CULTURALLY CONDITIONED PRIVACY IN ONLINE PHOTO-SHARING: A COMPARISON BETWEEN AMERICAN AND CHINESE USERS OF SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

Yang Liu

Dr. Lee Wilkins, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This research is a cross-cultural examination of how American and Chinese social network site (SNS) users deal with privacy in online photo sharing. It discovers that American subjects share more about private lives and execute less stringent privacy control in photo sharing on Facebook than Chinese subjects on Renren.com. It also discovers that in consistency with the correlation between privacy and social distance as proposed by the social distance theory, American subjects show a higher level of intensity of feeling in Facebook friendship than Chinese subjects in Renren.com friendship. Those differences of online privacy and friendship are not only conditioned by the ingroup-based differences between individualistic American culture and collectivistic Chinese culture, but also attributed to the mediation of social network sites on American culture and Chinese culture.