
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

NAME: Wenhong Chen

eRA COMMONS USER NAME: WENHONGC

POSITION TITLE: Assistant Professor, Departments of Media Studies and Sociology

EDUCATION/TRAINING

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
University of International Business and International Economics, Beijing, China	BA	07/1995	German/Economics
University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada	MA	11/2001	Sociology
University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada	PhD	11/2007	Sociology
Duke University, Durham, North Carolina	Postdoctoral Fellowship	07/2009	Sociology

A. Personal Statement

I am a media sociologist interested in the interaction of digital and social inequalities through the lens of network theories and methods. My interdisciplinary, mixed method research in sociology, communication, and management has made original contributions to a theoretically driven, empirically solid, and culturally sensitive understanding of the patterns, mechanisms, and impacts of digital media technologies, supported by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, the Ford Foundation, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Foundation of Science and Technology of Portugal among others. Published in top-tier journals, my work has received awards from the Academy of Management, American Sociological Association, International Communication Association, and International Association of Chinese Management Research. In the next five years, I will focus on the implications of digital technologies for 1) mental health and 2) work, drawing on two ongoing funded projects. Evaluating the Unlocking the Connection Initiative, I use a two-wave longitudinal mixed-method study to assess health, educational, and employment outcomes of gaining Internet access, digital skills, and devices among public housing residents. This project will generate critical insight on how the public, private, and non-profit sectors work together to digitally include members of disadvantaged groups. Adopting a networked producers' perspective, I have been collecting data via in-depth interviews and surveys, enriched by digital trace data, to examine how entrepreneurs in the mobile media industry develop privacy policies and practices. My research engages the PRC's Primary Research Areas: (1) Education, Work, and Inequality and (2) Population Health. I am a member of Socioeconomic Inequality and Work area in the PRC. The PRC has played a significant role in my professional development. As a junior scholar, the PRC Summer Boot Camp conducted by the Development Core has gave me much needed mentoring and guidance in grants application. The expertise and assistance of the Administrative Core greatly facilitate my preparation of grant proposals. My students and I have received important technical support from the Scientific and Technical Core.

B. Positions and Honors

Positions and Employment

2009 - present Assistant Professor, Department of Radio-TV-Film, University of Texas at Austin
2009 - present Faculty Research Associate, Population Research Center, University of Texas at Austin
2014 - present Faculty Affiliate, Center for Health Communication, University of Texas at Austin
2015 Visiting Researcher, Center for Identity, University of Texas at Austin

Other Experience and Professional Memberships

Present Editorial Boards: *Information, Communication & Society* (2016-), *Social Science Computer Review*(2016-), *Management & Organization Review* (2011-2017)
Ad-Hoc Reviewer: **Communication, media, information studies:** Journal of Communication, Communication Research, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, New Media & Society, Political Communication, Social Science Computer Review, The Information Society,

Information, Communication & Society, International Journal of Communication, Mobile Media & Communication, Policy & Internet, Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association, Internet & Higher Education

Sociology: American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, Social Networks, Canadian Journal of Sociology, Social Problems, Social Science Research, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Journal of International Migration and Integration, Urban Studies, Journal of Comparative Family Studies, American Behavioural Scientists

Management: Organization Science, Journal of Business Ethics, Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice, Management & Organization Review, Asia Pacific Journal of Management

Other: Psychoneuroendocrinology, American Psychologist, American Journal of Public Health

Present Member: American Sociological Association; International Communication Association

Honors

2002 Vivienne Poy Chancellor's Fellowship in the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Toronto

2002 - 2005 Doctoral Fellowship, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

2005 Bell Canada Graduate Scholarship

2007 - 2009 Postdoctoral Fellowship, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

2008 Young Scholar Award, International Association of Chinese Management Research

2008 IDEA Award (Research Promise Category), Academy of Management

2008 Postdoctoral Awards for Research Excellence, Duke University

2014 Dean's Fellowship, Moody College of Communication, UT Austin

2014 Top Paper Session on Conference Theme, International Communication Association

2014 High Impact Overseas Chinese Scholars on Strategy Research in Leading Business Journals (1991-2011)

2015 Best Article Award (Honorable Mention), Communication, Information Technologies, & Media Sociology Section, American Sociological Association

2015 - 2016 Humanities Institute Faculty Fellow, UT Austin

2016 William F. Ogburn Mid-Career Achievement Award, Communication, Information Technologies, & Media Sociology Section, American Sociological Association

C. Contributions to Science

Social capital as cause of digital divides: Digital technologies, coupled with social capital, have been exclaimed as the panacea that would cure many social problems. Yet, people on the wrong side of the digital divides are both digitally and socially disconnected. Using a large panel study in the US, I turn a literature centered on how the Internet affects social capital on its head and examine how social capital affects people's Internet access and use. I demonstrate that before the Internet can revitalize social capital, there must be the right social capital, more specifically, resource-rich bonding social capital, in place to bridge the digital divides (Chen, 2013).

- **Chen, W.**, Straubhaar, J.D., Li, X., Mora, A., Crocker, T., Huang, G., Sinta, V., & Spence, J. (2016). *Deep Digital Divides in Austin's Public Housing Communities. Unlocking the Connections Series Part I.* 79 pp.
- Robinson, L., Cotten, S., Ono, H., Quan-Haase, A., Mesch, G., **Chen, W.**, Schulz, J., Hale, T.M., & Stern, M. (2015). Digital inequalities and why they matter. *Information, Communication and Society*, 18(5), 569-582. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2015.1012532
The order of authors reflects the sequence of contributions as they appear in the text.
- Correa, T., Straubhaar, J. D., **Chen, W.**, & Spence, J. (2015). Brokering new technologies: The role of children in their parents' usage of the Internet. *New Media & Society*, 17(4), 483-500. doi: 10.1177/1461444813506975
- **Chen, W.** (2013). The implications of social capital for the digital divides in America. *The Information Society*, 29(1), 13-25. doi: 10.1080/01972243.2012.739265
Best Published Article Award, Honorable Mention, Communication, Information Technologies, & Media Sociology Section, American Sociological Association

Mobilization or normalization: Does the Internet increase or decrease social inequalities? The normalization thesis, drawing on the Matthew effect, argues that digital technologies tend to stimulate more activities from those who have been already active. By contrast, the mobilization thesis argues that digital technologies are powerful in mobilizing members of underprivileged or underrepresented groups thanks to the reduced cost for information, communication, and coordination. Supporting the mobilization thesis, I demonstrate in a number of articles that mobile media technologies allow racial and ethnic minorities to overcome gaps in donation, cultural participation, and health information. Published in *Human Communication Research*, a top communication journal, I use U.S. national survey data to investigate variations of mobile cultural participation by the access to mobile devices as well as the intensity, diversity, and specific types of app use.

- **Chen, W.** (2015). A movable feast: Do mobile media technologies mobilize or normalize cultural participation? *Human Communication Research* 41(1), 82-101. doi: 10.1111/hcre.12041 **Top Paper Session on Conference Theme, ICA, 2014**
- **Chen, W.**, & Ling, R. (2015). Mobile media and communication. In P. J. Schulz & P. Cobley (Eds.), *The Handbook of Communication Science* (Vol. 5 Communication and Technology, edited by L. Cantoni & J. Danowski, pp. 323-344). Sage Publications.
- **Chen, W.**, & Givens, T. (2013). Mobile donation in America. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 1(2), 196-212. doi: 10.1177/2050157913476028 **Most cited articles in 2015 based on journal website**

Fine-tuned theories and measures of health literacy in the social media age: I challenge the health informatics literature that 1) centers on active search via a single, specific medium and 2) overlooks social capital. Applying the concepts of cultural omnivores and univores to health information behaviors, I use survey data to assess how digital and social connectivity are related to health information repertoires (Chen, Lee, Straubhaar & Spence, 2014). I update the eHealth literacy scale and demonstrate it as a mechanism linking user characteristics with informational and participatory eHealth behaviors (Chen & Lee, 2014).

- **Chen, W.**, Lee, K.-H., Straubhaar, J. D., & Spence, J. (2014). Getting a second opinion: Social capital, digital divides and health information repertoire. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 65(12), 2552-2563. doi:10.1002/asi.23130
- Shen, C., & **Chen, W.** (2015). Social capital, coplaying patterns, and health disruptions: A survey of Massively Multiplayer Online Game participants in China. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 52, 243-249. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.05.053
- **Chen, W.**, & Lee, K.-H. (2014). More than search? Informational and participatory eHealth behaviors. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 30(1), 103-109. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2013.07.028

Unintended negative mental health consequence of receiving unsolicited job leads: With Lijun Song (Vanderbilt), our article in *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* reveals the unintended negative mental health consequence of receiving unsolicited job leads among working-age adults in the U.S., contingent on economic strain and financial dissatisfaction (Song & Chen, 2014). This work has been reported in ABC News, Harvard Business Review and online media including Tencent.com (the largest website in China).

- **Chen, W.**, & Lee, K.-H. (2013). Sharing, liking, commenting, and distressed? The pathway between Facebook interaction and psychological distress. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 16(10), 728-34. doi: 10.1089/cyber.2012.0272
- Song, L., & **Chen, W.** (2014). Does receiving unsolicited support help or hurt? Receipt of unsolicited job leads and depression. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 55(2), 144-160. doi: 10.1177/0022146514532816

A mediated network model of cultural capital: Advancing the classical network model of cultural capital in an article in *Social Networks*, one of the most prestigious journals on network analysis, I propose and test a mediated network model of cultural capital and illustrate that media use (including print, Internet, TV, and Radio) is a stronger predictor of cultural capital than network diversity. Moreover, media use moderates and mediates the relationship between network diversity and cultural capital along and across ethnic boundaries (Chen, 2015). This work advances the literature by 1) mediatizing the classical network model of cultural capital and 2) adding an ethnic lens to the conventional cultural capital theory that has underestimated cultural practices along and across ethnic boundaries.

- **Chen, W.** (2015). Mediatizing the network model of cultural capital: Network diversity, media use, and cultural knowledge along and across ethnic boundaries. *Social Networks*, 40(1), 185-196. doi: 10.1016/j.socnet.2014.10.003

List of Published Work on Health in MyBibliography:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/myncbi/browse/collection/50017078/?sort=date&direction=descending>

D. Research Support

Ongoing Research Support

Research Award (W. Chen, PI)

12/01/14-11/30/17

Foundation for Science and Technology, Portugal

Roots and Wings: Glocalized Networks and Mobile Media Entrepreneurship in Austin and Lisbon

This project focuses on how entrepreneurs of diverse racial and ethnic background in the mobile media industry leverage digital media technologies and glocalized networks for starting up new ventures, product development, marketization, and innovation. It uses a comparative mixed-method design to collect interview, survey, and digital trace data in Austin and Lisbon.

Role: Principal Investigator

Responsibilities: Coordinating collaborations among project members, conducting quantitative data collection and analyses, publication paper-writing, and reporting.

Completed Research Support

APUTA14-001 (W. Chen, PI)

11/01/14-02/29/16

Ford Foundation and Austin Pathway Foundation

Digital Inclusion Evaluation of the Unlocking the Connection Initiative

Using a two-wave longitudinal mixed-method design involving surveys and interviews, this project develops a community-based study to evaluate the employment, health, and educational impacts of gaining access to and training of the Internet and other digital media technologies on public housing residents in Austin, Texas.

Role: Principal Investigator

Responsibilities: Coordinating collaborations among project members, conducting quantitative data collection and analyses, publication paper-writing, and reporting.

UTA14-000257 (S. Stover, PI)

03/20/14-01/15/15

City of Austin

Digital Resources and Competencies in Austin

This project surveyed a random sample in Austin to examine residents' access and use of digital technologies as well as the employment and health outcomes.

Role: Co-Principal Investigator

Responsibilities: Conducting research design and data analyses, publication paper-writing, and reporting.

Research Grant (W. Chen, PI)

09/01/12-08/31/13

Grant Preparation Award, College of Communication, UT Austin

Media, Networks, and Protest Participation in China

The Project examines how the Internet and social media affect interpersonal networks, civic engagement and political participation in China.

Responsibilities: Design the research and conducting data collection and analyses, publication paper-writing, and reporting.