The new media and Chinese migrant netizens

Wellbeing of Elderly Chinese Immigrants

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• Existing research

• My findings:
  Internet use contributes to their wellbeing by providing:
  ▪ An enriched daily life
  ▪ Strengthened social relationships
  ▪ A newly-built independence
Qualitative data

- **35** Semi-structured, in-depth interviews

- **Nineteen ( >50% )** use the computer and the internet.
  
  9 males (average age 73); 10 females (average age 66).
  The length of staying in New Zealand: 4 - 24 years.
  16 tertiary education; 3 high school graduates.
An Enriched Daily Life

- A tool or strategy to improve quality of life
- Escaping from the boredom and isolation.

“Having just arrived here with nothing to do, I stayed at home, feeling bored. So I started to learn to use the computer. I asked my son to teach me how to use the internet, and how to send emails.”
Richer information → Alternative means of pleasure.

A personalized media experience → more freedom and stronger autonomy

“I don’t like watching TV. I feel it’s of little value.... In the past, I didn’t know how to use the internet. I could only watch whatever they showed on TV. Now, from the Internet, I can choose to watch whatever I want. It’s much better for me. I need the quality.”
The **combination** of using the internet and traditional media contributes to a richer daily life.

“I can't live in New Zealand without a computer. If I didn't know how to use it, my quality of life would drop significantly.”
Strengthened Social Relationships

Communication with family members

- Instant Messaging platforms

Communication with friends

- Emails
Communication with family members

- “Face-to-face” chat
- Share emotional care with adult children & very old parents
- A sense of intimacy and comfort
Communication with friends

“Electronic gatherings”

- Healthcare resources
- Migration experiences
- Perceptions of ageing
- Personal interests

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A sense of *fulfilment* and *pride*

“I can *see a lot of interesting information* and [China-related] news from New Zealand, *which cannot be found in China* [because of the censorship of the internet]. So I send the information to my old friends through emails. *This makes us very happy.* I can read many things that my [Chinese] friends can’t access.”
A Newly-Built Independence

- Facilitates *day-to-day living*

  e.g. “seeking rental accommodation”, “acquiring information about public transport”, “using public library services” and “obtaining information about community activities”.
Lessens **English language difficulties**
e.g. “looking for the meanings of English words”, “online translation services”.

“Here, you can’t rely on your children for everything, you must have your autonomy. I’m getting old, and there are always things I want to do but unable to deal with, especially the difficulties of the English language. But I always try my best to find out solutions on the computer before asking for help.”
Summary

The internet enables:

- An enriched daily life
- Strengthened social relationships
- A newly-built independence

Contribute to:

wellbeing and good quality of life.
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