

North–South Dialogues for an Equitable and Sustainable Information Future

Schedule and location

iConference Workshop 708: North–South Dialogues for an Equitable and Sustainable Information Future

Date and Time: Wednesday, 01/Apr/2026: 3:00pm - 4:30pm GMT (23:00-00:30 Beijing Time)

Location: Room 2/06

Speakers

Jiuzhen Zhang, Peking University (China)

Wenjie Zhou, Renmin University (China)

Ning Wang, University of Zurich (Switzerland)

Simon Mahony, University College London (UK)

Ulrich Tiedau, University College London (UK)

Andreas Vlachidis, University College London (UK)

Pu Yan, Peking University (China)

Abstract

This panel examines how the information ecologies between the Global North and South shape the pursuit of an equitable and sustainable information future. Drawing on three research frontiers—climate communication, information poverty, and AI ethics—the panel highlights comparative and reflexive perspectives on knowledge flows, data asymmetries, and epistemic justice. Through case studies spanning China, India, the UK, and Switzerland, participants will explore how algorithmic systems, digital infrastructures, and policy regimes mediate access to information and participation in global knowledge production. By fostering North–South dialogues among scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, this panel seeks to inspire new frameworks and collaborations for building inclusive information societies in the age of AI.

Keywords: information ecologies, comparative studies, Global South, Global North, sustainable information

Proposed Format

The 90-minute session will feature three thematic presentations followed by a guided dialogue moderated by the organizers. The final 30 minutes will feature audience-driven discussions, including live polls and interactive

boards (Mentimeter/Padlet) to visualize participants' views on "equitable information futures." Here are descriptions of the three guided dialogues.

1. Evidence-Based Information Poverty Research: Retrospect and Prospect (~20 mins)

This presentation outlines the Evidence-Based Information Poverty Research (EB-IPR) framework, integrating positivist and rationalist traditions to construct a systematic, data-driven approach to studying information poverty. It emphasizes combining meta-analytic synthesis and participatory deliberation, thus bridging micro-level case evidence with macro-level policy design. The talk concludes with an outlook on real-time monitoring of information poverty using computational social science tools.

2. Comparative Dialogues on AI Ethics: A Swiss–Chinese Perspective (~20 mins)

This segment introduces the AI Meets Ethics initiative, a Swiss–Sino collaboration promoting responsible AI governance through cross-cultural dialogue. It contrasts Switzerland's bottom-up innovation ecosystem with China's top-down policy frameworks, exploring how differing ethical foundations shape AI development and deployment. The talk illustrates "science diplomacy" as a mode of fostering mutual understanding and global cooperation in AI ethics.

3. Transnational Climate Information Flows (~20 mins)

This segment presents findings from the *Decoding Climate Narratives* project, which compares climate communication on YouTube and Bilibili. It introduces the concept of information migration to explain how content and audiences move across platforms and national contexts. The discussion highlights asymmetries in visibility, cultural framing, and algorithmic mediation between China and the UK, illustrating how global environmental narratives are localized and reinterpreted through digital media.

Bios of Organizers

Pu Yan is an assistant professor at the department of information management and is a scholar in the public understanding of climate change and computational social science. Her extensive research on climate communication on social media platforms across different European countries, UK, and USA makes her a quality partner for our project. Yan has expertise in teaching data storytelling, which provides invaluable insights on applying storytelling techniques to analysing climate communication.

Jiuzhen Zhang is a Professor in the Department of Information Management at Peking University, where she also serves in the Library and Information Science division. She received her B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in Library Science from Peking University. Her research focuses on reference and information services, digital information dissemination, and networked information governance. Professor Zhang has authored or co-authored numerous books

and academic papers, including *Network Self-regulation in Information Communication* and *Library and Information Services in the Digital Age*. She has led projects funded by the National Social Science Foundation of China and served on multiple committees of the Library Society of China. Her teaching and research continue to shape the development of library and information science education in China.

Simon Mahony is an expert in digital humanities and digital storytelling, and a visiting professor at PKU Department of Information Management. His research explores how narratives influence cultural memory and civil participation, with a focus on cross-cultural contexts between UK and China. He collaborates on the Shanghai Memory Project, applying storytelling, a methodology directly relevant to our project.

Ulrich Tiedau is a Professor of European History at the School of European Languages, Culture and Society of University College London (UCL) and, since 2010, an Associate Director of the UCL Centre for Digital Humanities. His research interests encompass various aspects of contemporary history, with a current focus on the history of early twentieth-century internationalism and on digital approaches to historical inquiry. I am a seminar convenor at the Institute for Historical Research (IHR), part of the University of London's School of Advanced Study (SAS), and a co-founder of the Richard Deswarte Prize for Digital History. Recent publications include *Pieter Geyl and Britain: Encounters, Controversies, Impact* (University of London Press, 2022; co-edited with Stijn van Rossem) and *The European Unity League: Sir Max Waechter and the idea of Europe, 1904–1924* (London: Bloomsbury, 2025, forthcoming).

Andreas Vlachid is an expert in text mining and semantic web technologies, has extensive experience in large multidisciplinary national and European projects. As PI of "Mixed Method in Oral Histories", he researches the application of language technology for historical-interpretative analysis, to better understand narratives of formation, disruption, and change. As technical lead of the Sloane Lab project, he directs data unification, aggregation, and knowledge base development. He is a member of UCLDH and convenor of the Alan Turing Research group for Humanities and Data Science.

Zhou Wenjie is a professor at the School of Information Resources Management, Renmin University of China. He also serves as a part-time research librarian at the China National Archives of Publications and Culture, a senior researcher at Shandong University, a part-time professor at the Interdisciplinary Innovation Laboratory for Evidence-Based Social Sciences of Lanzhou University and the School of Management of Northwest Normal University, a member of the Compilation and Publishing Committee of the Library Society of China. He has hosted three National Natural Science Foundation projects. He has published more than 100 academic papers and 8 academic monographs.

Ning Wang is an ethicist and a political scientist based at University of Zurich since 2017. She holds a PhD degree in Biomedical Ethics and Law from University of Zurich, and two Master's degrees in Applied Ethics and Political Science obtained in the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. Ning has broad research interests in the ethics assessment and responsible governance of emerging and future technologies, such as robotics, autonomous systems, and generative AI. Through empirical studies of these transformative technologies of both enabling and disruptive nature, she aims to address the ethical, social, legal, and regulatory challenges new and complex technologies pose to society, explore responsive analytical approaches in the understanding and evaluation of them, and propose practical governance tools for the design, development, and use of them. In between her academic endeavours, Ning led projects on ethics policy development for international organisations across government, industry, and NGOs. As a strong advocate of bottom-up forces for social change, I am dedicated to bridging the gap between science and society, with active engagement in influential non-academic institutions such as the World Economic Forum, the Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences, and the IEEE.