An International Study of Tech Help Networks
Human Agency Towards Digital Inclusion

& How It Can Be Applied in a C-19 World

Midwest Chinese American Librarians Association
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Problem: Capitalism is global phenom. Information society too. But is science truly global?

- Profound gap in understanding of grassroots
- Libraries suggest big changes underway
- Research not keeping up

Have you helped others with tech? | Count | %
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Yes | 25 | 33%
No | 51 | 67%
Focus of our research, teaching, service since 1990s
Opportunity: Organize our own studies

• Friend networks, colleagues, workshops to attract interest
• Students want more than books; want real world
• We overcome research funds shortage with social capital and motivation
Mutual assistance is a kind of good nature of human beings, and it is also a good informal institutional arrangement in the field of social assistance. On the way to the snowy mountain during the Long March, when a Red Army soldier ran out of food, others around him would share him some. Nowadays in the information society, ICT has gradually become a necessity for everyone. Bridging the digital divide also requires a good role in the various community mutual aid mechanisms. It is a very meaningful job to investigate the mutual help experience of various types of people in the process of ICT access and use. It will play an important role in bridging the digital divide, enhancing the quality and competence of each member of society, and promoting global reach and cooperation, and furthermore the development of community informatics.

互助是人类的一种善良天性，也是社会保障和社会救济领域一种非常好的非正式的制度安排。万里长征过雪山草地途中当某个红军战士断粮时身边其他战士都会匀给他一些粮食。在今天信息社会，ICT也逐渐成为每个人的生活必需品。缩小数字鸿沟也非常需要发挥好各种群体互助机制的作用。调查各类人群在ICT接入和使用过程中的互助经历，是一件很有意义的工作。它将为缩小数字鸿沟、提升每个社会成员的素质能力以及推动全球范围和合作，促进社群信息学的发展发挥重要的作用。

— Professor Lai Maosheng, Peking University
What we did: planning, workshop, field work

- Field manual
- 28 people at workshop
- IRB application, translation
- 10 researchers and their students in China, US, Norway, Czech Republic, Philippines, India: N > 350
- Everyone did 1-2 interviews and offered tech help
Now, in our C-19 world

1. How are we impacted?
2. How can we make a difference?
3. How can we learn faster?
4. And tell others?

Let’s discuss!