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SPECIAL ISSUE: CYBERSPACE IN EAST ASIA

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The explosion of Asian-language Internet sites over the past decade is of great significance to the development of Asian societies at a time of accelerated economic and social transformation. In the West, research on the characteristics of Asian 'cyberculture' is an emerging area of research that offers potential to reshape traditional disciplinary approaches in the social sciences and humanities. In this issue scholars in media studies, politics and cultural studies explore the social implications of the Internet in China, South Korea and Japan in the twenty-first century. Many of the contributions have a particular focus on 'sites of the imagination' that allow for intensive social networking and on the complex interaction of technologies and cultural traditions in East Asian cyberspace.

In South Korea super rapid broadband allows young people to merge online and offline identities within sophisticated sites known as 'minihompies'. Japanese 'cute' imagery and game technology are emulated in both 'minihompies' and Chinese digital games. In China, the celebrity 'blog' appears at the cutting edge of fashion amongst the younger generation. Chinese youths become addicted to digital games of 'virtual marriage', and traditional and emerging religious movements contend to promote themselves through dedicated websites. These studies highlight the cultural specificity of Asian-language websites with a view to emphasising their distinctiveness from the Western-language Internet and their importance to an understanding of social change in East Asia.

Articles

Internet Domains between China and India: Beyond Anglophone Paradigms
Mark McLelland

Home and Away: a Case Study of the Use of Cyworld Mini-hompy by Korean Students Studying in Australia
Larissa Hjorth

Online Intimacy in a Chinese Setting
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Blogging Everyday Life in the Chinese Internet
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Rights Defence and the Virtual China
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Netizens of Heaven: Contesting Orthodoxies on the Chinese Protestant Web
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Communing on the Internet – Chinese Catholics and their Various Uses of the Web
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