STUDYING ACROSS DIGITAL GAPS AND FIREWALLS

Elena D. Corbett, PhD, Serigne Ndiaye, PhD, Kārlis Rokpelnis, PhD
INTERNET ACCESS:
NAVIGATING BETWEEN INSTITUTIONAL DEMAND AND LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE
Standardized Program Operations

- Risk Prevention and Management
  - Clear Safety and Security Guidelines Protocols
  - Emergency Notification System

- Overall Monitoring of Program Quality
  - Academics
  - Housing
  - Co-curricular Activities
Objectives of Standardizing Operations

- Provide a safe and rewarding experience to participants in all programs
- Ensure a seamless administrative system
- Fulfill Mission, regardless of place of study

« we change lives, our alumni change the world »
Facilities Requirements: The Pitfalls of Standardizing

- Assuming Good Quality Internet Access and Connectivity

- Standardized requirements and sub-standard facilities
  - Connectivity in Senegal
  - Local Company offers sub-standard services
  - ADSL: Not enough bandwidth to ensure expected program quality
MITIGATING MEASURES
Program Administration Response to Poor Local Infrastructure

- Provide Rechargeable Internet Sticks to Students
- Double Internet Subscription with different companies
- Contract IT Services to control bandwidth usage and limit student connection with one device at a time
Two categories of responses:

1. The Bubble Seeker
   - Seek the comfort of restaurants and cafés with hotspots
   - Stay in computer Lab and familiar places

2. The Independent Explorer
   - Engage with the discomfort of the unknown
   - Step off the «colonial veranda»
In his article, “A View from the Veranda,” Anthony Ogden defines the “colonial student” in the following terms:

“The colonial student typifies the U.S. university student who really wants to be abroad and take full advantage of all the benefits studying abroad offers, but is not necessarily open to experiencing the less desirable side of being there. (37)
LESSONS LEARNED FROM
Lessons from the field

- High facilities standards provide a sense of comfort and familiarity while abroad

- Familiarity and comfort impact student satisfaction, which, in turn, impact their program ratings
Lessons from the field, Cont.

- Lack of high quality internet does pose a challenge to standardizing.

- Examined from an increasingly institutionalized and standardized perspective, lack of alignment may be equated with poor service quality, a high risk offer, and a decrease in enrollment.
Conclusion: Bubble Seeker or Independent Explorer

- Why do we send students abroad?

- Do we want students to be hardly more than insecure proprietors of experiences that we serve them in ready-to-consume packages?

  Or

- Do we also want them to take ownership of their experiences by “stepping off the [familiar] veranda” of our standardized expectations?
Digital and Disenfranchised

some personal reflections on exclusions, uprisings, and one little part of the global south

Dr. Elena D. Corbett
Director of Education Abroad, AMIDEAST
Context for Better Understanding

• As of the 2016 census, Jordan’s population was just over 9.5 million, about 3 million of whom were non-Jordanians

• Average monthly salary in Jordan= $637
  • Average monthly expenses excluding rent= $676 (single), $2468 (family of 4)
  • Amman is the most expensive Arab city in which to live
    -source: The Jordan Times (citing Numbeo and The Economist Intelligence Unit), April 7, 2017

• 75% of Jordanians 15 and older don’t have a bank account
  • 85% of women don’t have a bank account
  • In the MENA region as a whole, such financial inclusion stands at 14% of the population; it’s 69% in East Asia and the Pacific and nearly 100% in developed countries
**MONTHLY EVO HOME (17JD)-1200GB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bundle Name</th>
<th>Speed Up to</th>
<th>Monthly CAP</th>
<th>Promotional CAP</th>
<th>Monthly Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evo Home Promotional</td>
<td>8 Mbps</td>
<td>600 GB*</td>
<td>1200 GB*</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fair Usage Applied*

**Notes:**
- Internet service depends on available coverage
- Yearly commitment is required for monthly subscriptions
- After finishing the monthly CAP, the speed will be throttled to 256 Mbps
- CPE Free
- Above prices are subject to sales tax 16%
- This offer is valid for limited time only

* Fair usage policy is applied

Check [Umniyah's Coverage Map](#) to discover Internet coverage in your area.

For an offer, click here to fill out the form.
Internet and Smartphone Usage

- Internet usage in Jordan at the time of the census (late 2015/early 2016):
  - 6.3 million internet users
  - 2.038 million internet subscriptions (most mobile broadband, some ADSL and other)
  - 13.1 million subscriptions for mobile devices (mostly phones)
  - 70% of mobile phones were smartphones (much of this market is second-hand)

- As of early 2014 more than 90% of Jordanians owned cell phones
  - most were using them to SMS or communicate via social media
  - only 5% of users were using phones for consumer transactions

- As of 2015, most smartphone operating systems in Jordan were Android
  - people were using apps primarily for messaging and social media, and sending fewer SMS’s
    - source: The Jordan Times, citing an Arab Advisers Group survey, April 15, 2015
THANK YOU
THE LESSONS OF THE GREAT FIRE WALL
Great (Fire) Wall

The Chinese government has implemented “the most elaborate system for Internet content control in the world”, marshaling hundreds of thousands of people to strategically slow the flow of certain types of information among the Chinese people.

King et al. SCIENCE 22 AUGUST 2014
VOL 345 ISSUE 6199 1251722-1
Networked wonderland

A decade ago, Chinese Internet companies were still marginal internationally. Today, they are world-class industry innovators. In the Internet economy, the leadership is shifting from the advanced West to the emerging East.

Dan Steinbock, policy and economic analyst
Xinhuanet 2017-04-21
Internet in China is a very different experience

- Growing fast and changing rapidly
- Partially cut off from the rest of the world
- Tightly controlled, sovereign
- Fervently political yet strongly apolitical

- Addressing concerns about safety and security
- Maintaining access and connectivity
- Exposing students to the “local” version of internet
- Facilitating learning about the technologies and ethics of internet sovereignty
Addressing concerns about safety and security

Maintaining access and connectivity

- Access to CIEE and homeschool systems
- Access to communication tools to stay in touch with family and friends
- Access to local communication tools to ensure that CIEE staff can contact students for regular communication as well as emergencies
Exposing students to the “local” version of internet

- Chinese language content
- Chinese usage habits
- Use of Chinese internet for academic content, studying, and research
Facilitating learning about internet sovereignty

- Providing opportunities to learn about the technologies of censorship and circumvention tools
- Providing opportunities to learn about the technological, social, intellectual, and economic impacts of the censorship system
Conclusions

- Internet censorship is a key aspect of students experience while in Beijing
- Initial obstacles have to be rapidly overcome to ensure safety
- Learning to live with and overcome censorship is a key learning goal for the study abroad experience
THANK YOU