



What did we
learn from the
social media
survey?

What did we do?

- ⊙ A survey with 18 multiple choice questions in English and Lao
- ⊙ An **online** version promoted through LaoFAB, various Facebook pages
- ⊙ An **offline** version conducted by CLICK staff
- ⊙ Carried out between 15 Oct and 05 Nov 2014



The sample

- ◎ 284 online respondents and 278 offline
- ◎ In total, 521 completed all 18 questions
- ◎ The online sample is biased towards older, professional, male users
- ◎ The offline sample is biased towards students, with a high portion of young women.
- ◎ Both samples are biased towards educated people living in Vientiane.



What did we learn?

- © Firstly, we learnt that it is difficult to get a complete picture of social media use in Laos!
 - ✦ The social media 'landscape' is diverse: different social groups using different platforms for different purposes
 - ✦ The survey did not covered all social groups. In particular, we have almost no knowledge of what rural people are doing
 - ✦ But we can make generalisations about urban educated users of SM, and it is reasonable to assume they are the leaders in this field
 - ✦ What follows are tentative conclusions about this group



SM has arrived

1. Social media is already a big part of the lives of the urban population

- ✦ Over half of all respondents have been using SM for more than 3 years, and many over 5 years
- ✦ Average time online is about 2.5 hrs per day
- ✦ Most users are using multiple platforms and rate their own knowledge of the internet as 'good'



Everybody is doing it!



Most popular devices

2. Smart phones are the dominant means for accessing social media



- ★ 85% of online respondents, and 94% of offline respondents are accessing social media via smart phones,
- ★ Laptops are the second most popular device, with 79% and 21% respectively.
- ★ Use of desktops and tablets is under 50% for the online respondents, and under 15% for the younger offline respondents.



Most popular platforms

3. Facebook and WhatsApp are the most popular platforms in Laos

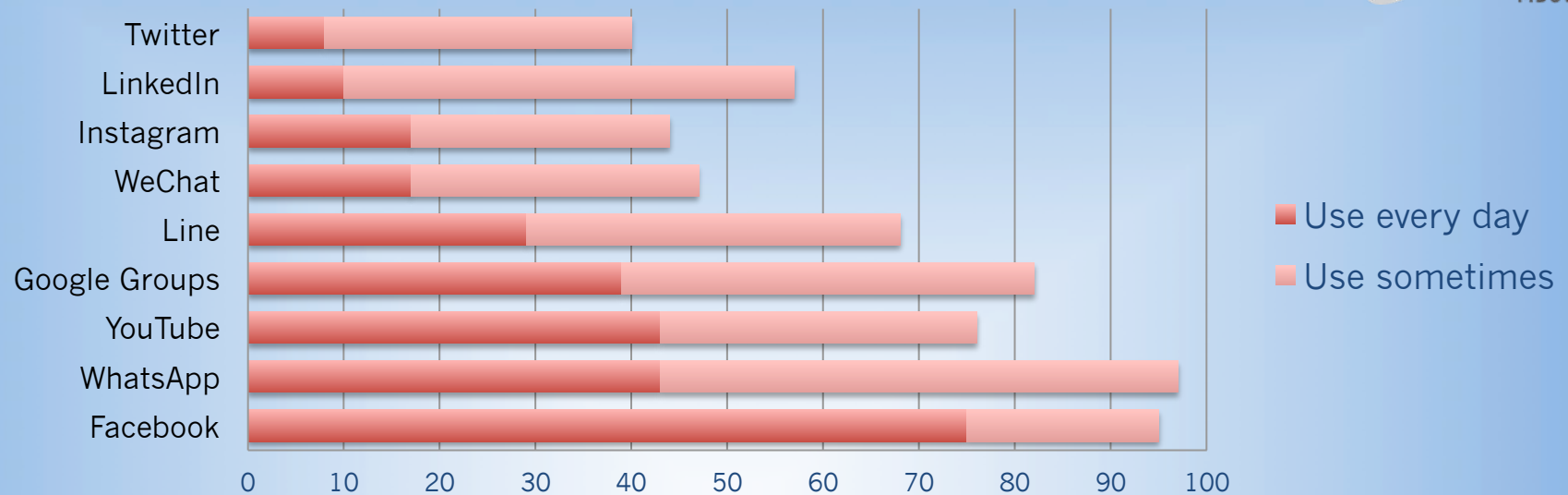


- ✦ Facebook is being used everyday by 75% of older professional users
- ✦ Approximately 40% of the same group are also using WhatsApp, YouTube and Google Groups every day
- ✦ Over 90% of students are using WhatsApp every day Students also make use of Facebook (70% daily) and chat applications such as WeChat (55%) and Line (42%)
- ✦ Twitter is not a major platform, unlike in other countries
- ✦ Instagram also has limited use, probably for posting photos on other platforms

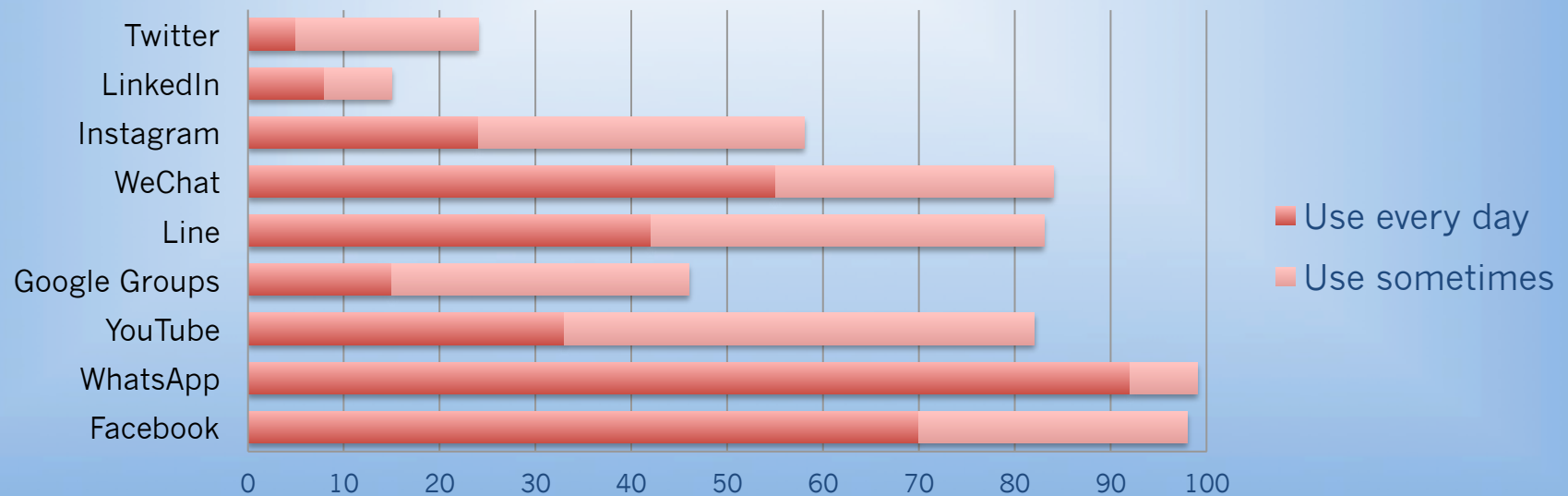




% of online respondents



% of offline respondents



Online activity



5. Users in Laos are not simply copying what happens in neighbouring countries

- ✦ Comparing our results with studies elsewhere, it seems we have a distinct group of users in Laos
- ✦ Lao users are not the same as the Vietnamese, who spend a lot of time checking product information and doing online business
- ✦ Lao users are not the same as Thai users, who spend a lot of time following celebrities and watching music videos
- ✦ Lao users have some similarities to Chinese users who spend a lot of time searching for news and chatting, but the platforms are different



Active users

6. Lao users are not passive consumers of online content

- ✦ Almost all users are searching, sharing and reacting to existing content
- ✦ Although only 20% of older users and 10% of students say they frequently create new content, at least two thirds of all users do it sometimes
- ✦ More than 80% of respondents say they are using online information in their work or studies, with a similar number have face-to-face discussion about the content
- ✦ Approximately two-thirds of users have changed their attitude about something as a result of social media



Concerned users

7. A surprising number of respondents expressed an interest in serious topics

- ✦ The topic with highest figure for a 'strong like' was social & environmental problems, with 34% in the online survey.
- ✦ Approximately 75% of the online users and 50% of offline users say they liked this subject ('strong' and 'somewhat')
- ✦ Politics and economics was also liked by 55% of online and 37% of offline respondents
- ✦ Perhaps this is a sampling bias... but at least it shows these are not taboo subjects
- ✦ Less surprising: 'Lao culture and scenery' was liked by more than two-thirds of both groups, with 'sports, movies and music' liked by more than half



Views on regulation

8. A small majority agree with the need to curb offensive behaviour, but far fewer are in favour of preventing critical debate

- ✦ This is a controversial area, with slightly different views between students and older professionals
- ✦ 50% of the online sample and 62% of the offline sample agreed with the need to protect privacy and decency
- ✦ Only 11% of the online sample agreed that users should not criticise policy, but this rose to 39% of the offline sample
- ✦ The biggest target for regulation appears to be pornography, which is disliked by two-thirds of users
- ✦ Accidents & violence are disliked by about half of older users, but students seem to be ambivalent about this



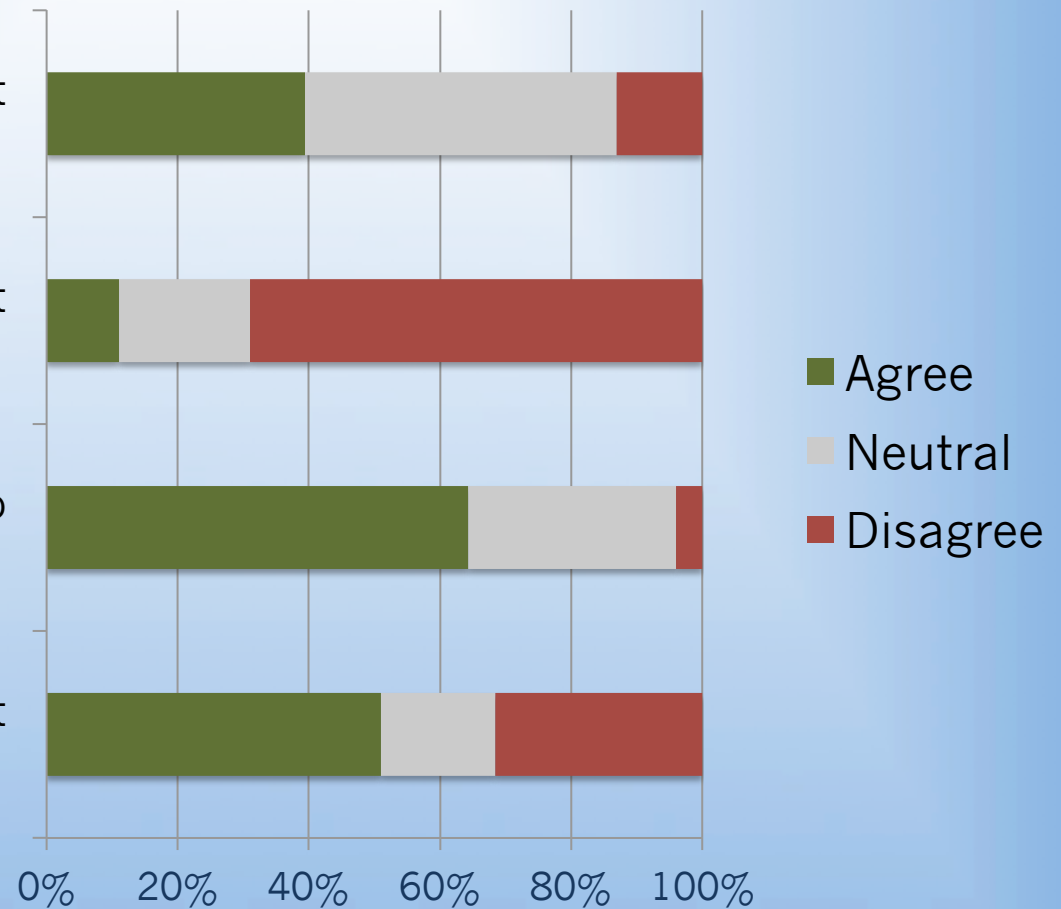
Different opinions

Student response: Should not criticise policy

Older response: Should not criticise policy

Student response: Need to protect privacy & decency

Older response: Need to protect privacy & decency



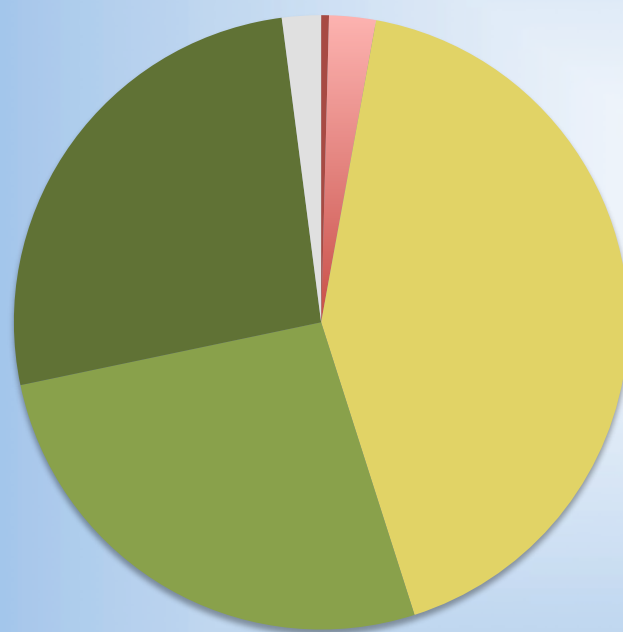
Social benefit

9. Positive views on the contribution that social media makes to the development of the country far outweigh negative views

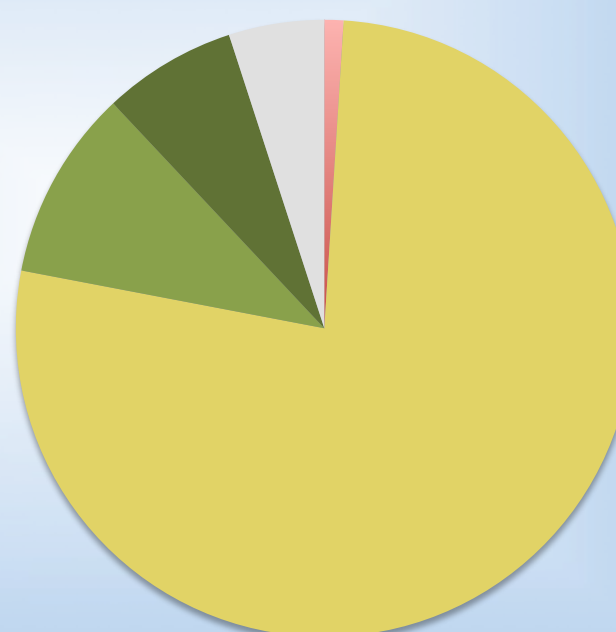
- ✦ Above 80% of the online sample, and above 60% of the offline sample, thought that social media was good for both business and education
- ✦ A further 75% online and 43% offline believe that SM was an opportunity for improving democracy and accountability
- ✦ In response to a general question on the overall contribution of social media there were far more positive than negative responses, but many people – especially students – opted for the ‘mixed or neutral’ response



How is social media contributing to development of the country?



Online respondents



Offline respondents

- very negative
- somewhat negative
- neutral or mixed
- somewhat positive
- very positive
- don't know



