INTERNET CONTENT AND USE BY CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS IN MONGOLIA: THE SITUATION IN 2005

A dissertation presented to

the faculty of

the Scripps College of Communication of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirement for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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November 2006
This dissertation entitled
INTERNET CONTENT AND USE BY CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENTAL
INSTITUTIONS IN MONGOLIA: THE SITUATION IN 2005

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Abstract

UNDRAKHBUYAN, BAASANJAV, Ph.D., November 2006, Mass Communication
INTERNET CONTENT AND USE BY CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENTAL
INSTITUTIONS IN MONGOLIA: THE SITUATION IN 2005 (238 pp.)
Director of Dissertation: Don Flournoy

This dissertation examines how governmental and civil society institutions in Mongolia use the Internet, and whether or not these institutions benefit politically and socially from that use. This study draws its theoretical framework from three main perspectives: 1) digital divide; 2) digital democracy; and 3) post-communism. Prevalent patterns and common features of 157 web sites of Mongolian civil society and governmental organizations are analyzed according to the information traffic patterns of allocution, consultation, conversation and registration proposed by Bordewijk and Van Kaam (1984) and suggested by Van Dijk (2000). Furthermore, institutional use of the Internet, the issues of the digital divide and the post-communistic media characteristics are discussed based on data gathered from 23 qualitative in-depth interviews conducted in the Summer of 2005. The study finds that currently Mongolian institutions use the web mostly for information distribution purposes. Conversation and registration patterns involving greater interactivity occur less frequently than allocution and consultation patterns. Diaspora, interest groups, and to a certain extent media web sites show different typologies scoring higher on the conversation, and registration indexes than more traditional institutions like government, research and education institutions. This situation is also supported by interview data showing that less-established Mongolian
institutions are gaining more prominence in policy making by using the Internet. The practice of Mongolian institutions shows little indication of rational discussion of policy issues on the Internet, especially when discussion is attempted on the web sites of government institutions. This situation appears to support Dean’s (2003) view of the Net as a “zero-institution” accommodating conflicting networks with no normative claim for democratic participation rather than a public sphere where the policy networks of government officials merge with the social spaces of ordinary people.

Approved:

Don Flournoy

Professor of Telecommunications
To my parents Norjma, and Dr. Baasanjav, and my sister Oyunbileg
Acknowledgements

This dissertation would have not been accomplished without support of many people and organizations.

I want to thank my dissertation director Don Flournoy for supporting me throughout my graduate program at Ohio University. His rigorous academic standard and positive energy made it possible for me to finish this dissertation. Don and Mary Anne Flournoy have been great support to me and my family in Athens during these academic years.

I would like to thank my dissertation committee members Duncan Brown, Bernhard Debatin and David Shafie. Duncan Brown provided thorough academic insights and practical advice, especially in the qualitative data analysis. David Shafie helped me to integrate policy analysis and political thoughts into my dissertation and to strengthen the analysis of quantitative data. Bernhard Debatin’s reading lists helped me to frame the theoretical framework of my dissertation. I also would like to thank Robert Stewart for his support during the proposal period.

The financial support of the Institute of Telecommunications Studies and the School of Telecommunication made it possible to finish my doctoral programs and to travel to Mongolia to conduct interviews. I also would like to extend my thank you to the Open Society Institute (The Soros Foundation) for supporting me during my master’s program in Athens as a Mongolian Professional Fellow.

Endless appreciation goes to all my interviewees, friends and colleagues in Mongolia, who generously shared their thoughts and expertise. I would like to thank my
friends for their support and help in the dissertation writing process, specifically, the
director of my writing group Jennifer Pauley-Gose, and my friends Erica Butcher, Mia
Zhang, and Lailawati Mohd Salleh for their emotional support, and helpful writing advice.
I would like to also thank my friends Borchuluun and Oyunjargal for helping me to test
the content analysis instrument.

The foremost and greatest thank you and love go to my family for bearing ups and
downs of this journey: my husband John Borczon and my daughter Tsolmon. John, this
dissertation would have not been done without our endless brainstorming and your
tireless reading and editing! Tsolmon, you made this dissertation writing process
meaningful!
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background: The Internet in Mongolia

The Internet reached Mongolia in 1996. The first Internet gateway for the country was called the Mongolian Access to Global Information and Communications Network (MAGICNet). This gateway was connected to the Internet via a communication satellite PanAmSat 2. The first Internet node in Mongolia was established as a result of the joint efforts of a Mongolian private company DataCom Co. and two international aid organizations: the Canadian International Development and Research Center and the National Science Foundation of the U.S. Immediately after the first node was established, Mongolian universities and academic societies began connecting to the Internet. Since 1996, the use of the Internet in Mongolia has been increasing in terms of access, and content. By 2005, the number of Internet users had reached approximately 200,000 within a population of 2.5 million and the number of Internet service providers (ISPs) has grown to seven in the last decade (CIA, 2006).

The Internet is the first electronic media developed in Mongolia after the collapse of the socialist regime and Soviet domination. The arrival of the Internet occurred after the 1990 political revolution in Mongolia that overthrew seven decades of communist rule. Even though the Mongolian democratic revolution of 1990 was peaceful, much like the “velvet” and “negotiated” revolutions in Eastern Europe (Tilly, 1993), the changes occurring in Mongolia since the collapse of socialism were rapid and unquestionably revolutionary in terms of both economic and political life (Odgard &
Odgard, 1998; Fish, 2001; Sabloff, 2002; Kaplonski, 2004). The new Constitution of 1992 declared Mongolia a democratic country characterized by the rule of law and freedom of speech, press and information. The political transition to democracy from a communist political system is in contrast to Mongolia’s neighbors China and Russia, as well as to other central Asian former Soviet countries that reverted to authoritarian regimes (Pomfret, 2000; Fish, 2001). According to Freedom House, the leading agency in evaluating political rights and civil liberty on a global scale, Mongolia ranks as a free country while its neighbors are ranked as “partially free” or “not free” (Freedom House, 2005).

The post-communist context of Mongolia calls for a new approach to the study of media development, especially the Internet, which is neither similar to the media of the former socialist regime nor to that of western developed countries. Moreover, there have been no attempts to measure the extent to which institutions in Mongolia use the Internet. Reseaching this area is important because the Internet is viewed by many scholars as a globalization agent bringing in the “embedded ideology” (Hassan, 2004, p.16) of liberal democracy and a free market economy. This study focuses on institutions rather than individual users because of their stability and complexity. Institutions tend to adapt to changes incrementally and evolutionarily (Bellamy & Taylor, 1998; North, 2000). Douglas North (2000), a Noble prize winning economist, argued the importance of domestic political institutions in securing economic development and defined institutions as “rules, enforcement characteristics of rules, and norms of behavior that structure repeated human interactions” (p.50).
The definition of an institution varies widely. According to Bellamy and Taylor (1998) three main components characterize what constitutes an institution. An institution is an entity having 1) established routines, 2) epistemic communities of “professional and occupational groups whose members rely on common funds of knowledge, memory, and skills and promote specific interpretations and paradigms,” and 3) actor networks of people with “different roles, expertise, and domains” (p. 158).¹ This path dependent nature of institutions in terms of routine, epistemic community, and actor networks provides an explanatory framework for an analysis of web use by Mongolian government and civil society institutions. It is plausible to assume that the institutions in Mongolia will exhibit certain degrees of continuity along historically developed paths (Sparks and Reading, 1998; Berry, 2004). These paths are currently being challenged by the open political system and new market economy Mongolia has pursued since the democratic revolution of 1990. Even though scholars are just now beginning to study the social and political consequences of the Internet on the former socialist countries, many share the expectation that the Internet will encourage more democratic values compared to the old state-controlled media that was used as a propagandistic tool by the communist party (Zassoursky, 2004). This study strives to explain the interplay between society and Internet technology in the context of the former socialist country of Mongolia.

An additional factor to consider is the rapid economic growth in East Asia which has influenced Internet development in Mongolia. The so-called “spillover effect” of the Asian Internet mania is evidenced in the context of Mongolia by the comparatively fast growth of mobile phones and Internet users. As can be seen in Figure 1.1, the number of

¹ This definition of an institution by Bellamy and Taylor (1998) is used throughout in this dissertation.
Internet users per 100 persons in Mongolia steadily increased from 0.01 in 1995 to 7.88 in 2004. The growth of Internet users is directly related to the growth in the number of telephone and computer users per 100 persons in Mongolia. Despite the low economic development of Mongolia where the average gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is US$ 477 per year (Economic Intelligence Unit, 2005), the number of computers in Mongolia reached 190,000 in 2003 exceeding both the 1999 numbers of radio and television sets in the country which were 155,900 and 168,800 respectively (World Fact Book, August 30, 2005). This growth in the number of personal computers in such a short time represents a major break with the socialist pattern of economic development that encouraged Mongolian people “to save and to sacrifice current consumption for the sake of future production” (Krugman, 1994, p. 63).

This growth in computer and Internet use in Mongolia can in part be explained by the parallel growth in the pan-Asian economy. The East Asian economic model was characterized by government-led economic development that is politically controlled. Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and, more recently, China have successfully adopted this model. The biggest producers of telecommunications equipment - China, Korea, and Japan- are among the biggest investors and economic partners of Mongolia. Japan is the biggest official source for development aid (ODA) for Mongolia, and 50% of all Japanese investment in Mongolia goes to the telecommunications sector via companies like MobiCom, a leading mobile phone joint venture company with Japanese Sumitomo and KDD. Korean Telecom owns 49% of Mongolia’s Telecom, and the second mobile phone operator SkyTel in Mongolia is a joint company with Korean SK Telecom (ADB, 2003).
China is the biggest source for goods and services that make up the shadow or “grey” economy of Mongolia and the second largest importer of goods and services from Mongolia (ADB, 2003). The decreasing price of communication equipment in the Asian market and an increasing liberalization of the telecommunications market in Mongolia allow Asian companies to tap into the Mongolian market, leading to an increase in the growth of computer and Internet use from 1995 to 2004, as can be seen in Figure 1.1 below.

![Figure 1-1. The growth in access to phone, computer and the Internet in Mongolia from 1995 to 2004.](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/mg.html)

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2 Data in Figure 1.1 is built based on the United Nations’ Millennium Indicators Database: Country Profile – Mongolia retrieved on May, 18, 2005 from [http://millenniumindicators.un.org/](http://millenniumindicators.un.org/) and data for the 2004 year was retrieved from the World Fact Book accessed on Sep 17, 2005 from [http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/mg.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/mg.html).
The government of Mongolia set a priority on development using information and communication technologies (ICT), especially on developing the Internet (Government of Mongolia, 2005). “The Vision for Developing Information and Communication Technology in Mongolia until 2010”3 was adopted by the Government of Mongolia as a strategic document. The government established the National Information and Communication Technology Authority in 2004 and started implementing the E-Mongolia programs that led to a comparatively faster growth in the number of Internet users.

In 2004, the former Prime Minister of Mongolia, Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj,4 prioritized the adoption of the Internet in all spheres of governance as a way to increase transparency and decrease corruption. This policy was influenced by such factors as the high adult literacy rate of 97.8 % (World Fact Book, 2005), a young population (the median age is 23.9), a medium level human development index (0.666 on the UNDP Human Development Index), and an increasing service sector ratio of 50% in the economy of the country (The World Fact Book, 2004). Under the influence of the development model adopted in Asia, the Government of Mongolia is considering a new role for governance. Until recently, Mongolian government policy was strongly in favor of following a laissez-faire model of economic development.

International and donor organizations have been encouraging developing countries to adopt information and communication technology such as the Internet.

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3 The researcher of this study was involved in drafting of this document which took place in 1999-2000.
4 Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj led the “grand-coalitional government” of the two major political forces in Mongolia: the Homeland-Democratic Coalition and the Mongolian People’s revolutionary party (the communist party). This government was formed as a result of the 2004 election and operated from August 2004 to January 2006. However, in the end of 2005 the Homeland-Democratic Coalition was dissolved due the disagreement among the leaders of three parties of the Homeland-Democracy Coalition. In January 2006, the Mongolian communist party removed the coalitional government and created the cabinet led by Miegombyn Enkhbold (Tuya, 2006).
During the G8 summit in 2000 in Okinawa, Japan pledged $15 billion over five years to help alleviate the problems created by a growing digital divide, focusing mainly in Asia (Ghahremani, June 29, 2001). The G8 meeting in Genoa in 2001 established a task force called Digital Opportunities Taskforce (dot.force) to help developing countries take advantage of digital technology. Developing country governments often times have been lured by the promises made by international organizations to use the Internet as a development tool. Like many other governments in developing countries, the government of Mongolia adopted E-Mongolia programs to increase the use of the Internet at all level of businesses and governance. The involvement of international organizations and donor countries in this process is a matter under consideration in this dissertation.

There are several methodological constraints in studying the use of the Internet in Mongolia. First of all, there is a lack of data available on Internet development in Mongolia. The literature review on the digital divide for this dissertation reveals that digital divide studies have mostly concentrated on developed countries (Norris, 2001; Warschaur, 2003; DiMaggio, Hargittai, Celeste, & Shafer, 2004; Hargittai, 2003; Hamelink, 2000, Slevin, 2000; Hassan, 2004). A few resources are available on Mongolian practice from the International Telecommunication Union and United Nations Agencies, and these sources are relatively outdated. Secondly, communication practices in impoverished nations call for a different methodological approach, one which takes into consideration different communication practices. For example, people in post-communist developing countries use the Internet in public cafes and centers (Kolko, B,
Wei, C. & Spyridakis, J.H, 2003; Arunachalam, 1999) and at work far more than people in developed countries (InfoCon, 2003; Warschar, 2003). The majority of Internet users in Mongolia are business subscribers. Kolko, Wei and Spyridakis (2003) point out the unreliability of statistical data and the discrepancies between the official numbers of Internet users and the actual number of users in former socialist countries. The same cautions concerning statistical data are given by Mongolian scholars who study the country’s history, society and economy due to state monopoly and censorship imposed during the former totalitarian socialist regime (Johnson, 2003; Bruun & Odgaard, 1996; Sanders, 1987).

It is still too early to predict the future of Internet development in Mongolia. A few developed nations have reached the critical mass of 50% of the population using the Internet and those countries are often the sources of the policies designed to facilitate the diffusion of the Internet. It is plausible to assume that the diffusion of the Internet in Mongolia is unlikely to be as extensive as in the U.S. or other developed countries. Scholars in the technological determinist camp will tend to hold expectations that implementation of the Internet technology in former socialist countries will emphasize the democratic role of the Internet compared to earlier media that were state-controlled and were used as propagandistic tools by the communist party. Yet, for many Mongolians, Internet access is still a distant priority due to economic, technological, and language barriers.
Statement of the Problem

The question of whether or not the Internet meaningfully contributes to the democracy Mongolia has been pursuing since the democratic revolution of 1990 has not been studied by communication scholars in terms of Internet content and use at the institutional level. The body of knowledge on the digital divide and the role of the Internet in political and social practices has been built within the context of developed countries (Norris, 2001; Warschauer, 2003; DiMaggio, Hargittai, Celeste, & Shafer, 2004; Hargittai, 2003; Hamelink, 2000; Slevin, 2000). Much of this knowledge lacks solid empirical evidence (Hoff, Horrock, & Tops, 2000) and is subject to contradictory interpretations (Poster, 2001; Norris, 2001; Margolis & Resnick, 2000). The study of Internet use in developing countries has often been reduced to the question of Internet access. This study will examine institutional uses of web sites, their content, functions, and the quality and quantity of their information. Little is known about the role of the Internet in social and political practices in developing countries like Mongolia. When studied at all, previous scholars either reduced the issues of the digital divide to access (DiMaggio et al., 2004; Hargittai, 2003), or lumped together different developing countries with different political, social and cultural contexts (Mohammed, 2004; Norris, 2001; Dimitrova & Beilock, 2005). Methodologically, most studies focused on the micro or the macro level of analysis, leaving much room for the intermediary level of institutional analysis.

An access-centered and western-focused approach to the digital divide leaves unexamined specific social, political, and cultural aspects, and actual Internet content in
developing countries (Hamelink, 2000; Slevin, 2000; Warschauer, 2003). Substantial issues such as local language content on the Internet, political and cultural contexts under post-communism, and the influences of international organizations have not been studied at all.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study systematically examines how governmental and civil society institutions in Mongolia use the Internet, and whether or not these institutions benefit politically and socially from the Internet. The study also focuses on the use of the Internet by public and civil society institutions in Mongolia. The institutional level analysis employed refers to analysis of social and political institutions that provide structures and opportunities for mediation between citizens and the state including government organizations, parliaments, schools, research institutions, political parties, media, interest groups, non-governmental organizations, international programs and diaspora groups. How these institutions use web technology is the focus of this research.

The study explores how Internet technology and Mongolian society co-constitute and co-shape each other in the context of post-communist Mongolia. The researcher positions Mongolia within the broader context of growing globalization and the development of network society. Therefore, the theoretical framework of this study is drawn from three main perspectives: 1) the digital divide; 2) digital democracy; and 3) post-communism. The synthesis of these three perspectives is a guiding framework for understanding the co-constitutive formation of technology and society in Mongolia. That is to say, this research addresses “the dialectical tension” between technological utopian
and dystopian views of Internet development based on the practices of Mongolia institutions.

In carrying out a mid-level analysis of Mongolian institutions using the Internet, this study identifies the descriptive and normative characteristics of communication among public and civil society institutions in Mongolia by studying how these institutions use the Internet. Institutional use is explored by means of a content analysis of web sites of public and civil society institutions, as well as by interviewing key persons in those institutions. Based on the analysis of original data collected in 2005 by the researcher, the institutional uses of the Internet and the actual media content conveyed in the context of Mongolia is examined. The researcher does not focus on a particular type of institution, rather the purpose of the study is to compare the patterns of web site use by public and civil society organizations and to analyze the perceived opportunities and risks associated with the use of the Internet by these institutions. This study does not attempt to measure the adoption of the Internet by individual users or individual households in Mongolia. Neither does it make a macro-level analysis of Internet development in the country.

**Significance of the Study**

Using Mongolia as a case study has theoretical implications for digital divide and digital democracy studies in developing countries, because this study looks at the post-communist characteristics of Internet development in a former socialist county.

The Mongolian study contributes to the knowledge of the social consequences of technology in four areas. First, this is one of a few attempts to systematically explore
Mongolian language content on the Internet and its use by public and civil society institutions. Second, this study is one of the earliest attempts to analyze post-communist media characteristics in former socialist countries, and the role of international governmental and civil society institutions in shaping the use of the Internet in Mongolia. Third, this study synthesizes the three theoretical perspectives of the digital divide, digital democracy and the post-communist media as they apply in the context of Mongolia. Fourth, the methodology of the institutional-level analysis and interviewing has rarely been applied simultaneously in the context of developing countries.

Outline of the Study

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 describes Internet development in Mongolia and the purpose and significance of the dissertation. The review of the literature is discussed in Chapter 2 and research questions are posed. Chapter 3 describes the research instruments and techniques used, the research sample and interviewees selected, and the means by which the data is collected and analyzed. The methodology is a quantitative content analysis supplemented by qualitative in-depth interviews. Chapter 4 summarizes the results of the web site analysis. It also presents the frequency and the prevalence of use of different communicative features classified into four typologies: allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration. Chapter 5 asks: “How do different institutions use the Internet and why?” By conducting in-depth interviews with leaders of Mongolian institutions and the managers of their web sites, a case study is built that attempts to explain political and social practices in a developing country like Mongolia. In Chapter 6, people’s notions of democracy and the
communicative capabilities of the Internet are discussed, as well as the theoretical debate over the Internet’s role in fostering public participation. Chapter 7 concludes by synthesizing data generated and provides some recommendations for Mongolian institutions in their effective use of the Internet and for future scholarly research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Communication scholars approach the use of the Internet from many different perspectives. The Internet euphoria of the late 1990’s in developed countries in North America and Europe, has led to the creation of a body of knowledge on the role of the Internet in social and political practices. It is unclear, however, whether or not the Internet contributes to democracy, especially for democracies in developing countries. In this study of the web content and use among Mongolian institutions, the following three lines of inquiry are followed. These are: the democracy theory perspective (Norris, 2001; Hoff, Horrock, & Tops, 2000; Bellamy & Taylor, 1998; Hamelink, 2000; Young, 2000; Poster, 2001; Dean, 2003); the digital divide perspective (DeMaggio et.al, 2004; Hargittai, 2003; Katz & Rice, 2002; Warschauer, 2003, NTIA, 1999; Rogers, 2000); and the post-communism perspective (Holmes, 1997; Sparks & Reading, 1998; Zassoursky, 2004). In this dissertation, the role of the Internet is studied in the context of Mongolia and the limited resources its institutions possess as suggested by Axford (2001) and Carey (2005).

Digital Democracy

The theory of digital democracy is used to examine the consequences and changes occurring in political and social practices and how these changes intersect with the use of digital technology. Digital democracy theories can be defined as discourses relating to democratic values, the notion of citizenship, and technological change (Hoff et.al., 2000; Nye, 2002; Applbaum, 2002). Within the theory of digital democracy, perceptions of the role of the Internet in politics and society vary widely from optimistic to skeptical.
The proponents of digital democracy claim that discussion forums like Usenet revive the public sphere, mobilize communities (Rheingold, 2000; Reid, 1999) and strengthen “direct and strong democracy” (Barber, 1984). Three claims are emphasized by the proponents of digital democracy: 1) that the Internet increases access to and exchange of information; 2) that it supports public debates, deliberation, and community formation; and 3) that it enhances political participation by citizens. On the Internet, the military network co-exists with the academic network, and the network of hippie environmentalists is interconnected with the network of policy makers that are commonly separated from each other in real life. At the same time, the Internet has dual characteristics performing the functions of both mass media and interpersonal communication (Flournoy, 2004; Poster, 2001; Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996).

The multiple forms of the Internet, and its decentralized characteristics interconnecting varieties of networks illustrate the ontological multiplicity of the Internet (Poster, 2001). Poster (2001) in his book *What is the matter with the Internet* argues that public dialogue and discussion on the Internet can be seen as analogues to the Athenian agora, and nineteenth century town hall meetings in the United States, where common interests and community affairs are discussed by autonomous individuals. Since discussion forums on the Internet are non-coerced discussions and debates of common issues by autonomous individuals, Poster goes on to say, they can be seen as a metaphorical analogue to what Habermas (1989) articulated as the public sphere in his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. The Habermasian public sphere refers to “table societies” or salons and coffee houses in eighteenth century
Europe where autonomous individuals beyond the realm of social hierarchies discussed public affairs without state or other coercion to achieve a consensus. However, Poster acknowledges that the word “public” creates problems because of the human-machine interface of the Internet where one person can dominate a public sphere thanks to her fast typing skill.

Many countries have spent a lot of resources to realize the democratic potential of the Internet. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2003) reports successful cases in which the Internet is adopted by member countries to increase efficiency and transparency in governance. These cases are widespread. In Mexico (www.compranet.gob.mx) and in Korea (www.g2b.go.kr) the Internet is efficiently used for government procurement resulting in reduced costs. In Switzerland and in the Great Britain, the parliamentary web sites Live+ and www.scottish.parliament.uk stream live debates and parliamentary sessions, allow online petition registrations, and provide reports about actions taken. In Spain, the tourism portal www.spain.info collects information from all municipal and local authorities to help tourists plan and book their reservations in nine different languages.

Skeptics claim that people tend to adapt technologies to their “old social mould,” and that technology itself does not change “politics as usual” (Margolis & Resnick, 2000; Agre, 2002; Axford & Huggins, 2001). Historically, skeptics point out, each new technology, including the Internet, has had its own fascination phase for improving democracy and political processes. Telephone, radio and cable TV have all moved beyond their periods when they were thought to be the ideal solution for developing
Radio developed into a mass medium rather than an interactive medium in the 1920’s because the dominant actors focused the discussion concerning the potential uses of radio to: what can we put on it? and how can we pay for it? (Gibson and Ward, 2000) When cable television came, some expected that the increase in the number of local channels would improve local political participation. However, cable television became more oriented toward entertainment, except for such programs as C-SPAN which has only a small audience (Margolis & Resnick, 2000). With development of these media came a so-called “law of suppression of radical potential” (Winston, 1998) and the emphasis on democratic potentials and opportunities tended to fade away.

Digital democracy scholars have tended to avoid the technologic deterministic view presuming that with the arrival of a new technology people will act in a predictable way. Likewise, the social construction theorists have avoided overemphasizing the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in society; rather they see technology as part of the fabric of society and culture. Hagen (2000) illustrated how the same digital technology is shaped differently in the different political and cultural contexts of the US, UK, and Germany. The US is characterized by technology enthusiasm, fascination with new technology, direct democracy and liberal values. The UK and Germany, by contrast, have adopted a more cautious approach to digital democracy. The historical practice of democracy in Germany before World War II tended to restrain the utopian scholars when they theorized about direct democracy and community building. According to the social construction view, there are three fallacies about digital democracy: the belief that technology is neutral (free of ideological values),
that it is autonomous (develops itself), and that technology is selected freely. Social constructivists also claim that the Internet balkanizes politics (Sunstein, 2001; Slevin, 2000) and alienates disengaged people creating a “democratic divide” (Norris, 2001).

Scholars supporting the dystopian view argue that young, white, male users dominate the public sphere on the Internet and exclude women, and ethnic and racial minorities (Slevin, 2000; Dean, 2003). Margolis and Resnick (2000) state that the Internet resembles the “semiprivate spaces of modern health clubs more than the public spaces of agoras” (p.101) and point to the violent game, porn, and uncivil chat spaces on the Internet. Other scholars question the possibilities of “common affairs” given the fragmentedness in modern societies and claim that the Internet can be seen as “public spheres” where many different interest networks coexist, but do not necessarily collide (Slevin, 2000; Dean, 2003). Dean (2003) argues that the Net is more of a “zero-institution” rather than a “public sphere” borrowing from Slavoj Zizek (1999), who argues:

A “zero-institution” is an empty signifier with no determinate meaning, since it signifies only meaning as such, in opposition to its absence: a specific institution which has no positive, determinate function – its only function is the purely negative one of signaling the presence and actuality of social institution as such, in opposition to its absence, to pre-social chaos (p.8).

Dean explains that the Net is a powerful form of a zero institution because many on the Net view themselves as a member of millions of conflicting networks with no determinate meaning. She goes on to say that “the web is precisely a site where all differences emerge, mutate, and link up into and through networks” (p.106). When the term “zero institution” was coined by Levi-Strauss, he explained how the members of a
tribe identified themselves as the members of the tribe despite the antagonism within it. In a similar vein, Zizek explained how nationhood and gender are zero institutions of society’s unity and division. These different points of view about the net by Poster (2001) and Dean (2003) are explored in this research when examining the use of the Internet in Mongolian institutions as a case study.

A middle point between the utopian and dystopian views of digital democracy is provided by Pippa Norris (2001) in her book *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide*. Norris uses the conceptual framework of a three-level analysis of digital democracy at national, institutional, and individual levels. At the national level, macro-level socio-economic, political and technological environments define the use of the Internet. At the institutional level, the use of the Internet by governmental and civil society institutions serves intermediary media functions between government and citizens. At the individual level, motivation and resources determine who participates. In constructing this model Norris rejected both utopian and skeptical views of virtual politics. She states that even though the Internet does not fundamentally change old institutions and influence disengaged citizens, it does facilitate communication, organization and mobilization of those already engaged. Norris claims that the Internet can alter the balance of resources among institutions.

This dissertation will make use of the Internet civic engagement model proposed by Norris (2001). The research examines Internet content generated by the Mongolian government and civil society institutions and the way that content is used. What Mongolian institutions gain by using the Internet depends upon their conception of
democracy and the communicative capabilities the Internet makes possible. In this chapter the literature is reviewed concerning 1) the different models of democracy that advocate varying views on democratic values, notions of citizenship and procedural norms as they relate to digital democracy; 2) varying communicative capabilities of the Internet focusing on information traffic patterns (Bordewijk and Kaam, 2002), and 3) interactivity as the most promising characteristic of Internet communication (Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1996; Jensen, 1998; McMillan, 2002a).

Models of Democracy and Digital Democracy

Understanding varying views of citizenship and democratic procedural norms in already established western democratic countries helps the researcher to interpret the democratic values Mongolian institutions are promoting, and the procedural norms and technological choices these institutions make when they design their web sites and use the web. Mongolian institutions are transitioning to a democracy from an authoritarian regime and democratic values and procedural norms at these institutions are open to different interpretations. Historically, philosophical debates on citizenship emerge from three main perspectives: libertarian, emphasizing the citizen’s personal autonomy and freedom of choice, republican, advocating dialogue and deliberation over public issues

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1 The proponents of the liberal view of citizenship argue that the highest freedom and autonomy of citizens is manifested by the right to vote for representatives. Representatives serve in the institutions which will defend citizens’ interests. The liberal democratic view thus emphasizes the citizens’ role in politics limited by making a choice for representation in legal and political institutions rather than by participating in dialogues (Hoff et.al., 2000).
2 The republican citizenship tradition views the participatory process of deliberation as the most important democratic value. This view is based upon beliefs in common interests, community affairs and deliberative procedural norms (Hoff et.al., 2000).
to solve common problems and communitarian,\footnote{Like the republican thoughts on citizenship, the communitarian view of citizenship focuses on common interests and common affairs of communities which can be developed and defended. The difference between republican and communitarian views is that the communitarian view focuses on communities but not artificial community (Hoff et.al., 2000).} highlighting the interest of historically specific and culturally different communities, self-realization and identity (Hoff et.al., 2000).

The varying notions of democracy have resulted in varying models of digital democracy. Scholars have built different models of digital democracy based on different views about what democracy is. Hoff, Horrock, and Tops (2000) construct four models of digital democracy: 1) consumer democracy, 2) demo-elitist democracy, 3) neo-republican democracy, and 4) cyber democracy. The consumer democratic model is the closest to the constitutional democracy that we are familiar with today in that it emphasizes the citizen’s right to vote and to express preferences as the most important actions of citizens. In this model, the Internet is most likely to serve the purpose of providing more information to citizens, giving them more choices, and thus more power in dealing with bureaucracy.

The second view, the demo-elitist model, emphasizes equality and citizens’ rights rather than duties and responsibilities. This perspective points to the legitimacy of responsive, accountable and open governance that typically exists in welfare states in order to satisfy citizens’ rights, wants and needs. From the demo-elitist perspective on digital democracy, the Internet is seen as means to enhance vertical communication between voters and representatives.
The third view, the neo-republican view, is based on the idea of shared social values, participation and engagement. This view emphasizes the “civic virtue” of active agents and their moral capacity to balance an individual’s desire against those of other citizens. According to this perspective, the Internet is a public space where agents participate and debate community issues.

The last view, that of cyberdemocracy, acknowledges alienation, balkanization, and fragmentation of politics and believes that there is a new form of pluralism based on the “proliferation of confined and narrow public spaces” (Sassi, 1996). These models by Hoff, Horrock, and Tops (2000) seem to provide a large range of varying notions concerning how democratic values advanced with Internet use.

Another perspective on digital democracy that informs this dissertation can be found in the study by Van Dijk (2000). His article entitled “Models of democracy and concepts of communication” shows the relationship between democratic values, procedural norms and the Internet’s communicative capabilities. According to Van Dijk, “the opportunities and risks people expect from the application of new media in politics crucially depends upon their conception of democracy and upon the communication capacities of the new media” (p.38). This view is adopted in this dissertation and is analyzed in the following section.

Models of Digital Democracy and Information Traffic Patterns

“Models of democracy and concepts of communication” by Van Dijk (2000) will be especially useful in the analysis of governmental and civil society institutions’ web sites. Van Dijk expands the notion of digital democracy by integrating democratic
procedural norms with the communicative capabilities of the Internet. For Van Dijk, democracy models differ depending on their goals and the means to achieve these goals. Van Dijk argues that the two main goals of democracy are either opinion formation or decision making. The means to reach these goals come from either representative or direct democracy. His explanation of digital democracy revolves around two central themes: 1) the models of democracy proposed by Held (1987) who analyzed the goals and means of democracy; and 2) the communicative capacities of new technology characterized by the information traffic patterns suggested by Bordewijk and Van Kaam (1984, 2002). Held (1987) analyzed five contemporary democracy models similar to those explained in the book by Horrock et.al. (2000); and expanded the analysis of these models by integrating procedural norms that can be representative or direct. In analyzing the institutional use of the Internet by Mongolian governmental and civil society institutions, representative and institutional politics are discussed more than direct or plebiscitary procedural norms because the dissertation focuses on Mongolian institutions.

The study by Bordewijk and Van Kaam has become familiar to mass media scholars through McQuail’s Reader in Mass Communication Theory series. Bordewijk and Van Kaam (2002) developed a model that posed four information traffic patterns or media typologies. Their classification of media typologies differentiated four patterns: 1) allocution; 2) consultation; 3) conversation; and 4) registration. These classifications refer to the direction of communication, and the control over information. The first of these, the allocution pattern, corresponds to the “old media” model of mass
communication where information is distributed from a center simultaneously to many peripheral receivers. The audience has no control over the communication process.

The second typology, the consultation pattern, refers to communication situations in which individuals look for information from a central source, yet they have some control over the process. Consumers send requests for information that can be provided by an identified source. Retrieving information from public information databases is an example of the consultation pattern.

The conversation pattern refers to various communicative actions where individuals interact directly with each other bypassing intermediaries. Users exchange information with each other, and they control the time and the interaction in bulletin board systems, discussion lists, electronic mails and teleconferences. The last typology, the registration pattern, is the reverse of the consultation pattern in that a center requests and receives information from participants at the periphery of the network. Collection of information centrally through questionnaires and voting ballots are examples of the registration pattern.

Van Dijk claims that institutions make choices emphasizing certain patterns of allocution, conversation, consultation and registration based on different notions of citizenship and democratic values. The first model of democracy he analyzes is legalist democracy which relies on laws and constitutions as the foundation of democracy and representative institutions as the means of achieving democratic goals. Like the consumer model discussed by Horrock et.al.(2000), proponents of legalist democracy emphasize freedom of the individual from authoritarian rules, yet reject direct democracy
and populism. Representative institutions and the constitutional separation of powers are keys in this model. Within the view of legalist democracy, information and communication technologies (ICT) are expected to solve the problem of information shortages between representatives and citizens and increase the effectiveness of existing institutions while ensuring checks and balances among institutional powers. Often times, a lack of information is seen as a hindrance for better, more transparent and responsive governance. Information campaigns, public services, and mass public information centers are important for governance. Polls, referenda and public debates among citizens are of lesser importance. In other words, allocution, consultation and vertical interactive communication between citizens and representatives are emphasized in this model of democracy (Van Dijk, 2000).

The second model of democracy, competitive democracy, is also based on a procedural conception of representative democracy. The assumption is that the strongest party and coalition wins elections. This model is also called competitive-elitist because the model emphasizes leadership in political institutions and rejects direct democracy as unfeasible in complex and heterogeneous societies. This model of democracy is in response to the growth of personalized politics in two party states. Populism is the typical election strategy. The Internet is used for targeting specific voting audiences with differentiated messages in information and election campaigns. Electronic polls, and town hall meetings are used for political leaders. Allocution, consultation, and registration patterns are prioritized by the political leadership (Van Dijk, 2000).
Another model analyzed by Van Dijk (2000) is a form of pluralist democracy that emphasizes the roles of intermediary institutions and organizations of civil society. Proponents of pluralistic democracy assume that coalitions of minorities can challenge the power of the majority. Opinion formation in civil society is based on aggregating interests, and thus discussions are more important than decision making. In this view of democracy, what makes a difference is the conversation pattern within and amongst organizations. Participatory democracy differs from pluralistic democracy in that it emphasizes informed citizens over institutions. This model of pluralistic democracy is similar to the neo-republican cyber democracy model suggested by Horrock et.al. in that ICTs serve to inform and activate citizens.

Van Dijk (2000) also discusses two more contemporary democracy models, direct democracy and libertarian democracy. Proponents of both prefer direct voting, and emphasize citizens’ will. With the arrival of computer mediated communication facilities in the 1980’s, the proponents of direct democracy attempted to revive plebiscitary democracy to address the problems associated with institutional politics. The proponents of these models, especially the ones following the libertarian democracy model, reject institutional politics as obsolete and encourage direct citizen action through horizontal communication. ICTs are expected to serve the purpose of informing citizens and facilitating conversation and discussions.

In the analysis of the communicative characteristics of the Mongolian institutions using the Internet, this study adopts the models suggested by Van Dijk (2000), and Bordewijk and Van Kaam (1982, 2002). Van Dijk explains how pluralistic democracy
proponents emphasize the importance of the conversation pattern in the use of the Internet, whereas the constitutionalist democracy proponents emphasize the allocution pattern. He shows how the notion of democratic procedural norms influence institutions’ preference for a certain pattern of communication. According to Van Dijk, the proponents of plebiscitary or direct democracy emphasize the registration pattern to facilitate citizens’ voices in decision making, whereas the proponents of competitive democracy emphasize a consultation pattern. The methodology deployed in the analysis of the information traffic patterns of the institutions using of the Internet is described in the “Methodology” Chapter 3. As Van Dijk suggests, it is plausible to make inferences about the democratic practices of the Mongolian institutions based on the characteristics of communication taking place on the World Wide Web.

Interactivity and Information Traffic Patterns

Interactive characteristics of the Internet are essential to understanding the role of the Internet in social and political practices because interactivity is a key function of the Internet to revive public spheres and facilitate strong and direct democracies. The concept of interactivity is, however, defined differently in different fields

4 The concept of interactivity stems from sociological studies where it is defined as the relationship between two or more people. By this token, interactivity on the Internet implies mediating practices of human interactions. In the field of informatics, interaction is a term referring to the relationship between people and machines. Within the field of communication and media studies, the word interaction often refers to the processes taking place between audiences and media messages (Jensen J., 1998; Jensen K., 2005).
spawned in separate fields of study illustrate that interactivity is a “multi-faceted continuum” (Jensen, 1998; Downes and McMillan, 2000). It can be present in varying degrees from very low levels to very high levels. The Internet can accommodate different types of communication from various sources in easily accessible formats. This is reminiscent of Internet’s “ontological multiplicity,” as defined by Poster (2001), since the Internet can interconnect various networks of different types. The Internet can convey interpersonal communication in such asynchronous communication as email and discussion forums while serving as a mass communication medium. The World Wide Web can distribute text, audio and video content. These different communication formats and different sources of information appear bundled together at a single point on the Internet, especially on the World Wide Web (Flournoy, 2004).

A review of the literature shows that earlier studies of interactivity tend to stem from the notion of the Internet as a medium facilitating people’s interactions, for example in the discursive analyzing of messages in discussion forums. These discussion forums were often referred to as computer mediated communication (CMC) and took the form of Usenet groups and Multi-user Dungeons (MUDs) where people discussed issues ranging from hobbies to politics mostly in text messages in forums like Usenet and WELL (Rheingold, 2000; Sack, 2005). CMC, in the form of Usenet-like discussion forums and MUDs, had an extended base in western countries, particularly among academic communities. These online discussion groups and forums seemed to mirror Habermas’s

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5 One of the earliest and often-cited works on interactivity by Rafaeli (1988) refers to online forums in terms of the interrelatedness of the messages and identifies three levels of interactivity: 1) the one-way or non-interactive level; 2) the reactive or quasi-interactive level meaning that later messages refer to and cohere with earlier ones; and 3) the fully interactive level when messages are reacting to each other.
idea of the “public sphere.” The Internet created opportunities for online civil societies to deliberate their common interest issues over a wide range of topics.

In developing countries like Mongolia, however, online discussion forums and civil society itself are just emerging and are still in their rudimentary phase. In Mongolia, discussion forums and online CMC networks have mostly been developed as parts of web sites, not as stand-alone media forums and discussion platforms. This can be explained by the fact the Internet only reached Mongolia in 1996, well after the inventions of the first browser software and the World Wide Web, which gave an impetus to the growth of the Internet as a mass communication medium. For this reason a textual focus on interactivity is given less emphasis in this research.

This study examines interactivity from the perspective of interface culture (Slevin, 2000) focusing on human-machine, human-content and human-human interactions. Scholars of mass media communication have studied the interactive characteristics of the web by conducting feature-based analysis of websites (Ha and Lincoln, 1998; Massey and Levy, 1999; Deuze, 2003; Mohammed, 2004; Norris, 2001; CPRG, 2000; Schneider and Foot, 2004), and by exploring interactivity based on users’ perceptions using surveys and interview methods (Downes and McMillan, 2000; McMillan, 2002; Jensen, 2005). Scholars who conduct feature-based analysis of websites construct different sets of characteristics, variables, and levels that vary from study to study. Yet, many communication scholars seem to associate interactivity with 1) the possibility of two way communication; 2) the flexibility in time of accessing and interacting; 3) the degree of control of communication by interactors; and 4) the shared understanding of the
contextual and mental dimension of the Internet (Van Dijk, 2000). These characteristics associated with interactivity can be juxtaposed into four different types of interactivity according to the information traffic pattern analysis suggested by Bordewijk and Van Kaam (2002) discussed in the previous section. In fact, two studies by Jensen (1998) and McMillan (2002a) provide a useful model for understanding different levels of interactivity by integrating the media typology of allocution, consultation, conversation and registration.

Based on the Bordewijk and Van Kaam’s (2002) media typologies, as well as organizational public relation theories suggested by Grunig and Grunig (1989), McMillan (2002a) proposes four levels of cyber-interactivity: 1) monologue; 2) feedback; 3) responsive dialogue and 4) mutual discourses. Each of these interactivity levels corresponds well to the information traffic patterns suggested by Bordewijk and Van Kaam. The first level of the interactivity model is monologue or one-way communication with little receiver control over the communication process. This type of organizational communication is called “press agency” in public relations theories and resembles the allocation pattern. The direction of communication is one-way and the communication is asymmetric from organization to public.

The opposite of the monologue level of interactivity is the feedback level. Feedback is mostly one-way communication allowing receivers limited participation in the communication process. Even though there is some symmetry in the communication process, when users send feedback through email, the center retains control over the communication process. The other two models of cyber-interactivity relate to two-way
Responsive dialogue is two-way communication where receivers primarily control the communication process. This type of communication is called the public information model in organizational communication theory and is an analog of the consultation pattern of information traffic. Responsive communication is seen at customer support websites and e-commerce websites. The highest level of interactivity is mutual discourse, and it is similar to the conversational pattern and the two-way symmetric model where senders and receivers have similar functions. For example, communication situations occurring in chat rooms, and bulletin-board systems (BBS) are examples of mutual discourse.

McMillan’s model of interactivity integrates both the information traffic patterns and organizational communication models and provides a tool for the analysis of websites. This study attempts to integrate different levels of interactivity into information traffic patterns. An instrument was created for content analysis of the websites of governmental and civil society institutions based on this model integrating the level of interactivity suggested by McMillan (2002a) and the information traffic patterns suggested by Bordewijk and Kaam (2002). The next chapter describes the details of the model.

**Digital Divide**

There are ongoing debates concerning the definitions, the causes, and the consequences of the digital divide, including whether or not special policies should be established to close the digital gap. Initially, the term “digital divide” was coined by the Clinton administration as an access issue that tended to dichotomize “haves” and “have-
nots” (Warschauer, 2003; DiMaggio, Hargittai, Celeste and Shafer, 2004; Hargittai, 2003; Hamelink, 2000). In 1973, Merton in the book *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations* described the so called “Matthew effect,” which states that “unto everyone who hath shall be given.” The Matthew effect has become the underlying assumption of digital divide theory (Hargittai, 2003; Norris, 2001). “Haves,” who have knowledge and resources, are better off using new information technologies than “have-nots” who do not possess such knowledge and resources. This gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” is assumed to increase over time (NTIA, 1999; Norris, 2001). Scholars continue to contest the definitions, scope, and policy implications of the digital divide from different theoretical and methodological perspectives.

In general, theoretical views vary from the technological deterministic to the social constructionists (Norris, 2001; Hassan, 2004; Katz and Rice, 2002). The technological deterministic view claims that unlimited information available via the Internet and its two way communications possibilities enrich and strengthen societies and eventually brings a change in society (Rheingold, 2000; Rogers, 2000). Social determinism sees technology as one of many factors influencing society and culture and claims that people adapt technologies to their social and cultural contexts and their “old social mold” (DiMaggio, et.al., 2004; Hargittai, 2003; Hamelink, 2000; Slevin, 2000).

Digital divide studies in the U.S. and Europe have often equated such issues with Internet access issues (DiMaggio et.al., 2004; Hargittai, 2003; Young, 2001). Internet use and diffusion among people has been measured by the number of households that have Internet access. These studies have generally been based on the concept of
technological determinism which assumes that technologies like the Internet ultimately diffuse into societies bringing positive changes. One of these perspectives is the diffusion of innovation. In this approach, the Internet is adopted by different societies like any other technological innovation, product, and service.

Rogers (2000) defines the diffusion of innovation as a social process in which an idea or an innovation is communicated through different channels among people in a society over a certain period of time. According to the diffusion of innovation approach, the diffusion of the Internet, like many other human traits, is distributed normally. A graph of the number of people adopting a technology over time forms an S-shaped curve reflecting the different people and groups which adopt innovations at a different time. In general, an S-shaped curve indicates that the adoption of a technology in a society is slow at the beginning until it reaches the critical mass; then the innovation spreads rapidly reaching the saturation level. After it reaches the saturation level, the diffusion slows down. Rogers (2000) goes on to classify different groups of people adopting a new technology as 1) innovators; 2) early adopters; 3) early majority; 4) late majority; and 5) laggards or a late comers. Rogers generalizes that earlier adopters usually have better social economic status (SES), better education and more resources in general than late adopters who have lower SES, less education, and fewer resources.

The diffusion studies are often critiqued for their pro-innovativeness bias and their technologically deterministic view implying that technology is autonomous and leads to progressive changes. The technological determinist approach tends to blame

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6 Historically, the diffusion of innovation approach is first used by the French sociologist Tarde in 1900 (Rogers, 2000)
individuals – laggards - for their shortage in resources and lack of innovativeness. An absence of analysis at a systematic level encourages governmental policy which ignores the social consequences of the digital divide. The underlying assumption that later adopters will catch up as time passes and the Internet technology eventually suffuses into society leads to the policy assumption that there is not much need to adopt a specific policy to equalize this difference in the use of the Internet (DiMaggio et.al., 2004; and Hargittai, 2003).

In contrast to technological determinism, social constructionists claim that a technology is a product of social practices, and is not an external changing force. In other words, social constructionists believe that the relationship between society and technology is co-evolutionary and co-constitutive, but not casual (DiMaggio et.al., 2004; and Hargittai, 2003). People create, modify, and adopt technologies to do things more effectively that they are already doing. Therefore, social determinists suggest that Internet studies should go beyond the narrowly defined access issue to a broader context of inequality that is already taking place in a society. DiMaggio et.al. (2004) and Hargittai (2003) suggest that digital divide research should be studied in a broader theoretical context and in comparison with the inequalities present in the use of other media.

Compared to other communication technologies, the diffusion of the Internet took off more rapidly than telephone, television and radio diffusions; however, slowed down much earlier before full penetration (DiMaggio et.al., 2004; Hargittai, 2003). DeMaggio et.al. and Hargittai also claim that public policies such as the E-rate program that
provided funding for connecting public institutions such as schools and libraries to the Internet, played an important role in closing the digital divide in the U.S. By the same token, the practice of flat-rate costing for Internet use in Europe has also enormously contributed to an increase in the use of the Internet. DeMaggio and Hargittai go on to suggest that instead of asking: “How many people have access to the Internet?” scholars have to ask: “How do people really use the Internet to increase their economic return and social mobility?” DeMaggio et.al. (2004) and Hargittai (2003) suggest research should be done on digital inequality from a perspective reflecting differences in levels of skill, social support, autonomy of use, and purposes in the use of the Internet. Hargittai (2003) and Warschaur (2003) emphasize the differentiated return in the use of Internet content due to differentiated quality of content. Warschauer (2003) suggests studying the discrepancies in Internet content in different languages and the huge gap in the literacy rate. Norris (2001) suggests studying the use of the Internet in democratic practices focusing on the democratic divide.

Norris (2001) in her book Digital divide: civic engagement, information poverty, and the Internet emphasizes three types of digital divide: 1) global digital divide occurring between developed and developing countries; 2) social divide within a community due to rural-urban, income, age, race, and gender differences; and 3) democratic divide occurring between those who use the Internet for political participation and those who do not. Norris analyzed available data in 179 countries and web sites of parliaments, political parties and media institutions. She states that the use of the Internet by different organizations varies, yet existing tendencies in institutions tend to be
reinforced with the use of the Internet. The theoretical framework and data analysis by Norris (2001) provides a useful framework for understanding which institutions are online, how they use the Internet, and what are the antecedent factors for the use of the Internet. However, much of her analysis at the institutional and individual level is based on data available from the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and does not provide analysis of developing countries, so it is unclear whether or not institutions in developing countries benefit from the use of the Internet.

This dissertation strives to answer some of these digital divide questions focusing on web content, as well as communication praxis in public and civil society institutions in the developing country of Mongolia. In doing so, the research focuses on the institutional divides in Mongolia, and less on the digital divide affecting individuals. The social divide often relates to the use of the Internet by individuals who have different incomes and ages, coming from different gender and race and is not the focus of this document.

This study avoids the access-centered approach to the digital democracy and digital divide issues because this approach tends to be automatically translated into the neo-liberal economic approach in developing countries which assumes 1) economic development is accelerated with information technology; 2) the growth of ICT needs the investment of foreign companies; and 3) foreign companies invest when the market is liberalized. As Hamelink (2001) warns us, when developing countries follow the patterns of consumption of developed nations in an effort to catch up, the only people who benefit are the corporations in the developed countries. Hamelink’s (2001)
statement is particularly relevant in the context of the former socialist country of Mongolia where individual consumption of goods was suppressed to encourage savings by individuals.

The development of the Internet in developing countries should be focused on the question of how in reality people can benefit from the Internet in their political, social and cultural environment. As suggested by Hargittai (2003), Hamelink (2001) and Warschauer (2003), this study focuses on actual Mongolian language content, and strives to answer the question of how the Internet is used in the context of Mongolia. Further, the study attempts to analyze the purposes, opportunities and constraints of Mongolian institutions using the Internet in their communicative practices. Bellamy and Taylor (1998) state that the “shaping of information age capabilities is not to be interpreted simply as a process of free and conscious choice in the exploitation of what are essentially neutral technologies” (p.151), rather the use of the Internet is to be molded to the existing settings of social and political institutions that are transforming from communist ideology to a democracy. The specific issues concerning this transformation will be discussed in the next section entitled “Post-communism.” This research sees the Internet as a technology that alters actors’ opportunities, constraints, and incentives rather than a new agent for a social change.

Global Digital Divide

The term “global divide” refers to the gap that exists between the developing and developed world in terms of access to and use of modern information technology.
Numerous scholars have studied the global digital divide in terms of access to computers, telephones and the Internet. Digital divide scholars rightly point out the huge discrepancy in access to the Internet between developed and developing countries. As of 2005, only five percent of the population in developing countries had Internet access (UN, 2005). Comparatively, a huge discrepancy in Internet access can easily be seen in Mongolia where only a small portion of the population has such access. However, an access-centered approach leaves the Internet content unexamined and diminishes the importance of locally generated or locally meaningful content on the Internet (Hamelink, 2000; Hargittai, 2004; Slevin, 2000; Warschaur, 2003; Dimitrova & Beilock, 2005; Hawkins and Hawkins, 2003). Hargittai (2004) pointed out that access-centered studies often times analyze the individual use of the Internet, which does not lead to a proper examination of the inequalities in content production, and consumption.

This study goes beyond studying Internet access by analyzing Mongolian language content web sites. Warschauer (2003) claims that language and language–based identity is the most complex and significant issue on the Internet. He says that English becomes one more barrier to equal opportunity in developing countries because unequal access to learning English coincides with other social inequalities in those countries. In countries like Mongolia not many people speak English, the most common language on the Internet, which has great “symbolic power.” People who speak English have more opportunities to get better-paying jobs; by the same token, they are much better-off when using the Internet which is overwhelmingly dominated by English language content.
Warschauer supports his argument by bringing in some statistics on language representation on the Internet. According to him, 65 percent of Internet domain names are located in the US, UK, and Germany, 78 percent of websites are in English and 91 percent of secure servers are in English. “Global English” is a lingua franca in international communication and on the Internet. He goes on to extend the definition of the digital divide to include content and literacy level by pointing out the great discrepancy of language representation on the Internet and the geographical imbalance in Internet content production.

In Mongolia, even though the country has a literacy rate of 97.8 percent (EIU, 2005), English language literacy becomes an unequalizing factor. In other words, the Matthew effect asserting “to those who have shall be given” will become even more evident in Mongolia than in English speaking countries unless content in the Mongolian language grows adequately. Mongolian language content has been increasing on the Internet. In the Summer of 2005, the Mongolian ICT companies celebrated the creation of “the one thousandth web” in Mongolia.

The quality of web content in the Mongolian language has not been studied at all. The quality of information people access on the Internet in developing countries can be very different from the quality of the information people in developed countries receive. As Hargittai (2004) warns readers, the quality and quantity of information on the Internet varies widely. This study is a first attempt to evaluate the Mongolian language web content.
As Hargittai (2004) points out, the difference in language representation on the Internet reflects an existing asymmetry in content creation in old media between developed and developing countries. Communication scholars point out the effects of content sharing and repackaging of traditional media content for use on the Internet. In other words, Internet websites, portals, and online media repack or “shovel” traditional news wire services, television and newspapers onto the Internet more often than they create original content on the Internet (Downie and Kaiser, 2003; Boczkowski, 2003). Since there are fewer textbooks and other forms of written knowledge in less developed countries like Mongolia, the global digital divide is exacerbated by poorly developed old media and the lack of written knowledge available in print and other non-digital media. The issue of the lack of printed and produced knowledge is even more important in a former socialist country where information was censored and used for communist party ideology. In this dissertation, where the website content of Mongolian institutions is analyzed, interviews with key persons in Mongolian institutions are also conducted to understand the challenges and opportunities they face in developing Internet content using the Mongolian language.

This study also focuses on the non-English alphabet issues of Internet content in the Mongolian language. From the beginning of the thirteenth century until 1941, Mongolians used the *uighur alphabet*.\(^7\) Under Soviet pressure in 1941, the traditional

\(^7\) *Uighur alphabet* or traditional Mongolian script was borrowed from the script used by Turkic Uigurs in Central Asia. It is of an Arabic origin and was adopted by Mongolians the thirteenth century. The first Mongolian literary text written in the uigur script was *The Secret History of the Mongols*, a part history and part epic mythology depicting Chinghis Khan’s (westerners say Genghis Khan) conquests. This uighur script is written vertically and had twenty four letters, each letter having three different forms in the beginning, in the middle and in the end of a word (Gilberg and Svantesson, 1996).
Mongolian alphabet was abandoned and was replaced by the Cyrillic alphabet used in the Soviet Union. The Mongolian Cyrillic alphabet has two extra vowels, Ө and Ү, that do not exist in the Russian Cyrillic alphabet. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in 1991 the Mongolian Parliament attempted to replace the Cyrillic alphabet with the *uighur* script in official documents. However, this transition proved to be unfeasible given the economic downturn in Mongolia after the collapse of its centrally planned economy in the early 1990’s. Even though the *uighur bichig* is being taught in schools, the Cyrillic alphabet remains official in Mongolia. The local Mongolian alphabet is not commonly supported by software companies producing Internet browsers, search engines and other software. These two extra letters called “barred O” and “straight Y” were distorted as displayed on the Internet until Microsoft released Windows 2000 which supported Unicode Standard 2.0. Neither the Mongolian Cyrillic nor the *uighur scripts* were accommodated in any system before Unicode 4 standards. This study examines the challenges that Mongolian institutions face in creating Internet content due to the use of a non-Latin alphabet.

*Democratic Divide*

The conceptual framework adopted for this dissertation is based on the theoretical framework of Pippa Norris (2001) discussed in her book *Digital Divide: civic engagement, information poverty and the Internet worldwide*. Norris tries to set normative benchmarks in evaluating the impact of digital technology on democracy. She
identifies three promises of how digital technology contributes to democracy: 1) digital technology provides multiple sources of information that allow citizens to make informed choices on possible alternatives; 2) it provides more possibilities for citizens to express preferences and communicate these preferences to others; and 3) digital technology provides more opportunities for increased transparency and accountability in government and civil society institutions. Norris emphasizes the role of institutions in technologically mediated politics in which civil society including media, political parties, interest groups, non-governmental organizations, and new social movements connect citizens and the state. Norris claims that the Internet changes the power balance among institutions by providing communication facilities for less well-established institutions. She goes on to say that by using the Internet, civil society might more efficiently mobilize its resources, while traditional institutions might remain conservative toward the Internet.

In the context of Mongolia, Norris’s conclusions might suggest that government institutions would tend to remain cautious in moving public services onto the net and facilitating civic participation on the net. If so, this conclusion would be contradicted by the Mongolian government agenda to use the Internet at all level of governance. Emerging civil society and non-governmental organizations in Mongolia (according to the World Bank, there are 2,800 NGOs in Mongolia) will strive to use Internet resources for institutional participation and the mobilization of their resources. Though civil society is a heterogeneous group not easily defined, especially in emerging democratic societies, this study adopts the view of civil society as an organized group outside of direct state or capitalist control (Lim, 2003). Civil society institutions in this study
include political, social and cultural non-governmental and non-profit organizations, as well as academic and scientific communities and other Mongolian networks including student and expatriate web sites operating outside the country.

In this study, the Internet civic engagement model proposed by Norris (2001) is expanded in two areas so it will better apply to the context of Mongolia. First, as Hamelink (2000) suggests, democratic participation should be defined more broadly than just voting, by including institutions and areas where ordinary people participate normally. Citizens’ comments, suggestions, and discussions on the Internet about policy and non-policy issues concerning Mongolian political and social institutions also represent expression of democratic participation in the country. Discussions, dialogues, and free speeches conveyed via the Internet are a kind of analogue to the Habermasian conventional public sphere. Based on Poster’s spatial analogue of public sphere, this research examines how opportunities for participation in discussion and the making of decisions in Mongolia are provided on the Internet, and whether or not these opportunities are used by institutions. In brief, this study analyzes how Mongolian institutions make use of the opportunities for democratic participation online.

It must be noted that the model suggested by Norris is designed for the highly developed countries whose governmental and media institutions are internationally influential. In Mongolia, the impact of such international institutions is much higher than in the well-established western countries. The role of such organizations has been increasing since Mongolia began the road toward democracy and a market oriented economy after the collapse of the Soviet bloc. Equally important has been the presence
of international civil society networks that can provide social and financial resources and expertise for Mongolian institutions. International governmental and non-governmental organizations often possess more financial and social capital than Mongolian institutions. A non-government organization, initially established by the Open Society Institute, hosts one of the most active discussion forums operating in Mongolia. Its websites convey the largest number of studies and works of local experts, as well as international authors.

Finally, at the individual level analysis suggested by Norris, the model is extended to include student and expatriate networks of Mongolians outside of the country. These Mongolians tend to have more resources, skills and motivation than those in the country. Student and expatriate networks operating from Korea, US, Japan and Europe create much of the Mongolian content distributed on the Internet used by Mongolians within the country, and that is one of the reasons these websites are also analyzed.

**Post-Communism in Mongolia**

Political, social and cultural settings of countries greatly influence their discourses about technology and politics. Carey (2005) thinks that Internet research has been insufficiently embedded in the real world of politics, economics, religion and culture. He reminds readers to locate Internet studies in a historical perspective within the broader context of other media development. It does appear that digital democracy and digital divide studies have not sufficiently reflected such political and cultural contexts as post-communism. The few studies that have examined Internet development in former socialist countries mostly focus on access to the Internet (Dimitrova & Beilock, 2005; Kolko, Wei & Spyridakis, 2003; Herron, 1999; Coleman & Kaposi, 2006). Dimitrova
and Beilock (2005) studied Internet development in a group of countries that included Mongolia. However, that study was one of those that focused only on access to the Internet and lumped Mongolia together with Central Asian countries that are very different politically and culturally.\footnote{Many central Asian counties have recently reverted back to authoritarian regimes.} Herron (1999) analyzed web sites of institutions in former socialist countries; however, his study did not include Mongolia. Coleman and Kaposi (2006) focused on government web sites only. To understand the dynamics of the co-shaping of the Internet and society, this study includes examination of the historical context and compares Internet to other media development in Mongolia.

**Communist Legacy in Mongolia**

The recent history of Mongolia is associated with communism. After the collapse of Chinghis Khan’s Mongolian Empire and its many subsequent kingdoms, the country survived a three-century-long Manchu/Chinese colonization that lasted until the beginning of the twentieth century. The political turmoil that took place in the beginning of the twentieth century within Mongolia’s two neighboring countries – Russia and China – greatly influenced Mongolia. Mongolia announced its independence from China in 1911 taking advantage of the Chinese Revolution. The independent Mongolian monarchy led by a religious leader Bogd Khan started a few minor reforms to modernize the country and overcome its three century colonization by the Manchu.\footnote{The first printing house, a telephone committee, and a power station were established during these first years of independence from China.} However, the independent Mongolian monarchy did not last for long. In 1919, Chinese troops of the nationalist government of China led by the Kuomintang party invaded Mongolia. In
1920, a Russian anti-Bolshevik group called the White Guards\textsuperscript{11} entered Mongolia promising to restore the “Yellow Faith Lamaism” (Sanders, 1987). In 1921, a small revolutionary group led by Sukhbaatar and Choibalsan with the military support of the Red Army and financial aid from the Comintern (Communist International) in Mongolia established the People’s Republic of Mongolia. Mongolia became the second socialist country in the world and remained so until the democratic revolution of 1990.

The socialist legacy in Mongolia was characterized by the communist party rule under direct guidance from the communist party of the Soviet Union. People’s individual freedoms were tightly limited; people were isolated from the outside world, and they suffered from an inefficient centrally planned economy. The communist party ideology was based on the principles of democratic centralization at all levels of society. Democratic centralization meant a chain of command from the top down, majority rule, unquestionable loyalty to party ideology, strict party discipline, and the superiority of higher party bodies over lower ones (Tumur-Ochir in Sanders, 1987). Each economic and social unit in Mongolia had a body of the communist party overseeing its activities. The communist party carefully appointed each government, political, and economic position based on loyalty and ideology. This system of personnel appointment is called the communist party “nomenklatura system” (Spark & Reading, 1998, p.32). Through democratic centralization, the nomenklatura system and various secret police institutions, the communist party built a state-surveillance system which Kaplonski (2004) points out controlled Mongolian society in a manner analogous to the Bentham’s prison surveillance

\textsuperscript{11} This group of White Guards were led by Baron von Ungern-Sternberg and were backed up by Japan (Sanders, 1987).
system. In the Panoptican surveillance system each cell of a prison is overseen easily from a central point.

The socialist Mongolian state was repressive, especially during the earlier period. To maintain a regime that was so foreign to many Mongolians who were deeply religious, and tied to their ancestors’ history and tradition, the communist party purged counter-revolutionaries, religious recalcitrants, feudal or capitalist elements, and critical intelligentsia. One of the earlier purges of the communist party was against Buddhist monasteries, the main ideological enemy of the communists. Confiscation of monastery property was followed by the demolition of monasteries and banishing of monks.\textsuperscript{12} Obviously, the economic policy of collectivization (\textit{negdels}) of the pastoral nomadic economy and the expropriation of feudal properties by the state faced enormous resistance in the 1930’s.\textsuperscript{13}

Despite the repressive party-state, the socialist legacy brought modernization and a social welfare system into Mongolia.\textsuperscript{14} Higher education was free officially, and the social welfare system was universal; yet there existed elite hospitals for high party members and special Russian schools for their children. Kaplonski (2004) and Rossabi (2005) point out the irony that many leaders of the democratic revolution of 1990 were

\textsuperscript{12} The number of monasteries destroyed and monks affected during these purges varies from one document to another, since information was censored and controlled tightly during the socialist days. Sanders (1987) states that there were eight hundred monasteries with eighty thousand monks and 7,700 \textit{jas} (monastery properties) in Mongolia at the beginning of the 1930’s. By the 1980’s, there was only one operating monastery; a few reserved monasteries operated as museums, and around one thousand monks lived in Mongolia.

\textsuperscript{13} Some sources state that there were 35,800 killed and imprisoned from 1930 to 1950; other accounts claim 100,000 killed and imprisoned during the same period (Dashpurev and Soni in M. Rossabi, 2005). The entire population of Mongolia was less than one million during this time.

\textsuperscript{14} Generous Soviet aid in the 1980’s made up one third of the gross domestic product of Mongolia at the time. During the socialist era, universal access to education and health care in Mongolia resulted in a literacy rate of 96 percent and the extension of life span by 15 years between 1960 and 1990 (UNDP and Government of Mongolia, 2000).
the children of the Politburo leaders of the communist party. It is not an easy task to evaluate the socialist legacy in Mongolia. Social welfare achievements of the socialist era are acknowledged even by such anti-Soviet democratic leaders as Baabar (1999).

The somewhat egalitarian education and social welfare system in Mongolia created educated young people who were open to ideas of perestroika and glasnost taking place in the mid 1980’s Gorbachev era in Russia and Eastern Europe. The Mongolian government led by the communist party was adopting similar policies for economic restructuring (öörchöön baiguulalt) and openness and freedom of expression (olon urgalch uzel) that paralleled perestroika and glasnost in Russia. Reevaluation of history, the relationship with Russia, and the questioning of the legitimacy of communist party rule all took place during these years of openness. However, slow changes and an economic downturn frustrated the raised expectations of people. Young intelligentsia and students wanted more radical changes in the political and social life of Mongolia. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the anticommunist revolutions in Eastern Europe, favorably influenced Mongolia’s Democratic Revolution in 1990.

Media development in Mongolia has been greatly influenced by Russia. According to Baabar (1999), the first newspaper in the country, Shine Toli (New Mirror), was launched in 1913 by Tseveen Jamsrano, a professor at Saint Petersburg University, who settled in Huree, the capital of Mongolia later renamed Ulaanbaatar. During the political turmoil in the 1920’s, the pro-Bolshevik revolutionary group started to publish the newspaper “Mongoliin Unen (Mongolian Truth) in Irkutsk, Russia which carried the

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15 Sanders (1987) states that the socialist legacy preserved Mongolia’s independence from China in the 1920’s and from Japan in the 1930’s during World War II and brought modernization into a very underdeveloped Mongolia in the beginning of the twentieth century.
propaganda of Marxism-Leninism and the great October Socialist Revolution” (Sanders, 1987, p.12).

Socialist propagandistic mass media was an essential part of the support of the regime, and they deprived citizens of individual thoughts and judgments. The state owned media was a mass mobilization tool. Mongol radio, the only nationwide radio in the country, started and ended each morning by playing the national anthem. Mongol television evening news once reached almost 100 percent of the TV audience. State ownership and a centrally planned economy made viability of independent and commercial media outlets impossible. Media professionals and institutions were trained to censor all information distribution outlets.

*The Democratic Revolution of 1990 and Post-Communism*

During the harsh winter of 1989-1990, the Mongolian Democratic Coalition led by young intelligentsia and students organized a series of protests.\(^{16}\) This coalition demanded the resignation of the Government, the establishment of a multiparty political system, and changes to Constitution Article 82 that legitimized the communist party as the only legal political party.\(^{17}\) To press the reigning communists, ten reformers went on a hunger strike between March 7-9, 1990, on the Sukhbaatar Square. This hunger strike was supported throughout the country. The Politburo resigned on March 9, and an

\(^{16}\) The two biggest of those demonstrations occurred on International Human Rights Day on December 10, 1989, and on January 21, 1990, on the day of Lenin’s death.

\(^{17}\) The reformers also demanded that the communist party apologize for the purges it committed in the 1930’s and 1940’s. In December 1989, the Politburo analyzed the purges of 1930 and 1950 and cleared the names of 20,000 people killed by the state (Rossabi, 2005).
interim government was established. In July 1990, the first parliamentary election with multi-party participation took place.

Western scholars have given little attention to the 1990 revolution in Mongolia (Kaplonkski, 2004; Rossabi, 2005). Though the 1990 Democratic revolution occurred without violence, many reformers’ lives were at stake. The literature on the revolutions that took place in former socialist countries during 1989-1990 argues that these revolutions were largely “melancholic” or “negotiated” (Holmes, 1997; Spark & Reading, 1998). However, as Holmes (1997) notes in her book called Post-Communism, the events in these former socialist countries were unquestionably revolutionary in terms of their outcomes and the way they happened. She calls the democratic revolutions between 1989 and 1991 “double-rejective revolutions” (p.14). That is, they threw off both external domination by the former Soviet Union and the repressive communist party control. Indeed, the Democratic revolution, as well as the aftermath developments in Mongolia showed the rise of nationalism and the rebirth of religion that had been outlawed during the socialist period. Mongolian traditions, Mongol traditional scripts, and images of Chinghis Khan suppressed during the socialist time were reintroduced by reformers. Holmes says that the rise of nationalism and the reintroduction of religions, with underdevelopment of consensus building and a moral and ideological vacuum, are

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18 The revolution happened a half year after the Tiananmen Square event in China and hard line communists were still in reign. They had the police and the military ready to use against reformers.
19 During the socialist era, Chinghis Khan (known in the West as Genghis Khan) was portrayed in textbooks as a bloodthirsty tyrant and any attempt to reevaluate this position was prohibited by the communist party. His historical role is reevaluated by the reformers as the founder of the Mongolian Empire in the thirteenth century. He was loathed by Russians because of the two century colonization of Russia by the Mongols.
common characteristics of post-communism. This research examines these post-communist characteristics in its analysis of online communication.

Since the democratic revolution of 1990, Mongolia has been transitioning away from the communist political system and a centrally planned economy toward democracy and a market economy. Holmes (1997) calls this transition “post-communism” and identifies several observable characteristics in the political, economic and social spheres. She emphasizes the transitional and the temporal characteristics of post-communism claiming that many post-communist countries face uncertainties and a lack of vision about where the political, economic and social development of those countries is heading. Even though political systems in post-communist countries are in flux, post-communism often means the isolation of party ideologies from state affairs, the separation of powers, the introduction of multiparty systems, fair elections, and constitutionalism.

The direct result of the democratic revolution of 1990 was the ratification and adoption of the new Constitution of Mongolia in 1992. According to the new Constitution, Mongolia established a mixed, parliamentary/presidential government system with independent legislative, executive and judicial branches. The legislative branch represents the unicameral State Great Khural with 76 seats elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms. The executive branch is headed by the president elected by popular vote for the period of four years. The president has the power to veto bills, but can be overruled by a two-thirds majority of the Parliament. The Parliament appoints the Prime Minister and the Cabinet in consultation with the President. The new political system has faced several challenges in the fifteen years since independence that triggered
a constitutional crisis and led to frequent resignations of the government (Ginsburg, 2005).

In economics, Holmes (1997) states that post-communism means replacing a centrally planned economy with liberalized economic systems and replacing state and collective ownership of enterprises with private entrepreneurship. Liberalization tends to mean a liberal price system that is coordinated by market competition rather than centrally planned distribution of resources and wealth. In post-communist countries, massive privatization programs are taking place using the different methods of a voucher scheme, an employee share scheme, joint venture with foreign ownership, and direct foreign investment. Holmes goes on to say that radical economic changes in former socialist countries have led to noticeable deterioration of the social welfare system.

Media in Post-Communist Mongolia

When it comes to mass media in post-communism, especially when it concerns the new media, there are ongoing debates concerning whether media development will be a continuation of the old pattern or the creation of a perhaps revolutionary new medium. Zassoursky (2004) claims that during the Moscow putsch, when other media channels were closed, the Internet was the only channel to spread the news of the coup all over Russia. He gives credit to Russian diasporic societies for the early development of Russian content on the Internet and claims that this content carried a utopian message concerning a new “civilization of consciousness” (p.163). On the other hand, Sparks and Reading (1998) argue that even though the fall of communism was a revolution, the institutions of broadcasting display a “marked degree of continuation” in Hungary,
Poland, Chechoslovakia and Romania. They go on to say that the fusion of political and economic power that characterizes these societies sheds a different light on the problems of mass media than those commonly occurring in the West. The evolution of commercial and public broadcasting in these countries tends to be politicized and does not assimilate the Anglo-Saxon model; rather, broadcasting tends to continue in its historical path.

Munkhmandakh and Nielsen (2001), who studied the media landscape in post-communist Mongolia, also found that western theoretical perspectives do not apply in the context of Mongolia because of the uniqueness of Mongolia’s nomadic heritage, its communist legacy, the Buddhist tradition, and its geopolitical position between China and Russia. The authors describe a rapid growth in media outlets after the adoption of the New Constitution of 1992, which guaranteed freedom of expression and the right to seek and receive information.20 The government dismantled the censorship authority, and adopted a new Law on Media which banned state-ownership and state control of media. The Law on Media necessitated the transformation of government-owned television and radio to public service broadcasting entities, a process that has recently finished.

Munkhmandakh and Nielsen argue that though the boom of independent media has contributed to the democratization process of the country by expanding public spheres, there are several shortcomings. Munkhmandakh and Nielsen point out, for example, that despite the varieties of media outlets, Mongolian media remains paternalistic and “center-oriented.” They say that both the nomadic culture and the communist political mindset

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20 In 2004, there were 161 newspapers, 69 journals and magazines, 43 radio channels, 37 over-the-air and 15 cable television channels in Mongolia (Press Institute of Mongolia, 2005).
feed into the Mongolian leaders’ desire to retain control of information and “agitate the masses.” They argue that with the collapse of the socialist centralized control system, the gap between urban and rural areas has widened creating a gap in the national identity. While the capital of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, is becoming a modern complex society, people in remote rural areas are more inclined toward traditional nomadic animal husbandry, and Buddhist religious and family-tie traditions. The authors are critical of the Mongolian government’s approach as “too modernizing,” which is influenced by the ideas of western advisors who do not fully understand Mongolia’s specifics. The authors are of an opinion that Mongolian media should adopt policies to close the gap in national identity with one which will appeal to people both in urban and rural areas.

The role of media in building national identity in the context of post-communism is a double-edged sword.\textsuperscript{21} The use of the Internet in Mongolian government and civil society institutions might sound like one of those “too modern” or far-fetched ideas of the Mongolian government. Obviously, with the implementation of the Internet in Mongolia, there is a high risk in widening the digital divide between urban and rural areas, as implied by Munkhmandakh and Nielsen. However, Internet technology is a by-product of an already existing complex society in Mongolia shaped by increasing globalization and political and social changes taking place following the collapse of communism. Like many other developed and developing countries, the government of Mongolia is taking steps to shrink the global digital divide, and to bring “opportunities to develop the economy, reduce poverty, and improve the quality of life” (Information and

\textsuperscript{21} Since this issue is not the central topic of this dissertation, this issue is only briefly touched on in the context of the role of new media in the new era.
Communication Technology Authority, 2006). That is why it is important to focus on the social practices of the Internet as recommended by DiMaggio et.al. (2004), Hargittai, (2003) and Hamelink (2001).

Though post-communist development in Mongolia is unique, it has parallels in other post-communist countries. The polarization in Mongolian society Munkhmandakh and Nielson (2001) talk about, such as the gap between the rural and urban areas, is a typical process happening in many post-communist countries. In her book on post-communism, Holmes (1997) shows that many post-communist countries have experienced the break-up of their welfare systems, and the widening disparity between urban and rural areas, as well as between the poor and rich. The media system too, especially new media development, has parallels that can be drawn from the experiences of other countries.

Zassoursky (2004), in his book *Media and power in post-soviet Russia*, describes how the Internet has positively influenced politics and society in that country. The Internet was the only channel to spread the words of the 1991 putsch in Moscow while other media were silent. Russian Internet users accessed such news sources as *the New York Times* and the *British Guardian*, which were available in Russian on web sites like inopressa.ru. In the context of Mongolia, where mainstream media is somewhat limited, the new media and the Internet provided alternative sources of information. Zassoursky (2004) points out the role of Russian immigrants living in Israel, the U.S. and Canada in Internet development in Russia, especially at the beginning phase. Well-known Russian Internet projects like zhurnal.ru, *Vecherny Internet*, and Paravozov-News, as well as
Maksim Moshkov’s electronic library appeared on the Net thanks to those immigrants. Largely due to the lack of online payment systems and credit cards, Internet development in Russia did not take off until the mid 1990’s. Zassoursky implies that the normalization of the Russian language Internet had taken place by 2002. The traditional media sites of *Komsomolskaya Pravda, Izvestiya, and Nezavisimaya Gazeta* soon caught up with the earlier Internet sites like gazeta.ru, lenta.ru, and rbc.ru and became among the Top 100 web sites. He goes on to mention the Russian government’s attempt to control the Internet by requiring ISPs to use a surveillance system called SORM which provided officials access to personal messages.

The role of media in national identity building in Mongolia, suggested by Munkhmandakh and Nielsen (2001), is a complex issue. Kaplonski (2004) reports that many of his Mongolian interviewees articulated “mongolness” as being different from Chinese and Russians because of the geopolitical location of the country and the historically formed relationship with its neighbors. Bulag (1998), who identifies himself as a Mongolian and studied nationalism and hybridity in Mongolia between 1990 and 1993, wrote about the nationalist fervor in this period. He is critical of the exclusiveness of this national identity argument claiming it is just the continuation of socialist propaganda that splits national identity from ethnic identity. The relationship between the concept of national identity and the concept of nationhood has been

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22 The Moshkov electronic library project reproduced the English-language “Project Gutenberg” on the Internet.
23 There are 4.9 million ethnic Mongolians in China (almost twice the number in independent Mongolia) and 600,000 in Russia who identify themselves as Mongolians (Gilberg and Svantesson, 1996)
24 Uradyn Bulag is an associate professor in CUNY Graduate center and grew up in Inner Mongolian autonomic region of China.
questioned by scholars like Anderson (1993) as “imagined.” As Slevin (2000) points out, freedom of expression and democracy do not naturally go together with community and nationhood. A community and a nation can be built on principles of centralized authority and hierarchically organized society. Nationhood and national identity building can be undermined by the Internet as well (Poster, 2001).

This study strives to identify such characteristics within post-communist Mongolian institutions. By analyzing manifest media content on the Internet, as well as by interviewing people involved in Internet media development in Mongolia, this research examines the nature of communication that can be characterized as nationalism, religious revival, and ideology, as suggested by Holmes (1997). This research examines the political and social shaping of the Internet in the context of post-communist Mongolia. Moreover, the roles of political culture and language, as well as the role of international organizations in the Mongolian transition, are under investigation.

**Research Questions**

The research questions in this study are developed within the framework of three theoretical perspectives: 1) digital democracy; 2) digital divide; and 3) post-communism. Three overarching research questions, each composed of several specific sub-elements, are posed in this research to examine Internet content and use by Mongolian government and civil society institutions.

The first group of research questions is framed within the perspective of digital democracy and focuses on the content of the web sites of Mongolian government and civil society institutions. The four media typologies of allocution, consultation,
conversation, and registration proposed by Bordewijk and Van Kaam (1984, 2002) and the four levels of cyber interactivity suggested by McMillan (2002a) and Jensen (1998) are applied to the analysis of the democratic functions of the web using a sampling of Mongolian government and civil society institutions. This study explores the relationship, if any, between the democratic values constructed within Mongolina institutions and their preferences for certain media typologies based on their web site content.

*RQ 1: What are the most prevalent media typologies (allocation, consultation, conversation and registration) used by Mongolian government and civil society institutions?*

More specifically the following sub-questions are posed:

RQ 1-1. To what extent do Mongolian government and civil society institutions use the allocation pattern? Is there a relationship between the type of institutions and different allocation variables?

RQ 1-2. To what extent do Mongolian government and civil society institutions use the consultation pattern which allows users to look for information on their web sites? Do different types of institutions emphasize different consultation features?

RQ 1-3. To what extent do Mongolian institutions use the conversation pattern on the web? What government and civil society institutions put more effort into Mongolian language discussions and dialogues on the web?

RQ 1-4. To what extent do Mongolian institutions register information from users on the web? Are there differences in registration patterns across different types of institutions?
The second research question is also developed within the framework of digital democracy and asks whether or not the Internet helps Mongolian government and civil society institutions to extend the democratic process?

RQ 2: Of the cyberdemocracy models suggested by Van Dijk(2000) which are the most prevalent in Mongolian government and civil society institutions, according to their web sites? What democratic functions do Mongolian government and civil society institutions most commonly use the web for?

The third research questions focuses on the transitional media characteristics of Mongolian institutions. Formulated within the context of post-communism and media development (Holmes, 1997; Sparks and Reading, 1998; Berry, 2004; Zassoursky, 2004), this question examines the characteristics of web use by Mongolian government and civil society institutions, specifically whether post-communistic characteristics of communication appear within their Internet content. The second purpose is latent and strives to analyze how institutional settings influence Internet content by interviewing key people in Mongolian institutions.

RQ 3: Are such characteristics as nationalism, religious revival, and rudimentary consensus building reflected in the Internet content of Mongolian institutions?

The fourth research question explores the role of institutions in rapidly changing Mongolian society that have gone through communism and post-communism in a comparatively short period of time. Using Bellamy and Taylor (1998) as models for explaining the roles of institutions, this study explores the understanding and notion of
the Internet by epistemic groups\textsuperscript{25} and actors\textsuperscript{26} in these institutions and how these understandings are routinized in institutional practices.

RQ 4: How do institutional routines, and epistemic community and actor networks within Mongolian institutions influence the content and use of the web?

RQ 5: How are language barriers and the Mongolian alphabet reflected in Internet content and use?

The sixth question examines how donor aid and loans affect Internet content and use. The Mongolian case offers a possibility for understanding the way international organizations affect Internet content and use via donor assistance and loans.\textsuperscript{27}

RQ 6: How do international organizations influence the content and the use of the Internet in Mongolia?

\textsuperscript{25} Epistemic community is defined by Bellamy and Taylor (1998) as occupational or professional groups sharing common knowledge and skills and support similar values and norms (see p.6).

\textsuperscript{26} Actor networks are people with “different roles, expertise, and domains” (see p.6).

\textsuperscript{27} By the year 2003, foreign aid per capita was $100 comprising some 20 percent of its gross national product placing Mongolia in the category of the fifth most aid-dependent country in the world (Landman, Larizza & McEvoy, 2005).
Chapter 3: Methodology

This study is an analysis of Mongolian language content on the Internet and Mongolian institutions using the web. The lack of previous studies exploring Mongolian language content on the Internet necessarily poses the questions: “What content is available in the Mongolian language on the Internet?” “Who creates and manages that content?” and “What characteristics do Mongolian language web sites have?” Quantitative content analysis is a method well-suited to answering the research questions of this study because this method allows the researcher to sample Mongolian language web sites, to systematically analyze them with a prepared coding instrument, and to generate quantifiable data that can be used to make broader generalizations and inferences about the characteristics of online communication. The systematic content analysis technique allows the researcher to find the pertinent characteristics of Mongolian language web sites and to explore the implications of institutions’ preferences for certain information traffic patterns and certain interactive features.

Some effort is made to go beyond a content analysis of Mongolian language web sites by conducting in-depth interviews as well. Leaders and managers in selected institutions using the Internet, particularly those with web sites, are interviewed to better understand their views about web technology and its application. The interviewees were chosen from institutions based on the results of the content analysis of their web sites. In-depth qualitative interviews are most suitable for the purposes of exploring knowledge, views, and perceptions given the interview method’s flexibility that encourages respondents to articulate their ideas, and allows the researcher to pursue deeper the
thoughts of respondents by probing and interacting with them (Mason, 2002). Respondents’ views and notions of democratic values, democratic procedural norms, as well as their perceptions of the communicative capabilities of web technology are explored using the in-depth interview method. In addition, in the context of post-communist Mongolia, people’s perceptions and values are explored based on their reports about their routines and everyday practices.

Integration of the two methods, the content analysis and the in-depth interviews, can provide more coherent answers to the research questions asked in this study. The quantitative content analysis method helps to understand in a systematical way which institutions are using the web, what content they develop in the Mongolian language, and what information traffic patterns prevail in these Mongolian institutions. Answers to the questions: Why do Mongolian institutions use the web? How do they benefit? and How are they constrained by the use of the web? are also derived from data generated through a set of interviews. By using both the content analysis and the in-depth interview methods, an attempt is made to construct a “coherent and convincing argument” (Mason, 2002, p.36) about the embeddedness of the Internet technology in the social and cultural settings of Mongolian institutions.

The use of these two methods, which have different ontological and epistemological assumptions, allows the researcher to complement and corroborate data generated by each method. The quantitative content analysis method allows the researcher to examine the characteristics of online communication in context and to infer about its antecedents, contexts, and effects based on manifest content (McMillan, 2000;
Stempel, 2003; Krippendorff, 1980). The qualitative in-depth interview method permits the researcher to analyze the ‘reality’ of the social world as it is constructed by human perception and interpretation (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). It should be noted that some assumptions of the two methods contradict each other. The quantitative content analysis presumes that the reality is observed by measuring what is manifested on the web, while the interview method is based on the assumption that realities are constructed as they are perceived by interviewees. However, the researcher believes that the two methods used in this study should shed different lights on the research questions by allowing the researcher to interrogate data generated by each method.

**Content Analysis of Governmental and Non-governmental Institutions’ Web Sites**

In the content analysis of Mongolian web sites, the theoretical framework of digital democracy suggested by Van Dijk (2000) is used, since it provides a model for linking democratic values and norms on the one hand and the information traffic patterns of allocation, consultation, conversation and registration suggested by Bordewijk and Kaam (1984, 2002) on the other. As discussed in Chapter 2, Van Dijk explains how the proponents of pluralistic and participatory democracy emphasize the conversation and consultation patterns that elicit more horizontal communications among users and encourage citizens’ voices in decision-making by developing and using bulletin board systems, discussion lists, electronic mail and teleconferences at their web sites.

Van Dijk goes on to say that the proponents of constitutional democracy emphasize the allocation pattern, the one-way distribution of information to the masses, in election information campaigns and computerized information services. Van Dijk
reminds readers that the growing commercialization of the Internet and the desire for establishing order out of anarchy on the Internet leads to an infocracy model of the Internet. The infocracy model he refers to assumes an ever increasing central control by state surveillance systems. The commercialized infocracy tendency is triggered by an increasing collection of user information at a center in the form of questionnaires, voting ballots, and virtual observations.

Van Dijk’s model is chosen because it integrates democratic values and information traffic patterns in this research. The model provides clear connections between the different notions and values of democracy while taking into account the communicative capabilities of the Internet. The Internet’s capacity to narrowcast and do niche publishing, to target specific audiences, and to form social groups based on specific interests rather than geographical approximation, leads researchers to conclude that a web site’s content can contain specific information about its audience characteristics (Evans, 1998). In this study of Mongolian language web sites, the content analysis is used to describe institutions’ preferences pertaining to democratic practices. This study assumes that the preferences of institutions for certain democratic values and procedural norms are discernible by analyzing the characteristics of their web sites. The model by Van Dijk also allows the researcher to integrate different levels of interactivity into a more thorough account. The two key dimensions of interactivity, the direction of communication and the level of receiver control, are well-embedded in information traffic pattern analysis (McMillan, 2002a; Jensen J., 1998). By using the four typologies, this model by Van Dijk also well reflects the fact that the Internet accommodates the
characteristics of both mass and interpersonal communication (Jensen, 1998; Flournoy, 2004; Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1996; Green, 2001).

The model suggested by Van Dijk has not been tested empirically, however. That is why the content analysis instrument in this research is informed by the methodological approach suggested by the Cyberspace Policy Research Group (2000) and Norris (2001), who identified Information Richness and Transparency indexes for the analysis of web sites of governmental and civil society organizations. CyPRG (2000) and Norris (2001) constructed transparency and interactivity indexes consisting of more than twenty criteria each. These were designed to measure an agent’s effort to make information available on a web site, and to provide opportunities for interactive communication.

The information richness index is measured by the presence of such content as constitutions, legislation, publications, reports, press releases, calendars, events, and other relevant information related to the organization’s functions. The communicative index is measured by the presence of hyperlinks, emails, guest books, online forums, discussion groups, chat rooms, and search facilities. These variables are applied to the instrument used in the content analysis of Mongolian web sites. These variables were classified into the four indexes of allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration as suggested by Bordewijk and Van Kaam (2002) in their information traffic pattern analysis. More variables were added to help understand the pattern of communication at each web site. The list of variables and their grouping into four indexes are discussed in the section below entitled “The Instrument: Coded categories.” Furthermore, the study examines the
post-communist characteristics of websites such as the symbolic rise of nationalism, religious revival, and the low level of consensus as discussed in the “Post-communism” section of the previous chapter.

Messages and symbolic environments found in the web sites of Mongolian institutions are systematically analyzed in this research to make inferences about the contexts of the Mongolian institutions where Internet technology is embedded. The content analysis method used has historically played an important role in studying the relationship between news content, and public opinion and behavior (Evans, 1998). Although the method was originally developed for analyzing the stable content of newspapers, it has increasingly been used for the analysis of dynamic Internet content (McMillan, 2000, 2002a, 2002b; CPRG, 2000; Norris, 2001; Evans, 1998; Lin & Jeffres, 2001; Mohammed, 2004). This research seeks to identify prevalent information traffic patterns and to explore the meaning behind institutions’ preferences for different democratic norms and values. There are four steps for conducting such a content analysis: 1) selection of the unit of analysis; 2) category construction; 3) sampling of content; and 4) reliability of coding. How this research engages each step is discussed at length below.

The Unit of Analysis

One of the serious methodological challenges in applying content analysis to the Internet is in choosing the unit of analysis. Communication scholars have chosen different units of analysis for Internet content depending on the purpose of their study. Home pages and web pages have oftentimes been used as units of analysis (McMillan, 2000). However, choosing a home page or a web page as the unit of analysis has become
difficult due to the increasing number of dynamic web sites that display web page content according to the specific request of users. For this reason, the web site is the unit of analysis in my study.

A web site can be defined as a collection of Uniform Resource Locators (URL) for web pages that are organized and maintained by a group or an organization. Each web site has an address (a group of URLs) for identifying the location of a resource on the Internet (Katz, 2004). In the case of dynamic web sites, these groups of interlinked URLs are not seen by the users of the Internet. Therefore, communication researchers frequently use the term “the seed URL,” which is a URL address to a front page or a home page of a web site. A seed URL takes a form, for example, http://www.parl.gov.mn, where the first part http stands for Hypertext Transfer Protocol that is used to locate resources on the Internet; and an Internet domain name www.parl.gov.mn where the web site is located. Domain names are easy to remember textual names that are used by browser software to locate resources on the Internet.1 Frequently, domain names correspond to authority names, especially so in the case of Mongolian institutions. Conventionally, the domain name address consists of the highest level domain names placed at the very end of a seed URL, and sub-domain names separated by dots. For example, www.parl.gov.mn domain name has the highest level top domain name .mn which corresponds to Mongolia’s country code top level domain

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1 Domain names, or textual names of web resources on the Internet, have also numeric addresses called Internet protocol (IP) addresses, unique to a computer or a group of computers. Special computers on the Internet called root servers resolve a URL address into an IP address. For example, the www.mol.mn address resolves to the IP numerical address 202.131.0.3 or an IP address block starting with 202.131.
Mongolian web sites can also be located at the generic top-level domain (gTLD), names such as .org, .com, .edu, .net. For example, The Mongolian Embassy to South Korea has a web site address http://www.mongolembassy.com which is located within the .com gTLD name.\(^3\)

Mongolian language web sites vary widely in their size, depth, and scope. There are shallow web sites with very few resources and web pages, and there are deep web sites with many databases, resources and web pages. This research captures and analyzes the first two levels including a front accessed by a seed URL address and the first-level web pages or resources directly accessed from the front page. As will be discussed in “A Sample” section below, the seed URLs were collected for web sites of Mongolian institutions based on the results of five search engines. After the seed URLs are collected, first level web pages or resources are accessed and stored. The first-level web pages or resources are web pages or resources accessed from a front page by the main menu within a front page. Oftentimes, the main menu that provides the links to the first-level web pages is listed at the top or at the left or right columns of a front page. These practical definitions of the first-level web pages and front pages are used in the study to capture the key resources or web pages of web sites.

\(^2\) The organization that has the first level name may further subdivide it as many times as desired, limited by class, conventionally allocated classification of the domain names. In the example of www.parl.gov.mn, the first level domain name is .gov for government entities and the second level domain name .parl indicates the Parliament web server.

\(^3\) It is also possible that websites can have two or more assigned names to the same assigned number address or Internet protocol (IP) address. For example, the Mongolica.mn website has two URL addresses www.mongolica.mn or www.bambar.url.mn, and the Olloo (Eureka) newspaper website has the URL addresses www.olloo.mn or www.mp3.mn.
The Instrument: Coded Categories

This study examines the Mongolian language web sites of the Mongolian government, non-government, educational, media institutions and interest groups according to an instrument that consists of six groups of variables. As shown in Appendix 1, the first group describes a web site in terms of name, URL address, type of institution, and a the funding mechanism. The next four groups of variables describe the characteristics of the information traffic patterns of allocution, consultation, conversation and registration suggested by Bordewijk and Van Kaam (2002). Each of these four groups consists of seven variables. The last group of six variables assesses such symbolic post-communist media characteristics as the rise of nationalism and religious revival. Symbols such as patriotic mottos, images of Chingis Khan, and images of religious tradition are measured by these variables.

The first four variables in the coding sheet are: 1) Name; 2) URL address; 3) Type of web site; and 4) Funding. These variables are the descriptive variables of the web site. The first variable is a text variable showing the name of the web site as it appears in a title bar or in a prominent place at the front page of the web site. Frequently, the name of a web site indicates the name of the institution maintaining the web site. The URL address variable is a seed URL or a domain name address for an institution's web site. The last two variables in this group “Type of web site,” and “Funding” are nominal variables that are entered as a number corresponding to a certain category of institutions or a certain category of funding mechanism specified in the coding book as shown in Appendix 2. The variable “Type” has nine categories each corresponding to government
institutions, educational and research institutions, non-government organizations, media, international projects, political groups, diaspora web sites, other interest groups, and none of these types of institutions. The variable “Funding” is also a nominal variable with five categories: “displays some ads,” “subscription based,” “organizational funding,” “donor supported,” and “others.”

The second group of variables is in the allocution index. According to Bordewijk and Kaam (2002), the allocution pattern refers to communication where information is distributed from a center simultaneously to many peripheral receivers. The pattern of allocution can be used to evaluate the efforts of an organization to make the information it disseminates informative, transparent and current. Seven variables compose the allocution index: 1) research and analysis; 2) laws and regulations; 3) reports and statistics; 4) newsletters and transcripts; 5) current news; 6) locally relevant information; and 7) disclosure of authors. Each of these seven variables is coded “1” if a certain feature is present at a web site, and “0” if a certain feature is not present. For example, if a web site provides research and analysis, the variable “research and analysis” is coded “1,” otherwise the variable is coded “0.” Current news variable is coded “1” if a web site provides information on news or events occurring within ten days of the date of downloading the web site. The locally relevant information is coded “1” if a web site provides locally relevant news and information. The variable “disclosure of authors” is marked “1” if the web site explicitly indicates authors and the sources of information. An accumulative sum of seven variables creates the allocution index. In terms of the level of interactivity, the allocution index composing of these seven variables corresponds to the
monologue model where both control over sources of information, as well as over choice and time of subject matter belong to a center maintaining the web site (McMillan, 2002a). Often times, “News,” “Information” or “Resources” web pages are analyzed by the allocution variables.

The next group of variables used in the content analysis of web sites relates to the consultation index. This group is also comprised of seven variables: 1) archived newsletters and magazines; 2) databases; 3) search facility; 4) web directories; 5) outside links; 6) email and contact info; and 7) site maps. These seven variables refer to a range of different communication situations in which individuals look for information at a center (Bordewijk & Kaam, 2002). Each of these variables is marked “1” for the presence of features such as “Archived Newsletters,” “Databases,” “Search,” and “Web directories” at a web site, and the sum of these seven variables comprises the consultation index. These variables indicate the presence of two-way communication when receivers seemingly control the communication process, yet the sources of information are controlled by a center or an institution. McMillan (2002a) classifies this kind of communication as the responsive dialogue model in terms of the levels of interactivity.

From the receivers’ point of view, it appears as if they control the communication process by retrieving the information they need, and by following hyperlinks provided at a web site. Yet their choices are controlled within the range of sources provided by a center.

The fourth group of variables in the content analysis instrument is the conversation index which is comprised of another set of seven variables: 1) discussion forums and bulletin board systems (BBS); 2) archived forums; 3) facilitation of forums; 4)
chat; 5) teleconferences; 6) anonymity and 7) privacy acknowledgement. The variable “discussion forums and BBS” indicates the presence of asynchronous (occurring over time) discussion forums; whereas the variable “teleconferences” is used to indicate discussions or chat occurring in a synchronous (limited) time period, as in “real time.” The second variable “archived forums” shows whether or not earlier discussions are accessible later, and the third variable indicates whether or not discussion forums are moderated, showing the person in charge of discussion, and the persons who and reply. The last two variables in this group “anonymity” and “privacy acknowledgement” are designed to evaluate an institution’s effort to make communication among users more discrete. The variable “anonymity” is coded “1” if pseudo identifiers are used in discussion forums and chats. The variable “privacy acknowledgement” indicates whether or not any statement on privacy is present at the web site. These variables are coded “1” for presence and “0” for absence of such features as discussion forums, teleconferences, and chat at a web site.

An aggregate value of these seven variables composes the conversation index. The conversation index variables assess possibilities for interaction among users bypassing the center. The variables composing the conversation index also indicate the interactivity level of mutual discourse as explained in the interactivity model suggested by McMillan (2002a). The mutual conversation level of interactivity is a two-way symmetric model occurring in chat rooms, and bulletin-board systems (BBS). At the same time, these features at an institution’s website indicate an institution’s efforts to encourage horizontal communication among the users at its web site.
The fifth group of variables in the analysis of web sites refers to the registration index indicating the extent to which an institution collects information from users at its web site. The registration index is comprised of seven variables: 1) member registration at discussion forums; 2) polling and voting; 3) questionnaires and surveys; 4) registration for events and activities; 5) mailing lists and listserves; 6) guest books, feedback and online forms; and 7) subscription. The first variable “member registration” shows whether or not an institution collects information from users who participate in discussion forums. The variables “polling and voting,” “questionnaires and surveys,” and “guest book, feedback, and online forums” indicate the extent to which an institution maintaining the web site collects opinions from users. The variable “registration in events and activities,” and “mailing lists and listserves” show whether or not the web site is used to collect information for an institution’s operation and activities. The last variable is designed to see whether or not an institution’s information at a web site is accessible by subscription services. The registration pattern corresponds to the feedback level of the cyber interactivity model suggested by McMillan. Even though there is some symmetry in the communication process when users send feedback through email and feedbacks, the center retains control over the communication process.

The last group in the content analysis instrument of this study is designed to indicate the transitional characteristics of post-communism. As suggested by Holmes (1997), this study examines the online symbolic environment related to such post-communistic characteristics as the rise of nationalism, religious revival, and the low level of consensus building. Six variables: 1) nationalistic mottos; 2) religious images; 3)
Chinggis Khan, landscapes and flags; 4) flames and negative postings; 5) traditional
Mongolian script; and 6) Cyrillic alphabet distortion are constructed to explore these
characteristics. Each variable in this group is coded “1” for the presence and “0” for
absence of these features at a web site. A coding sheet and a detailed coding book used
in the content analysis are shown in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

It must be noted that the instrument has a few limitations. The variables
measured in this dissertation supply the basic list of information that the researcher
presumes to be relevant to the research questions posed. Web sites might contain other
forms of information and features that are not measured by the instrument (Paul, 2001).
Another limitation of the instrument is related to the scale of variables that measure web
site features for presence or absence only. This design would not differ, for example,
between two web sites, one with much research and analysis and another web site
providing only one research paper on its web site.

A Sample

To be consistent in constructing a sample, the following criteria are applied in
selecting web sites to be content analyzed:

1) Mongolian language web sites written in the Cyrillic alphabet;

2) Mongolian context-related web sites in term of social, political, and cultural life of
Mongolians; and

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4 Mongolian institution web sites that are not available in the Mongolian language such as the National
AIDS Foundation web site are not analyzed in this study.
5 The web sites of foreign agencies not relevant to the social and cultural life in Mongolia such as the China
Online site available in the Mongolian language and the web site of an autonomic region Buryatii of Russia
which is written in the Cyrillic alphabet are not included.
3) web sites dealing with civic discourse in Mongolia providing news or discussion forums.

The explosive growth in Internet content and their ephemeral characteristics make it difficult to use offline lists for defining a universe to be studied on the Internet. One of the commonly used methods for constructing a sample for content analysis of Internet artifacts is the use of search engines that have more up-to-date lists of online content (McMillan, 2000). Following McMillan, this study constructs its sample in several steps. First, the researcher identified Mongolian language web sites based on the results of five search engines, AllTheWeb, AltaVista, Google, MSN and Yahoo, which were listed as major search engines by SearchEngineWatch (Sullivan, Jan 28, 2004) and have the Cyrillic alphabet search capabilities. The key word “Монгол” in Cyrillic is used given the fact that A) there are comparatively few websites in the Mongolian language⁶; B) specific words such as public institutions, civic society and civic discourse are comparatively new concepts for the Mongolian society and are interpreted differently; and C) the word “Монгол” itself does not include Ø (barred O) and Y (straight Y) letters that might cause an inconsistency in the search results due to different Cyrillic alphabet standards.⁷ All five search engines searched by the word “Монгол” in the Cyrillic alphabet on the same day.⁸ The search results were printed out, sorted, and aggregated so as to create a list of seed URL addresses of Mongolian language web sites found by at

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⁶ In Summer 2005 Mongolian companies celebrated the launch of the thousandth web site.
⁷ As discussed earlier, the two Mongolian Cyrillic alphabets have different codes in alphabet set standards such as Unicode 4.0 and ASCII which code these two letters differently. Since these two vowels are among the most commonly used vowels, it is important to avoid using them in the search engine.
⁸ Word search “Монгол” (Mongolia in English) by five major search engines on February 3, 2005 lasted from 0.12 second at www.yahoo.com to 0.55seconds at www.google.com and search engines displayed from as low as 250,000 entries by MSN, and 562,000 entries by Google to as high as 1,000,000 by Yahoo, 1,050,000 by AltaVista, and 1,100,000 entries by the AllTheWeb engine.
least by one of the five search engines. The second step resulted in 373 web sites that were found by at least one of the search engines. It must be noted that the use of commercialized search engines for the construction of a sample might limit the study. Commercialized search engines might not list web sites that are less trafficked and less prominent with local interests (Paul, 2001). Therefore a combination of five search engines and human maintained web directories were used.

Third, the researcher checked the accessibility and the relevance to the study of these 373 web sites. Out of 373 web sites, 20 web sites were not found, two web sites had secure access, and three web sites were under construction at the time the sample was being constructed.9 By applying the above mentioned three criteria for selecting web sites of government and civil society institutions relevant to civic discourse, sites that were for purely commercial and entertainment purposes were removed from the sample.10 After removing those sites, and some personal web sites, 157 web sites were left to compose the sample in this study. Finally, since spider and crawler-based search engine results are not very efficient in searching dynamically organized “deep” sites compared to the search of statistically organized “surface” websites, the results were corroborated with the man-maintained web directory as suggested by Stein (2003). The results of the search engines were corroborated with the web directories of the Mongolian websites, and with the portals of Internet service providers such as www.hailt.com, www.mol.mn, http://www.owc.org.mn and http://www.openforum.mn.

9 Web sites were accessed between March 11 and April 13, 2005.
10 Web sites of purely commercial and entertainment purposes excluded from the sample are online shops, travel agencies, banks, electronic brochure-like web sites of companies, as well as music and sport web sites. Also personal web sites maintained by individuals were not included in this study.
As can be seen in Appendix 7, a sample of 157 web sites was analyzed in this study. These represented public and civil society institutions that contribute to Mongolian civic discourse. After corroborating the results of five search engines and other man-maintained Mongolian directories, the sample was judged to be well representative of a “snapshot” of the publicly available civic discourse web sites in the Mongolian language on the Internet. This sample consisted of the web sites of 37 government institutions, 38 educational and research institutions, 16 non-governmental organizations, 28 media and Internet portals, 6 international organizations, 20 interest groups, 3 political parties and 9 diaspora web sites. For this study, these web sites were analyzed based on their information traffic patterns.

Data Gathering

Applying the content analysis method to the fast-paced web environment is a unique challenge given the need to ensure the reliability of the coding instrument due to the explosive growth and ephemerality of web sites. This situation requires the researcher to collect data in a short period of time in order to capture a “snapshot” of the current content of the web sites selected (McMillan, 2000; Schneider & Foot, 2004). The ephemeral and transient characteristics of web content make it problematic to reproduce the data for later analyses, because the later version of the web content can sometimes completely erase the earlier content of websites. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, “snapshots” of the current content of the websites were captured from March 11 and April 13, 2005 and saved manually by the researcher on a disk. The methods for
capturing website content have been evolving. Currently, there is no Internet archive capturing Mongolian web site content. In this study, the 157 Mongolian language websites were captured and saved manually for testing the instrument, as well as for later analysis of content. The captured web sites were analyzed by the researcher using the prepared coding sheet and coding instruction.

Reliability Test

The instrument to be used for the content analysis of the Mongolian language websites was tested for inter-coder reliability. Stempel (2003) defines reliability as the consistency of classification experienced by coders of the media artifact. Three graduate students in Midwestern universities independently coded 10.8 % of the sample or 17 purposefully selected web sites that had been manually stored on a compact disk by the researcher. Each coder was given a coding book (see Appendix 2) with instructions on how to code web sites and was trained before coding the web sites. Average inter-coder reliability ranged from a low of 76.5 % agreement for the variable of Mongolian alphabet to 98 % for the variables of discussion forum, membership, subscription and flaming to 100 % for the variables of nationalistic motto, religious indicators and traditional Mongolian script. Overall inter-coder reliability assessed on a simple percentage agreement was 92 % for the study.

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11 Examples of Internet archives can be seen on the Library of Congress’ MINERVA (Mapping the Internet Electronic Resources Virtual Archive) project at [http://www.loc.gov/minerva/](http://www.loc.gov/minerva/) or visit the site [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org), which captured web content related to September 11th and major elections in the U.S.A.  
12 flaming on the Internet refers to negative and insulting messages in discussion forums.
Data Analysis

The data generated by the content analysis were analyzed mostly using
descriptive statistics. Most of the variables in this study are nominal or categorical data;
the researcher used such descriptive statistics as frequencies and percentages of web sites
using certain features. Frequencies and percentages are used to examine, for instance,
the percentage of institutions with discussion forums, polling, and databases appearing on
their web sites. The relationships between variables were further examined, for example,
the relationship between variables “type of web site” and “funding mechanism.” The
researcher did not propose specific hypotheses in this research; rather the relationships
between variables were tested for null-hypotheses, a statement claiming that there will be
no relationship between the variables being tested. The associations between two
variables were examined using the chi-square test. The chi-square test is used for tabular
data, frequently presented in rows and columns, to compare the observed frequencies
with the expected frequency. Cross tables of variables by the types of web sites are
created and the chi-square tests for contingency tables and the like are used to examine
the association between the variables.

Further, five index variables were created by aggregating groups of seven or six
variables each as described in the “Coded Variables” section above: 1) the allocution
index, 2) the consultation index, 3) the conversation index, 4) the registration index, and
5) the post-communist index. These five interval variables were analyzed for central
tendency: the mean, the standard deviation, and distribution. Also examined were the
relationships between the variables “type of web site” and “the allocution index,”
between “type of web site” and “the consultation index” and so on. The Analysis of Variances of means (ANOVA) of the variables “allocution index,” “consultation index,” “conversation index,” and “registration index” among different types of web sites were tested.

**In-depth Interviews**

The ways Internet technology is embedded into the social context of Mongolia is best understood in what Geertz (1973) would call its “most complex whole” (p. 299). Following Geertz’s suggestions, this dissertation strives to create a “thick description” (p.298) of how public and civil society institutions use the Internet. After the content analysis is conducted, the collected data are “thickened” with data gathered via the in-depth interview method. In-depth interviews allow the researcher to analyze the views, perceptions and judgment of people working in institutions focusing on such why questions as “Why does an institution choose to use web sites?,” “Why does an institution make use of public participation in their activities?” and “What are the perceived obstacles in the use of web sites for democratic purposes?” In-depth interviews also serve the purposes of cross referencing data obtained by the quantitative method.

**Informed Consent**

Since the research involves human subjects, an approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Ohio University was obtained on March 14, 2005. The IRB approval is shown in Appendix 3. Each person interviewed signed a consent form which explains the purpose and benefits of this research, and also indicates risks, discomfort and
compensation associated with the involvement in this research. Voluntary participation was obtained with the statement that pseudonyms would be used in the publicly viewable documents.\textsuperscript{13} An informed consent form is shown in Appendix 4.

\textit{Interview Schedule}

Qualitative researchers are challenged to capture the way respondents articulate and construct experiences that are consistently relevant to the research questions (Mason, 2002). Following suggestions by Mason, the researcher pre-identified several central themes that were consistent with the research questions posed in this study: 1) the respondents’ own specific experiences in developing and using web sites; 2) their reasoning and judgment about the advantages and disadvantage of using web sites compared to other media; 3) whether or not their institutions use the web for public forums and discussions; 4) their perceived challenges in using the web for their institutional purposes; and 5) their perceived challenges and opportunities specific to the context of Mongolia. In order to make the interviews flowing and engaging, an initial semi-structured interview schedule was developed to guide the “conversation with a purpose” (Burgess, 1984, p.102) as can be seen in Appendix 5.

A stimulus response model, where the researcher asks questions and the respondents respond to the stimulus, is used. This model requires that the researcher makes frequent on-the-spot decisions about what questions to ask at the moment, and how to question so that the interviews focus on themes related to the research questions.

\textsuperscript{13} This research uses pseudonyms for its interviewees. Some interviewees gave permission to reveal their names, some did not. To comply with the IRB approval, interviewees are identified by pseudonyms.
In this way, the complexity of the situated context of the respondents can be captured based on their own views and judgment.

**Interviewees**

This study also seeks to explore the situated knowledge of agents who have worked to integrate the Internet into the practices of one or more Mongolian institutions. Even though the qualitative interview method is strategic and not rigid in its procedure for selecting a sample, it oftentimes requires the researchers to select a purposive and meaningful range of “developmental threads” (Mason, p.124) to illustrate and saturate the arguments they are developing. Informants for the in-depth interviews in this research were initially selected based on the results of the content analysis. The top two to three Mongolian institutions scoring highest among the same types of organizations were identified based on the content analysis conducted prior to the interviews and the researcher found suitable people to interview inside these institutions. Even though the content analysis results helped to identify institutions using the web most extensively, some focal institutions such as the Information and Communication Technology Authority, MIDAS/MONITA, a non-government organization, and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Park, which did not score high on the content analysis, were included in the list of institutions whose leaders needed to be interviewed due to their central role in the process of studying Internet use and content in Mongolia.

The researcher contacted key figures and web administrators of those institutions by email and phone for the purposes of interviewing. It was understood that institutional or collective views might not necessarily be captured based on one person’s view. As
Bellamy and Taylor (1998) point out, an institution is an entity characterized by 1) routine procedure; 2) an epistemic community; and 3) an actors network. Different actors in an institution might advocate different views that are relevant to different routines of an institution. Interviewees in this study varied from the managing directors or vice directors of government and media institutions to the web master of the institution. Conversations tended to focus on a broader picture when the director or the leader of an organization was interviewed omitting what technological capabilities they had within the institution. Conversely, conversations were specifically focused on narrow technical and organizational issues, particularly when a middle range management official was being interviewed. Considering these possibilities, the researcher sometimes interviewed two persons within an institution, one leader of an organization and a webmaster or information specialist. In one case, the researcher interviewed two persons at the same time.

Twenty three people were interviewed in the Summer of 2005. Among them were the leaders and managers of web sites of the most active institutions promoting Mongolian public discourse. The pseudonyms of interviewees, the date of interviews and the names of the institutions and web sites for which the interviewees worked are listed in Appendix 6. Twenty one persons were interviewed face-to-face (FTF), and two interviews were conducted using computer mediated communication (CMC). While FTF interviews are recommended for their flexibility in capturing the nuances of the informants’ responses, the CMC interviews enhanced the comprehensiveness of this study by allowing the researcher to interview the members of the Mongolian diaspora
who were resourcefully using the Internet in different geographical locations. The selected group of informants provided different perspectives of varying institutional use by public and civil society institutions. The data generated in this research provided a thorough account of different practices and threads, and captured nuances and meaning built on respondents’ perceptions.

*Interviews*

Interviews were reflexive in that the researcher was not a neutral data collector. Many informants were aware that the researcher of this study advocated Internet development in Mongolia by being involved in the initiation of several projects of the Open Society Institute (the Soros Foundation) that had established Internet centers in certain provinces, connected secondary schools, and trained students and teachers using the Internet. A few of informants knew the researcher through these projects and from the first Information and Communication Technology Summit in Mongolia in 1999. In this sense, the researcher was an insider. This situation helped the researcher to set and conduct interviews with many informants. The insider’s view added to the rigor and the depth to the generated data given the dynamic of the social interactions that put informants at ease by collecting data in their native language and putting aside peculiar social interactions in other social situations. On the other hand, the researcher was an outsider that hadn’t lived in the country for six years. Within these years both the accelerated development of the Internet, as well as chaotic and rapid deepening of the transition toward a market economy and democracy had taken place in Mongolia.
Interview length varied from 15 minutes to as long as 80 minutes. All interviews were conducted in Summer 2005 and were transcribed in the Mongolian language. Although there are many advantages to the interview method, the method heavily relies upon the responses of subjects and does not let researchers observe actual practices of using the Internet. Despite this limitation, the interview data provided rigorous and reliable data in combination with the content analysis method used in this dissertation. The data gathered is assumed to be rigorous and has captured the nuances and complexities of the institutional setting of the post-communist country of Mongolia.

**Data Interpretation and Analysis**

Interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder and later transcribed in the Mongolian language by the researcher. Generated data were analyzed interpretively and reflexively, meaning that the researcher read each interview transcript to decide what the interviewees meant to infer about the role of the web in their institutional practices. Based on the generated data, the researcher built cross-contextual generalizations inductively concerning how respondents saw the use of the web and whether or not they thought the use of the web impeded or helped their institutions in terms of their set goals.

Data analyzed was organized around pre-identified themes and a holistic case study was constructed (Mason, p.166). The researcher tried to build arguments about how the social and political context of Mongolia and institutional adoption of the web technology influence each other as illustrated by the data generated through the interviews. In the analysis of data, the researcher tried to adopt a ‘dialectical process’ of theory construction moving back and forth between generated data and theory
construction by refining and polishing explanations and data. This process is similar to inductive reasoning based on “grounded theorizing” (Glazer & Strauss, 1967).
Chapter 4: Results of the Content Analysis of the Mongolian
Government and Civil Society Institutions’ Web Sites

In this chapter the results of the content analysis of web sites of Mongolian
government and civil society institutions are summarized. By conducting a systematic
content analysis, this study examines the Mongolian language web sites of government
and civil society institutions to generalize about the prevalent patterns and common uses
of the web. This chapter starts with a brief description of the research design, and an
overview of the findings. Then, the chapter presents the frequency and prevalent uses of
communicative features classified according to four typologies of allocution, consultation,
conversation, and registration. The presence of these typologies is presented in four
separate sections in accordance with the research questions posed in the study.

While discussing the prevalence of different communicative features of the four
media typologies,1 differences in the use or non-use of certain communicative features by
different types of institutions are examined. How different types of institutions vary in
their information traffic patterns of allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration
is also analyzed. Moreover, this chapter presents the findings concerning such post-
communist characteristics as the rise of nationalism and religious revival as manifested
on the web sites of Mongolian government and civil society institutions. Finally, this
chapter discusses how international organizations are influencing the web content of
Mongolian government and civil society institutions. The chapter ends with a discussion
section where the researcher interprets the data and suggests the implications of the study.

1 In this research the terms “information traffic pattern” and “typologies” are used interchangeably.
In order to create some normative benchmarks in measuring web use by government and civil society institutions for democratic purposes, this study adopts the information traffic pattern analysis proposed by Bordewijk and Van Kaam (2002) and Van Dijk (2000) as discussed in Chapter 2. A content analysis instrument was designed incorporating the information traffic patterns of allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration. This study adopts the view of civil society as an organized group outside of direct state or capitalist control (Lim, 2003). The final recoded sample (N=157) consists of the web sites of 37 government institutions (23.6 %), 38 educational and research institutions (24.2 %), 22 non-government and international non-government organizations (14 %), 28 media and Internet portals (17.8 %), 23 interest groups and political parties (14.6 %), and 9 diaspora web sites (5.7 %). These categories are used throughout the rest of the dissertation. Appendix 7 shows the list of web sites analyzed, their seed URL addresses, and a summary of the findings. The web sites are grouped by types of institutions and are ranked according to the total of scores of the four indexes of allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration.

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2 Initially, this study analyzed the web sites of nine types of institutions: government, educational and research, non-government organization, media, political parties, international projects, interest groups, diasporic web sites, and others (see Chapter 3). However, the category “others” was omitted because there was no web site belonging to this category. Due to the low number of institutions belonging to the categories “international projects” and “political parties,” these two categories were combined with the categories “non-governmental organizations” and “interest group” respectively. The six international project web sites in the Mongolian language are web sites of international non-governmental organizations such as World Wild Foundation, and Amnesty International. These web sites of international non-governmental organizations are combined with the category “non-governmental organizations” and a new category “non-governmental and international non-governmental organizations” (NGO and INGO) was created. Three political party web sites were merged with the category “interest group” and this combined category was also named “interest groups and political parties.”
Overview of the Findings

The content analysis of the web sites of the Mongolian government and civil society institutions in this study shows that a wide range of government and civil society institutions have an online presence in the Mongolian language on the Internet. These web sites range from the Parliament to student associations, from a Buddhist monastery to a lesbian community, and from the communist party to liberty centers.

To systematically analyze the effort to use the web for democratic purposes, the content analysis instrument was designed to indicate the presence or absence of 28 communicative features classified into the four media typologies of allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration. Each of these typologies consists of seven variables. Given the openness of the political system in Mongolia, both government and civil society institutions perform the democratic functions of distributing information, increasing consultative and participatory processes among citizens, and triggering citizens’ opinions and votes. The four groups of variables of allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration are designed to measure the extent to which Mongolian government and civil society institutions distribute useful information, as well as the extent to which they use the communicative capabilities of the Internet to increase consultation and participation. This study does not aim to evaluate the design, the aesthetic appeal, or the technological level of web sites, rather the findings of the study are presented in accordance with the research questions posed in this study.

The first research question posed asks what media typology is the most prevalent on the web of Mongolian government and civil society institutions. This research
question was divided into four sub-questions each asking the extent to which Mongolian institutions use the four typologies of allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration. A summary of the prevalence of the different communicative features grouped into four typologies for the sample of 157 web sites of Mongolian government and civil society institutions is shown in Figure 4-1 below. The bars in Figure 4-1 present the percentage of web sites in the sample providing each feature of the allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration typologies.

Figure 4-1. The percentages of web sites providing different information traffic pattern features (N=157).
As can be seen in Figure 4-1, some features such as “local relevance” (82.8% of web sites) and “email and contact information” (80.3% of web sites) are used by more than 80% of the web sites in the sample, while other features such as “event registration” (0.6 % of web sites) and “privacy acknowledgement” (1.9% of web sites) are present on the web sites of very few institutions. In general, the allocution pattern is most prevalent among these web sites followed by the consultation pattern, while the conversation and registration patterns are less commonly used. The four sub-question findings are discussed in detail in separate sections below.

The web sites studied vary widely in their use of different communicative features of the Internet. Figure 4-2 below shows the distribution of the total scores of all 28 variables of four information traffic patterns on 157 web sites of Mongolian government and civil society institutions. The Mongolian language web sites analyzed in this research score as low as one in the total scores to as high as 17 out of a possible 28 scores including all variables of the four information traffic patterns of allocation, consultation, conversation and registration. The average mean score for the sample is 6.85 with the standard deviation 3.77. The distribution of the total scores in Figure 4-2 is skewed left indicating that many web sites in the sample have total scores less than the mean average total score 6.85. In fact, it can be seen in Figure 4-2 that 39 web sites or 24.8% of all web sites have a total score between 1 and 3 (3 web sites score 1; 14 web sites have the total score of 2; and 22 web sites have the total score of 3). These data show that almost one fourth of web sites studied have simple web pages providing basic
information such as the history of the institution and are rudimentary in the information provided.

Figure 4-2. The total scores in all four information traffic patterns by Mongolian government and civil society institutions’ web sites (N=157). The maximum possible score for a web site is 28 (M=6.85, SD=3.77)

Figure 4-2 also shows that in contrast to those rudimentary web sites, there are 18 web sites with information traffic pattern scores equal to or above 12 (in Figure 4-2, the five vertical bars on the right correspond to the total scores between 12-17). The Open-Government web site has regular online chat with government officials on real problems in real time; the Open Society Forum web site encourages citizens to offer their opinions and views on pending legislation before and during the Parliament. New media institutions such as TV5 stream current video news on the Internet each day, and
Olloo.mn has the most active online discussion forums on a broad range of topics. Figure 4-3 below illustrates the front pages of the web sites of the Mongolian Parliament, and Open Society Forum, each providing rich information, current news, discussion forums, and polls.

![Figure 4-3. The front pages of the web sites of A) the Mongolian Parliament and B) Open Society Forum.](image-url)
The web sites with the greater total scores were the web sites of the Parliament of Mongolia, the Open Web Center - a non-government organization, Olloo.mn - an Internet portal site, and Open Source Developers – a web site of open source software developers and enthusiasts. These were the highest scoring web sites on the information traffic pattern analysis. Appendix 7 shows the results of the information traffic pattern analysis of each web site. It also shows the total scores of the allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration typologies, as well as the total score of the four typologies of each web site studied. The last column in Appendix 7 presents the total score of the post-communist characteristic variables of each web site. The web sites are grouped by type of institutions and are ranked within the group by the total score of the four typologies.

The web sites with the greater total scores of the four typologies generally provide comprehensive information, discussion forums on a broad range of topics, and interactive features that allow users to interact with an institution, as well as with other users. Whereas the web site with low total scores tend to provide outdated information, and do not offer many possibilities for users to interact with the institutions, or with each other. The summary of each of the four information traffic patterns, as well as the post-communist characteristics of the web sites, are discussed in greater detail in separate sections below.

**Allocution**

In this section, the researcher seeks to answer the sub research question RQ 1-1 which asks the extent to which Mongolian government and civil society institutions use
the allocution pattern on the web. According to Bordewijk and Van Kaam (2002), the allocution pattern characterizes a communication situation in which information is distributed from a center. As discussed in the Methodology section, the allocution pattern in this research is triggered by the seven variables coded for the presence or the absence of the following features: 1) research and analysis; 2) laws and regulations; 3) reports and statistics; 4) newsletters and transcripts; 5) current news; 6) locally relevant information; and 7) disclosure of authors. These variables evaluate the comprehensiveness and quality of the information distributed by Mongolian institutions on the web. Furthermore, this chapter presents the results of the chi-square tests to reveal the differences across different types of institutions in providing or not providing the seven allocution features analyzed in this research. The frequency and the percentage of the web sites using the allocution features by each of the six types of institutions are shown in a consolidated table in Appendix 8. The web sites of Parliament, the Information and Communication Technology Authority, the Open Forum, and Olloo.mn scored highest on the allocution features. These sites provide legislation, reports, statistics, and up-to-date news and information. They also indicate the sources of the information they post. The Parliament and the Open Forum were among the few institutions providing some research and analysis. The differences in the use of allocution features by six different types of institutions are examined by the relationships between the variable “type of a web site” and the seven allocution variables. The chi-square tests of the relationship between these variables reveal that different types of institutions provide the allocution features to a varying extent.
The first allocation variable “research and analysis” indicates whether or not an institution’s web site provides some research and analysis given by experts, officials, and researchers explaining issues in the areas of an institution’s operation. The content analysis in this study discovers that 28.7% (45 web sites) of the sample does provide “research and analysis,” as shown in Figure 4-1 above. Surprisingly, only 18.4% of educational and research institutions make available “research and analysis” on the web compared to other types of institutions such as interest groups and political parties and non-governmental and international non-governmental organizations of which 43.5% and 40.9% provide research and analysis respectively as can be seen in Appendix 8. However, the relationship between the variables “research and analysis” and “type of web site” is not statistically significant on the chi-square test \( \chi^2(5, N=157)=7.75, \text { n.s.} \) indicating that the difference among different types institutions might be occurring by chance.

The second allocation variable “laws and regulations” is not commonly accessible (28.7% or 45 web sites) on the web of the Mongolian government and civil society institutions, yet the chi-square test shows a statistically significant relationship between the variable “type of a web site” and the variable “laws and regulation” \( \chi^2(5, N=157)=43.55, \text { p < 0.01} \) indicating that certain types of institutions are more likely than other types of institutions to provide laws and regulation on the web. As can be seen in Appendix 8, 67.6% of government organizations’ web sites make accessible different laws and regulations at their web sites, whereas none of the diaspora web sites do this and only 7.1% of media and Internet portal sites, and 8.7% of interest and political groups
make laws and regulations accessible at their web sites. Government institutions are significantly more likely than other types of institutions to provide laws and regulations.

A slightly greater number of institutions (33.7% of the sample or 53 web sites) provide reports and statistics measured by the third allocation variable, as can be seen in Figure 4-1 above. This variable is coded “1,” if a web site has organizational reports, project reports and other statistical data. Again, government institutions along with non-government and international non-government institutions (NGO and INGO) are more likely than other types of institutions to provide reports and statistics \( \chi^2 (5, N=157)=47.38, p<0.01 \) at their web sites. As can be seen in Appendix 8, 73% of government institutions and 54.5% of NGO and INGO provide reports and statistics, whereas only a small percentage of diasporic sites, interest groups and media sites provide reports and statistics at their web site.

The allocation feature “newsletter and transcripts,” which indicates the presence of newsletters or transcripts of meetings, was found at only 31 web sites or 19.7% of the web sites. The differences across different types of institutions for the variable “newsletters and transcripts” was statistically significant (see Appendix 8 \( \chi^2 (5, N=157)=18.03, p<0.01 \)) indicating that interest groups and political party web sites are significantly more likely than other types of institutions to provide newsletters and transcripts.

The last three allocation variables “current news,” “local relevance,” and “source disclosure” are designed to examine the quality and the credibility of information on the web of government and civil society institutions. The “current news” variable is
coded “1” if the site provides information or news occurring within 10 days from the date when the web site was accessed. The findings of this study show that most Mongolian government and civil society institutional web sites are not frequently updated with new information. As shown in Figure 4-1, only 29.9 % of the sample or 47 web sites provided current news and information when a snapshot of the web sites was analyzed in March and April 2005. However, the differences across different types of institutions for the variable “current news” were found to be statistically significant \[\chi^2 (5, N=157)= 18.42, p<0.01\] suggesting that diaspora (55.6 %) and media (53.6 %) web sites more frequently than the other four types of institutions update their web sites with current news and information. In contrast to the low percentage of web sites providing current news and information, 82.8 % of web sites (130 web sites) do provide locally relevant information. The allocation variable “local relevance” was not found to be significantly different across the different types of institutions \[\chi^2 (5, N=157)=5.87, n.s.\]. All of the institutions examined provided some introductory information about themselves, which explains insignificant difference of the variable “local relevance” across different types of institutions.

The last variable in the allocation pattern, “source disclosure,” evaluates whether or not Mongolian language web sites explicitly indicate their sources of information. The result of the content analysis showed that only 26.1 % of web sites or 41 web sites indicated the sources of information, as shown in Figure 4-1 above. Referencing the sources of information increases the credibility of information provided by government and civil society institutions. The chi-square test reveals that a significantly greater
number of interest group and political party web sites disclose their sources of information than do other types of institutions \([\chi^2 (5, N=157)= 26.51, p<0.01]\). As shown in Appendix 8, 52.2% of interest groups and political party web sites disclose their sources of information. The media and Internet institutions are the next highest group of which 50% indicate their sources.

The results of the allocution pattern analysis of the seven variables for the sample of 157 web sites of the Mongolian government and civil society institutions show that less than one third of the web sites indicate an effort to provide comprehensive, current, and credible information. The presence of four allocution variables “research and analysis,” “laws and regulations,” “reports and statistics,” and “transcripts and newsletters” indicate institutions’ effort to provide comprehensive information at their web sites. However, the results of the content analysis showing the low percentage of institutions presenting these four allocution features at their web sites, suggest that Mongolian government and civil society institutions provide a limited amount of comprehensive information. The content analysis also reveals that less than one third of the web sites studied frequently update their web sites or indicates their sources of information. Currency and source disclosure would increase the credibility of information provided by government and civil society institutions. The failure to indicate their information sources and to update their web sites with new information tends to decrease currency and credibility of these web sites.

None of the seven allocution variables, except for “local relevance,” were frequently provided at the web sites analyzed. The six variables-- research and analysis,
laws and regulation, reports and statistics, newsletters and transcripts, current information, source disclosure -- were identified in less than 33.7% of the web sites analyzed as shown in Figure 4-1. It can be concluded that almost two third of all web sites analyzed provide only basic introductory information about themselves and tend to resemble an electronic version of institutional brochures on the Internet.

The results of the content analysis show that different types of institutions tend to put more effort into providing certain types of information than others. Five allocation variables are found to be significantly varied across different types of institutions. Government institutions, perhaps obviously, more often than other institutions, present the features “laws and regulations,” and “report and statistics” on the web. Diaspora and media web sites more frequently update their web sites. The web sites of interest groups and political parties provide more “newsletters and transcripts.” Even though the difference across different types of institutions for the variables “research and analysis” was not significant, and, unexpectedly, this study finds that only a small percentage of Mongolian research and educational institutions provide research and analysis on the web. The question of whether or not different types of institutions have distinct information traffic patterns will be examined by using the analysis of variance test (ANOVA) in comparison with other information traffic pattern typologies of consultation, conversation, and registration later in this chapter.

Consultation

The sub-research question RQ 1-2 posed in this study asks “To what extent do Mongolian government and civil society institutions use a consultation pattern that allows users to
look for information at their web sites? Do different types of institutions emphasize different consultation features?” As Bordewijk and Van Kaam (2002) explain, the consultation pattern refers to a range of different communication situations in which individuals look for information at a center. In this study, the consultation pattern is measured by seven variables indicating the presence or the absence of the features: 1) archived newsletters and magazines; 2) databases; 3) search facilities; 4) web directories; 5) outside links; 6) email and contact info; and 7) site maps. These features help users to look for information by interacting with a web site. In terms of the interactivity level, users of a web site appear to control the communication process, yet, the institutions maintaining the web site control the sources of information (McMillan, 2002).

The prevalence of consultation features on the web sites of Mongolian government and civil society institutions are evaluated by identifying the percentage of web sites providing the consultation features as shown in Figure 4-1 above. The most common consultation feature among the web sites is “email and contact information.” As can be seen at Figure 4.1, 80.3% of web sites (126 out of 157 web sites) provide email and contact information in a clickable format. The next common features in the sample analyzed in this study were “outside links” (58% of web sites provide hypertext links to other web sites) and “search facility” (39.5% of web sites provide search windows).

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3 Search facility at a web site is defined as the possibility to search for information within the site, as well as outside, by entering search criteria in a window or drop-down menu.

4 Web directory refers to a large number of outside links classified into categories. For example, a list of governmental or non-governmental organizations with links to corresponding web sites is considered a web directory.

5 Site maps are provided to show visitors the structure of a web site in order to help users find information on the web easily.
The web sites of the Open Web Center, the Open-Government and the Central Library of Ulaanbaatar used most effectively the consultation features. The Open Web Center had a database and a web directory of Mongolian non-government organizations that were searchable. The Central Library web site had a database of Mongolian literature that was searchable by authors and titles. The Open Government web site had a site map which was uncommon among most Mongolian web sites.

While easy-to-design features such as email, outside links and search facilities are common, more sophisticated information features such as databases, archived newsletters, and web directories are less common at Mongolian language web sites. The variable “databases” is coded “present” or “1” if a web site features any database of articles, downloadable documents, maps, or television programs. Only 19.1% of web sites featured archived news and magazines, 15.9% of the sample provided databases, and another 14.6% web directories. Site maps are the least common feature in the studied sample with only 9.6% of the web sites providing site maps.

Differences in providing or not providing consultation features across different types of institutions were examined using chi-square tests. The variable “archived newsletter and magazines” is the only variable significantly associated with the variable “type of web site” [$\chi^2$ (5, N=157)=11.81, p<0.05]. The web sites of diasporic institutions, as well as media and Internet portal sites were significantly more likely than other types of institutions to provide archived news and magazines. As can be seen in Appendix 9, 44.4% of diasporic web sites and 32.1% of media and Internet portal sites provide archived news and magazines. The other six consultation variables did not differ
significantly across the different types of institutions. Appendix 9 shows the differences in the use of the consultation features by the different types of institutions and the results of the chi square tests.

Overall, the consultation pattern variables are the second most common features at the Mongolian language web sites. While easy-to-design consultation features such as clickable email and contact information, outside links, and search facilities are commonly used by all types of web sites, more sophisticated features such as databases, archived newsletters and magazines, and web directories are less used by Mongolian government and civil society institution web sites.

**Conversation**

The next sub-research question in this study concerns whether or not government and civil society institutions use online discussion and forums in the Mongolian language on the Internet. This question asks “To what extent do Mongolian institutions use the conversation pattern on the web?” Seven variables which indicate various institutions’ efforts to encourage people’s participation in the communication process are coded for the presence and the absence of the following features: 1) discussions and forums; 2) archived forums; 3) facilitation of forums; 4) chat; 5) teleconferences; 6) anonymity and 7) privacy acknowledgement. A web site that contains all seven variables indicates the presence of the highest level of interactivity--mutual conversation--and is characterized by two-way and equal-participation possibilities.

The prevalence of these features are shown in Figure 4-1 above, and the results of the chi-square tests examining the differences in the conversation variables across
different types of institutions are shown in Appendix 10. As can be seen in Figure 4-1, 30.6% of all web sites (48 web sites) analyzed have discussion forums and bulletin board systems (BBS) where users can post messages and read other’s postings on a variety of topics. As shown in Appendix 10, diasporic web sites most likely have discussion forums (66.7% of diasporic web sites) followed by interest groups and political parties (43.5%), whereas only 29.7% of government institutions and 15.8% of educational and research institutions host discussions and forums on the web. The chi-square test of the association between the variables “discussions and forums” and “type of web sites” is found to be statistically significant ($\chi^2(5, N=157)=12.46, p<0.05$).

The web sites of the Mongolian Student Network, Asuult.net, TV 5, and the MGLclub scored highest on the conversation features. The Mongolian Student Network and TV 5 sites had many active discussion forums that were archived and facilitated by several moderators. These web sites had Internet chat features, and also displayed pseudonyms of posters on the discussion forums.

This study also examines whether or not institutions maintaining web sites put additional effort into promoting public forums and discussions on the web by archiving earlier discussion forum messages and facilitating discussion forums. This research found that discussion forums and discussions are seldom archived (only 12.1% of web sites or 19 web sites), meaning that messages in discussion forums from earlier periods of time are not accessible later. Only 13.4% of web sites or 21 web sites have moderation and facilitation aids showing who posted messages originally, who posted last, how many replied, and who is a moderator. The differences across different types of institutions for
the variables “archived forums” and “facilitated forums” were not tested due to the too small number of occurrences in the contingency tables.

The next two conversation variables in this study are intended to evaluate Mongolian institutions’ efforts to use the web for facilitating mutual discourse among people (McMillan, 2002a). The variable “chat” indicates the presence of always-on chat features on the web, and the variable “teleconference” shows whether or not a web site had chats and conferences. “Chat” and “teleconference” features differ from discussion forums and bulletin-board systems (BBS) in that the former occur synchronously, whereas the latter occur asynchronously over a period of time. For instance, the public online chat with government officials on a certain topic at the Open-Government web site is considered a teleconference. The results of the content analysis in this study shows that the conversation feature “chat” is present at only 6.4 % of web sites and the feature “teleconferences” is present at only 2.5 % of web sites of the institutions studied. The differences in using or not using such conversation features as “chat,” and “teleconferences” by different types of institutions were not sought out due to the small number of occurrences of these variables.

The most noticeably omitted feature on the Mongolian language web sites is the privacy acknowledgement. As shown in Figure 4-3, 1.9 % of web sites has privacy notices. Compared to the privacy acknowledgement, more web sites (24.2 % of web sites) allowed for anonymity in discussion forums and other conversation activities indicated by made-up names of participants. Government institutions (16.2%) and NGO and INGOs (13.6%) less often than interest groups (47.8 %), diaspora (33.3%) and media
web sites (32.1 %) allow users to have pseudonyms when they participate in discussion forums. In fact, the results of the chi-square test between the variables “anonymity” and the variable “type of web site” was statistically significant ($\chi^2(5, N=157)=16.22, p<0.01$) indicating that the differences across the different types of institutions are not occurring by chance.

In general, Mongolian government and civil society institutions use the conversation features less often than the other three information traffic patterns. The results of the chi-square tests suggest that discussion forums and BBS are more often used by diaspora, interest groups and political parties, which also allow users more anonymous participation. Most institutions do not provide access to earlier postings and rarely facilitate discussion forums. Direct communication using chat and teleconference features are not common; yet a few web sites such as the Open-Government.mn hold pre-arranged chats with government officials. Issues like stating policies for collecting private information and allowing for anonymity are rarely addressed by the web sites of government and civil society institutions. Overall, the Mongolian language web sites of government and civil society institutions demonstrated a low level of use of the highest interactivity level, the conversation pattern, compared to the other media typologies of allocution, consultation, and registration.

**Registration**

The last sub-question in the research question RQ 1 asks to what extent Mongolian institutions collect information from users on the web. The following seven variables measure an institution’s effort to register information from users: 1) member
registration/sign-up; 2) polling and voting; 3) questionnaires and surveys; 4) registration for events and activities; 5) mailing lists and listserv registrations; 6) guest books, feedback and online forms and 7) subscriptions. The registration pattern corresponds to the feedback level of the cyber interactivity model suggested by McMillan (2002a).

The websites Asuult.net and Dotno.mn scored highest on the registration features. Asuult.net and Dotno.mn, for example, allowed the users of the web site to register for events and activities. Dotno.mn web site had surveys and questionnaires and polls and votes that the users of the web site could respond to.

Figure 4-1 above shows the percentages of web sites using the registration features. Among the seven registration variables, the first registration feature “member registration” is the most common and is present at 36.9 % of web sites studied. Even though the percentage of institutions using this feature is low in the sample, there is a significant difference in the use of this feature across different types of institutions. As can be seen in Appendix 11, media and Internet portals (67.9 % of media and Internet portals) and diasporic web sites (66.7% of diasporic web sites) more often than other types of institutions use the feature “membership registration/sign-up.” Actually, the chi-square test results in a significant relationship between the variables “type of web site” and “member registration” \( \chi^2(5, N=157)=22.03, p<0.01 \) indicating that the differences in using the “membership registration/sign-up” feature across different types of institutions are not occurring by chance.

The next most common registration features present on the web of Mongolian government and civil society institutions are “guest books, feedback and forms,” (31.2 %
of web sites have this feature), followed by the “votes and polls” feature (26.1 % of web sites). The chi-square tests examining the distribution of occurrences using these features among the six different types of institutions show significant relationships between the variables “type of web site” and “guest books, feedback, and forms” [$\chi^2(5, N=157)=12.06, p<0.05$], as well as between the variables “type of web site” and “polls and votes” [$\chi^2(5, N=157)=11.46, p<0.05$]. As Appendix 11 shows, 50% of media and Internet portal sites and 47.8% of interest group and political party sites provide the “guest books, feedback, and forms” feature. Also 39.1% of media and Internet portal sites, and 39.1% of interest group and political party web sites have the “polls and votes” feature allowing users to cast votes in easily clickable formats.

The other four registration features-- “registration for events and activities” (one web site only), “mailing list” (nine web sites or 5.7% of web sites), “questionnaires” (six web sites or 3.8 % of web sites) and “subscriptions” (five web sites or 3.2% of web sites) -- are used to a limited extent by Mongolian government and civil society institutions. Only one interest group web site (www.asuult.net, translated as Inquiry.net) allows the “registration for events” feature. Four media web sites and one government institution website (the National Statistical Office) require a subscription to access information at the web site. The differences across different types of institutions for these variables were not tested due to the low number of occurrences.

Overall, the registration features are the second least frequently used on the web by Mongolian government and civil society institutions. The four registration features studied in this research are present on the web only to a limited extent. Media and
Internet portal sites, as well as interest groups and diaspora web sites, tend to use the registration features more frequently than other types of institutions. Given the media institutions’ commercial goal, it is somewhat expected to see that media and Internet portal web sites register more information from users. The results of the content analysis of web sites also shows that diasporic web sites, as well as interest group and political party web sites, more often collect information from users. The next section in this chapter attempts to generalize about the common information traffic pattern for different types of institutions.

**Differences in Information Traffic Patterns across Different Types of Institutions**

In the previous sections of this chapter, the four typologies of information traffic pattern analysis were discussed separately as they pertain to the content of the Mongolian language web sites of government and civil society institutions. In this section, four traffic patterns of different types of institutions are compared in order to generalize about the use of the web across different types of institutions and to evaluate Mongolian institutions’ efforts to use the web for democratic purposes. This section strives to answer RQ 2 posed in this study which asks “Of the cyberdemocracy models suggested by Van Dijk(2000), which are the most prevalent in Mongolian government and civil society institutions? For what democratic functions do Mongolian government and civil society institutions most commonly use the web?”

To summarize the findings of the content analysis of the web sites, as well as to draw together the central tendencies of each of the four patterns as they characterize each of six different types of institutions, this study uses the following four index variables:
the allocution index, the consultation index, the conversation index, and the registration
index.

Figure 4-4. The mean indexes of information traffic patterns of the Mongolian language
web sites of government and civil society institutions
Each of these indexes is derived from a cumulative score of seven variables grouped together into the four information traffic patterns discussed previously.\textsuperscript{6} The mean score for each of the four indexes describing the six different types of institutions, and the standard deviation of these index variables characterize the prevalent media typology of the web use and the differences and similarities of the information traffic patterns among different types of institutions, as shown in Appendix 12. Graphical comparison of the four information traffic patterns is shown in Figure 4-4 above.

Figure 4-4 shows that in general the means of the allocution and the consultation indexes are greater than the mean conversation and consultation indexes for all six types of institutions. The mean indexes of allocution and consultation are shown in the upper two diagrams in Figure 4-4, and the conversation and registration indexes are shown in the vertical bars in the lower two diagrams. The mean allocation indexes are the highest among the four information traffic pattern indexes for all six types of institutions, except for education and research institutions. The mean allocation index of the six different types of institutions range from 3.14 (SD=1.27) for government institutions to 1.82 (SD= 1.43) for educational institutions as can be seen in Appendix 12.

Furthermore, the researcher uses the one-way analysis of variances (ANOVA)\textsuperscript{7} or F-test to examine the differences in the means of the four indexes across the six different types of institutions as shown in Appendix 12. The F-value measuring the variance in the

\textsuperscript{6} Since each of the seven variables creating these four indexes is coded “0” when a certain feature is absent and “1” if it is present, the indexes of allocation, consultation, conversation, conversation, and registration vary from as low as “0” to as high as “7” for each web site.

\textsuperscript{7} The analysis of variances (ANOVA) or F-test examines the differences in means among more than two groups by comparing the differences in means among groups to the differences in means within groups (Black, 1999; Calder, 1996).
means of the six different groups of institutions is statistically significant \((F(5, 151)=3.46, p<0.01)\) indicating that these differences are not occurring by chance (see Appendix 12). Government institutions, more likely than other types of institutions, tend to provide more allocution features on the web. The consultation features are the second most prevalent features used on the web by Mongolian government and civil society institutions. The means in the consultation indexes for the six different types of institutions range from 2.56 \((SD=1.33)\) for diaspora web sites to 2.05 \((SD=1.37)\) for educational and research institutions. The differences in the consultation index means of the different types of institutions compared to the differences in the means within the group are not statistically significant as the ANOVA test result indicates \((F(5, 151)=0.921, p>0.05)\). All six types of institutions tend to unvaryingly use consultation pattern features and this is indicated by the small differences in the mean consultation indexes of the six different types of institutions. The greater presence of allocution and consultation than conversation and registration suggests that the Mongolian institutions most commonly use the web for information distribution purposes without actively engaging users in the communication.

Mongolian government and civil society institutions use the conversation and registration features only to a limited extent, as can be seen in Figure 4-4 by the low conversation and registration indexes. The mean conversation indexes range from as low as 0.42 \((SD=0.98)\) for educational research institutes to 1.89 \((SD=1.83)\) for diaspora web sites. Though the mean conversation indexes of all types of institutions is generally very low compared to other means of information traffic pattern indexes, a significant
difference among the six different types of institutions is found in this study. As the ANOVA test shows, the diaspora, interest groups, and media web sites are significantly more likely than other types of web sites to use conversation features \( (F(5, 151)=3.98, p<0.01) \), indicating that these institutions put effort into facilitating conversation and discussion among user of web sites. Similarly, the low level of use of the registration patterns features is indicated by the mean registration index range of 0.68 (SD=0.87) for educational and research institutions to 1.75 (SD= 1.04) for media and Internet portal sites. The ANOVA test of registration indexes of the six different types of institutions show significant levels of difference \( (F(5, 151)=4.82, p<0.01) \). The web sites of media and Internet portal, and interest and diaspora groups have higher mean registration indexes than other types of institutions.

Overall, the findings of this study show high mean scores in the allocution and consultation indexes and lower mean scores in the conversation and registration indexes. This suggests that the direction of communication on the web is mostly top down from a center with little opportunity for users to be involved in the communication process. This web communication practice of Mongolian government and civil society institutions closely resembles the traditional media model where information is distributed from a center to peripheries with few possibilities for interactivity and limited user control over the communicative process. The limited use of the conversation pattern by government and civil society institutions to facilitate horizontal communication among citizens suggests that public discussion of public issues on the Internet facilitated by Mongolian institutions is yet to come. As discussed in Chapter 2, the prevalence of the conversation
pattern on the web is emphasized by the proponents of pluralistic and participatory democracy (Van Dijk, 2000). Opinion formation in civil society by means of deliberation and discussion on the web within, and among institutions plays a central role when the web is used for participatory communication. However, Mongolian government and civil society institutions emphasize the conversation features of the web only to a limited degree.

On the other hand, information distribution, information services, and public information centers are all important for Mongolian government and civil society institutions as indicated by the comparatively high means of allocution and consultation indexes within all six types of institutions. This common use of the allocution and consultation patterns suggests that the legalist or the competitive-elitist model of cyber democracy are more applicable than other cyber democracy models in the context of Mongolia. The proponents of both of these models of cyber democracy emphasize the centrality of institutions over individual politics as discussed in Chapter 2. The findings of this content analysis suggests that Mongolian institutions tend to use the web to solve the problem of the information shortage between institutions and their constituents in order to increase the effectiveness of existing institutions. Moreover, the content analysis shows that registration features are more frequently used than conversation features in the forms of polls, votes and other means to collect information from users. In other words, Mongolian institutions use allocution and consultation features most, followed by the registration pattern.
This information traffic pattern might be classified as falling into the competitive-elitist model of cyber democracy according to Van Dijk (2000). In this model, as Van Dijk (2000) elaborates, leaders of institutions deploy a populist strategy that is growing with the rise of personalized politics in two-party states. Though the political environment in Mongolia is a multi-party system, there are two major political forces -- the Communist Party and the Democratic Coalition. The Internet’s capability to conduct electronic polls, and to register votes and opinions tends to enforce this populist tendency.

The findings of this study also shows that the information traffic patterns among the six different types of organizations vary significantly in the allocation, conversation and registration patterns as indicated by the high F-values. Educational and research institutions tend to have the lowest indexes of all four media typologies among the six different types of institutions. Educational and research institutions in Mongolia may only use the information and communication features of the Internet to a limited extent because there is a lack of financial resources. In contrast, Figure 4-4 above shows that diaspora, interest groups and political parties, and to a certain extent media and Internet portal web sites score higher on the conversation, and registration indexes than those of the more traditional institutions. Interest group and diaspora group web sites’ mean conversation indexes are also higher than their mean registration indexes. The three groups of diaspora, interest groups, and to a certain extent media and Internet web sites, are perhaps, more imaginative and have more resources for using the Internet.
Post-Communistic Characteristics

This section summarizes the findings of the content analysis related to the post-communist characteristics of the web content of Mongolian government and civil society institutions. The last three research questions concerning the social and cultural aspects of Internet use in the post-communist Mongolia are addressed in this section.

Research question RQ 3 asks how post-communist characteristics such as the rise of nationalism, religious revival and rudimentary consensus building are reflected on the web. Scholars who have studied post-communist political and media systems, including Mongolist scholars, have pointed out the nationalistic fervor and the ideological vacuum that occurred in the early 1990’s in former socialist countries. They observed a rise in nationalism, the revival of religion, and increasing political fragmentation (Holmes, 1997; Sparks and Reading, 1998; Campi, 1991). Following these propositions, this research has analyzed the web content for evidence of such post-communistic characteristics on the web. The data coded for the presence or the absence of the following features: 1) nationalistic mottos; 2) religious images; 3) images of Chinghis Khan, landscapes and flags; 4) flames and negative postings; 5) traditional Mongolian script, and 6) the Cyrillic alphabet distortion. The images of Chinghis Khan, the use of the traditional Mongolian script, and the Buddhist religious symbols were chosen in this study as a way to identify the rise of nationalism because these symbols were prohibited by the

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8 Scholars who study Mongolian history, society, and culture.
9 Known in the West as Genghis Khan.
10 Flames are offensive and uncivil messages on the Internet often appearing in discussion forums.
11 Traditional Mongolian script or Uyghur script was used in Mongolia until 1941 (see Chapter 1).
The content analysis did not reveal a significant manifestation of the symbolic rise of nationalism on the web sites of Mongolian government and civil society institutions. Only five web sites or 3.2% of all 157 web sites display some nationalistic motto such as “For the development of Mother Land-Mongolia.” Religious symbols are present only on the web of two institutions, one of which is the web site of the Buddhist Monastery Amarbayasgalant. National flags, the images of Chinghis Khan and landscape are present at only 23.6% of web sites, most of which are government institution web sites using the national flag. Only eight web sites or 5.1% of Mongolian institutions displayed the traditional Mongolian script on the web. Furthermore, the content analysis of web sites shows that flames and negative messages occurred in seven web sites or 4.3% of web sites. This result has to be taken cautiously due to the small number of discussion forums. The design of the study was such that the first level web pages did not completely capture all discussion forums. The last column in Appendix 7 shows the total score of post-communist characteristics of each web site.

The content study discovered that 80% of web sites analyzed displayed distorted Mongolian Cyrillic letters. Inclusion of non-English alphabets into computer character sets and universally coding and displaying those alphabets on computer keyboard layouts and browser software is a large issue beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, this

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12 Amarbayasgalant Buddhist Monastery is one of the biggest Buddhist temples in Northern Mongolia. The Monastery was built in 1737 and was harshly repressed during 1937-1938. The Monastery was deserted more than 50 years. After the Democratic revolution of 1990, the Monastery is being restored and is active now (www.amarbayasgalant.org).
study does approach this matter from digital divide and post-communistic theory perspectives to answer research question RQ 5, which asks "How are language barriers, and the Mongolian alphabet reflected on the Internet?"

The variable “Cyrillic letter distortion” was coded “1” if any Mongolian Cyrillic letter is incorrectly displayed on a web site. The Cyrillic alphabet used in many Slav languages is oftentimes included international standard computer character sets. Though the official Mongolian official alphabet is now the Cyrillic alphabet, it uses two extra letters Ө and Ү recorded in the Unicode standard as “barred O” and “straight U.” Early character standards such as those of the American National Standard Institutions (ANSI) allocated fewer bits for coding different alphabetic sets. This made it difficult to later include these two letters on computer keyboard layouts.

Since the arrival of computers in Mongolia, the exclusion of those two letters from the computer keyboard, and thus from browser software, has been an enormous hindrance for Internet use and Internet content development in the Mongolian language. Software and hardware developers in Mongolia tried replacing Russian characters rarely used in the Mongolian language, such as “щ,” ”ъ.” Only with the arrival of Microsoft Windows in the mid 1990’s, was the Mongolian Standards Office able to develop the first Mongolian Cyrillic standard that universally included the letters “Ө” and “Ү.” Starting with the Unicode standard 3.0, both Cyrillic Mongolian and traditional Mongolian alphabets were fully included into this international standard. Yet, the problem of

13 The Mongolian language has vowel harmony in which the letters “Ө” and “Ү” comprise the two letters out of three female vowels.
14 The Unicode consortium has developed since 1991 a universal character map that displays non-English language alphabets regardless of the differences in platforms, software and language.
displaying Mongolian Cyrillic alphabet correctly persists, as the results of this study show.

The last research question in this research asks *To what extent do international and donor organizations influence the content and use of the web in the Mongolian government and civil society institutions?* The Mongolian case offers an opportunity to understand the role of international organizations. This study first attempts to discover the influence of international organizations by examining the way web sites are funded. The content analysis result displayed in Appendix 13 shows that 22.3% of all web sites in the sample were donor funded, while 28.7% of web sites were coded as funded by ads, subscription and other mechanisms and 49% of the sample were organizationally funded. Even though the percentage of donor funded web sites is not high, the chi-square test indicates a significant association between the variables “type of web sites” and “funding mechanism” ($\chi^2(10, N=157)=104.14, p<0.01$) suggesting certain types of organizations are more likely than other types of institutions to be supported by donors. As can be seen in Appendix 13, 59.1% of NGO and INGO websites were donor funded, while diaspora, media and Internet, and interest groups’ web sites were more often funded by ads, subscription and other means.

Scholars of the digital divide acknowledge that, as an American invented technology, the Internet is dominated by English (Warschauer, 2003, Norris, 2001, Hargittai, 2003; Hassan 2004). The role of language is also studied in this dissertation by examining the domain names.  

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15 Domain names are descriptive markers with corresponding numerical addresses for computers, or groups of computers, accessed on the Internet called “hosts.” Domain names can be either within the Generic Top
choose to use in their web site addresses. Results of the content analysis of the web sites reveals that 113 web sites or 72% of Mongolian language web sites studied in the sample of Mongolian government and civil society institutions use the Mongolian country code (cc) domain names ending with the “.mn” suffix such as www.parl.gov.mn, while only 44 web sites or 28% of web sites have domain names which use generic code (gc) or other country code domain names such as “.com,” “.net,” and “.org.” This preference for domain names by Mongolian institutions is the complete opposite of that in the United States, which has over 50 percent of the world domains and consists almost entirely of gTLDs (Zook, 2000). Appendix 7 lists all domain names for each site.

The result of the content analysis reveals that even though most web sites use the Mongolian country code domain names, most web sites also use the textual URL address which use English words and acronyms such as www.open-government.mn for the Prime Minister’s Office web site, and www.apemongolia.mn for the web sites of the Academy of Political Education in Mongolia. The content analysis found that 117 web sites or 74.5% of web sites in the sample use English words or the acronyms in their textual URL addresses indicating that the web site text names are more tailored toward audiences with knowledge of the English language. Even thought the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is working to include different language in the textual URL addresses, as the Mongolian case shows, English remains a necessity for the Internet users and an exacerbating factor for the global digital divide.

Level Domain Names (gTLD) such as “.com,” “.edu,” “.gov,” “.mil,” “.net,” “.org,” and “.int” or within the Country Code Top Level Domain Names (ccTLD) assigned to certain country domains such as .mn, .jp, .uk and .us (Zook, 2000).

16 Only one Mongolian web site in the sample uses both country code and generic code domain names in its web site address (www.libertycenter.org.mn, and www.liberty-center.org).
Discussion and Analysis

The finding that the web is being used for traditional information distribution purposes in Mongolia is congruent with earlier studies. Most organizations use the web conservatively for “top-down” information dissemination without much creativity in deploying the interactive characteristics of the Internet. Scholars have noted that many web sites are not often updated and make little use of the interactive characteristics of the Internet (Norris, 2001; Musso, Weare & Hale, 2000; McMillan, 2002; CyPRG, 2000). The information traffic pattern of web sites tends to support the social constructivist argument claiming that institutions adopt a new technology to do things they are already doing.

The low level use of interactivity features of the Internet may be due in part to technological difficulty. McMillan (2002a) claims that the mutual discourse level of interactivity is the most technologically challenging aspect of web design, as well as the most threatening for web site developers. Grass roots and non-governmental organizations may not have the skills to use the more challenging conversation features. McMillan goes on to say that some organizations may be too cautious to provide the highest level of interactivity for it would allow users to post condemning and praising messages. Technological complexity and caution might plausibly explain why conversation and registration patterns are less used. In other words, institutions tend to under utilize the capabilities of the Internet because their notion of democracy and citizenship changes slowly (Van Dijk, 2000). The findings of the content analysis of the web sites of Mongolian government and civil society institutions that show greater use of
the allocution and consultation pattern features and very limited use of the conversation and registration features seem to support Munkhmandakh and Nielson’s claim that Mongolian media continue to be “sender-oriented.”

The limited use of the conversation pattern is also partly explained by the historically developed institutional mold of socialism that did not value individual expression of opinion and judgment. Institutional routines and people’s attitudes are slow to adapt to changes. In fact, the highest scores on the allocution index and the lowest mean scores on the conversation index were among government and non-governmental organizations. Norris’ conclusion that well established institutions will remain relatively conservative might prove to be the case in Mongolia.

Furthermore, when the Internet came to Mongolia in 1996, it came only in the form of email and the World Wide Web. In other words, discussion forums and such online communities as WELL, Usenet and similar user groups popular in the western countries were still not known to most Mongolians. These online discussion groups and virtual communities were often based in research institutions and university communities in the U.S. In terms of Internet adoption, Mongolian educational and research communities are almost the complete opposite of colleges and research communities in the U.S., as can be seen in the Figure 4-4 on page 109. Their web sites neither promote interactive communication patterns nor offer much in the way of credible information even to an academic community in Mongolia. Participatory public spheres on the Internet in the form of discussion forums are not well-known. Over three centuries of

17 Many Mongolian non-governmental organizations were established on the bases of the old social institutions such as trade unions, women organizations and other professional associations.
colonization, and a communist political system that suppressed individual opinions and
rational discussions with Panoptican-like secret services, has created an environment that
does not yet foster democratic political practices. The bourgeois public sphere and town
hall meeting did not exist in Mongolia.18

The content analysis did not produce definitive answers to questions concerning
such post-communistic characteristics as a revival of nationalism, religion and Mongolian
traditions. The findings showing only limited presence of these characteristics on the
web of Mongolian institutions might suggest that they are no longer worried about
external domination. On the other hand, Norris (2001) points out that Internet users tend
to value more secular and international values. The relevance of this perspective is
examined in the next two chapters using qualitative in-depth interviews. The research
question concerning language barriers and the Mongolian alphabet problems on the
Internet showed how English has become another unequalizing factor for Mongolian
institutions. Most web sites of Mongolian institutions do not properly display the
Mongolian alphabet, and have English names and acronyms in their URLs.

The last research question explored the role of international organizations. The
research indicates that 40 % of non-governmental organizations are funded by donors.
Non-government organization web sites provide the most research and analysis among
different types of organizations. In fact, non-government organization web sites like the

18 Some Mongolist scholars (Sabloff, 2002) go so far as to associate the Chinghis Khan legacy with the
modern political culture by claiming that Chinghis Khan’s “Khuraldai” (The Council of nine wizards that
were selected based on meritocracy) was a form of political democracy and pluralistic debate. However, it
is debatable how the thirteen century king’s legacy contributes to the modern political notions of
citizenship and democracy taking place in Mongolia today.
Open Forum have the largest discussion forums and the deepest information insights of any web sites in Mongolia. Based on the content analysis, it is plausible to conclude that international organizations are influencing Mongolian Internet content and use by supporting non-government and other civil society sectors.
Chapter 5: Government and Civil Society Institutions’ Web Sites in Mongolia: The Socialist Legacy

The previous chapter analyzed the Mongolian language content on the Internet and examined the Mongolian institutions’ understanding of both technology and democracy. The purpose of this and the next chapters is to expand this analysis by asking: “How different institutions use or do not use the Internet for different purposes and why?” By conducting in-depth interviews with leaders and the managers of websites of Mongolian institutions, a case study was built that contributes to the understanding of mediated political and social practices in a developing countries like Mongolia. The major goal in this chapter is to provide some evidence that will fill in the gap between the theories surrounding mediated political and social practices and the everyday social practices and routines of Mongolian institutions.

Mongolian polity and society after the collapse of communism were not as stable as they were expected to be by more established societies. The transitional characteristics in government, as well as other types of institutions, frequently emerged as discussion points in the interviews with key people in those institutions using the Internet. The research questions How do institutional routines, actor networks and epistemic communities affect the use of the technology? (Bellamy and Taylor, 1998) and How does the specific Mongolian context such as the transition to a democracy from a communist regime and the influence of international organizations affect the use of the Internet? guided these discussions. In this chapter, along with the next chapter, several different theoretical views about the democratic role of the Internet in participatory political and
social practices are considered. Among them are theoretical perspectives that view the Internet as either a) an analogue to the Habermasian public sphere referred to by Poster (2001) as a “social space” (p.127) or b) a “zero-institution” as articulated by Jodi Dean (2003). Counter arguments are also discussed. Issues such as spam, flaming, lurking and anonymity in discussion forums on the Internet that are particularly important in mediated communication are discussed in the next chapter. These issues and how the interviewees respond to them fuse and blend. By raising topics like the continuation of the socialist legacy, and the popular support for or discontent with the post-communistic systems, the researcher was able to capture some notion of democracy which is woven into the everyday routines of Mongolian institutions.

By using qualitative in-depth interviews, the researcher was able to draw conclusions based on each informants’ responses in terms of their understanding of both democracy and the Internet since they represent the epistemic groups and actors in Mongolian government and civil society institutions. This chapter also provides some deeper explanation of the results of the content analysis discussed in the previous chapter. Each interview was transcribed in Mongolian prior to analysis. Excerpts from the interviews the researcher chose to illustrate the argument were translated into English carefully capturing the informants’ responses. Some words describing the Mongolian context do not translate exactly into English, but, despite these limitations, the data generated in the interviews was rich and meaningful.

The literature review in Chapter 2 showed contradicting and varying views on the role of the Internet in developing countries. Communication scholars pointed out that the
utopian view of the Internet’s role tends to translate into policies supporting access-centered and neo-liberal economic approaches, which tended to funnel a global capitalism ideology into developing countries. Information and communication technologies such as the Internet, according to this view, are seen as an accelerator of global capitalism and its drive to reach new markets (Hassan, 2004). The neo-liberal economic approach has deeply affected Mongolia through the “shock therapy” of replacing a socialist economy by liberalizing the market and privatizing state-owned enterprises in a comparatively short period of time with “hands-off” government involvement (Rossabi, 2005). The government of Mongolia views the adoption of information and communication technology as a way to be included in the global information society. Therefore, the government has developed several policy documents such as “E-Mongolia” that are being implemented into policy actions involving the projects such as a computer for US$ 250 and Internet access for 1 Tugrig.¹

This chapter discusses how Mongolian institutions use the web and how this use of the web is influenced by the social context in Mongolia. The socialist legacy, the enormous role that international organizations play in Mongolia, and the democratic and participatory social practices that have (or have not) emerged around the Internet are also discussed in a later chapter.

¹ Tugrig is the Mongolian currency, approximately 1,177 of which equals US$ 1 on July 27, 2006.
Overview of Mongolian Web Content: Why Do Institutions Use the Web?

Though there are around one thousand web sites in Mongolian, there are few attractive sites that go beyond posting electronic versions of newspapers (Enkh, August 1, 2005).

The purpose and content of web sites of different types of Mongolian institutions vary widely according to their purposes. Ministries and related agencies in Mongolia follow the government decrees which necessitate that they provide information to citizens through their web sites in order to increase openness and transparency. The Mongolian Government initiated the Open-government web site (www.open-government.mn) in 2001 to provide business people and foreign and domestic investors access to policy documents, bills, legislation and other relevant information. In return the government gets opinions and feedback from businesses on draft bills and on other policy matters. The structure and information on the web sites of government institution are thoroughly discussed by working groups within those institutions, and these people normally look at similar web sites in other countries, appropriating what they can, given their limited resources and technical abilities.

Educational and research institutions try to make available on the Internet what information and materials they possess. The lack of textbooks and other educational resources in their colleges, schools and libraries makes digital libraries and free resources on the Internet very enticing for Mongolians. The capital city central library has initiated (www.mclibrary.mn) “The Mongolian literature project on the Internet” making available

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2 This dissertation uses pseudonyms for the interviewees in the accordance with the informed consent signed by the interviewees prior to the interviews. Later requests asking permissions to use the interviewees' real names have not gotten approval from some of the interviewees. The list of interviewees' pseudonyms, the institutions the interviewees represented, and the web site they were associated with are given in Appendix 6.
Mongolian folk tales, riddles, proverbs and ancient literature such as *The Secret History of Mongols* on the Internet. The web site *Mongoleducation.mn* publishes the best international and domestic educational practices, educational laws and rules, and allows secondary school teachers to share with each other methodologies they use and articles they write. The *Mongoleducation.mn* site also provides research on drop-outs in Mongolian schools and comparative studies on private tutoring practices in post-communist countries. The web site *Tanhim.net* hosts educational resources in the fields of engineering and technology and allows engineers to share experiences. These emerging efforts to make studies available online enrich Mongolian language Internet content, and could change people’s notion that “there is not much out there on the Internet beyond the electronic versions of newspapers.” Some educational and non-governmental institutions have started projects that “recycle” general interest information on the Internet including old newspapers and magazines gathered in libraries during the socialist time.

Non-governmental organizations in Mongolia also use the web in their everyday work. Applications range from signing human rights petitions on the web site of *Amnesty.mn*, to peer advising and helping the young generation and high risk groups to prevent the contraction of the HIV viruses at *Dotno.mn*, to an advocacy for public participation in policy making at the *Openforum.mn* site. The Open Society Forum, formerly the Soros Foundation, aims at informing people on policy matters and engaging

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3 *The Secret History of Mongols* is a book describing the rise of Chinghis Khan, his empire and military campaigns.
them in policy formulation via a tri-part effort involving an information center, a web site portal and television programs. Jargal (July 18, 2005), the director of a NGO said:

When one talks about public participation in policy making processes, the most important issue becomes information… People are uninformed; especially when, they have limited policy related information, regardless of where they live.

The *Openforum.mn* web site thus aims to keep the public informed on policy issues. Moreover, the Open Society Forum provides research grants for policy research on social and political problems facing the country and posts all this research on its website. The institution’s web site makes research, analysis, and reports publicly available that otherwise would have ended-up “locked in the drawers of bureaucrats.”

A technology oriented non-government organization, the Mongolian Information Development Association, aims at increasing online content beyond the capacities of newspapers. The MIDAS web site informs people about matters related to the digital divide, and the possible contributions of information technologies. The MIDAS staff also translate and post on the web site grant-winning projects in other developing countries as a way to educate Mongolians on how information technology can be used in people’s daily lives.

Emerging online media organization web sites such as *Olloo.mn* began attracting large numbers of users, thanks to the free provision of current news and other information on the Internet. These sites are now packaging information for individual users, and at the same time packaging online audiences for service providers and advertisers. This is a new development even for television, radio and newspaper organizations in Mongolia because it is a departure from the socialist legacy where the state used to guide what information would be released and there were no commercial or independent media.
Olloo.mn opened the *newspaper.mn* web site where online versions of Mongolian newspapers were posted; however, people had little interest in buying newspapers online. Though there is an attempt to become an exclusively online media; the Mongolian new media tend to rely on traditional media to generate the content for their web sites. *Olloo.mn* cooperates with such media organizations as *Udriin Medee* (Daily News), *MN news agency*, and *TV 25*. The first Mongolian host *mol.mn* cooperates with such traditional media as *MonTsaMe* (Mongolian National News Agency) and *Unuuder* (Today). In return, established news companies get Internet and other technical services from their new Internet media partners.

Interest and diaspora groups on the Internet tend to use the web more imaginatively, as discussed in the previous chapter. *Asuult.net, openforge.mn*, as well as *MGLclub.mn*, have more lively discussion forums with many users, and more up-to-date information. However, oftentimes these web sites can not afford to pay for journalists and writers, and tend to go to the newspapers for their news and information. This situation illustrates one of the challenges Mongolian web sites face in the area of information production and distribution on the Internet. Tuul (June 30, 2005), the manager of the MGLclub web site, told how the MGLclub received a critical remark from the *Unuuder* newspaper of the MongolNews Co. for using its news on the MGLclub.com web site, as well as a complaint from the web master of the Guys666, a Mongolian pop group, for streaming the group’s songs without permission. She honestly acknowledged that it was their fault; however, she was of the opinion that there was no law or regulation to control such situations:
Of course it was our fault, but all web sites copy from each other. There is no law and no mechanism to monitor the Internet content….When there is a law we will comply with it. We changed MP3 files to streaming audio format at our web site complying with the regulation prohibiting MP3 file sharing on the Internet.

Tuul (June 30, 2005) said “all web sites copy from each other,” and there is no regulation coordinating the use of intellectual property on the Internet. However, she is concerned about the fair use of intellectual products by the MGLclub.com web site because they “do not sell or charge for news and streaming songs.” In the interview, she spoke of the help the MGLclub.com gives to Mongolian artists giving them greater exposure on the Internet since these goods are “experience goods” (Shapiro and Varian, 1999, p.85). People buy their products more because they are exposed to the products on the Internet. This situation reveals the loose copyright and intellectual property rights enforcement in developing countries like Mongolia, despite the fact that Mongolia has joined the Berne convention. In the following sections, this study provides explanations for the role that social settings play in the shaping of technological development in Mongolia as they relate to the Internet content and its use.

Socialist Legacy or Departure from It?

Analysis of the web sites discussed in the previous chapter did not result in any significant evidence of post-communist characteristics such as a rise in nationalism, and religious revival. In this chapter, informants articulate how they make sense of the post-communist period in terms of technology use in Mongolia. The researcher asked about the challenges, and opportunities of using the Internet as a way to track “developmental threads” (Mason, 2002) that may be revealed by the informants. This study takes into account diverging views about media in post-communist countries.
When interviewees addressed perceived challenges in using Internet technology, they tended to situate problems within the broader context of society and polity rather than specific problems pertaining to the use of the Internet. That is, they talked about political and economic structures, people’s attitude, and institutional routines. The interviewees tended to emphasize that Mongolia is in transition and its institutions exist within a time continuum that includes the former socialist regime. The word “socialism” was almost always avoided; some interviewees referred the socialist time as ter ueiin translated as “of that time,” or huuchny translated as “old time,” or ungersen ueiin “of the past regime.”

Analysis of the Mongolian institutional web sites discussed in the previous chapter showed that the Mongolian State Great Khural (the Parliament) web site and the Open Government web sites scored highest on the information traffic pattern analysis among government institutions. Both the Parliament and the Prime Minister’s Cabinet web sites place pending legislation, bills and other legislative documents on their web sites, and host discussion forums that allow citizens to discuss their views on pending legislation and bills. Though the legislative functions, as well as the oversight of the executive branch are the functions of Parliament, the web sites of two key government institutions – the Parliament and the Executive branch – were somewhat overlapping. Dorj (June 27, 2005), who worked on the web content of the Open-Government site, explained this dynamic:

This is a context specific to Mongolia... almost 80% of bills are proposed and initiated by the Cabinet. Even in the case of an individual parliamentarian proposing a bill... the parliamentarians have to submit a bill to the cabinet for comment. This way the cabinet is so influential... because of the political
The leaders of the winning party become the Ministers in the Cabinet, at the same time they are the members of the Parliament [laughs]. The majority in the Parliament dominates the Parliament, and oversees the Cabinet. Therefore, the words of the Government are the words of the leaders of the winning party. It is obvious that the Cabinet-proposed bills pass the Parliament straight through. In the future, a lot has to be done to increase the Parliaments’ involvement.

Dorj, who studied political science in a western university, explained sarcastically the overlapping functions of legislative and executive governance in Mongolia. Though the initial purpose of the OpenGovernment.mn web site was to facilitate a dialogue on economic reform issues, the web site shifted its focus to the legislative and law formulation process because of the existing political practice. The cabinet led by the Prime Minister is formed by the majority political party in the Parliament, and the Prime Minister oftentimes is the leader of the winning political party. This situation reflects the political system in Mongolia, where power separation between the legislative and executive branches, and power check and balances is not thoroughly thought through and is still in flux. This situation supports Sparks and Reading’s (1998) claim that the post communist countries continue in the legacy of socialism in which political and economic powers are fused. In this case, when the legislative and executive branches are in the hands of a certain group or a political faction, its effects are apparent in Internet content. As Dorj said, the Parliament of Mongolia, a key institution of democracy, still has to strengthen its role in the law making process.

Though the fusion of political powers might be a socialist legacy, the political process in Mongolia may also be fragile because its democratic institutions are newly established. The Parliament, functioning as a law making institution, is a new institution in Mongolia since the 1990 Democratic revolution. Before then, the State Great Khural
used to unanimously approve the bills created by the communist party apparatchiks. As a new institution of democracy, the Mongolian Parliament has achieved a lot in increasing openness and transparency, yet is struggling to perform the functions of law making, to represent constituents, and to carry out oversight of the executive branch. Elbeg (August 3, 2005), who worked at the Parliament Secretariat, explains that the Mongolian Parliament’s public relations is fragmented between the Media Relations division, which deals with media, and the Public Relations division, which has only two persons conducting tours in the government building and accepting petitions or complaints from citizens. The website of the Parliament scored high on the information traffic pattern analysis, yet this site is not reliable and goes down every now and then. That is why Odnoo (August 1, 2005), the media person, said that her office mostly focuses on the traditional media of television and newspapers.

The problems of new institutions are clearly apparent in political institutions of Mongolia. As Zol (August 3, 2005), the media person of a major political party in Mongolia, said:

Time is a determining factor. The Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party [MPRP is the communist party] is an already well-established party with 80 years of experience, while our party has been around only 15 years. We spend a lot of effort trying to solve internal conflicts, and disagreements….The open, almost anarchic structure of our party, also creates problems for implementing a coherent party policy.

Zol was frustrated with the political uncertainty that caused friction among the leaders in the Homeland-Democratic Coalition, a coalition of three parties that won half of the seats in the Parliament in the election of 2004. In 2006, the leaders of the Homeland-Democratic Coalition dissolved their partnership and twenty five members of the
Parliament representing the former coalition of three parties joined the MPRP faction in the Parliament in order to save the government. According to Tuya (2006), this move was intended to preserve some level of confidence for donor organizations supporting Mongolia. However, the effort was in vain; bold moves by the Mongolian communist party removed the coalitional government in January 2006.

The problems of new institutions in Mongolia are also evident in the experiences of online media companies. *Olloo.mn* is a new online media institution providing online news and services. The company has media reporters, editors and software engineers and has adopted an electronic media model packaging information for audiences and at the same time packaging audiences for service providers. The company started by building online information sources on schools, hospitals, banks, shops and real estate, since there has been a lack of information on these services available in Mongolia. During the socialist time, all these services were state-owned and state-run, and there was no need for information to compare the different organizations. Private practices in these service areas are a comparatively new phenomena, and there is no established system of reputation or brand recognition. Parents have to visit all of the schools in order to decide which one is best to send their children to, or people have to rely on their social networks in order to choose dentists, hospitals and banks. There have been plenty of incidences of fraudulent and corrupt banks, schools, and medical malpractices in Mongolia in recent years. That is why building information databases on schools, hospitals, banks and real estate services is important in Mongolia and covering these stories is a socially important
contribution that new Internet media companies can make to the. Yet, **Olloo.mn** faces many challenges as Bayar (July 7, 2005) said:

> People are unenthusiastic, because they do not understand [the Internet]… they prefer traditional ways, and maintain overly cynical and suspicious views thinking that we, online media companies, are going to make windfall profits on the information they give us. Even non-governmental organizations do not easily provide studies and information that they are supposed to distribute.

Both Zol and Bayar’s perceived challenges are problems for newly established institutions in Mongolia which were unknown to the socialist regime. These challenges are related to the complexity of the current Mongolian society and people’s anxiety in coping with such a plurality of views. These situations suggest there is more discontinuity than continuity in the socialist legacy. The interviewees in this study emphasized the information flow problem, that is “the difficulties in obtaining information” in Mongolian institutions. Even though everyone - the government officials, the Prime Ministers and the media - talk about the importance of openness of information, as Jargal (July 18, 2005), the director of an influential NGO in Mongolia, put it “people are uninformed.” This lack of information seems to exist at all levels. The **Open-government** web site is designed so that each version of proposed bills is posted so that people will have opportunity to discuss and contribute to draft bills. However, there is not a strong routine guiding the procedure of how Parliament is supposed to discuss bills. As Ariun (June 27, 2005), the manager of the site, stated:

> There is no fixed time schedule for discussing bills in the Parliament … which specifies that the discussion should take place at least after 10 days. … Sometimes, the first introduction of a bill happens during the Fall session [of the Parliament] and the second discussion takes place in the Spring session. Sometimes, an amendment to the Constitution is introduced at the morning session and is passed during the second discussion after lunch [laughed].
Ariun was frustrated with the unpredictability of the Parliamentary sessions, which seriously impedes people’s engagement in law and policy making. Since it is difficult to get information about proposed bills, the people’s right to know is not guaranteed. People’s participation in law making through discussions at the Open-Government web site is thus in jeopardy. In this circumstance, the lack of institutional routines in the newly transformed Mongolian Parliament considerably constrains the shaping of mediated politics and limits public participation via the Internet. As Bellamy and Taylor (1998) explain, the shaping of Internet technology is not simply “a process of free and conscious choice” (p.151), rather the use of the Internet is shaped and constrained by existing routines of public institutions that are transitioning to democratic institutions. This lack of information and established routines in the Parliament were problems of little concern to communist institutions. Uncertainty and lack of information illustrate the complexity of societies such as Mongolia that have developed since the collapse of the socialist regime.

In fact, the socialist system failed because of its attempt to centrally control information in all political, social and economic spheres of society. The one party ideology, a centrally planned economy, and a preference for a certain type of cultural product all used to be expected in Mongolian society during the socialist time. Though that system failed, Mongolian institutions are slow in adapting to the changes, still showing “a degree of continuation” of the previous system. Public officials in ministries are wary even of providing information to the Open-Government web site team, using the excuse that “a draft is not finalized.” A web master in the ministry has created a “black
list” of departments and officials who “will not give information to be posted to the web site.” Public officials are not enthusiastic about providing information. Those interviewed provided several plausible explanations. Naran (July 18, 2005), a policy researcher studying the Freedom of Information Act in different countries, claimed:

Though the Constitution guarantees the freedom of information in Mongolia, it does not legalize the process of providing information to the public by government organizations. In order to provide access to information on the web, government organizations need to develop a classification system sorting public, and classified information… However, government organizations face financial and personnel constraints to accomplish this stage.

Other interviewees explained “the difficulties in obtaining information” in relation to people’s attitudes and routines inherited from the socialist institutions. In those days, government controlled information via television and newspapers, had the function of propagandizing first, and controlling and censoring information second. Since there was no need to produce and create information, government institutions did not have professionals who could provide information for the public. Only recently have Mongolian institutions set up media and public relations divisions.

Ironically, the media that used to control information and censor other views still seems to play a huge role in Mongolian society. As several interviewees suggested, the ubiquity of the socialist media legacy in post-communist Mongolia is still enormous. The recent Ivanhoe mines case and the Ongi river movement show the role of traditional media, especially television, in Mongolian society. Jargal (July 18, 2005), the leader of an influential non-governmental organization that broadcasts television programs explained that:

Television is really influential on our society because it is broadcast nationwide… Television talk shows with influential people advocating both pro and con sides
really draw people’s attention. …The case of Ivanhoe Mines in Umnugobi province showed people that the contract between the Government and the Ivanhoe Mines is “dubious” and is not favorable for Mongolia. People were not informed until we had a television program on this issue. After the program, the local people started an “Ongi river movement” which tried to stop the Ivanhoe Mines’ degradation of the environment due to heavy excavation. The Ongi river and the lake “Khangal” into which the Ongi river feeds have dried up.

Jargal emphasized the effect of the television program that informed people that were not aware of the contract between the Government of Mongolia and the Ivanhoe Mines, a Canadian based international gold mining corporation. Articles showed up in the newspapers in Summer 2005 indicating the unattractiveness of the contract for Mongolia and the looseness of the requirements for environmental protection. Even though the Open Society Forum had discussion forums at its web site, a public was uninformed before the television program. Jargal went on to say that the people of the Ongi river movement were planning to sue the Government for faulty policy, a new practice in Mongolian civil society. In general, big institutions like the Parliament and political parties emphasize traditional media - television and newspapers - and in some cases this preference for traditional media was a reason for weaker efforts to develop the Internet by institutions.

Interviewees acknowledged the enormous role of media, especially of television, at the same time they expressed that “Mongolian media was failing.” A couple of interviewees felt that the Mongolian media was polarized according to political parties, and incapable of providing factual information. Others expressed the view that the Mongolian media have become accustomed to providing information without checking the facts and doing research. Devshil (July 26, 2005), a vice director of a new commercial television company, described the problems:
Mongol television [the state television] is failing because it makes programs and news based on press conferences, which can be organized by anyone who pays US$ 50 to the Press Institute. … The Mongolian media has become full of dirt digging and the worst information imaginable. This is the complete opposite of the socialist era media… The more squasy or destructive [the newspapers] are the more they are sold and read…. We entered into the media business to break this “darkness” by praising and encouraging those who have businesses …and to balance this overwhelmingly negative media…so that we can direct the ideological power of media into development.

Comparing the media in Mongolia during and after the socialist time, Devshil mentions the ideological power of media when socialism “presented and organized information and opinions in a way to mobilize the masses” (Sparks and Reading, 1998, p.43). His company developed a signature program called “Let’s develop motherland Mongolia.” Though the slogan reminds one of an earlier era, it became very popular in the country. These kinds of positive programs were needed, he said; that is why the program is popular. It is paradoxical that some of those interviewed judged the Mongolian media to be “failing,” yet said that it was “really important” in the Mongolian society. Devshil expressed nostalgia for “the positive images of the socialist time” that mobilized masses in contrast to the dirt-digging of current media. The idea that the media was a great mobilizing tool still seemed to dominate the info-sphere in Mongolia and competing information sources such as the Internet were downplayed.

The socialist legacy is also affecting the social spheres, especially in the areas of education and health. The overall lack of library resources and educational materials and an acute shortage of funds for educational and research institutions also encouraged content creators to “recycle” information and materials from the earlier time period. Suren (June 27, 2005), who created a digital library project in the Central Library of
Ulaanbaatar, said that he collected clips of old newspapers and magazines to include into his digital library project. He said:

We build our digital library extensively using valuable newspaper and magazine sources published in the 80’s which are already in our library stock… such as the children magazine Zalgamjlagch (Successor), Hödölmör (Labor), and Unen (The Truth) of that [socialist] time. We selectively choose information from newspaper corners …by taking out “socialism related content” [ideological information]. Nowadays people who bring up this old information and advice are almost becoming “innovators” or “eloquent orators.”….Those sources are kept or preserved only in few libraries… we should make them available.

Suren willingly showed the clips of articles and stories from old newspapers and magazines. For Suren, those old magazines are worthy information sources to convert into the digital library by removing only “ideological parts.” Besides, the library does not have to pay for “copyright,” because these materials are conveniently in the public domain already. Another interviewee Mend (July 5, 2005), a doctor working on the HIV prevention web site, also had positive reminiscences of the socialist time when it came to social services in Mongolia. She mentioned that “the socialist era morals - loyalty to the family and monogamy in relationships –have changed” increasing the risk of HIV spreading among Mongolians. As Holmes (1997) explained, the post-communist system to a certain extent debilitated the almost egalitarian social service network built during the socialist period. Education, health and other social welfare systems in former socialist countries rapidly deteriorated with the collapse of a centrally planned economy, and the loss of Soviet and Mongolian government subsidies. As will be discussed in the next section, the social system in Mongolia in the post-communist time has become very dependent on donor support to replace the Soviet and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance subsidies.
Role of International Organizations

The Mongolian dependency on foreign aid and loans was a topic the interviewees discussed. According to the Economic Intelligence Unit (2005), international aid money provided by donor countries amounted to US$ 2.9 billion during the period of 1991-2002. This money was given to help Mongolia overcome the loss of Soviet support and COMECON (an economic bloc of the former communist countries) support. Reflecting the immense role of international organizations, many institutions maintain their websites in two languages - Mongolian and English – in order to provide the “right” information for donors whose money Mongolia really depends on.

A recognized businessman and a former deputy minister Bat (July 14, 2005) said that “donor money of 300 million dollars a year in the one-billion-dollar Mongolian economy brings some changes to Mongolia.” By providing economic indicators on Mongolia’s dependence on aid money, Bat was critical of economic policies of the Mongolian government that lacked a coherent vision and was driven by rent-seeking behaviors of public officials and the opaqueness of using aid money. He mentioned his involvement in several cycles of creating policy documents on the use of information technology in Mongolia in order to ask for foreign aid. These cycles of policy development happened “right after the G-8 meetings announcing the commitment to support developing countries to embrace new technologies.” Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe

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4 Other official sources of information on the economic development of Mongolia confirm his estimates. The EIU estimate of the GDP of Mongolia in 2004 was 1.2 billion US dollars, and foreign aid received by Mongolia for the period 1991-2002 reached US$2.9 billions (yearly estimate is US$ 241.6 million) in the form of mostly emergency aid without including loans and other developmental assistance (EIU, 2005).

5 In this study donor countries refer to Japan, USA, South Korea, and the countries of the EU that are major aid donors.
(2006) analyzed the donor assistance in the education sector in Mongolia and pointed out how the Ministry of Education in Mongolia used such catch phrases as “choice,” and “individual choice” that resonate with the strategy of donor organizations to attract international funding. They go on to say that when funding is secured the government spends it on other projects. Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe also point out the discrepancies between “policy talk” and “policy implementation” (p.157).

In a similar vein, the Mongolian government emphasize catch phrases like “increasing transparency,” and “combating corruption” when it comes to Internet use in Mongolia. When donor money is received, Bat went on to say, the government translates policy into actions that benefit only the factional or private interests of politicians such as those selling computers at a lower rate that benefit only a certain company, not the general public. Socially beneficial applications of the Internet such as developing useful government services tends to fall behind the implementation of an access centered policy. Bat (July 14, 2005) questioned the government policy saying:

Has the Internet developed [in Mongolia]? Not at all. Only people communicating with the outside world naturally use email. Those who are standing at the Naran Tuul market [street market] don’t need the Internet...Why would [the government] give a $250 computer... but not a washing machine or a fridge for $100? Truly, the stable food in Mongolia is still meat; its price is rocketing [this summer]. What will families do with their $250 computers? There is no basic government service available...for people to request with a single application using those computers... This [the government program] is a pure a rent-seeking deal between the government and a company... I don’t want those who are willing to make money to use the information technology as a one time disposable... like a preservative or toilet tissue... Policy should be evaluated as Mao Tse-tung⁶ said, asking the question of “Who gets fed and who gets hungry after this policy is implemented?

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⁶ Mao Tse-tung is the leader of the Chinese Communist Party between the 1930’s and the 1975 and the Chairman of the People’s Republic of China for the period 1949 - 1959 (Harris & Levey, 1975).
Bat expressed his disappointment that government policy has not created “a single application” for people to fill out, but focuses instead on selling computers and regulating the price of Internet access. The issue of a rent-seeking deal between the government and computer companies is reminiscent of the social constructionists’ perspectives claiming that the social context where the technology is embedded shapes the technological development. Other interviewees had different opinions regarding the policy of selling cheap computers, basically approving of the government policy as a tangible step to increase access to computers. Even though Bat had different opinions than the other interviewees, his points of views have also been observed in the policy making process in the education sector by Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe (2006).

Bat (July 14, 2005) sarcastically concluded that “we all conduct workshops if someone is willing to give 10,000 dollars.” Bat implied that policies meant to use the new information technology and the Internet were endorsed by the government for the sake of receiving donor aid, but not always for the sake of increasing the public benefits of using the technology. Policy researcher Naran (July 18, 2005) said that “the government becomes especially interested in the participatory policy making process if someone [a donor organization] is willing to finance the process” and highlighted the donor organizations’ influence on the policy process in Mongolia through the leverage of funding.

Such international donor organizations as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Soros Foundation, the Canadian International Development and Research Center, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank (WB), and the
Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have been very active in supporting development of the Internet, and related policy in Mongolia (Enkhjargal and Batjargal, 2004; Van Doodeward, 2002). Furthermore, the governments of Korea and India are supporters of information technology development and training. They represent the practices of donor organizations providing funding to increase access to computers and the Internet, especially in government institutions. Executive offices of government institutions - the Prime Minister’s Cabinet, and ministries - have established their online presence in many cases thanks to donors such as the UNDP, the ADB, and the WB. The Parliament established an Internet connection and created its web site with the support of the Open Society Institution or the Soros Foundation, a philanthropic organization based in New York. The Prime Minister’s Open-Government web site is financially supported by the U.S Agency of International Development (USAID) and the maintenance of its content is contracted to the Asia Foundation, a U.S. semi-government foundation. These examples of donor organization support for government institutions tend to support the view that government institutions are benefiting more from this donor aid than the general public.

There are a few efforts of international organizations to help non-government and educational institutions in Mongolia, as well as the “have-nots” in rural Mongolia. The Community Information Center projects, the Internet for Schools and the Citizens Information Center in the provinces of Mongolia, the former two supported by the Soros Foundation in Mongolia mostly works with non-governmental and civil society institutions. The first speaker of the new Mongolian Parliament Gonchigdorj personally requested that George Soros, the philanthropist, help the Mongolian Parliament embrace the Internet in 1997.

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7 This claim is based on the personal experience of the researcher in working as a program coordinator of the Soros Foundation, one of the major donor institutions providing aid to the development of the Internet.
8 The Soros Foundation in Mongolia mostly works with non-governmental and civil society institutions. The first speaker of the new Mongolian Parliament Gonchigdorj personally requested that George Soros, the philanthropist, help the Mongolian Parliament embrace the Internet in 1997.
Foundation and the latter funded by the UNDP, have been evaluated as “not sustainable” due to the high cost of rural communication and the low paying power of people in rural Mongolia. These international projects established Internet centers with a few computers in several remote provinces of Mongolia. Enkh (August 1, 2005), the head of a NGO, compared the donor funded information centers with Internet cafes which operate as small businesses. He saw important differences between the two:

One [donor funded ones] fails as soon as the funding expires, while Internet cafes in the street still remain in business. There is a need to create a business model so that these centers can be sustained. Anecdotally, the sustainability of donor organizations’ projects in developing countries means “finding another project.”

Enkh reflected on the importance of developing a business model for international projects that operate in local settings. Projects employing new technology and skilled staff brought into the local setting tend to fail when the funding expires. Mongolia is a unique case with a vast territory and poorly-developed infrastructure. Although some social benefits can not be measured in terms of funding. *AsiaWeek* (August 24, 2001) reported that Dolgorma, a mother who has for 11-years been seeking medical help for her daughter, met a German conservationist in the Internet café in the Dornod province public library who showed her how to search for medical information on the Internet. With their help, as well as her search on the Internet, she found a hospital in Germany willing to do surgery for her daughter. Even more, she was able to raise a fund of $40,000. This case shows that the social benefits of donor funded project are not easily evaluated.\(^9\) Despite a few exceptional cases, taken overall, donor projects using the Internet in rural areas, as well as in educational and research institutions, still face many

\(^9\) This Soros Foundation project of establishing the Community Information Center in Dornod province was implemented by DataCom company for the cost of US$30,000.
challenges. Tuya (July 19, 2005), the director of an educational NGO with branches in six province of Mongolia, said that Teachers like when we train and show them how to use the Internet. They would use it a lot if they had a 24-hour connection at school or in nearby places. However, in general the Internet connection at schools is so unreliable; mostly dial-up, and teachers do not stay long on the Internet because of the cost. After the projects of the Soros Foundation and the World Bank expired, the use of the Internet and our web site [MongolEducation.mn] is even more rare.

Tuya thought that people in educational institutions in the countryside were interested in using new technologies and the Internet; however, they are constrained by the lack of resources. She went on to say that the Ministry of Education has not been really effective in coordinating and distributing donor support and money.

The role of international and donor organizations in using and promoting the use of new technology in Mongolia is nevertheless noticeable. The interviews in this study suggest that support from international organizations have focused on the issue of access to computers and the Internet, especially in providing this access for government organizations. Though the context of Mongolia is unique, this situation raises several digital divide issues. First, government organizations in the capital, which are already “better-off” in Mongolia, benefit more from these international organizations’ support. The “have nots” in the countryside of Mongolia and the educational and research institutions have been supported less. This situation supports the view that donor aid money distributed by government organizations tends to benefit institutions that are in charge, and does little to bridge the digital divide. Second, the greater emphasis on access tends to translate into a government policy that pours international donor loans and other assistance into infrastructure and technologies that are rapidly changing and
soon may be obsolete. A deputy director of a government agency Erdem (July 20, 2005) expressed this concern:

Since 1992 we invested more than 80 million dollars, mostly from donor aid and loan money, into the expansion and renovation of telecommunication networks and services...However, technology changes rapidly. For instance, we received a 40 year loan from the international bank groups to invest into infrastructure and communication equipment. The technology and communication equipment we installed in 1997 are almost outdated now, while the payment for the 40 year loan has barely begun. A long-term loan to invest into a rapidly changing industry becomes something of dubious value.

Erdem discussed the challenges Mongolia is facing in finding venture capital to invest in the rapidly changing telecommunication sector in Mongolia. More than half of this investment went into the expansion and renovation of the telecommunication network of Mongolia (ADB, December 2003). Given the fact that half of the donors’ 2.9 billion dollar aid and assistance came in the form of loans, the situation raises concern over Mongolia’s debt in the longer run. This heavy investment in infrastructure and access to telecommunications services was the reason for Hamelink’s (2001) warning that developing countries should not try to follow the pattern of consumption observed in developed countries. Hamelink was of an opinion that this access-centered and neo-liberal economic approach in developing countries would only benefit the corporate sector. In the case of Mongolia, the government is investing loan money borrowed from international bank groups in ways that some businesses tend to benefit more than the rest of society.

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10 The Asian Development Bank and the Nordic Development Fund were the major supporters of this US$ 49 million project for the renovation and expansion of Mongolia’s basic telecommunication network (ADB, December 2003).
Though international organizations provide financial support, the interviewees rarely discussed their participation in related technology and media initiatives, global communication, and the governance of the Internet. When asked about international cooperation, most of the interviewees discussed their cooperation with donor organizations in Mongolia that provide financial support. Only a few interviewees mentioned that they participated in such organizations and initiatives as the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), the Civil Society Group discussions, and the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP). Enkh, the leader of MIDAS, mentioned that he participated in several list serve discussions on the WSIS; as a result he was invited to a conference in Sri-Lanka. Only one other international governance participation was mentioned by a Mongolian Company – the Domain Name Registrar. The fact that the Mongolian domain registrar only manages the country code domain names ending with the suffix .mn indicates that the company’s participation in global domain name distribution is likely small. Mongolian government organizations do participate in such intergovernmental organizations like the International Telecommunication Union and with regional group such as the Asia Pacific Development Information Program and the Asian-Oceanian Computing Industry Organization (ASOCIO). It seem fair to conclude that there is room for greater participation in international initiatives which will allow Mongolians to participate and learn from other countries.

**Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter discussed why and how Mongolian institutions use the web and how the use of the web is affected by post-communistic development and the role of
international organizations. The data generated by the in-depth interview method in this chapter provides deeper and more nuanced explanations of the socialist legacy and the challenges Mongolians face in using the web. Analysis of these interviews gives a deeper understanding of the interplay between society and technology and enriches the results of the content analysis discussed in the previous chapter. The interviewees in this study shed further light on the socialist legacy, especially the socialist media, and the new changes occurring in Mongolia. Their view concerning the democratic practices and the role of the Internet in this process is discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 6: Discussion and Public Forums: Mediated Political and Social Participation

Public discussion and deliberation on the Internet are promising in terms of their contribution to democracy building, but some issues related to these political and social practices are controversial. The Literature Review in Chapter 2 discussed varying perspectives on the democratic functions of the Internet ranging from utopian to dystopian views.

The proponents claim that the Internet’s ontological multiplicity, merging military, academic, and social networks, can be used as an analogue to the Habermasian notion of the public sphere (Poster, 2001). Application of the concept of the public sphere to the Internet has been criticized by those who point out how the Internet excludes various groups - women, ethnic and racial minorities - adding to the fragmentedness of modern societies (Dean, 2003; Slevin, 2000). Others point to violent games, porn, and uncivil chat spaces on the Internet. Poster (2001) theorizes that the Net is a “social space” where different networks coexist, and interact, while Dean (2003) theorizes that the Net is a “zero-institution” that does not make normative claims, but accepts antagonisms, conflicts and differences. In fact, the multiplicity of epistemic communities, the fluidity of actors, and the amorphousness of communication on the Net, when applying the definition\(^1\) of an institution proposed by Bellamy and Tailor (1998), shows the Net indeed can be seen as “a signifier of no determinate meaning.” The different theories of the Net

\(^1\) Bellamy and Taylor (1998) defined an institution as an entity having 1) established routines, 2) epistemic communities of “professional and occupational groups whose members rely on common funds of knowledge, memory, and skills and promote specific interpretations and paradigms”; and 3) actor networks of people with “different roles, expertise, and domains” (p. 158).
by Poster (2001) and Dean (2003) are analyzed in this chapter based on the use of the Internet by Mongolian institutions.

The review of literature also strongly suggests considering the political and social context wherever technology is observed to be embedded. People’s notions of democracy and the communicative capabilities of the Internet can best be understood within the embedded context. By conducting in-depth interviews, this study captures experts’ notions of both democracy and the Internet’s capabilities. These perspectives emerge while experts discuss their institutional routines and practices using the web and other media. This way, the theoretical debate over the Internet’s role in fostering public participation is integrated into a case study of Mongolian institutions. This chapter adopts the grounded-approach to the analysis of these different theoretical views as they are applied to different political and social settings.

Several interviewees in this study applauded the possibilities the Internet brings, allowing a new kind of dialogue between government and citizens; at the same time they are aware that implementation of the mechanics of the Internet does not automatically lead to dialogues and constructive discussions between the government and its citizens. The Open-Government.mn web site hosts discussion forums managed by ministries on a biweekly basis. During these two weeks, the responsible ministry officials respond to the questions posed by Internet users. Responses to the questions posted on the web site are coordinated with other ministries.

Open-Government.mn also organizes biweekly online chats with the officials of the Prime Minister’s cabinet on pre-identified topics so that Mongolians can ask
questions of them directly. The transcripts of online chats are accessible online. Ariun (June 27, 2005), the manager of the Open-Government web site, told about the online chats government officials have had with the public on the Open-Government web site. At the same time, she acknowledged that there were plenty of questions that were not responded to during online chat due to time constraints. Ariun (June 27, 2005) also jokingly said that, thanks to the technology, people became more open, more bold asking questions like “What is your income?” It would have been impossible in the communist time to ask such a question of members of the Cabinet. Ariun implied that the questions asked during these online chats sometimes focused on more practical matters rather than policy oriented feedback.

Despite government efforts, discussion forums on the web sites of its organizations tend to be wary and infrequent. Even when there was some debate, the discussion tended not to be very constructive or “not substantial enough” to be reflected in policy issues. Several interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of public participation saying that “feedback [postings] that can contribute to policy making are rare.” However, interviewees working in non-government organizations did not agree. Those critical of the government’s approach to policy making said that people do not have enough information to give constructive feedback. Jargal (July 18, 2005), the director of an influential NGO, explained the policy making process in Mongolia:

A small number of policy makers create public policy without even consulting with researchers, and professionals...The government is not transparent; and public officials and parliamentarians have the notion that policy making is their job only. They accuse NGOs and individuals involved in the policy making process of being ‘meddlesome,’ or ‘nosy.’ They ask us ‘Why do you make draft documents public [on your web site], making people resist and consequently the
projects fail - ‘forgetting’ that these are draft bills, and the issues being discussed at the Parliament are supposed to be in the public domains.

Jargal, as well as other interviewees, felt that public participation had been limited in part because the public is uninformed and in part because the policy making process is opaque and exclusive.

Jargal (July 18, 2005) was of the opinion that the Mongolian government plays down the role of the new emerging civil society in Mongolia that has grown in knowledge and expertise. She referred to two policy making processes that show growth in Mongolian civil society. In 2005, through a series of public discussions, and recommendations to the government, the Open Society Forum along with other non-governmental organizations successfully opposed some changes in the Law of Non-Governmental Organizations that the government attempted to impose. In the second case, several non-governmental organizations led by the Open Society Forum, the Globe International, and the Press Institute persuaded the Government to pass the Law on Public Radio and Television. This law was instrumental in transforming state-owned Mongolian National Radio and Television into a public service broadcasting entity. The Government was reluctant to do this until January 2005. The Open Society Forum posted a lot of valuable research, analysis, and draft laws on its web site, and hosted web and television discussion forums on the issues of re-structuring state-owned broadcasting into a public broadcasting entity. Jargal suggested that civil society organizations in Mongolia are engaged and are prepared to contribute; however, the policy making processes of government remain opaque and uninviting.
Professional groups also have started to influence policy making processes in Mongolia. The Mongolian Information Developers’ Association (MIDAS) is a non-government organization coordinating the activities of professionals in the field of information and communication technology. The organization was active in developing the draft Law on Information and Communication technology, in organizing public meetings, and informing the public on related issues on its web site. Enkh (August 1, 2005), the director of the organization, said that the organization’s mailing list, which had around 270 subscribers, was very effective in mobilizing people. When the Communication Regulatory Committee (CRC), a regulatory agency overseeing the communication industry in Mongolia, initiated a new licensing procedure for interactive services over the communication networks, Enkh sent an email to the mailing list inviting people to discuss the proposal requiring licensing of common Internet applications such as File Transfer Protocol (FTP), and Voice over the Internet (VoIP). To the CRC’s surprise, many people came to the meeting on short notice and criticized the idea of regulations which he said were “overly extensive and almost reminded one of the socialist centralized control system.” As a result, the CRC limited licensing requirements to the Voice Over IP services and ISPs (Internet Service Providers) only.

As these cases suggest, civil society participation in public policy-making is a comparatively new practice in Mongolia, and plausibly reflects historically formed institutional routines. As the scholars of the social constructivist tradition point out,

\[\text{2 File Transfer Protocol or FTP is the common Internet protocols allowing file transfer between computers.}\]
\[\text{3 Internet telephony, sometimes called IP phone, or Voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) or Web talk is defined as the ability to make telephone calls and to send facsimiles over Internet protocol based data network (www.techguide.com).}\]
neither the government’s new order, nor the Internet, can rapidly change existing practices in Mongolia. Even the opportunity for citizens to influence law-making through their representatives in the Parliament is limited in Mongolia. Elbeg (August 3, 2005), who worked in the Parliament, pointed out that parliamentarians tend to get isolated from their constituents, partly because “most parliamentarians reside in Ulaanbaatar (the capital).” He went on to say that since the representative function of parliamentarians is oftentimes overlooked, the Parliament has little interest in public opinion studies and other policy related research and analysis. The lack of policy research capability in the Parliament, as well as in the Government, explains several of the interviewees’ concerns surrounding the practices of spontaneous and almost “fire extinguishing” policy making in the Government without analysis and discussions.

The parliamentarians’ isolation from their constituents, as well as government officials’ notions that policy making is their job only, tend to suggest that the policy-making processes in Mongolia is neither very participatory nor pluralistic. This situation also applies to technologically mediated political practices. When the researcher asked the interviewees “How do you make use of postings and opinions in discussion forums and on the web site?”, different answers were given between government and non-governmental organizations. Government institutions hosting online discussion forums like the Open-Government web site tended to merely respond to questions and opinions, rather than to collect opinions and ensure participation. Non-government organizations, such as the Open Society Forum, try to gather opinions and post them on their web site so these ideas can be included into draft bills and policy documents. In other words,
government organizations tend to emphasize official information distributed from a center, and are more likely to use the consultative pattern discussed in the previous chapter, whereas non-government organizations hosting discussion forums tend to emphasize open participation from citizens with the hope that this will stimulate citizen involvement as well as influence policy making. One of the interviewees mentioned that a ministry where he works used the strategy of trying to provide all necessary information on the web in order to reduce “unnecessary” contact and requests coming from the outside.

When the researcher asked her interviewees how the postings and questions in discussion forums and chats are used, several responded that they rarely led to constructive policy input, rather they tended to be concrete questions, and “not very constructive criticism.” When Prime Minister Enkhbayar started the Open-Government web site, he used to respond personally to questions posted in discussion forums. Ariun (June 27, 2005), the manager of the Open-Government web site, mentioned that the Prime Minister once issued a permit to export pine cones in order to encourage the public to post questions, despite the government ordinance prohibiting such export to China. Despite these efforts, Ariun went on to say that feedback and suggestions on the Open-Government web site have been unsubstantial. Another governmental agency, the Information and Communication Technology Authority (ICTA), also hosted discussion forums on draft bills. However, feedback in these forums did not go beyond suggestions to clarify terms and to reduce jargon. Forums at the web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are also not regularly analyzed even though the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
changed the web site address from www.extmin.mn to www.mongolian-foreign-policy.mn following suggestions posted in discussion forums.

The interviewees explained these problems differently. Erdem (July 20, 2005), a deputy director of a government agency, claimed that “public contribution to the policy documents that have been prepared several months in advance by professionals tends to be not much.” His view is challenged, however, by a couple of interviewees who were of the opinion that people are not informed and therefore their participation in decision making is limited, which makes their contributions less likely to be “constructive.” A policy researcher Naran (July 18, 2005) described the government’s approach to participatory policy making:

The government invites the public and non-governmental organizations to participate in the policy making process when issues are complex and unclear. Then, when the issues become clear, and draft documents are close to finalization, the government usually brings in expertise from outside…and at the same time the government’s interest diminishes…They discuss things inside ministries, and the final version becomes… very different from the initial document.

Naran suggested that civil society cooperation in creating public policy is problematic. This political participation practice in Mongolia provides little support for the possibility of consensus building on common affairs as it was envisioned by the proponents of the deliberative democracy model and the Habermasian notion of the public sphere. On the contrary, the situation leads more to contestation and conflict between the government and civil society, rather than the notion of the unity. The concept of a “zero institution,” as explained by Zizek (1999), provides some explanation for this situation. As elaborated by Levi-Strauss the concept of a zero institution is to explain how members of a tribe can identify themselves as members of the tribe despite their complete antagonism
to one another. It is plausible to theorize the Net, according to Dean (2003), as a zero institution in which conflict and chaos are expected and no normative claims are made. Naran, agreed that it is hard to make a normative claim about Net political participation saying “even though there are not many constructive arguments, people get engaged by reading, and informing themselves.”

Unlike the discussion forums at government institution’s web sites, such web sites as MGLclub.mn, Olloo.mn and Dotno.mn have lively discussion forums that engage many people. These are more like the web sites of media, interest, and diaspora groups that appear far from the public sphere where rational individuals discuss community affairs. Yet, these forums are “social spaces” (Poster, 2001) for people to express their opinions, and discuss their interests, and problems. Olloo.mn, a new online media site, claimed that it has 25,000 visitors on average each day. Bayar (July 7, 2005), the director of the company, explained the use of online forums in the Mongolian context in relation to their cultural appropriateness for Mongolians who are not very outspoken:

Our people are not outspoken in public. …One can really see their opinions in online forums, … things that are deep, and bottled up …There was an incident recently when a policeman killed a person … When we posted a poll [on our site] 78% of people responded “the police do not defend me,” and only 7% responded “the police do.” Then, people posted about their experiences with the police. I don’t think they waste their time just to tease other people…by leaving long messages…

Bayar said that once Olloo.mn temporarily stopped the postings which led to a public “outrcry.” People sent a large number of emails and made many phone calls criticizing them for becoming like the traditional media; they demanded discussion forums be made available. When the themes are informal and relevant to people’s experience, involvement tends to be greater. This is the case for the web sites Dotno.mn, Asuult.net,
MGLclub.com and Olloo.mn. Mend (July 5, 2005), manager of a web site helping to prevent HIV among youth, said online chat at Dotno.mn (translated as “intimate.mn”) conducted on the Candle Light Memorial Days became alive and interesting and involved many overseas Mongolians. Discussion forums at the Dotno.mn cover a wide range of topics that allow people to exchange their thoughts and opinions naturally.

Not all forums at the web sites of non-governmental organizations and other interest groups are this lively, however. Tuya (July 19, 2005), the director of an educational non-government institution, said that despite their effort to allow secondary school teachers to exchange educational practices and resources, discussion forums at the MongolEducation.mn web site are “not very lively.” This is partly because teachers can not stay online for a long time and can not afford Internet access unlike the audiences of web sites like Olloo.mn and Open Society Forum, who work in government, or in business organizations located in the capital. These users have fast and always-on connections.

Mongolian society is an Asian society with a rigid social hierarchy. Young people are discouraged from being outspoken, as Bayar noted. Moreover, past fear of the secret police and caution about political surveillance operating over the seventy years of communist rule makes people cautious. Memories of the “fearful time” have not faded away after 15 years of democracy. Jargal (July 18, 2005), the leader of an NGO, stated that the parliamentary election of 2004 has noticeably reduced this fear because it established the Coalitional Government of the two major political forces, the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party (MPRP), and the Democratic Coalition. Before the 2004
election, she said, people were fearful remembering the time when the communist party ruled the country with highly organized and centralized control.

**Lurking, Flaming, Spam, and Anonymity on the Internet**

In using the Internet, Mongolians face new challenges in developing and governing their own communication. Rogers and Malhotra (2000), who studied the impact of four community-level projects in Berkley, Santa Monica, Virginia and Taos in the U.S. concluded that efforts to use the Internet for community and political participation tended to mobilize already active people. Furthermore, the authors pointed out that there is a greater possibility for “flaming” or offensive expressions posted on the Internet. Other scholars have argued that activities on the Internet are mostly apolitical and the Internet has much populist potential (Thompson, 2000). Thompson (2000) argues that the marketplace of ideas on the Internet is an active interchange that goes beyond just voting. He proposes “a bill of cyber rights” that will require a) openness of forums with no filtering, b) participatory surfing with no lurking; c) sustaining all interaction with no churning; d) the civility of posting with no flames; and e) the transparency of downloading with no cookies (Thompson, 2000, p.39.). Studies conducted in developed countries show varying opinions surrounding the question of “Who participates in Internet discussions and how does one participate?” Taking into account these previous studies, this research examines how and why people engage in or disengage from discussion forums at the web sites of Mongolian institutions based on the interviewees’ comments.
Several of those interviewed in this study expressed the view that few people actually post or send messages, but most people “lurk” in discussion forums and in mailing lists. Enkh (August 1, 2005), the director of an NGO administering the mailing list of around 270 information technology professionals (ict@magicnet.mn), said that most people on their mailing list read, and only a few (around ten) people post to the mailing list. The mailing list he mentioned has existed since 1999 when information technology professionals in Mongolia, including the author of this dissertation, joined up to share information about the first national Information and Communication Technology Summit in 1999 held at the central Sukhbaatar Square.\(^4\) All people subscribed to the mailing list were registered and eligible to post messages. However, only a few people already active and outspoken in meetings in real-life tended to post messages to the mailing list. Enkh (August 1, 2005) noted that “We [Mongolians] lack the culture to respond to emails. Even in situations when a notice to show-up is expected from them, only a few people respond.” Gant (July 15, 2005), one of the administrators of the Tanhim.net web site, told the same story. He observed that only a few people with expertise and confidence tend to post information on discussion forums or write articles for the web. Those people tend to be graduate students or engineers working in other countries who have more information and who have had greater opportunities for experimentation. The comments of both Enkh and Gant suggest that web use does reinforce existing tendencies in that only active and knowledgeable people communicate over the Internet in Mongolia.

\(^4\) Sukhbaatar Square is a central place in front of the government building where the most important events in the country occur.
However, both Enkh and Gan said that they require registration from people to post messages on the mailing list and in discussion forums in order to protect from spam and flames. Usenet newsgroups in the 1990’s started to refer to unsolicited commercial or bulk emails as spam\(^5\) and hostile and offensive messages as flames. Usenet newsgroups which in the west involved broad-based academic communities and early net enthusiasts still do not exist to a large degree in Mongolia. Mongolian institutions using the web now are facing new challenges such as how to handle issues like flaming and spam. Enkh (August 1, 2005), the director of a NGO, is of the opinion that registration increases the responsible behavior of users and reduces spam. However, required registration for users of discussion forums and mailing lists can also diminish the number of people who are willing to participate. Dotno.mn and Open-Government.mn have filtering systems that do not allow “bad words,” and several of those interviewed said that they deleted flames from their discussion forums when “discussion degrades into squabbles or offensive attacks.” A couple of government institution web site managers said that they also regularly deleted offensive messages such as personal attacks on the Prime Minister and cabinet members. In return, the users of their web sites criticize government institutions for censoring messages.

A more hands-off approach is advocated by those who work with online media and diaspora networks. They would tend to support Thompson’s (2000) “no-filtering,” and “no churning” approach when it comes to postings in the discussion forums; yet they

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\(^5\) A term that came from a Monty Python sketch describing a restaurant where all dishes on the menu say spam, spam, and spam (food).
too acknowledged that they delete “outrageous,” “fake” or “harmful” postings. Tuul (June 30, 2005), the manager of the MGLclub, said:

    We used to receive complaints from people and from companies about the postings at our site. They did not understand that the Internet is a place… where people exercise their free speech. Companies receiving bad reviews on our site used to threaten us... We told them deleting complaints is considered “censoring” people’s views. However, we delete harassing messages, fake announcements, or the harmful messages written by someone on behalf of others.

Tuul, who studied in Korea, was of the opinion that discussion forums are the places “where free speech is exercised.” The MGLclub.com web site hosts lively discussions, and thus has gained the reputation of being “the medium without which Mongolians in Korea are helpless,” as described by another interviewee.

Bayar (July 7, 2005), the director of a new online media, agreed that “It is better not to delete them [messages], unless the posting is outrageous…When people read all the negative and positive postings, they will eventually get a balanced view.” For Bayar, the only way to give a balanced view on an issue is to leave all posting and let the readers decide. This kind of “freedom of speech” was expressed by informants representing web sites of online media, interest groups, and diaspora that have more lively discussion forums.

Several interviewees said that they have volunteer moderators who oversee certain topics or areas of discussion. Asuult.net, for instance, has around fifty moderators overseeing discussion forums and Tanhim.net has several moderators who decide whether to delete flames in the discussion forums or not. It can be concluded that the more widely used discussion forums tend to have more relaxed rules of registration
and management of flames. These web sites also tend to have moderators who volunteer to oversee certain areas of their discussion forums.

**Struggling Development of the Internet and the Digital Divide**

In this section, the researcher discusses the challenges and opportunities of Mongolian institutions using the Internet as articulated by the interviewees and in comparison with other media. Comparison of the Internet with other media emerges naturally because several institutions use both. In the previous chapter, it was revealed that Mongolian institutions tend to give greater emphasis to traditional media, especially television. Despite this general notion, several interviewees see the advantages of the web. Bayar (July 7, 2005), the director of an online media company observed that the flexibility in editorial policy of online media companies allow them to publish “what their audience wants.” Bayar said that there are possibilities to respond to their audience’s interests by analyzing log-files of the most frequently read stories and articles. He went over with the researcher the statistics on the most frequently read articles appearing on *Olooloo.mn*, in which such categories as jokes, sex, horoscopes, literature, sport and culture, and health advice are ranked the most frequently read. Interviewee Dorj (June 27, 2005) commented that “the Internet helps his institutions make accessible vast amount of information resources at any given time.” The Internet can make multiple resources available, while it is difficult and expensive for Mongolian institutions to obtain news holes and air time. Mend (July 7, 2005), the manager of the Dotno.mn web site, said that compared to her organization’s television program *Yahuu* (translated as “what to do?”), the Internet is effective in reaching people on such sensitive issues as
HIV thanks to the anonymity it allows. Mend went on to say that “people disclose to me things they don’t tell their parents, and friends.” She helps people get tested for AIDS in professional institutions, and helps them to contact experts.

Individuals and institutions in Mongolia have started to realize the advantages of the Internet, but the use of the Internet has not taken off for a variety of reasons. There is the general notion in Mongolia that “the web does not reach people,” therefore, businesses in Mongolia do not advertise on the web. Luvsan, a manager of the first Internet host in Mongolia, explained this perception by claiming “there is a small audience and people can’t stay on the Internet.” As discussed by Norris (2001), obviously there is a digital divide in all global, social and democratic forms. Even though interviewees did not explicitly label the problems as “digital divide” issues, they presumed that the digital divide was one of the reasons for the lagging development of the Internet. Since this study does not focus on access to the Internet, the case is based on interviewees’ articulation of the challenges they face in using the web in everyday practice. All interviewees acknowledged that there is a small percentage of people who have access to the Internet and those who have access “can not stay online for a long time” since Mongolian Internet users are charged for access and for the minutes they use on telephone lines. Enkh (August 1, 2005), who had conducted several studies on the use of information and communication technology for development, summarized the situation as follows:

The slogan “ICT for development” is grand, but the Internet is expensive, and there is almost no opportunity to generate money using it [in Mongolia]… If we compare developing countries with developed countries … as I heard at many international conferences…the situation is murky. The Internet connection one
gets paying $10 a month in the USA is incomparably better than the one we get here in Mongolia paying $30-40 a month despite our much lower average income. Enkh was pessimistic about the situation of Internet use in Mongolia, mostly because of the lack of possibilities to generate income online. Enkh was educated in Australia and like other interviewees, was aware that those who use the Internet tend to be better educated and socially better off than those who do not use the Internet.

The social divide that exists between rural and urban areas is one of the biggest challenges as articulated by those interviewed. The problem has to do with the vastness of the territory and the underdeveloped infrastructure, especially in the provinces of Mongolia. Tuya (July 19, 2005), the director of the Mongolian Educational Alliance, observed that secondary school teachers are not at ease using their MongolEducation.mn web site because the Internet connections in those schools are “so unreliable” because most Internet connections in the countryside is via dial-up. The Alliance has branches in six provinces, where they have small information centers to provide teachers with educational materials. Since the Internet connection is not reliable, the materials are downloaded off the web site onto compact disks and distributed to teachers. In other words, compact disk distribution is used to compensate for an unreliable Internet connection. Another interesting development in Mongolia is OpenMix, an exchange point among several Mongolian Internet services providers that allows some educational institutions access to information servers within Mongolia without loading Internet gateway traffic. The users of the central library, for instance, can have access to those information servers. However, the users of the library can not access servers outside of Mongolia such as Asuult.net, and MGLclub.com.
Government buildings and business organizations especially in the capital tend to have better Internet access, while educational institutions like libraries and secondary schools are “falling through the net” (NTIA, 1999). Many Mongolian government institutions, at least those interviewed, mostly the Parliament, the Prime Minister’s Cabinet, Ministries and key implementing agencies, have already developed the structural and technical capability to use the Internet. To a certain extent, such access is due to the support of international organizations. This situation does not exist, however, for educational and research institutions. There is a need for a policy that will help overcome this difference by adopting programs like E-rate in the USA that set aside funds for schools, libraries, and hospitals to guarantee Internet access.

The digital divide in Mongolia goes beyond Internet access. Language is without doubt the biggest factor affecting the pervasive public use of the Internet, as Warschaur (2003) pointed out. Suren (June 27, 2005), the computer specialist in a Mongolian library, mentioned the problems the central library is facing digitizing Mongolian language content onto computer systems. There is no software that recognizes the Mongolian alphabet, therefore the indexing of library resources falls behind. Ariun, the manager of a government web site, mentioned this language problem as well. She said the Latin alphabet used in online chats with government officials makes it difficult to read and type for Mongolians who use the Cyrillic alphabet. Even though adoption of the Unicode standard solved the Mongolian language two letter problem, few people have the Windows XP system that has Unicode character sets.
The lack of a payment system (few Mongolians use credit cards) and the limited possibility to generate income online are a big hindrance for media and interest groups. Zassoursky (2004) explained that the late development of Internet in Russia was mostly due to the lack of online payment systems - credit cards and other payment options. This is the case for Mongolia as well where online banking and payment systems are still in a rudimentary stage. Two banks in Mongolia, the Trade and Development Bank and the Golomt Bank, started to issue debit cards for individuals, but online payment services have not yet taken off.

**Diaspora and the Internet**

Discussion about the use of the Internet and email by Mongolians residing in other countries emerged as a discussion point in most interviews. A couple of interviewees claimed that email is the most common communication for around 110,000 Mongolians (equal to 4 % of the total population) living outside the country, mostly in South Korea, China, Japan, USA and in the countries of the European Union.\(^6\) The largest number of Mongolians living outside the country reside in South Korea.\(^7\) The remittance money from Mongolians working outside of the country contributes a sizeable portion of the foreign currency exchange for the country (World Fact Book, 2005).\(^8\) The interviewees expressed different views about the reasons Mongolians living outside made greater use of the Internet.

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\(^6\) This dissertation studies the use of the Internet by Mongolians who mostly left the country after 1990. It does not discuss the use of the Internet among Mongolian ethnic groups in Inner Mongolia in China, or in Buriatya in Russia.

\(^7\) The South Korean government estimates that there are around 27,000 Mongolians, some 15,000 of whom are there illegally (EIU, December 2005).

\(^8\) According to the Government of South Korea, the remittance money the Mongolians in Korea have transmitted is US$22 million.
Several interviewees claimed that the Internet allowed for the creation of a socially beneficial “community-like” network for Mongolians living outside of the country, especially among illegal workers abroad. The manager of the MGLclub.com web site Tuul (June 30, 2005) explained why its web site is livelier, more community-oriented and has a broader user base:

We have an audience ranging from teenagers to 50 year-olds…They get sick, women get married, and get pregnant … they face different problems illegally working people can not get services for… Then, they post questions, and other Mongolians advise them on where to go and what to do. People really exchange information in discussion forums…Other people discuss software, computer viruses, counterstrike games and many other things…

The Mongolian songs, music, and news that people living far away from home “really need” were placed on their web site, Tuul said. The web site was initiated in 2001 by a Korean who visited Mongolia. In the beginning, it functioned as a South Korean service center for the Mongolian company Rose.mn that delivered presents to family members from people working in South Korea. Mongolian pop songs in the form of MP3 files, and discussion forums were the main features. Within five years, the user base of the web site grew to 50,000. According to Tuul, the web site now finances itself by ads from Mongolian banks, as well as Korean transportation and cargo companies, and a percentage of airline tickets and phone cards sold.

In November 2005, a couple of the MGLclub.com’s advertisers, Anod Bank and Zoos Bank, were closed by the South Korean police for illegally operating in South Korea and channeling money earned by Mongolians in South Korea back to Mongolia (EIU, December 2005). This situation supported the claim of another interviewee, Enkh(August 1, 2005) , that the advertisers on the net were often those businesses not
allowed to advertise over-the-air including alcohol and tobacco companies. The MGLclub.com experience perhaps suggests that web developments, especially those crossing national boundaries, are still in a fluid condition, requiring institutionalization.

Since almost one in five families in Mongolia has someone living outside of the country, expatriate Mongolians can be socially and economically a niche target audience for some of these sites. Media, health and educational organizations in Mongolia have already started services for the Mongolian diaspora. Mend (July 5, 2005), the doctor of the web site Dotno.mn, the purpose of which is to prevent HIV in Mongolia said:

Workers, especially illegal workers, in foreign countries do not receive social, medical and educational services. They email me and post questions at our site when they have health problems. We are happy to help them to solve urgent problems, advise and educate them.

Mend noted that almost a half of the emails she receives come from Mongolians living outside of the country. The Internet and email are an efficient way to help her communicate with them. A similar project was started by Suren (June 27, 2005), the computer specialist of the metropolitan central library, who works on the digital library project on the Internet. Suren scans and makes available on the Internet famous Mongolian folk and literary novels mostly targeting the Mongolians living outside the country. The digital library he created has Mongolian riddles, proverbs, and folk tales and is requested and appreciated by the Mongolians who live outside the country. The Mongolian diaspora wants to have access to that literature for themselves, as well as for their children growing up in different cultures. Though Mongolians living in Korea learn to speak the Korean language after living in the country for a few years, Tuul (June 30, 2005) explained that many Mongolians need to read Mongolian newspapers that arrive
weeks later. Furthermore, as Tuul observed, there are children in Korea who can not attend schools, because of their parents’ illegal status.

Not only social institutions, but also commercial institutions, are involved in these cross-border networks. *MGLclub.com*, discussed above, is mostly a commercially sustaining web site. Mongolian commercial television station TV 5 started to broadcast its news and over-the-air programs like its signature program *Let’s develop motherland Mongolia* on the Internet. TV 5 invested in an Internet–broadcasting service in the US at an expense of approximately $2,000 a month. This service allows Mongolians to send an Internet greeting to family members and friends living outside of the country for a small charge. Furthermore, Mongolians outside of the country sometimes send requests to TV 5 to take pictures and video images of the places where they grew up.

A top manager of the company Devshil (July 26, 2005) explained that his company targeted the Mongolian diaspora because “Mongolians living outside of the country are the ones who see more, are better educated, and have more resources than those in Mongolia.” Though this initiative has not proven to be financially viable, Devshil explained that it is important to involve those Mongolians in the country’s development. A similar view about the Mongolians living abroad was expressed by Gant (July 15, 2005), one of the managers of the *Tanhim.net* web site that allows Mongolian engineers to exchange information:

Students and engineers working in foreign countries have more information and more opportunities to build and experiment, … whereas, engineers and students in Mongolia do not have information, equipment, and labs….

Both Badral and Gan, mentioned the superior resources and skills that Mongolians outside the country have compared to Mongolians in the country, especially in
technology areas. Several interviewees suggested that Mongolians outside the country also tend to participate more often in discussion forums. Almost half of the visitors to the web sites Dotno.mn, Olloo.mn, Mclibrary.mn, Tanhim.net, and Openforum.mn, as well as government organizations web sites like Open-government, and icta.gov.mn sign on from foreign IP addresses in Korea, China, Japan, USA, and Russia. Several web sites were created and are maintained by Mongolian students and workers living in other countries. These include Asuult.net, MGLclub.com, Monstudnet.mn, and Openmn.org (Openforge.org) that are popular not only among the Mongolians living outside, but also among the people living in Mongolia. These web sites often have more creative use of the interactive and participatory possibilities of the Internet than Mongolian web sites inside the country.

Internet development in the countries where Mongolians are working and studying contributes to the greater use of the Internet by the Mongolians everywhere. As Tuul (June 30, 2005) explained, in South Korea every three months there is a new computer, and a new cell phone model. The Internet is cheaper and faster there, since South Korea has become the country with the highest broadband penetration. This situation shows how skills and resources tend to match each other, as explained by Easterly (2002), one of the top-ranked economists of the World Bank group. Easterly points out that when new knowledge complements existing knowledge, it has greater worth and use. The servers Tanhim.net, Asuult.net, Openforge.mn, and the MGLclub.com were created and maintained by Mongolians who have skills and knowledge equal to that of the more technologically advanced societies.
Summary of the Chapter

The efforts of government institutions to use the Internet as a public sphere for policy making at the web sites of the Open-Government.mn, the Mongolian-foreign-policy.mn, and www.icta.mn have not yet taken off. On the other hand, discussion forums on the web sites of diaspora, interest group and new media seem to engage people to share their opinions, thoughts, and interests. As Hamelink (2000) noted, public participation is greater in institutions and areas where ordinary people normally participate. Citizens’ comments, and discussions on the Internet about policy and non-policy issues should also be considered as participation.

The analysis provided in this chapter suggests that the networks of ordinary people do not naturally mesh with the networks of the policy-makers. It appears that the Mongolian government should consider partnering with civil society in order to increase participation by Mongolians on the Internet. The Internet brought together the different networks of policy makers, military networks and academic societies in the west. However, this case will not necessarily be relevant to the mediated political and social practices of Mongolian institutions. The data seems to support the view of the Internet as “a zero institution,” posited by Dean (2003) and Zizek (1999), with no pre-determined meaning, but one that takes into consideration Mongolian context. Moreover, the interviewees shed light on such emerging issues as intellectual product creation and distribution over the web that need to be institutionalized.
Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

This study is an unprecedented exploration of the institutional use of the Internet in the context of Mongolia. Based on the analysis of original data collected in 2005 using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study examines evidence of the interplay between technology and society in the developing country of Mongolia, and focuses on the social and political practices of institutions in developing countries using the Internet.

The literature review pointed out the lack of research on the role of the Internet as it affects social and political practices in developing countries. Even when these practices are studied, the research tends to focus on access to computers and the Internet by lumping together different countries without much consideration of political, social and cultural context. Moreover, previous studies have tended to use either micro or macro level analysis, leaving much room for a methodology using mid-institutional level analysis. By focusing at the institutional level, this study analyzed web content and communication practices of Mongolian institutions using the Internet.

The use of both quantitative content analysis and qualitative interview methods in this research allowed the researcher to explore the common characteristics of the content developed by Mongolian institutions and the typologies of their communication on the Internet. Based on the content analysis, the study carried out qualitative exploration into the questions of “why” based on informants’ articulation of their everyday practices and perceived opportunities and challenges in using the Internet. In other words, the combination of two different methods allowed the researcher to investigate the research
questions from different angles. The content analysis of the web sites in this study were carried out following suggestions made by Van Dijk (2000) that allowed the researcher to make some generalizations about the purposes and the types and extent of Mongolian institutional use of the Internet. This approach provided meaningful results that were also supported by the interviewees’ responses in the interviews.

The content analysis of Mongolian language web sites determined that a wide range of institutions in Mongolia have an online presence. The purpose, scope and the level of interactivity within these sites varied. In general, the direction of communication on the web was mostly from a center with little room reserved for involving users in the communication process. The greater use of the allocution and consultation patterns than the conversation and registration patterns by Mongolian government and civil society institutions suggests that Mongolian government and civil society institutions tend to use the web to solve the problem of an information shortage between institutions and their constituents in order to increase the effectiveness of those institutions. This situation resembles the traditional media model with sparse possibilities for interactivity and limited user control over the communicative process. Public deliberation and discussion in a form envisioned by the proponents of the utopian view of the Internet’s role in political and social practices rarely occurs. This conclusion can be drawn based on the low level use of the conversation and registration features on the web by Mongolian institutions.

The content analysis of web sites indicated a significant difference in the patterns of use of the Internet among different types of organizations in the allocation,
conversation and registration patterns as discussed in Chapter 4. Diaspora, interest
groups, and to a certain extent media web sites show a different typology by scoring
higher on the conversation, and registration indexes than those of the more traditional
institutions like government, research and educational institutions. Mongolian
institutions, especially government institutions, showed a limited use of the conversation
pattern to engage citizens in deliberation and discussion on the web. It is plausible to
conclude that new types of institutions such as Olloo.mn, Asuult.net, Openforge.mn and
the MGLclub.mn are emerging and their web use typology will significantly differ from
that of traditional institutions in Mongolia.

Mongolian government and civil society institutions use registration features
more than conversation features. According to Van Dijk (2000), this situation indicates
a populist strategy by the political elites when they use the web. Van Dijk (2000) says
that the Internet’s capability to conduct electronic polls, and to register votes and
opinions tends to enforce the populist tendency which will grow with the rise of
personalized politics in a polity with two major political forces. This situation is worthy
of attention given the two major political forces -- the Communist Party and the
Democratic Coalition - in Mongolia, especially when the Democratic Coalition is
stumbling as discussed in Chapter 5.

This research suggests broader implications for the theory of digital democracy as
it applies to developing countries. The dialectical tension between the technological
deterministic and the social constructivist perspectives is explored throughout this study
as it is observed in the use of the Internet by Mongolian institutions. The study tested
empirically the model suggested by Van Dijk (2000) which incorporates different notions and values of democracy, as well as different communicative capabilities of the Internet. In adopting the methodological approach and the variables of content analysis used by Norris (2001) and CyPRG (2000), who used information richness and transparency indexes in their analysis of different web sites, this study is able to integrate the four media typologies posited by Bordewijk and Van Kaam (1984, 2002) and the different levels of interactivity suggested by Jensen (1998) and McMillan (2002a).

This integration of information traffic patterns and different levels of interactivity allowed the researcher to analyze the media content in a more detailed way bearing in mind the different notions of democratic values and different procedural norms suggested by Van Dijk (2000). Although the instrument developed in this study will need to be refined in future studies, this research demonstrates that the model suggested by Van Dijk (2000) deserves greater attention from future communication scholars. In fact, the four media typologies of 1) allocution; 2) consultation; 3) conversation; and 4) registration proposed by Bordewijk and Van Kaam (1984, 2002) correspond well to the four models of interactivity: 1) monologue; 2) feedback; 3) responsive dialogue and 4) mutual discourses posited by McMillan (2002a). Both models classify communication processes based on the direction of communication, and the control over information. It is logical to recommend this model by Van Dijk (2000) for future studies analyzing web content.

**Recommendation 1:** The model suggested by Van Dijk (2000), which integrates the information traffic patterns suggested by Bordewijk and Kaam (2000) and the four level
analysis of the interactivity suggested by McMillan (2002), deserves greater attention in the analysis of web content in future research.

The findings of the quantitative content analysis were also supported by the interviewees who explained the different notions and practices of policy making in Mongolia. Several interviewees suggested that the views of government officials about the role of the public in the policy making process differ greatly from the views held by policy advocates in civil society institutions. As discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, the interviewees observed that discussion forums at the government institutions’ web sites were not “alive” and the postings in discussion forums did not substantially contribute to policy making. Interviewees also suggested that this limited use of public opinion in policy making and policy analysis was not only a problem of the mediated political process, but was a wider problem with social practices in Mongolia. As the interviewees noted, some government officials still view public involvement as “nosy” or “meddlesome.” The results of this study suggest that the Net is not necessarily the public sphere where the policy networks of government officials merge with the social spaces of interest group web sites such as Olloo.mn, Asuult.mn and the MGLclub.mn which ordinary people use. Mongolian practice so far shows little indication of rational discussion of policy issues on the Internet, especially when discussions are attempted on the web sites of government institution. This situation appears to support Dean’s (2003) and Zizek’s (1999) view of the Net as a “zero-institution” as discussed in Chapter 6, leading to the following recommendation for Mongolian government institutions.
Recommendation 2: Mongolian government institutions should partner with civil society institutions when they try to engage citizens in policy issues on the Internet. There are interest groups and non-governmental institutions in Mongolia that have the expertise and willingness to engage citizens, as this study shows.

Government officials in Mongolian institutions are still reluctant to acknowledge the role of the public and civil society in the policy making process. The lack of procedures for discussing policy issues and reflecting public opinion in government institutions still constrains institutional use of the Internet for democratic practices. The classification of information and the creation of routines to reflect public opinion could be better developed by Mongolian institutions using the web.

The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in this study brought mostly complementary results; however, concerning some questions of this study the results were contradictory. This was the case surrounding the matter of the digital divide in Mongolia. This issue goes beyond access to computers and the Internet. To look at this topic, this study examined specific content on web sites of Mongolian institutions as suggested by Warschauer (2003), DeMaggio et.al. (2004) and Hargittai (2003). The content analysis showed that 80% of these web sites display distortions of the two Mongolian Cyrillic letters - the barred O and the straight Y. However, those later interviewed about this topic seemed to agree that the problems of using the Mongolian alphabet on the Internet had been solved with the adoption the UNICODE 3.0 standard and with the arrival of the Microsoft Windows XP version that supported the Unicode 3.0 standard. Even though a few interviewees thought there were still some problems in
using the Mongolian Cyrillic alphabet when chatting online or developing web content, most were satisfied that these two letters had become part of the international standard. The adopting of the Unicode standard as a national standard in June 2005, undoubtedly has helped to solve these problems. This new standard will not however immediately help those Mongolians who use the older version of Windows.

The data gathered from the interviews brought more detailed explanations of the digital divide issues in Mongolia. As the director of an influential NGO, Enkh (August 3, 2005) observed, people in Mongolia must pay more for poor service despite their low average income. The problem was expressed as “a problem of not being able to afford to stay online” because Internet users in Mongolia are charged for the Internet connection and for the time spent on the phone. The interviewees also pointed out the social digital divide that exists between different types of institutions, as well as between rural and urban areas. Several stated that people working in government and business organizations visit their web sites more often because these institutions have always-on Internet connections unlike people who work in educational and research institutions, and these web sites are better.

The institutional digital divide in Mongolia is also marked by the results of the content analysis discussed in Chapter 4, which showed that educational and research institutions in general have the lowest indexes of all four media typologies of allocution, consultation, conversation, and registration among the six different types of institutions. As the interviewees in this study expressed, these institutions have limited technological
capabilities and are struggling with the problems that come from a lack of financial resources, largely resulting from the collapse of the socialist system.

Recommendation 3. *There is a need for programs to alleviate the digital divide between rural and urban areas, as well as to alleviate the institutional digital divide in Mongolia.*

This study showed that only a few programs have addressed the digital divide problems in Mongolia. The problems of “not being able to stay online” were related in part to the fact that Internet users are double charged when using the Internet. A flat rate policy for Internet use contributed to the increase in Internet use in Europe. Also programs like the E-rate, adopted in the US to ensure that educational institution and libraries are connected, might help in Mongolia to alleviate inequalities caused by the arrival of the Internet.

This study is one of the earliest studies to analyze the characteristics of the new media sphere in former socialist countries. The post-communist characteristic of the new media sphere is examined by analyzing manifest media content on the web, as well as by interviewing people who are actively involved in Internet development in Mongolia. The content analysis of web sites of Mongolian institutions did not find a significant indicators of such characteristics such as the rise of nationalism, religious revival, and the ideological vacuum, as suggested by Holmes (1997). The web sites of Mongolian institutions sparsely displayed nationalistic mottos, religious symbols, national flags, images of Chinghis Khaan, Mongolian traditional script, and landscapes. This result is not surprising taking into account Norris’s (2001) view of Internet culture as a distinctive culture more inclined toward secular, egalitarian and international values. On the other
hand, the scholars of the post-communism era also point out that “the euphoria of independence” (Holmes, 1997) from the Soviet dominance in post-communist countries has declined as the transition in these countries deepens and the polity and society becomes more deeply concerned with economic and political problems.

Questions exploring the influences of the socialist legacy on the use of the Internet in Mongolia are better answered by qualitative interview methods. One of the post-communist characteristics “the low level of consensus building” was examined by analyzing the level of flaming (offensive postings in discussion forums) on the web sites of Mongolian institutions. The content analysis of web sites showed that only a few web sites had flames and negative messages appearing in discussion forums. However, the interviewees in this study explained that they did use software that could automatically delete offensive messages or they regularly deleted these “bad,” or “outrageous” messages in discussion forums. This way, the data generated by in-depth interviews was more helpful in exploring social practices that are not seen on the web. Several interviewees said that there is flaming and that they do not have written policies concerning it. Different institutions handle flaming differently.

Recommendation 4: Disclosure of policies concerning flaming, privacy, spam and copyright on a web site should be clearly stated by Mongolian institutions.

Analysis of the data generated by the in-depth interviews suggests that the socialist legacy is still influencing institutional routines, people’s attitudes, and social practices. The interviewees in this study noted instances of continuation of the socialist legacy and instances of departure from it. Some talked about how Mongolian institutions
continue to follow the practices of the socialist legacy in the fusion of legislative and executive governance, and in the narrow separation of powers among government institutions. Public officials’ attitudes toward the role of civil society and the public as “meddlesome” or “nosy” also shows that government institutions are not completely separated from the paternalistic “democratic centralization” principles of communist party ideology. The secrecy in society, inherited from the socialist time, also exacerbates “the difficulty of obtaining information” at all levels of Mongolian society, as the interviewees confirmed.

All these examples show that the in-depth interviews brought more honest and detailed explanations of the questions concerning the post-communistic period in Mongolia. Yet, these views by the experts are not captured by the content analysis method. The results of the content analysis of the Mongolian web sites did indicate that Mongolian institutions, especially government institutions, most often use the allocution and the consultation patterns that are most frequently used for top-down information distribution. The results of the content analysis of the web sites showed that web communication derives from the traditional media communication mode where most online content and communication demonstrates the allocution and consultation patterns.

Many problems in using the Internet in Mongolian institutions are associated with newly established institutions and the temporal characteristics of Mongolian society. The arrival of the Internet occurred during a time of enormous changes in polity and society that took place after the Democratic Revolution of 1990. As discussed in Chapter 5, the effort to use the web to involve the public in public policy at the Open-Government.mn
site is in jeopardy because of the Mongolian Parliament’s lack of procedures for discussing legislation. Emerging online media and diaspora web sites face many challenges, including financial sustainability due the lack of advertisers. The lack of payment systems and credit cards constrain commercial and public institutions’ ability to provide services online. The collapse of social welfare systems in health and education encourages many among the public to remember fondly the more secure days of socialism.

This study also examined the role of international organizations in mediated social and political practices in Mongolia. The content analysis addressed this topic by looking at the sources of funding for Mongolian language web sites. The research found a significant relationship indicated by the higher mean indexes of allocution, consultation and conversation patterns by the web sites funded by international organizations. The leaders and managers of Mongolian institutions interviewed in this study also confirmed this dependence of Mongolian institutions on donor aid and assistance. Even though the content analysis of Mongolian language web sites showed that the web sites of non-government organizations were supported more by donor organizations, the interview data also suggested the extent to which government institutions benefit from international aid especially in terms of access to computers and the Internet. The data generated by both methods point out the enormous role international aid and donor support play in Mongolian society.
Recommendation 5: Donor organizations should support initiatives and applications that are socially beneficial, financially sustainable, and intended to close the institutional and social digital divide in Mongolia.

In general, the methodological approaches used in this study allowed the researcher to examine empirically how Internet development is embedded in Mongolian society and view the perception of Internet development from the eyes of people working with it. Given that this study is an early study exploring Internet use and content in a post-communist society, the scope and the theoretical approach were framed in a broad sense. Future research might take more narrowed paths focusing on the use of the Internet in government institutions, or in non-governmental institutions. This study analyzed “a snapshot” of existing online content captured between March and April 2005 and current practices based on data generated by interviews conducted in July and August 2005. One way future research might proceed would be to analyze and compare more longitudinal data generated in different time periods.

Recommendation 6: Future research should take a more narrow path by comparing longitudinal or comparative data analysis in specific groups of institutions or perhaps a comparative analysis based on two post-communist societies.
**References:**


Hargittai, E. (2004). Internet access and use in context. New Media and Society. 6(1).137-143.


Appendices

Appendix 1. Coding Sheet

1. Name: ____________________________ 2. URL address ______________________

3. Type: 
   1=gov  2=educ and research  3=NGO
   4=media  5=political  6=international
   7=interest group  8=diaspora  9=others

4. Funding: 
   1=Ads  2=subscript  3=organizational
   4=donor  5=others

The following variables are marked for only presence of features:

**Allocation Indexes**

5. research and analysis ___
6. laws, rules and regulations ___
7. reports and statistics ___
8. newsletters and the transcripts ___
9. current news information ___
10. locally relevant news information ___
11. disclose authors and sources ___

**Consultation Indexes**

12. archived newsletters and magazines ___
13. databases ___
14. search facility ___
15. web directories ___
16. outside links ___
17. email and contact info ___
18. site maps ___

**Conversation Indexes**

19. discussion forums and BBS ___
20. archived forums and discussions ___
21. facilitation of forums ___
22. chat features ___
23. teleconferences ___
24. anonymity ___
25. privacy acknowledgement ___

**Registration Indexes**

26. member registration ___
27. polling and voting ___
28. questionnaires and surveys ___
29. registration for events and activities ___
30. mailing list and listserve registration ___
31. online forms and guest books ___
32. subscription ___

**Transitional characteristics**

33. nationalistic mottos: ___
34. Chinghis Khan, landscapes and flags ___
35. Traditional mongolian transcripts ___

36. Religious indicators ___
37. Flames and negative postings ___
38. Mongolian alphabet distorted ___

Comments:
Appendix 2. Coding Book

Introduction

This study examines Mongolian language web sites of Mongolian government, non-government, educational, political and media institutions and interest groups according to the information traffic patterns of allocution, consultation, conversation and registration. Furthermore, the study examines the post-communist characteristics of websites such as the symbolic rise of nationalism and religious revival. This study does not focus on technological and aesthetical aspects of the websites.

For the reliability of the study, website “snap-shots” of the front page and first-level web pages of Mongolian government and civil society institutions’ web site were captured in March and April 2005 and saved on a CD. It is important that you look at all the web pages of a website saved in the same folder before you start coding. Given a wide gap between “deep” and “shallow” websites, only the front page and first-level web pages which are accessed from a front page using the main menu system are captured. The front page is an entry page to a web site when a seed URL address is entered into browser software. Subject categories are categories listed in the main menu leading to first-level category web pages. Oftentimes subject categories are listed at the top or at the left or right columns of front pages.

Definitions of variables and scale

There are six groups of variables in a coding process. The first group of variables is descriptive variables of a web site. Four variables describe a web site: 1) Name; 2) URL address; 3) Type of a web site; and 4) Funding. The next four groups of variables – allocution, consultation, conservation, and registration– are composed of seven variables which are marked for the presence of certain features at a web site. The allocution index variables are developed to assess information distribution characteristics of web sites focusing on the informativeness and credibility of web sites. The consultation pattern refers to a range of different communication situations in which individuals look for information at a website. The conversation index variables are designed to assess characteristics of websites allowing individuals to interact directly with each other. The registration index variables examine whether or not a web site collects information from users (sometimes without their awareness). All variables in these four categories are checked for presence only. The last group of variables assesses the symbolic post-communist media characteristics such as the rise of nationalism and religious revival at web sites of Mongolian institutions. Symbols such as patriotic mottos, images of Chinghis Khan, and religious tradition are measured by these variables.
Procedure

A coding sheet where web sites are coded is shown in Appendix 1. As shown on the coding sheet, there are 38 variables that are grouped into six groups: 1) description of a web site; 2) allocution; 3) consultation; 4) conversation; 5) registration; and 6) transitional characteristics. The description of variables and their categories are shown below (v stands for variable).

v1. Name: Enter a name of a web site as it appears in the title bar or in a front page.

v2. URL address: A seed unique resource locater (URL) address or domain name address.

v3. Type of website: Often times the type of web sites is stated in the “About us” or “Introduction” web pages. A number from 1 to 9 is entered corresponding to categories below:

1=government: Government organizations are the parliament, the cabinet, the presidency, ministries, courts, local governments and government agencies and commissions.

2=educ and research: Educational and research institutions are universities, schools, libraries, academic institutions and libraries.

3=non-governmental: Non-governmental organizations are not for-profit and non-government organizations as stated in organizational bylaws or charts such as registered associations and foundations.

4=media: Media websites are the web sites of newspaper, television, Internet service providers, and portal web sites.

5=political: Political web sites include websites of political parties and politicians.

6=international projects: International projects and organizations categories include projects and programs of UN and other international organizations.

7=interest groups: Interest groups and clubs are the web sites of formally not-registered interest groups.

8=diaspora: Diasporic websites and networks are the web sites supporting communication among geographically dislocated Mongolians including student networks in different countries such as the websites of Mongolians in the U.K.

9=others: If a web site does belongs non of above described categories
v4. Funding: Indicates how likely the web site is funded. The funding of the websites is implicitly defined based on the presence of the following:

1=Ads: A web site displays some ads
2=subscription: A web site requires subscription to access information at a web site
3=organizational: A web site seemingly funded by the institution itself
4= donor supported: there is a statement or an indication that the site being supported by donor or by international aid programs
5=others: none of above

Allocution

The allocation pattern refers to situations in which information is distributed from the center simultaneously to many peripheral receivers (Bordewijk and Kaam, 2002). The allocation index is used to evaluate the efforts of organizations to make the information they disseminate informative, transparent and current. Oftentimes, but not always, subcategories “News,” “Information” or “Resources” are analyzed to code allocation variables. The following variables are marked for the presence of the following features. An accumulative score of the following seven variables composes the allocation index.

v5. Research and analysis: Studies and analysis are provided by experts and researchers to explain issues in the area of interest of an organization. Analytical essays and studies written or conducted by experts, officials, and researchers are also included.


v7. Reports and statistics: The web site provides statistics and reports in an area of focus of the site including organizational reports.

v8. Newsletters and transcripts: The web site has newsletters and transcripts of meetings and discussions.

v9. Currency of news information: The site provides information on news occurring within ten days of the date of downloading the website.

v10. Local relevance: Information at a web site is relevant to geographical approximation (city, district, place names). This variable is also checked if there is organizational information which is oftentimes found in the introduction and electronic brochures of an organization or group.
v11. Authorship and source: Information at the site indicate their authors and sources.

**Consultation**

The consultation pattern refers to a range of different communication situations in which individuals look for information at a center (Bordewijk and Kaam, 2002). Features at a web site such as “Search,” “Databases,” “Archived Newsletters,” and “Previous Issues” are used for the consultation index. Each of the below variables is marked for the presence of the following features.

v12. Archived newsletters and magazines: A site provides archived newsletters and issues of magazines

v13. Databases: The site has databases of articles, organizations, lessons, downloadable documents, maps, and television programs.

v14. Search facility: The web site provides facilities for searching information within the web site, as well as outside the site. Oftentimes this is a window or drop-down menu to enter or to select specific terms and information.

v15. Web directories: The web site has categorized links to a large number of different web sites grouped into categories. For example, a list of governmental or non-governmental organizations with links to corresponding web sites is considered a web directory.

v16. Outside links: The web site provides links to other web sites.

v17. Email and contact info: There are the email addresses and contact information of an institution listed at a web sites.

v18. Site maps: There is information about the site structure.

**Conversation**

Forums, discussions, teleconferences, chat and opinions variables are the conversation pattern variables. The conversation variables assess the possibilities for interaction among users often times bypassing a center. The conversation pattern variables indicate the presence of the highest level of interactivity, the mutual conversation, at a web site. The mutual conversation level of interactivity is a two-way symmetric model occurring in chat rooms, and bulletin-board systems (BBS). The conversation index was comprised of the following variables.

v19. Discussion forums and Bulletin Board Systems (BBS): The site has bulletin boards or discussion forums.
v20. Archived forums and discussions: This variable indicates if messages from earlier periods of times are accessible later. Some forums have archived forums and messages, some provide access to earlier messages directly.

v21. Facilitation of forums: Are discussion forums managed at the site indicating who posted the message originally, who posted last, how many replied, and who is the moderator? Oftentimes the presence of a moderator or facilitator indicates that discussion forums are facilitated.

v22. Chat features: Does the site allow users to chat?

v23. Teleconferences: Does the site allows online synchronous (happening in a limited time) meetings among users?

v24. Anonymity: Do users have pseudo identifiers in discussions and forums?

v25. Privacy acknowledgement: The site has a privacy statement or a statement about how personal information will be used.

Registration

Registration variables indicate the extent to which web sites collect information from users through member registration, questionnaires, voting ballots, and subscriptions. The registration variables are also used to measure the feedback level of the cyber interactivity model suggested by McMillan. The situation occurs when users communicate with an institution through email, questionnaires and feedbacks, yet, the center retains control over communication process. The registration index was comprised of seven variables described below: 1) member registration/sign-ups; 2) polling and voting; 3) questionnaires and surveys; 4) registration for events and activities; 5) mailing list and listserve registration; 6) guest books, feedback and online forms and 7) subscription.

v26. Member registration/sign-in/sign-ups: The site has member registration or sign-up/sign-in features to collect information from users.

v27. Polling and voting: The web site collects information from users through “Vote,” “Your opinion” and “Your choice” windows and other similar features.

v28. Questionnaires and surveys: The web site collects information through questionnaire and surveys which have more than one question.

v29. Registration for events and activities: The site allows users to register for activities and events.
v30. Mailing list and listserv registration: The web site collects personal information from users in order to subscribe them to list serve and mailing lists.

v31. Guest book, feedback and online forms: The site provides guest books, feedback and other forms for users to post opinions and views.

v32. Subscription: The variable indicates if the web site requires subscription to access information provided at the site. Most Internet content is by definition free; however, some web sites require subscription to read information.

**Transitional characteristics**

The following variables are included to indicate the level of symbolic nationalism and religious revival. These variables are checked for presence only. The transitional index is aggregated by the variables: 1) nationalistic mottos 2) religious images 3) Chinggis Khan, landscapes and flags 4) flames and negative postings; and 5) traditional Mongolian transcripts.

v33. patriotic mottos: The web site has patriotic mottos such as “Монгол орноо хөгжүүлэ” (For the development of Mongolia).

v34. Chinghis Khan, landscapes and flags: The images of Chinghis Khaan, Mongolian landscapes and flags are present at the web site.

v35. Traditional Mongolian transcripts: The traditional Mongolian script is used at the web site.

v36. Religious indicators: The web site has Buddhist mantra, religious symbols and other icons.

v37. Flames: The forums and discussions at the web site have uncivil feedbacks (flames).

v38. Cyrillic alphabet: The web site does not correctly display all Cyrillic Mongolian characters including (“Ө” and “Ү”).
Appendix 3. Approval of the Institutional Review Board of Ohio University

A determination has been made that the following research study is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 2 - research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior

Project Title: Internet Content, Use and Access in Mongolia: Cyber Transition in Post-communist Mongolia

Project Director: Baasanjav Undrahbuyan

Department: Telecommunications

Advisor: Don Flournoy

Rebecca Cale, Associate Director, Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

Date

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.
Appendix 4. Ohio University Consent Form

Title of Research: Internet Content, Use and Access in Mongolia: Cyber Transition in Post-communist Mongolia:

Principal Investigator: Baasanjav Undrakhbuyan
Co-Investigator: None
Department: Telecommunications

Federal and university regulations require signed consent for participation in research involving human subjects. After reading the statements below, please indicate your consent by signing this form.

Explanation of Study

This study will systematically explore the institutions in Mongolia using the Internet. The study focuses on the content they develop and the purposes of their use. The question of whether or not the Internet meaningfully contributes to the democracy Mongolia has pursued since the democratic revolution of 1990 has not been studied in terms of content and use at the institutional level. This study will examine the institutional use of the Internet by interviewing key people involved in the Mongolian content development.

The democratic use of the Internet will be examined by interviewing those who are actively creating the Mongolian content on the Internet at the institutional level. The study also attempts to identify transitional characteristics of new media in former socialist countries. The transitional characteristics such as the rise of nationalism will be studied in this study.

Your participation in this interview will help us better understand the institutional use of the Internet and opportunities and risks of the Internet development in post-communist developing country of Mongolia.

You will be asked a series of questions that should take 45-60 minutes to answer. You can refuse to answer any or as many of questions as you wish. You may also choose to withdraw from this study at any time, and request that your answers not be used. If you choose to withdraw, your answers will be deleted from the research.

Risks and Discomforts

There are no known risks and discomfort associated with this study. If you feel uncomfortable discussing the use of the Internet at your institution, we encourage you to withdraw from the study.
Benefits

There are no benefits to individuals involved in this study, except the opportunity to express your opinions. **However, the study will contribute to the understanding of why and how institutions in developing countries like Mongolia use the Internet and what challenges they face.** The study aims to bring evidences of the Internet use in developing countries and will help to analyze the characteristics of post-communist media systems, especially those of new media.

Confidentiality and Records

You will be identified in this study with a pseudonym. Your real identity will only be found on this signed form. Only the principal investigator will have access to this form once you sign it. We will not use your real name in our report of research findings. **Your interview will be audio-taped and will be accessed only by the researcher for transcription. Audiotapes will be kept in a file cabinet of the researcher (PI) in a locked drawer and will be destroyed after a period of two years.**

Compensation

There is no compensation provided for participating in this study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact
Baasanjav Undrakhbuyan, Ph.D. candidate
bu322000@ohio.edu
(740) 592-1669

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

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I certify that I have read and understand this consent form and agree to participate as a subject in the research described. I agree that known risks to me have been explained to my satisfaction and I understand that no compensation is available from Ohio University and its employees for any injury resulting from my participation in this research. I certify that I am 18 years of age or older. My participation in this research is given voluntarily. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which I may otherwise be entitled. I certify that I have been given a copy of this consent form to take with me.

Signature ________________________________ Date _______
Printed Name ________________________________
Appendix 5. Interview Schedule

Loosely structured in-depth interviews will be conducted with people who are actively involved in website content management of organizations that are using websites for civic discourse. Informants will be chosen based on the outcomes of content analysis of Mongolian websites of governmental and civil society institutions. Approximately 10-15 interviews each lasting for 30-45 minutes will be conducted. A tentative set of questions for the informant are the following:

1. When and how did your organization start to create and maintain websites? And what were the major milestones in the development and use of the website?
2. What were the initial purposes? Who were the leaders in initiating the website?
3. What is the process of web content production and maintenance in your organization? Who is responsible for what content of the web site (sections), how much time do they spend, and where do they get content from? Who are the sources, reporters, editors, and final decision makers of the website in your organization?
4. What are the benefits and disadvantages of the website compared to other media?
5. How are the questions asked on the web site are analyzed and responded to at your website?
6. How are feedback, chat rooms, and comments analyzed and used?
7. Is there anyone responsible for preparing, moderating, and following up discussion forums?
8. How do you make use of the discussions and comments posted on the website?
9. Are there financial, technical, language and other obstacles? How do you overcome these problems?

10. How does your organization solve the Mongolian alphabet two letter problems not included in browser software?

11. Who are the main partners of your organization in terms of content creation?

12. Do you collaborate with international communities and organizations? Do you participate in international community discussions and other international conferences? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this participation?
Appendix 6. Pseudonyms of Interviewees, the Date of Interviews, and Associated Institutions and Web sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonyms</th>
<th>Date of the Interview</th>
<th>Institution and Web site the interview is associated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Dorj</td>
<td>June 27, 2005</td>
<td>The Asia Foundation (Open-government.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ariun</td>
<td>June 27, 2005</td>
<td>The USAID (Open-Government.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Odnoo</td>
<td>August 1, 2005</td>
<td>The Parliament of Mongolia (parl.gov.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Elbeg</td>
<td>August 3, 2005</td>
<td>The Parliament Strengthening for Democratic Governance Project (parl.gov.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Tumen</td>
<td>July 29, 2005</td>
<td>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mongolia-foreign-policy.net)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Erdem</td>
<td>July 20, 2005</td>
<td>The Information and Communication Technology Authority (icta.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Bold</td>
<td>July 15, 2005</td>
<td>The Information Technology Park (itpark.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Suren</td>
<td>June 27, 2005</td>
<td>The Metropolitan Central Library of the Capital (mclibrary.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Tuya</td>
<td>July 19, 2005</td>
<td>The Mongolian Education Alliance (mongoleducation.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Gant</td>
<td>July 15, 2005</td>
<td>The Mongolian National University (Tanhim.net)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Bayar</td>
<td>July 7, 2005</td>
<td>Pixel Co. (Olloo.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Tuul</td>
<td>June 30, 2005</td>
<td>MGLclub (MGLclub.com)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Luvsan</td>
<td>July 8, 2005</td>
<td>DataCom (mol.mn)</td>
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<td>14 Bat</td>
<td>July 14, 2005</td>
<td>Datacom (mol.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Devshil</td>
<td>July 26, 2005</td>
<td>Asuult Net (asuult.net)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Jargal</td>
<td>July 18, 2005</td>
<td>Open Forum (Openforum.mn)</td>
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<td>17 Naran</td>
<td>July 18, 2005</td>
<td>Open Forum (Openforum.mn)</td>
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<td>18 Naran</td>
<td>July 6, 2005</td>
<td>Amnesty (amnesty.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Tunga</td>
<td>August 1, 2005</td>
<td>MIDAS/MONITA (<a href="http://www.midas.mn">www.midas.mn</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Enkh</td>
<td>July 5, 2005</td>
<td>The National AIDS Foundation (Dotno.mn)</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Mend</td>
<td>August 3, 2005</td>
<td>The Democratic Party (demparty.mn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Zol</td>
<td>August 29, 2005</td>
<td>Openforge.mn</td>
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<td>23 Tsog</td>
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## Appendix 7: Results of the Content Analysis of Mongolian Government and Civil Society Institutions' Web Sites

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<th>URL</th>
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<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4 Millenium Challenge Account Dornod Province</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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**Education and research**

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| 3 | Youth Club at the National Foundation against AIDS | <a href="http://www.dotno.mn">www.dotno.mn</a> | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 1 |
| 4 | Asuult.net | <a href="http://www.asuult.net">www.asuult.net</a> | 0 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 12 | 3 |</p>
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<td>9</td>
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</table>

Note: A means Allocution index, C1 is the consultation index, C2 stands for conversation index, R stands for the registration index, Total is the total index for all four typologies, and PC stands for the post-communistic index.
## Appendix 8. Prevalence of Allocution Features at the Different Web Sites of Mongolian Government and Civil Society Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Government (n=37)</th>
<th>Educ &amp; research (n=38)</th>
<th>NGO &amp; INGO (n=22)</th>
<th>Media &amp; Internet (n=28)</th>
<th>Interest &amp; political (n=23)</th>
<th>Diaspora (n=9)</th>
<th>Total (n=157)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Provide</td>
<td>11 (29.7%)</td>
<td>7 (18.4%)</td>
<td>9 (40.9%)</td>
<td>5 (17.9%)</td>
<td>10 (43.5%)</td>
<td>3 (33.3%)</td>
<td>45 (28.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not provide</td>
<td>26 (70.3%)</td>
<td>31 (81.6%)</td>
<td>13 (59.1%)</td>
<td>23 (82.1%)</td>
<td>13 (56.5%)</td>
<td>6 (66.7%)</td>
<td>112 (71.3%)</td>
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<td>Laws &amp; regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide</td>
<td>25 (67.6%)</td>
<td>8 (21.1%)</td>
<td>8 (36.4%)</td>
<td>2 (7.1%)</td>
<td>2 (8.7%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>45 (28.7%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do not provide</td>
<td>12 (32.4%)</td>
<td>30 (78.9%)</td>
<td>14 (63.6%)</td>
<td>26 (92.9%)</td>
<td>21 (91.3%)</td>
<td>9 (100.0%)</td>
<td>112 (71.3%)</td>
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<td>12 (54.5%)</td>
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<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
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<td>10 (27%)</td>
<td>31 (81.6%)</td>
<td>10 (45.5%)</td>
<td>26 (92.9%)</td>
<td>19 (82.6%)</td>
<td>8 (88.9%)</td>
<td>104 (66.2%)</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Provide</td>
<td>8 (21.6%)</td>
<td>2 (5.3%)</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
<td>7 (25.0%)</td>
<td>10 (43.5%)</td>
<td>3 (33.3%)</td>
<td>31 (19.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not provide</td>
<td>29 (78.4%)</td>
<td>36 (94.7%)</td>
<td>21 (95.5%)</td>
<td>21 (75.0%)</td>
<td>13 (56.5%)</td>
<td>6 (66.7%)</td>
<td>126 (80.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide</td>
<td>10 (27.0%)</td>
<td>4 (10.5%)</td>
<td>8 (36.4%)</td>
<td>15 (53.6%)</td>
<td>5 (21.7%)</td>
<td>5 (55.6%)</td>
<td>47 (29.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>27 (73.0%)</td>
<td>34 (89.5%)</td>
<td>14 (63.6%)</td>
<td>13 (46.4%)</td>
<td>18 (78.3%)</td>
<td>4 (44.4%)</td>
<td>110 (70.1%)</td>
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<td>31 (83.8%)</td>
<td>35 (92.1%)</td>
<td>19 (86.4%)</td>
<td>22 (78.6%)</td>
<td>16 (69.6%)</td>
<td>7 (77.8%)</td>
<td>130 (82.8%)</td>
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<td>6 (16.2%)</td>
<td>3 (7.9%)</td>
<td>3 (13.6%)</td>
<td>6 (21.4%)</td>
<td>7 (30.4%)</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
<td>27 (17.2%)</td>
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<td>4 (10.8%)</td>
<td>6 (15.8%)</td>
<td>2 (9.1%)</td>
<td>14 (50.0%)</td>
<td>12 (52.2%)</td>
<td>3 (33.3%)</td>
<td>41 (26.1%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do not provide</td>
<td>33 (89.2%)</td>
<td>32 (84.2%)</td>
<td>20 (90.9%)</td>
<td>14 (50.0%)</td>
<td>11 (47.8%)</td>
<td>6 (66.7%)</td>
<td>116 (73.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\chi^2(5, N=157)=7.75, \ p >0.05, \text{not significant}\]

\[\chi^2(5, N=157)=43.55, \ p<0.01\]

\[\chi^2(5, N=157)=47.38, \ p<0.01\]

\[\chi^2(5, N=157)=18.03, \ p<0.01\]

\[\chi^2(5, N=157)=18.42, \ p<0.01\]

\[\chi^2(5, N=157)=18.03, \ p<0.01\]

\[\chi^2(5, N=157)=26.512, \ p<0.001\]
Appendix 9. Prevalence of Consultation Features at the Different Web Sites of Mongolian Government and Civil Society Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Government (n=37)</th>
<th>Educ &amp; Res (n=38)</th>
<th>NGO &amp; INGO (n=22)</th>
<th>Media &amp; Internet (n=28)</th>
<th>Interest &amp; political (n=23)</th>
<th>Diaspora (n=9)</th>
<th>Total (n=157)</th>
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<td>5 (13.5%)</td>
<td>3 (7.9%)</td>
<td>3 (13.6%)</td>
<td>9 (32.1%)</td>
<td>6 (26.1%)</td>
<td>4 (19.1%)</td>
<td>30 (19.1%)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>32 (86.5%)</td>
<td>35 (92.1%)</td>
<td>19 (86.4%)</td>
<td>19 (67.9%)</td>
<td>17 (73.9%)</td>
<td>5 (26.1%)</td>
<td>127 (80.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>χ²(5, N=157)=11.81, p&lt;0.05</td>
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<td>7 (18.9%)</td>
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<td>4 (18.2%)</td>
<td>4 (14.3%)</td>
<td>4 (17.4%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
<td>25 (15.9%)</td>
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<td>do not provide</td>
<td>30 (81.1%)</td>
<td>33 (86.8%)</td>
<td>18 (81.8%)</td>
<td>24 (85.7%)</td>
<td>19 (82.6%)</td>
<td>8 (78.6%)</td>
<td>132 (84.1%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>χ²(5, N=157)=0.80, not significant.</td>
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<td>provide</td>
<td>13 (35.1%)</td>
<td>12 (31.6%)</td>
<td>5 (22.7%)</td>
<td>17 (60.7%)</td>
<td>11 (47.8%)</td>
<td>4 (44.4%)</td>
<td>62 (39.5%)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>24 (64.9%)</td>
<td>26 (68.4%)</td>
<td>17 (77.3%)</td>
<td>11 (39.3%)</td>
<td>12 (52.2%)</td>
<td>5 (55.6%)</td>
<td>95 (60.5%)</td>
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<td>provide</td>
<td>5 (13.5%)</td>
<td>5 (13.2%)</td>
<td>2 (9.1%)</td>
<td>8 (28.6%)</td>
<td>3 (13.0%)</td>
<td>.0% (0.0%)</td>
<td>23 (14.6%)</td>
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<td>32 (86.5%)</td>
<td>33 (86.8%)</td>
<td>20 (90.9%)</td>
<td>20 (71.4%)</td>
<td>20 (87.0%)</td>
<td>9 (100.0%)</td>
<td>134 (85.4%)</td>
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<td>provide</td>
<td>26 (70.3%)</td>
<td>19 (50.0%)</td>
<td>9 (40.9%)</td>
<td>16 (57.1%)</td>
<td>15 (65.2%)</td>
<td>6 (66.7%)</td>
<td>91 (59.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>do not provide</td>
<td>11 (29.7%)</td>
<td>13 (50.0%)</td>
<td>13 (59.1%)</td>
<td>12 (42.9%)</td>
<td>12 (34.8%)</td>
<td>3 (33.3%)</td>
<td>66 (41.0%)</td>
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<td>provide</td>
<td>32 (86.5%)</td>
<td>31 (81.6%)</td>
<td>20 (90.9%)</td>
<td>21 (75.0%)</td>
<td>16 (69.6%)</td>
<td>6 (66.7%)</td>
<td>126 (80.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do not provide</td>
<td>5 (13.5%)</td>
<td>7 (18.4%)</td>
<td>2 (9.1%)</td>
<td>7 (25.0%)</td>
<td>7 (30.4%)</td>
<td>3 (33.3%)</td>
<td>31 (19.7%)</td>
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<td>3 (7.9%)</td>
<td>3 (13.6%)</td>
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<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
<td>15 (9.6%)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>35 (92.1%)</td>
<td>19 (86.4%)</td>
<td>27 (96.4%)</td>
<td>23 (100.0%)</td>
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**Appendix 10. Prevalence of Conversation Features at the Different Web Sites of Mongolian Government and Civil Society Institutions**

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Government (n=37)</th>
<th>Educ &amp; Res (n=38)</th>
<th>NGO &amp; INGO (n=22)</th>
<th>Media &amp; Internet (n=28)</th>
<th>Interest &amp; political (n=23)</th>
<th>Diaspora (n=9)</th>
<th>Total (n=157)</th>
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<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>154</td>
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<tr>
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<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>98.1%</td>
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**χ²(5, N=157)=16.217, p<0.01**  
*χ²(5, N=157)=12.459, p<0.05
## Appendix 11. Prevalence of Registration Features at the Different Web Sites of Mongolian Government and Civil Society Institutions

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Media &amp; Internet (n=28)</th>
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* stands for not testing chi-square test due to small numbers in the table.
Appendix 12. One-Way ANOVA Comparing of Mean Indexes of Allocution, Consultation, Conversation and Registration by Different Types of Institutions

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<th>Media &amp; Internet (n=28)</th>
<th>Interest &amp; political (n=23)</th>
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## Appendix 13. Funding and Types of Mongolian Language Web Sites of Mongolian Government and Civil society Institution Web Sites

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χ²(10, N=157)=104.14, p<0.001