

COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW MEDIA PROGRAMME

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The South Korean Online Game Industry: *A Political Economic Analysis of Its Success*

A Talk by Dr. Chung Peichi
Communications and New Media Programme

CNM Seminar Room, AS6 #03-33
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS
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This talk will focus on the South Korean online game industry to discuss some relevant theoretical questions in media studies. The presentation will discuss issues related to cultural imperialism theory, especially the criticisms raised by media scholars about the dominance of western media companies in the global film industry. The talk will also examine how the South Korean online gaming industry has been impacted by increasing cross-border media exchange in the age of new communication technology. The presentation will apply a political economic analysis on the development of the South Korean online game industry.

The project draws on 21 interviews with South Korean government officials, industry professionals and corporate managers in the field. The study finds that political factors contributing to the country's success in the global online game industry include state's intervention in designing an aggressive IT policy in broadband development and an open cultural policy in the cultivation of E-Sport culture. The influence of these policies is seen in the widespread PC Bangs (internet cafes) network that offers local game companies stable distribution channels in their content delivery. E-sport culture shapes the consumer economy that connects the Korean game market to the global network.

Free market economic logic has been one of the economic factors that shaped the current market structure. The initial local success of homegrown games has created a huge market base that has in turn further boosted the expansion of the industry to the global markets. The economic performance of respective game titles in the nearby Asian countries (ie Japan, China, Taiwan and South East Asia) indicates a collaborative corporate effort evolved from the state market system. This collective corporate expansion indicates a South Korean version of "global complexity" where state and local firms are significant players in the country's globalization process.

About the Speaker:

Dr. Peichi Chung received her Ph.D. in Mass Communication from Indiana University-Bloomington. Her research area includes social impact of global entertainment industries, new media culture and film studies. Her current project examines the complex industry dynamics of game industries in South Korea and Singapore. Her works include the use of the Internet in Taiwanese political movement, new Chinese Kung Fu film in Hollywood and South Korean online game industry. She holds a MA in Telecommunication from Ohio University and a BA in British Literature from Tunghai University, Taiwan.

