

Abstract

A new form of personal Internet publication, online diary (OD), has gained popularity among the Hong Kong young generation very rapidly. This study aimed to generate some useful information concerning the usage of OD and its users' characteristics. 422 young people, including both OD users and non-users, were recruited for the study. They provided some basic usage information and filled in scales measuring constructs that are correlating with self-disclosure or general computer mediated communication. Results reveal that OD serves two major functions: the self-expressive function and communicational function. It enables people to express their inner feelings or thoughts freely and conveniently in the cyberspace. It also serves as an important channel for friends to understand and communicate with each other deeply and easily. Among all those constructs, peer influence has been identified as the most important factors in predicting the usage of OD. These findings help to provide a more clear picture of this new Internet publication. Understanding the reasons behinds its rapid expansion also provides a solid base in exploring their future impact.