

CEACOP SEMINAR

ENLARGING THE SELF AND DIGITAL WELL-BEING THROUGH CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY



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ABSTRACT

There are various approaches to exploring digital well-being (DWB), whose objective is to study the impacts of digital technologies on people's well-being. Most existing approaches conceive digital well-being primarily from an individualistic and/or anthropocentric perspective, viewing individuals and humans as the locus of well-being. Although interpersonal and extrapersonal considerations, such as social relationships and physical environments, are not excluded, they are typically viewed only as instrumental. Following the Intercultural Digital Ethics approach, my talk problematizes the individualistic and anthropocentric approaches to DWB and argues non-anthropocentric considerations should be viewed as constitutive of DWB. Drawing on the Confucian view of personhood and the Confucian notion of oneness—which posits that our welfare is deeply intertwined with other people and things—this talk proposes expanding our understanding of DWB to explicitly integrate interpersonal and extrapersonal dimensions. In addition, I diagnose a key obstacle to DWB from the Confucian perspective in self-centeredness, and propose the notion of self-centered digital technology as an evaluative tool to examine the impact of digital technologies on well-being. In doing so, this talk aims to provide an alternative framework to DWB inspired by Confucian philosophy.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Pak-Hang Wong is an Assistant Professor at the Academy of Chinese, History, Religion and Philosophy and a Research Fellow at the Centre for Applied Ethics, Hong Kong Baptist University. His research explores the social, ethical, and political dimensions of artificial intelligence, data, and other emerging digital technologies. He earned his doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Twente and has held academic positions in Europe and the UK. Additionally, he has industry experience as a specialist in AI ethics and governance. Wong co-edited *Harmonious Technology: A Confucian Ethics of Technology* with Tom Wang, which offers an alternative, non-Western perspective on philosophy and ethics of technology. He is now serving as the series editor for the *Anthem Philosophy of Technology* series.