SOME QUESTIONS FOR OUR CONTRIBUTORS #CIRC16

Modes of Connection: The 16th Chinese Internet Research Conference
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In one sentence, how would you define the 'Chinese internet'?

An invisible hand.

Quite varied, multiple, and contradictory, and unfortunately more and more censored.

A constantly and rapidly altering space shaped by multiple actors.

Censorship.

A realm defined by a multiplicity of distinct activities and heavily informed by state-sanctioned, technical and social rules.

The information technology that has been adopted, used, and domesticated by Chinese government, organisations, and individuals.

Media that encourages the expression of personal opinion.

An Internet channel that facilitates exchanges communications among Chinese businesses and Chinese people.

A seemingly public sphere.

The commercial internet, associated applications and platforms developed and used within China.

A unique and still under regulated dynamic system that combines needs, expectations and programs from officials, private sectors and civil society.

Chinese internet is a communication technology that is utilized in every aspect of the citizens' lives.

It is a self-organized enclosure that partly separates from the global Internet with strict censorship.

A material & discursive space historically related to the Chinese nation, society, or language.

Internet used among Chinese community.

A complicated controversial and rapid growing sphere.

It's a broad concept, and I think it is difficult to define Chinese internet. For some people, it means censorship and online activism. For others, it means e-commerce and online payment.

The Chinese Internet is multifaceted and contested in nature.

An online space where Chinese people interact among themselves and with the state.

The computer networks that adopted IPs administered & allocated by the Chinese administration (namely, CNNIC).

Fast-changing.

Both online and offline practices related to the use of communication technologies with Chinese characteristics.

Orwellian.

The digital layer of the Chinese society.

Infrastructure to facilitate information sharing, public discussion, political mobilization and network construction.

A contested, by no means political neutral space where state and non-state actors try to articulate their respective agendas and wrest for control over the means of communication.

A strictly controlled realm which encompasses numerous sub-ecosystems with their own dynamics.

The Chinese internet is beyond censorship.

How the Internet is perceived and used by the sociocultural conditions in China.

A network that treads the fine line between acting as a tool of control for, and a tool that in fact controls, the Chinese government.

Vibrant but controlled in a fragmented, not monolithic way unique dynamics between state and business.

Chinese internet is a closed system with no history and an uncertain future.

Internet within Chinese cultural boundary.

Always a site of regulation and subversion - best understood from the inside.

A collective term to describe electronics mean of communication in China.

Chinese internet can be regarded as the connected network(s) among users using the Chinese language or within the Sino cultural sphere with the help of various digital tools.

Rapid development, but long way to go for governance.

Chinese internet is the network within the "great fire wall".

What makes the "Chinese internet" distinct from the other linguistic- or state-defined spheres of the internet are its culturally situated social norms around online interaction (e.g., coded language to represent censored terms, paid Q&A fora, massive online quiz games) and its reconfigurations of technological infrastructure (e.g., mini apps).

It is a space where Chinese do cultural, economic, and political practices with the Internet.

The Chinese internet is both the infrastructure (telecom, undersea cables, internet exchange centre, devices, et.) and the superstructure (software, rhetoric, labor relations, socio-cultural expression and usages, etc.) appropriated and developed within a globalizing and industrializing China.

Chinese Internet is a networked environment that is strictly regulated and supervised by the Chinese government and where citizens strive to create economic, cultural and societal values.

All sorts of activities facilitated by ICT.

The "Chinese internet" is a specific part of the world-wide internet one can get access to in China.

Complex, contradictory, and rapidly developing.

Trick question... as this depends on a definition of 'Chinese' For my research, I am interested in the Internet under the jurisdiction of PRC authorities.

Superior and the future.

A digital territory subject to controls by the government which will become a model for other states as the realities if digital space and territory become more aware to them.

A plane of consistency and heterogenesis.

A national Internet subject to the jurisdiction of the Chinese government, partially connected to the global Internet, used by principally Chinese individuals, businesses, organizations and governments to connect with one another and with the outside world.

Chinese Internet changes from a space for non-official voices to a tightly state-controlled media.

Chinese Internet is an ecosystem, which evolves and revolves subject to social, political, economic, and cultural forces.

The ways in which Chinese users navigate digital space and make sense of their everyday life.

In your opinion, what is currently the single most pressing question about the Chinese internet?

The government's censorship.

The Chinese internet seems to be quite successful within the country. Will it ultimately act as a model for other countries around world?

The promotion of a Chinese multilateral model at the international level.

Privacy of individuals.

It is perhaps priority to create a free and orderly online environment for the public expressing and participating in public discussion.

Relationship between internet technology and financial capitalism in China.

Linking China to the rest of the world.

How to balance the supervision and freedom.

The blurring boundary between the state and some high-tech firms.

How do people in China make sense of what they are doing on the Internet?

The co-optation of the Internet for the government's and corporation's agenda.

Government-imposed censorship.

We need great research on an assortment of issues.

To look beyond the "Chineseness".

Will China's domestic censorship and other information-management practices be exported, to where, and how?

The (future) use of AI in state control.

Censorship.

How does it facilitate the communication of dominant political values and power structures.

Who are shaping "the Chinese internet" (the state is not the only player)?

How to control the offensive use, such as cyber-crime, of the Chinese internet is a question.

Diverse population.

The government's relationship with the internet and how it manages the balance between encouraging use of it as a development tool, whilst mitigating the social repercussions.

Whether the vibrancy can sustain under increasingly strict regulatory environment. Whether the model of state control will change under the establishment of CAC.

The internal Internet repression.

Cybersovereignty.

Can it provide a causal impetus for mobilisation?

Internet governance and free flow of information.

If the Chinese internet can be regarded as a large cultural assemblage, the most pressing question from me is how diversified actors ranging from the state policy to the capitalism logic, or from the technological affordance to the agency of users, contribute to the assemblage, and how these factors are mutually connected to each other in the process.

Growing disputes with limited access to dispute resolution.

Censorship and self-censorship.

Where are the boundaries between the state and private tech companies?

Does the Internet serve the public good?

In my opinion, it is probably how to connect the Chinese experiences to history, theories (not necessarily Western) and global practices to improvise our own research (anti-trust, data localization, uses, queer and LGBTQ communities) while avoiding exceptionalism claims.

Whether it is possible to turn it into an environment that is more towards a public space, which means reducing unnecessary state control, improving citizens' media literacy and regulating media practices.

How the state will interact with the dominating platforms in the future?

The question is how Chinese netizens can get access to the information filtered out by censors.

How Chinese internet companies work.

What is the actual relationship between 'the Internet' and people's lives?

The interlink between the different apps and the multifunctionality of WeChat.

How exactly do the regimes of censorship work. Only by understanding these regimes and sharing their limitations can people know how to interact safely.

Whither and Whence Chinese is the Chinese Internet?

Regulation, censorship, monopoly, cybersecurity, justice.

The tight state-control will both kill and also spur more creative energy.

Surveillance and privacy.

Historicize the study of the Chinese internet.

What is its limit? Is it still a positive technology?

Censorship.

A growing role of the Party-state.

I have two: The lengths the CCP will go to sanitize the Chinese Internet given recent measures and the exportation of a Chinese Internet model.

Apart from our knowledge about Chinese Internet industry and policies, how exactly does the Internet influences the everyday life of both urban and rural users? Does the Internet bridges pre-existing social gaps in contemporary Chinese society?

Regulation of new media, and relationship between traditional media and internet.

Policies.

What methods do you mainly use for studying the Chinese internet?

Qualitative and quantitative combined analysis; discourse analysis; digital methods.

Participant observation: to participate into the online communities and bbs, observe how netizens develop their own languages to avoid some sensitive words and discuss various topics.

Semiotics, Marxist political economy.

Qualitative Research.

Mixed Method.

Survey, and computational method.

Discourse Analysis, Ethnography of Communication.

Textual analysis; digital ethnography.

Text analytics.

Quantitative and qualitative; Ethnography;

Combined.

Qualitative analysis of policy documents and official statements.

Interview, discourse analysis, and experiment.

Quantitative methodologies including text analysis, survey, experiments.

Critical discourse analysis and "content" analysis (in the case of the internet as "text," this also involves researching the number of views it gets, the platforms it's hosted by and disseminated across); class-based analysis of internet users

Quantitative analysis, network analysis, content and image analysis

Content analysis and case studies.

Survey.

I don't directly study the Chinese internet but I would say directly on the webpages for the content and by asking people for the usage

Digital ethnography, interviews, textual analysis.

Qualitative: content analysis + interviews

Content Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Netnography

Critical discourse analysis and content analysis. Some online ethnography and network analysis.

Survey; Ethnography; Interviews; Mobile logging applications; Natural language processing

Qualitative method, especially the content analysis.

Survey.

Netnography

Textual analysis.

Media history.

So far, I have used largely online research and basic data analysis.

A mix of policy interpretations and evidence-based empirical studies using computer sciences methods.

Content analysis and participatory observation.

Qualitative Research.

Qualitative study of textual material.

Quantitative methods.

Qualitative methods including online ethnography and discourse analysis.

Legal Analysis, Case Studies.

Ethnography.

Qualitative: semi-structured interviews, participant-observation, social media discourse analysis, comparative case studies.

Qualitative methods.

Document analysis, interview.

Digital ethnography, discourse analysis, grounded theory.

Library method and observational field research.

Ethnography, grounded theory.

Combination of interviews and analysis of user behaviour and content, as well myself using the platforms I study.

Comparison of online sources, ethnography, interviews, study of policy/legal texts.

Cross-cultural surveys.

Ethnography, in digital and physical space, interviews and questionnaires (digital).

Treat media-texts as works with their own history.

Critical approaches, interviewing, ethnography, digital content analysis, big data.

Textural analysis, close reading.

Survey, content analysis.

Cultural studies, close reading, discourse analysis.

Digital methods and qualitative research methods.

In your opinion, what is the single greatest challenge that scholars of the Chinese internet face today?

Access.

It is increasingly difficult to get insider information on how policies are made behind-the-scenes, how companies conduct daily operations, and how the interactions between the state and companies unfold. Information is in a black box under the name of 'national security'.

To research across disciplines.

Understanding Chinese context.

Dynamism of subversive material online and vague boundaries of what is censored and what isn't.

Lack of reliable and empirical data access.

WeChat circles :)

Offline access to the online actors.

The rate of change; contemporary issues already suffer from the inability to age well, but given the rate of change in China (not just for the Internet), scholarship become outdated very quickly.

We currently lack the comparative perspective to compare different groups of Chinese Internet users and compare Chinese Internet with ICTs in other parts of the world.

How to balance the research requirement and the control of media from government department.

Access of data.

Censorship.

There seems to be difficulty applying western theories about the Internet to China. I think the major challenge is finding and developing organic methods and theories for studies within China.

In term of qualitative research no doubt that the greatest challenge is to arrange in depth interview with policy makers and businessman.

Sheer size and credibility of the internet data.

It is suggested to recognize how the netizens re-produce some online images with adding new meanings, how this trajectory can be possible and how the authority react with these phenomena.

Western-centrism.

Access to certain private discussion group.

How to get reliable data from the Internet and its related companies.

Access to data/algorithms.

To capture the multifacetedness of the Chinese Internet.

To localize the theories of Internet in the Chinese context while reaching a wide audience

Lack of conceptual framework that explains findings.

Theoretical breakthrough beyond description.

Beyond event-based analysis.

The speed of change.

Keeping up with the fast-changing industry.

Understanding the sophisticated functions of Chinese internet.

Getting away from the "liberal" framework of analysis - even scholars critical of the internet's potential to democratize Chinese communication and policymaking often speak of the internet in the ways it "falls short" of achieving these ideals, instead of assessing it in other terms such as the political economy of internet governance, its instrumentalization by the party-state and different social classes, state and non-state actors.

How to design our research in a way that enables us to take up emerging new phenomena but keep the research scientific grounded?

Understand the complexity of the Chinese internet.

The extremely uneven ownership and usage of Internet by Chinese individuals

Loss of access to data because of a combination of information monopolies and traceable data tracks.

One of the biggest challenge for me is to figure out what features of Chinese internet deserve to be distinguished from global trends in the

world wide web and what contributes to these features.

Where is the boundary/standard between freedom of speech and national security?

Lack of historical record.

Interview access to users, technology designers, and of course, state representatives.

Data mining.

The ability to get and obtain credible, consistent data.

Unpredictable political environment.

Lack of home-grown theories that could more effectively account for the various unique aspects of China's internet than the predominant Western perspectives.

The challenge is that how should scholars convince the academia about the credibility of their data from the Chinese internet.

How to access Internet companies, and how to understand the Chinese government and access different authorities involved in regulating the Internet.

Anti-China bias due to a lack of comparative studies.

The non-acknowledgement from the so-called West.

Those who they research self-censoring so much that they cannot receive reliable information.

Not quite sure.

Lack of critical mass to connect and take on larger projects together.

The access of the information, for some information or website quickly disappear.

The invisible hand of market and government in manipulating the flow,

structure, and content and online information.

Offering a more in-depth/systematic analysis of internet events and social phenomenon, tracing their roots and connections with previous cultural forms, instead of focusing on single case analysis.