



The School of Journalism & Communication

Tsinghua University

Online Identity Politics

the observation of resistance identity
of networked users

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Outline

- 1. Concept: Networked Users
- 2. Literature: BBS, user and Identity
- 3. Case: SMTH BBS in regulation issue
- 4. Background & process of the regulation
- 5. The Fight: reactions by the users
- 6. So what: lose/lose situation
- 7. Analysis: behaviors of networked users
- 8. Conclusion



1. Concept: Networked Users

- The concept of “audience” is historical, dynamic and constructed
- Audience activity (Biocca, 1998; McQuail, 1997)
- Shift from audience to user (Livingstone, 2004)
- “Networked Users” as a new perspective on audience research



1. Concept: Networked Users

- “networked society” (Castells,2000)
- “networked users”
 - It refers to the open, extensive and interactive **social network** which takes ICT as the agent, and regards individual user as the **node**
 - It is built on certain **identity**, “fandom” or common interests/topics, strengthened and expanded by information interflow and interactions among the users



1. Concept: Networked Users

■ “networked users”

- An individual user belongs to **multiple networks**. Different networks interrelate because of the **overlap** of node/user, with information and meaning circulate among them
- different nodes/users have **different functions and status** in the network. Those nodes which have more connections and perform more actively in the information flow are usually in the center or of great importance



1. Concept: Networked Users

- Difference between the "networked users" and the audience as a group in previous theories
 - "rediscovery of the group" :primary group, obstinate audience, opinion leader, interpretative group ...
 - the “networks” are **generated** during the process of the exposure and usage of the **media**, and **changes** with the behavior of the users



2. Literature: BBS, user and Identity

■ BBS

- Few about the regulation issue: in “ideology education” field
- Rich and colorful perspectives

■ Users

- Networked Users as the key factor of BBS
- BBS legacy in Web2.0 movement



2. Literature: BBS, user and Identity

■ Identity

- Castells (1997): “the source of meaning and experience of human”; legitimizing identity, resistance identity, and project identity
- **Resistance identity**: “those actors that are in positions/conditions devalued and or/stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society”
- “life on the screen may be play, but it is very serious play” (Turkle, 1995)
- Zapatista movement (Castells, 1997; Russell, 2005)



3. Case: SMTH BBS in regulation issue

- Analyze the behavior of the networked users and the effects
- Extreme but well exhibits the difference...
- Methodology:
 - Interpretive paradigm;
 - Case study;
 - Ethnography methods: field observation, face-to-face/online interview, experience
 - Text analysis.



What is SMTH BBS

- BBS is one of the most active Internet applications in China during the last ten years. In early 2007, more than 50 million people, approximately 36.9% of Chinese Internet users, are constantly using BBS
- SMTH BBS (<http://www.smth.edu.cn>)
 - One of the biggest and most famous BBS in CERNET (China Education and Research Network), based in Tsinghua Univ.
 - Set up in 1995, more than 500 discussion boards, 300,000 registered users.
 - The users resisted the regulation in lots of ways.
 - Most of them denied the use of SMTH and continued their virtual life in NewSMTH



旧水

F连接 E编辑 V界面 I工具 L语言 S脚本 O选项 H帮助

阅读 工具 BBS

水木清华

SMTH

欢迎莅临BBS水木清华站

telnet:166.111.8.238 http://smth.edu.cn

本站试运行IPv6服务 telnet:2001:DA8:200:100::238 http://6smth.edu.cn

北京通信管理局ICP备案号 (京ICP备020002号)

欢迎光临 ◆BBS 水木清华站◆ 上线人数 3973[最高: 23674](3286 WWW GUEST)

试用请输入 'guest', 注册请输入 'new', add '.' after your ID for BIG5

请输入代号:

zixia.net zixia.net 旧水

Connected

WELCOME TO F-TERM



Campus BBS Regulation Issue in 2005

- With more and more college students using BBS, the Ministry of Education of China issued a mandate in March 2005 towards all campus BBS:
 - denying the access of the users whose IP is out of campus
 - establishing real-name policy and shutting down several BBSes directly.
 - Almost one million BBSers were involved in this issue.



4. Background of the regulation

- Rapid development of Internet, booming of e-economy and more people participation.
- Chinese government leaders showed their attention and support to online expression of public opinion.
- The government also enhanced the control over Internet
- “enhance and improve the ideological education of college students”



4. Process of the regulation

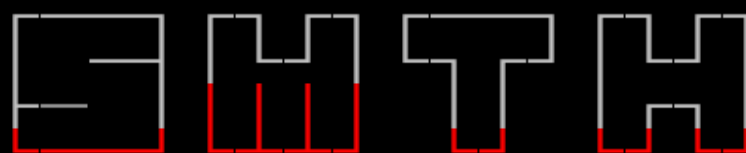
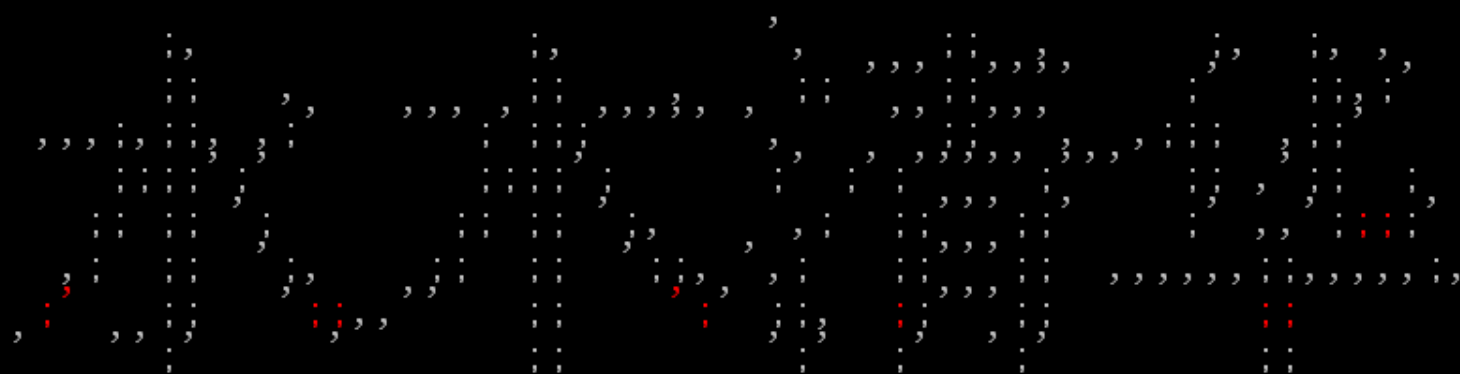
- The ownership of SMTH?
 - Tradition and history of **autonomy**
 - SMTH Administrative Committee (SAC) :operator of SMTH from volunteer users
 - the Network Research Center of Tsinghua University (NRCOTU) : the “legal” operator of SMTH



4. Process of the regulation

■ four steps

- Mar.16,2005: NRCOTU implemented **router-block**, users outside the campus found them could not access SMTH.
- Mar.18,2005: three people working for NRCOTU got the **SYSOP power**.
- Apr.14,2005: the real **physical “take-over”** (NRCOTU workers entered the room that hosted SMTH server machine, and removed the cables connecting the data hard drive stand. The hard drive stand was then reconnected to another machine where they had absolute root privileges).
- Apr.15,2005: **SAC** made **resignation** and statement; NRCOTU took over their work.



从即日起，BBS水木清华站由开放型转为校内型，限制校外IP访问。

清华大学 2005.3.16

欢迎光临 ◆BBS 水木清华站◆ 上线人数 6069[最高: 23674](936 WWW GUEST)
请输入代号(试用请输入 'guest', 暂停注册新帐号, add '.' after your ID for BIG5
请输入代号:



从即日起，BBS水木清华站由开放型转为校内型，
限制校外IP访问。

清华大学 2005年3月16日

BBS

水木清华站

用户名

密码

[登录] [匿名] 

2005.03.16



5. The Fight: reactions by the users

- **82.3%** (more than 200,000) of SMTH users are from the outside of Tsinghua campus
- Three categories of reactions by SMTH users
 - Online reactions within SMTH
 - 3/16~3/18
 - 3/18~4/14
 - Post 4/14
 - Online reactions outside SMTH
 - Offline reactions
- They were Intervening and inter-determined



5.1 Online reactions within SMTH

- By in-campus users
- Once fragmental and diverse groups with niche interests and hobbies became united
- Three phases:
 - 3/16~3/18: emotional but reasonable
 - 3/18~4/14: follow media agenda
 - Post-4/14: carnival-like destruction



5.1 Online reactions within SMTH

- 3/16~3/18: Expressed their views with great emotion, still reasonable
 - Original well-written essays;
 - New nickname, new signing message and new “about-me” information.
 - Several hundreds new greeting pages in ASCII art;
 - Call users’ attention
 - frame their thoughts
 - decide the key of their behaviors

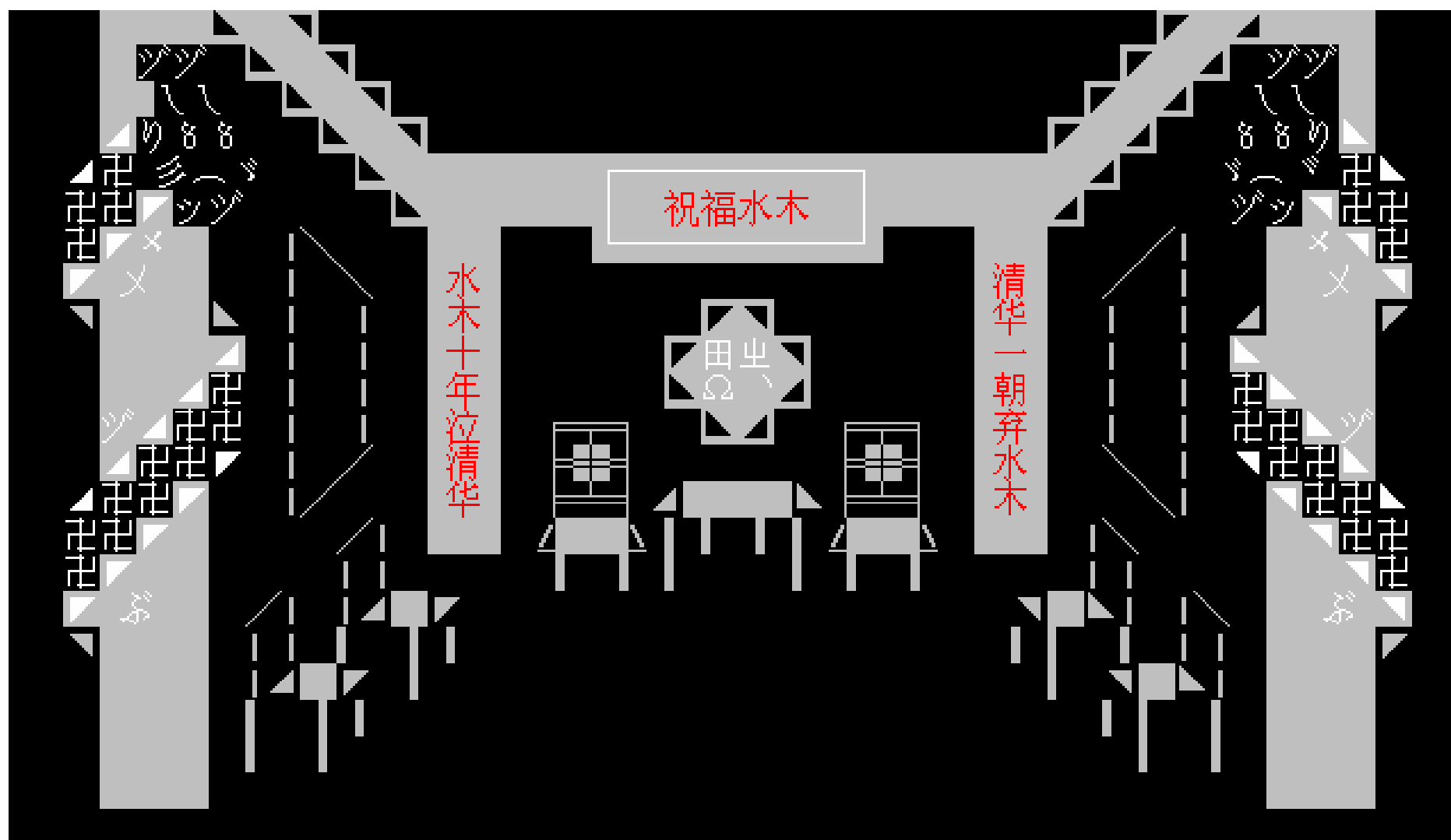


SMTH “dpim”



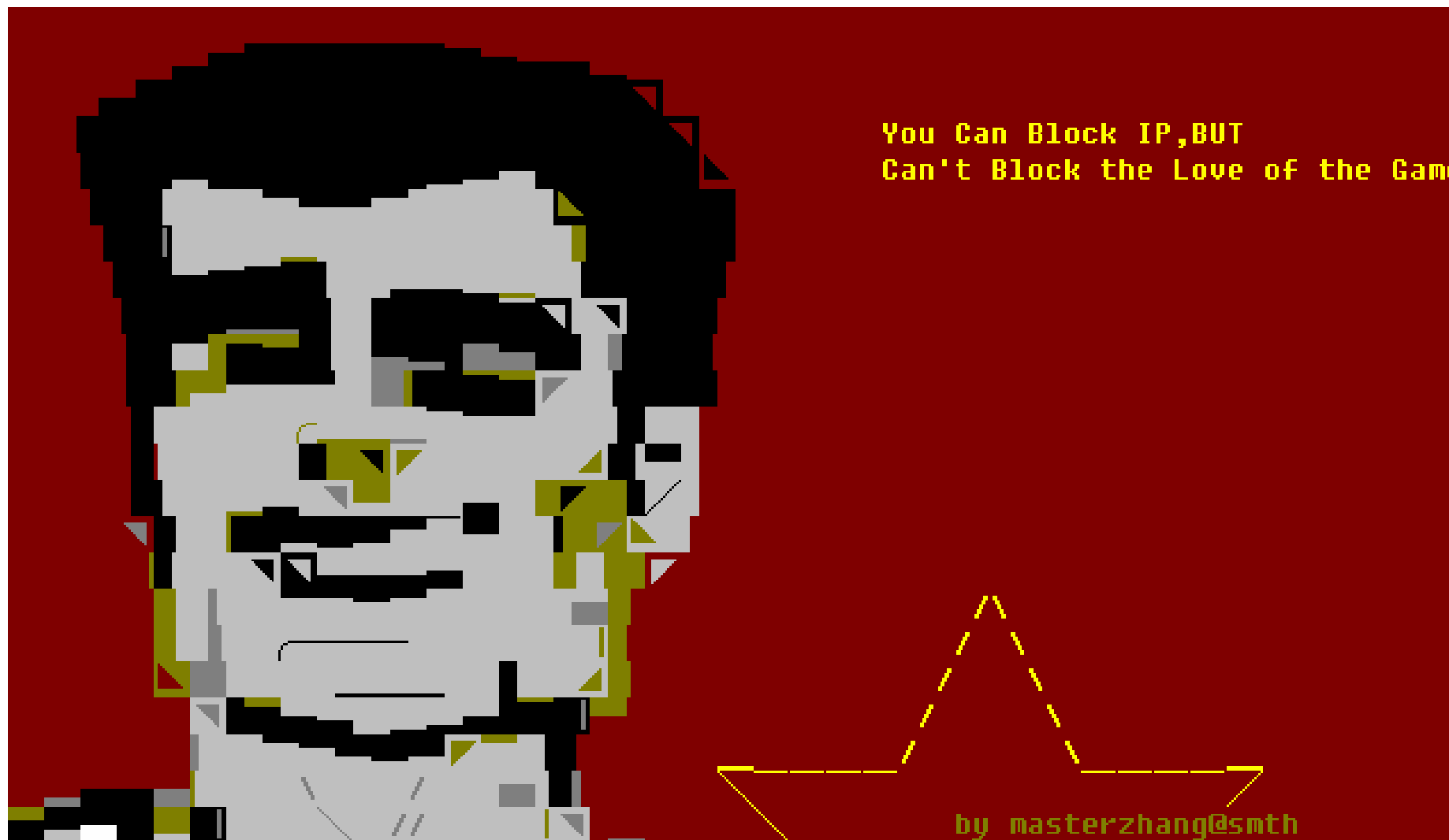


SMTH “ASCIIstudio”



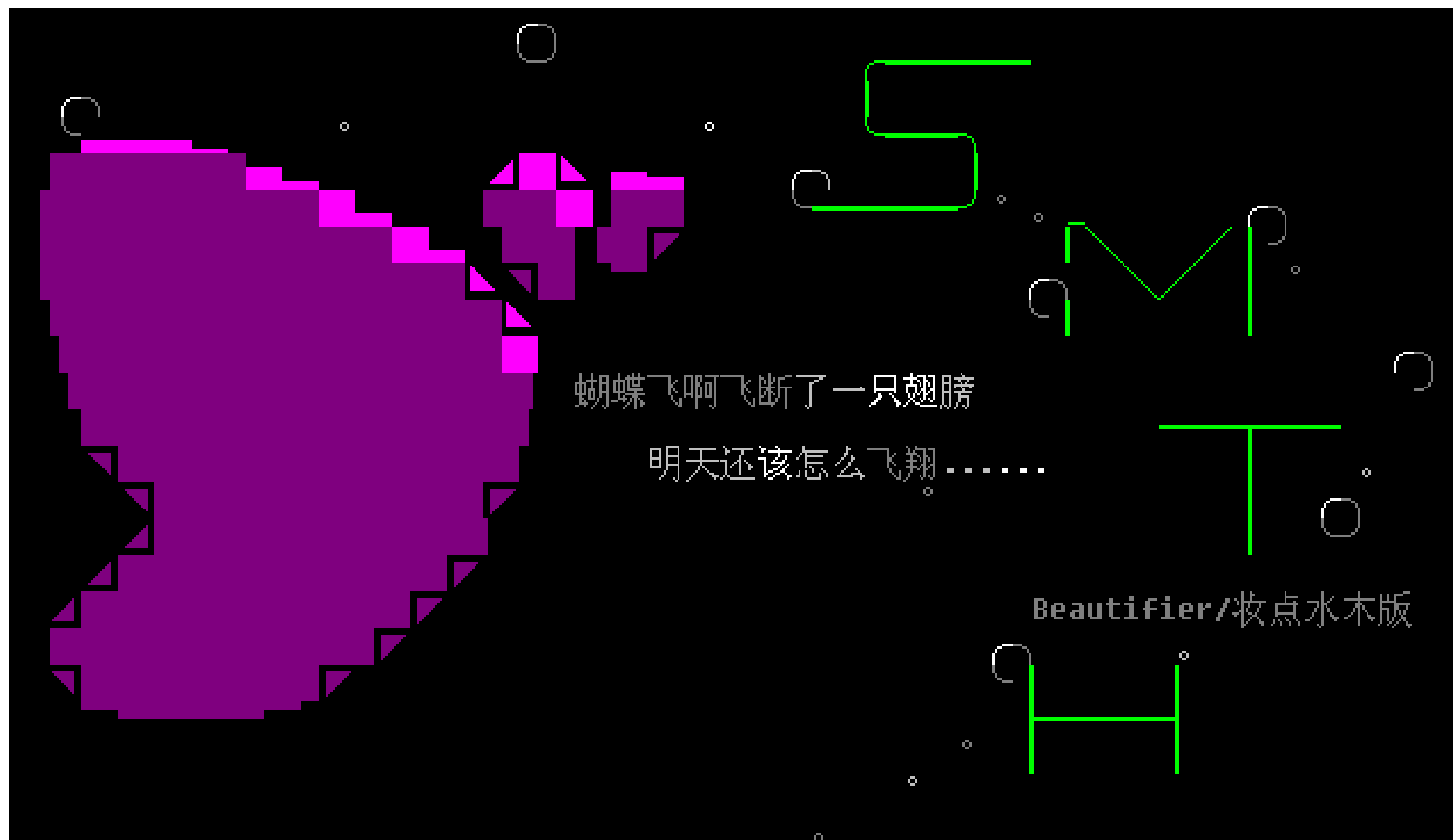


SMTH “basketball”





SMTH “beautiflier”





SMTH “stonestory”

石頭記

红楼梦

桃李明年能再发，
明年闺中知有谁？
三月香巢已垒成，
梁间燕子太无情！
明年花发虽可啄，
却不道人去梁空巢也倾。

梦版存知己，天涯若比邻



SMTH “braveheart”

WILLIAM WALLACE:

Aye, Fight and you may die.
Run and you will live, at least a while.
And dying in your beds many years from now,
Would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that,
For one chance, just one chance,
To come back here and tell our enemies that:
They may take our lives, but they will never take our

FREEDOM

Forever and ever Braveheart



SMTH “langheaven”

Solange mir eine Moeglichkeit offen steht, werde ich mich nur in einem Lande aufhalten, in dem politische Freiheit, Toleranz und Gleichheit aller Buerger vor dem Gesetz herrschen. Zur politischen Freiheit gehoert die Freiheit der muendlichen und schriftlichen Aeusserung politischer ueberzeugung, zur Toleranz die Achtung vor jeglicher ueberzeugung eines Individuums. Diese Bedingunge sind gegenwaertig in Deutschland nicht erfuehlt.

-----A.Einstein
1933.3.10

As long as I have the opportunity I will reside in a country ruled by political freedom, tolerance and equality of all citizens before the law. Political freedom consists of the freedom to articulate one's political opinion, in speech as well as writing. Tolerance means respect towards all forms of opinion of the individual. At present these conditions are not met in Germany.

-----A.Einstein
1933.3.10



SMTH “jlu”

水流花败春临时
木枯枝折雀难栖
清明未至泪已尽
华发早生欲断魂
被衾虽暖心难温
强弩已折空余矢
奸臣当道奈若何
了却身前身后事



5.1 Online reactions within SMTH

- 3/18: media began to report; agenda within SMTH began to follow the media.
- “Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong” and “Quotation Machine ”
 - Satire or nonsense
 - Post-mordernism style



04 京华时报
2005 / 3 / 19

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北京 / 时事

水木BBS调整为校内型

北大未名等高校 BBS 站也已作出类似调整

本报讯 3月16日,清华大学 BBS 水木清华站务委员会发出通知称,该站从当天已由开放型转为校内型,限制校外 IP 访问。

问——校外用户将不能访问 BBS 水木清华站。

本报记者昨日登录多家高校 BBS 后获悉,北京大学、南开

大学、武汉大学等高校的 BBS 均已在近日作出类似调整。其中,有些 BBS 站已经停止了新用户注册,有些则全站进入“只

读状态”。

除了“系统维护”的原因之外,各家高校均未对此事作出进一步的解释。

一名水木清华用户在帖子中称,此次调整是根据教育部相关文件执行的。但该帖子并没有说明是什么文件。

清华大学(水木清华站) 限制校外IP访问

3月16日,打开 BBS 水木清华站,网页中间显示一排红字:“从即日起,BBS 水木清华站由开放型转为校内型,限制校外 IP 访问。”

下午3时40分,水木清华站站务委员会发出《致水木清华站全站用户的一封信》,信中说,水木清华站近期会对开放的 IP 范围进行暂时的调整,校外用户将不能访问 BBS 水木清华站。

信中还说,水木清华十年发展的经验,校外用户对于水木清华站的活力和质量,进而对于彰显清华大学的学术声誉,都有着巨大的贡献。

两个半小时后,一名 ID 叫 KCN 的用户在系统管理员信区发帖子称,此次水木清华 BBS 是按照教育部相关文件要求而进行的调整。该文件要求高校 BBS 必须向实名制下校内交流平台改造,水木清华被要求作为典型实施。为此,清华决



从3月16日起,BBS 水木清华站限制校外 IP 访问。图为该站网页。

北京大学(北大未名站)

3月4日11时30分左右,BBS 北大未名站站务委员会发出公告:“由于近期本站平均及峰值在线人数激增,来自于公众网的访问请求显著增多,为加强系统处

无法匿名浏览网页

一些北大校内学生回忆,从3月5日起,BBS 北大未名站便时常莫名断线,3月6日更是长时间不能连接。3月7日,未名 BBS 基本恢复正常,但校外用户

过多方努力,目前校外网络用户已经可以使用匿名方式访问本站”。至今,校外用户只能匿名浏览 BBS 北大未名站,无法登录留言。

据 BBS 北大未名站相关负责人

南京大学(小百合站) 昨天进入升级期

昨晚,南京大学 BBS 发出公告,在公告中首次使用了“南京大学 BBS 网站”的名称,而没有用传统的名称“南京大学小百合 BBS”。公告中说,BBS 的升级期为昨天,到3月21日24时为止。

公告内容如下:

“现就近期南京大学 BBS 网站系统升级改造的有关事宜做如下说明:1. 南京大学 BBS 网站进行系统升级是一个较为复杂的过程,由此给大家带来了学习、生活等方面的某些不便,敬请谅解。2. 因新系统运行程序与原系统有一定差异,从即日起至3月21日24时止,请各位务必把现在存放于小百合 BBS 网站上的个人文档和其他相关资料下载备份,以防丢失。请将此消息相互转告。3. 热忱欢迎大家一如既往地关心和支持南京大学 BBS 网站。”



Firefox

web2.0 wp host 传播 oversea 链

文件(F) 编辑(E) 查看(V) 转到(G) 书签(B) 工具(T)

http://www.phoenixtv.com/phoenixtv/74311627234607104/20050322/523048.shtml

凤凰卫视 中文台 资讯台 欧洲台 美洲台 电影台 凤凰广告 凤凰周刊 影视基地 简/繁体版

首页 资讯 宽频 节目 娱乐 时尚 论坛 博客 凤凰之声 凤凰无线 凤凰书屋 佛艺博览 凤凰搜索 ENGLISH 观众反馈

鲁豫有约 李敖有话说 秋雨时分 风范大国民 新闻骇客赵少康 投资收藏 解码陈文茜 娱乐风暴 冷暖人生 凤凰卫视节目表



2007年5月19日

关键字

- 请选择 -

搜索

凤凰网 > 凤凰宽频 > 专业点评 > 网罗天下 > 正文

媒体文件

3月22日网罗天下 清华学生自发集会·纪念SMTH BBS



水木清华bbs是中国最稳健保守的bbs，这里的用户恐怕也是全中国学历最高、肩负责任、有时爱国得有点过于热血的人，他们要求的是能说出自己想说的话的权力，而他们想说的话并不是对党、国家、人民利益的反动。

节目归属：凤凰卫视中文台

节目名称：网罗天下

价 格：1.0 元

播出时长：24 分钟

>>播放 >>下载

精彩评论

“凤舞龙翔”恭贺新禧
我对凤凰有“意见”
2005之《名人面对面》旧瓶装新酒
凤凰如何八年成就公信
凤凰，华夏儿女的凤凰
凤凰卫视提供另类选择
这样才是中国人的声音
我的精神家园需要你
凤凰是我的好朋友
戈辉，永远的最爱

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5.1 Online reactions within SMTH

- 4/14: after the physical “take-over” of SMTH, SAC announced that **SMTH were no longer under their control and they could not secure any user’s data**. SMTH began to be called as **“pseudo-SMTH”**
- many users gave up the patience for reasonable dialogue, and chose the carnival-like destruction to the “homeland” they built in the last ten years.



5.1 Online reactions within SMTH

- **Erase discussion board data:** 50+ boards had been totally erased in 24 hours
- **“Irrigation Machine”:** 100+ posts/second
- **Flash mob:** 300+ IDs appeared in given time and posted nearly 400 posts with the same title of “SYS03 *is abolished the right to post*” in “sysop” board.
- **“Prime number list”:** a file of prime number list less than 10^9 . It is about 56Mb. Users used it as the attachment when posting or sending local email. It caused the system of SMTH slow and unstable, even cracked.
- **ID suicide:** totally gives up his/her identity here.



5.1 Online reactions within SMTH

- **Authorization and disclamation:** Some users made *Statement of Authorization and Disclamation* that was drafted out by juristic professionals, in which the users stated that they authorized the BMs and former SAC to delete any post they posted before, and authorized their copyrighted data to be copied or backed up in order to be used in a new SMTH.
- **Resignation of BM:** During the first month after “3/16”, 32 BMs resigned. After 4/14, 119 BMs resigned in five days.
- **Vote with feet:** If the situation could not be changed, users could just leave with feet. Many users begin to continue their virtue life in NewSMTH.

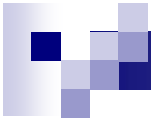
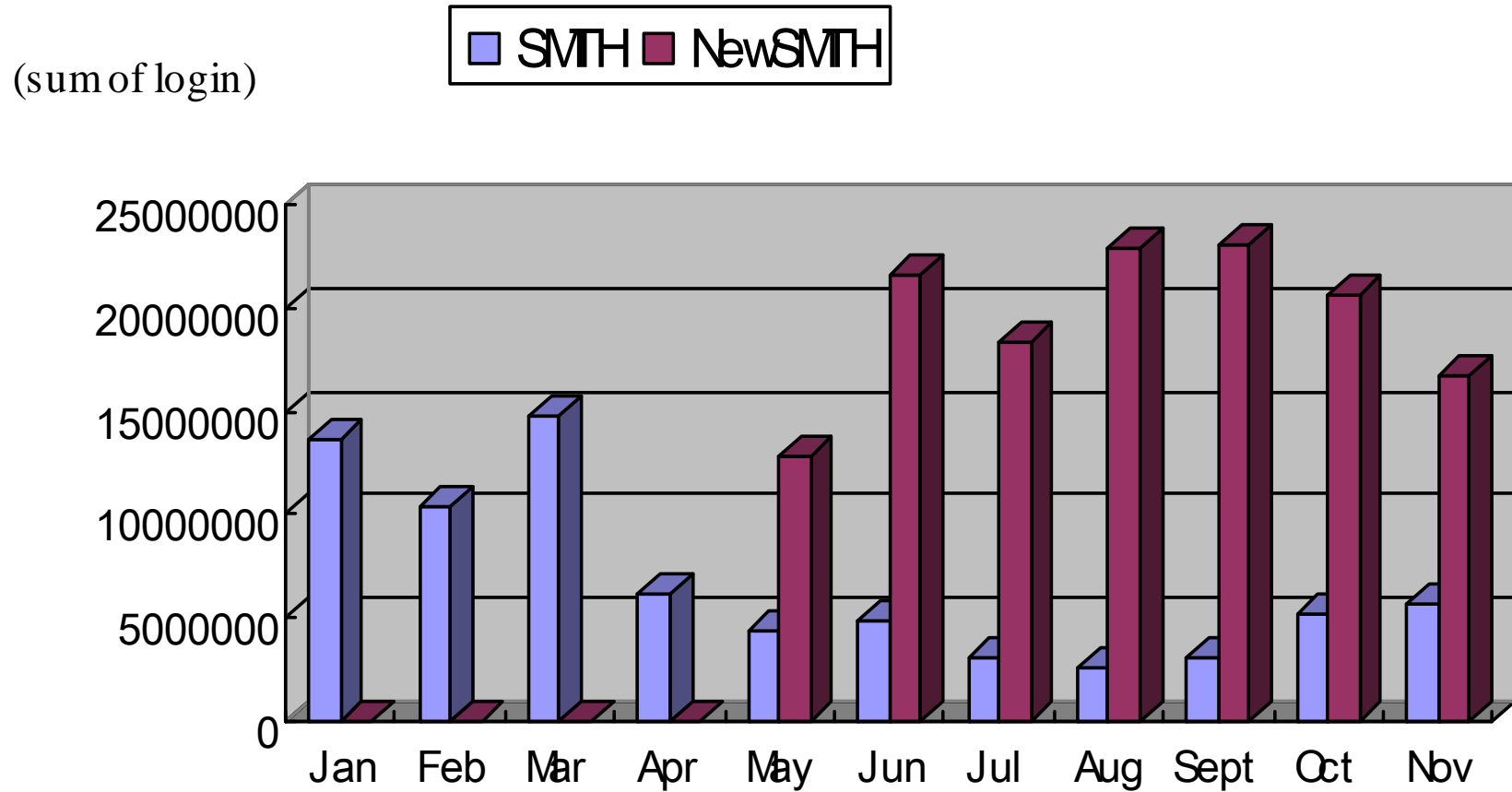


Table 1: The sum of login each month in 2005.





5.2 Online reactions outside SMTH

- Two communication circuits: for information flow
- QQ groups and Other BBSes: maintain the previous social network and discussion
- overseas users established a website in which an open letter to President Hu Jintao, the alumni of Tsinghua University, was posted, with 8,500 reply and signature within a month
- Avoid content censorship
 - adding space or dash between each character.
 - “Fake Ancient Prose” : a software transform the horizontal paragraph to vertical paragraph, which could be recognized by human being, but not identified by censorship mechanism.



“Fake Ancient Prose”

Powered by oldthink+redbird+nullgate

「假古文用戶指南」

「使用方法」

一 書文字 入頁上之方框

二 擇分隔 一 合乎常情

三 擇頁寬 廿四合公告牌

四 擇頁高 十九合公告牌

五 擇古風 合天朝之傳統

六 回古文 匯之入頁下方

「注意事項」

一 古風假 恐有紕漏

二 忌入零 機關算盡

三 標點變 合乎古風

四 半角滅 全角則出

五 尊法紀 與時俱進

六 敬古風 廣而宣之

執筆 墨 魚

美工 赤羽飛鳥

監制 空 門

於 己酉年風沙



5.3 Offline reactions

- “3/18”: hundreds of SMTH users gathered, presented the flowers and origami crane;
- User “dear110” knelt down and bowed to get the chance to speak in a symposium;
- Be interviewed by media; “public journalist”; real media reporter;
- Thinking and discussing in daily life.



3/18 peaceful gathering











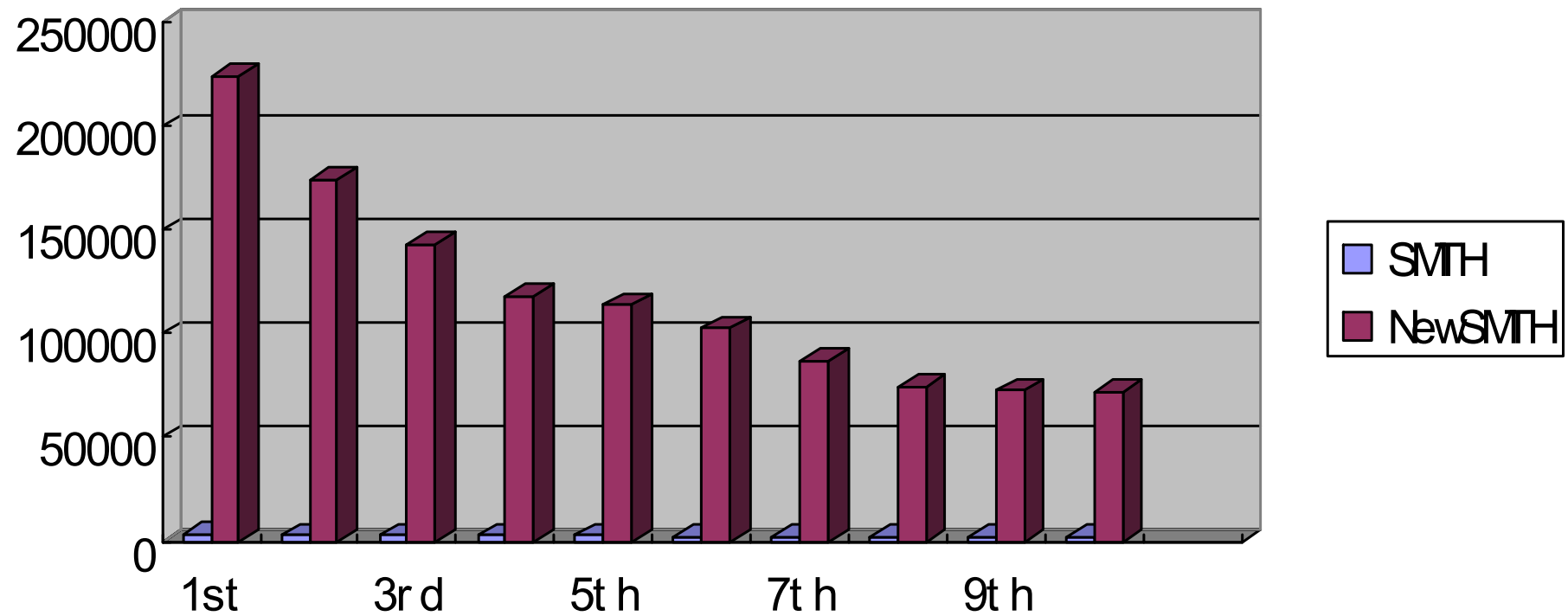


6. So what: lose/lose situation

- The failure of the regulation:
 - The real name policy and so called “on-campus network platform” don’t really actualized
 - The users of SMTH are much less than the users of NewSMTH, with much less participation
 - It blemished the image of the government in some students’ mind and provoked repulsive feeling
- data analysis

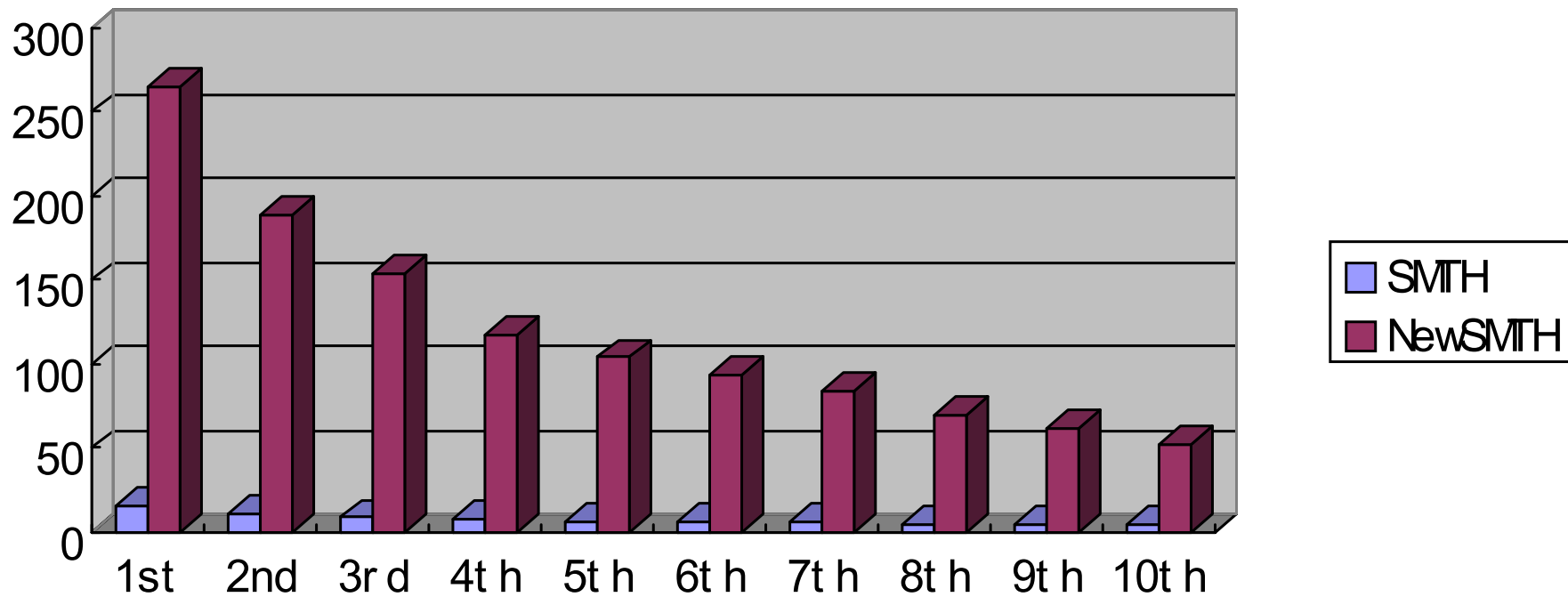


- *Table 4: the comparison of the number of visits to the top-10 boards in both BBSes*





- *Table 5: the comparison of the average number of participators of the top-10 most popular topics in a week*





- *Table 6: the comparison of the number of updated Blog recently in both BBSes*

Within...	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months	24 months
SMTH	66	162	250	521	856
NewSMTH	900	1425	1901	3626	5985



6. So what: lose/lose situation

- The failure of the resistance:
 - Users in NewSMTH do not have much more speech freedom than before;
 - NewSMTH might become commercialized and privatized step by step after departing from Tsinghua campus. “Public sphere” is weakened.
 - user’s social network and personal history were smashed. Their frustration and wound in mind are difficult to measure but exist.
 - They might become indifferent to politics as well as distrust policies and institutions. They might incline to adopt more extreme way or more “post-modernism” way to deal with important public issues.

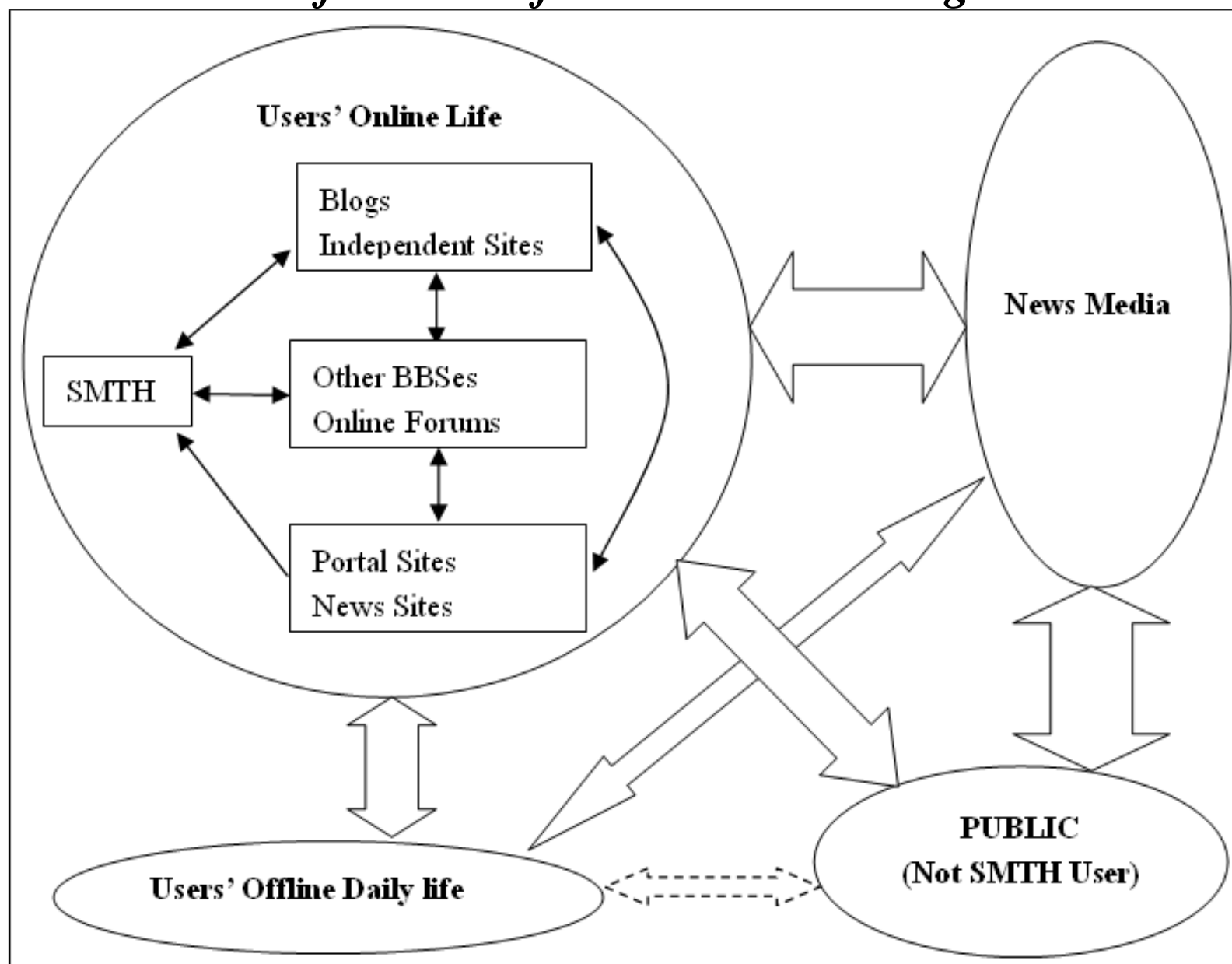


7. Analysis: behaviors of networked users

- how could we understand their social behavior as a group? They were networked and socialized users/participants. Four aspects:
 - ☐ **Information flow and interpersonal interactions**
 - ☐ **Power of networked users**
 - ☐ **Resistance Identity**
 - ☐ **Quotation from the authoritative text**

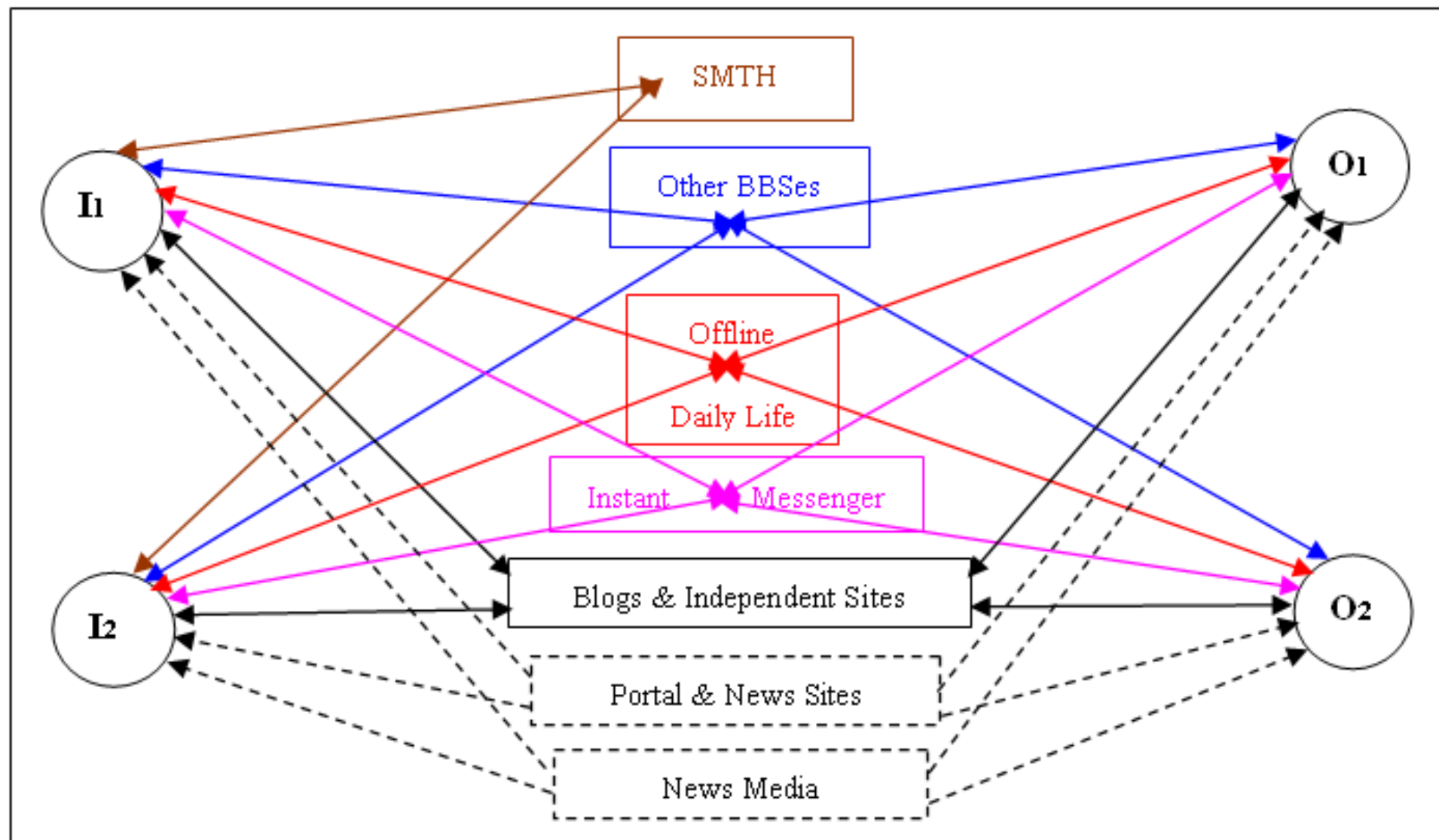


□ *Table 2: information flow model in the regulation*





■ *Table 3: interpersonal interaction model of the users during the regulation*





7. Analysis: behaviors of networked users

■ Power of networked users

- different users have different powers, which lead to different effects of their reaction;
- Those users with strong power are both opinion leaders and action leaders;
- Three factors might influence the power of users:
 - Position
 - Ability
 - Initiative



7. Analysis: behaviors of networked users

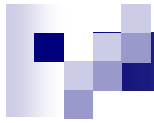
■ **Resistance Identity**

- It drives the users from different niche groups beginning to react in union;
- Users feel they are devalued or “stigmatized” ;
- The group is lack of consistent plan. Their purpose and measures are changing with the change of the outside world.
- However, their identity doesn’t disappear quickly.



■ *NewSMTH's first welcoming page in May 2005*





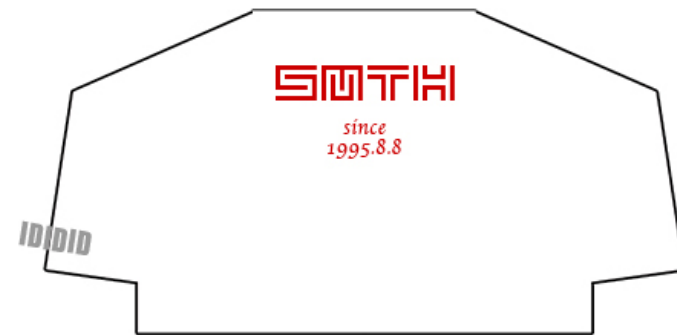
年

body

man

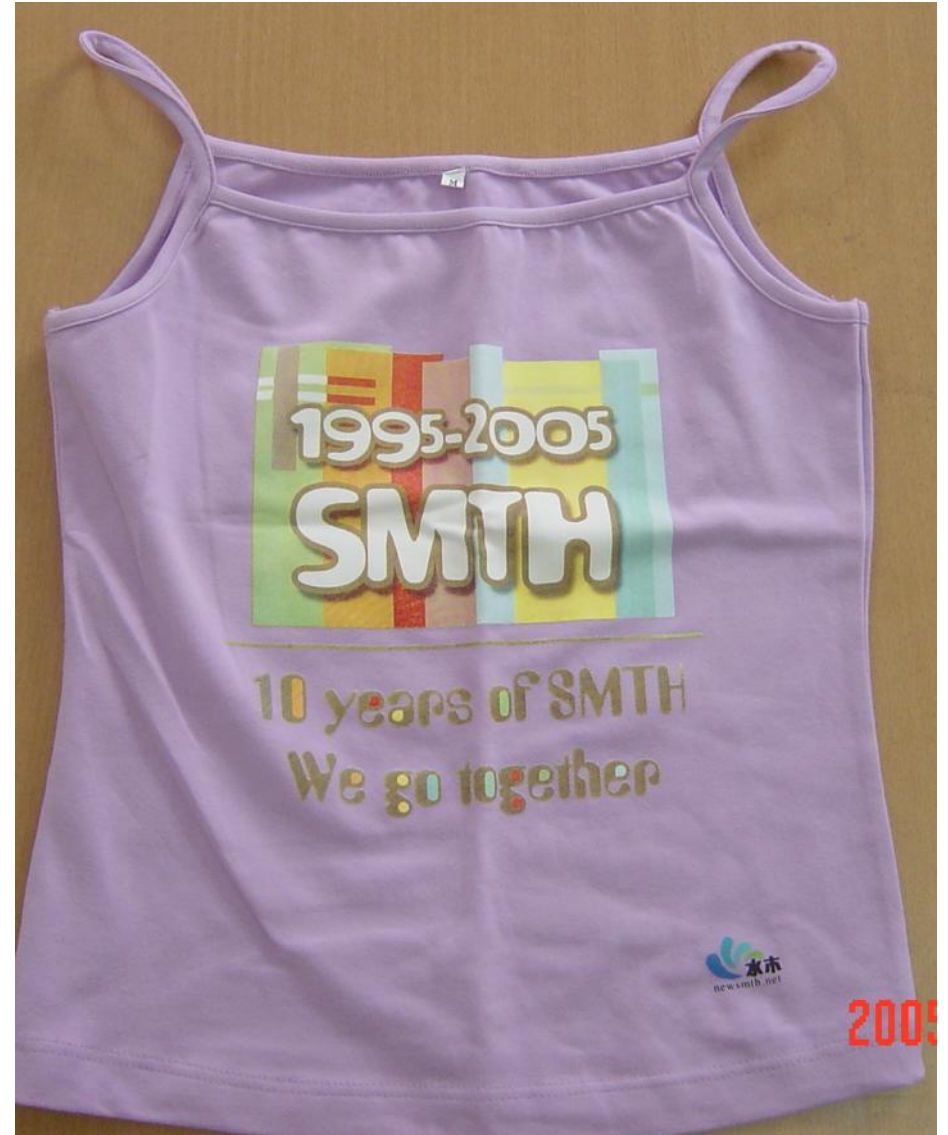





front view



back view

Ciril
2005.6



You are my  Sun.
You are my  Moon.
I give you all my  Time,
& love you with all my  Heart.





8. Conclusion

- Systematic factors special in China of this regulation:
 - universities are not institutions of autonomy but subordinate units of certain administrative department;
 - sophisticated and effective Internet control system;
 - Lots of government departments endowed by lots of administration rules about Internet management: “power without responsibility” ;
 - ideology hegemony.



8. Conclusion

- However, internet regulation in China is not a fresh topic. The fresh thing is: people empowered by ICTs are driven by the “resistance identity” and react in union as networked users.
- Networked users are not only living in the media-space. Their behaviors are affected by all the factors.
- networked users is changing the landscape of China society through the online politics and engagements, while the changes are in a gentle and mild way like the drizzle falls into the earth.



Thank you

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