

Techno-nationalism and Creative Industries:

The Development of Chinese Online Game Industry
in a Globalized Economy

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The C-Centre

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Foreword

Winning an award at a peer-reviewed conference is an honor that most academics cherish. We like it because we enjoy being recognized by the research community. In addition, when rightly done, an award speaks to the quality of a paper. All this probably explains why the annual conventions of major communication associations of the world—ICA, NCA, AEJMC, WAPOR, IAMCR and the like—have set up awards for top student papers. While the authors will find the awards encouraging, the award-winning papers can be a source of inspiration to many others. Graduate students and budding scholars are particularly curious about these papers.

The graduate students in our School have been very active in joining all the aforesaid conferences. As teachers, we are happy to find that quite a few have won awards for their outstanding works. To meet the demand for easy access to these papers, the Centre for Chinese Media and Comparative Communication Research (the C-Centre) has launched this Award-winning Student Paper series as part of its e-publication plan. As the copyright owner, the authors are expected to revise and publish the e-papers in the more traditional venues of journals and books later. We publish the e-version as working monographs in order to speed up the dissemination of research ideas. We encourage you to share the e-papers with others. You are also invited to refer student award-winning papers to us for possible inclusion in the series.

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Abstract

This paper examines how China responds to the dominant force of cultural globalization with a case study of its development of online game industry. Based on archive documents, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic data, this study elucidates an emerging strategy, namely, techno-nationalism. In the Chinese context, such a national strategy manipulates technology to create a version of popular nationalism that is acceptable and readily to be censored by the authorities. As a consequence, cultural industries which pitch in with the strategies could prevail in the Chinese market. This explains why the regional competitors of Chinese online games—Korean games—are more successful than most Western counterparts in China. By providing a snapshot of the current ecology of Chinese online game industry, this paper also discussed the role of cultural regionalization and globalization, and argues that the development of online game industry in China depends more on political factor than economic factors.

This paper was awarded the Herbert Schiller Award of International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) annual conference 2011.