

INTERNET UNIVERSALITY BEYOND WORDS

**EXHIBITION
FINAL REPORT**
October 2018

UNESCO
Office in Bangkok

Report drafted by Sali Sasaki
for the Communication and Information sector (CI)



SUMMARY

Following a creative workshop, the exhibition combined the results of collective reflection and brainstorming on a number of local situations and social transformations pertaining to the Internet as a space, a tool, and a network. The works included print design, three-dimensional works, photography, and videos.

Through a multi-disciplinary approach, this visual and informative showcase shared multiple views on Internet freedom and human rights in a region where the concepts are increasingly being challenged. This project also articulated links between artistic works and the UNESCO principles of “Internet Universality”, which refer to rights (R), openness (O), accessibility (A) and multi-stakeholder participation (M).

According to participants’ feedback, more hands-on creative activities that tackle issues relating to free speech and Internet freedom are needed - particularly since the topic remains a difficult one to understand and approach in the region.

A larger scale project of the same kind, involving multiple countries/partners and designed to stimulate social engagement among young creative practitioners could be considered in the future.

KEY OUTCOMES

CREATIVE WORKS

6 creative works (described below) were completed for the exhibition covering a range of issues and interests from local creative practitioners in connection to the topic of Internet.

Nippita Pongern *My Virtual Playground*

Online safety is tied to individual responsibility and awareness, which at times are challenged by the speed of information technology. My Virtual playground is a mini-campaign that aims to educate the audience about Internet literacy and self-protection from cyber harm. Three original stories were created based on an actual survey that identified various social patterns among a pool of 30 people. The stories interpret daily activities and personal interactions as metaphors that represent issues linked to online behaviour. They include: individual privacy, the access to trustworthy information and the pervasive influence of Internet stereotypes. The books seek to provide a better understanding of the complex ecosystem of Internet Universality.

ROAM: Rights, Openness, Accessibility

Siriwat Pokrajen *Internet Universality* อนาคตของอินเทอร์เน็ตเพื่อทุกคน

This documentary is an attempt to understand UNESCO's Internet Universality concept and its links to the current Thai context. Using the premise of freedom of expression as a fundamental human right, the video explores the laws that affect online freedom of expression in Thailand and the context in which the laws are exercised. The aim is to inform the public about existing laws in an attempt to clarify certain misunderstandings that may generate unnecessary fears about the laws in question. The people interviewed in the documentary are experts who are working directly or indirectly on Internet Universality.

ROAM: Rights, Multistakeholder participation,

Paphop Kerdsup หนังสือภาษาไทย *PHASA+THAI(LAND) : The Books of Languages*

“How well do we know ourselves? How do others actually see us?”

Languages have influenced the degree of online visibility and cultural perceptions of countries, including Thailand. Wikipedia, in this case, has been the first landing spot for those who search for the keyword ‘Thailand.’ Everyone can search and find it, but the volume of information varies according to the language used. In the form of printed matter, this project provides a tangible evidence of the degree of visibility and invisibility of the keyword ‘Thailand’ as it is perceived through different languages. This set comprising thirty languages asks the viewer to reflect on the impact of online representations and the global hierarchies that may influence the Internet as a common space.

ROAM: Openness, Accessibility

Wee Viraporn *Watch!*

These days in Thailand, most citizens have gained the right to use the Internet as a powerful source of information. In the pre-Internet era the circulation of information remained limited to a few, now people from all backgrounds can find and read stories linked to various issues, including the controversies and scandals that affect the country. This artwork gathers widely-circulated images from the news, which have become common references to most Thai citizens. It questions whether the accessibility to online information has had any impact on people's ability to shape a better society. How wide is the gap between online information, civic responsibility and social participation? Can the Internet be more than just a source of information in Thailand?

ROAM: Rights, Accessibility, Openness, Multistakeholder participation



Tewprai Bualoi

*Friendship Ended with Mudasir
Now Salman is my Best Friend*

On the Internet, memes form a popular sub-culture that has continuously evolved globally without limitations or boundaries. They happen as digital images are copied and re-used with alterations, rapidly spreading through online networks and social media platforms. Relying on symbols and metaphors, they function as an often humorous coded language that cannot be understood in a literal sense. This video is a commentary about free speech and uses memes as a code to convey historic information that may otherwise be prohibited in Thailand. The narrative requires a 'decoding' process in order to fully make sense, however it can also be viewed as a visual piece that stimulates curiosity, pushing the viewer to find out more about the symbols that are used within it.

ROAM: Rights, Accessibility, Openness

Aonree Thawatpongsri

Kawin Suwannatrai

Kewalin Prasertsith

Pimnara Sintaveevonge

Praiya Sathanasaowphak

Tanyathorn Lertruangpunyavut

School of Architecture and Design, KMUTT

Artisans 4.0

This project has been developed by six 'generation Z' students from the school of architecture and design (SoAD) at King Mongkut University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) in an attempt to analyze the relationship between the Internet and traditional practices in Petchaburi and Bangkok's old town. Through interviews, the work investigates the benefits and the challenges associated with the Internet in this context, reflecting on the future possibilities for local skills and knowledge to survive in a tech-savvy world, as Thai values and lifestyles continue to transform through globalization.

ROAM: Accessibility, Openness

WEBSITE

A blog site showcasing the exhibition works, including videos, was set-up can be viewed at the following link:

internet-universality.tumblr.com

PRESS COVERAGE

[The Nation](#)

[Khaosod English](#)

[Voice TV](#)

[NBT World](#)

[Newswit](#)

[Thai Post](#)

[RYT 9](#)

[Muan Sanook](#)

[JCPR Digital Team](#)

AUDIENCE & OUTREACH

- 550 daily average number of visitors during the exhibition period (source: TCDC.)
- 65+ registered attendees for the panel discussion and opening event on 28 September 2018.
- 12 journalists registered at the opening event.

PANEL DISCUSSION

A panel discussion, which took place on the opening night of 28 September and organized in collaboration with UNESCO's culture sector, gathered 3 Thai filmmakers (Anucha Boonyawatana, Pen-Ek Ratanaruang, Sorayos Prapapan) as well as five exhibition participants around the topic of artistic freedom and the UNESCO 2005 Convention on cultural diversity.

The panel raised questions about the present situation facing creative professionals in Thailand, as well as possible actions to take to mobilize artists and creators. It revealed that free speech remains a politically sensitive topic that is not easily discussed publicly. Participants expressed their frustration in connection to the limitations of their present contexts and were unable to gear toward solutions that can work beyond political threats and the lack of artistic freedom.

A pragmatic approach on "what can be done?" in this type of situation is therefore important to consider. Taking good practices or models from other places, inviting experienced speakers in the field who can inspire ideas.



BIOS

Paphop Kerdsup

Paphop Graf Kerdsup received his Bachelor of Architecture from Chulalongkorn University. His interest revolves around alternative practices in architecture including architectural narratives expressed through fictions and films, architectural criticism and curatorial practice, and the relationship between architecture and print media. He is currently an associate editor for art4d magazine.

Nippita Pongern

Nippita Pongern (Medfai) is currently a 3rd year student in Communication Design at Chulalongkorn University. Fascinated by all forms of art and design, Nippita decided to enroll in Communication Design with the ambition of becoming a graphic designer and illustrator. Photography, illustrations, handcrafts and publishing have always been her main interests as well as her specialty areas. However, she has always been eager to push herself beyond boundaries and her comfort zone; believing that learning is an endless life-long journey.

Siriwat Pokrajen

Siriwat Pokrajen is Documentation Officer at the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts. Prior to his current position, he has been a broadcast journalist, a magazine contributor and a public relations officer at an art centre. His interests lie in art and culture, human rights and LGBTQ issues. In 2015, he worked as a volunteer in the HIV Prevention and Health Promotion Unit of UNESCO Bangkok, offering support in the organizing of Thailand's commemoration of the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. Apart from work, Siriwat has created a blog and a YouTube channel on art, design and creativity called Not A Full Baht.

Tewprai Bualoi

Tewprai Bualoi (Tew) majored in painting and holds a BFA from King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang. His personal interests include contemporary art, films, internet culture, cats and internet memes.

Wee Viraporn

Wee is the Founder and Design Director of Conscious, a small design studio specialized in environmental graphic design. The studio has designed wayfinding and signage systems for major names in both the public and private sectors. As an advisor to ThaiGa (Thai Graphic Designers Association), he supports community driven projects such as the redesign of Bangkok bus stop signage and took part in activities that aim to stimulate awareness and educate the public and enthusiasts about graphic design in Thailand. His personal interest in pixel art has led to many outstanding post-it murals in places around Bangkok.

PRODUCTION

Curation + Art Direction | Production

Sali Sasaki
Manuporn Luengaram
Habbit Exhibitions

Design support

Nippita Pongern
Wee Viraporn (Conscious Design)

Project Management

Misako Ito

Venue partner

Thailand Creative Design Center (TCDC)

University partner

School of Architecture and Design (SoA+D)
at King Mongkut University
of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT)