Mobile Communication and Social Change

2004 International Conference on Mobile Communication

VENUE: KOREA PRESS FOUNDATION

HOSTED BY THE KOREAN ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTING STUDIES
PROGRAMMED BY THE INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICATION ARTS & TECHNOLOGY
SPONSORED BY SK TELECOM
Mobile Communication and Social Change

2004 CONFERENCE ON MOBILE COMMUNICATION

October 18-19, 2004
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Mobile telephony and face-to-face interaction: A social network analysis
By M. Shuaib Mohamed Haneef and Prema P. Nair ................................................................. 400

“Want-nots” or “have-nots”? An examination of the non-adoption behavior of the cellular phone use
By Donghun Chung .................................................................................................................. 412

Mobile Communication and Mobile Library: Impacts of mobile communication on mobile library services
By Euchul Jung and Thelma H. Tate ...................................................................................... 421

MOBILE SPACE ..................................................................................................................... 431

A study on factors influencing mobile phone uses in public places By Jin-Han Bae .................................................. 432

Mobile Communicative Actions @ Partially Ubiquitous Network Society: Socio-Political Impacts of Mobile Communication in a Globalizing World By On-Kwok Lai .............................................................. 455

Space, Technology and Mobilities By Soochul Kim ............................................................................ 468

The Use of the Mobile Phones and the Privatization of Public Space By Chung-Min Joo ........................................... 474

MOBILE PRACTICES ............................................................................................................. 487

From voice to text : continuity and change in the use of mobile phones in France and Japan
By Carole Anne Rivière and Christian Licoppe ......................................................................... 488

Emergent Social Practices, Situations and Relations through Everyday Camera Phone Use
By Daisuke Okabe .................................................................................................................. 504

Strategic Uses of Mobile and Interpersonal Media in Maintaining Interpersonal Relations
By Joohan Kim and Borae Jin .................................................................................................. 514

New and Old Interpersonal Communication Media in Competition: Cell Phone, E-mail, and Telephone
By Seunghan Lee .................................................................................................................. 535

PAPERS IN ABSENTIA ......................................................................................................... 545

Imaging the Mobile Phone: A Content Analysis of Mobile Phone Newspaper Advertisements in the Philippines
By Fernando Paragas .............................................................................................................. 546

The mobile phone as a cultural artefact in Singapore
By Leow Meizhi and Doobo Shim .......................................................................................... 569

SLIDES IN LIEU OF PAPERS ............................................................................................. 579

Critical Media Practice on Culture and Literacy of Mobile Media in Japan By Shin Mizukoshi .............................................................................................................. 580

Cultural Probe on Mobile Media Literacy: From the Experimental Media Practice of Fukuoka Media Summer Camp 2004
By Mamiko Hayashida, Masaaki Ito, and Kiyoko Toriumi ................................................................ 583

AUTHORS ......................................................................................................................................... 587
Welcome

Shin Dong Kim

Some years ago, when the mobile phone was still at the initial stage of its diffusion worldwide, countries in East Asia displayed top rates of penetration in a very short period. Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan were easily spotted on top of the list along with some European countries. As the diffusion stage proceeds to the next phase, the rates do not seem to mean much as they once did. But the East Asian initiative in mobile technology and industry is well and vivid. Japan has never allowed others to take the lead in mobile technology, and always introduced the next generation devices and services. Korea’s quantum leaf into the most wired society has already received much attention from every corner of the globe. The country’s high rates of broadband Internet access became a showcase. The impact of the technological breakthrough seems to be mirrored in the nation’s politics, economy, and culture.

My first international commitment to the research of mobile communication came from an unexpected invitation from across the Pacific in 1999. Dr. James Katz organized a workshop on mobile communication at his Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and the result of the gathering was later developed into the book, Perpetual Contact. Dr. Katz workshop saw its sequel on the same site in 2001 with increased diversity in perspectives and papers. Since the exchanges at the provoking workshops were so precious, I thought the ‘show must go on.’ As Seoul hosted the 52nd ICA annual conference in the following year, I initiated to take the ball and organized a pre-conference on mobile communication in Chuncheon, Korea. The baton was handed to Rich Ling in Norway (2003) and Leopoldina Fortunati in Italy (2004). Kristof Nyiri in Hungary has also been hosting very productive meetings in the last couple of years.

If well prepared, conference going is a pleasure as well as a reward for academics. It is basically a symposium of like-minded scholars who can easily make themselves contented when they can ‘communicate.’ From the conferences and workshops, I have felt that somehow East Asian forerunners are quite slow in academic discourse and research while their mobile technology and business are topping the field. This conference is a small effort to fill the gap. In the last few decades, the region called East Asia was one of the most dynamic parts of the world in terms of political democratization, economic development, and cultural influx. Social change was everyday aspect of the region and thus sometimes change seem to mean little. But the region including Korea is still left with long journey to sail toward progress. Challenging issues are awaiting just ahead and we all hope technology will open a constructive way for us to strive. “Mobile Communication and Social Change,” the theme of this conference was adopted for this reason.

This conference is truly international in a couple of senses. Its panels present speakers and respondents from over twenty countries, and it is not Western dominant, as Dr. Dale Eickelman from Dartmouth pointed out. Organizing a conference is a project with endless chores and stress. Many people toiled to make it happen. Professor Jae-bum Kim, the president of the Korean Association of Broadcasting Studies was responsible for the brave final decision on the size of this conference. His leadership and support made all this possible. Dr. Chang Yoon Joo worked hard to facilitate all the logistics for the meeting. Dr. Jin-han Bae and Dr. Hyun Ban, as members of the Program Committee of the conference for which I serve as a chair, add their contribution. I am very grateful to Dr. James Katz and Dr. Rich Ling for their acceptance of keynote speeches, and I also deeply thank all the paper presenters. Florence Chee performed a miracle in rapidly compiling all the diverse manuscripts, turning them into valuable proceedings. The event was also prepared with the assistance of top-flight students from both Hallym and Hanyang universities.

Shin Dong Kim

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Conference Proceedings

Shin Dong Kim, Ed.

With the assistance of Florence Chee

and

The Institute of Communication Arts and Technology

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# Table of Contents

WELCOME ............................................................................................................. 1

KEYNOTE SPEECH – DAY 1 ..................................................................................... 2

Imagining the Mobile Phone: Co-construction of a Consuming Technology  By James E. Katz ................................................................. 2

TECHNOLOGY, CULTURE, AND LIFE .................................................................... 9

Mobile Communications: New Technology and Old Archetypes  By Harmeet Sawhney ................................................................. 10

Cultural Differences in Communication: Examining Patterns of Daily Life  By Leslie Haddon ................................................................. 18

Personal Portable Pedestrian: Lessons from Japanese Mobile Phone Use  By Mizuko Ito ................................................................. 31

Key Issues in Producing and Programming Mobile Media Content  By Yang Soo Choi................................................................. 38

SOCIAL ISSUES IN MOBILE COMMUNICATION ............................................ 61

Mobile Telephones as New Media in the Middle East and North Africa: Social and Economic Implications  By Dale Eickelman ................................................................. 62

The family, communication and the new technologies  By Leopoldina Fortunati and Annamaria Manganelli ................................................................. 70

Mobility, Communication and Generation  By Shin Dong Kim ................................................................. 88

COUNTRIES GOING MOBILE ............................................................................. 95

Usage of Digital Mobile Communication and Change in a Traditional Media Use  By Hyun Ban ................................................................. 96

The Use of Cellphones amongst Migrant Workers in Southern China  By Patrick Law and Yinni Peng ................................................................. 127

How mobiles change microentrepreneurs’ social networks: Enabling and amplifying network contacts in Kigali, Rwanda  By Jonathan Donner ................................................................. 135

INDUSTRIAL AND REGULATORY DIMENSIONS .............................................. 149

M-commerce Diffusion: Environmental & Technological Innovation Aspects  By Jeung-Tai Eddie Tang and Tsung-I Tang ................................................................. 150

Dominant Designs approach to Smartphone platforms  By Richard Tee ................................................................. 166

The Emergence of Regional Capabilities in New Technologies: the case of the mobile Internet  By Jeffrey L. Funk ................................................................. 182

On Regulatory Measures and National Character: What has affected the proliferation of cellular phones in Israel?  By Amit M. Schefter ................................................................. 203
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MOBILE COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Service Industry in Hong Kong and Mobile Communication: An exploratory study</td>
<td>By Garland Liu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mobile Fiction. Intimate Discourses in Text Message Communication Amongst Young Norwegian People</td>
<td>By Lin PrØitz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being there: society of the Phoneur  Gendered customising of mobile telephonic net practices in Seoul</td>
<td>By Larissa Hjorth with Heewon Kim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a gender difference in mobile phone usage?</td>
<td>By Dong-Hoo Lee and Seung-Hye Sohn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEYNOTE SPEECH – DAY 2</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is mobile communication causing social change?</td>
<td>By Rich Ling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE YOUNG ONES ARE MOBILE I</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU on IM: The Instant Messaging Generation: Young Adults Motivations for Synchronous Mediated Communication in Germany and the United States</td>
<td>By Stephanie Broge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Youth Digital Literacies and Mobile Connectivity: Text-messaging among Hong Kong College Students</td>
<td>By Angel Lin and Jin Lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of cellular phone among young adults: A study among youths in the Klang Valley, Malaysia</td>
<td>By Mohd Yusof Hj. Abdullah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An examination of mobile phone use by adolescents and adults in Korea</td>
<td>By Jung Kee Kim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE YOUNG ONES ARE MOBILE II</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Students' self-positioning and the cell-phone consumption</td>
<td>By Shanhua Yang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relationship of mobile phone use to addiction and depression amongst American college students</td>
<td>By Yi-Fan Chen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Characteristics of Cellular Phone Communication of the U.S. College Students</td>
<td>By Jinbong Choi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESIGN AND SOFTWARE</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Trends and Design Opportunities</td>
<td>By Jan-Christoph Zoels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POST_Email: Ease, Lightness and Intuitive Affordances of Paper and Electronic Affordances of Email Communication Technology</td>
<td>By Tarun Jung Rawat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy and Community in the Design of Mobile Social Software</td>
<td>By Dan Melinger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPLICATIONS OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Mappa Mundi: using cell phones as associative mapping tools</td>
<td>By Michael Sharon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>