

# Urban or rural?

## Advancement of technology (The Internet) and its effect on Malaysian rural society

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# Introduction

- New technology advancement has brought us into a wireless and borderless world
- Even today, the rural society has access to outside information
- How did this new technology impact the rural society? What has changed?
- How does the rural community adapt, and do they have access to it?
- What is its impact on the rural community in terms of economy, social, or culture?
- Do they see it as a good/positive or bad/negative?

- From an observation on Malaysia rural society, many rural areas have access to the outside world/cultures/ new cultures
- More than 21.1 million out of 30.8 million Malaysian population are internet users as of 2016  
(<http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/malaysia/>)
- Some studies show that the rural society have benefitted from the internet by having access to knowledge and services at their fingertips

# Asia Pacific's Internet Users by Country (2012)



We lead

## Asia Pacific's Internet Users By Country

COUNTRY	INTERNET USERS	PENETRATION RATE (%)	% OF USERS
AUSTRALIA	19,554,832	89.80	81.70
CHINA	513,100,000	38.40	50.50
HONG KONG	4,894,913	68.70	0.50
INDIA	121,000,000	10.20	11.90
INDONESIA	55,000,000	22.40	5.40
JAPAN	101,228,736	80.00	10.00
KOREA. SOUTH	40,329,660	82.70	4.00
MALAYSIA	17,723,000	61.70	1.70
NEW ZEALAND	3,625,555	84.50	15.20
THE PHILIPPINES	29,700,000	29.20	2.90
SINGAPORE	3,658,400	77.20	0.40
TAIWAN	16,147,000	70.00	1.60
THAILAND	18,310,000	27.40	1.80
VIETNAM	30,516,587	33.70	3.00

(SOURCE: INTERNET WORLD STATS, DECEMBER 2011)

Retrieve from: <https://amanz.my/201231313/>

- Malaysia aims to be a digital society by 2020.
- However, there had been a digital divide between urban and rural areas because of the uneven distribution of the basic telecommunication infrastructure between the urban and rural areas in Malaysia
- To solve this, the Malaysian government has made a community-based telecentre to serve the rural population such as; “Kedaikom”, and *Kampung Tanpa Wayar 1Malaysia* (1Malaysia Wireless Village)\*

\*(Zulkefli bin Ibrahim, Ainin Sulaiman, Tengku M. Faziharudean (2011). Bringing the Internet to the Rural Area: A Case Study of the ‘Kedaikom’ Project in Malaysia DOI: 10.4018/978-1-61520-997-2.ch002

- Generally, it is known that the ability to access the internet brings an abundance of positive impact towards the rural society at large
- Many activities can be done easily with the access of the internet, such as; signing up for University, where students can simply access the *Kampung Tanpa Wayar 1Malaysia* internet service
- They can also sign up for jobs, services, and promote their businesses online, etc

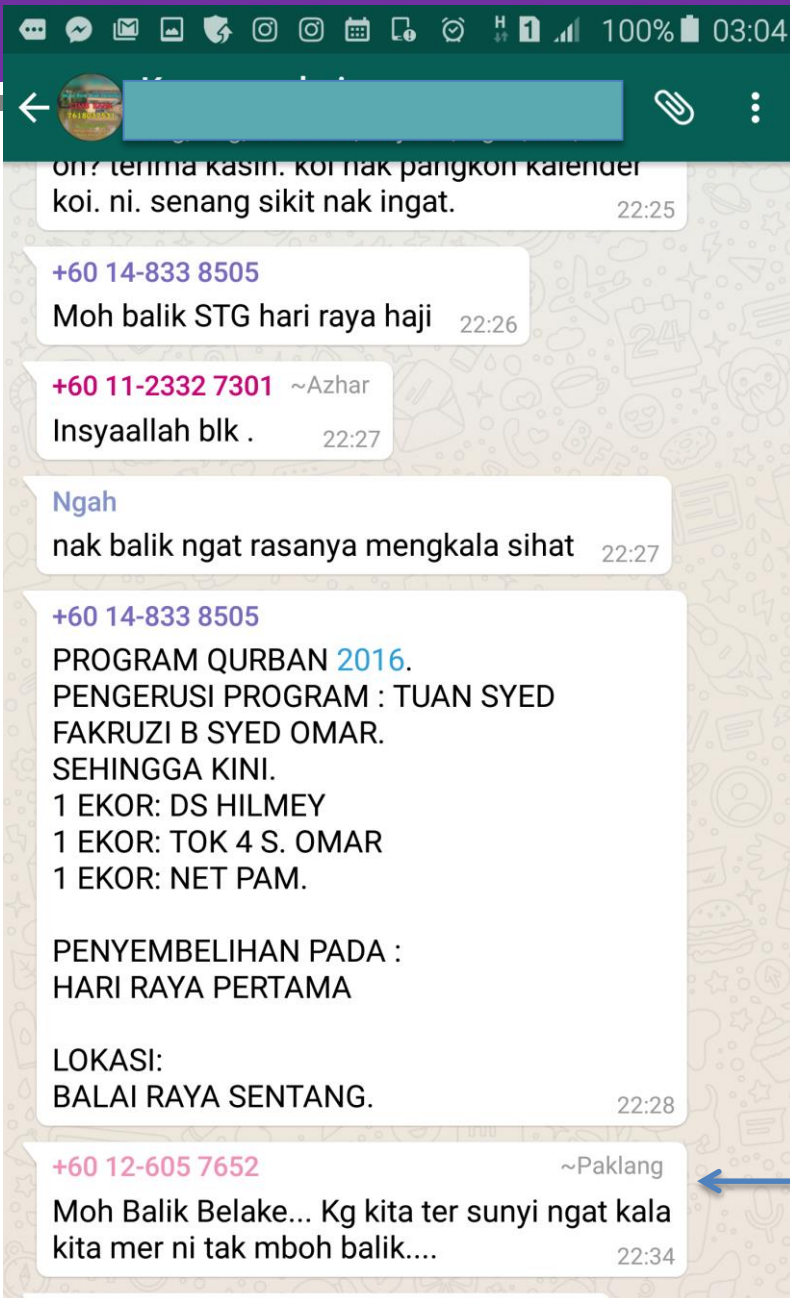
- Despite this, not everyone receive the positive impacts of this newly applied internet services
- For example, many poor people do not know how to register for the e-kasih system, which is a National Poverty Data Bank which contains in-depth information on the poor
- As stated in panduanmalaysia.com, “Menurut FAQ eKasih, semua Ketua Isi Rumah (KIR) yang berpendapatan kurang dari RM1,500 (Bandar) dan RM1,000 (Luar Bandar) **adalah digalakkan untuk mendaftar.**” (*“According to FAQeKasih, all Head of Household that has earnings less than RM1,500 (Urban) and RM1,000 (Rural) are encouraged to register.”*)

- Individuals who wish to register may refer to the District Office and Federal Development Office/State Development Office
- However, our study on poverty in rural areas found that many of those who we considered poor (has no fixed income/do not have any income) did not register with e-kasih due to lack of knowledge, having never heard of e-kasih and due to the complexity of the registration process\*
  - \* Narimah Samat, Suriati Ghazali and others, Spatial Inequalities: Framing Phenomena, Formulating Strategies, Research University Team Grant.
- Despite the issues such as those related to e-kasih, the internet have brought considerable amounts of changes towards the rural community, especially on social relations.



- In this time and age, the internet usage by those from the rural areas are increasing in number, even though lower compared to those from the urban areas. The rural-urban divide between the two areas have been getting closer.
- Urban centres such as Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory recorded 115.7% broadband penetration rate in 2014 compared to less urbanised state such as Pahang, with penetration rate 60% (Communication & Media: Statistics Info Book 2014)
- Now, both rural and urban communities can exist together via internet-using applications such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Wechat, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc

- An example can be found within group chats which contain both rural and urban peoples who had first come from the same *kampung*, such as Whatsapp groups for classmates/relatives from the same primary school
- The result is a new phenomena which involve a vibrant social interaction; especially between the classmates/relatives who still live in the rural areas, and those who have moved to the cities.
- News related to big events/activities/births/deaths in the *kampung* are easily spread to those who are living in the urban areas, thus, giving them a reason to return back to the *kampung* to visit their friends and relatives



Whatsapp messenger showing a group of people from the same village who now reside in different places discussing on '*balik kampung*' (returning to hometown) to celebrate Eid with family and relatives in a program called 'Program Qurban'

"Lets return back together...our village is too quiet if we're not there..."



The city migrants return back to their rural village to participate in village activities

(\*Majlis Jasamu Dikenang is an event in which the kampung people and city migrants meet up to show appreciation to village leaders and ex-teachers during primary school )

- Furthermore, events for the *kampung* can be made and planned together between those from the rural and urban areas, thus, giving the *kampung* a more lively atmosphere; something which is very much different compared to the times without internet.
- Upon observing the trends in Malaysia, technology nowadays is no longer used just by the younger generations; but also by their parents.
- In the case of *kampung*, parents (those who are of older generation) who are active in their family/friends Whatsapp/Wechat groups are no longer a rarity.

# CONCLUDING REMARKS

- However, were these services used to its full potential; which involves the betterment of one's self, the increase of knowledge, to generate the *kampung's* economy and etc..?
- Were they able to reduce cases of poverty, create jobs, and increase skills and income?
- These are aspects that can be explored for further research.

# Thank you

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