

Ethics of the Global Digital  
Divide  
Global Justice, Development and Policy  
Implications for Thailand

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*Soraj Hongladarom*

*Department of Philosophy and Project for the Center of Science, Technology and Society  
Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University  
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# Overview

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- *Rationale and Research Questions*
- *Objectives*
- *Methodology*
- *Expected Outcome*
- *Project Output So Far*
- *Activities*
- *Future Plans*

# Rationale

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- *Policy deliberations on the digital divide problem in Thailand and elsewhere have not taken adequate consideration of ethical aspects and aspects from social and political philosophy.*
- *This has led to some blind policymaking, which resulted in possible waste of resources.*

# Rationale

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- *Another thing is that the digital divide problem is interesting in itself for philosophical reflection, since it lies at the intersection of the interests of social and political philosophy, philosophy of technology, and epistemology, to name but a few.*

# Research Questions

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- *What exactly does 'digital divide' mean?*
- *Is 'digital divide' an appropriate characterization of current trends in information technology distribution?*
- *What does it actually mean for one to be separated by this 'divide' from another?*

# Research Questions

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- *Why does the divide need to be closed?*
- *What else needs to be taken into consideration?*
- *Is thinking about this issue essentially the same or different from thinking about the familiar indicators of social and international inequality, such as nutrition (the food divide) or income (the money divide)?*

# Research Questions

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- *How does the digital divide relate to globalization?*
- *What are the relations between it and local cultures?*
- *How can we conceptualize the whole problem so that we could understand it better?*

# Objectives

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- *To analyze the conceptual and descriptive aspects of the problem of the global digital divide so as to gain a fuller understanding of the phenomenon.*
- *To find the most appropriate normative solutions to the problem as related to global justice and development of a small state such as Thailand.*
- *To offer a set of policy recommendations on how solutions to the global digital divide problem delineated in this project contribute to the development of Thailand, and how such recommendations could serve as an example for other small states.*



# Methodology

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- *Documentary Research*

# Expected Outcome

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- *Three articles to be published in leading international journals*
- *Three papers to be presented at international conferences*
- *Policy impact through organization of meetings of stakeholders and media outreaching programs.*

# Project Duration

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- *September 2003 to August 2006*

# Activities

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- *Chair, Organizing Committee, The 2nd Asia-Pacific Computing and Philosophy Conference, January 7 -9 2005 (AP-CAP 2005) at Novotel Hotel, in association with the International Association of Computing and Philosophy ([www.iacap.org](http://www.iacap.org))*
- *Conference website: <http://www.stc.arts.chula.ac.th/CAP/AP-CAP.html>*
- *Attended by 50 paper presenters from more than 15 countries.*

# Activities

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- *Follow up activities from the conference include publication of three volumes:*
  - Computing and Philosophy: Selected Papers from the 2nd AP-CAP, published by Chulalongkorn University Press.
  - One special issue of MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities on Computer Ethics
  - Other articles to be published in regular issues of MANUSYA

# Activities

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- *Editor, together with Charles Ess, of a volume on Information Technology Ethics: Cultural Perspectives, to be published by Idea-Group, Inc.*
- *The volume is expected to finish in March 2006.*

# Output So Far

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- *Soraj Hongladarom, "Exploring the Philosophical Terrain of the Digital Divide."* In John Weckert and Yeslam Al-Saggaf, eds. *Computers and Philosophy 2003: Selected Papers from the Computers and Philosophy Conference (CAP 2003). Conferences in Research and Practice in Information Technology, Vol. 37. 2004. The Australian Computer Society, pp. 85-89.*
- *Soraj Hongladarom, "The Digital Divide in Thailand: Past attempts to solve the problem and the need for consideration of culture."* In Fay Sudweeks and Charles Ess, eds. *Fourth International Conference on Cultural Attitudes towards Technology and Communication 2004, pp. 565-569.*
- *Soraj Hongladarom, "Electronic Surveillance in the Workplace: A Buddhist Perspective."* In John Weckert, ed. *Electronic Surveillance in the Workplace. Hershey, PA: Idea Groups, 2005.*

# Output So Far

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- *Soraj Hongladarom, "The Digital Divide, Epistemology and Global Justice."* Special Issue of the CSI (Computer Society of India) Communications on Information Ethics 28.12(June 2005). *K. Weber, R. Capurro Guest Eds., pp. 5-6.*
- *Soraj Hongladarom, "The Asian Information Society and the Aims of Education."* Journal of the Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics (*forthcoming*).
- *Soraj Hongladarom, "Global Digital Divide, Global Justice, Cultures and Epistemology."* *Forthcoming from Information Technology and Social Justice, Emma Rooksby ed. Idea-Group Publisher.*



# Future Plans

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- *Organizing a meeting of stakeholders in the digital divide problem at Chulalongkorn University toward the end of the Project (August 2006).*
- *Put all the English-language articles together in a volume and translate them into Thai for the Thai audience.*