

# ICT and Buddhism

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The year 2555 B.E. (2012 A.D.) is a Buddha Jayanti 2600 year, the Celebration of 2600 years of Buddha's Enlightenment. On this occasion the Buddhists will emphasize the practice of worship of the Buddha. All Buddhists around the world have participation of this occasion, from the family to the national level as well as behaving as true Buddhists. This will lead to stability and sustainable Buddhism.

The Buddha Jayanti day is a very important occasion in Buddhism. The origin of the term Buddha Jayanti stems from the Pali word 'jaya,' which means victory. This term refers to the complete victory of the Buddha over Mara and all mental impurities, a victory which enabled the perfectly enlightened Buddha to come into existence. Buddha Jayanti thus refers to both the enlightenment and the coming into existence of the Buddha. In modern times the term Buddha Jayanti is also interpreted as the victory of Buddhism and the victory by individual Buddhists.

Buddhism has now existed amongst the changes in the world for almost 2,600 years to the era of Information Technology and Communications (ICT). This technology has been linked to global unity. Humanitarian access and obtaining information very quickly. ICT has both positive and negative impacts on Buddhism. For example, the positive impacts are such as using ICT for Worldwide Buddhist dissemination via the Internet, which is very quick. People can reach Buddha's teachings through ICT with ease anytime anywhere. **Venerable Pannyavaro**, Webmaster of Buddhanet, President of the Buddha Dharma Education Association, said in his article "E-Learning Buddhism on the Internet" that: *"...While for some it may seem rather futuristic, broadband and interactive technology promises an enormous expansion of the potential of the World Wide Web to create a true online community and enhance online learning. On the other hand, we have to work with the current limitations until the interactive technology matures. And especially, we will have to come to terms with the realities in Buddhist countries that are being left behind in the information revolution. One way to address this problem is the use of hybrid technology. To this end we are developing ways to deliver e-learning content via text-based material on the Web or through Intranets using CD-ROM. For example, BuddhaNet has produced a CD-ROM on "Buddhist Studies for Primary and Secondary Students" that can be used on an Intranet in schools or Dharma centers. The CD is actually a web page (HTML files) that includes Adobe PDF (Portable Document Files) documents of all of the material, which when printed can then be photocopied. Also we have produced a multimedia CD that interfaces with our web site, and includes over sixty Buddhist eBooks. The traditional temples*

*and bricks and mortar centers will continue to service peoples' needs for the Dharma, yet this can be expanded and enhanced, and may evolve to a Cyber Sangha, which needs resources, and is supported in its aim to develop the Dharma online using the latest technology that is available. Because a teaching is ancient that doesn't mean that it cannot sit comfortably with new technology. If the Buddha were alive today, he would surely be at ease in the digital world. There is a new generation growing up with the Internet technologies, who regard it as the natural place to find information, for online learning and for spiritual and emotional support. Can we hope that it will be a place that one goes to have a meaningful experience of the Buddha's Dharma as well - it's the future!"*

While the negative impact may use of ICT for disseminating incorrect Buddha's teachings, or to insult Buddhism by people who may have different religious beliefs.

**Bhikkhu P.A. Payutto** said in his book **"Advanced ICT, But the Need to Develop Wisdom and Discipline of the People"**, which can be summarized as: "...In the current era of Globalization, let us examine the effects the globalization has on religion beliefs. What is the future of our beliefs? How can religious beliefs be integrated into the ever changing progress. It has long been focused on the religion solely. In this discussion, I would like to discuss 'Religion in the Era of Globalization'. Let us set religious beliefs on one side and globalization era on the other. Each side has effect on the other. How is globalization effect the religion beliefs and how can religious beliefs aids human in this era?..."

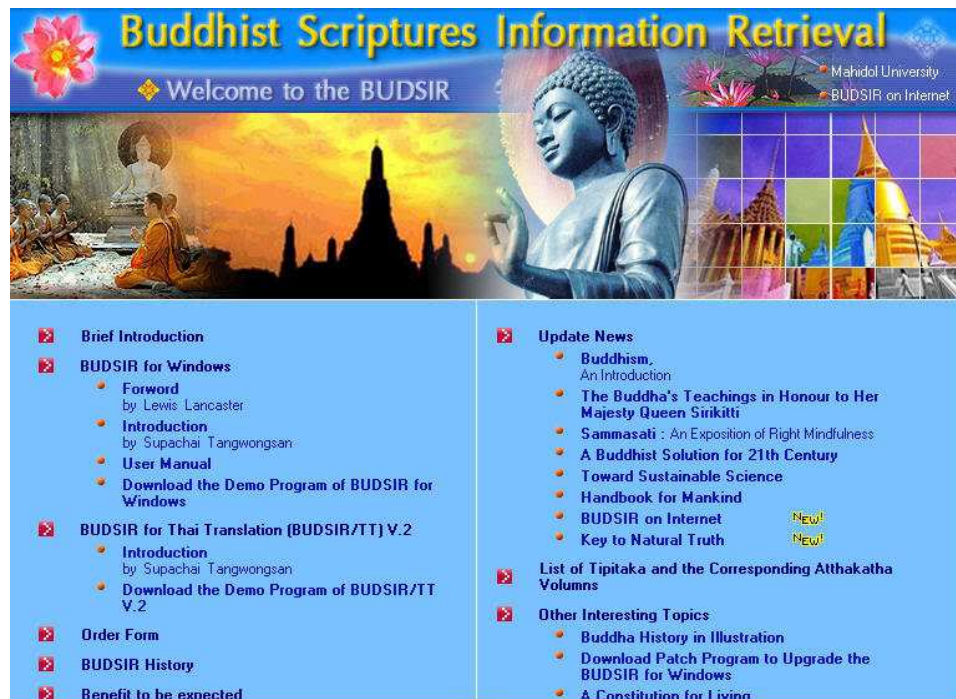
... The importance of technologies is not only seen as a tool that helps us save time and energy. It should also be viewed as a miraculous discovery. Technologies represent human ever-growing visions. They enable us into achieving something that our previous generation has not even dreamt of....

...For example, our scripture, Tripitaka, has been downloaded onto CD-ROM. We are now able to search the lengthy Tripitaka containing 22,000 pages approximately. To find out word 'Sabha' manually, previously took weeks or even months to obtain, but now can be achieved at an unheard of speed. With just one click of a keyword, all information of that keyword will appear within seconds on the computer screen. Technology provides easy and convenient access in the study of Buddhism. I consider this a miracle. It expands human visions...

...This should try to fully understand the capabilities of Information Technology. We must utilize its capacities. We must realize the Pros and Cons of this new tool. We then must select the beneficial outcome of technology. We should not focus solely on the commercial benefits. We must also focus on the effects of its output to society as a whole. The output should be identified as favorable or harmful. Least of all, we should be able to identify which outcome of the new technology we can adapt into our society and which to avoid..."

**His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej**, is a Buddhist and upholder of all religions in the Kingdom of Thailand. **Prof. Dr. Srisakdi Charmonman** said in his paper “Major ICT Leadership from HM the King of Thailand” that “...HM the King provided the most significant inspiration for Thai Information Technology by visiting the IBM plant in San Jose, Silicon Valley, California, USA, in July 1960. That event encouraged Thailand to start thinking about computerization, using the computer in social and economic development of the country to keep abreast with developed countries. In May 2001, HM the King kindly donated 1,472,900 Baht to Mahidol University to develop computerized system for the study of Buddhist Scripture and related statements. The project was completed and presented to HM the King and HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. The presentation was made on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1995 under the name ‘Buddhist Scriptures Information Retrieval IV (BUDSIR IV)’...”

The BUDSIR for Windows contains 115 volumes, or 50,189 pages of text. The data can be divided into two groups as follows: (1) The Pali Tipitaka, 45 volumes. (2) The Atthakatha and other important scriptures, 70 volumes. The data from each volume was entered twice and verified by a computer program which pin-pointed any discrepancies between the two versions, which were then corrected until the two versions were completely identical. This was done by eighty typists, each working at a rate of thirty Pali words a minute, or on average of 15 pages a day. The BUDSIR for Thai Translation contains 160 volumes in all, consisting of 115 volumes in Pali text as in the product of BUDSIR for Windows, and 45 volumes of Tipitaka in Thai translation which is convenient for comparison with the original Pali source.

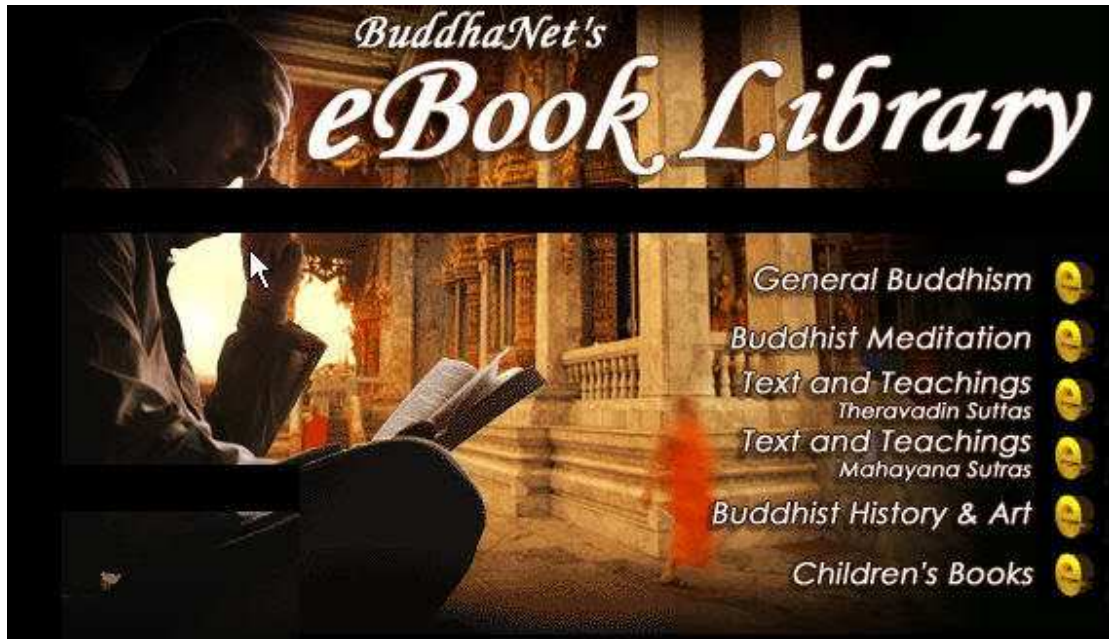


For all of Buddhists should rethink about applying Buddha's teachings to everyday life. **Prof. Manfred Krames**, (Baden-Baden, Germany) said in his speech that "...Be mindful in your daily life. Be good to others, but also to yourself! Try to learn as much as possible from Buddha's teachings, and also from your marvelous His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. However, do not worship them too much. They never asked for that. All they want is that we learn from them, so we create a good and happy life, free from bad Karma. Don't believe what the society or media tells you. Believe in yourself only. Trust your heart!"

In celebration of His Majesty the King's 84<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary, Her Majesty the Queen's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary, the Information and Communication Technology for All Club (ICT for All Club) as shown in [www.ictforall.org](http://www.ictforall.org), is a non-profit organization run in the civil sector which strives to reduce the Digital Divide as much as it can. We will hold an **ICT for All Symposium 2012 on "ICT and Buddhism"** November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, at Panyapiwat Technological Collage, Nonthaburi province, Kingdom of Thailand. It will be held as part of our activities and on the occasion of "Celebrating 2600 Years of Buddhajayanti of the Buddha's Enlightenment". The goal of this Symposium is to bring together interested academics from all areas to share their knowledge and exchange their experiences in the role of ICT in Buddhism as well as to discuss topics related to the area of the Enlightenment of Buddha, and how can we can apply Buddha's teachings to everyday life.

In this Symposium, we expect approximately 200 attendees such as Buddhist monks, novices, children & young people, and others.. All of the participants will participate in academic activities, to practice worship of the Buddha. Charity will be dedicated to the auspicious occasion of His Majesty the King's 84<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary (December 5, 2555 B.E.), Her Majesty the Queen's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary (August 12, 2555 B.E.) and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's 60th Birthday Anniversary (July 28, 2555 B.E.)

Buddhist monks, novices, children & young people and others who participate in the Symposium will have the right knowledge, the correct understanding, and provide comments and suggestions regarding the use of ICT for the purpose of access to the Buddha's Teachings and dissemination of Buddhism. The ICT for All Club will bring the results of this Symposium to analyze and synthesize the suggestions and recommendations about "Using Information and Communication Technologies for Buddhism" to related agencies or organizations and the public.



**BuddhaNet ebook Library ([www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net))**

To attend the ICT for All Symposium 2012 on "ICT and Buddhism" on , November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2555 B.E. at 12:30-17:30 hrs., at Panyapiwat Technological College, 20/29 Soi-Ngam-Wong- Wan 23, Ngam-Wong- Wan Rd., Mueang Nonthaburi district, Nonthaburi province, Kingdom of Thailand, organized by the Information Technology and Communication for All Club (ICT for All Club) and the Party organizations: The Assembly of Buddhist Organizations of Thailand Association, The Thai Consumers Development Association, The Association for Constitutional Democracy, The Council of Political Development by The People, National Science Technology and Innovation Association, or require more information, please contact Mr. Thossaphol NORATUS, +668-1261-0726 or register to join the Symposium at [www.ictforall.org](http://www.ictforall.org).

*\*Special thanks to Prof.Dr. Brian Sheehan for kindly reviewing this article and Khun Kiewesai for translating some parts of the article from Thai-English.*