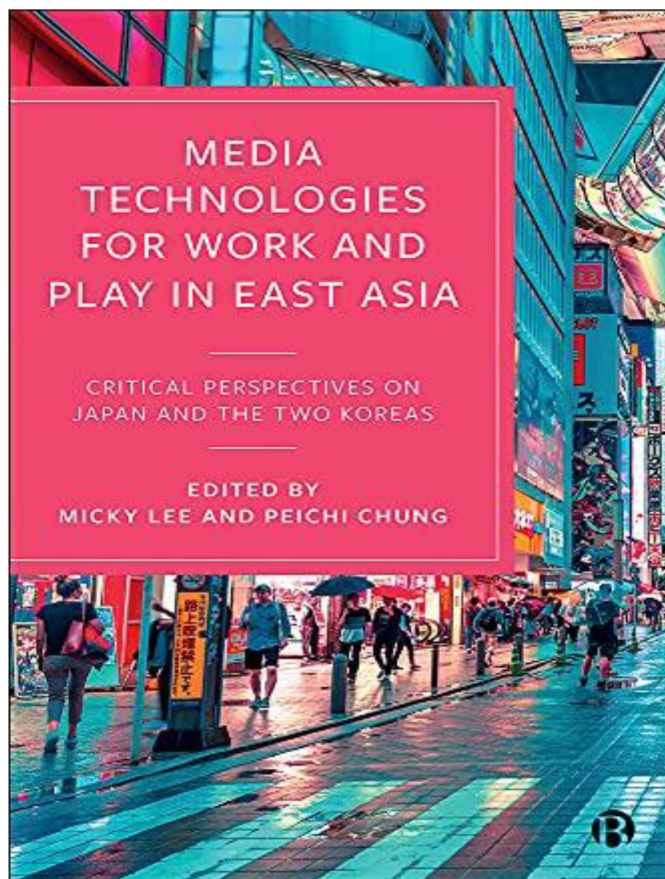


## Media Technologies for Work and Play in East Asia



**Media Technologies for Work and Play in East Asia:** Critical Perspectives on Japan and the Two Koreas; edited by Mickey Lee and Peichi Chung, Bristol University Press, Bristol, UK, 2021, ISBN: 978-15292-1336-2.

Technology and Multimedia have a crucial role in our daily lives. In fact, they have become integrated into the social, political, cultural, and economic systems. The confluence of these is more often than not related to the adoption and use of Information Technology (IT). The rapid development and wide applications of IT in the past few decades have impacted the structure of economies and markets<sup>[1,2]</sup> and the measures of productivity.<sup>[3]</sup> The wide adoption of IT and digitalisation of economies in the past two decades has pushed e-businesses to the front of the economic system. While it was mostly firms, which were adopting the internet-based service

model in the early 2000s, the development of an enabling environment constituted of technologies and relevant policies by national governments has ushered in an era of entrepreneurship. A booming entrepreneurial ecosystem rooted in a combination of online and offline services has developed and allowed individual and small businesses to offer services to the global market. Services such as online secure transactions, subscription-based doorstep pickup and delivery, and varied service delivery platforms have developed. Social Media platforms, such as Google, Facebook, Instagram, etc. have incorporated features that enable small businesses and individuals to offer services and monetise their content on these platforms. Over 200 million businesses have registered accounts on Instagram, with services such as paid partnerships, crowdsourcing (badges), shopping, milestone-based bonus for popular content, affiliate marketing, paid partnerships, etc. In addition, video conferencing and related platforms have made

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it easier for individuals to deliver services such as teaching, training, performance arts, etc. These have received a further push in the backdrop of social distancing necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These changes can be related to discourse about the fourth industrial revolution and the resulting changes in the nature and quality of available jobs in different economies and societies. In this context, the book “Media Technologies for Work and Play in East Asia: Critical Perspectives on Japan and the two Koreas” can be seen as the latest academic contribution. It presents a series of detailed accounts of the various aspects of the interaction between technology and society. The book is comprised of 10 chapters divided into three sections. It focuses on Japan and Korea (South and North) and uses concepts from *political economy*, *critical cultural studies*, and *science and technology studies* to explore the different dimensions of interactions between technology, economy, and culture.

In the First Section, “Gender Online and Digital Sex” which contains two chapters, the first one focuses on Korean Online Small Businesses run by women entrepreneurs and, the second focuses on the Japanese Manga and Video Game industry. More specifically looking at the niche of adult games that do not conform with the societal norms of western countries. Cultural Studies form an important reference for these chapters.

The second section, “Governance and Regulations” contains four chapters, namely the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth. The third chapter focuses on the dimension of personal data protection in Japan. The fourth chapter deals with the role of augmented reality and games in Japan by presenting a case study of Pokémon GO. The fifth and sixth chapters deal with the licensing and use of technology in the Korean peninsula. The fifth chapter looks at the use of pirated multimedia from South Korea in North Korea from the perspectives of political economy and cultural studies. The sixth chapter compares South Korea and North Korea on the production and availability of creative content in cinema and the digital revolution.

The Third section focuses on Japan and South Korea’s response to Techno-identity and Digital Labour Conditions.

It places emphasis on different identities that groups of Individuals develop and associate with as a consequence of their participation in digital spaces. The narrative in this section also explores the cultural dimension of digital spaces. For instance, it looks at the prominent games and anime across different eras in Japan and explores its distribution across the world.

The overall presentation and organisation of the book are commendable and it provides an easy reading experience. The editors and authors seem to have taken appropriate care in developing the framework for the presentation of the book. The Introductions provided before each section begins serves as an important tool for the reader to contextualise the contents of the section. These not only provide a snapshot of the sections but also develop the relevant theoretical understanding of the analytical frameworks utilised by the authors in the respective section. The different perspectives of western popular culture and the inherent regional traditions and culture of Japan and Korea are presented lucidly and simply. The different constructs, which relate to niche areas and related products specific to Japan and Korea are explained and developed using relevant theoretic tools.

The main focus audience for this book would include students and practitioners related to fields such as technical communication studies, cultural studies, game studies, and political economy. A few reviewers have claimed that it can act as a textbook for students in these areas of study. Since it covers concepts from three different theoretical disciplines, it would have been a good idea to include a glossary with an explanation of the technical terms used in the book. This would enable readers not engrained in these streams of research, to better understand the detailed accounts and read between the lines.

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