

EDITORIAL

Riding the Wave

of Digital Communication and Technology: New Perspectives from Southeast Asia

It has not taken humans a long time to reach the height of the new wave of technology. About two decades after the emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterized by the prevalence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoTs), and machine learning, the Nobel Prizes were awarded to AI-aided studies in Physics and Chemistry in 2024, marking the year as the threshold opening to the AI era. The speed of innovation diffusion in this era is significantly faster compared to earlier epochs, such as the Stone Age, which spanned millions of years; the Bronze Age (3500 BC to 1200 BC); the Iron Age (1200 BC to the Industrial Revolution in the early 19th century); and subsequent technological waves powered by steam in the 19th century, electricity in the early to mid-20th century, and computation at the end of the 20th century. For example, technologies of this new era, such as ChatGPT and TikTok, reached 100 million users in just two and five months, respectively, whereas technologies of the previous industrial revolution, such as the mobile phone and car, needed over 15 years and 33 years, respectively, to achieve the same milestone (Ebert and Louridas 2023, 31).

Besides the rapidity of the advancement in digital communication and technology, AI causes massive disruptive changes in all aspects of life. AI-powered technologies are increasingly capable of replacing human labor and reshaping the workforce, from autonomous vehicles to robotic arms in manufacturing, and from large language model chatbots to virtual assistants. The emergence of Artificial Superintelligence (ASI)—a foreseeable future of AI where machines are more intelligent than humans—raises significant ethical and societal questions. In the media industry, AI-generated media products offer potential benefits such as mass production, cost and time reduction. On the other hand, they are the roots for public scrutiny and potential misinformation.

2024 has been a complex year for most media scholars and educators. Following the initial excitement surrounding ChatGPT in 2023, we now are haunted with fundamental questions regarding the role of AI in academic research and teaching. Should we maintain the traditional approach of academic writing with much hard work and many imperfections but where we control every single letter, or should we give the writing job entirely to AI tools? In the role of educators, we find it difficult to assess students' work that may be AI-generated. Hence, the transformative power of AI is a test for our academic integrity and the authenticity of our media work.

Scholars like us feel uneasy with the disruptive new technologies; however, we are not the odd ones out, since even the leaders of Big Tech are, to some extent, overwhelmed by the new wave. Elon Musk, the CEO of SpaceX, in his open letter from the Future of Life Institute (2023), called for

a pause in developing AI for at least six months, while Mustafa Suleyman, the CEO of Microsoft AI, introduced the concept of “AI containment” to control the advance in this new technology (2023).

How have Southeast Asian nations adopted and adapted to this new wave of technology? According to a report by the Tech Collective, ASEAN is emerging as a hub for global big tech companies (2024). Source of Asia, a business intelligence think tank based in Vietnam, recently stated that countries in the region, such as Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia, with their young and large populations, robust tech infrastructure, and favorable government policies, are poised to reshape the regional landscape (2024). Living in the heart of the rising global hub for digital technology and communication, we need a comprehensive, evidence-based analysis of digital communication and technology to build a strong foundation for developing relevant policies and regulations.

With these constructive intentions and purposes in mind, the Southeast Asian Media Studies Journal dedicates its issue 6.1 to feature research in Digital Communication and Technology. Most of the papers were researched by ASEAN scholars, while some were authored by scholars from Australia and Europe, demonstrating the geographical heterogeneous interest in this theme. This highlights the extended reach of our journal and the growing contribution of ASEAN media scholars and educators to global governance in digital communications and technology.

SEAMSJ issue 6.1. includes eight papers divided into three themes of research.

The first theme is Emerging Technologies in Communication, with two papers. The first paper is “Metaverse and Affordances of VR-enabled Connection” by Mark Finn, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia. It draws on the idea of “imagined affordances” to explore the intersection of technology and human agency. The author states that “These affordances arise from the interaction between actual technological artifacts and user perceptions, attitudes, and expectations, de-emphasizing the designer’s intent and allowing for the exploration of unintended uses.”

The second paper is “Different Platforms, Shared Imaginaries: A Comparative Analysis of Cross-Platform User Experiences” by Ngoc-Chau Pham and Lan-Chi Nguyen, Swinburne Vietnam, FPT University. This study synthesizes and analyzes research on user perceptions of algorithms (algorithmic imaginaries) across three major social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

The second theme, encompassing four papers, is Application of Digital Technology in Communication in Different Industries.

The first paper following this theme is “‘Taming’ Generative AI at Work: Balancing Technological Promise with Professional Values” by Martina Skrubbeltrang Mahnke from University of Roskilde, Denmark. Drawing on domestication theory, the overall aim of her study is to examine how users ‘tame’ generative AI (GenAI) in professional contexts.

“The Roles of Media Literacy, Emotional Intelligence, and Digital Intelligence in Predicting Psychological Well-Being” by Sarah Lynn Aliah Nor Zaidi and Nor Diana Mohd Mahudin from International Islamic University Malaysia is the second paper in this category. The study suggests that to be digitally intelligent, one must be media-literate and emotionally astute. The study is one

of the growing efforts to contribute to the literature on the role of media literacy, emotional intelligence, and digital intelligence in predicting the psychological well-being of young adults.

The third paper following the theme of Application of Digital Technology in Communication in Different Industries is “AI-Mediated Communication in Academic Organizations: Issues and Directions” by Kahrein A. Salvador from University of the Philippines Los Baños. This quantitative study surveyed 50 academic and administrative managers from various higher education institutions in Calabarzon, the Philippines. The author recommends capacity building efforts and policy implementation to manage issues identified on AI use and maximize its potential without compromising human agency.

The final paper following the given theme is “Travel Influencers as Catalysts for Fostering Open Innovation of Tourism: A Case Study in Da Lat” by Hien Duong from Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City—University of Social Sciences and Humanities. The research highlights the potential of travel influencers as catalysts for open innovation, emphasizing their ability to involve a broader range of actors, encourage co-creation, and facilitate knowledge sharing.

The third theme of SEAMSJ issue 6.1 is Integrity Perspectives in Digital Technology in Communication and features the final two papers of this issue.

The first paper here is “Data Ethics in the Race of Artificial Intelligence Technology Development between China and the U.S.” by Reyjane Calicdan-Del Campo from Far Eastern University in Manila. This study puts China and the U.S. side by side, allowing for a critical analysis on the emerging challenges of AI adoption, particularly regarding data privacy, unwarranted surveillance, and the proliferation of synthetic media.

The second paper following the theme of Perspectives in Digital Technology in Communication—and the eighth paper of the issue altogether—is “Marcos Forever: Resistance to anti-Marcos Persuasion and anti-Disinformation Efforts” by Karl Lewis L. Cruz from University of the Philippines Diliman. The study investigates the resistance of purposively sampled Marcos apologists to representative anti-Marcos persuasion and anti-disinformation messages.

We hope the papers in this issue will help you in your academic research and build a solid foundation for further practice and policy building in the media industry in the era of new technologies. Thus, we extend our gratitude to the two dozen dedicated reviewers and editorial assistants whose contributions have played an important role in the successful completion of this journal issue. Their expertise, hard work, and commitment to excellence have contributed to the quality of the journal and the continuation of a strong academic community of media scholars in the region.

As the late scientist Stephen Hawking once said “We are all time-travellers, journeying together into the future. But let us work together to make that future a place we want to visit.” SEAMSJ issue 6.1 seeks to contribute to the construction of a bright media future as it rides the wave of digital communication and technology—as seen from new perspectives from Southeast Asia.

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Hanoi, Vietnam
October 2024

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Hanoi, Vietnam

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NGO BICH NGOC is Head of Media and Communication Department, Swinburne University of Technology, Vietnam campus. She was Deputy Editor in Chief of the Online portal of the Academy of Journalism and Communication and an editor of Journal of Journalism and Communication Theories, Vietnam. She also works as a reviewer for several journals in Vietnam. Her research areas are multimedia journalism, digital communication, strategic communication, and public relations.

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Original Call for Papers

ISSUE 6.1

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

SEAMSJ issue 6.1 will delve into the multifaceted dimensions of digital communication and innovative technologies in the context of data science, with artificial intelligence (AI) being increasingly integrated into the production and operational cycles of media industries. The main objective of SEAMSJ 6.1 is to grasp the opportunities and challenges brought about by advancements in the novel technologies shaping and shaped by AI. The issue examines the interactions between human behavior, cognition, social motivations, and the vast amount of data generated by digital platforms and the use of algorithms and AI systems to analyze and influence information flow. This open call for contributions for SEAMSJ issue 6.1 invites full-paper submissions not only from scholars and practitioners who participated in the recently held International Conference and Media and Communication (ICMC 2023; organized and hosted by the Swinburne Vietnam Alliance Program and supported by SEAMSA in November 2023) but also from all academicians and other experts in the areas of Southeast Asian Media Studies, AI, digital communication, and innovative technologies.

AREAS OF INTEREST

Submitted articles should focus on digital communication and innovative technologies as they shape media landscapes in Southeast Asia. As such, they could touch on any of the following areas of interest:

- Futures of the media industries in Southeast Asia
- Applications of innovative AI technologies
- AI in the realms of professional development and media research
- Knowledge production and dissemination
- Fake news, misinformation, disinformation, alternative expertise
- AI and social, political, economic, and cultural issues
- Data analysis and audience insights
- Changing roles in journalism, fact-seeking and checking
- Integration of AI in journalism and media training curricula
- AI in relation to Media and Information Literacy (MIL)
- Interdisciplinary collaboration in a future shaped by AI
- Algorithmic decision-making in media business
- Surveillance and privacy concerns

Submitted research articles adhering to these and related themes and to the SEAMSJ's aims and scope will be considered for publication. All submitted articles undergo a primary quality check by the SEAMSJ editorial team and a secondary quality check through a double-blind peer-review according to quality standards found here: <https://bitly.ws/32PvE>

PAPER GUIDELINES

- Length: 4,000 to 5,000 words (excluding abstract and references)
- Title: 5 to 12 words
- Abstract: 150 to 200 words
- Keywords: 4 to 5
- References: 20 to 40 (80% from 2018 to 2023)
- Short bio: 150 words (separate on final page)
- Font: Arial, size 11, 1.5 line spacing
- Paragraphs: One empty line between paragraphs; no indentation of paragraphs
- Pagination: Page numbers in lower right corner
- Style: Chicago Manual of Style. Follow this guide for in-text citations and the list of references:
https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html
https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html
- Figures: A maximum of 3 graphic images (figures) of excellent quality
- Tables: A maximum of 3 tables of excellent quality
- Language: British English preferred (American English accepted)
- File: MS Word file (no PDFs)
- Samples: See published SEAMSJ issues here: <https://seamsa.org/seamsjournal/>

IMPORTANT DATES

- 1 February 2024: Final deadline for full paper submission
- 1 April 2024: Double-blind peer review and feedback
- 1 June 2024: Submission of revised paper
- 1 August 2024: Target publication date

SUBMISSION AND INQUIRIES

Submit full paper (MS Word file) and signed ethics commitment form (PDF file; [ethics commitment form](#)) and direct all inquiries to ICMC email at swinmediacomm@fe.edu.vn with CC to SEAMSJ editor-in-chief, Dr. Alexander J. Klemm at eic.seamsj@gmail.com, and Dr. Ngo Bich Ngoc at bngo@swin.edu.au. Put "[SEAMSJ 6.1]" in the email subject line.

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