



# What's IN-cubating?

April - July 2023

We hope that your semester is starting well. As we start planning for our activities for this new quarter, including preparing for the Wave 7 of our IN-cube Panel Survey that tracks internet use and effects in Singapore, we're also looking back at our activities in the past few months.

In this newsletter, we're very excited to share with you some of our recent academic articles that explored various facets of internet use. We also share with you some of our efforts at public engagement, as we hope to make our research at IN-cube more accessible to the public. In July, we launched our State of the Internet and Media in Singapore (STIMS) Report, which we plan to be an annual report to share our findings and insights into the state of internet use in the country. This month, we're also holding a symposium on the very important issue of online harms.

Please take a look at our newsletter and let us know if you have any comments or suggestions. We would love to hear from, and potentially work with, you.

**Assoc Prof Edson C. Tandoc Jr.**  
Director, IN-cube

## State of the Internet and Media in Singapore (STIMS)

### STIMS Webinar

How many hours do Singaporean adults spend on the internet? Which social media platforms are growing in terms of number of users in Singapore?

IN-cube held its inaugural STIMS webinar on 14 June 2023 and presented findings from our panel surveys that tracked internet use in Singapore from 2020 to 2022. IN-cube Research Fellow Dr. Goh Zhang Hao and IN-cube Director, Assoc. Prof. Edson Tandoc Jr shared interpretation and insights on how Singaporeans use the internet, consume news, navigate social media, and perceive information integrity in Singapore. Explore our findings by visiting our website at [ntu.edu.sg/incube](http://ntu.edu.sg/incube)



*How many hours in a day do you spend ...? - On the internet in general  
(From "0 hours" to "13 hours or more")*





## International Engagement

Held in collaboration with ICA's Health Communication Division, IN-cube recently hosted two online sessions to facilitate discussions between ICA fellows and early career scholars. Organised by Asst Prof Edmund Lee, IN-cube's Assistant Director, the series addressed pivotal topics pertinent to the job market, catering to the interests of aspiring scholars within the domains of public health and health communication.

**THE SPEAKERS**



**K. "VISH"  
VISWANATH, PHD**

Lee Kum Kee Professor of Health Communication  
Faculty Director, Health Communication Core of  
the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center  
Harvard University



**ROBERT C.  
HORNIK, PHD**

Wilbur Schramm Professor of Communication  
and Health Policy, Emeritus, Annenberg School  
for Communication  
University of Pennsylvania



**PETER J.  
SCHULZ, PHD**

Full Professor of Communication Theories and  
Health Communication, Director of the Institute  
of Communication and Health  
University of Lugano, Switzerland



**YIN LENG  
THENG, PHD**

Associate Provost (Faculty Affairs)  
President's Chair in Information  
Studies & Professor  
Nanyang Technological University (NTU)

MODERATOR  
**DR. HSUAN HUANG**  
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**TIMOTHY MACKEY, PHD**

Professor of Global Health  
UC San Diego  
Editor-in-Chief of JMIR Infodemiology.  
CEO and co-founder of S-3 Research



**JINGBO MENG, PHD**

Associate Professor  
Department of Communication  
Michigan State University



**LYNN CAROL MILLER**

Professor, Associate Dean for Research  
Annenberg School for Communication  
and Journalism  
University of Southern California



**KING-WA FU**

Professor  
Journalism and Media Studies  
University of Hong Kong

## Disinformation Workshop at University of Malaga

### Keynote Speaker



IN-cube Director, Assoc Prof Edson Tandoc Jr., delivered the keynote address at the International Workshop on Disinformation Research organised by the University of Malaga in Malaga, Spain on 4-5 July 2023 that brought together national projects in Spain that investigate the problem of disinformation. In his keynote address, Assoc Prof Tandoc shared about IN-cube's research on fake news in Singapore as well as shared his reflections on the future of disinformation research.

# Recent Journal Publications

## **Understanding the Effects of News-Finds-Me Perception on Health Knowledge and Information Seeking During Public Health Crises**

News-finds-me (NFM) perception is a belief that, in the era of social media, individuals can remain adequately well-informed about current events even if they do not actively seek news. While it has been examined in the context of general and political news, NFM perception has not been explored in the context of other genres of news.



Through an online survey involving 1,001 Singaporeans, this study examines how NFM perception is related to information seeking and COVID-19 knowledge. An issue-specific NFM perception was also proposed and tested in order to determine whether NFM perception and its associated effects differ when operationalised as general news exposure or issue-specific news relating to COVID-19. Read more about this article [here](#).

## **The good, the bad, and the Internet: Investigating the impact of online prosocial and anti-social behaviors on well-being**

Studies have acknowledged how Internet use can lead to increased loneliness, but while Internet use can lead to various types of behavior, less research has been done comparing the effects of different Internet behaviors on loneliness, such as prosocial and antisocial behaviors.

Using survey data collected in Singapore, this study finds that online prosocial behavior reduces loneliness only when it enhances satisfaction with life, while online antisocial behavior increases loneliness only when satisfaction with life is unaffected. The findings provide support to the positive effects of engaging in pro-social behavior and suggest that a more reflective use of the Internet, such as engaging only in pro-social behavior, can help contribute to higher life satisfaction among users. Read more about this article [here](#).



# Recent Journal Publications

## **From pandemic to Plandemic: Examining the amplification and attenuation of COVID-19 misinformation on social media**

This study examines the proliferation of COVID-19 misinformation through Plandemic—a pseudo-documentary of COVID-19 conspiracy theories—on social media and examines how factors such as (a) themes of misinformation, (b) types of misinformation, (c) sources of misinformation, (d) emotions of misinformation, and (e) fact-checking labels amplify or attenuate online misinformation during the early days of the pandemic. Read more about this article [here](#).



## **Exploring the Incentive Function of Virtual Academic Degrees in a Chinese Online Smoking Cessation Community: Qualitative Content Analysis**

Previous studies on online smoking cessation communities (OSCCs) have shown how such networks contribute to members' health outcomes from behavior influence and social support perspectives. However, these studies rarely considered the incentive function of OSCCs. One of the ways OSCCs motivate smoking cessation behaviors is through digital incentives. Read more about this article [here](#).



## International Research Awards



Assoc Prof Edson Tandoc Jr.

**2022 Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly Outstanding Article Award**

*"Why People Who Know Less Think They Know about COVID-19: Evidence from US and Singapore"*



Assoc Prof Chen Lou

**Top Faculty Paper (Advertising Division) 2023 Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference**

*"When Social Media Gets Political: How Message-Platform Match Affects Consumer Responses to Brand Activism Advertising"*



Asst Prof Edmund Lee

**Top Faculty Paper (Mass Comm Division) 2023 International Communication Association Conference**

*"Understanding Public Perceptions and Intentions to Adopt Traditional vs Emerging Investment Platforms"*

# IN-cube in the News

## 'Taylor Swift is my mother': How parasocial mania has overtaken pop culture



In this article, IN-cube lead researchers shared their insights on how parasocial relations with celebrities like Taylor Swift has changed in the modern day.

Assoc Prof Chen Lou, Head of IN-cube's Digital Advertising and Consumer Psychology Lab (DACP), mentions that social media and its ability to facilitate real-time interactions has enhanced parasocial relations between fans and global superstars.

Assoc Prof Nuri Kim, Head of IN-cube's Communication and Democracy Lab (CODE), adds that the fan-superstar dynamic has evolved to be more intimate with the birth of fan meetings and applications that allow for personalised fan messages.



PHOTOS: AFP.  
HONG@HONGPHOTOGRAPHY.ART/INSTAGRAM

## Commentary: We must become better writers in an age of ChatGPT



In this commentary, IN-cube Director Assoc Prof Edson Tandoc Jr discusses the use of ChatGPT, a generative artificial intelligence chatbot, in the context of writing assignments and education. The article highlights the popularity of ChatGPT among users, its benefits in saving time, and its potential to help writers with grammar and writer's block. However, it raises concerns about the impact of AI-generated content on original writing and the issue of accountability for factual errors.



Assoc Prof Tandoc emphasises the value of originality and creativity in writing, encourages students to find their own voice rather than relying solely on AI tools, and reflects on the extent to which AI tools like ChatGPT should influence and change the writing process.

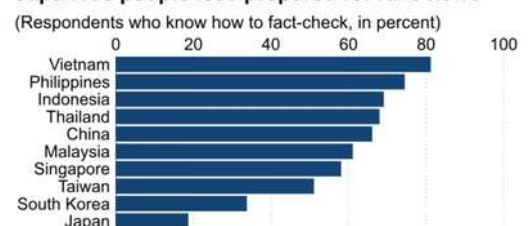


## Japan lags Asian peers in dealing with fake news



IN-cube collaborated with Nikkei to study the prevalence of fake news in Japan. The study found that less than one fifth of Japanese know how to fact-check news, sitting at the lowest percentage among major Asian countries.

### Japanese people less prepared for fake news



Source: Joint survey by Nanyang Technological University and Nikkei

## Interview: Assoc Prof Edson Tandoc on NTU study on internet use across five COVID-related events



During a live interview on Channel NewsAsia, IN-cube Director Edson Tandoc Jr discussed how public susceptibility to fake news has evolved over time, since the COVID-19 pandemic to the post-pandemic normal. While Singaporeans' ability to spot fake news and their susceptibility to fake news and scams have not drastically improved, Assoc Prof. Tandoc observes an increasing number of Singaporeans are becoming more proactive in responding to fake news.

Still, the problem of fake news remains and Assoc Prof Tandoc emphasises the importance of platform accountability to address this problem, among other interventions.



## Interview: Asst Prof Saifuddin Ahmed on Singapore's Online Criminal Harms Bill



Asst Prof Saifuddin Ahmed, Head of IN-cube's Social Media and Political Engagement Lab (SMAPE), discussed the potential effects of the Online Criminal Harms Bill, such as increased responsibility of social media platforms and closer collaborations between social media companies and government bodies to combat online falsehoods.



## About IN-cube

IN-cube stands for Centre for Information Integrity and the Internet, a research centre at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University Singapore. It aims to contribute to promoting information integrity in online spaces, especially in an era of misinformation and disinformation, through timely, rigorous, and relevant research that links academics, policymakers, industry players, and the public. Learn more about IN-cube by visiting our website: [ntu.edu.sg/incube](http://ntu.edu.sg/incube)