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and Information Systems

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Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Proceedings  
of

ICT, SOCIETY AND HUMAN BEINGS 2008

Edited by:  
Gunilla Bradley

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international association for development of the information society

**IADIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**ICT, SOCIETY AND HUMAN  
BEINGS 2008**

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# FOREWORD

These proceedings contain the papers of the IADIS International Conference ICT Society and Human Beings 2008, which was organised by the International Association for Development of the Information Society in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, July 22 – 24, 2008. This conference is part of the Multi Conference on Computer Science and Information Systems 2008, 22 - 27 July 2008, which had a total of 1211 submissions.

The effects of ICT on humans comes in focus in the conference but also the interaction between ICT – Individual – Society. Interaction and Effects - both are important. Changes in behaviour, perspectives, values, competencies, human and psychological aspects, feelings are all of interest. Computer Science and IT related disciplines work more and more together with various behavioural sciences: Cognitive effects and changes, Motivational and emotional changes, Organisational and institutional changes, Societal changes, Value changes and new lifestyles, experiences from Child psychology and Development psychology.

In general all types of research strategies are encouraged and especially cross disciplinary and multidisciplinary studies. Case studies, broader empirical field studies, theoretical analyses, cross cultural studies, scenarios, ethnographic studies, epistemological analyses.

The IADIS ICT Society and Human Beings conference addresses in detail seven main aspects: Globalization and ICT, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Life environment and ICT, Life role and ICT, Effects on humans, Actions for reaching the Good Information Society and Desirable goals. The conference has the intention to provide a contribution to academics and practitioners. So, all are fundamental and applied research are considered relevant.

The IADIS ICT Society and Human Beings 2008 conference received 85 submissions from more than 26 countries. Each submission has been anonymously reviewed by an average of five independent reviewers, to ensure that accepted submissions were of a high standard. Consequently only 21 full papers were approved which means an acceptance rate below 25 %. A few more papers were accepted as short papers, reflection papers and posters. An extended version of the best papers will be published in the IADIS International Journal on WWW/Internet (1645-7641) and IADIS International Journal on Computer Science and Information Systems (ISSN: 1646-3692) and also in other selected journals.

Besides the presentation of full papers, short papers, reflection papers and posters, the conference also included two keynote presentations from internationally distinguished researchers. We would therefore like to express our gratitude to Professor Margaret Tan, Deputy Director, Singapore Internet Research Centre, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and Professor Simone Fischer Hübner, Karlstad University, Sweden, for accepting our invitation as keynote speakers.

# Posters

# PRODUCING ANIMATIONS TO EDUCATE MSM AND MSW TO FASHION SAFE SEX PRACTICES AND ADDRESS LOW PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL RISK

Christopher S. Walsh  
*Deakin University*

## ABSTRACT

This project will produce animations in order to increase understandings of safe sex practices and address low perceptions of personal risk among two of the most vulnerable groups to HIV infection in Thailand. The animations will be incorporated into a prevention outreach program via Ipods, mobile phones and mobile-based portable devices to men who have sex with men (MSM) in their 'hide-outs', that is, parks, clubs and public toilets and male sex workers (MSW) in sex venues such as brothels, go-go bars and beats. To produce these animations, the project is first researching the sexual practices of MSM and MSW because of the lack of any substantive investigation of their social and sexual networks. This use of technology, informed by social research rather than behavioral studies, offers new possibilities to stem rapidly rising infection rates because it takes into account the diverse MSM and MSW identities. Overall, an estimated one-fifth (21%) of new HIV infections in Thailand occur in men who have unsafe sex with men. This disquieting increase highlights the fact that MSM are not adequately reached through HIV prevention programmes, most likely because little is known about their particular situations, contexts and practices.

## KEYWORDS

Animations, HIV, prevention, sexual practices, MSM

## 1. PRODUCING ANIMATIONS FOR HIV PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

HIV prevention programmes in Thailand continue not to reach MSM and MSW. Along with many men who are open about having sex with men, they remain highly stigmatised and socially sanctioned members of Thai society. There is an urgent need for HIV prevention programmes that reduce sexual risk behaviour among these groups. Studies of the MSM community in three major Thai cities found HIV prevalence among MSM has grown dramatically. These studies found for example, that the infection rate among MSM in Bangkok increased from 17.3 percent in 2003 to 28.3 percent in 2005 and in Chiang Mai the rate was 15.3%. Among MSM under age 21, HIV prevalence tripled within the same time frame (*UNAIDS/WHO 2006*). This situation is made more complicated as a result of the stigma directed towards MSM and those who engage in sex work/prostitution as well as the complexity of non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) situation. This includes a lack of adequate funding and the diversity among MSM and MSW.

Because HIV prevalence among MSM in Thailand is increasing at an alarming rate, this project funded by the Australian Association of AIDS Organisations (AFAO), expands a current HIV prevention programme at *Mplus+* ([www.mplusthailand.com](http://www.mplusthailand.com)) in Chiang Mai by producing animations to be used in its existing outreach programmes. The animations will be delivered to MSM in their 'hide-outs', that is, parks, clubs and public toilets and MSW in sex venues such as brothels, go-go bars and beats. These animations will be dubbed in multiple languages and dialects (Thai, Shan, Karen & Kachin), in order to increase understandings of safe sex practices and address low perceptions of personal risk among some of the most vulnerable groups to HIV infection in Thailand. The animations will be incorporated into *Mplus+*'s established and trusted HIV prevention outreach program via Ipods, mobile phones and mobile-based portable devices and uploaded onto their website. Incorporating these animations into *Mplus+*'s HIV prevention programme has the potential to improve the capacity of the organisation to respond to the epidemic across the local, national and regional levels. To produce these animations, the project will also research the sexual practices of the above mentioned MSM groups because of the lack of any substantive investigation of their social and sexual

networks. This innovative and creative use of technology, informed by social research rather than behavioural studies, offers new possibilities to stem rapidly rising infection rates because it takes into account the diverse MSM identities in and around the north of Thailand.

## 2. USING ANIMATIONS TO INFLUENCE SEXUAL PRACTICE

The level of HIV prevention related materials available to MSM have been insufficient. After years of neglect, Thailand's first HIV prevention campaign directed at MSM was launched in February of 2006. The 7-month campaign, known as 'Sex Alert', was jointly run by US non-governmental organisation (NGO) Family Health Planning, the Thai Ministry of Health and local NGOs. It intended to provide MSM with information on safer sex through magazine and radio adverts, text messages, posters and the Internet. Flyers, condoms and lubricant were also distributed. Before 'Sex Alert,' MSM had generally been ignored by prevention campaigns and had not featured in national HIV/AIDS strategies. 'Sex Alert' marked a welcome change, but its impact was considered negligible by many NGOs. The imperative is very clear that more prevention campaigns, which directly target MSM, are desperately needed to stem rapidly rising infection rates. For most MSM, prevention information is via word of mouth, from friends and limited advertising campaigns (TREAT ASIA, 2006). Because of the stigma surrounding MSM, these men often have only limited access to any HIV prevention resources.

It is anticipated the animations will help MSM understand the risks associated with various sexual activities and the consequences of unsafe sex for themselves and their sexual partners/spouses. Importantly, the animations will also attempt to provoke emotional reactions from viewers as they become closely familiar with the thoughts and feelings of MSM and MSW characters who became HIV+ in contexts and situations familiar to the MSM and MSW in Chiang Mai. They will also promote safe sex and the importance of condom use when having anal intercourse and/or oral sex. The animations will provide HIV prevention education for MSM and MSW in Thai, as well as the Shan, Karen and Kachin dialects. The films will help MSM and MSW understand HIV prevention through descriptions of bodily fluids that transmit the virus, how bodily fluids are transferred into the human body, and the various context specific scenarios where risky behavior (identified through the research) may lead to HIV infection. The animations will also model practical ways of increasing the ability of MSM and MSW to negotiate safe sex with potential partners or clients.

The project is unique as it aims to influence sexual practice, not sexual behaviour. Changing sexual behaviour is difficult, even impossible in the 'real world' because there is no such thing. All sexual behaviour is sexual practice; meaning it is produced and enacted in local and precise interpersonal, social, historical and cultural contexts. This project will work in partnership with targeted communities (MSM and MSW) in Chiang Mai instead of working with the population being studied as 'research subjects.' This means, as *Mplus+* collaborates to evaluate and design effective HIV prevention programmes for MSM and MSW, they will work to understand sexual practice as it is lived and transformed, by working with those engaged in negotiating sex, talking about it, and exploring its dimensions and forms.

## 3. *MPLUS+* AND HIV OUTREACH TO SEX VENUES

In 2006, *Mplus+* became Thailand's 2<sup>nd</sup> officially recognised organization, after Rainbow Sky of Thailand, and was formed to improve the sexual health of MSM, including transgenders. *Mplus+* is unique in Chiang Mai because it works in partnership with the Provincial Health Office and the Chiang Mai STD Center N0.10. No other group in Chiang Mai carries out this kind of work with MSM and MSW. Until 2006, the national Thai HIV strategic plan had not included MSM and there had only been limited outreach to the MSM community. Stigma and discrimination have been driving this vulnerable population underground, making it hard to reach with HIV prevention interventions. Through their outreach, *Mplus+* takes condoms and safe-sex information to places where MSM meet for sex to make their usage more acceptable and less stigmatized. Services also include a drop-in centre providing referrals to a medical clinic—in association with the local Thai public health system—for testing and treatment of sexually transmitted illnesses, and community outreach and education, including Internet based prevention.

The primary vulnerable population this project focuses on are MSM. Because MSM is a term that describes a broad diversity of individuals where male-to-male sex is not constructed so much in terms of homosexuality versus heterosexuality, or “gay” versus “straight”, but along a spectrum of masculinities and gender variance that incorporate ideas of feminisation, gender orientation, penetrative masculinity, desire, and sexual orientation, there are four populations within the category of MSM this project focuses on in Chiang Mai. They include; (1) MSM who meet in a secretive and marginalized fashion in parks, restrooms, or other public places with the intention of having sex at the location or elsewhere; (2) young MSM who frequent gay saunas, massage parlours, bars, go-go bars and karaoke bars; (3) Thai MSW (4) and migrant MSW, both who work across a variety of sex venues and beats.

To be successful, this project incorporates a kind of *formative* research where the researchers define the groups of MSM and MSW most at risk, determine ways to access different members of that community, and identify the attributes of the community relevant to HIV risk reduction. The project allows a community-based organization like *Mplus+* to create culturally and socially appropriate HIV interventions over time and improve them. The specific objective of this project is to produce 4 HIV prevention animations that *Mplus+* can incorporate into its outreach prevention programme. In order to meet the above objective, the project also has specific research objectives that will inform the design and production of the animations:

1. To research the patterns and contexts of MSM and MSW sexual practices amid a changing HIV/AIDS epidemic;
2. To develop and implement an effective intervention using animations in order to promote consistent condom use by MSM in the four target groups with a view to preventing HIV infection.

*Mplus+*, primarily staffed by MSM, understands its prevention strategies must be adapted to the changing patterns of risk behaviour and situations involving MSM, MSW, their clients and partners. It recognizes more attention should be given to prevention strategies aimed at reducing HIV transmission between regular partners (in particular in young people), one of whom may have been exposed to HIV through buying or selling sex, while sustaining existing prevention efforts targeting sex work. *Mplus+* also understands that while Thailand has a strong history of intense academic and health research around HIV/AIDS prevention, current research around MSM as ‘group’ and their sexual practices has been severely marginalised. Clearly absent in the research is any substantive investigation of the social and sexual networks of MSM *per se*. This type of research is crucial because it aims to understand and trial how the use of ICT interacts with and impacts MSM and MSW identities in relation to how they perceive and understand personal risk in relation to HIV with an the goal of reducing new infections.

This research will help *Mplus+* to determine MSM & MSW knowledge and attitude towards HIV and personal risk, rather than their sexual behaviours that currently lead to higher rates of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STIs). The project will incorporate knowledge from the research into the scripting, designing, piloting reviewing, production and implementation/trialing of the animations with MSM and MSW in Chiang Mai. The research outcome of the project is designed to focus on understanding the sexual practices of MSM and MSW as they are socially produced in terms of their impact on current HIV prevention programmes at *Mplus+* and developing future prevention programmes and materials (digital/print based and animations) with MSM and MSW with whom the research is carried out. This kind of collaborative research has the potential to build stronger alliances between MSM and MSW (of all genders) and could improve advocacy efforts around sexual health and rights, particularly in relation to HIV prevention. Such broader alliances are desperately needed to tackle the underlying resistance to granting of sexual health and rights to these groups by conservative elements of Thai society.

The project is founded on the belief that *effective* HIV prevention promotes agency and targets sexual practice as it is socially produced. A core aim of the research is to contribute to good sexual health through identifying when and how *Mplus+*'s prevention outreach is/is not promoting agency and changes in sexual behaviour. In order to achieve this aim, the study will evaluate the complexities of the specific object being addressed—sexual practice—which is fluid and essentially social (Kippax & Stephenson, 2005). The goal of the project is to collaborate to produce 4 animations to be included into *Mplus+*'s HIV prevention program. HIV prevention animations currently exist, but they are often short humorous and context specific to Western culture and not explicitly aimed at HIV prevention among Thai MSM and MSW. In Thailand, a multifaceted intervention to promote consistent condom use by female sex workers included video scenarios and was found to promote significant increases in consistent condom use among the intervention groups (Ford & Koetsawang, 1999). This project believes it could produce similar results by drawing on the earlier

study's range of attitudinal, communicational and motivational factors crucial to sex workers' consistency of condom use in the design of this project's methodology and objectives.

In Thailand, MSM and MSW do not learn about HIV/AIDS in educational institutions, they tend to learn about HIV prevention from mass media campaigns through television, billboards and radio. Although there are strong efforts to disseminate HIV/AIDS information, because of the nature of the aforementioned education strategies, MSM and MSW must often make sense of these short, out-of-context pieces of HIV prevention information on their own. This often leads to misunderstanding as well as the memorization of random fragmented data, which does not help them understand how to fashion of safe sex practices or address low perceptions of personal risk. The animations will provide a new pedagogical paradigm that is not only context specific to (1) MSM who meet in a secretive and marginalized fashion in parks, restrooms, or other public places; (2) young MSM who frequent gay saunas, massage parlours, bars, go-go bars and karaoke bars; (3) Thai and (4) migrant MSW who work across a variety of sex venues and beats, but also context specific to *their* sexual practices.

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