

Digital Technology : Connecting the World in New Ways

Purpose

From August 17th to 24th of this year, we visited Vietnam and Cambodia for an overseas training program.

As part of that program, we traveled to Kampong Pluk Village, located along Cambodia's Tonle Sap Lake. In this village, people live in houses built above the water.

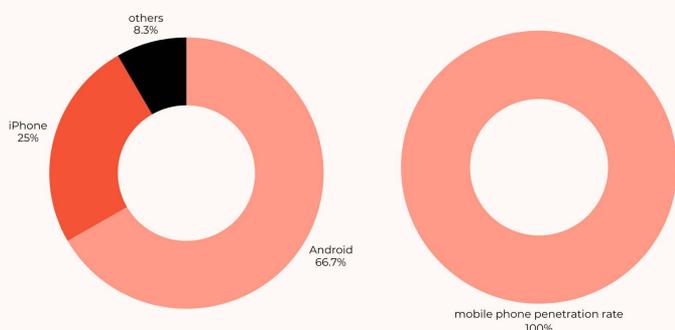
In recent years, however, we felt that the global wave of digitalization has also begun reaching this community. We wanted to explore how "traditional ways of life" and "new digital culture" are affecting the people living there, and what kinds of changes are actually taking place.

Hypothesis

- Kampong Pluk Village maintains a traditional water-based lifestyle, so digital technology is likely still limited.
- Smartphone use is probably mostly among young people, with little impact on daily life or culture.

Method

- Target: Villagers of different ages and genders
- Content: Smartphone ownership, usage time, age when first started using, purposes, etc.
- Method: Home visits, questionnaires



In Reality

- Young people now use social media to access information about tourists and overseas destinations.
- The practice of sharing photos and videos through social media is spreading.

This is influencing how people connect both within and outside the village, as well as how they present themselves.

A new culture of sharing is emerging within daily life.

I'm 18, and I use an iPhone. I spend about five hours a day on it, and I first got a smartphone when I was 15. I usually use apps like Facebook and TikTok, and I pretty much rely on my phone whenever I need to look something up.

As I kept watching things about Japan online, I started really wanting to visit someday. That's also why I study English every day — so I can travel to different countries in the future. I'm dreaming of the day I can finally go to Japan.

I'm 17, and the apps I use the most are Facebook and TikTok. I spend about three hours a day on my phone, and I started using a smartphone when I was 15. I usually use Facebook as my main app.

In Japan, Facebook is mostly used by people in their 40s and 50s, but around here, it's totally normal for young people to use it. Not many people use Instagram. In my family, some of them like watching the mini-dramas on Facebook.



Villager A



Villager B



Conclusion

Digital technology is not merely a convenient tool; it possesses the power to transform people's cultures and values themselves. In Kampong Pluk Village too, its influence is gradually beginning to manifest, bringing changes to how information is conveyed, people's values, and the nature of human relationships. New forms of communication like social media and messaging apps are supplementing the village's connections, which previously centered on face-to-face conversations, slowly altering the shape of society. Going forward, a major challenge will be how the advancement of such digital technology will coexist with traditional ways of life and what new cultures it will give rise to.