South Korea, Malaysia and Myanmar have witnessed how blogging impacted on political governance and civic participation. In its attempt to fine-tune its policy on Internet regulation, the Singapore government, known

for its autocratic measures underpinned by a paternalistic governing style, has solicited recommendations from academics, bloggers and members of the public. Seizing this opportunity, a group of renowned bloggers, Bloggers 13, formed an alliance and launched their proposal for greater Internet freedom. In-depth interviews conducted with nine activist bloggers revealed intricate dynamics underlying collective action. Although bound together by a common adversary and shared ideological goals, there exists a dichotomy and a negotiation for the balance between the self and the group – suggesting heterogeneity and multiplexity in collectivity. Blogging practices serve as boundary markers which define members in a group from the others in the out-group. Although the data indicates that there is a distinct collective identity present among socio-political bloggers, this study points to the role of political opportunity structures, selective incentives, pre-existing social networks and structural availability as mitigating factors for movement participation. Thus, by adopting critical concepts from classic and new social movement theories, this paper questions establishes if and how political blogging constitutes a new form of social movement and proposes for a holistic framework for analysis.

**Oxford eResearch Conference, September 11-13, 2008**

**“The emergence of e-research in Asia, its potential and the realities for the social sciences: Case studies of Singapore and South Korea.”**

**Abstract for Full Paper Presentation**

Carol Soon and Park Han Woo

In spite of the growing interest in e-science and e-research among scholars as well as policy-makers, most of the existing published works concentrate on the developments in the Western countries, such as in the United States and United Kingdom. To address the lacunae in existing literature, this paper focuses primarily on issues related to scholarly practice in e-research within the context of Asian countries. Both South Korea and Singapore are two countries that have achieved international recognition for their rapid progress in information communication technology (ICT) adoption and development, as demonstrated in part by high Internet and broadband adoption. Technological discourse dominates the education and digital media scenes in Singapore with technology perceived as an indispensable tool in nurturing research and collaborative initiatives. South Korea is currently an important node in advanced international and regional research networks. The government in these two countries plays an undoubtedly critical role in fostering research and development; and policies and funding initiatives are geared towards developing and building e-science technologies to drive the economy forward. In spite of the clear emergence of e-science as a new way to conduct research and development, little is known about how these emerging tools help to facilitate Asian scholars in conducting better research and collaboration in the digital age and the impediments faced by these scholars.

By adopting a reflective approach, we trace the evolution in the attempts to leverage on e-science in these two Asian countries. Spurred by the lure of leveraging on ICT infrastructures that will perhaps redefine the process of data collection, analysis as well as

collaboration among researchers, many scientists are quite aware of and want to take advantage of e-science. The development of enormous computing power and the capacity to process and store huge amounts of data poses a promising future beyond natural and engineering fields. The potential rewards that can be reaped from e-science leave little doubt that new ways of doing research, for example, the type of analytical methods and data collection processes are necessary. However, the adoption and application of e-science in social sciences research has been slower than in the other scientific fields in both Singapore and South Korea. In this paper, we will share critical reflections gained from scholars from three research projects, in the realms of web archiving, cultural analytics and a nation's political web sphere. In-depth interviews were conducted with the primary investigators of these projects to find out if and how their work leverage on any form of e-science, their vision on how e-science applications such as the grid infrastructure can be utilized to meet their research goals, as well as to elicit their views on main challenges that social scientists and humanities scholars encounter in e-science. Through the insights gained from both policy reviews and interviews with researchers in the social sciences, this paper elucidates the general imperatives behind e-science programs in Asia, the role of the government in fostering the growth and applications of e-science, and the main challenges and obstacles that may inhibit the transformation of the e-science dream into a reality for social science researchers.

**International Communication Association, May 26 - 30, 2005**  
**"The Internet and online political communities in Singapore."**  
**Abstract for Full Paper Presentation**  
**Carol Soon and Randolph Kløver**

The emergence and the widespread adoption of the Internet have brought about many dramatic changes on different levels. Due to its inherent characteristics, the Internet has become an engine of political mobilization and participation, and led to the proliferation of online communities. Few studies examine how political groups use the Internet to build communities and forge alliances in the cyberspace, and this study attempts to bridge this gap. Registered political parties and political expression groups in Singapore were selected for this study. Through hyperlink analysis, the study shows that reciprocity and similarity, two main characteristics observed in online communities, were found in the groupings formed by these political groups. This study also reveals that only a minority of political groups in Singapore use hyperlinks to advance their political agenda on the international level. Interestingly, most of the online alliances established by these groups reflect their associations offline.