

Using the Internet for Building a Global Community

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Would the Facebook save the world? Would the Google mail play a vital role on an international level? I am sure almost everyone would say “no” to these questions. Those are just internet things. Internet communication is for fun but not for real. It’s not real. People, especially older generations, would laugh at me if I said Facebook or Google might be essential for building a global community.

It is not just Facebook or Google. It is the global connection of people that will be important for the world, and we can use the internet to make it easy. I came to think this way during the summer program at Stanford University this year. During that period, my perspective changed significantly because I met many people from various countries and because I had an opportunity to visit Facebook

Visiting the Company Facebook was one of the biggest things during the trip. By meeting its employees and seeing what the company was like, I was impressed with the program they were working on--connecting everyone. It really looked like a company that was creating the need for the future. The internet is becoming the next ground for the social connection. Also, Facebook is creating the key stone of the Social Networking Service, and I can understand why. Keeping in contact is the key to so many things, and it used to be hard to stay in touch with friends. A student could have had

a similar to me, and make friends from different nations, but it must have been hard to keep contact with letters that take such a long time. With the internet so advanced and the SNS becoming so helpful, it makes it extremely easy to keep the connection that can be so important. I am blessed with such a great environment, and I know SNS companies like Facebook will continue to have a crucial role in the future world.

Another thing that changed my view in an important way was meeting students from various Asian countries. The American Language and Culture (ALC) program had more than 100 students coming from Korea, China, Taiwan, Macau, and Japan. Even Japanese students came from various schools, such as Waseda and Keio, besides Doshisha. We were there for one month, studying together, living in the same dorms, eating together and making field trips together. I also met wonderful faculty and some Stanford students who were helping us.

The people from the various Asian counties actually had similar things in common. One person from Taiwan I got to know had a similar personal problem of being shy. Even in counties that seemed so different there was a pattern where some people were more open, friendly and some a little shy. To me this was funny; even though the people are so different in location, culture, and background, we shared the same personality problem. Yet I meet so many interesting people on the program. The Chinese students were a lot of fun to be around, they were cool, very smart, and loved to shop. Hearing how the Koreans thought about their countries conscription system was fresh and interesting. Taiwanese, and people

from Macao too were fun to be with, and I found them to be especially nice.

I felt the summer program to be too short. When it ended after four weeks, I felt sad that we students had to be all separated and return to our usual life as students back home. However, going home does not have to be the end of our relations. While we were at Stanford, we were already using the internet to communicate with each other and share information. After my return to Japan, I have been using the Skype, Facebook, and other internet programs to stay in touch with those summer program alumni. Skype allows us to talk to each other while looking at their faces on the computer monitor. Meeting those people at Stanford face-to-face was just the beginning of our relations. By using the internet, we can continue exchanging ideas and developing friendship.

There is one good example that shows how the internet has helped me stay in touch with the people I had made friends with this summer. When someone we had met in California (who happened to work for an internet communication company) was coming to Tokyo, we shared the information through the Facebook and got together with him in Tokyo. It was like having a reunion within a few weeks after we left Stanford campus. Internet reinforces the friendship we started in a brief period this summer and leads to interactions among people that are now spread geographically. I believe we can do the same with other Asian students in China, Korea, Taiwan, and Macau.

Come to think of it, I can now see why Silicon Valley is so close to Stanford and other leading universities. Companies in Silicon Valley probably develop connections with good students and keeping

them connected no matter where they go.

One big surprise was that the companies that are rivals today actually have workers going back and forward. This too was the power of friendship made at the school; a worker in Apple will invite a friend from Google to work, simply because he wanted to try something new. Companies that may seem to hate another competitor are really friendly at the human level. The moral of the story is that the successful Silicon Valley was done truly by connections: friends trying to help each other out. This can be applied to the world today. The world is and will become more and more global, and if the world is to solve problems like poverty and the environment, every country must work together, as a friend.

I believe that connections also have the potential of preventing wars from happening; I had the opportunity to talk with a student from China, who gave a new view to the problems we face. I was able to find out that the people in each country think very hard of topics, and they know what they speak of. These talks and debates I thought were one of the most important things to continue if the world is to become more global. Younger people must throw away the stereotype they hold of others, and see the truth. This can help prevent any misleading ideas. The most effective power that will prevent the war I think is that just by having a friend on the other side people will not want have a war.

The interesting phenomenon I saw in the program was that people would show video clips from YouTube, which lead the student to leaning more new songs. The American songs lead many of the people to like songs that were big over in the states, but not the

countries they come from. The song they heard apparently was so liked, that they would even play it at the prom we had. The way this simple video from an internet would make people connect was impressive; also, this was a great way for people to learn the culture of America.

In this way cultural connections now can be achieved by the internet. YouTube videos will provide so much more of the “raw” culture than learning from a book. These videos make people to connect more, the example of watching music videos. Music itself is a great for this task, but by adding the visual, and making it a video. It makes it more fun to watch and understand, with a friend from a different county.

One of the most popular are funny videos and animal videos that can be watched without the wall of language. We can laugh to a cat cashing a laser point no matter which country you are from. This kind of small fun is a great help to breaking the ice for talking with a friend. I too showed my roommate a funny video, and it was great for getting to know what interests he had for these things. These simple videos helped me greatly in becoming close to him.

Doshisha's Motto of Internationalism is valuable for the future of Japan and it should play an important role. Founder Jo Niijima started the tradition of global networking at the time when Japan closed its door to the world. We Doshisha students should be proud of Niijima's foresight and legacy of global networking. Doshisha is expanding Japan's global network through international exchange and academic work. I was lucky to get an opportunity to study at Stanford as a Doshisha student this summer.