



Bangkok Post Learning: *Test Yourself*

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Welcome to the world of VTubers by Gary Boyle

Read the following story by Suwittha Chaiyong from the *Bangkok Post*. Then, answer the questions that follow.



Photo: YuChan

Two university students -- Aisha and YuChan -- enjoy talking with fans via livestream on YouTube. Unlike many YouTubers, however, Aisha and YuChan are not human. They are computer-generated characters who have their own individual YouTube channels -- Aisha Channel has 303,000 subscribers and the YuChan Channel 115,000 subscribers.

In today's digital age, many YouTubers and influencers attract a large number of internet users and advertisers. This advertising market, which is dominated by real people, now has to share space with virtual YouTubers -- known as VTubers -- and virtual idols.

Originating in Japan, well-known VTubers are widely used as presenters in commercials and various events. Launched in 2016, Kizuna AI, the most famous Japanese VTuber, has almost 3 million subscribers on YouTube and appeared in an advertisement for cup noodles last year. Taro Iwasaki of Kadokawa Amarin, which publishes Japanese manga, novels and games and the creator of YuChan Channel for Thai audiences, said the VTubers market in Japan is very competitive.

"Back in 2016, people were excited with Kizuna AI, which could act like a YouTuber. Viewers can talk and interact with this animated character in real time. I think Kizuna AI was created for fun and its makers did not know that she was going to be such a big hit. The VTubers market has become extremely competitive. There are about 10,000 VTubers in the market but very few are making money," said Iwasaki.

Although the market for VTubers is still in its early stages in Thailand, it has expanded quickly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Nakharin Sinsiri of Guardian Angel AI and Phriezt Sumanas of Polygon Official -- the people behind Aisha Channel -- said Aisha has been hired to work many kinds of jobs.

While Aisha debuted on YouTube in July 2019, YuChan's first video was posted in March last year. The characters are both 18 years old and like to play games, however, they were created for different objectives. Aisha was created to become a virtual influencer but YuChan was created to be a point of contact between a business and its customers.

"I thought Aisha would be a fun project. Besides having real people as influencers, we thought it would be interesting to add a new category such as a virtual influencer in the market. It was difficult in the beginning because people did not know what a virtual influencer or idol was. After we explored the market, we found many investors were interested in VTubers," said Nakharin.

Section 1: Write the correct answer in the space provided.

1. Who has most subscribers - Aisha or YuChan?
2. Which VTuber first appeared in 2016?
3. What did a Japanese VTuber advertise in 2020?
4. During which event did the Thai VTuber market increase?
5. In which month and year did YuChan's first video appear?.....
6. Who thought Aisha would be a fun project?

Section 2: Read the following passage. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the choices given.

"In Japan, we have many ...7... voice actors who can make a ...8... from this career. In Thailand, we had to train an actress for a ...9... months before she was able to reach an ...10... level and become YuChan."

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 7. __A. profession | __B. professor | __C. professional |
| 8. __A. life | __B. living | __C. liver |
| 9. __A. few | __B. several | __C. many |
| 10. __A. accepting | __B. acceptable | __C. acceptance |

Section 3: Find words that match the following definitions.

11. done using computer technology and not involving people going somewhere
12. a person who influences potential buyers of a product by promoting it on social media
13. a television or radio advertisement
14. to communicate with or react to each other

For the answers, find the story online at www.bangkokpost.com/learning. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the Editor at garyb@bangkokpost.co.th