

(Published on 22 June 2009)

A research paper outlining the internet blogging behavioural patterns of university students has earned Rachael Ip Kwai-fun (right), PhD student and instructor at City University of Hong Kong (CityU), an Emerald Management Reviews Citation of Excellence Award from among 15,000 articles published in world-renowned management journals.

The Emerald Management Reviews Accreditation Board, comprising management experts from industry and academia, selected its 50 best papers from 15,000 articles published annually in 400 top management journals, including *Harvard Business Review* and *Oxford Reviews of Economic Policy*.

The award-winning paper "Weblogging: a study of social computing and its impact on organisations" was co-authored by Rachael and her supervisor Professor Christian Wagner (left), both from CityU's Department of Information Systems (IS).

"I was beyond my expectations to earn such a high accolade from so many articles published in top international journals. As a teacher, I need to look for new information technologies and social software for my class. Interacting with CityU students has inspired me to study the effects of web blogging. The paper benefited from my teaching experience and research studies," Rachael said.

CityU PhD student's blogging paper stands out among 15,000

Rachael, who joined CityU as an instructor since 2001, has completed her Bachelor of Arts with Honours (IS) and Master of Philosophy at CityU and holds a Master of Education.

"Special thanks must be given to Chair Professor Wei Kwok-kee, Dean of the College of Business, and Professor Wagner, as they encouraged me to participate in international conferences where I gained valuable experience and feedback," she added.

Professor Wagner said researchers at CityU were ahead of the industry trends. "Researchers study the phenomenon of new information technologies before they become popular. Like surfing, websurfers must be early enough to catch the waves. Rachael is a good surfer and this award recognises her foresight," said Professor Wagner.

The paper included 33 Hong Kong university student interviews and examined their blogging behaviour. They were categorised into four types of bloggers based on their usage intensity rated from heavy to low (namely, habitual, active, personal and blogging lurkers).

"Habitual users are addicted to blogs and seemingly unable to live without them. At the other extreme, blogging lurkers keep blogs but never update but are eager to learn about their friends and maintain a blog so they can subscribe to friends' web blogs," Rachel explained.

"Bloggers keep posting, commenting or reading blogs to satisfy their individual and social needs. The major social need of the bloggers is to create their own social circles, to be socially accepted and to maintain social exchange with peers," she said.

Though social computing software such as MSN and Facebook are not usually formal communication tools within organisations, Rachael's paper suggested organisations take advantage of using them.

"Organisations that allow employees to use software they are familiar with, instead of other communications software, can save training costs and avoid resistance. Such organisations will be regarded as 'open-minded' by students too," she said.

Where organisations are using email as a medium to attract customer attention, Rachael suggested marketing departments should adopt social software to interact with customers. "Bloggers ignore advertising emails. They are interested in a more personal and 'natural' communication style in web blogs. Organisations that reach customers in this way should be able to reap extraordinary benefits," she said.





城大博士生憑博客研究獲最佳論文獎

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香港城市大學（城大）資訊系統學系博士生兼導師葉桂芬（右）憑藉大學生網誌行為研究，於全球15,000篇學術論文中脫穎而出，獲國際著名期刊數據庫Emerald Management Reviews頒發最佳論文獎。

Emerald Management Reviews評鑑委員會由專業人士及著名學者組成，每年審閱《哈佛商業評論》和《牛津經濟政策評論》等400份全球頂尖管理學術期刊內登載的15,000多篇論文，從中甄選出50篇最佳獲獎論文。

得獎論文「博客：社會運算及其對機構的影響研究」由葉桂芬與其指導老師資訊系統學系Christian Wagner教授（左）合著。

葉桂芬說：「能夠與世界知名期刊的論文競逐並獲此殊榮，令人喜出望外。為了教學，我經常要為課程發掘新的資訊科技及社交軟件，並教導學生加以使用。與學生的交流啟發我進行有關網誌行為的研究，而這篇論文也充分發揮了教學經驗與研究工作的協同效應。」葉桂芬在城大完成資訊系統學榮譽文學士及哲學碩士課程，並擁有教育碩士學位，於2001年加入城大擔任導師。

她說：「我要特別感謝商學院院長魏國基講座教授及Wagner教授，全靠他們鼓勵參加國際會議，我才能夠與世界各國的學者及研究員交流，獲益良多。」

Wagner教授表示，城大研究員能夠洞察新科技的趨勢及把握先機。「研究員往往在新科技普及前就研究其現象，有如滑浪者必須及早預備才能克服巨浪。葉桂芬便是一名出色的『滑浪者』，獎項證明了她的先見之明，」他說。

葉桂芬訪問了33名香港的大學生，檢視他們使用網誌的行為，並根據使用量從高至低將他們歸納為習慣型、活躍型、個人型及隱藏型四類博客。

「沉迷在網誌中的習慣型博客，沒有網誌幾乎不能生存，」她補充說。隱藏型博客會建立自己的網誌但從不更新，他們只想憑此身份訂閱朋友的網誌。

她說：「博客為了滿足個人社交需要而在網誌撰寫文章、提出回應及閱讀網誌。博客最大的社交需要是建立自己的社交圈子，希望他人接納並與朋輩保持聯繫及交流。」

雖然現時社交軟件如MSN和Facebook並非工作環境中的正式溝通工具，葉桂芬的論文卻建議機構善用社交軟件帶來的好處。她說：「若機構容許員工使用熟悉的軟件作為溝通工具而非其他軟件，既可節省使用新軟件所需的訓練成本，也可減少員工對新軟件的抗拒。有些學生更認為這些機構較為開明。」

機構現多使用電郵吸引客戶注意，但葉桂芬認為，市場營銷部應該開始使用社交軟件與客戶互動。她說：「博客通常不注意電郵廣告，他們對網誌的個人及自然溝通風格更感興趣。機構如果能夠利用網誌接觸客戶，應可獲得意想不到的回報。」

Media coverage 媒體報導：

Newspapers 報章

22-6-2009 *Ta Kung Pao* 《大公報》, *Wen Wei Po* 《文匯報》

Website 網頁

22-6-2009 *CityU NewsCentre* 《城大新聞網》

Original work (or related link) 相關連結

CityU Institutional Repository 城大機構典藏
<http://hdl.handle.net/2031/5561>