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## Chinese Media: Party and State structures

Rogier Creemers\*

### Introduction

It is a well-known fact that the Chinese Communist Party government has an elaborate structure in place to strategically control public communications. The Party itself is clear in its objectives. In its latest pronouncement on cultural reform, dating from November 2011, the Central Committee made clear that, “cultural construction is an important component part of the overall composition of undertakings under Socialism with Chinese characteristics. Without the vigorous guidance of culture, there is no great abundance in the people’s spiritual world, there is no full rein for the entire nation’s spiritual strength, and it is impossible for a country and a nation to stand towering above the forest of the people of the world<sup>1</sup>.” In other words, in the eyes of the Chinese Communist Party, culture and communications are instrumental means to ends, more specifically, creating a modern and strong China. Another factor that influences the Party is the need to monopolize the public sphere. It is, of course, true for any non-pluralist government to ensure that no space is left open for organized dissent to take hold. The CCP describes this using the terminology of the public opinion battlefield. In this view, the public sphere is divided into different areas, such as public opinion, entertainment, television, the Internet, etc., which are directed at different target audiences, where the Party claims it must be the monopolistic voice. This idea stems from the fact that the Party, in Leninist vein, proclaims itself to be the vanguard of the whole people, which bases itself politically on a sole correct approach to reality, described as Socialism with Chinese characteristics. It follows from this assumption that opening up the public sphere to public voices would be to condone falsehoods, which might confuse the population<sup>2</sup>.

For the implementation of these purposes, the Party-State needs an administrative structure. This structure consists of three main pillars, respectively encompassing Party structures, State departments and third bodies. This paper will describe the structuring of all three pillars, and outline the regulatory tactics that are used to ensure that control over media products is maintained.

### The Party

The propaganda system is integral to both the internal functioning of the Party and the control it exerts over the State. It has powers and competencies to regulate just about every matter related to the dissemination of content, education and culture. It is divided into two tiers: the Central Committee level and the local levels. At the peak of the Central structure sits the Central Leading Group on Propaganda and Ideological Work (Zhongyang Xuanchuan Sixiang Gongzuo Lingdao Xiaozu 中央宣传思想工作领导小组 – hereafter named IPW). This existed informally in the late Sixties, and was formally constituted by a Central Committee directive in 1988. Until that time, its portfolio also encompassed education. The 1988 directive tasks it with “Routinely analysing and monitoring dynamics and trends in the ideological field; researching and controlling propaganda work and direction; coordinating work in propaganda, theoretical, cultural, media publishing and other departments concerned with work in the ideological field; offering comments and suggestions to propaganda and theoretical units.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Central Committee, Zhonggong Zhongyong guanyu Shenhua Wenhua Tizhi Gaige [Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Decision Concerning Deepening Cultural Structural Reform], 2011.

<sup>2</sup> However, this does not mean that the Party claims complete knowledge, and discussion about concrete policy topics may be permitted under certain circumstances.

<sup>3</sup> Shambaugh, David, ‘China’s Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy’, *The China Journal*, no. 57, 2007.

The Leading Small Group is one of the most important among the Central Committee leading groups. Although these bodies operate in an extremely secretive manner, their power over policy is considerable. Both Party departments and State ministries and commissions are subordinate to them.

There are two other media-related leading small groups: the Central Committee for Guiding Spiritual Civilization Construction (Zhongyang Jingshen Wenming Jianshe Zhidao Wei yuanhui 中央精神文明建设指导委员会 – hereafter named SCG) and the Leading Small Group for Cultural Structural Reform and Development Work. (Zhongyang Wenhua Tizhi Gaige he Fazhan Gongzuo Lingdao Xiaozu 中央文化体制改革和发展工作领导小组 – hereafter named CSRD). The mandate of these two groups overlaps the IPG's. The major difference, however, is in their membership. These two groups have a more detailed portfolio of specific tasks, which for the SCG relates to issues of patriotic education and public morality; while the CSRD is concerned with the economic side of media development.

The above two groups are mainly concerned with setting out general policy directives and ensuring high-level agreement within the Party about propaganda. The concrete responsibility for institutionalizing propaganda governance and regularizing management lies with the Central Propaganda Department (CPD). This has been a part of the central Party structure since its very beginning in the Twenties, although it was suspended for a while during the Cultural Revolution. At present, the CPD is directly in charge of a number of media sectors, including radio, film, television, press, publications and culture, and has ideological command over the State bodies responsible for the administrative management of these sectors. It also controls the Central Party School and provides ideological training to cadres down the line. Furthermore, it has an advisory role towards a number of other administrations, including the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Education, the Chinese Academy and Social Science and all of China's mass organizations and NGOs. The CPD's norm-setting power can hardly be overstated. It decides on all policy matters, starting with the general orientation of media policy down to the daily instructions it sends to all journalistic departments. It approves phrasings (口径 *koujing*) and formulations (提法 *tifa*), and is in constant contact with the heads of major media outlets. Perhaps most importantly, it directly controls the appointment of the leading positions in all key central media companies<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, the Party has a department responsible for external propaganda, the Foreign Propaganda Office. This Office is better known under its English name, the State Council Information Office. It closely liaises with the CPD, under which it is subordinate. Officially, this department is responsible for all official foreign-related communications of the Chinese government. It also plays an important role in the management of news, particularly in the online sphere<sup>5</sup>. Its most important function in this regard is to send regular notifications to websites and other media outlets, which indicate whether and how to report certain news. In the wake of the expansion of online news, a formal body was set up under the State Council Information Office, named the State Internet Information Office, and tasked with managing online information<sup>6</sup>.

## The State

Where the Party departments named are mostly concerned with ideological orientation, general policies, providing cadre training and education and other matters of personnel management, policies are implemented, administered and enforced through the State bureaucracy. At the central level, this consists of a number of ministries and administrative bodies. These ministries are all part of the State

<sup>4</sup> Generally, see Brady, Anne-Marie, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Xiao, Qiang, The Rise of Online Public Opinion and its Impact, in Shirk, Susan (ed.), *Changing Media, Changing China*, Oxford U.P., Oxford, 2010, pp. 206 *et seq.*

<sup>6</sup> See also Zhang, Xiaoling, From "Foreign Propaganda" to "International Communication": China's Promotion of Soft Power in the Age of Information and Communication Technologies, in Zhang Xiaoling and Yongnian Zheng (eds.), *China's Information and Communications Technology Revolution: Social Changes and State Responses*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2010.

Council, the overarching authority. Their responsibilities are divided along departmental lines. According to legislative regulations published in 1989<sup>7</sup>, there are three level of normative documents. At the highest level, there are laws, which regulate basic and main social and economic relationships. At present, there are few laws that directly affect the media, with the exception of copyright and advertising. Furthermore, insofar as they provide for offences and misdemeanors that may be committed through the media, such as subversion or invasion of privacy, the Criminal Law and the General Principles of the Civil Law apply to media matters. The second level consists of administrative regulations, which comprehensively and systematically regulate a broad sector. These are promulgated by the State Council, as they often have implications for a number of different ministries or departments. For example, provisions on the import of films may impose obligations on the General Administration of Customs, but individual ministries are not permitted to promulgate documents which impact other departments in such a way<sup>8</sup>. At the third level, there are departmental rules, which provide specialized provisions to a very specific aspect of media regulation, or provide detailed explanations of broader provisions in higher-ranking documents. Outside of this structure, there is a continuous stream of notices (*tongzhi* 通知), which provide concrete instructions. Sometimes, such Notices may impose strict interpretations of earlier rules, which may be binding and has the effect of making it very difficult to establish exactly what the law is in a given field, as it requires a thorough knowledge of this whole corpus. To make matters more difficult, not all notices are made public. Except in the case of laws, implementation, interpretation and enforcement of these regulatory documents is the responsibility of the administrative department in question.

There are three main State bodies governing the media, and their responsibilities are divided along functional lines<sup>9</sup>. First, there is the Ministry of Culture. It was established in October 1949, on the foundation of the People's Republic of China. It was disbanded in 1970, during the Cultural Revolution, but re-established in 1975. While it gained a number of functions in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, including the control over film and publishing, it lost these in the Eighties as film was handed over to the then Ministry of Radio and Television, and a separate administrative body was set up for the printing industry. It tried to reclaim lost ground through the control of online gaming, but this led to a well-publicized spat with the General Administration of Press and Publications. Its powers are mainly to be found in the management of traditional culture and art, cultural heritage and the cultural market. It also has competencies in cartoons and online gaming, as well as culture-related science and technologies. Subordinate to the Ministry of Culture are a number of institutes, cultural entities and enterprises, including the National Theatre, the Central Cultural Management Cadre Academy, the National Library, the National Gallery and the National Symphonic Orchestra.

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Radio, Film and Television, *Regulations on the Legislative Procedure for Radio, Film and Television*, 1989, available online, <<http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/1989/03/08/regulations-on-the-legislative-procedure-for-radio-film-and-television/>>

<sup>8</sup> Apart from where such documents are promulgated jointly. This often happens in regulatory documents pertaining to concrete acts of implementation or enforcement.

<sup>9</sup> For the most recent outline of roles and responsibilities, see, respectively, *Provisions on the Main Duties, Internal Organization and Personnel Allotment of the General Administration of Press and Publication (National Copyright Administration)*; *the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television*; and *the Ministry of Culture*, (all 2008), all available online on <http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2008/07/>

Second, there is the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television. Like the Ministry of Culture, its predecessor (the Broadcast Undertaking Bureau) was established around the time of the foundation of the People's Republic. During the early years of the Cultural Revolution, it was put under military control, but reverted to the civilian structure in 1973. In 1982, it was upgraded in rank and renamed the Ministry of Radio and Television. It became the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television in 1986, when it took over the Ministry of Culture's Film Bureau in 1986. In 1998, it was demoted to vice-ministry rank, becoming the State Administration of Radio Film and Television. As can be derived from its name, it is in charge of audiovisual broadcasting, as well as management of the film sector. It is in direct charge of the three central broadcasting stations, China Central Television, China Education Television and China National Radio. It licenses every film, radio or television programme that is to be broadcast, as well as broadcasting channels and film production or distribution enterprises. With the advent of the Internet, its remit has expanded to online audiovisual programmes, although due to the nature of converged media, the question of defining and categorizing online audiovisuals, the concomitant administrative subordination relationship and hence, the potential gains to be made remain unclear.

Third, there is the General Administration of Press and Publications. Like the above two bodies, it was incorporated in 1949, but was merged into the Ministry of Culture during a round of administrative reform in 1954. It regained its independence in 1985, in order to support the development of China's scientific and technological sector. It also became host to the National Copyright Administration the year after. Its competencies naturally include the book, newspaper and periodical publishing sectors, but also all audiovisual publishing, electronic publishing and a significant part of online publishing. It licenses products and producers throughout the value chain.

A relative newcomer in terms of media management is the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, which was formed in 2008 through the amalgamation of, amongst others, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications and the Ministry of Electronics Industry. In principle, it is responsible for the management of Chinese telecommunications hardware, including the Internet. However, technological development has run into the vertical, departmentally-organized governance structure. Media convergence has made it possible for different forms of content to be distributed on different kinds of networks to different types and brands of terminals or devices. However, strategic institutional interests have so far impeded the interconnection of different networks and delivery services, as departments prefer to firmly enclose their jurisdictions. One example of this is the creation of a national cable network, which should naturally fall under MIIT (Ministry of Industry and Information Technology). However, SARFT (State Administration of Radio Film and Television) has pulled this into its own scope of competence, and is in the process of establishing a subordinate company to manage the national cable network.

Apart from these bodies, there are a number of administrative departments whose portfolios sometimes involve media issues. For example, the Public Security Department is involved in all cases of media-related crime, such as illegal broadcasting or piracy, but also in closely managing Internet discussions. The General Administration of Customs and the Ministry of Commerce are involved in matters related to international trade in media products and services – or smuggling, while the General Administration of Taxation and the Ministry of Finance are involved in economic media policies. The Supreme People's

Court will issue interpretations and notices related to the application and interpretations of certain legal rules, and the GAPP uses the banner of the National Copyright Administration when dealing with copyright issues.

### Third parties

Apart from the Party and State bureaucracies, there are a number of institutions, industry bodies and companies that, although they do not have direct regulatory powers, strongly impact the way that China's media are run. They can be divided into three important categories: research-oriented bodies, industry bodies and companies.

Due to the epistemological, concept-driven nature of Chinese regulatory culture, research institutes have a very important role in developing policy advice and recommendations related to media governance reform. There is a plethora of universities, research bodies, coordination councils and funding sources, but the most important research from the point of view of policy tends to be centralized through high-level institutions such as the Chinese Academy of Social Science and the Central Party School. The officially mandated purpose of research in China is to support economic and social development. Hence, much of media research is concerned with expounding the basic theoretical positions that fall under the banner of Socialism with Chinese characteristics<sup>10</sup>. The epistemological assumption underpinning this effort is that there are "laws" (*guilü* 规律) that underpin society in the same manner that natural laws provide tools to understand and predict natural phenomena<sup>11</sup>. These laws can, in this view, be discovered through diligent social science research, and will then provide knowledge necessary for optimizing regulatory systems.

The role of industry bodies is to provide centralized networks that group most or all of the relevant enterprises or individuals in a particular field. Some of them go back to the early days of Communist Party rule, and were originally intended to play a consultative role, as well as a transmission belt for top-down Party policies. As they are directly run by Party cadres, they also are a less obtrusive way of governing behavior than direct State regulation. For example, many media associations, such as the China Internet Association, the China Journalists' Association have concluded self-discipline conventions, in which the members commit to certain norms of ethical behaviour, of which supporting Party leadership and Socialism with Chinese characteristics is invariably one<sup>12</sup>. This also alters the dynamism of the nature of rules. Rather than imposing Socialist loyalty directly through Party control of State institutions, this more subtle form of rule generation means that the willingness to be bound by them emerges from within

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<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Central Committee, *National "12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan" for Philosophy and Social Science Research*, 2011, available online, <<http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2011/06/03/national-12th-five-year-plan-for-philosophy-and-social-science-research/>>; and Central Committee, *Opinion concerning Further Letting Philosophy and Social Sciences Flourish and Develop*, 2004, available online, <<http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2004/03/20/ccp-central-committee-opinion-concerning-further-letting-philosophy-and-social-sciences-flourish-and-develop/>>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, the *China Network Audiovisual Programme Service Self-Discipline Convention*, 2012, available online, <<http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2012/07/13/china-network-audiovisual-programme-service-self-discipline-convention/>>, China Internet Association, *Self-Discipline Convention for Blog Services*, 2007, available online, <<http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2007/08/21/self-discipline-convention-for-blog-services/>>, China Internet Association, *China Internet Sector Self-Discipline Convention*, 2002, available online, <<http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2002/04/24/china-internet-sector-self-discipline-convention/>>, and the *Self-Regulation Convention for the Chinese Newspaper Sector*, 1999, available online, <<http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/1999/12/08/self-regulation-convention-for-the-chinese-newspaper-sector/>>.

the company or professional association<sup>13</sup>. As a consequence, a regulatory violation cannot just be construed as breaking a rule imposed by the State, but also a self-made behavioural commitment.

The Party-State complex also controls the most important media enterprises. Although in recent years, a few provisions have been made for non-public and foreign capital to enter into the media sector<sup>14</sup>, there is a graduated hierarchy as to which activities can be subject to this investment, and what the concomitant level of control is. In short, private or foreign investment is encouraged in areas where certain technological or professional expertise is necessary, such as film and cartoon production, cinemas and printing enterprises. Conversely, the State maintains ownership and/or control in areas directly affecting distribution and mass media. For example, investment is essentially prohibited in radio and television stations at national, provincial and – in some cases – city levels; film distribution enterprises, infrastructure companies, newspaper and book publishers, distributors and shops, as well as other forms of cultural companies<sup>15</sup>. The one exception in this regard is the Internet, in which private enterprises reign. Nonetheless, their scope of action is strictly controlled, amongst others through the self-regulatory conventions outlined above, but also requirements that Internet enterprises have to provide technological access to State departments to block or delete content<sup>16</sup>. A number of high-profile websites, such as the Twitter-like Fanfou, have been shut down. Also, in a demonstration of its power, Sina and Tencent were obliged to shut down parts of their social media serviced in early 2012<sup>17</sup>. The power of governance is not just limited to State action: the major players in this field have by now all established Party committees.

### The force that binds: personnel

The Party's propaganda structure has tremendous power in the Chinese political structure, especially after the advent of the Internet. Hence, it is well understood that not too much leeway can be given to the person in charge of it. This became of special importance after 1989, as the relationship between Party and State was reconfigured to ensure that concurrent positions in both bureaucracies would be occupied by the same person. Hence, the officials in charge of propaganda have, since 1989, tended to be relatively conservative, subordinate but senior persons. Also, after 1989, the media administration was reorganized so as to not only provide institutional relationships between different bodies, but personal linkages between them as well. In turn, appointments are based on patronage chains, which extend far into the different institutions that make up the propaganda system. Officials often switch between different roles, strengthening the bonds between enterprises, Party and State institutions, rather than implementing strong, independent regulatory oversight, based on checks and balances.

In 2010, a leaked document posted on Chinese microblog platform *Sina Weibo* indicated that the IPG is chaired by Li Changchun, a Standing Committee member. Its vice-presidents are Liu Yunshan, head of the CPD, Liu Yandong, a State Councillor and vice-Chair of the Beijing Olympic Games Organizing

<sup>13</sup> See, amongst others, Tsui, Lokman, *The Panopticon as the Antithesis of a Space of Freedom: Control and Regulation of the Internet in China*, *China Information*, 2003, p. 71; and Weber, Ian and Lu Jia, *Internet and Self-Regulation in China: the Cultural Logic of Controlled Commodification*, *Media Culture Society*, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> This is referred to with the phrase “public ownership at the core, and jointly developing with many kinds of ownership” (公有制为主体、多种所有制共同发展 *gongyoushi wei zhuti, duozhong suoyouzhi gongtong fazhan*). The most important document in this regard is National Development and Reform Commission, *Some Decisions Concerning Non-Public Capital Entering the Cultural Industry*, 2005, available online, <<http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2005/04/15/some-decisions-concerning-non-public-capital-entering-the-cultural-industry/>>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> See Creemers, Rogier, *More Information about the Weibo Real-Name Registration System*, China Copyright and Media, 2012, <<http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2012/03/01/more-information-about-the-weibo-real-name-registration-system/>>. See also State Council, *Internet Information Service Management Rules (Opinion-Seeking Version of Revision Draft)*, 2012, available online, <<http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2012/06/07/internet-information-service-management-rules-opinion-seeking-version-of-revision-draft/>>.

<sup>17</sup> Chao, Loretta, *Sina, Tencent Shit Down Commenting on Microblogs*, Wall Street Journal, 31 March 2012, available online, <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303816504577314400064661814.html>>.

Committee and Chen Kuiyuan, chair of the CPPCC and director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Further members are Luo Shugang, who is a CPD vice-director, the director of the SCG office, CPD Party Secretary and Discipline Secretary and director of the National Propaganda Cadre Academy; Wang Taihua, CPD vice-director and director of SARFT; Wang Chen, an ex-People's Daily chief who is also a CPD vice-director, the director of the SCIO/FPD Office and the director of the SIIO; Cai Wu, an ex- SCIO/FPD chief who is now Minister of Culture, Leng Rong, an ex-CASS bureaucrat who now heads the Party Documentary Centre and the China Scientific Socialism Society, Zhang Yannong, the current People's Daily chief and president of the All-China Journalist Association; Wang Weiguang, ex-vice director of the Central Party School and vice-director of CASS; Bai Keming, the chair of the Commission for Education, Science, Culture and Hygiene in the National People's Congress; and Xu Guanhua, who performs the same function in the CPPCC.

A similar situation is present in the CPD. Its vice directors include Wang Taihua, Luo Shugang, Cai Wu and Wang Chen, who are also members of the IPG, and People's Daily editor-in-chief Cai Mingzhao. There is a full-time manager for the work of the Central Civilization Office, Wang Shiming, a secretary responsible for the work of the Learning Publishing House, the Party Building Journal and the Current Affairs Magazine, Guan Jinghui and a vice-secretary who is the vice-president of the Propaganda Cadre Academy. Until 2011, this position was filled by Li Wei, who is now vice-director of SARFT.

The overall picture is that there is a network of personal relationships and structures that supplements the formal hierarchy and supervision structures outlined earlier. Also, since every high-level cadre is a Party member, their career advancement prospects depend primarily on pleasing superiors within the Party, rather than pursuing the programmatic interests of their departments. In other words, the personnel exchange strengthens and concentrates Party power, rather than limiting it or providing for meaningful checks and balances.

**Dr. Rogier Creemers** is a post-doctoral research officer at the Programme for Comparative Media Law and Policy. On the basis of his background in Chinese Studies and International Relations, he wrote a Ph.D. thesis on the relationship between media piracy in China, intellectual property law and media regulation, and globalization. His main research interests include the nexus between media policy and political change in China, with a particular focus on the processes of cooptation and confrontation between the vested regime and potential challengers.



## Between the Nation and the Market: A Case Study on Network Construction and the Dilemma of China Central Television (CCTV)

Min Tang\*

China Central Television (CCTV) plays an important role in the Chinese propaganda system. When the ongoing process of media commercialization imposes on the state-owned media a market-oriented approach without compromising their absolute dominance over the domestic media network and public opinion, studying CCTV's strategy in the dual role of state propaganda machine and commercialized entity is crucial for us in understanding the socialist transformation and capital convergence.

The recent IPOs of Chinese state-owned media and the opening of overseas bureaus demonstrates China's avid desire to increase its soft power as an emerging economic and political power in the global capitalist system. In order to establish its communication power in the global society, the Chinese media has to achieve the ability to control not only the domestic network but also the connecting points between different networks (Castells, 2008) beyond national borders. CCTV's network construction thus needs to be understood within the context of China's participation in global capitalism.

In attempting to combine the forces of commercialization, globalization, digital capitalism and post-authoritarian regime, this paper aims to systematically study the establishment of China Central Television's domestic network power and to explore its global expansion strategy. Through analysis of documents, the paper examines the CCTV chiefs' speeches and minutes of meetings from 2001 to 2010, all of which are taken from "TV Research", a trade journal published by CCTV. While the triangular relations between the nation, market and the public have been profoundly transformed by political transformations, economic restructuring and digital battles, how the interaction of these affects the structure of CCTV as a national communication network and, conversely, the tensions and resistance, will determine the future of market reform and political reconstitution in China.

### Communication Power Backed by Ideological Legitimacy

The very name - China Central Television - signals its position as the legitimate national television station. To reinforce its position as the national television station and to ensure its absolute loyalty, the CCP accords it various forms of support, including administrative appointments, broadcasting permits and government subsidies.

CCTV is regulated by the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) propaganda department and the State Administration of Radio Film and Television (SARFT). While the Propaganda Department takes charge of media policy in every aspect, and the main broadcasting and television industry regulatory authority in China. As the SARFT is a ministerial-level unit, CCTV enjoys power as a deputy ministerial-level administration, a level above all other TV stations in China. The Chief and deputy Chiefs of CCTV are appointed by the Central Committee of the CCP and are either representatives of the National People's Congress or the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, thus entitling them to the privilege of taking part in media policy-making and political consultation. This dual role of TV station manager and government official demonstrates the complicated structure of the media in China.

The leaders' capacity to influence media policy means that exclusive broadcasting permits for major news-worthy events are often granted to CCTV. This ensures that the government's messages are disseminated to the public correctly and guarantees CCTV's ratings. In 1982, central government ruled that any important information concerning national politics would be announced first on "Xinwen Lianbo", a 30-minute daily news program on air at 19:00 on CCTV Channel One. Meanwhile, every provincial, municipal, and county level TV station is obliged to broadcast "Xinwen Lianbo". This policy not only consolidated CCTV's dominance in domestic communication, it also enhanced its advertising revenue as it is the most widely watched program in China.

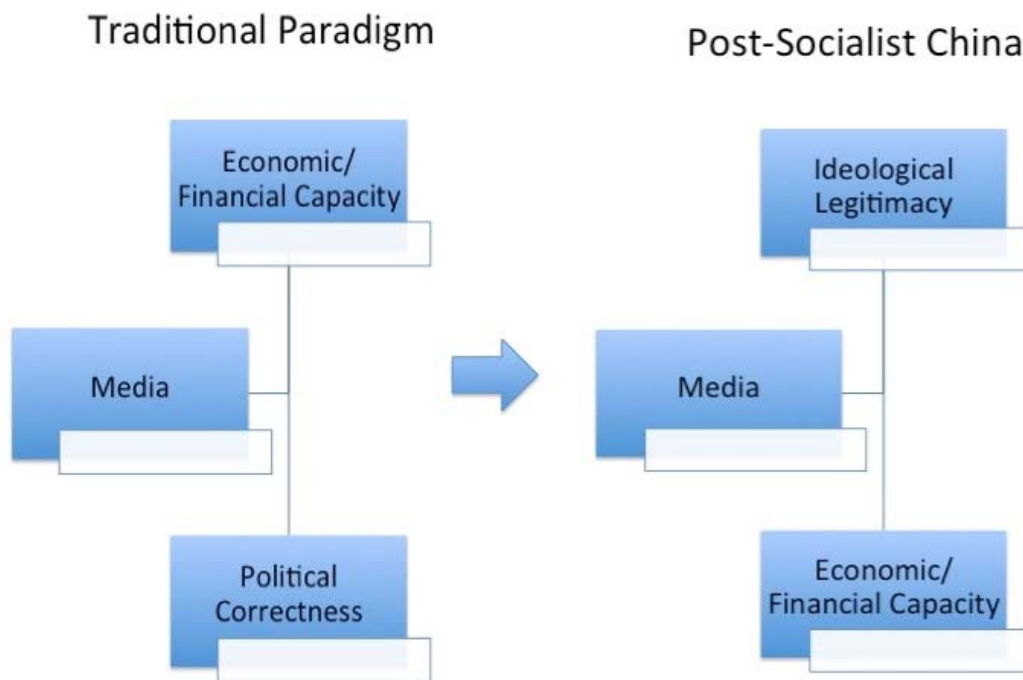
In the bid round for the 2010 CCTV prime time advertising slot in November 2009, twelve companies bought the 180 second slot between Xinwen Lianbo and Weather Broadcast<sup>18</sup>. Each of the twelve companies were assigned a 15 second slot at a price of 30 million RMB (approximately 5 million USD) while the 15 second "count down" slot before Xinwen Lianbo was bought by a liquor company for 60

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<sup>18</sup> The daily weather forecast on the air after the *Xinwen Lianbo*. The time between the two programs is called the golden advertising time slot.

million RMB (approximately 10 million USD). However, these bids and prices were not for a whole year: the slots were auctioned on a quarterly basis and the companies bought them for just two quarters of the year. This quarterly contract gives CCTV more flexibility in generating advertising income and, as a government entity, it is exempt from tax on this revenue (The Beijing News, 2005).

In the classical political economy paradigm of media, communication is a field controlled by the economic sector through advertising (Bourdieu, 2000). The economic entities that control advertising and thus the media could therefore influence the political sector through the media (see the graph below). However, in authoritarian China, the power flow is the opposite: it flows from the political sector to the economic, financial and social ones. Instead of economic power being the initial driver of the media and politics, in post-socialist China the power of ideological legitimacy and political correctness unifies the political, cultural and financial capital of CCTV and allows a privileged but limited space for CCTV to interact with the market (see the graph below).



**Figura 1 Centralized Autonomy and Decentralized Ownership**

Though empowered by political support, CCTV still has to manage the widening gap between the party agenda and the public agenda (Li, 2006) eventually with deepening and intensifying reform in China when the political logic of controlling the media conflicts with the capitalist logic of free information and engaging the audience. CCTV has endeavored to find a solution to this problem, transforming a government propaganda institution into a profitable media corporation (Miao, 2011).

Despite the growth of the culture industry in recent years, central government does not afford CCTV much autonomy to explore its own commercialized approach. CCTV has to obey the propaganda guidelines while generating revenue and being self-subsidized. CCTV has therefore set up commercial corporations using government funds and built a cross-industry chain. China Television Media Ltd (CTV) was founded in 1997. As the first company listed by CCTV, it owned two large studios and one film technology corporation. The main business of the company is filming, advertising and tourism. In 2001, China Media Group (CMG), a network that includes CCTV, China National Radio (CNR), China Radio International (CRI), China Film Group Corporation (CFGC) and China Broadcast Network (CBN), was

founded. Since September 2000 CCTV has created seven new channels: the English Channel, Education Channel, Opera Channel, Western Channel, Music Channel, Spanish Channel and French Channel.

However, although they are called “companies”, these so-called “media corporations” are still in fact state-owned entities and their economic and financial structure remains unclear. The companies were originally funded by the government, which denotes no clear ownership. One of the questions CCTV needs to address is the sustainability of national capitalism and internal resistance (Zhao and Schiller, 2001) to a fully capitalized media market in the future.

### **Dialectic Central - Local Dynamic**

While CCTV enjoys exclusive rights in publicizing and disseminating official propaganda, local TV stations are not entitled to these advantages. In order to compete against CCTV’s dominance in the domestic TV network, provincial and municipal stations have formed coalitions to call for bids for advertising space. In 2004, twenty-eight of the thirty-one provincial satellite television stations proposed an “integrated communication” strategy to sell certain prime time advertising slots to companies, offering discounts. This strategy means that companies sign contracts with twenty-eight provincial televisions at the same time, thus ensuring that their ads reach the audience in twenty-eight provinces simultaneously and guaranteeing those TV stations ad revenue.

Moreover, while local stations are not entitled to some privileges, the SARFT intentionally grants local television stations more freedom to explore commercial strategies. Some popular sitcoms and entertainment shows that are not suitable for broadcasting on CCTV increase the local stations’ audience. Local stations sometimes have to infringe the rules emanated by the SARFT. Nevertheless, a relatively loose policy does not mean complete freedom for commercial TV stations and programs. Whenever it finds local stations crossing the line of political or moral correctness, the SARFT steps in and educates the local stations. In those moments, CCTV is used as a model for checks and balances. In 2008, for example, CCTV proposed the concept of “Green audience rating” to “purify the media ecology” (Li, 2005) and to advocate the SARFT’s guidance in promoting an advanced spiritual culture in China. CCTV and local provincial stations are the opposite poles of the policy-market bargaining. The central-local dynamics are used by the SARFT to explore the parameters of the Chinese commercialization media reform.

CCTV also actively responds to the challenges posed by the local stations by collaborating with them. Whenever some important domestic news happens outside Beijing, such as the “3. 14” Tibet incident, the snowstorm in southern China and the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake, CCTV collaborates with local stations by using the visual and audio materials from local stations and giving them credits. In doing so, CCTV in turn secures its dominant position and has local stations compete against each other to gain recognition from CCTV.

The intertwined local-central dynamics suggests that the construction of a domestic media network is no longer a one-way top-down process. Media ecology has to consider the bottom-up forces from local television stations as both competition and an advantage. CCTV’s power in the domestic communication network signals a capacity to connect different local networks instead of merely dominating them.

### **The “China” Brand in Global Expansion**

When it comes to global communication, CCTV is far less competitive than Hong Kong based Phoenix Television or other multinational media giants. In recent years, the Chinese government has put greater effort into building and expanding its global communication infrastructure.

As early as 2000, through collaboration with Norway Telecom, CCTV-1 and CCTV-4 landed in Northern Europe. After that, CCTV aggressively broadcast international programs across the world. One of the projects undertaken was the construction of the “Great-Wall Platform” to achieve the aim of promoting Chinese TV and “serving global audiences” (Tian, 2007). Built first as a platform for CCTV’s programs in Asia and America, the Great-Wall project has now extended to Europe, Africa and Australia (Zhao, 2005). It has helped to localize CCTV programs in 79 countries by collaborating with 198 foreign TV stations (Li, 2007).

Yet, coverage does not necessarily mean active usage. Indeed, this emphasis on numbers reflects the inadequacy of the country's soft power resources and the aggressive yet not very successful efforts in projecting soft power abroad (Huang & Ding, 2008). The reason could be that, for a long period of time, international communication was framed as "international propaganda" and "foreign publicity" in China. Not until very recent years, with the many discussions on Beijing's ability to shape other people's world view and political agenda domestically and globally (Huang & Ding, 2008), did officials realize that the key to international communication was "differentiation"- differentiating it from domestic propaganda (Zhao, 2001).

## Discussion and Conclusion: Technology Capitalism?

CCTV's role in reshaping the market and reconfiguring the communication network is that of negotiator between nation-market, local-central and internal-external communication. It seems, however, that the transitions of media ownership, policy and practice are accomplished through information technology. In 1995, the Central Satellite Television Transmitting Center was established. In 1996, it was registered as a company with the State Administration for Industry and Commerce and now provides the signal for CCTV and the receiving and decoding equipment of provincial stations. In 1999 CCTV.com came into being. With the development of information technology in the last decade, the telecom, Internet and TV networks are actively merging into a single multi-media network in China.

It is obvious that building this information infrastructure requires a huge amount of money and no other media institution in China apart from CCTV has the capacity to obtain both financial and political support for this investment in technology. The capacity to create a technology network comes from its pre-existing status as national television station. This status, intentionally or not, helps facilitate the commercialization process in China's media reform and reinforces CCTV's dominant market position domestically through capital accumulation and policy advantages. Thus, media capitalization seems to be driven by technology. On the other hand, whereas some scholars called China's integration in the global digital capital a "dance with wolves" (Zhao & Schiller, 2001), whether and how technology will shake the regulatory bodies and lead the television industry, just like its predecessors - film and telecom industries - into not just digital capitalism but a completely commercialized arena is an interesting field of study.

In 1958, Chairman Mao coined the name Beijing TV, the predecessor of CCTV. In 1988, Deng Xiaoping wrote "CCTV in thirty years" to celebrate the national station's 30th anniversary. In 1993, Jiang Zemin instructed CCTV to "construct material and spiritual culture for the Chinese people", "be useful in the opening up and modernization", and "become an influential global media giant". In 2009, Hu Jintao asked CCTV to build a modern communication system and enhance international communication capacity" (Wang, 2009). Top Chinese leaders have changed over the years, but their expectations of CCTV have not as they all attach great importance to the national TV station. While media and communication will grow to become a pillar industry, what role will CCTV hold in sustaining domestic stability and integrating into the global network? With the intertwined discourse of commercialization and globalization, how will CCTV, a preeminent architect in China, find the way for the public service, commercial market and government censorship to work together? The ongoing transformation of the media in China is neither necessarily empowering nor exploitative. Yet the specifics and mechanisms beg further investigation.

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## Overview of the Newspaper Industry in China in 2011

The newspaper industry in China saw many changes in 2011 as it faced the challenge of the new media and the advertising/circulation market. For example, the newspaper industry set a record in 2011 with more than 1600 non-political newspapers transforming into market-oriented entities by the end of the year. Three newspaper groups were established in 2011: the China Press and Publishing Media Group (sponsored by the State Council), the Northern United Publishing and Media Group (the first Media Group specialized in evening and metropolitan newspapers), and the China Energy & Automotive Media Group (media group specialized in the industrial and economical sectors). The Zhejiang Daily Newspaper Group was listed on the stock market in September of 2011 and now ranks seventh among newspaper groups in China.

Circulation, especially that of popular dailies which now hold a 68.9% share of the entire market (64.7% in 2010), increased in 2011 compared to 2010. Metropolitan newspapers increased their circulation proportionately to the increase in the population of urban cities and the higher number of newsstands. In cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, popular newspapers now reach all the newsstands throughout the city, while competition among the various metropolitan newspapers is also fiercer in these cities. The circulation of financial newspapers, which sell mainly in the larger cities, dropped by 36.5% in 2011 compared to 2010.

The newspaper industry advertising market grew by 11.2%. The growth rate remained high between January and August (especially after March), but dropped sharply after September (from 24% to 8%). The biggest market is still the eastern region (Shanghai area). The real estate industry, retail business and automobile industry contributed 55% of the entire advertising market: the investment in advertising by the real estate industry rose by 23.6% and the retail business by 9.4% while that of the automobile industry dropped by 4.1%.

### Source:

#### **Bluebook on China's Media - Report on the Development of China's Media Industry (2012)**

Led by the Tsinghua University School of Journalism and Communication, and Center of Media Economy and Management Studies.

Chief Editor: Cui Baoguo

Publisher: Social Sciences Academic Press (China) April 2012

## Broadcasting

### The China Broadcast-Network company is approved for set up

The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) is set to launch a new government-financed broadband and cable TV service provider with the mission of breaking the monopoly of the country's three telecoms giants (China Mobile, China Unicom and China Telecom) and of becoming the 4th competitor in the market. The project is set to receive 4.5 billion yuan in start-up capital from the government and a special license from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, allowing the new company to operate via telecom, broadband and cable TV networks.

The move is the latest step towards the long-planned integration of media networks. The 2010 policy for media network integration calls for creating a nationwide, integrated network that provides customer access to high-speed Internet, TV and radio through any terminal, while combining data transfer, cable TV and telecom services. The State Council said restructuring should be completed in two stages. From 2010 to 2012, a trial program will be conducted to connect the broadcasting and telecoms networks while the basic architecture for the overall integration of the networks will be put in place between 2013 and 2015.

Source: The Economic Observer, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012 <http://www.eeo.com.cn/2012/1123/236452.shtml>  
 Caijing, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2012 <http://english.caixin.com/2012-08-06/100420145.html>

### China Adds 53 Million New DTV STB Users in 2012

At the end of October, the market of the newly introduced Digital TV (including cable TV, satellite TV, terrestrial, and IPTV) set-top boxes (STB) in China is expected to reach 53 mln units, up 11.1 million or a 26.5% increase compared to 41.9 million in 2011. The total market of Digital TV STBs would reach a total of 200 million units.

China had a total of 168.28 million DTV STBs at the end of 2011, up 33.2% compared to 2010, including 135.88 million cable DTV STBs, accounting for 80.6% of the market. IPTV STBs reached 14 million, up 8.3%, while the number of STBs distributed by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television's (SARFT) through its Cuncuntong(村村通) and Huhutong(户户通) distribution program to rural areas reached 14.5 million, up 8.6%, and the number of terrestrial DTV STBs was approximately 4.2 million, up 2.5%.

Sarft.net estimates that China's total shipments of HD DTV STBs between 2013-2016 will reach 91.6 million units, accounting for approximately 30% of total shipments, with HD DTV STB shipments in 2016 alone reaching 31.79 million, accounting for 40% of total DTV shipments that year. Total cable DTV HD STB shipments for the 2013-2016 period will reach 72.88 million, with 2016 shipments reaching 23.27 million units, accounting for more than half of total cable DTV STB shipments (standard and HD combined).

Source: Sarft net News, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012 <http://www.sarft.net/a/56563.aspx>

### SARFT Domestic Drama Distribution License Records – The Third Quarter 2012

SARFT released its Domestic Drama Distribution License Records for the third quarter, showing that a total of 134 titles with 4,858 episodes received distribution licenses in the third quarter of this year. Among those, 87 TV dramas (3,057 episodes) are "realistic themed" series and 52 TV dramas (1,943 episodes) are "historical themed".

Source: 21st November 2012 <http://www.sarft.gov.cn/articles/2012/11/14/20121114095126420112.html>

## Film industry

### China Is About To Become The Biggest Film Market In The World

China's film market – already the second largest in the world – will surpass that of the US by 2020, according to a new report by Ernst & Young released to coincide with the accounting firm's media and entertainment conference in Shanghai.

The report suggests that the media and entertainment industry in China is due to grow by 17% every year until 2015. China is also building 25,000 cinema screens over the next five years, to cope with demand from an increasingly wealthy population. Many will have the latest 4k digital technology. Growth will also be helped by the government's recent decision to increase the number of foreign movies allowed to screen each year from 20 to 34.

Sources: People.com, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2012 <http://ent.people.com.cn/n/2012/1202/c1012-19763322.html>

The Guardian, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012 <http://www.businessinsider.com/chinese-film-market-2012-11>

### Two Top Chinese state-owned film companies start the process to list on the stock exchange

Two of China's most influential state-owned film companies, China Film Group and Shanghai Film Group, have submitted their applications to list on the Shanghai stock exchange. The plan comes as Beijing encourages domestic media and film companies to list in order to better compete with new media companies and privately invested film companies like Huayi Brothers Media Corp and Bona Film Group, which have been successful on the stock market in recent years. The China Film Group Corporation is the largest movie producer and distributor in China and the sole importer of foreign movies while the Shanghai Film Group is a unit of the Shanghai Media and Entertainment Group, one of the largest and most authoritative media conglomerates in China. Both the two state-owned film companies have a very good reputation in the film sector in China and have both produced a large number of well-known and popular films. However, they are one step behind in the capital market compared to other new film companies which now pose a market challenge to state-owned film companies.

Source: China Stock Daily, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012 <http://company.cnstock.com/listed/rdqs/201211/2389177.htm>

### The Box Office Split System Adjusted in China

The 5 main film producers/distributors in China - the China Film Group, Huayi Brother Media Corp, Bona Film Group, Stella Mega Media Group and Enlight Media Group - sent a joint announcement to cinemas on November 13th saying that the Box Office split system should be changed with the 12 new year blockbusters in December such as *1942* and *The Last Supper* which are now in cinema. The Box Office split percentage should not drop below 45:55 (film distributor 45% vs. the cinema line 55%), 2% more than the current situation of 43:57.

The 5 film producers/distributors declared that increased production in recent years calls for a higher budget due to the use of new technology and the rising cost of labor. The aim of the announcement signed jointly by the 5 companies is to protect the creative production of Chinese films and to set a healthy marketing relationship between the producer, distributor and the film screener. The new system will benefit the film market as a whole with more high-quality film productions in the near future. At November 25th, 28 different cinema chains have confirmed that they will change the B.O. split from November 29th in line with this announcement without increasing the price of the ticket.

Source: China Youth Daily, 18<sup>th</sup> November [http://article.cyou.com/news/content/2012-11/18/content\\_7362947.htm](http://article.cyou.com/news/content/2012-11/18/content_7362947.htm)

Xinhua News, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2012 [http://news.xinhuanet.com/zgjx/2012-11/26/c\\_131998682.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/zgjx/2012-11/26/c_131998682.htm)



## Internet

### **Singles' Day promotions draw in shoppers**

At 12th December 2012, 14.1 billion yuan of transactions were made on Tmall and Taobao, Alibaba's two online shopping websites.

The research company comScore said US online retailers recorded \$1.25 billion of sales during last year's Cyber Monday, the day after Thanksgiving weekend and the busiest day for online retailers as US shoppers start to prepare for Christmas. One reason that could explain this record was the celebration of the Singles' Day.

"In the past, people only shopped online occasionally, but now, online shopping is a lifestyle embraced by many," said Zhang Yong, Tmall president.

"I don't know if we will lose money, but I don't think we will earn much on this day by selling goods at half price," said Hao Hongfeng, chairman of Beijing Jiuxian E-Commerce, a liquor retailer in Beijing who took part in the event.

Source: China Daily, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012 [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2012-11/12/content\\_15917506.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2012-11/12/content_15917506.htm)

### **40% of Chinese Netizens Interested in Items Shared by SNS Friends**

CNNIC reported that nearly 80% of Chinese netizens pay close attention to commercial information on social networking sites. In September, the average number of visits per user on a single day was 2.2, for a total of 11 minutes.

More than 40% of netizens are interested in items shared by their friends. Almost 40% of netizens will use friends' comments to help them with their own shopping decisions. In addition, 37.2% of netizens will share their favorite items, brands and stores on SNS. More than 25% of them would complain on SNS if they had a bad shopping experience.

Only 22.1% will not participate in any of the actions mentioned above, meaning that approximately 80% of them keep an eye on commercial activities or commodity information on SNS. This shows how SNS can influence online shopping.

Source: China Internet Watch and China Internet Information Center

## Mapping Media in China

Wanning Sun  
Jenny Chio

Peking University, China with Helen Hui  
Publisher: Routledge Contemporary China Series  
2012

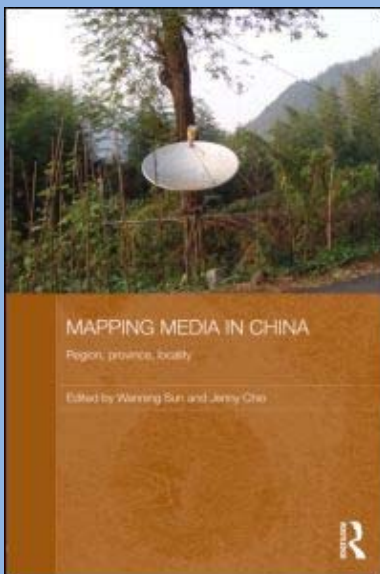
Mapping Media in China is the first book-length study that goes below the 'national' scale to focus on the rich diversity of media in China from local, provincial and regional perspectives. China's media has played a crucial role in shaping and directing the country's social and cultural changes, and whilst these shifts have often been discussed as a single and coherent phenomenon, this ignores the vast array of local and regional variations within the country's borders.

This book explores media as both a reflection of the diversity within China and as an active agent behind these growing differences. It examines the role of media in shaping regional, provincial and local identities through the prism of media economics and technology, media practices, audiences, as well as media discourses. The book covers a wide range of themes, including civil society, political resistance, state power and the production and consumption of place-specific memory and imagination.

With contributions from around the world, including original ethnographic material from scholars based in China, Mapping Media in China is an original book which spans a wide range of disciplines. It will be invaluable to both students and scholars of Chinese and Asian studies, media and communication studies, geography, anthropology and cultural studies.

**Wanning Sun** is Professor of Chinese Media and Cultural Studies at China Research Centre, UTS. Prior to her arrival at UTS, she was with the School of Media, Communication and Creative Arts (from 2000 to 2008) at Curtin University, Western Australia. Wanning was Visiting Professor at the Asian and Asian American Studies Program at the State University of New York from 2005 to 2006.

**Janny Chio** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Emory University (Atlanta, GA, USA). From 2009-2012, she was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the UTS China Research Centre, where she started a new project about amateur media production, ethnic identity, and social transformation in rural China.



## China and the New Internet World: The Eleventh Chinese Internet Research Conference (CIRC11)

Saturday 15 June 2013

Location: Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, 1 St Giles Oxford OX1 3JS

Registration: Please email your name and affiliation to [events@oii.ox.ac.uk](mailto:events@oii.ox.ac.uk) or telephone +44 (0)1865 287209

CIRC is an interdisciplinary conference that brings together scholars, analysts, industry leaders, journalists and legal practitioners from around the world to examine the impact of the Internet on Chinese society, including its social, cultural, political and economic aspects, as well as how China is changing the Internet. Founded in 2003, the eleventh meeting of the Chinese Internet Research Conference (CIRC) will be held in Oxford, hosted and co-organized by the Oxford Internet Institute, the Programme of Comparative Media Law and Policy, and the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford in collaboration with the Steering Committee of the CIRC, the Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism at USC, the Center for Global Communications Studies (CGCS) at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, the Global Communication Research Institute (GCRI) at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and Singapore Internet Research Centre at Nanyang Technological University.

CIRC11 will begin with a dinner at Balliol College on 14 June 2013, which follows the ICA Pre-Conference on 'China and the New Internet World'. This conference will be organized by the OII, PCMLP and RISJ, in collaboration with an organizing committee, which will include representatives of CIRC and our academic partners. CIRC11 will continue on Saturday, 15 June with academic panels and presentations from 9am to 5pm, followed by a closing session.

While individuals may register to attend CIRC11 whether or not they are able to attend the ICA Pre-Conference on the 14th (and vice versa), the conferences are designed to flow seamlessly together providing a broad range of current research on the Chinese Internet and drawing prominent researchers to these consecutive events.

### Registration

Those who wish to attend the ICA Pre-Conference should register through the ICA: <http://www.icahdq.org/conf/index.asp>. Those who wish to attend the CIRC11 Dinner on 14 June or CIRC11 on 15 June should register through: CIRC11 WEB SITE or send an email expressing interest to [events@oii.ox.ac.uk](mailto:events@oii.ox.ac.uk) with CIRC in the subject heading.

### Accepting Proposals and Abstracts

The CIRC11 Organizing Committee welcomes proposals for panels or abstracts of presentations for the 15 June conference. Any panel or presentation that promises to advance social research on the Internet and related media and communication technologies in China or within the broader Chinese user community is welcomed. Panel proposals should be written in English and should not exceed two pages or 1000 words, and abstracts not exceed one page or 500 words.

### Deadlines for Abstracts and Papers

We invite abstracts of proposed papers and panels by 15 December 2012. We will provide feedback on the abstract designed to shape the final paper or panel proposal, which should be submitted to the organizers by 1 April 2013. Please send any abstracts and full papers to events at [oii.ox.ac.uk](mailto:events@oii.ox.ac.uk) with CIRC in the subject heading. Full papers should be limited to a maximum of 8000 words, including the abstract and references. You may of course copy your submission to any of the members of the organizing committee.

## Graduate Student Paper Competition

Papers by graduate students are particularly welcomed. Graduate students who submit conference papers will be considered for CIRC's annual graduate student paper competition. Eligibility is limited to papers that do not include any faculty co-authors.

## Thematic Focus

CIRC examines trends and themes concerning the role of the Internet and related media and communication technologies in Chinese political, economic, cultural and social life. We welcome contributions from any disciplinary or interdisciplinary perspective that seek to address these themes. Forward looking and historical perspectives on the Internet in China and the Asian region are particularly welcome.

Potential topics include:

- presentations on the Internet and media industries, such as new companies and innovations in China;
- applications, ranging from gaming and social media to journalism, news and information; patterns of consuming Internet products and services, from online shopping to digital government;
- issues related to the creative industries and online popular culture;
- media and Internet governance in China and globally;
- social movements, such as grassroots activism and e-tactics, and digital divides in technology, skills, and access; and
- methodological perspectives and challenges in performing Internet research in China.

China Media Observatory is oriented to develop a strong academic network among Professors, researchers, PhD from Europe, China and other countries, who are focusing on China Media studies, with interdisciplinary approaches. Any academic contributions and suggestions from your side are always welcomed.

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