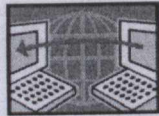## CYBER NAMES : CONSTRUCTING INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES

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University of Malaya

Focus of Study

The focus of this study is on the construction of individual and cultural identity via ones' choice of cyber names in chat rooms.

This paper is a preliminary study of the construction of identities via the choice of names in chat rooms. Given the anonymous nature of chat rooms, this study is a particularly complex one.

Cyber Names

By using cyber names, the chat room community identifies themselves and their netizens as inhabitants of a different and unorthodox world, but it is nevertheless one that recognizes the netizens as a community in their own cyber domain.

Identity

The relative anonymity of cyberspace allows for the making of identities that are not bound by the conventions of a physical world. In other words, in an alternate, notional world that has no borders or boundaries, netizens are free to construct an individual and cultural identity of their own choice.

Second Language Identities
David Block, 2007

- Identity as how individuals are defined, contained and enabled by documents as opposed to the actions they take. Fixed and deterministic.
- *Identity- one that is open-ended and unstable one that is invented.*
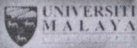- Identity- an academic concept.

Identity

A name is one of the things that give individuals their own special identity, while also helping others identify the person.
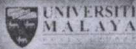
Matthews, G. (2000) cultural supermarket- a range of identities to be assumed.

Not a free market there are social structures within which individual exist which constrain the amount and scope of choice available to individual.

Thematic/subject	Upper/lowercase/numeric	authentic
nympetamine_g url	LeOPard	kavi
Ragdoll	MAGNUM4D	lali
Mr Goober	PicherZ	Ron
Mistique	rApture	Nikki
Babypup	+sjoo-	Dora
tiramisu	+Baboon	Unclelim
Pillow talk	@yuyu	Amma
Bento Pet	NaUs	Ah Fo
tvaddict	@NevilShute	SarahC
MAGNUM4D	Wel-JaN	izzatirahman

	mmuurrllyyc123	khairulanwar
Darkstar	po0w0k	shantini
Warlock	VampireM	Rames
Iwashi-kun	Apek8188	vishnu
ckBoy	Virgin guy	Praveen
uncleokui	Looking4gals	Syakila
angkasawan-malaysia	heartman_ceyl onese35single	ChinHaiYan
leTHam	BoreD^GaL	mui^tao

Leet Speak
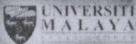
3=E
9=G
0=o
@LLi3= Allie
D3ad= dead
9rac3= Grace

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leet_speak

Cutesy

PicherZ
rApture
+sjoo-
intentional misspellings especially the "z" at the end of words ("skillz").

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Mystique (Raven Darkholme) is a fictional character associated with the Marvel Comics' franchise, X-Men. Throughout most of her history, Mystique has been a supervillainess, founding the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants and assassinating several important people involved in mutant affairs. Mystique herself is a mutant, a shapeshifter whose natural appearance her blue skin and yellow eyes. At one point, she mentioned she is over a 100 years old. Mystique is the mother of the villain Graydon Creed, the X-Men hero Nightcrawler and foster mother of the hero Rogue. She was forced to abandon Nightcrawler, but raised Rogue for a number of years and the two women have mixed feelings towards one another. Despite Mystique's history of crime, she was most recently working with the X-Men's Professor X in a short-lived series. She was later voted straight into the X-Men.

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Darkstar (Laynia Petrovna) is a fictional character, a mutant superheroine in the Marvel Comics universe. She has been a member of various super-teams in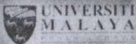 her career and ultimately died as a member of the X-Corporation in New X-Men. A new Darkstar has since appeared several times as a member of the new Winter Guard.

Cyber name

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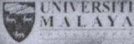
nympetamine_gurl
Nymphetamine Fix
Cradle of Filth is an extreme metal band, formed in Suffolk, United Kingdom in 1991.

Ethnic

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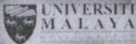
kavi	ChinHaiYan	Ron	izzatirahman
lali	mui^tao	Nikki	khairulanwar
mmuurrllyyc123	uncleokui	SarahC	angkasawan-malaysia

Gender

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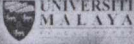
nympetamine_gurl
Ragdoll
Syakila

VampireM
Apek8188
Bart

Calling Card

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Virgin guy
Looking4gals
heartman_ceylonese35single
BoreD^GaL
Naughty|By|Nature

One Nation Identity

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Milton Gordon (1964) in his 'melting pot' theory looked at melting pot assimilation which involved the fusion, both cultural and biological, of all societal groups into a totally new blend. In this hybrid society, all racial and ethnic groups become 'melted together by the fires of American influence and interaction into a distinctly new type' (Gordon 1964:115). The final outcome of such a homogenizing process is the fusion of formerly distinct groups into an ethnically undifferentiated society.

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Multiculturalism which rejects assimilation began as a movement in the field of education (Higham 2001). It calls for equal-respect and recognition of contributions of all racial and ethnic groups with a focus on the importance of maintaining cultural diversity (Higham 2001; Giroux 1994; Dworkin & Dworkin 1999; Gordon & Newfield 1996).

COMPOSITE IDENTITY

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While assimilation is not the desired outcome in Malaysia's quest to be a globalized nation, multiculturalism—for want of a better term—is. multiculturalism is seen as one that rejects assimilation into a mainstream culture and an ethnically undifferentiated society. Multiculturalism, in the context of Malaysia, maintains pluralism, that is, the cultural diversity and uniqueness of all ethnic groups in Malaysia. However it does not see the maintenance process as one that rejects 'intimate group relationships' (Gordon 1994; Gans 1997) but rather one that fosters unity in diversity.

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Thank you

Questions?
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