This workshop is organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore; with support from Tembusu College, National University of Singapore.

How is *homo sapiens* and its mortality represented, reified and shaped through the Internet in Asia? To what extent does the Internet transform *homo sapiens* and its mortality in Asia? What visions and imaginaries of *homo sapiens* are propagated and can exert influence through the Internet in Asia?

This workshop will probe these questions in Asian and Inter-Asian contexts firstly through considering how *homo sapiens* has had different manifestations and configurations to and for itself throughout history, with a particular focus on the recent times in Asia. For the purposes of this workshop *homo sapiens* refers to sentient beings, bipeds capable of higher level thought, speech and tool creation that emerged approximately 150,000 years ago, when we gained our ‘anatomical “modernity”’ (Taylor, 2002:23)”. This term evokes a sense of existence through time, a situatedness in a broader configuration of life and a particular techno-scientific way of seeing.

It is debatable if *homo sapiens* had any sense of itself as a species or as a global collective prior to modernity. Indeed Foucault (1971) suggests that the modern society of *homo sapiens* is an aberration in its need to invent a term that describes itself: “man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge...man is an invention of recent date”. Thus terms like ‘Man’, ‘Humanity’ and ‘The Human’, which are taken as timeless and transcendental of culture and geography, are both embedded in particular sets of beliefs about the body, gender and consciousness, relatively new and are continuing to evolve. The particular situatedness of these and other terms used to refer to *homo sapiens* in Asia and the effect they exert through infrastructures such as the Internet is something this workshop aims to explore.

It is particularly useful to consider these formations in relation to death and mortality. As particular types or approaches to death – the traditional, the modern and the neomodern – have particular associated authority and values (Walter, 1996) so we suggest that these same types or approaches may be associated both with particular ways of seeing *homo sapiens*, particular times and regions and distinct infrastructure. And these ways of seeing *homo sapiens* can both underpin or reflect a worldview and/or shape behaviours. In response, this workshop aims to explore the proposition that modernity and associated ICTs have appropriated and remediated more traditional sets of belief as well as propagated newer configurations of *homo sapiens* such as The Human in the context of Asia. The workshop also aims to explore the applicability of different configurations of *homo sapiens* in Asian and Inter-Asian contexts, in contemporary times and through history and their antagonism to and association with traditional, modern and neomodern approaches to death (Walter, 1996).

These themes, foci and concerns are summarized by the five steering questions listed below.

1. What different visions and imaginaries of *homo sapiens* have been prevalent in Asian and Inter-Asian contexts through different historical times but especially in the contemporary?
2. What are the underlying associations of these visions and imaginaries to ideas of mortality and immortality and particular approaches to death in Asian and Inter-Asian contexts?
3. What role have Internet technologies had in propagating and/or resisting particular visions and imaginaries of *homo sapiens* in Asian and Inter-Asian contexts?
4. What is the extent of the influence of these visions and imaginaries of *homo sapiens* on, for example, Internet technology design and policy-making?
5. What connection between particular Internet technologies and *homo sapiens* in Asian and Inter-Asian contexts can be established, including the approach to death as being traditional, modern, neo-modern or post-modern?

**CONTACT DETAILS**

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