

Communication, Culture and Governance in China and East Asia Symposium 2018

Program

Thursday 2nd August, 8.30am – 6.00pm



Image: Shenzhen, China

8.30 – 9.00	Tea and coffee on arrival
9.00 – 9.10 Welcome	Professor Terry Flew
9.10 – 10.00 Keynote presentation	Professor Yu Hong, Zhejiang University <i>How to Think about Cyber Sovereignty: The Case of China</i>

Betting on the strategic importance of cyberspace and ICTs in the renewed global scramble for command and power, the Chinese state has expressed a clear intention to defend, improve, and assert its strategic interests in cyberspace. Its cyber power strategy is intended to build a regulatory-and-institutional architecture compatible with the country’s emerging cyber-power status. The small central leadership group for cyber affairs established in 2014 in conjunction the China Administration of Cyber (CAC) is the top-level control room for overseeing cyber security, on the one hand, and for developing programs and policies to support China’s strategic interests at home and abroad, on the other. In the slew of actions that the state has undertaken in respect to cyberspace, the notion of cyber sovereignty is the hallmark gesture. It has prompted China watchers and Internet pundits to ask, how does the cyber sovereignty edict facilitate or hinder China’s global integration? And to what extent is cyber sovereignty portending the “nationalization of the Internet” (Herold, 2011)?

This paper argues that there is no systematic attempt to account for political economy in sovereignty construction. For the dominant liberal perspective on China’s Internet has generated a corpus of scholarship full of dichotomies, which is caused in general terms by the blind spot on the entanglement between the Internet and capitalism, between the state and political economy. To make a more accurate assessment of China’s cyber sovereignty edict, this paper makes the case for complicating

the popular constructs of the Internet, of the state, and of sovereignty, individually and collectively. For this purpose, throughout the discussion, this paper draws upon critical insights that escaped liberal-and-neoliberal straitjackets and detected the intertwining between the state and political economy. The conceptual discussion is followed by empirical analysis of policies the Chinese state enacts and statements it makes under the banner of cyber sovereignty. With qualitative content analysis and policy study, this paper argues that cyber sovereignty is not a coherent thing but entails an ongoing balancing between the quest for security and the quest for opportunity.

Yu Hong joined Zhejiang University as a “100-Talents Program” Young Professor in Fall 2017, after having taught at the Annenberg School for Communication at University of Southern California for six plus years. Yu Hong is vice director of the ZJU Research Centre on Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication. She got her Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research focuses on ICT development, Internet and media policy, and digital capitalism, with a regional focus on China. Yu Hong serves as the Book Review Editor for *Global Media and Communication* and serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Chinese Journal of Communication*. Yu Hong is the author of two books, including *Networking China: The Digital Transformation of the Chinese Economy* (U of I Press, 2017).

**10.00 – 10.30
Presentation**

Junyi Lv, USC Annenberg, David Craig, USC Annenberg, and Distinguished Professor Stuart Cunningham, QUT

* Stuart Cunningham will present the paper.

From Game Players to Game Changers: platforms, politics, and precarity in Chinese live streaming

China’s live streaming industry is “booming” (Lavin 2018) and a “game changer” (Qian 2016). Informed by a creator-centric critical media industries studies research agenda (Havens, Lotz & Tinic 2009; Cunningham & Craig 2019), this paper examines this emergent industry through the perspectives of Chinese live streamers. Their entrepreneurialism is informed by China’s distinctive structural conditions that have contributed to heightened platform and political precarity. In a rapidly-scaling Chinese middle class consumption culture, Chinese live streamers ride marketing imperatives directing consumers to cross-integrated ecommerce platforms. This industry has also been fuelled by cultural shifts, notably the increasing gender inequality as women have migrated to urban settings to service-based labour opportunities coupled with increased access to high-speed and affordable mobile technology by rural and lonely men. These conditions have contributed to a gendered performativity across these platforms that has empowered female streamers appealing to the emotional needs and limited relationship opportunities of rural men. Across a highly competitive and rapidly evolving landscape of live and recorded video platforms, Chinese live streamers foster improvisational content, engage in mediated intimacy, and synchronous interactivity to aggregate and engage fan communities and build and sustain their media businesses. But these streamers are subject to an ever-increasing level of state-based regulatory restraint that, as Yang (2014) describes, signals the return of ideology designed to “proactively mold online expression and behavior” (109). Based on a series of interviews with live streamers and industry players, this paper examines

conditions placing China's live streamers as central focal points in the increasing tensions between the cultural politics and economic ambitions of digital China (Keane 2016).

Stuart Cunningham is Distinguished Professor of Media and Communications, Queensland University of Technology. His most recent books are *Hidden Innovation: Policy, Industry and the Creative Sector* (2014), the co-authored *Social Media Entertainment: The new intersection of Hollywood and Silicon Valley* (2019), *Key Concepts in Creative Industries* (2013), *Screen Distribution and the New King Kongs of the Online World* (2013), and *Media Economics* (2015), and the co-edited *Digital Disruption: Cinema Moves Online* (2012) and *The Media and Communications in Australia* (2014). He is a fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences and the Australian Academy of the Humanities, and a Member of the Order of Australia.

**10.30 – 11.00
Presentation**

Professor Michael Keane, Curtin University

Assessing China's Digital Communications Outreach in the Asia-Pacific and One Belt, One Road

This paper considers the reach of China's digital communications media in the Asia-Pacific and the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) territories. It looks at the uptake of Chinese digital media among populations in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea and Australia, regions in which Chinese ideas and business interests are spreading, albeit with some local resistance. In the paper, I ask if a dual communications sphere is now functioning whereby people use Chinese apps and services like Wechat for doing business with China and ostensibly western platforms like Facebook for (freer) exchange of ideas. The presentation will attempt to validate China's status as an innovative nation in the region through the lens of commercial platformization strategies.

Michael Keane is Professor of Chinese Media and Cultural Studies at Curtin University. He is Program Leader of the Digital China Lab. Prof Keane's key research interests are digital transformation in Asia; the One Belt One Road, East Asian cultural and media policy; and creative industries and cultural export strategies in China and Asia. He is editor of the book series Digital China (Anthem Press, UK) and curates two research sites Digital Asia Digital Australia and Creative Transformations Asia. Recent publications include *Willing Collaborators: Foreign partners in Chinese Media* (ed. Rowman and Littlefield 2018) and the *Handbook of the Cultural and Creative Industries in China* (ed. Edward Elgar 2016).

**11.00 – 11.30
Presentation**

Dr Elaine Jing Zhao, University of New South Wales

Repackaged informality and norm-based regulation: the case of Xiaomi in open-source smartphone production

Today's digital platforms increasingly operate at the intersection of the formal and informal. How meanings, values and legitimacy of platforms are developed and negotiated become central to debates about digital futures. This paper investigates the understudied phenomenon of open-source smartphone production in China with reference to Xiaomi, a digital giant in China

best known for breaking into the smartphone market and building on this success to construct its own digital ecology. It begins with an overview of the booming development of *shanzhaiji*, its cultural potency and ambivalent boundaries. Then it outlines the contexts where a new generation of smartphone brands emerge: industry deregulation together with the state initiative to rebrand “Made in China”, and open source cultures. It then zooms in on the case of Xiaomi, focusing on its smartphone production. This case study focuses on its initial success in the smartphone market. Based on in-depth interviews with users including amateur developers and corporate employees, observation of online communities and secondary sources, this article analyses how the brand attempts to craft a distinctive brand identity by aligning with the state interest and capitalising on open source software cultures in the deregulated market while repackaging informality. It provides critical insights into the complexity of openness, the tension in the conjunction of control, value and ownership, and the power of informal norm-based regulation as the brand navigates between the formal and informal.

Elaine Jing Zhao is Senior Lecturer in the School of the Arts and Media at the University of New South Wales, Australia. Her research focuses on digital media, communication and culture, and their sociocultural and policy implications in China and beyond. She publishes widely on the topics of communication and media policy, cultural production, digital labour, informal media economy, and media globalisation. Elaine is Chief Investigator on the ARC Discovery Project *Digital China: From cultural presence to innovative nation* (DP170102176) with M. Keane et al. The project examines the rise of China's digital platforms and their internationalisation in the Asia-Pacific.

11.30 – 11.45

Break

11.45 – 12.15
Presentation

Dr Brian Yecies, University of Wollongong

Transcreation Intermediaries in South Korea's Digital Webtoon Platform Ecosystem

Webtoons (aka digital comics) are now an integral part of the world's expanding media industries. The major South Korean Internet and mobile broadband portal Naver has developed a pioneering webtoon platform that is accessible across multiple markets and in multiple languages. The paper argues that one of Naver's most significant yet overlooked contributions to this thriving digital environment is the amateur user-translation infrastructure that localizes content across 31 different languages. Seeking to explain how this transnational cultural practice is undergoing rapid transformation, the paper first examines how a coterie of volunteer translators are generating value co-creation for Naver and the webtoon industry more broadly through their digital “transcreation” activities. The study focuses in detail on the Chinese cultural intermediaries who are relaying a variety of Korean webtoon genres and series for fans spread throughout the Chinese Diaspora. This case study demonstrates how developments in the webtoon industry are contributing symbiotically to both the expansion of the Korean digital wave and its revitalized links with China.

Brian Yecies is a Senior Lecturer in Communication and Media at the University of Wollongong. He researches on film, digital media, creative industries, innovation ecosystems and cultural policy, and he's published: *Korea's Occupied Cinemas, 1893-1948* (Routledge, 2011) and *The Changing Face of Korean Cinema, 1960-2015* (Routledge, 2016) – co-authored with Ae-Gyung Shim. His new book on Korea's Immersive Mobile Webtooniverse (also with Aegyung Shim) is forthcoming by Rowman and Littlefield. Brian is a Chief Investigator on two Australian Research Council Discovery Projects: *Mobile Webtoons: Creative Innovation in a New Digital Economy* (2018-20), and *Digital China: from cultural presence to innovative nation* (2017-19).

**12.15 – 12.45
Presentation**

Associate Professor Marko M. Skoric, City University of Hong Kong
Media Use, Opinion Leadership, and Environmental Engagement in China

Several decades of rapid economic growth characterized by large-scale industrialization, infrastructure development, and urbanization have transformed China into the second largest economy in the world. The cost of such dramatic pace of development is perhaps most evident when looking at the levels of environmental degradation and air and water pollution across most populated urban centres of China. Not surprisingly, environmental protection has recently become one of the key government priorities, alongside the fight against corruption and financial recklessness. These changes coincide with an increasing environmental awareness among Chinese citizens, and grassroots efforts to improve environmental conditions. One of the key enablers of pro-environmental activism has been the Internet, particularly social media networks. This study thus examines the predictors of environmental engagement among Chinese citizens, paying particular attention to their leadership qualities and their news and social media use. Using a measure of environmental engagement that incorporates both activist (petitions, protests) and consumerist behaviours (boycotting and buycotting), we find that self-perceived opinion leadership, news media use, and political use of a microblogging platform Weibo are all significant predictors of environmental engagement. We also explore interactions between opinion leadership and media use, showing differential impact of news and social media use on environmental engagement in China.

Dr Marko M. Skoric is Associate Professor at the Department of Media and Communication, City University of Hong Kong. He holds a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Michigan, and a B.Sc. in Psychology from the University College London, UK. Marko's teaching and research interests are focused on new media and social change, with particular emphasis on civic and political implications of new communication technologies. He is a member of editorial boards of the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research and New Media & Society* and he chairs the International Conference for e-Democracy and Open Government Asia (CeDEM Asia) and Digital Asia series of International Communication Association (ICA) pre-conferences.

12.45 – 1.15
Presentation

Dr Nina Li, University of Queensland

Loophole with Some History: How to Think about China's Financial Regulation of the Internet

In 1999, when Sina, one of China's earliest web portals, planned to launch its IPO on NASDAQ, it encountered immediate regulatory troubles as its foreign ownership had way exceeded the limit allowed by the Chinese government at the time. To circumvent that limit, a workaround structure called Variable Interest Entity (VIE) was designed to enable foreign capital to gain control over entities in China through contractual arrangements, rather than through equity interests which would trigger restriction. This method, not appearing in any official policy documents, was silently approved by Chinese regulators at the time, and has since been widely used by Chinese internet companies to attract foreign investment and list overseas, thereby bringing the golden decades of the Chinese internet. This policy ambiguity could be considered as a particular type of media policy silence which seems to be common in media economies marked by certain degree of informality. In this talk, I will discuss this and other types of media policy silences in different national systems of regulation and reflect on their challenges to communications policy research. This kind of reflection is both necessary and urgent as we today are increasingly experience what Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe term "new lives of secrecy" in our political and cultural age.

Dr Nina Li is a lecturer in cultural studies in the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at The University of Queensland, Australia. Her research focuses on digital culture, global media and cultural industries, media history, Chinese media, among others. Her work has appeared in *Television & New Media*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies and Media*, *Culture & Society*.

1.15 – 2.15

Lunch

2.15 – 3.00
Keynote presentation

Assistant Professor Angela Xiao Wu, New York University

The Evolution of Regime Imaginaries on the Chinese Internet

This study examines popular perceptions about the ruling state on the Chinese Internet before and along the state's project of "online public opinion guidance." We chose two historical moments from 2011 and 2016, and systematically captured and analysed massive amounts of speech traces on Weibo that contain the term *tizhi*, a discursively flexible, yet distinctively concept onto which sentiments related to the state are projected. Combining semantic network clustering and critical discourse analysis, our analyses have revealed, historically and macroscopically, the relative dominance of differing ways of evaluating regime legitimacy on the Chinese Internet. We found that, among other things, the previously dominant legitimacy-challenging imaginary grounded in (Western) democratic references has imploded and become absorbed by a nationalist, "civilizational competition" discourse that enhances regime legitimacy. Additionally, the legitimacy-criticizing imaginary within the party-state's "reform framework" has become depoliticized into administration-focused compartments. Finally, even though the goal

of this study is not to establish causality, our additional analysis of the 2016 data does provides some insights into how the state “nudges” online public opinion.

By exploring the “regime imaginaries” held by ordinary people, this study complements the scholarship on Chinese state legitimacy that predominantly focuses on historico-structural analyses, policy initiatives, or the party elite’s normative justifications. It makes methodological and conceptual advances for researching the complex cultural frames, political tropes, and repertoires of local references that comprise regime imaginaries.

Angela Xiao Wu is Assistant Professor at the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University. Using mixed methodologies, Wu explores the connections between emerging technologies and cultural changes, with a focus on the socially constituted ways in which people encounter and engage the mediated environment. Her research draws from communication, media studies, science and technology studies, cultural sociology, and network science. Her current foci include: (1) data analytics and algorithmic cultures, (2) media use and media (infra)structures, and (3) information technology and post-reform China. Wu is an ACLS Fellow. Her past work has been supported by the Henry Luce Foundation, the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, and the Hong Kong Research Grants Council, among others.

3.00 – 5.00

Huan Wu, Lucy Montgomery, Henry Siling Li, and John Hartley, Curtin University

Creative Innovation and Networked Culture: Creative Innovation, Open Knowledge, Higher Education and the Semiosphere

We offer a coherent but diverse view on how we might reconceive “governance” within the creative economy in China as bottom-up as well as top-down – emphasizing internal governmentality of practices more than external government control. Our papers are part of a larger research project on *Creative Innovation and Networked Culture: Future-Forming and Global China*, which will be published as a co-authored monograph by Palgrave Macmillan (UK). In each of these themed papers we progressively widen the analytical lens from:

- (i) **local** examples of how creative practices and practitioners deal with issues of governance (drawn from our fieldwork in Shanghai, Shenzhen and elsewhere),
- (ii) **national** networks of open knowledge and research in China, focusing on contradictions between top-down regulation/incentives and bottom-up self-organising systems among scientists and researchers,
- (iii) **international** relations, where the predominant or governing approach to Australian high education in China can be seen as a colonial model not an equal partnership, finally to
- (iv) **global** systems of communication, culture and governance, comparing work on the semiosphere (sphere of culture and meaning) with work on the biosphere (sphere of living matter), in order to address the question of which governs which, with surprising results.

**3.00 – 3.30
Presentation**

Dr Huan Wu, Curtin University

Enterprise-level governance among Chinese start-ups, creative professionals and citizen-creatives

What do creative practitioners and enterprises, especially in the field of education, have to do to make their businesses work? What are the features of the social context where creativity or new knowledge grows in today's China? How do the practitioners/companies manage official sensitivities and rules – Chinese and/or foreign? How do they make a balance between originality and marketization? What is easy and enjoyable about the way things are arranged? Are their systems sustainable?

Dr Huan Wu holds a PhD from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, an MA from Tsinghua University Beijing and a BA from Fudan University Shanghai. She was an Endeavour Australia Cheung Kong Research Fellow at QUT, has worked at Shanghai University and the University of Canberra, and now works as a postdoctoral researcher in the School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry at Curtin. Her own research centres on older people and the internet. She has published chapters and articles in both English-language and Chinese journals, including *The Handbook of Cultural and Creative Industries in China* (Edward Elgar, UK, 2016).

**3.30 – 4.00
Presentation**

Associate Professor Lucy Montgomery, Curtin University

Open knowledge and the governance of research networks in China

This presentation examines the pitfalls and advantages of internationalising research and knowledge systems in the context of growing demand for open knowledge institutions in higher education, research and publishing. The paper brings together international research on Open Knowledge with recent research on scientific communication in China. It examines contradictions between top-down regulation/incentives and bottom-up, self-organising systems among scientists and researchers.

A/Prof Lucy Montgomery holds a PhD from QUT, where she won a Vice-Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship. She is now Director of the Centre for Culture & Technology at Curtin, and Co-Director of Knowledge Unlatched Research. Her research focuses on open knowledge and research communications systems. Her book, *China's Creative Industries: Copyright, Social Network Markets and the Business of Culture in a Digital Age* was published by Edward Elgar (UK) in 2010.

**4.00 – 4.30
Presentation**

Associate Professor Henry Siling Li, Curtin University

Australian high education in China: A colonial model, not an equal partnership?

This paper examines how Australian universities and research are faring in China and what's needed for them to prosper. Now that the Chinese system has begun to catch up, what does Chinese higher education want from their international partners?

What do graduates want? What do universities and government agencies want? What are the responses of Australian universities and state agencies? What examples are there of good peer-to-peer collaborations? What works and what doesn't from the point of view of using higher education to promote personal emancipation, international friendship and environmental sustainability?

A/Prof Henry Siling Li holds a PhD from QUT and is now Dean of International—China at Curtin University. His research centres on the playful use of the internet in spoof videos, with articles published in the *Chinese Journal of Communication and International Journal of Cultural Studies*. He is co-author of *Creative Economy and Culture* (Sage, 2015).

**4.30 – 5.00
Presentation**

Distinguished Professor John Hartley, Curtin University
Global governance theory in the era of a contested global semiosphere

Does communication govern life, and if so how does accelerating technological change intersect with global media interactions? This paper uses the differences between China and the West to develop a semiotics-based global governance theory, by connecting the global semiosphere (Yuri Lotman) with work on the biosphere (Vladimir Vernadsky), in order to address the question of which governs which, and the role of mediation and digital technology in that context. If diverse cultural systems create, translate and contest knowledge at accelerating rate, and if communication carries transformational force, what are the implications for 'governing' the biosphere? These questions both connect and divide China and the rest of the world, but they have barely begun to be asked in media scholarship.

John Hartley holds a PhD from Murdoch University (where he was named a distinguished alumnus in 2018) and is now John Curtin Distinguished Professor and Professor of Cultural Science at Curtin University. In the interim he was ARC Federation Fellow and Research Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, and Foundation Dean of the Creative Industries Faculty, at QUT. His research focuses on media, culture, communication and journalism. He has published 30 books and many papers, including a co-edited book with Weiguo Qu, *Re-Orientation: Translingual, Transcultural, Transmedia Studies in Narrative, Language, Identity and Knowledge* (published by Fudan University Press, in English, in 2015).

5.00 – 6.00

Reception and Book Launch

Professor Yu Hong (Zhejiang University) will launch *Willing Collaborators: Foreign Partners in Chinese Media*, co-edited by Michael Keane, Brian Yecies and Terry Flew, followed by networking drinks and refreshments.

Communication, Culture and Governance in China and East Asia Symposium 2018

Program

Friday 3rd August, 8.30am – 12.30pm



Image: Shenzhen, China

8.30 – 9.00	Tea and coffee on arrival
9.00 – 9.10 Welcome	Dr Nina Li
9.10 – 10.00 Keynote presentation	Associate Professor Trisha T. C. Lin, National Chengchi University, Taiwan <i>Dual screening use and civic engagement in Taiwan</i>

Digital savvy Taiwanese in a democratic society tends to be enthusiastic with sociopolitical discussions and concerned about public affairs via online and offline engagement. In recent years, Taiwan's government has developed the open platform, vTaiwan, to facilitate government and citizen communication, and fostered digital spaces to harvest civic engagement and participatory democracy through open data and crowdsourcing civic sectors. In 2016, Taiwan, with the advanced information and communication technology infrastructure, was rank 2nd in terms of multiscreen usage in Asia. Dual screening refers to people using a screen device to engage in social and communicative activities while viewing videos on another.

According to Institute for Information Industry (2017), 74% of Taiwanese were dual screeners who watched television and used smartphone activities simultaneously. What motives people to use dual screening and how this may affect Taiwanese people's civic engagement? On one hand, this study aims to investigate how motivation types (i.e., information seeking and discussion) influence dual screeners' social media interactions (e.g., social network sites, mobile instant messages, and TV/video apps) during viewing current affair-related videos; on the other hand, it further examines the impact of dual screening on their civic engagement attitude and offline behaviours. A national web survey was conducted in 2016 to recruit 741 dual screen users among Taiwanese Internet users. Structural equation modelling results show that discussion motivation has a strong positive

association with dual screening use, while information seeking motivation has no influence. This signifies the importance of social media interactivity to like-minded dual screeners who feel concerned about similar civic issues. Additionally, dual screening use that has a strong positive effect on users' civic engagement attitude is found to well predict offline civic engagement behaviours. Theoretical and practical implications of dual screening use and civic engagement are discussed.

Trisha T.C. Lin (Ph.D., University of Hawaii, Manoa) is Associate Professor, Department of Radio and Television, National Chengchi University, Taiwan. In addition to a former broadcasting media professional, she previously worked as the Assistant Professor at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Her research interests focus on examining emerging interactive digital media with two approaches: socio-technical system analysis and socio-psychological user research. She has published journal articles regarding mobile media and communication, new media convergence, digital journalism and health communication.

10.00 – 10.30
Presentation

Dr Damien Spry, QUT and Bond University

From Dehli to Dili - digital diplomatic discourses in the Asia-Pacific

This paper applies innovative digital media research methods to public diplomacy via Facebook in the Asia-Pacific, using the largest data set yet available and applying a multi-staged, mixed methods approach. The case studies include four 'publisher' nations with diplomatic missions active on Facebook in the region: two from Asia (India and Japan), one from the Pacific (Australia) and a global power (the United States). The research considers these countries' Facebook pages in 12 'host locations' in the Asia-Pacific region: Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, Taiwan and Timor-Leste. The data used is from 1 January 2016 – 1 January 2018.

The research discusses quantitative analysis of social media metrics that suggests Facebook is far more valuable in 'host locations' that are poorer, smaller and (strategically or physically) closer to the publisher nations. It also develops a four-fold taxonomy of diplomatic – outward-facing publicity, inward-facing publicity, engagement, and the 'diplomacy of the public' (Castells, 2008) – and uses critical discourse analysis to discuss the contexts and consequences of the content's production and reception. In this context, it foregrounds the complexities inherent in digital diplomacy that arise from the complicated and contingent communications environment in which it occurs. The data is also used to highlight the types of digital diplomatic discourses that appear to have greater appeal and impact, and identifies locations where Facebook is more effective as a vehicle for public diplomacy.

This paper varies from previous research by: the focus on the content of public diplomacy and the use of media studies approaches to analyse this; the large scale, cross-country analysis; and emphasis on examples from the Asia-Pacific. Its

conclusions provide new insights for scholars and practitioners, and its methods are replicable and generalizable, signifying a new trajectory for research in the field.

Dr Damien Spry's research explores digital diplomacy, based on social media content and engagement metrics. He is a Visiting Fellow at the DMRC at QUT, a Research Fellow at Bond University and an Honorary Associate at the University of Sydney. He is based in Hong Kong and previously spent four years in Seoul as an academic and broadcaster. He previously worked in media and publishing in the NGO and corporate sectors. He has published widely on public diplomacy, soft power and Asia. Details of his research and publications, including files the presentation is based on, can be found at www.diplomatics.com.au.

**10.30 – 11.00
Presentation**

Dr Xiang Ren, Western Sydney University

Understanding Chinese 'Pay for Knowledge' initiatives: Knowledge sharing, platform capitalism and digital publishing evolution

Since 2016, the term 'Pay-for-Knowledge' became a buzzword in the Chinese digital publishing industry and a wide variety of digital initiatives that 'sell knowledge' to digital publics achieved impressive commercial success. In 2017, the economic scale of 'Pay-for-Knowledge' industry was over 50 billion RMB Yuan (nearly AU\$ 10 billion), which attracted more than 50 million paid users. Compared with traditional trade publishing or Kindle-style eBook models, 'Pay-for-Knowledge' initiatives shift the focus of publishing from selling bookish content to offering multimedia, interactive, social and customisable services for knowledge sharing and social learning, ranging from audiobooks, to paid podcasts, paid subscriptions, cash for answers, and celebrity-led reading groups. While the ideas and practices of 'Pay-for-Knowledge' suggest some interesting potential of reinventing publishing and knowledge communication, it attracts tremendous criticisms within China in terms of commercial viability, business ethics, and social benefits.

This paper understands China's 'Pay-for-Knowledge' initiatives through an evolutionary perspective and employs combined methods of discourse analysis, case studies and interviews. It explores the business innovation of 'Pay-for-Knowledge' that redefines publishing value propositions and monetises intellectual resources differently, as well as its social impact and controversies in commercialising knowledge sharing in the context of platform capitalism. It further discusses the tension between commons and markets in the Chinese digital publishing systems and the governance of China's digital knowledge society in a platform age.

Dr Xiang Ren is Academic Course Advisor and Research Fellow in the Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture and a member of the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. His research looks at digital innovation and the evolution of publishing and knowledge systems in China, Australia, and globally. He completed his PhD at QUT in 2013, receiving the

University's Outstanding Doctoral Thesis Award, followed by a research fellowship in the Australian Digital Futures Institute. Prior to his academic career, he spent more than a decade working in the Chinese publishing industry.

11.00 – 11.30
Presentation

Professor Terry Flew, QUT

Trust in the Digital Economy: Australian and Chinese Perspectives

There is a growing debate about a crisis of trust in Western liberal democracies, characterised by declining levels of trust in business, government, NGOs and the media. It is also evidenced in growing demands for greater social regulation of digital platforms, as well as concerns about “fake news” and “filter bubbles”. This presentation considers debates about trust in digital platforms from Australian and Chinese perspectives, particularly around the question of whether distributed trust systems present a resolution to such crises.

Terry Flew is Professor of Media and Communication in the Creative Industries Faculty at the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. He is the author of eleven books, and his books have been translated into Chinese, Arabic, Persian and Polish. He has most recently published *Understanding Global Media* (Palgrave, 2018) and co-edited *Willing Collaborators: Refashioning Content for the Chinese Media Market* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018) with Michael Keane and Brian Yecies. He is currently the President-elect of the International Communications Association (ICA), organizing the 69th ICA Annual Conference in Washington DC in 2019 and has been an Executive Board member of the International Communications Association since 2013. He is on the Editorial Board of 13 academic journals, and was the founding Editor-in-Chief of *Communication Research and Practice*, an ANZCA journal established in 2016 and published by Taylor & Francis.

11.30 – 12.30

Lunch and symposium close
