

Study on the improvement of electronic waste problems in Thailand

(タイにおける電子廃棄物問題改善に向けた研究)

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[Introduction] Electronic waste problems have been getting serious in the world with the rapid progress in the internet society. Various actions to tackle with the problems have been started in developed countries by applying the idea of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) or developing public collecting systems of electronic wastes (e-wastes). In developing countries, however, these issues are still on the way to cope with. Thailand is one of the most economically developed countries in the South Asia, and the electronic industries are also flourish. However, there are no laws to restrict improper disposal nor classification systems of e-wastes. Considering these situations, this study aims to examine the awareness and consciousness of Thai people about the problems and explore the direction of the improvement of the way to deal with the e-wastes in Thailand.

[Methods] Main (from in December 2015 to February 2016) and supplemental (from November to December 2016) social surveys were conducted around Bangkok, Thailand. For the main survey, questionnaires were distributed to consumers with high educational backgrounds and second-hand dealers of e-wastes. For the supplemental survey, an interview was implemented to the most famous temple in Nonthaburi Province nearby Bangkok, which collect and sell e-wastes.

[Results and Discussion] The results of the main survey show that there was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between students and workers about the awareness of the e-waste problems and the idea of EPR. Cooperative mind was considered higher for the consumers than for the second-hand dealers. Based on the results of the supplemental survey, it was found that there is a flow that is characteristic in Thailand: many citizens donate e-wastes to the temple and classify the e-wastes.

[Conclusion] This study revealed that strong human network exists in the e-waste collecting system among Thai people, which is considered to be originated from deep radical cooperative mind based on the Buddhism. Therefore, enhancement of the faith and community network might help improve e-waste problems in Thailand.