

# Announcements

NEW JOURNAL

## The Challenge of Studying Digital Asia An Introduction to *Asiascape: Digital Asia*

Florian Schneider

IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2012, the Internet was awash with Chinese, Taiwanese, and Japanese discussions over a set of islands in the East China Sea that the governments of all three nations lay claim to. The dispute has been a recurring issue in East Asian regional relations, but over the past decade more and more people have become 'switched into' this seemingly classic-realist international relations topic through new information and communication technologies (ICTs).

As millions of bloggers and 'tweople' followed the actions of activists and politicians, and as nationalist protests spilled into the streets in China and Japan, one post on the Chinese micro-blogging service Weibo inspired particularly heated discussions. Yet the post did not come from a politician or from an activist. It did not call for the burning of more flags, for boycotts of foreign goods, or for decisive military intervention. The post was a calligraphy that promoted the friendship between the people of China and Japan, and it had been sent by the Japanese porn star Sola Aoi.

With the speed that arguably only digital communication allows, the calligraphy travelled across the region, reaching over 13 million people. It received more than 140,000 comments - many derogatory, but many also critically discussing the conflict, as well as the meaning of national identity in 21st century East Asia.

This example is symptomatic of the challenges that established academic disciplines face as they explore developments in an increasingly interlinked region such as Asia. The ubiquity of digital ICT fuels processes that have always been complex and dynamic, but it has arguably never before facilitated and shaped politics, economics, culture, and society to such a degree as today.

Other examples from the region abound: In South Korea, online computer games have become so popular that individual matches are broadcasted on TV. In South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, election campaigns are accompanied by online activism in the form of twitter and blogging, which in turn has inspired Taiwanese and South-Korean politicians to integrate new media content into their campaigns. In India, the government is building a controversial digital biometric database that will include personal information on more than a billion citizens, allowing for unprecedented experiments in e-governance. The People's Republic of China now has more 'netizens' than the European Union has citizens, prompting Chinese companies to create native search engines, social networking sites, micro-blogging services, and even

operating systems - always within the restrictions that the authorities impose on the highly regulated Chinese net. Meanwhile, smart phones are quickly gaining popularity in Southeast Asia, and may well overtake broadband internet as the main means by which citizens from Myanmar to Indonesia link up with each other and with global information networks. Many politicians and public figures now maintain their own digital networks with constituents and fans, and ICT companies are eagerly looking to these growing markets to test technological innovations.

What is needed to understand these processes is innovative, transdisciplinary research that has the courage to take the complexity of the information age seriously, and that does not shy away from exploring the diverse realities in which this complexity plays out. *Asiascape: Digital Asia* provides a forum for such research. Its contributions examine what impact new technologies, new channels of communication, and the unprecedented convergence of media formats have in the Asian context.

### New Journal *Asiascape: Digital Asia* –Call for Manuscripts

With its peer-reviewed in-depth analyses, *Asiascape: Digital Asia* will keep readers abreast of such developments in the cyber cultures and digital networks of Asia. It will further provide book reviews, specifically aiming to introduce non-Asian related works and scholars to the area-studies community, and research on Asia to the larger field of digital media and communication studies. In addition, *Asiascape: Digital Asia* reviews relevant conferences, and includes a digital media review, which focuses on digital platforms and media products from Asia, such as blog and twitter services, social media websites, video sharing services, games, digital tools, etc.

If you are a scholar conducting research on the digital processes that shape Asia, and if your focus lies with the social sciences, arts, media and communication studies, information and computer sciences, or area studies, then we invite you to consider *Asiascape: Digital Asia* as the outlet for your work. The journal will launch in early 2014, and will be published bi-annually. More information is available in our call-for-papers downloadable from our website: [www.asiascape.org/resources/dias/DIAS---Call-for-Papers.pdf](http://www.asiascape.org/resources/dias/DIAS---Call-for-Papers.pdf)

A version of this article first appeared as a blog-post on [www.asiascape.org/dias.html](http://www.asiascape.org/dias.html) on 25 March 2013. The online version gives access to a large number of web links to further information.

### First issue 2014

Launching in early 2014, the bi-annual academic journal *Asiascape: Digital Asia* explores the political, social, and cultural impact of digital media in Asia. Bringing together inter- and multi-disciplinary research in the social sciences, arts, media and communication studies, information and computer sciences, and area studies, the journal examines the role that information, communication, and digital technologies play in Asian societies, as well as in intra-regional and transnational dynamics.

### Editor

Florian Schneider  
Leiden University  
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### Reviews Editor

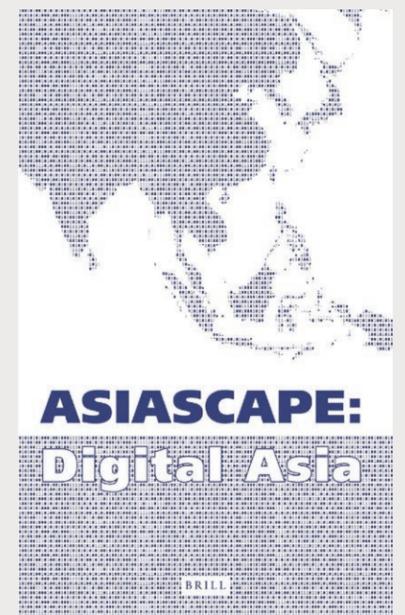
Éric Sautedé  
University of Saint Joseph  
Macau

### About *Asiascape*

Established in October 2007 by Prof. Chris Goto-Jones, *Asiascape* aims to build a new international research coalition in the rapidly emerging fields of cyberculture (New Media, Convergence Culture, Video Games and other related media, such as fan-culture) and animanga (Anime and Manga), especially as they relate to (or originate from) East Asia. *Asiascape* sponsors a series of 'state of the field' events (lectures, conferences, competitions, exhibitions) and disseminates research using new and old media, including our website [www.asiascape.org](http://www.asiascape.org)

*Asiascape* is linked to Leiden University, the Netherlands.

First Issue  
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ASIA-PACIFIC JOURNAL: JAPAN FOCUS

## Free Downloadable Course Readers

Laura E. Hein

The *Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* announces the start of a new initiative: volume-length e-book compilations of essays on selected topics with explanatory introductions by scholars.

These volumes are designed to make it easier for teachers and students to use the *Asia-Pacific Journal* archive. The volume editors have chosen articles from the archive that lend themselves particularly well to classroom use and work well as a set. All volumes have been peer-reviewed, in addition to the initial review process each article went through when it was originally posted.

The readers are designed to be especially convenient for students; the readers are available any time of day, are storable on a computer, searchable, and cost nothing to them. The readers can also be highlighted, annotated, or printed, and they include convenient bookmarks to navigate to the beginning of each article.

### Available and upcoming

Eight readers are currently available on the following topics: *War and Visual Culture* edited by Hong Kal and Jooyeon Rhee, *Environmental History* edited by Eiko Maruko Siniawer, *War in Japanese Popular Culture* edited by Matthew Penney,

*Women and Japan's Political Economy* edited by Valerie Barske, *Japan's 'Abandoned People' in the Wake of Fukushima* edited by Brian Earl, *Public Opinion on Nuclear Power in Japan after the Fukushima Disaster* edited by Brian Earl, *The Politics of Memory in Japan and East Asia* edited by Sven Saaler and Justin Aukema, *The Japanese Empire: Colonial Lives and Postcolonial Struggle* edited by Kirsten Ziomek.

The topics of other volumes currently in preparation include: Japan and the American-led Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Ethnic Minorities and Japan, Globalization and Japanese Popular Culture: Mixing It Up, Japanese Intellectual Currents of the Twentieth Century, Putting Okinawa at the Center.

### To download a volume

The volumes are downloadable from the *Asia-Pacific Journal* website ([www.japanfocus.org](http://www.japanfocus.org)) as searchable PDFs. From the home page, please click on the button marked Course Readers at the top and center of the page, or simply go to [www.japanfocus.org/course\\_readers](http://www.japanfocus.org/course_readers). Interested viewers may download a copy of any reader by clicking on the appropriate link at the course readers home page and entering their email address. In addition, viewers may download the table of contents of any course reader for a preview of the volume.

### The Board

The Editorial Board for this project consists of Mark Caprio, Rikkyo University; Lonny Carlile, University of Hawai'i; Parks Coble, University of Nebraska; Sabine Früstück, UC-Santa Barbara; A. Tom Grunfeld, Empire State College; Laura Hein, Northwestern University; James Hu man, Wittenberg University; Je rey Kingston, Temple University- Japan; Susan Long, John Carroll University; Laura Miller, University of Missouri, St. Louis; Mark Ravinia, Emory University; Mark Selden, APJ-Japan Focus; Stephen Vlastos, University of Iowa.

### Contributions

If you are interested in creating a volume yourself, wish to participate as a reviewer and editor, have suggestions for new topics, or want to discuss another aspect of this project, please contact Laura Hein at [l-hein@northwestern.edu](mailto:l-hein@northwestern.edu).

Although the course readers are free, we welcome donations to support the Journal and this initiative; to contribute, please note the red button 'Sustaining APJ' on the left side of the APJ homepage ([www.japanfocus.org](http://www.japanfocus.org)).

Laura E. Hein (Northwestern University, PhD Wisconsin, 1986) specializes in the history of Japan in the 20th century and its international relations. She also has a strong interest in problems of remembrance and public memory. ([l-hein@northwestern.edu](mailto:l-hein@northwestern.edu))



The Japanese Empire: Colonial Lives and Postcolonial Struggles

Kirsten Ziomek

Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus

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