

Nekmat, E. (2009, July). Youth Internet literacy: The relevance of contextual knowledge and inter-personal influences in the search and evaluation of online information. *The 4th Asian Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore (13-17 July 2009)*, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

Abstract

Scholars more recently argue against the effectiveness of the conventional approach to the digital divide motioned between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and point toward the importance of understanding the contextual patterns of digital inequality or differences in IT usage persisting within countries. Largely based on users level of skills and knowledge, otherwise termed as literacy levels, focus should be continuously geared towards narrowing this internal digital divide at every stage of development. This paper thus extends this pertinent view by qualitatively exploring the varying levels and patterns of skills and contextual knowledge utilized amongst Singaporean youths in their use of the internet.

Applying a cognitive-psychological framework of media literacy, the paper analyzes the varying levels of different contextual knowledge structures utilized by users when evaluating information. They are knowledge of: i) the real world, and ii) the self. Extending this framework, the paper also uncovers how users, in their critical evaluation of online information utilize informal methods and seek guidance from inter-personal influences. Findings gathered from 'think aloud' sessions and survey questionnaires showed the pertinence of these factors impacting undergraduates in their search and evaluation of online information.

Lim, S. S. and Nekmat, E. (2008, July). The Implications of Multimodal Representation for Media Literacy. *Fourth International Conference on Multimodality*. Singapore. 30 July – 1 August.

Abstract

With the advent of Web 2.0, the media consumer is endowed with the ability to consume, produce and disseminate media messages often involving multimodal representations which incorporate text, images and sound. In both receptive and expressive modes of communication, multimodal representation demands that media consumers have knowledge and competencies in various aspects – textual understanding, visual literacy, genre identification, critical analysis, legal know-how, ICT skills, industry insights and more. Surely, it cannot be reasonably assumed that the average media consumer is in possession of all of these literacies, and at a functional level of competency at that. In which case, on a public policy level, there is a need to prioritise which components of media literacy need to be most urgently inculcated so that citizens can avail of new media opportunities to maximise benefits and minimise harms. This paper will begin with a few examples which illustrate how multimodal representation challenges consumers' media literacy skills, ponder the different dimensions of media literacy in the era of multimodal representation and conclude by identifying which literacies are most critical in our current media landscape.

Nekmat, E. and Lim, S. S. (2008, July). New Media and Youth: The Motivations And Gratifications Of Online Betting Amongst Youths. *17th Asian Media Information & Communication Centre Annual Conference on Changing Media, Changing Societies: Media and the Millennium Development Goals*. Manila. 14-17 July.

Abstract

The online gambling phenomenon has grown at a rapid pace with industry studies predicting growth at 50 to 70 per cent a year for the next five to ten years to an estimate of US\$25 billion by 2012. The propensity of online gambling to induce addiction has raised red flags amongst policy makers and social organizations, especially where it is highly attractive to minors and youths. Acknowledging this crucial intervention juncture for research on online gambling, this study qualitatively explores the perceptions and motivations of Singaporean youths' involved in online gambling. Motivations are framed according to the factors elicited by Roger's diffusion of innovations theory (1995). Gratifications obtained by online bettors as afforded by the structural characteristics of the Internet medium and the salient features of gambling websites were also analysed in determining their allure to online bettors as well as their propensity to induce addiction. Findings not only indicate consistency with previous studies on the phenomena but also novel factors influenced by the socio-cultural contexts of Singaporean youths.

Nekmat, E. and Lim, S. S. (2008, June). Youth and Online Gambling: Uncovering the propensity for addiction through understanding the motivations and gratifications of online betting. *International Research Development Centre Workshop on Internet Addiction Research in Asia. Manila, 16-17 June.*

Abstract

Beginning on 18 August 1995, the online gambling phenomenon has grown at a rapid pace with Asia touted as a key untapped market for online gambling operators. However, research on addiction to online gambling has been limited since the turn of this millennium. Further, the propensity of online gambling to induce addiction has since raised red flags amongst policy makers and social organizations, especially due to its attractiveness to youths and minors. This study contributes to research on Internet addiction by focusing on the online gambling phenomenon which is problematic due to its 'doubly addictive' potential; addiction to the Internet as medium, and gambling as activity. Employing a qualitative research method, this study interviews Singapore youths to uncover their perceptions and motivations for their involvement in online gambling. Salient features of gambling websites which were found to be most popular amongst participants were then triangulated with content analyses of these gambling websites in determining their allure to online bettors as well as their propensity to induce addiction. These features which facilitate the online betting experience and possess the propensity to induce addiction are highlighted according to three categories of affection; instrumental, incentivising and sensory stimulations.

Lim, S. S. and Nekmat, E. (2008, April). Learning Through Prosuming: Lessons from media literacies programs in Asia. *Science, Technology & Society (STS) Cluster and Communications and New Media Programme, National University of Singapore International Workshop on ICTs and Development: Experiences from Asia. Singapore.*

Abstract

In today's new media landscape, consuming media content is only part of the equation. Media consumers also enjoy various avenues by which they can produce and share media content. This combination of consuming and producing has been termed 'prosuming' and rather than being the preserve of the intellectual elite, virtually any media consumer can be a prosumer given the relative

affordability and accessibility of ICTs and new media platforms. Producing media can be extremely satisfying as it allows individuals to flex their creative energies. Producing media is also empowering because it enables people to make their own views heard, particularly if their opinions have been hitherto overlooked by mainstream media channels. Focusing specifically on media literacy programmes targeted at youths in developing countries, this paper analyses media literacy programmes which inculcate the skills of media production. It looks at the Little Masters programme in China, the Cybermohalla programme in India and the Young Journalists Group in Vietnam. The paper finds that when developing country youths are vested with media production skills, they are able to raise awareness of issues which concern youth and in the process, help to advance societal development.