Communicative ♥ Intimacies: Influencers and Perceived Interconnectedness

Crystal Abidin

Around the world, many young people have taken to social media to monetise their personal lives as "influencers." Although international news reports have variously described these commercial social media users as "bloggers," "YouTubers," and "Instagrammers," I conceptualise these high-profile Internet microcelebrities (Senft 2008) as influencers regardless of their digital platform. Influencers are everyday, ordinary Internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces, and monetise their following by integrating "advertorials" into their blog or social media posts. A pastiche of "advertisement" and "editorial", advertorials in the Influencer industry are highly personalised, opinion-laden promotions of products/services that influencers personally experience and endorse for a fee.

Although influencers are now a worldwide phenomenon, this paper investigates a subset of them, namely women influencers of the "lifestyle" genre in Singapore. Based on my fieldwork and drawing from Horton & Wohl's work on parasocial relations (1956), I observe how influencers appropriate and mobilise intimacies in different ways (commercial, interactive, reciprocal, disclosive), and describe a model of communication between influencers and followers I term "perceived interconnectedness", in which influencers interact with followers to give the impression of intimacy. The practices investigated and analyses developed in this paper are not unique to Singapore and may be mapped onto larger Influencer ecologies. However, as a small nation of just over five million (YourSingapore 2013) with a high IT penetration rate (iDA 2015) and relatively developed Influencer industry[1], it is hoped that this study of influencers in Singapore can serve as a microcosm for future comparative studies of influencers globally.

Methodology

This paper is ethnographically situated. The data presented is from original fieldwork in the Influencer industry Singapore since 2010, and contextually informed by my personal experiences interacting with influencers and their followers since their debut in 2005. Several collaborative methodologies were employed: 1) I conducted participant

observation in the Influencer industry between 2011 and 2015 in various capacities including a research scientist and shadow manager at Influencer management agencies, and a personal assistant, copyeditor, and fashion intern to several influencers; 2) I conducted personal interviews with influencers, their management agencies, and a small number of followers either in person or through technology such as Email, WhatsApp, and Skype; 3) I conducted archival research into mainstream media coverage on influencers between 2005 and 2013 at the Singapore Press Holdings Information Resource Centre; 4) I archived influencers' public and commercial blogs and social media feeds through screenshots. This paper focuses on the influencers' perspectives. Data coding was informed by grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1968). Pseudonyms are adopted in this paper.

Influencers in Singapore

In Singapore, lifestyle influencers are predominantly women, are aged between 18 and 35, and use English and Singlish[2] as the primary language. Most influencers are contracted to an Influencer management agency that publicises their portfolio to prospective clients and brokers deals in exchange for a commission. Although a handful of extremely prolific and viable influencers have chosen to go independent, for most (prospective) influencers, being "picked up," "signed," or "contracted" is a valuable status symbol.

Additionally, the influencers I investigate belong to the cohorts who were schooled in the decades during which IT infrastructure and knowledge was championed by the state (Cordeiro & Al-Hawamdeh 2001, Mahizhnan 1999, Wong 1992). These influencers and their followers were brought up in the 1990s-2000s, during which they literally grew up with the Internet, and generally have collectively internalised the expectant norms and flexible posturing of various personae (Turkle 2008) necessary for communicative intimacies.

Although microcelebrities are public icons with large-scale followings who are famous within small, niche networks (Marwick 2013), many influencers in Singapore go on to become multimedia microcelebrities beyond these earlier envisioned niche networks. Beyond the web, the impact and status of influencers has been recognised in several mainstream industries in Singapore. In order to leverage on influencers' predominantly youth following and boost ratings, producers star influencers in high-profile cameos. Despite being thought of as an "unstable career" in the early days, educational institutes now invite alumni who have become influencers to share

"success stories" with their juniors. To appeal to voters who are increasingly turning to digital media for electoral coverage, politicians are having webcast dialogue sessions and photographed tea sessions with influencers. In addition, influencers frequently headline mainstream newspapers and magazines for their good looks (i.e. "Model owners", Ng 2009), entrepreneurship (i.e. "Net Worth", Chung 2010), and creative methods (i.e. "From blog to riches", Chiew 2009). As evidenced, the media space for dialogue and visibility once controlled by executives and dominated by public figures and mainstream celebrities are increasingly being commanded by young women influencers who have built a strong rapport with their followers.

Influencers and followers

Influencers in Singapore refer to users who "follow" them on social media as "followers" rather than "fans" (Marwick & boyd 2011), in rejection of the status elevation and sense of distance this hierachical naming implies. As noted by Influencer Bernice:

"I don't really see them as fans, cos it sounds like I'm very big or like a celebrity… but I'm don't think I'm like very 'high up'… I'm normal and just like everyone…"

Influencer Michelle similarly notes:

"I call them readers… readers and haters… not fans *lah* please, don't make it sound like I [am] very *duapai* [big shot]."

In addition, Influencer Linda feels that branding her followers as "fans" may come across as demeaning:

"I think if you call them fans then they might feel like you think you are very great… like better than them [such that] you deserve fans… but I'm not… I'm very ordinary, and I hope I don't give the impression that I am 'above' all of them."

In their attempt to retain an impression of "intimacy" (discussed below) and to bridge the distance between themselves and followers, influencers in Singapore tend to emphasise a persona that is ordinary and everyday, and premise their communication on a "responsiveness to, rather than distancing from, one's community" (Senft 2008:116).

Influencers in Singapore generally categorise their followers as "readers" (supportive towards influencers), "haters" (disavow influencers and have been known to denigrate their craft), and "bots" (dummy, purchased accounts that some influencers have been accused of using to boost their numbers). Although a handful of influencers do refer to some followers as "fans", this term is the least used as it tended to imply a sense of distance and status elevation between influencers and followers.

Although most of their followers are between the ages of 13 and 35 (70-80% women, 20-30% men), influencers are fairly well-known and recognisable by the general population as the vernacular "bloggers". This is owing to the fact that influencers in Singapore first debut on blogs in 2005. On a single platform, influencers in Singapore may boast followers numbering between 7,000 and 500,000. This number increases multifold if individual Influencer's various social media platforms are to be combined[3]. This following usually comprises a significant portion of regional and international users: this is noted in the comments section of influencers' social media feeds in which followers based outside of Singapore mark their "exoticism" and loyalty by mentioning the region or country from which they hail, and the duration of which they have been "following" the Influencer":

"Omg [name of Influencer]! I have been following you on Insta since you started! We love you in Italy!"

"… [name of Influencer] ♥ your Indon supporter here! I [have been] read[ing] your blog from when you were still not so famous, lol 😁 Plz follow back!…"

In addition, many comments left by international followers are in languages other than English and Singlish (i.e. Bahasa Indonesia, Traditional Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Italian). Influencers in Singapore generally identify the periods on weekday mornings between 8 and 10 am, and on evenings between 7 and 9 pm as the prime time for peak user traffic (Abidin 2014:125), and thus schedule crucial posts such as major advertorials then. However, in recognition of their international following, many influencers additionally specially publish Instagram and Twitter posts corresponding to the peak hours of their international following in different time zones.

Influencers and commercial intimacies

Many scholars have studied intimacy enacted as business strategies, some among women. In her work on domestic labour and migration through marriage, Constable

(2009) has underscored instances of the commodification of intimacy within marital relationships and the family. Hochschild's (1983) work on staff in the service industry has similarly disclosed the enactment of intimacy in business exchanges. Gregg (2011:3) examines the impact of online technology on contemporary work culture in which a "presence bleed" causes boundaries between professional and personal identities to break down and affective labour has to be renegotiated. Marwick & boyd's (2011) study of celebrity practitioners on Twitter reveal that personal information is used to create a sense of intimacy with followers. Baym's (2012) investigation of musicians and their social media audiences revealed that musicians saw their fans as equals and derived genuine interpersonal rewards from the intimacies exchanged online.

Similar communicative intimacies play out among influencers and followers in Singapore, among whom "intimacy" is emically understood as how familiar and close followers feel to an Influencer. Although an extended discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, I note that the "intimacy" discussed in this paper is distinct from other related emic notions of "accessibility" (how easy it is to approach an Influencer in digital and physical spaces), "believability" (how convincing and realistic an Influencer's depicted lifestyle and sentiment is), "authenticity" (how genuine an Influencer's actual lifestyle and sentiment is), "emulatability" (how easy it is for followers to model themselves after an Influencer's lifestyle). Thus, it is possible for intimacies between influencers and followers to be motivated by commerce or elaborately curated as long as followers (who may or may not be critically aware of these) feel familiar, close, and emotionally attached to influencers.

The allure of influencers is premised on the ways they engage with their followers to give the impression of exclusive, intimate exchange. Generally, influencers in the lifestyle genre write about their lives "as lived" as the central theme of their output, unlike influencers in other genres such as parenting, fashion, or food, who focus exclusively on a streamlined thematic interest that does not have to intimately relate to their personal, private lives. Like Constable (2009) focused on conjugal relationships and domestic labour, and Hochschild (1983) customer service, influencers practice a feminine labour[4] that hinges on commercial intimacies, albeit one that focuses on homosocial friendships and advertorial advertising.

Influencers appear to be critically aware of the latent profit-oriented motivations behind their interactions, but like the musicians in Baym's (2012) study of musicians and their social media audiences, attest to benefiting from the commercial intimacy on

some level. Influencer Marianne, who was contemplating a "dramatic post" about her breakup, admits that while she is enthused by the potential increase in follower traffic from her controversial post, she would also genuinely be benefiting from emotional support from her followers:

"…so obviously [blogging about a] breakup will surely get [my blog] many hits… because people are curious what… and [they] like to gossip… but some readers will surely leave nice comments to, you know, cheer me up… and I'll be lying if I say [their comments] don't make me feel good, right?"

Influencer Tina, who frequently travels for work, enjoys the companionship from her followers:

"… I mean, it's nice to read comments from reader… you can tell some of them really put in a lot of effort… and like when I travel and I'm alone in the hotel… I feel supported… when I read and reply…"

On a more practical level, Influencer Brittany, who has been blogging since 2005, acknowledges her followers' contributions towards improving her Influencer practice:

"Some of my readers have been with me for very long… they are very sweet, they will say, oh maybe you can blog more about this… or maybe you can improve on this…"

As evidenced, influencers' communicative intimacy can sincerely engender personal attachments despite being motivated by "underlying commercial interests" (Abidin & Thompson 2012:472).

Influencers and interactive intimacies

Influencers are one form of "microcelebrity", which are "a new style of online performance that involves people 'amping up' their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs and social networking sites" (Senft 2008:25). However, a distinctive feature of influencers in Singapore is their extensive integration of face-to-face meet-ups with followers on a regular basis, in formal and informal settings.

Formal events include those sponsored and organised by clients in conjunction with the launch of a new product or service, or parties (i.e. birthdays, anniversaries, festive occasions, meet & greet sessions, photo-taking sessions) organised by influencers that

are sponsored in kind by clients (i.e. venue, party favours, F&B, photography, make up, wardrobe) in exchange for advertorial publicity.

Informal events include those casually organised by influencers themselves, such as Christmas giveaways and lucky dips for selected followers, and impromptu coffee sessions in cafes where followers can take the opportunity to snap selfies with influencers. These physical interactions usually incorporate the use of a dedicated event hashtag that followers are encouraged to use while they "live Tweet" or "live Instagram" their activities. Such practices are also commonly incentivised through competitions such as giveaways to selected users on the hashtag, or prizes awarded to the best Tweet or Instagram post.

These physical space interactions complement digital space engagements because influencers are expected to perform their personae in congruence with depictions they have displayed on their blogs and social media. As such, the intimacies fostered and negotiated in digital platforms[5] are transferred to physical settings[6], in a feedback loop that amplifies the sense of intimacy followers feel towards influencers.

Influencers and reciprocal intimacies

Unlike mainstream celebrity practitioners (Marwick & boyd 2011) who still convey a sense of distance and hierarchy with their Twitter fans, influencers in Singapore are highly responsive and communicate reciprocal intimacies with their followers. Many influencers are likely to "favourite" or "like" (on Twitter and YouTube), "retweet" (on Twitter), or reply with smiley faces and heart shaped emoji (on blogs and Instagram) to comments from followers as a sign of acknowledgement and appreciation. This practice also publicises a follower's handle to the influencers' tens of thousands of followers, in what is known as a "shout out".

For instance Influencer Natalie retweets every single Tweet from followers who mention her even though these may number in the mid-hundreds on a daily basis; Influencer Rena often begins or closes her blogposts with a brief shout out or thanks to followers who have written personal emails to her; and Influencer Brittany, who accedes to having selfies taken with followers who see her in public, regularly tells followers to send her copies of the photographs that she collates and posts on her platforms.

Influencers and disclosive intimacies

A key feature of lifestyle influencers is documenting the trivial and mundane aspects of everyday life (i.e. outfit of the day, #nomakeup selfies, close-ups of pimples and bad skin, gripes about housework) and how well influencers can relate these to their followers in dialogue. In addition, influencers engaged in official "glamorous" events may also run a parallel "behind-the-scenes" commentary disclosing "insider information" from the Influencer's point of view. An example would be captures of influencers in dressing rooms being dolled up by make up artistes and hairdressers, or teasers of potential outfits soliciting followers' opinions. When juxtaposed against the exclusive and glamorous opportunities (i.e. interactions with public personalities and mainstream celebrities, high fashion shoots with expensive labels, previews and media screenings at events) in which influencers engage, these "behind-the-scenes" portrayals of ordinary and relatable everyday life gives followers the impression that they are privy to the private, usually inaccessible aspects of influencers' lives.

In other words, influencers are "more interesting than actors because they are perceived to represent commonality" (Danesi 2008:225). Thus, unlike the flexible corporate workers in Gregg's (2011) study who experience an invasive intimacy as an undesired consequence from working with online technologies, the influencers in this study intentionally use digital media to craft, convey, and sustain intimacies with their followers. Unlike older media like fan magazines and behind-the-scenes entertainment news that are still largely managed by a production crew, published, edited, and distributed after a lag time, the posts put out by influencers are more amateur and raw, and allowed for immediate interactivity and response from followers. Stripped of bureaucratic negotiations and social distance, followers are able to view interactions with influencers as more personal, direct, swift, and thus intimate (boyd 2006).

However, this is not to say that influencers are engaging in full disclosure and have obliterated public/private boundaries, or that they have no concerns over privacy. Instead, influencers aestheticize and package snippets of the "backstage" (Goffman 1990) to present the illusion of an intimate sharing (i.e. a carefully arranged "just got out of bed" selfie, a blogpost about a bad breakup in which only selective but highly emotive aspects are shared).

Perceived Interconnectedness

In their theory of *parasocial relations*, Horton & Wohl (1956) posit that television and radio personalities produce one-sided interpersonal connections and an illusion of intimacy with their audience through conversational small talk that appears informal, casual, and responsive. This is supported by media personalities who appear to mingle with their audience, and give the impression of rapport through the use of media devices and theatrics. What the authors highlight is that parasocial relations enable the audience to cultivate an extensive knowledge of the television or radio personality, without any actual reciprocity involved. As evidenced, influencers enact similar relations with followers through explicit displays of intimacy mediated on blogs and social media platforms, albeit utilising a different structural rubric.

With the affordances of social media platforms, influencers directly control their self-representation and interactions with followers by extending revelations into the backstage "behind the scenes" and the use of personal voice (boyd 2006; Lövheim 2010) to convey intimacy. The pace, quantity, and wide circulation of their social media posts among followers contributes to the impression that influencers are constantly sharing aspects of their personal lives with followers. Moreover, followers are often invited to interact with influencers (i.e. "Ask me anything on this hashtag and I will compile an AMA video[7]!"), to contribute to the curation of Influencer content from informal polls (i.e. "Should I do part two of my Christmas holiday or blog about recent events first? Comment to let me know!"), and to improve Influencer content through solicited feedback (i.e. sidebar polls on blogs). As earlier iterated, the intimacies negotiated are impressions that are felt by followers as opposed to whether or not these intimacies are actually "authentic" or "genuine". Hence, I use of the modifier "perceived" (in contrast with "actual") in branding the model of perceived interconnectedness.

In a separate paper (Abidin 2013), I investigate followers' expectations of influencers, the tension this invites into the social lives of influencers, and influencers' motivations for staying in the industry. Specifically, I detailed how the practice of perceived interconnectedness has resulted in social tensions in influencers' personal lives as: immediacy (need for short response time), constancy (need for responses around the clock), exclusivity (need for personalised attention and responses), intimacy (need to foster feeling of familiarity), and quality (need to produce thoughtful responses). In reaction, influencers cope by: disregarding haters, publicly shaming haters, adapting to readers' demands, drawing topical boundaries, and demarcating work and leisure hours. Despite these drawbacks, influencers are motivated to continue their personae

management because they accept these tensions as part of their job, give in to the pressure to perform well, and derive a sense of satisfaction from their work.

In this paper, I have analysed how influencers appropriate and mobilise different types of intimacies with the use of digital technologies. Drawing on my ethnographic evaluations and Horton & Wohl's (1956) notion of parasocial relations, this section builds a model of communication through which influencers convey intimacies, that I term perceived interconnectedness. In comparing perceived interconnectedness to parasocial relations, I look at seven distinctions: medium (where communication takes place), primary strategy (how communication mainly is achieved), origin of strategy (who controls the primary strategy), organisation of actors (how producers and audiences relate to each other), authority of dissemination (who controls communication), flow of dialogue (how communication runs between producers and audiences), and conversational structure (how communication is configured among producers and audiences). The primary distinctions between parasocial relations and perceived interconnectedness are tabulated as follows:

Element	Parasocial Relations	Perceived Interconnectedness
Medium	TV/radio technology	Social media platforms
Primary strategy	Theatrics	Intimacies
Origin of strategy	Constructed by producer	Co-constructed by producer and audience
Organisation of actors	Hierarchical	Flat
Authority of dissemination	Broadcast	Interactive
Flow of dialogue	Unidirectional	Bi-directional
Conversational structure	One-to-many	One-to-many, One-to-one

Parasocial Relations is mediated via a more rigid infrastructure of TV/radio technology, which stimulates a hierarchical organisation of actors where TV/radio personalities control the discursive dialogue. The information disseminated is broadcast top-down,

there is low reciprocity since viewers are unlikely to respond in a unidirectional flow of content, and the structure is one-to-many. Parasocial Relations is constructed on the back of the TV/radio personality at the production backend, and primarily engages in theatrics to sustain itself.

In contrast, perceived interconnectedness is mediated via a more democratic and equalising infrastructure of social media platforms, which stimulate a flat organisation of actors where influencers and followers co-produce and shape the conversation. The information disseminated is interactive and malleable, given that there is high reciprocity in a bidirectional conversation that is simultaneously one-to-many (as when influencers publish posts to hundreds of thousands of fans) and one-to-one (as when influencers favourite, repost, or reply to individual responses from readers via Tweets, Instagram comments, blog replies, or personal emails). Perceived interconnectedness is co-constructed by influencers and followers, and primarily engages in intimacy strategies to sustain itself.

Conclusion

The allure of influencers is premised on the ways they engage with their followers to give the impression of exclusive, "intimate" exchange through digital and physical space interactions, where "intimacy" is emically understood to be how familiar and close followers feel to an Influencer. Unlike mainstream celebrities in traditional media industries, lifestyle influencers are everyday, ordinary Internet users whose lives "as lived" are the central themes of their output, wherein followers are privy to what appears to be genuine, raw, and usually inaccessible aspects of influencers' personal lives. In this paper, I have demonstrated how influencers appropriate and mobilise four types of intimacies with followers: commercial, interactive, reciprocal, and disclosive. Following from this and drawing on Horton & Wohl's parasocial relations, I described a model of perceived interconnectedness through which influencers convey intimacies to followers.

Unlike earlier models of intimacy labour in which women actors engage in conjugal relationships and domestic labour (Constable 2009) or customer service (Hochschild 1983), in which producers practice distance from their audience (Marwick & boyd 2011), and in which flexible corporate workers experience unintended intimacies as a consequence of online technologies (Gregg 2011), influencers chiefly engage in displays and impressions of intimacy towards their followers in order to convey the closeness and relatability upon which the success of their advertorials lies. It is noted that this

intimacy labour is not without tensions and drawbacks (Abidin 2013), however influencers are ultimately motivated by "underlying commercial interests" (Abidin & Thompson 2012:472) and expend effort to maintain impressions of intimacies with followers. Additionally, unlike older media like fan magazines and behind-the-scenes entertainment news which entail bureaucratic production processes and a lag time before publication, influencers' posts are personal, direct, and swift, and allow for immediate interactivity and response from followers. Together, these DIY strategies constitute the model of perceived interconnectedness through which influencers can communicate intimacies to their followers.

Bibliography

Abidin, C., Thompson, E.C. (2012). "Buymylife.com: Cyberfemininities and Commercial Intimacy in Blogshops", *Women's Studies International Forum* 35:467-477.

Abidin, C. (2013). "Cyber-BFFs: Assessing women's 'perceived interconnectedness' in Singapore's commercial lifestyle blog industry", *Global Media Journal Australian Edition* 7(1).

Abidin, C. (2014). #In$tagLam: Instagram as a repository of taste, a brimming marketplace, a war of eyeballs. *Mobile Media Making in the Age of Smartphones*, Marsha Berry & Max Schleser (eds), pp.119-128, Palgrave Pivot.

Baym, N. (2012). Fans of friends?: Seeing social media audiences as musicians do. *Participations* 9(2):286-316.

boyd, d. (2006). A Blogger's Blog: Exploring the Definition of a Medium. *Reconstruction: Studies in contemporary culture* 6(4).

Chiew, K. (2009). From blog to riches. *The Straits Times*, April 28, INS p. 8.

Chung, G. (2010). Net Worth. 2010. *The Straits Times*, June 25, URBAN p. 13, p. 14.

Constable, N. (2009). The commodification of intimacy: Marriage, sex, and reproductive labor. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 48:39–64.

Cordeiro, C.M. & S. Al-Hawamdeh. (2001). National Information Infrastructure and the realization of Singapore IT2000 initiative. *Information Research* 6(2):1-25.

Danesi, M. (2008). *Popular culture: Introductory perspectives.* Lanham (MD): Rowman and Littlefield.

Duffy, Brooke Erin. (2015). The romance of work: Gender and aspirational labour in the digital culture industries. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* pp1-17.

Glaser, B.G., and A.L. Strauss. (1968). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.* Weidenfeld and Nicolson: London.

Goffman, E. (1990). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* Doubleday, New York.

Gregg, M. (2011). *Work's Intimacy.* Polity Press: Cambridge.

Hochschild, A.R. (1983). *The managed heart; Commercialisation of human feeling.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Horton, D. & R.R. Wohl. (1956). Mass Communication and Para-social Interaction. *Psychiatry* 19(3): 215-229. Republished in *Particip@tions* 3(1), viewed 15 June 2013 from <**http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Modules/TF33120/horton_and_wohl_1956.html** (http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Modules/TF33120/horton_and_wohl_1956.html) >

iDA. (2015). "Infocomm Usage – Households and Individuals", viewed 18 July 2015 from <**http://www.ida.gov.sg/Tech-Scene-News/Facts-and-Figures/Infocomm-Usage-Households-and-Individuals** (http://www.ida.gov.sg/Tech-Scene-News/Facts-and-Figures/Infocomm-Usage-Households-and-Individuals) >

Lövheim, M. (2010). Young Swedish Female Top-Bloggers and the Performance of Authentic Selves. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Suntec City, Singapore,* Jun 21, 2010.

Mahizhnan, A. (1999). "Smart cities: The Singapore case". *Cities* 16(1):13-18.

Marwick, A. & d boyd. (2011). "To see and be seen: Celebrity practice on Twitter", *Convergence* 17(2):139-158.

Ng, M. (2009). "Model owners." *The Straits Times,* September 27, LIFE p. 6.

Turkle, S. (2008). "Always-on/Always-on-you: The tethered self", in *Handbook of mobile communication studies,* J.E. Katz (ed.), pp.121-137. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wong, S.H. (1992). "Exploiting Information Technology: A Case Study of Singapore". *World Development* 20(12):1817-1828.

YourSingapore. (2013). "Vibrance in the City", viewed 30 April 2013 from <**http://www.yoursingapore.com/content/traveller/en/browse/aboutsingapore/key-facts.html** (http://www.yoursingapore.com/content/traveller/en/browse/aboutsingapore/key-facts.html) >

[1]For a case study on how Instagram use is integrated in the Influencer industry in Singapore, see Abidin 2014

[2]A creole of Singaporean English

[3]In Singapore, the digital platforms most utilised by influencers are blogs (Blogger, LiveJournal, WordPress), AskFM, Facebook, Formspring, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube

[4]See also Duffy 2015 on a related but distinct notion of "aspirational labour" in her work on amateur creative workers in the fashion, beauty, and retail industries

[5]i.e. terms of endearment, girl talk, emoji and emoticon use

[6]i.e. hugs, group selfies, gift exchanges

[7]Ask Me Anything video: A genre of vlogs proliferating on YouTube in which vloggers solicit and compile questions from viewers, and respond to them in the style of a talking head via a dedicated vlog

Footnotes

1. For a case study on how Instagram use is integrated in the Influencer industry in Singapore, see Abidin 2014.

2. A creole of Singaporean English.

3. In Singapore, the digital platforms most utilised by influencers are blogs (Blogger, LiveJournal, WordPress), AskFM, Facebook, Formspring, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube.

4. See also Duffy 2015 on a related but distinct notion of "aspirational labour" in her work on amateur creative workers in the fashion, beauty, and retail industries.

5. i.e. terms of endearment, girl talk, emoji and emoticon use.

6. i.e. hugs, group selfies, gift exchanges.

7. Ask Me Anything video: A genre of vlogs proliferating on YouTube in which vloggers solicit and compile questions from viewers, and respond to them in the style of a talking head via a dedicated vlog.

This article has been openly peer reviewed at **Ada Review** (http://adareview.fembotcollective.org/ada-issue-8-gender-globalization-and-the-digital/perceived-interconnectedness-and-web-intimacy-in-womens-lifestyle-blogging/) .

BLOGGING   INFLUENCERS   INTIMACY   PEER REVIEWED   SINGAPORE
SOCIAL MEDIA

Crystal Abidin (https://adanewmedia.org/author/crystalabidin)
Crystal Abidin is a 4th year PhD Candidate in Anthropology & Sociology, and Communication & Media Studies at the University of Western Australia (UWA). She was previously a visiting doctoral fellow at the Media Management and Transformation Centre

(MMTC) at Jönköping University (JU), and a visiting researcher at the Digital Ethnography Research Centre (DERC) at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT).

4 THOUGHTS ON "COMMUNICATIVE ♥ INTIMACIES: INFLUENCERS AND PERCEIVED INTERCONNECTEDNESS"

Pingback: **Now live: Ada Issue no.8, Globalization, Gender and the Digital I.**

Pingback: **When exploiting kids for cash goes wrong on YouTube: the lessons of DaddyOFive – Tama Leaver dot Net**

Pingback: **When exploiting kids for cash goes wrong on YouTube • The Medical RepublicThe Medical Republic**

Pingback: **Not just another Gangnam Style: Framing politics and internet celebrity in East Asia**