

# Does Cyberspace Facilitate or Hinder the Development Process in Cambodia?

Ean Sokserei\*

Third Place Winner of Essay Contest 2017

Cyberspace metaphorically is a Central Nervous System (CNS) in human head where it stores multifaceted information and transmits messages to different parts of the entire body system. Therefore, it provides human with a capacity to interact with one another and conduct certain activities. In technical term, cyberspace is a domain where digital or computer-based data are stored, modified, and exchanged through virtual network system and incorporated with physical infrastructures. It creates interconnectivity of human relationships through the use of digital devices, computers, and telecommunication regardless of physical geography (Cox, 2008). In this twenty first century known as the age of technology, cyberspace has significantly transformed the way people come into contact with one another; thus, has undeniably contributed to the development of many countries in the world. It has been increasingly making the world more connected and globalized as never before since communication among peoples across the globe become much more convenient and incredibly faster. In many well-developed countries, for example, the Netherland's service-oriented economy considerably gains from the development of Internet and Communication Technology (ICT) and Digital technology (Gijsbers & Veenendaal, 2011). Meanwhile, telecommunication services in Cambodia, specifically telephone, and internet access have been reached by 94 percent and more than 30 percent of the population respectively (Phong & Sola, 2015; Paula Burito & Ouch, 2015). Thus, it is noticeable that cyberspace is also

growingly playing an important role in the development process of Cambodia, particularly in economic and socio-political sectors.

In terms of economic facet, cyberspace together with information infrastructures have become an indispensable asset which fosters the grow of e-commerce and internet-based services. In recent years, online businesses and services have been spreading quite dramatically across the country. It is noteworthy that Facebook has become a second most popular platform for Cambodians to access to various information and commercial promotion. On the screen, people can easily get exposed to a variety of products and services provided by different firms while the firms themselves can also reach out to a greater number of targeted customers beyond local scale. Moreover, Facebook and other e-commerce websites have provided both online business owners and customers with the ability to communicate with one another to make their transaction go smoothly with an efficient cost that both of them can gain more than before. This new trend has created an emerging wave of digitalized enterprises and technological innovation development in Cambodia. Moreover, banking services also rely heavily on the cyberspace or the use of the internet. Without cyberspace, the whole process of monetary flow would be frozen or slowing down, and people would not be able to issue their payment promptly via the internet. Instead, with the use of cyberspace, electronic banking services would ensure the efficiency as well as the security of the transactions. In addition, the availability of the access to cyberspace in the

\*Ean Sokserei is a fresh graduate from Institute of Foreign Languages, Royal University of Phnom Penh, majoring in International Studies.

country would also attract more foreign investments since it provides them with capacity to conduct their businesses in the right path of technological innovations on the global scale. Therefore, it is clear that cyberspace is playing an important role in facilitating the economic activities, which would eventually boost the productivity of Cambodia's economy.

Regarding socio-political sectors, cyberspace is indeed a requisite facet in the development process of the country. Cyberspace, particularly the internet, has provided people with a broader arena for exercising their civil and political rights in terms of expressing their opinions and receiving information. The fact that cyberspace efficiently facilitates the exchange of information and ideas across the globe substantially contributes the cross-cultural understanding and global mindset of the peoples. In Cambodia, Social Networking System such as Facebook has given us an insight into the diversity of cultures and traditions in different societies through people-to-people interaction and dissemination of information from all over the world. The presence of cyberspace, in particular the internet and telecommunication have underpinned the social structure that allows individuals to get connected with one another in a quick and easy way despite geographical distances. This would enable Cambodian people to develop a healthy relationship with a sense of belonging to their nations as well as the globalized world. Furthermore, cyberspace is also playing an advancing role in the field of education. Through the use of internet, people can search for the information and scholarly existing literatures or research study they needed via plenty of websites available on the cyberspace. Meanwhile, there are a considerable number of online courses for people, especially students to learn new skills and knowledge at home or other convenient places. In addition, the advancement of cyberspace also encourages people to embrace the notion of civic engagement by serving as platform for civil society

groups and government to raise social awareness among the people who can get access to information it deposits. For instance, the United Nations Volunteer in Cambodia has been using Social Networking System such as Facebook to promote volunteerism across the country for fostering the development of Cambodia. Thus, cyberspace has helped Cambodia generate more human resources needed for its on-going development process.

In conclusion, cyberspace is inevitably an indispensable factor facilitating Cambodia's development process, especially in economic and socio-political sectors. As mentioned above, cyberspace provides Cambodian people not only with a cost-effective method to generate profits while saving their resources and time but also allows them to enhance their knowledge, which could further produce more human resources necessary for the development of Cambodia as a whole. In spite of the fact that cybersecurity is also another important factor that Cambodia should not overlook in order to ensure fruitful consequences from the use of cyberspace, it is clear that there is a prospect for further advancement of cyberspace contributing to a more developed Cambodia. Therefore, the government together with the people should learn more about the advancement of cyberspace and utilize it productively to bring about positive impacts to the society for the betterment of development process in Cambodia in such a globalized world.

## References


Cox, J. (2008, January). *Definition: Cyberspace*. Retrieved from <http://searchmicroservices.techtarget.com/definition/cyberspace>


Gijsbers, K. & Veenendaal, M. (2011). *Protecting the National Interests in Cyberspace*. Retrieved from [http://journal.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/191\\_gj124\\_Gijsbers-CYBER-2011.pdf](http://journal.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/191_gj124_Gijsbers-CYBER-2011.pdf)

Phong, K., & Sola, J. (2015). *Mobile Phone and Internet in Cambodia 2015*. *Asia Foundation*. Retrieved from <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/MobilePhonesinCB2015.pdf>

Phaula Burito, M., & Ouch, S. (2015). *One-Third of Cambodians Now Online Thanks to Mobile Phone*. *Cambodia Daily*. Retrieved from <https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/one-third-of-cambodians-now-online-thanks-to-mobile-phones-79547/>


 Cambodia Development Center



 Cambodia Development Center (@cdcenter\_kh)

 Cambodia Development Center (@cd.centerkh)

 Cambodia Development Center

 Cambodia Development Center

 Building E, University of Puthisastra, #55, Street 180-184, Sangkat Boeung Raing, Khan Daun Penh

 [info@cd-center.com](mailto:info@cd-center.com) |  (+855) 16 616 951

