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**Parental Attitudes towards Children's Internet Use
and Online Advertising in Hong Kong**

Keywords: parental attitudes – children – Internet use – online advertising

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Abstract

The rocketing growth of new media technology, especially the Internet, brought up a “digital generation”, which both excites and worries their parents. However, parents’ perception and attitudes toward children’s Internet use has seldom been investigated, especially in countries with Asian culture background. Like their counterparts in western countries, Chinese parents hold both positive and negative attitudes toward children’s Internet use and online advertising. A survey of 367 Chinese parents was conducted to examine parental attitudes of their children’s Internet use and online advertising in November 2003 in Hong Kong. Eleven statements were used to measure parental attitudes toward children’s Internet use and five statements were used to measure their attitudes toward online advertising. A factor analysis was conducted to examine the dimensions of parental attitudes and a correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship among parental attitudes, demographic factors and their computer and Internet literacy. Results showed that Chinese parents mostly worried that Internet use would hurt their children’s eyesight. They also concerned about the pornographic and violent content, and the chance to meet with immoral people online. Parents generally held negative attitudes toward online advertising. Parental attitudes varied among different demographic groups. Those parents with higher computer and Internet literacy were more likely to hold positive attitude toward Internet. The implications for public policy and for the design of the technology were discussed. (225 words)