

Internet Histories 2: Australia and Asia-Pacific
ARC Cultural Research Network research workshop
Great Southern Room, fourth floor,
WA State Library, Perth, Saturday 14 June 2008
Final program @ 12.06.08

- 10.15-10.30am Gerard Goggin (UNSW) and Mark McLelland (Wollongong):
welcome & overview of workshop & *Internet Histories* project
- 10.30-11.30am Shin Dong Kim (Hallym), 'The Great Migration: Transforming the
Social Space with the Internet'
- 11.30-11.45am Morning tea
- 11.45am Leslie M. Tkach-Kawasaki (Tsukuba), 'Finding the Internet in
-1.15pm Japan's "Lost Decade": Internet Growth
in Japan 1990-2001'
Larissa Hjorth (RMIT), 'Internet intimacies: SNS (social
networking systems) in the Asia-Pacific region'
Terence Lee & Cornelius Kan (Murdoch), 'Internet Development
in Singapore: A Regulatory Approach Towards Online Discourses'
- 1.15-2.00 pm Lunch
- 2.00-3.30pm Glenn Pass (Curtin), 'The more things change ... A prehistory of
the Internet in Western Australia'
Sam Hinton (Canberra), 'Articulating Internet Histories'
Fiona Martin (Sydney), 'Reading change: technoculture and
Internet adoption in public service broadcasting'
- 3.30-3.45pm Afternoon tea
- 3.45-5.15pm Lelia Green and Donell Holloway (Edith Cowan University), 'The
Internet in Australian Family Life' □
Melissa Gregg (UQ), 'The order of pixels: towards a genealogy of
online culture'
Maureen Burns (UQ), 'Images of Thought: Thinking the Websites
of Australian Media Institutions'
- 5.15pm-5.30pm Summing up & discussion on future directions
- 5.30pm+ drinks

The *Internet Histories* workshop is an activity of the 'Cultural Technologies' node of the ARC Cultural Research Network. It is also supported by:

- Centre for Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies (CAPSTRANS)
University of Wollongong
- Internet Studies Program, Faculty of Humanities, Curtin University of
Technology
- Journalism and Media Research Centre, University of New South Wales

About the *Internet Histories 2* workshop

Internet Histories 2: Australia and the Asia-Pacific is the second of two workshops exploring the emerging field of Internet Histories.

Following on from the Vancouver Oct 07 pre-conference workshop of the Association of Internet Researchers, this event will further investigate conceptualisation of the problematics of Internet histories, what the state of the field is, and what specific challenges exist for cultural research, and media histories.

In particular *Internet Histories 2* will focus upon:

- Australian Internet histories;
- Internet histories in the region, notably from leading Asia-Pacific countries (such as China, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines);
- what comparative Internet histories tell us about the development of the Australian Internet — and the possibilities for the paths the technology might take in the future;
- what are the implication of specific Internet histories for revising taken-for-granted, general ideas about the Internet?
- what are the challenges of doing Internet histories, and what are the particular issues for concepts, methods, tools, documentation, archives, interpretative strategies, and presentation of research findings?

The workshop aims to discuss concepts, methods, themes, and theories associated with Internet histories in Australia and the Asia-Pacific — as well as issues of archives, records, historical documentation and interpretation.

An outcome of the workshop will be a edited volume on *Internet Histories*.

For further information contact Gerard Goggin: g.goggin@unsw.edu.au or Mark McLelland (markmc@uow.edu.au).

**Internet Histories 2: Australia and Asia-Pacific
Abstracts & presenter details**

Keynote session

Shin Dong Kim (Hallym), ‘The Great Migration: Transforming the Social Space with the Internet’

In this presentation, I discuss Korea's Internet experience with a framing of migration. Since the Internet was introduced to the public of the nation with some magnitude about a decade ago, many of mundane human activities, whether they are collective and social or individual and private, have migrated to the space on the net, which we have called cyberspace. Or more correctly, we have constructed the cyberspace by relocating many of our off-line activities in the new space as it saved much of our resources.

The notion of migration is useful to approach the idea of the social meaning and impact of the Internet from a macro view. In a way, the history of Internet in Korea, and perhaps in other societies as well, is a history of migration from here to the cyberspace. And we would want to know how it happened and why. The presentation will discuss: some aspects of Korea's Internet use; how the nation became the most advanced broadband Internet society; the role of government; active consumers; things changing and not changing with Internet.

Shin Dong Kim is a professor of communication at Hallym University, Korea and currently serves as a visiting professor at Peking University, China. He has been the founding director of Institute for Communication Arts and Technology (iCat) at Hallym University since 2003. Dr. Kim is one of the initiating researchers of mobile communication in Korea and has hosted many international conferences on the topic along with his other area of interest which is transnational pop culture focusing especially on Asia-Pacific contexts. His research and teaching interest covers political economy of media, social and cultural meanings and impacts of new communication technology, and global television and cinema. Dr. Kim received his PhD in mass communications from Indiana University, and has been invited to teach at many universities including Dartmouth College, US; Macquarie University, Australia; Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand, University of the Philippines, and Peking University, China. He has recently been appointed as the Korean Studies Chair Professor at Sciences Po, Paris for 2008-2009. He can be reached at kimsd@hallym.ac.kr

Session 1

Leslie M. Tkach-Kawasaki (Tsukuba), ‘Finding the Internet in Japan’s “Lost Decade”: Internet Growth in Japan 1990-2001’

The 1990s are often referred to as the “Lost Decade” in Japan, as Japan’s era of high economic growth in the 1980s trudged to a standstill in the early years of the following decade. Yet during the early 1990s, Japan’s burgeoning internet

communities expanded from small-scale, citizen-initiated activist networks to national communities of interest, and further, to the development of the nation-level “e-Japan” initiative in early 2001 and the phenomenal growth of mobile internet technologies. How did these changes come about? What roles were played by various levels of government in promoting as well as responding to public awareness and utilization of the internet?

This paper explores the social, technological, and economic development of Japan’s internet during the 1990s with a particular emphasis on the involvement of various levels of government in its expansion. While initial forays into the use of the internet outside the corporate and academic environments tended to be small-scale locally based initiatives, certain events throughout the 1990s led to the increased national-level attention to the social and economic consequences of expanded internet utilization. The paper traces these events and discusses their influence on the creation of Japan’s “e-Japan” policy in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Leslie M. Tkach-Kawasaki, Ph.D., is Visiting Foreign Research Fellow, University of Tsukuba, Japan

Larissa Hjorth (RMIT), ‘Internet intimacies: SNS (social networking systems) in the Asia-Pacific region’

Unquestionably, the zeitgeist of web 2.0 is symbolized by the dominance of SNS and UCC (user created content). MySpace, facebook, and Cyworld mini-hompy are but a few examples of SNS that are becoming increasingly part of urban everyday life, and interwoven into the historicity of the Internet. Far from one SNS dominating globally, the rise of SNS has been multiple and divergent, reflecting the localized adaptations of Internet.

In each different cultural context we see different examples of SNS that are subject to localized governmental and socio-cultural factors. SNS simultaneously reflect micro and macro extensions of the user and their community. This process of being “online” is augmented by localized offline definitions of place and home.

In this divergence and contested picture of the Internet, the Asia-Pacific region provides a vivid picture sketching its ebbs and flows. Through the lens of SNS we can gain much insight into the deployment and engagement of socio-technological spaces such as the Internet. Housing some of the world leaders in 21st century technologies and broadband centres such as South Korea and Japan, in contrast to the still uneven development of web 2.0 in Australia, the region provides a poignant illustration of the growing significance of the local in interpreting the Internet. Through the index of SNS, this study will explore cross-cultural and transnational comparisons and contrasts of SNS in the region. Focusing upon western models such as facebook and friendster alongside Korean examples such as Cyworld mini-hompy and Japanese such as mixi, this study will reflect upon localised intimate internet histories that have emerged, and continue to evolve, in the region.

Larissa Hjorth is researcher, artist, and lecturer in the Games and Digital Art programs at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. In 2007, she was BK21 research

fellow at CICC (Communication Interface and Culture Content) Research Group at Yonsei University, South Korea. Over the last seven years, Hjorth has been researching and publishing on gendered customizing of mobile communication, gaming and virtual communities in the Asia–Pacific. Hjorth has published widely on the topic in journals such as Convergence journal, Journal of Intercultural Studies, Continuum, ACCESS, Convergence, Fibreculture and Southern Review. In 2007, Hjorth co-convoked the International Mobile media conference with Gerard Goggin (www.mobilemedia2007.net) and the Interactive Entertainment (IE) conference with Esther Milne (www.ie.rmit.edu.au). Recently she editing a special issue of Games and Culture journal on gaming in the Asia-Pacific region and has a forthcoming book on gendered mobile media in the Asia-Pacific region entitled, The Art of Being Mobile (London, Routledge).

Terence Lee & Cornelius Kan (Murdoch), ‘Internet Development in Singapore: A Regulatory Approach Towards Online Discourses’

This paper sets out to trace the history of Internet development in Singapore, one of the most technologically-advanced and networked societies in the world. From being the first country in the world to host a national website (www.sg) in 1994 to being the first broadband-cabled country in the world in 1999, Singapore has been relentless in its pursuit of making technological and Internet history. By 2015, as part of its latest Intelligent Nation 2015 (iN2015) masterplan, Singapore plans to integrate all aspects of info-communications into a single ultra-fast broadband platform, slated to be the best in the world (www.ida.gov.sg). At the same time and somewhat paradoxically, Singapore has also made ‘history’ in its regulatory approaches and strategies, with outright censorship of pornographic – and, since 11 September 2001 (9/11), terrorist-related - websites to the implementation of both overt and subtle controls of alternative political websites. In addition, the Singapore Government has drawn on socio-political legislations (such as sedition laws) and strategies of auto-regulation to clamp down on undesirable Internet discourses, most recently applied onto the Singaporean blogosphere. Guided by regulatory shifts and strategies, this paper aims to trace and analyse key historical milestones of the Internet as it has developed in Singapore, and considers the impact this has on society, culture and politics in the city-state.

Terence Lee is Associate Professor of Mass Communication in the Faculty of Creative Technologies and Media and a Research Fellow of the Asia Research Centre, both at Murdoch University, Perth, Australia. He has authored many articles and book chapters on various aspects of media, culture and politics in Singapore. He was one of the first scholars to analyse Internet regulations and discourses in Singapore.

Cornelius Kan is an independent scholar based in Singapore. He is currently doing accounts management work with a design and publishing house in Singapore. He graduated in Mass Communication from Murdoch University in 2006 and obtained First Class Honours in Mass Communication from Curtin University in 2007 for a thesis on the Singaporean Blogosphere.

Session 2

Glenn Pass (Curtin), ‘The more things change ... A prehistory of the Internet in Western Australia’

In this paper I outline my research on the history of the Internet in Western Australia, focusing on the prehistory of this technology. I explore the history of earlier information and communications technologies in Western Australia, such as the telegraph, telephone and computing, highlighting the significance of these technologies to later developments of the Internet within the state. There are many parallels between the histories of earlier technologies and the history of the Internet. Drawing on my research I identify some of these stories within the Western Australian context, providing support for the saying: “the more things change the more they stay the same”.

Glenn Pass is a Doctoral Candidate, Internet Studies, and Associate Lecturer, Information Studies, Faculty of Media, Society and Culture, at Curtin University of Technology.

Lelia Green and Donell Holloway (Edith Cowan University), ‘The Internet in Australian Family Life’ □

Taking as its starting point an ethnographic study of 26 Western Australian families (2002-4), this paper examines the history of the Internet in Australian family life from the perspective of what has been revealed by participants — alongside known gaps in the Australian record, and the gaps emerging in the International record (if the EU Kids Online project is indicative of this). Internationally, there are very few longitudinal studies of Internet adoption in family contexts and almost all the longitudinal studies there are focus predominantly on quantitative studies. □ This paper addresses qualitative research into the history of cascading adoption of online-capable technologies revealed within the three years of WA fieldwork (which saw some families with wireless in 2004, while others were still on dial-up, or not connected). It includes histories of Internet adoption, use and consumption within the household; particularly households with one or more school-aged children (identified by ABS surveys at the time as the population group with the fastest domestic uptake). The history of families’ Internet experience is also a history of role renegotiation to take into account a complex new element in the domestic mix which revealed a capacity to destabilise the home environment, as revealed in participants’ accounts of their own domestic Internet histories. This contribution will help the workshop pay due attention to the public/private dynamics which influence individual, group and household Internet histories.

*Lelia Green is Professor of Communications in the Faculty of Education and Arts at Edith Cowan University and a long-time researcher into the dynamics of technology, choice and change. Author of *Technoculture: from alphabet to cybersex* (2002) and Co-editor of *Framing Technology: Society, choice and change* (1994), both Allen & Unwin, Lelia was a Chief Investigator on an ARC funded project researching the Internet in Australian family life (2002-4) and is currently investigating the benefits of*

the HeartNET online community, co-funded by the Heart Foundation (WA) and an ARC Linkage grant. She has been the author or co-author of the Australia chapter for the UN-funded Digital Review of Asia-Pacific since 2003.

Donell Holloway is a PhD candidate at the School of Communications and Contemporary Arts at Edith Cowan University, Perth. As Research Assistant on an Australian Research Council funded project –The Internet in Australian Family Life—Donell Holloway is the first author or co- author of 16 refereed journal articles and conference papers, as well as a book chapter. Donell’s interest in children, media and family life is informed by 16 years as a primary school educator. Donell is an Edith Cowan University Excellence Award and PhD scholarship holder. Her current research interests include media consumption in the context of everyday family life-as well as retirement, leisure and everyday life.

Sam Hinton (Canberra), ‘Articulating Internet Histories’

There are a growing number of Internet histories that are geographically and/or culturally localised. Taken together these Internet histories constitute the historical development of the global Internet. Each is important in its own right, yet each also needs to be understood in the context of related histories and the broader social, political and economic currents that contextualise them. This paper looks at the development of the Australian Academic Research Network (AARNET) from 1989 to 1995 as one such localised history, and examines how this history can be articulated with other local Australian Internet histories and placed into a broader national and international context.

Sam Hinton is a lecturer in media at the University of Canberra, Australia. His PhD “Towards a Critical Theory of the Internet” looked at the early development of the Australian Academic Research Network (AARNET) and was completed at La Trobe University in 2006. He is currently working on research into the Australian interactive entertainment industry.

Fiona Martin (Sydney), ‘Reading change: technoculture and Internet adoption in public service broadcasting’

In the past decade cultural historians have revealed localised, unexpected expressions of the internet round the globe. Yet little has been written about the broadcast media’s halting, then tumultuous adoption of internet technologies. During the mid 1990s broadcasters struggled to apprehend the significance of the internet for their publishing and research operations, and were slower than newspapers to move online. This paper argues that the notion of technoculture is central to analysing the competing forces at work within broadcast organisations. Using a case study of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation it surveys the varied discourses of technological change that existed around ICT development in everyday working relationships. It distinguishes distinct, and sometimes oppositional, objectives for, beliefs about, and ethical conceptions of, internetworking. In doing so however it problematizes the bottom up/top down conceptions of internet adoption that have characterised histories of ABC Online, the corporation’s web service (Martin, 2002; Burns 2003). Instead,

drawing on neo-Foucauldian governmentality studies, it proposes a more complex dynamic, given substance by outside expertise and an evangelical pedagogy of technology.

Fiona Martin lectures in Online Journalism at Sydney University. A graduate of UTS, Fiona has worked as a radio journalist/producer for ABC Radio networks, including Radio National and 702 Sydney. She has also been a freelance radio documentary maker, a multimedia and theatre sound designer and has written for regional newspapers and magazines. Her interest in online publishing led to the cross-media documentary series *Re-imagining Utopia* (2003) and a doctoral thesis on the emergence of an interactive multimedial ABC (2008). She has written chapters in *Virtual Nation: the Internet in Australia* (2004) and 'New media, new audiences' in *Media and Communications in Australia* (2006).

Session 3

Melissa Gregg (UQ) and Catherine Driscoll (USyd), 'The order of pixels: towards a genealogy of online culture'

The title of this paper clearly claims to model a history of online culture on the work of Michel Foucault, whose emphasis in *The Order of Things* on the importance of historicising the systems by which things are ordered and known has much to offer online cultural studies. On the one hand, the spectacular diversity and ever-changing vastness of online culture exceeds any single conceptual framework, and on the other online culture is continually being fixed into a knowable order by a range of competing discourses on the internet. Each of these discourses forms a particular common ground for structuring what online culture will be and mean, and what it will be seen to be drawing on and tending towards. However, despite its evident availability to spatial conceptions and linear historical narratives about technology and capital, online culture is manifestly disorderly. Thus we might think of historicising online culture along such lines as Foucault calls *heteroclite* – where “things are ‘laid’, ‘placed’, ‘arranged’ in sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a place of residence for them, to define a *common locus* beneath them all”. Our chapter considers what it would mean for internet histories to see their sites of study as *heterotopic* rather than utopic.

Melissa Gregg is an ARC Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies, University of Queensland. Catherine Driscoll is Chair of Gender and Cultural Studies, University of Sydney.

Maureen Burns (UQ), 'Images of Thought: Thinking the Websites of Australian Media Institutions'

This paper offers a history of some of the 'images of thought' that underpin the websites of pre-existing Australian media institutions. In doing so it explores the intersections of at least two other histories of ideas. The first is a history of the utopian thinking that has attended the introduction of every new technology – including cybernetics. Traces of such histories flavour the ways that new technologies, including the internet or more specifically the world wide web, are celebrated. The second is the history of a particular dichotomy (that of

commercial/national) within the Australian media environment. It is within the intersection of these histories of ideas that websites of media institutions are imagined and produced.

I begin by exploring a history of the utopian thinking that has informed cybernetics. As Mattelart among others has detailed, such thinking can be found in Bacon's project for useful science and in Leibniz's project for automating reason. And as Hayles has demonstrated, elements of such thinking were also central to the Macy conferences of cybernetics in the nineteen fifties.

I continue by analysing the dichotomy commercial/public (sometimes also figured as commercial/national) within Australian media history. Discussions and debates about Australian media industries are almost always structured by this dichotomy, which favours the public or national as the site for all things utopian, and figures the commercial as its opposite. In effect, the construction of this dichotomy has often silenced discussion of any public or national service that Australian commercial media institutions may have effected, or to which they might have aspired. The dichotomy has also silenced ways of thinking the ABC that might celebrate its regionality or global presence, for instance, rather than its nationalist project. The addition of another new technology, one redolent with utopian histories and one that must by definition stand outside the commercial/national dichotomy, necessitates a restructure of both the Australian media environment, and the ways that we can think about and talk about that environment.

Internet histories cannot be constructed outside pre-existing movements, industries, or outside specific histories of ideas. Internet histories, in other words, are embedded in what Deleuze and Guattari called 'images of thought'. Australian media history has been discussed as 'dual system' since its inception. This duality divided the 'commercial' from the 'national for the purposes of legislation, funding and structures of various media organisations. This distinction requires further interrogation in a digital age with different legislation, policy and technologies.

The ABC is not 'the' national broadcaster, and in some media it has become quite the reverse. In addition to having a global presence, the ABC is now the champion of localism on regional radio. Conversely, institutions such as Macquarie Southern Cross Media which now owns most commercial regional radio stations in Australia is a national broadcaster in all but name. How might each of these broadcasters utilise their world wide web sites to challenge (or to situate themselves within) the commercial/national dualism that has structured them? And how does legislation and policy guide or prohibit such uses of the web? For instance, MSCM is trying to establish its regional radio websites as interactive and hyperlocal; despite the fact that their radio programming is mostly networked from capital cities. The ABC has been, at least since 2000, involved in discussions about how it can (and whether it should) commercialise its web presence.

This paper calls for an analysis of the extent to which media institutions (whether commercial or public) have used their websites (which carry a history of utopian thinking) as a medium where they can operate outside or across the dichotomy that has structured the Australian media environment.

Maureen Burns is a lecturer in Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Queensland. Current projects include public service broadcasting online, the history of science mediation in Australia, and unrealised productions in the Australian film

industry.