

Our Future

1. Our children will grow up in a completely different world
 - a. We have to prepare them and our society for this
2. One of the biggest changes that will affect us– the internet
 - a. New media is pervasive and fast-moving
 - b. Everyone is plugged in and connected
 - c. People are blogging, engaging one another, organising themselves online, and doing politics online
 - d. From “Grassroots” to “Netroots”
 - e. Happening worldwide
3. America
 - a. Current US election campaign
 - b. John McCain is present on the internet, even though he says he does not know how to use a computer (*Slide 1*)
 - c. Barack Obama – internet is a key part of his campaign
 - i. Home page – “Change we can believe in”
 - ii. Younger Americans are highly energised
 - iii. They are helping him to run the system
 - (1) e.g. Chris Hughes (24, a founder of Facebook) joined Obama’s campaign
 - (2) Using Facebook technology to link up, mobilise and organise supporters all over the country
 - iv. Raising funds online
 - (1) “Donate now”

(2) More than 1.5 million people have donated – small amounts individually, but cumulatively a huge boost to his campaign

v. Rebutting attackers on “Fight the Smears”

4. Korea – world’s most wired country

a. Internet has had a major impact on Korean politics

b. Empowered new groups

i. e.g. mass access to the internet helped President Lee Myung-bak to win resoundingly in Dec 2007

c. But also created rapidly changing moods in the population

i. Within a few months, President Lee was under siege

ii. Mass demonstrations and protests

d. One issue – mad cow disease

i. Fanned by rumours on the internet

(1) “94% of Koreans have a gene which predisposes them to mad cow disease”

(2) “Cow products are used to make pampers, which gives babies who wear them mad cow disease”

ii. Videos and pictures circulated online and worked people up

e. President Lee calls it “infodemics”

i. Anonymous false information on the internet

ii. Creating discontent and unhappiness which spread like an epidemic in the real world

f. One Korean newspaper called this “mad cow madness”

5. Malaysia

a. Internet has become an active space for information and engagement

- i. Lively debate and serious contributions, together with more doubtful stuff
 - (1) On blogs and chatrooms
 - (2) On alternative news sites, e.g. Malaysiakini
 - ii. Politicians themselves participate actively in cyberspace
 - (1) Cyberspace personalities entered politics, e.g. Jeff Ooi
 - iii. In recent elections
 - (1) Mass of materials circulated through blogs, SMS and YouTube
 - (2) Public went into cyberspace to get what they could not get in mainstream media
 - (3) Opposition campaigned widely in cyberspace
 - (4) BN was also present, although not to the same extent
 - b. Election was not just about the new media
 - i. It was about real life politics
 - (1) Opposition raised many hot issues in *ceramahs*
 - (2) e.g. rising costs of living, poor public service delivery, and perceived inequalities in the government's policies
 - ii. But these issues were picked up in the new media, and amplified through viral distribution
6. Even in China
- a. World's largest number of internet users – more than America
 - b. After Sichuan earthquake, netizens mobilised to collect funds and show support (*Slide 10*)
 - c. Leaders are engaging on the new media
 - i. President Hu Jintao held his first web chat recently

7. In Singapore too, the new media is a big thing
 - a. Talked about this two years ago
 - b. We have moved further on since then
 - i. More than 80% of homes have broadband access
 - ii. 6 million handphone accounts – more handphone accounts than babies per person!
 - c. Young people are totally immersed in this medium
 - i. Reading print newspapers less
 - (1) Getting information and discussing issues online, e.g. ST, CNA and my websites
 - ii. Organising interest groups
 - iii. Writing their own content and sharing it with others
 - d. All this has changed how the Government works
 - i. Many services online, 24/7
 - (1) From passport renewals to incorporating a new business
 - ii. Communicating with and engaging Singaporeans online
 - (1) Not just putting out video clips
 - (2) Two way process
 - iii. REACH
 - (1) At the forefront of this
 - (2) Lively exchanges on its website – blogs, online chats etc
 - (3) Also active participation on Facebook
 - (4) Lots of discussion on cost of living, ERP, babies etc – useful feedback for this NDR

8. It will also change the way we conduct our politics
 - a. We have to adapt, get used to it, and turn it to positive effect
 - b. Use it to inform, educate, debate and engage
 - c. Each of us must learn how to be savvy cyber-citizens
 - i. Be discerning about what you see on the net
 - ii. Distinguish between what is true and false
 - iii. Set prudent limits to flag problems and avoid excesses
 - iv. Participate actively but do not get swept away
 - v. Do not catch mad cow madness
 - d. Our rules governing politics must keep up to date too