

IN FOCUS:

SEADS FEATURE



Tech in Activism with Rumah Mandiri

On the 9th May 2025, SEADS in collaboration with MANDIRI, a youth-driven organisation based in Petaling Jaya held its third panel of the year - Tech in Activism - taking a look at platforms, advocacy and collective action in Malaysia through the years.

Held at Rumah Mandiri, the panel featured activists through the ages such as veteran journalist and author of "We Are Marching Now: The Inside Story of Bersih 1.0" Danny Lim, the young but already established Ain Hesniza who is the founder of Pocket of Pink, a feminist initiative combining art, advocacy, and education to empower youth and SEADS' very own online gender-based violence research lead, Dr Dyah Pitaloka. The panel session was moderated by MANDIRI's Finance Director, Dobby Chew.

● Key Takeaways

- Early 2000s activism relied on offline action due to limited technology.
- Today, activism often stays online as people prefer anonymity.
- Shifting digital activism into real-world action remains a key challenge.



ICT Policies and Development Politics in the Global South

From technology transfer and dependencies in the early days, New Public Management (NPM) inspired e-governance and its innovations, to the now emerging applications for mobile governance, the use of AI and open data and open governance, ICT4D in the Global South has had a constantly evolving set of state-citizen interfaces in the last few decades. This talk would like to invite experts, with years of experience and critical engagement with ICT policy and practice, for a discussion on the history of ICT initiatives and impact of development programmes, the role of international developmentalism, and current trajectories, concerns and issues of ICT4D in the context of the Global South.

You're Invited!
SEADS Future Event

MONASH University

ICT POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENT POLITICS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

18 JUNE 2025 | 4PM TO 5PM |
Online via ZOOM

REGISTER HERE

PROFESSOR EMERITUS TIM UNWIN
Royal Holloway, University of London and ICT4D Collective

PHET SAYO
Engage Media

DR BIDISHA CHAUDHURI
University of Amsterdam

Moderated by: KHETRIMAYUM MONISH SEADS

Date: 18th June 2025

Time: 4pm to 5pm (GMT+08)

Mode: Online (via ZOOM)

Event is free via registration.

[Register for the event here!](#)

● Our Panelists



Phet Sayo

*Executive Director,
Engage Media*



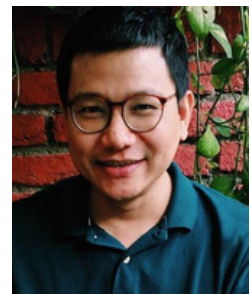
Tim Unwin

*Emeritus Professor of
Geography
(Royal Holloway,
University of London)
and
Catalyst of
the ICT4D Collective*



Dr Bidisha Chaudhuri

*Assistant Professor
of Government,
Information
Cultures and
Digital Citizenship
at University of
Amsterdam*



Khetrinmayum Monish

*Post-doctoral
fellow,
SEADS*

Moderated by

OPEN CALL: Applications for SEADS PhD Candidates

The Southeast Asia Research Centre for Digital Tech and Society (SEADS) is a research centre based at Monash University Malaysia's School of Arts and Social Sciences, one of the premier humanities and social science research and teaching institutions in Malaysia. SEADS aims to advance scholarship through critically exploring and reconceptualising the relationships between digital technologies and human societies in Southeast Asia, using humanities and social science approaches. Applications are now open for SEADS' two fully-funded PhD positions for 2025.

Research projects that may be related to the following areas:

- E-commerce: including studies that focus on traders, workers, delivery drivers, consumption, the political economy of e-commerce, the history of e-commerce
- Creative economies: streaming platforms and creative work, AI and creative work, gaming platforms
- Digital public sphere: Online activism, online political discourse, Mis/Dis/Malinformation, Digital media literacy, digital regulations and freedom of expression, digital journalism
- Digital technology and political/armed conflict; online hate speech; digital tech in insurgencies
- Governing technologies: uses and resistance to digital technologies in government; population and mobilities management; biometrics & biopolitics; surveillance practices & securitisation
- (Geo)politics and power of digital infrastructures; socio-technical imaginaries and state formation; digital tech and development
- Urban technologies: technology and urban space, smart cities, digital infrastructure, surveillance, glitches and breakdowns
- Technology and gender: Gender discourses within digital platforms, AI and synthetic media, gender-based violence, gender justice and techno-feminism, gender/sex focused misinformation, LGBTQIA+ digital activism.



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- Digital technology and political/armed conflict; online hate speech; digital tech in insurgencies
- Governing technologies: uses and resistance to digital technologies in government; population and mobilities management; biometrics & biopolitics; surveillance practices & securitisation
- (Geo)politics and power of digital infrastructures; socio-technical imaginaries and state formation; digital tech and development
- Urban technologies: technology and urban space, smart cities, digital infrastructure, surveillance, glitches and breakdowns

Please submit an expression of interest by sending your updated CV and a 2000 word research proposal to sheril.bustaman@monash.edu by 30 June 2025.

The proposal should include:

- Project title
- Research topic summary (three or four sentences that encapsulate the project)
- Project description (describe the proposed project including relevant theoretical contexts)
- Rationale for project (what motivated your interest in this particular area?)
- Main research questions (list 3-4 questions that underpin your investigation or research topic)
- Methodology (describe your proposed research methods, eg ethnography, textual analysis, interviewing etc)
- Outcomes of this research and its contribution to knowledge (how is your research filling gaps in the field and revising existing understandings, or

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- Outcomes of this research and its contribution to knowledge (how is your research filling gaps in the field and revising existing understandings, or contributing to key debates?)
- Bibliography

Smart Tech, Dirty Footprint?

By Preevena Devi

Imagine building AI to fight climate change, only to realise it's quietly accelerating the problem.

AI promises smarter solutions: predicting floods, optimising energy, modelling climate futures. But beneath the sleek tech lies a heavy cost.

Data centres guzzle electricity, drain water, and rely on supply chains tied to extraction and e-waste. In Southeast Asia, where grids still depend on fossil fuels, this isn't just a trade-off, it's a contradiction.

So, is AI helping or hurting?

Both.

AI can be a powerful tool if used responsibly. But right now, environmental governance is an afterthought. Most policies focus on data ethics, not ecological impact. And when sustainability isn't baked in from the start, innovation becomes exploitation.

● **Get In Touch With Us**

SEADS is located at:

Building 2 Level 6, Monash University Malaysia
Jalan Lagoon Selatan, Bandar Sunway
47500, Selangor, MALAYSIA

Email: sheril.bustaman@monash.edu

Myth or Reality?



So, what now?

We need climate-conscious AI strategies which includes tech built with energy limits, local infrastructure, and environmental justice in mind.

Not just smarter machines, but smarter systems. Because a green future isn't just about what AI can do, it's about what it costs to get there.