

IN FOCUS:

SEADS FEATURE



Digital Inclusion & Women in Disabilities: Launch of National Report & Panel Discussion

On 25 July 2025, SEADS, in collaboration with ARROW and the DATUM Initiative, hosted a virtual event launching the national report, "Monitoring the SDGs at 10 Years: Sexual and Reproductive Health and the Lived Experiences of Women and Individuals Assigned Female at Birth with Disabilities in Malaysia."

The event featured a panel titled *Digital Inclusion and Women with Disabilities*, moderated by Dr Dyah Pitaloka, and brought together Adhura Farouk, Beatrice Leong, and Dr Benjamin Loh. Together, they explored how digital tools are bridging access gaps for disabled communities while also confronting the systemic exclusions they continue to face in health, tech, and governance spaces.

● Key Takeaways

- Digital spaces create access and community for women with disabilities.
- Inclusion must be rights-based, not charity-driven.
- Lived experiences challenge dominant tech narratives.



SEADS @ DRAPAC

Several members of SEADS will be organising discussions at the Digital Rights in Asia-Pacific assembly happening from the 26th to 28th August 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Tracing Data Trails by Arran Ridley

Date: 26th August 2025 (Tuesday)
Time: 4:00 PM – 5:20 PM

This workshop invites participants to critically engage with urban space through the method of datawalking, a situated, embodied practice that explores how surveillance infrastructures shape the way we move, behave, and are seen in the city. In the context of smart city rollouts and datafication across Southeast Asia, the workshop encourages participants to trace both visible technologies of control (CCTVs, sensors, checkpoints, etc) and spaces of refusal or absence, which we might consider to be “dead zones,” where surveillance systems falter, break, or are intentionally bypassed.



You're Invited! SEADS Future Event

Zine-making Workshop: What Would a Good AI Future Look Like? by Stefan Bächtold & Emma Baulch

Date: 27th August 2025 (Wednesday)
Time: 10:00 AM – 11:20 AM

The current hype around Artificial Intelligence (AI) is everywhere - and so are the red flags that pop up when thinking through the consequences of current AI for society. Bias, exclusion, privacy infringements, surveillance, environmental concerns, intellectual property theft, job destruction, manipulation, data colonialism, and unchecked corporate power all come to mind.

In this co-learning workshop, we invite participants to use their creative side to think alternatives to the current, big tech corporate (business) model of AI. What does a good AI future look like? What should AI do for future societies in the majority world? Who should have a say in AI futures?

Participation for DRAPAC is by registration but only virtual spaces are available now.

Head to [DRAPAC's website](#) for more information.

GRANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

SEADS would like to congratulate its members for successfully securing the following grants:

Google (2025)

- Journalism Talent Gap Research Malaysia & Singapore
- \$47,925 USD
- Recipients: Emma Baulch, Premesh Chandran, Meera Sivasothy, Ben Loh, Rubin Khoo

The project will:

- Understand specific skill needs across the funnel through in-depth interviews with journalism educators and news room leaders
- Assess current academic and other training available for journalists
- Analyse and assess familiarity with online journalism tools including Google products like Pinpoint and NotebookLM, as well as other relevant tools
- Identify specific gaps between training demands and supply.
- Offer actionable recommendations to address identified gaps

Arts Campus Mobility Scheme (2025 - 2026)

- \$8,140 AUD Arts Campus Mobility Scheme (an internal funding scheme)
- Recipients: Arran Ridley, Dyah Pitaloka, Stefan Bachtold and Emma Baulch.

Building on the expertise of the Southeast Asia Research Centre for Digital Tech and Society (SEADS) at MUM, this collaboration will explore how digital research methods, frameworks, and pedagogies can be made relevant to Southeast Asian contexts and the broader Global South.

Humanities, Arts & Social Science (HASS) Grant (2025 - 2026)

- Recipients: Stefan Bachtold, Thaatchayini Kananatu, Ridoan Karim (SOB), Joanne Lim (SOE)
- R<30,000

HASS grant Governing (with) AI: Technopolitics of machine learning in Malaysia's public sector

Censorship, Art & Digital Rights

By Preevena Devi

Censorship looks like an exhibition edit. But what if it's a diplomatic weapon disguised as cultural protocol?

At Bangkok's Art and Culture Center, artworks referencing Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong were quietly removed under pressure from the Chinese Embassy. Artist names were blacked out. Flags were taken down. Postcards and videos disappeared. It wasn't just curatorial discretion; it was state interference with regional ripple effects.

What happened in the gallery didn't stay in the gallery. Emails revealed involvement from Bangkok city authorities, raising questions about state complicity. In digital spaces, archives and catalogues were also "cleaned." Artist voices were erased not only from walls but from memory.

● Get In Touch With Us

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Myth or Reality?



This isn't new. From film festivals in New Zealand to screenings in the Philippines, China's efforts to silence critique now span continents and media. Art becomes collateral in the struggle over digital narrative control.

Are these exhibitions too political, or are we just afraid of politics that challenge power?

Right now, it's both. The intersection of censorship and diplomacy is expanding, and it's colonising the digital too.

Until curators, states, and platforms stand firm, silence will keep masquerading as neutrality.

Censorship no longer starts with bans; it starts with pressure and ends in quiet compliance.