

IAS-STS Work-in-Progress Workshop, March 3, 2011

Abstract by Florence Chee

Communication Infrastructures and Changing Social Dynamics in Asian and European Contexts

In this presentation of research work in progress, I will discuss how my proposed research study has evolved, examining the use of information communication technologies (ICTs) and the changing social dynamics amidst the impacts of transnationality in Asian and European contexts. A theme of the study has been to look at the relationship between the spaces in which media use occurs and how social choices are influenced by local culture.

To date, the primary field research I have conducted concerning the media ecologies in Asia (including Japan, Singapore, India, the United Arab Emirates, and most prominently my dissertation work on South Korea) find that these relationships have appeared to be very much shaped by local culture, social structure and infrastructural factors. Having now added preliminary observations in the European context, I will compare and contrast some initial findings and suppositions.

My initial analyses have pointed to differing ideas with respect to the perception of online games and gamers, including what has typically motivated people to play and congregate in spaces such as the Internet café, the home, and other hybrid public/private environments. My goal is to build an increased understanding of cultural factors in the evaluation and implementation of technology and their associated societal consequences. Furthermore, I argue that government policy initiatives, industrial relationships, and social history that, have indeed been instrumental in driving the frenetic pace of technology use-culture in places like contemporary South Korea. Indeed, the examination of the cultural, political, and economic path dependencies of other environments is imperative as studies in science, technology, and society move towards greater global understandings.