

Diffusion of Rumors on the Internet

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Abstract

This paper describes the process of rumor diffusion on the Internet and investigates the effects of online communication on rumor diffusion. Data from an online survey of the Internet users was analyzed to investigate channels, contact, and transmission of rumors on the Internet. The results show that rumors spread on the Internet usually come from the Internet itself or traditional mass media such as TV and newspapers. The online news media and bulletin boards are the most frequently used channels of contacting rumors on the Internet. The credibility of a source has found to be the major factor for the transmission of a rumor on the Internet. A rumor is conveyed to the other audience mainly through email, bulletin boards, and chatting. Not all rumors follow the same trajectory of diffusion, and the effects of the technological and social attributes of online communication on the components of the communication process vary by rumors. The effects of the Internet communication are double-edged: While the Internet communication provides space for many more voices, speed of delivery may supersede accuracy and the ethos of the participants may preside over the responsibility of citizens to make informed decisions.

I. Introduction

The massive growth of the Internet users has been accompanied by the diversification of the user population. While the digital divides by class, gender, and region still exist, the composition of the Internet users has significantly changed

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within last five years. For instance, housewives, traditionally excluded from public participation in Korea, constitute a significant part of the current Internet population. The number of young users has also increased as the Internet becomes an important tool for education and entertainment in school and at home. Because of the massive size and the diverse composition of the user population, the Internet commands one of major tools of communication today.

Internet is open to anyone, and any individuals with a proper access can read and post messages. Services such as email, newsgroup, instant messaging and chatting allow people to communicate without the barriers imposed by time and space. These technological and social attributes of the Internet can foster the spread of rumor and information that have not been able to get attention from the traditional mass media in which a single message is communicated from a single source to hundreds of thousands of receivers. Thus, such rarely publicized issues as victims of family violence, whistle-blowing of employees, voters' angry, and consumers' dissatisfaction, can be easily publicized through the Internet.

Rumors on the Internet are spread mainly by a network of users, its membership ranging from elementary school boys to professionals. The Internet users too often give emailed rumors and unverified assertions the same weight as news from the major news organizations. They forward spurious data to friends, relatives and colleagues, without questioning its origin or validity. Many received the rumor, then hit a button and emailed the story. Defusing the rumors is far more difficult than spreading them, and laws about passing on rumors over the Internet are vague.

This paper describes the process of rumor diffusion on the Internet and investigates the effects of the Internet communication on the rumor diffusion process. A rumor is a bit of information that is passed informally from one person to another without firm evidence. Rumors often develop in highly charged social situations where accurate information is absent or lacks credibility. Spreading through informal and often novel channels a rumor can exert a major influence on emerging definition of the situation (Michener and DeLamater, 1993). In this paper, the term "rumor" refers broadly to the information transmitted through computer-mediated communication (CMC) on the Internet.

Four selected rumors, widely spread over the Internet between early 2000

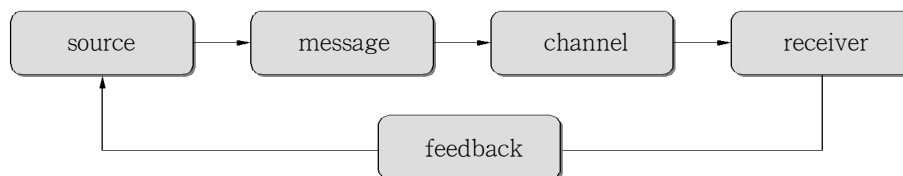
and late 2001, were analyzed, and an online survey of the Internet users was conducted for the research. Before move on, we will first look at the general process of communication, communication channels on the Internet, and traits of online communication.

II. Communications on the Internet

1. The process of communication

A basic model of the communication process consists of five main components that are present in every exchange of information (Schramm, 1982; Michener and DeLamater, 1993). In this source-message-channel-receiver (SMCR) model depicted in Figure 1, the source is the originator of the communication, and the message is the content of the communication, the information that is to be exchanged. A channel is the medium or transmission system used to convey the message from one place to another. The receiver is the destination of the communication. A feedback mechanism between the source and the receiver may be used to regulate the flow of communication.

(Fig. 1) The SMCR Model of the Communication Process



As the model indicates, each of these components has a major effect on the transmission of a message and thus persuasion (Michener and DeLamater, 1993). First, properties of the source can affect how the target audience construes the message. For instance, characteristics such as expertise and trustworthiness of the source can affect whether or not a receiver changes attitudes. Second, properties of the message itself can have a significant impact on its persuasiveness. For instance, whether a message carries a fear appeal or presents only one-sided arguments can affect whether a persuasion attempt is successful. Third, characteristics of the receiver also enter the picture. For

instance, what a receiver already believes about an issue, as well as the extent of that person's involvement and commitment, can affect whether a message leads to further transmission or merely to rejection.

The Internet significantly transforms the nature of communication. To understand the way the Internet modifies the communication process, an overview of the various communication channels on the Internet is presented first, followed by the investigation of characteristics of online communication and theoretical perspectives.

2. Communication channels on the Internet

The Internet provides various communication channels for people that want to interact with others on the Internet. The types of interaction can be delayed as with email or newsgroups, or real time as with Internet Relay Chat(IRC) or instant messaging. Email and mailing lists are the most popular and familiar channels for communicating through the Internet. Millions of people across the world have at least one email address. Email is mainly used for a one-to-one interaction, allowing a user to send a message directly to another user. A mailing list goes beyond a one-to-one interaction, in which a message sent to a group address is then copied and sent to all the email addresses on a list.

Newsgroups are online group devoted to specific subjects where user can post news, ideas, discussions and rumors. Messages in newsgroups are often good sources for new rumors, as these messages can easily be forwarded to email addresses and other newsgroups. Electronic bulletin boards are online discussion groups offered in various websites. Electronic bulletin boards and conferences also provide a forum for messages, notes, questions, and answers. They differ from email in that the messages are not addressed to specific individuals; instead, they are posted for all to read. These conferences are often international and focus on specific issues.

Instant messaging(IM) differs from email in that IM software is able to detect if a specific person a user wish to communicate with is currently online. If they are, the message will immediately pop up on the intended recipient's computer screen. Popular IM Software includes MSN Messenger, Daum Messenger, Dreamwiz's Gini, and Yahoo Messenger. Online chatting refers to a two-way interactive exchange through telecommunications. This, however,

is not a vocal exchange. Instead, two or more people are online at the same time and send messages back and forth. In the chat mode, part of the screen will display outgoing messages. At the same time, the other part(s) of the screen will show the incoming messages. Teleconferencing is also possible on the Internet if the appropriate audio and video hardware and software are available.

〈Table 1〉 Comparison of Communication Channels on the Internet

channels	synchronicity	Interaction	anonymity	publicity
email/ mailing lists	asynchronous	one-to-one/many-to-many	low	low
bulletin boards/newsgroups	asynchronous	many-to-many	high	high
chatting	synchronous	one-to-one/many-to-many	middle	middle
instant messaging	synchronous	one-to-one	low	low
online game	synchronous	one-to-one/many-to-many	middle	middle
file sharing service	synchronous	many-to-many	high	high

〈Table 1〉 compares communication channels on the Internet in terms of synchronicity, anonymity, interactivity, and publicity. Email, bulletin boards, and newsgroups are asynchronous in that communication partners of these channels need not interact in real time, whereas chatting, instant messaging, online game, and file sharing service are synchronous. Email and instant messaging are mainly used for one-to-one interactions, while bulletin boards and newsgroups are for many-to-many communications. Chatting and online game can be used either for one-to-one or for many-to-many interactions.

Anonymity refers to the degree of concealing a user's identity, whereas publicity refers to the degree of which the contents of the communication are exposed to others. Both anonymity and publicity are relatively low in email and chat communications, whereas they are high in bulletin boards, newsgroups, and file sharing service. Anonymity and publicity do not always move along the same scale. For instance, in a closed bulletin board where only verified users can post a message, anonymity may be low but publicity can be still high.

3. Characteristics of online communication

The Internet communication possesses several important characteristics(Do and Jo 2000: Jo *et al.* 2001). Firstly, disembodiment and invisibility are the most prominent attributes of online communication. Absence of body and lack of physical signals on the Internet have both positive and negative effects on the ways in which people communicate. On the one hand, disembodiment and fluidity of identity provide people with opportunities for experimenting various identities and social roles on the Internet. On the other hand, these factors can conduce to anti-social behaviors by fostering deception and identity concealment.

Secondly, the restrictions imposed by time and space are significantly relaxed on the Internet. The Internet provides many effective tools of communication between geographically dispersed partners. Asynchronous communication channels such as email and bulletin boards allow people to communicate without everyone gathering at a particular time. As a result people on very different schedules or in distant time zones can still exchange messages and sustain discussion. Thirdly, the Internet supports interactive¹⁾ and multimedia communications. Interactive two-way communications are possible on the Internet, and various types of data, such as text, audio, video, and graphic, can be incorporated in the communication process. Finally, the electronic records of the Internet communications are digital and have durability, facilitating the diffusion of information. These digital records allow people to build trust by providing references of reputation among anonymous users. The same records can also be tools of surveillance and sources of misuses and abuses of personal information.

4. Theoretical perspectives on online communication

Early research into the Internet communication dealt with media characterized by displays of words and symbols without the apparent benefit of other cues. Much of this work was laid on the foundation established by social

1) The term interactive refers to situations where real-time feedback is collected from the receivers of a communications channel and is used by the source to continually modify the message as it is being delivered to the receiver.

presence theory (Short, Williams, and Christie, 1976). Social presence is the degree to which we as individuals perceive another as a real person and any interaction between the two of us as a relationship. The degree of the connection is based on the amount of nonverbal information available to the receiver through any particular channel. In this perspective, the Internet and face-to-face communication are specialized channels that people choose to fulfill particular need (Wood and Smith 2001).

According to Sproull and Kiesler (1986), social context cues serve as indicators of appropriate behavior. These cues govern both contact and content of communication. Some social context cues include geographic, organizational, and situational variables. Many social context cues are conveyed through nonverbal channels, and computer-mediated channels lack as many nonverbal cues as we are familiar with in face-to-face contexts. The lack of social context cues leads to feelings of anonymity, reduced self-regulation, and reduced self-awareness. While this state can foster either greater personal independence, at the same time it can lead to the flouting of social standards.

Postmes, Spears, and Lea (1998) assert that they can predict the conditions under which relationships will emerge through their social identification/deindividuation (SIDE) model. The SIDE model posits that people are more likely to comply with a social role than worry about asserting their individual identity. This process is called deindividuation because personal identity is decreased in favor of one's social identity. The SIDE model predicts that people will set aside personal identity and adopt appropriate social identity in order to find acceptance among others. According to this perspective, anonymity on the Internet will foster stronger SIDE effects toward conformity and group norms, and encourage stronger self-categorization among users.

III. Data and Methods

The data come from an online survey of the Internet users aged between 14 and 60. The sample was randomly drawn from the research panel of an online survey organization so that respondents represent the total Internet population in Korea. The data were collected through an online survey in which questions were presented in sequence in a web document.²⁾ The questionnaire centered four rumors spread on the Internet between early 2000 and late 2001.

Respondents were asked about contact and transmission of each rumor. The "Politicians' Carousel" rumor, spread over the Internet around May 2000, had it that some '386'-generation politicians visiting a local city to pay a tribute to the memory of those who sacrificed themselves for the democratization movement, had a drinking bout along with women servants. The rumor was originally posted to a web site called "Third Power," and the poster appealed to readers that such a carousel ran counter to the spirits of the sacrificed. The "Policewoman's Affair" rumor was posted on the Internet by the daughter of a chief policewoman at a local police branch office, and spread over the Internet around March 2000. The poster claimed that her mother had love affairs and betrayed her father working as a teacher in a remote school. The rumor got much attention when a friend of the policewoman's refuted the original post.

The "Chinese Mob" rumor, spread over the Internet around July 2000, had it that some agitated Chinese audiences assaulted Korean students watching a football game between Korea and China at a stadium in Beijing, China. The original posting contained a detailed description of the accident and the author's own negative views of China. The "Pop Star's Videotape" rumor, spread around November 2000, had it that a videotape containing private life of a popular female singer was being circulated in public. The singer was a popular figure at that time, and the rumor got much attention from both offline and online audiences. The rumor sparked a heated controversy on the Internet over her press conference and the time of resuming her activities.

The cross-tabulation analysis was applied to the major part of the analysis. Part of the data was analyzed utilizing correspondence analysis, a descriptive and exploratory statistical technique designed to analyze to simple two-way tables(Statsoft 2001). The results provide information which is similar in nature to those produced by factor analysis techniques, and they allow one to explore the structure of categorical variables included in the table. In addition, logit regression analysis was used for analyzing the relationship between transmission of a rumor and various factors contributed to the transmission.

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- 2) The online survey methods are very effective means of data collection, especially when the target population of a research is the Internet users. In online survey questionnaire presentation and response process are controlled via CGI(common gateway interface) programs and/or Java scripts, reducing measurement errors(Jo, 2000).

IV. Findings

1. Contact of the rumors

The majority of the respondents contacted the pop star's videotape rumor. Ninety-one percent of the respondents contacted the rumor. The contact rates of the politicians' carousel, Chinese mob, policewoman's affair rumors were 55%, 47%, and 45% respectively. Although the circulation period of the pop star's videotape rumor was shorter than those of the other rumors, it reached the majority of the Internet users. This implies that period of exposure is not the only factor of rumor diffusion. Rather, the press conference for the traditional mass media such as TVs and newspapers exposed the rumor to a larger audience, making a "secondary event" in the diffusion process.

The Internet, along with the traditional mass media, is the major source of contacting rumors on the Net. As for the Chinese mob rumor, fifty-five percent of respondents first contacted the rumor on the Internet. For the politicians' carousel and policewoman's affair rumors, the Internet was also the main source of contacting rumors. Generally, traditional broadcasting media such as TVs and radios were the second important sources, and newspapers were the third. In the case of pop star's videotape, however, friends were the second major source(See Table 2).

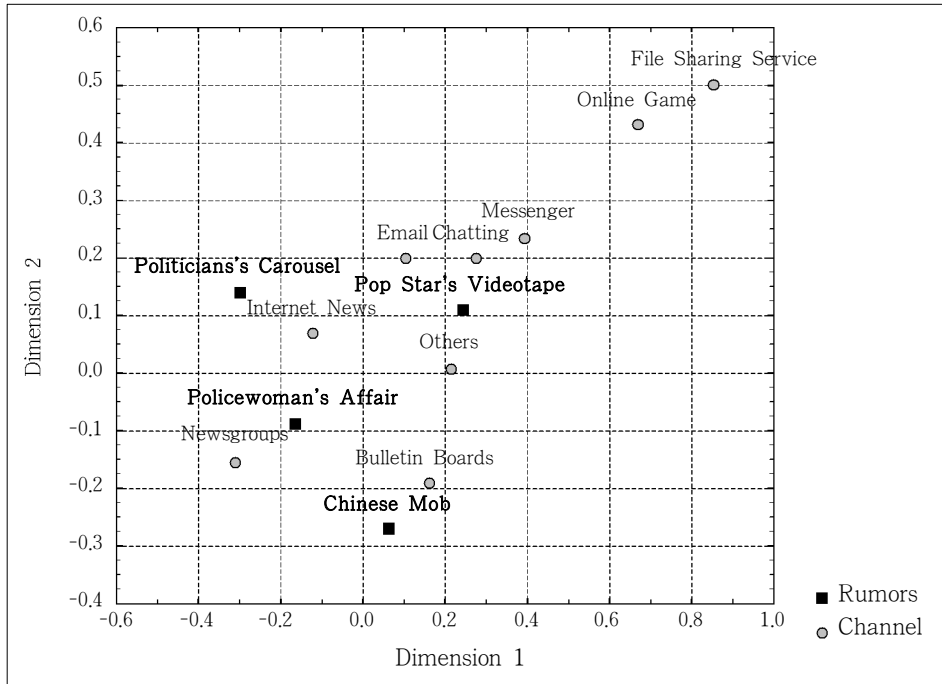
<Table 2> Sources of Rumors on the Internet(%)

Rumors \ Sources	Internet	TV/radio	Newspapers	Friends	Others	Total
Politicians' Carousel	43.0	35.8	15.9	3.7	1.7	100
Policewoman's Affair	47.1	31.0	15.0	5.4	1.5	100
Chinese Mob	54.8	25.2	12.0	5.5	2.4	100
Pop Star's Videotape	35.9	22.1	11.2	29.2	1.5	100

Figure 2 shows the results of correspondence analysis of contact channels on the Internet by rumors. The Internet news media such as Internet TV and Internet newspapers were the main channels for contacting the politicians' carousel rumor. For the pop star's videotape rumor, email, chatting, instant messaging and others were the major channels. Newsgroups were the major

channel for contacting the policewoman's affair rumor, whereas bulletin boards were for the Chinese mob rumor.

(Fig. 2) Contact Channels by Rumors



As for the credibility of rumors, the majority of respondents report that they consider those rumors to be somewhat or very credible. Table 3 shows that over 77% believe that the politicians' carousel rumor is true, whereas 63% do for the policewoman's affair rumor.

<Table 3> Degree of Credibility by Rumors(%)

Rumors \ Credibility	Credibility					Total
	Not Credible at All	Somewhat Incredible	Neither Incredible nor Credible	Somewhat Credible	Very Credible	
Politicians' Carousel	0.0	1.5	21.2	69.8	7.4	100
Policewoman's Affair	0.0	5.6	31.0	56.0	7.3	100
Chinese Mob	0.0	4.9	24.3	57.2	13.6	100
Pop Star's Videotape	0.4	5.1	21.8	51.6	21.1	100

Table 4 shows the degree of respondent's involvement with the rumors. Fifty-six percent of respondents concerned about the Chinese mob rumor, whereas thirty-seven percent did for the politicians' carousel rumor.

<Table 4> Degree of Involvement by Rumors(%)

Involvement Rumors	Not Concerned at all	Somewhat Unconcerned	Neither Unconcerned nor Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned	Total
Politicians' Carousel	3.7	13.2	46.5	31.5	5.1	100
Policewoman's Affair	3.3	10.6	47.7	32.7	5.6	100
Chinese Mob	0.6	9.5	33.5	46.0	10.5	100
Pop Star's Videotape	2.6	8.5	34.0	38.3	16.6	100

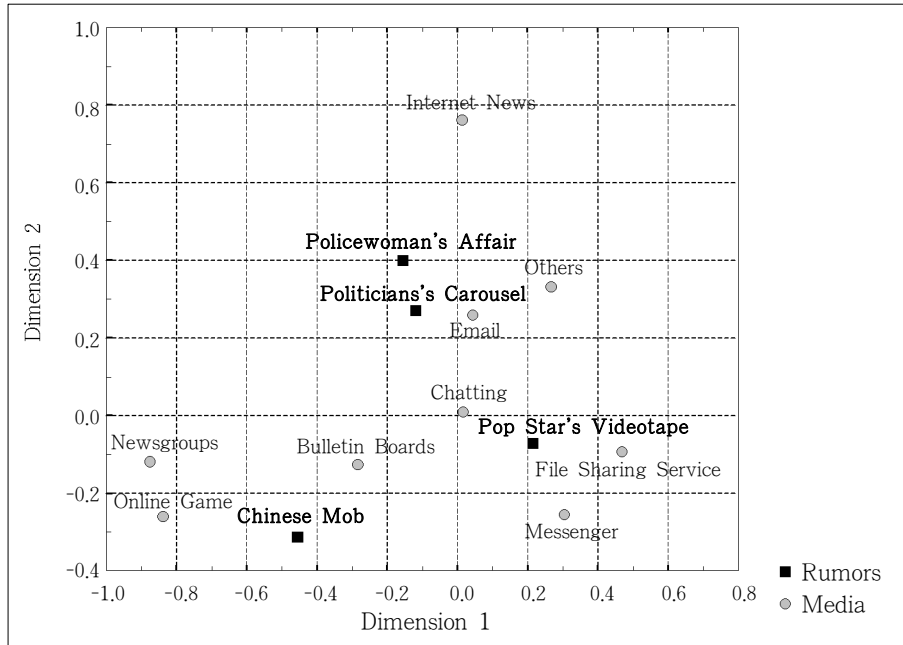
2. Transmission of the rumors

Thirty-five percent of those who contacted the pop star's videotape rumor reported that they transmitted it to others. As for the politicians' carousel rumor and the policewoman's affair rumor, the percentage of transmission was around 17%. The rate was slightly higher for the Chinese mob rumor 21%. The most frequently used channels for rumor transmission were email and bulletin boards.

Figure 3 presents the results of correspondence analysis of transmission channels and rumors on the Internet. Email played an important role in transmission of the politicians' carousel rumor and the policewoman's affair rumor, whereas bulletin boards did for the Chinese mob rumor. Newsgroups and online game were also major channels of transmission for the Chinese mob rumor. For the pop star's videotape rumor, chatting, file sharing service, and instant messaging were the main channels of transmission.

A logit analysis was conducted to identify factors contributed to the transmission of rumors. For each model, status of transmission of rumor was the dependent variable, and credibility, involvement, gender, and age were included in the model as independent variables. As summarized in Table 5, not all the variables are significant factors for the transmission models. Credibility was found to be a significant factor for all the models. This means that the higher is the credibility of a rumor, the higher is the probability of transmission of the rumor. Involvement was found to be a significant variable

(Fig. 3) Transmission Channels by Rumors



only for the politicians' carousel model. As users have greater concern about the rumor, they are more likely to convey it to other users. For the policewoman's affair model and the Chinese mob model, credibility of rumor was the only significant factor. Gender and age as well as credibility were significant variables for the pop star's videotape model. Male users and younger users are more likely to transmit the rumor than female and older users.

<Table 5> Logit Analysis of Rumor Transmission

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables							
	Politicians' Carousel		Policewoman's Affair		Chinese Mob		Pop Star's Videotape	
	Coeff.	Chi	Coeff.	Chi	Coeff.	Chi	Coeff.	Chi
Reliability	0.467	4.105*	0.757	6.791**	0.705	8.031**	0.405	5.848*
Involvement	0.696	20.887**	0.316	3.372	-0.013	0.007	0.099	0.768
Gender †	0.127	0.279	-0.349	1.445	0.132	0.203	0.400	4.370*
Age	-0.001	0.001	-0.002	0.013	-0.012	0.658	-0.070	40.376**

Notes: * significant at 0.5, ** significant at .01, † based on male

If credibility and involvement of rumors are major factors for the transmission of the rumor, then we need to investigate attributes of a credible source and those of the information that attracts much attention. Table 6 indicates that the most trusted sources of information on the Internet are those whose real identity is revealed or whom they personally know of. Those who frequently post useful information or who have a good reputation among other users are also credible sources of information on the Internet.

<Table 6> Characteristics of a Credible Source of Information(%)

I will trust those ...	Percentage
who reveal their real identity	40.7
whom I personally know of	28.9
who frequently post useful information	15.7
who have a good reputation from others	13.8
who have other traits	0.8
Total	100

Table 7 presents the characteristics of information frequently read by many Internet users. The most frequently read messages are those that other users read frequently. Postings with an attractive subject line and those posted by a heavy poster are also read frequently. Relatively a small portion of the Internet users read messages of those posters whom they personally know of.

<Table 7> Characteristics of the Postings with a High Hit Number(%)

I will read those messages that ...	Percentage
other users read frequently	38.8
have an attractive subject line	29.7
was posted by heavy posters	20.2
was posted by those users I personally know of	10.4
have other traits	0.9
Total	100

V. Discussions

Rumors spread on the Internet usually come from the Internet itself or traditional mass media such as TV and newspapers. The online news media, such as Internet TV and Internet newspaper, and bulletin boards are the most frequently used channels of contacting rumors on the Internet. The credibility of a source has found to be a significant factor for the transmission of a rumor on the Internet. A rumor on the Internet is conveyed to the other audience mainly through email, bulletin boards, and chatting.

Not all rumors follow the same trajectory of diffusion, and the effects of the technological and social attributes of online communication on the rumor diffusion process vary by rumors. To expand the influences of rumors, the posters try to control various components of the communication process depicted in Figure 1(Gurak 1997; Jo *et al.* 2001). Jo *et al.*(2001) identifies techniques of controlling communication process commonly used on the Internet to increase the effects of a posting, and they are classified into three major categories: message format, delivery mechanism, and message content.

Techniques of controlling message format include underlining subject, captioning³⁾, replying, increasing the hit number, and identity management.

<Table 8> Techniques of Controlling Communication on the Internet

Control Channels	Message Format	Delivery Mechanism	Message Contents
Bulletin Boards Newsgroups	Underlining subject Captioning Replying Increasing the hit number	Cross-posting Reposting	Logical presentation Emotional appeal Use of humor or parody
Email Mailing Lists	Underlining subject Captioning	Spamming Sending chain letters	
Chatting Instant Messaging	Underlining title Identity management	Nicknaming Avatar manipulation	

3) Captioning refers to the posting practice on the Internet that prefixes the same word or phrase to the subject line to stress supports for or rejections against the given messages(Jo *et al.* 2001: 136).

Postings with a striking subject, the same caption to the subject, many replies, and a high hit number catch more attention than those without. Posters also try to manage their identity presentation so that they are presented to be a credible source or to have expertise on the subject.

Techniques of controlling delivery mechanism involve cross-posting⁴⁾, re-posting, spamming, nicknaming, and avatar manipulation. To deliver a message more effectively, posters try to cross-post a message to a number of related bulletin boards or newsgroups. In the email communication, similar practices are pursued in the forms of spam mails and chain letters. In chatting and instant messaging, nicknaming and avatar manipulation are commonly used to control the delivery mechanism.

The source of the Internet communication is open to anyone. Any individuals or organizations with appropriate Internet access can express their voices and read messages others posted. This aspect of the Internet communication provides the opportunities to express their voices for the socially disadvantaged groups. This implies that social issues ignored by the traditional mass media can surface and be exposed to the public more easily.

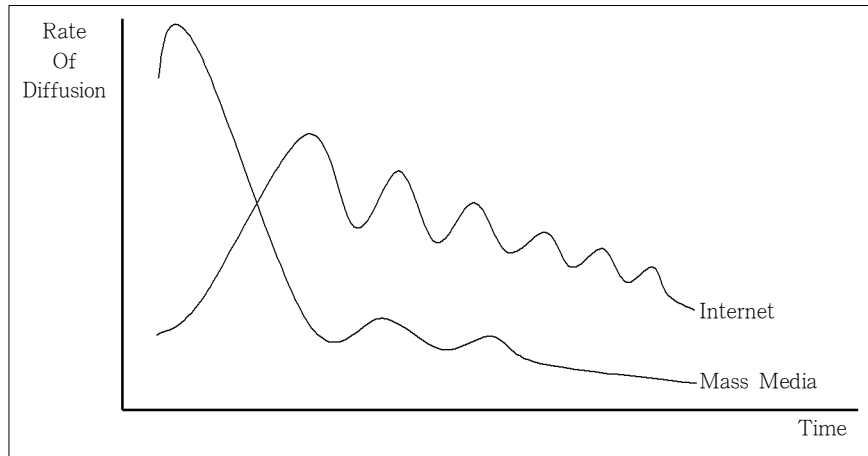
For all the channels, the contents of a message have a significant effect on communication process. Logical coherence and validity are of great importance to get the attention of rational receivers, whereas emotional appeal is commonly used to get supports of an highly charged audience (Jo *et al.* 2001). Humor and parody are also used to convey the message to audience in an indirect and effective way.

The nature of a channel itself influences the rumor diffusion process. In general, many-to-many communications, such as bulletin boards and newsgroups, contribute more to the diffusion of a rumor than one-to-one communications. An asynchronous channel in which the informant and the receiver of a message communicate without time restriction can have greater diffusion power than a synchronous channel in which communication partners must coexist in time. Unlike the traditional mass media, messages of online communications are digitally recorded, and spread over the Internet in a fluctuating and persistent pattern. Figure 4 depicts the changes of diffusion rates over

4) Cross-posting refers to the process of posting the same message to multiple bulletin boards or newsgroups (Smith 1999: 198).

time.

(Fig. 4) Change of Diffusion Rates over Time



In the traditional mass media in which a single message is communicated from a single source to hundreds or thousands of receivers, the diffusion rate drops sharply after reaching its maximum at the initial stage. On the Internet, however, the diffusion rate increases slowly and decreases gradually forming a wave pattern. Since the records of communication on the Internet are long kept in a digital form, the diffusion rates fluctuate as new generations or groups of new users are introduced to the message. The nature of receivers also plays a major role in the diffusion process. On the Internet, messages are spread through the social network of users, and a message diffuses fast and easily if the density of the network is high. This implies that the homogeneity of receivers is closely related with the spread of a message.

VI. Conclusions

The Internet communication can be attributed to four independent factors: the sender, the receiver, the channel, and feedback. The sender in the Internet communication possesses greater control of self-presentation to others. Thus, one can be highly selective in what one chooses to reveal about oneself and

create an even more idealized self-image. As the SIDE model asserts, the receiver tends to overestimate the qualities of a communication partner on the Internet, fostering a more favorable communication situation. Characteristics of the channel itself, most notably its asynchronous aspects, can also affect the communication process. Asynchronous communication allows individuals to overcome the limitations of co-presence and to construct messages in a more deliberative manner. And finally, feedback in the Internet communication can lead to a "an intensification of loop" (Walther 1996) where the confirming messages of each partner reinforce the behavior of the other.

The Internet communication permits individuals to mobilize far more quickly, cheaply, and efficiently than is usually possible. Relevant information can be posted publicly or forwarded to particular individuals or groups at little or no cost. Significantly, it is also relatively easy for individuals to find other individuals with similar concerns and interests. Yet the same features can also be problematic (Smith and Kollock, 1999). The speed and range of communication can encourage the spread of inaccurate information, and the common ethos shared by many of the participants can discourage challenges to the information and conclusions of the group. The specialized nature of the discussion groups can become too insular and force out dissenting voices.

The research suggests that it is not so much the nature of the technology that determines the diffusion of a rumor as much as it is one's perception of that rumor. The effects of the Internet communication are neither simple nor unitary; rather the outcome is double-edged. While we applaud the ability of the Internet communication to provide space for many more voices, we also caution that speed may supersede accuracy and that the beliefs of the community may preside over the responsibility of citizens to make informed decisions.

The key to alleviating the negative effects of the Internet communication does not lie in demonizing the Internet and trying to legislate away a patchwork of legal loopholes which can never be closed. Culture of mutual respects and self-cleansing will do. The Internet may have come of age, but its users are still in their infancy. The Internet will realize its potential as a court of humankind when the users grow out of their infancy through education and self-training.

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