

**Symposium  
on  
Media and Internet Use During General Election 2015**

Wednesday, 27 January 2016  
Conference Room, Level 1, Oei Tiong Ham Building  
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy  
National University of Singapore (*Bukit Timah Campus*)

**PROGRAMME**

(As at 22 January 2016)

2.00 pm – 2.30 pm

**Registration**

2.30 pm – 2.45 pm

**Opening Remarks**

Mr Tan Tarn How  
Senior Research Fellow  
Institute of Policy Studies

2.45 pm – 4.00 pm

**Explicating Social Media Use: How Expressive,  
Informational and Relational Uses of Social Media  
Shape Participation**

Dr Natalie Pang  
Assistant Professor  
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and  
Information  
Nanyang Technological University

**Posted and Shared: Personalised Communication  
and Knowledge Gap in Singapore's General  
Election 2015**

Dr Debbie Goh  
Assistant Professor  
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and  
Information  
Nanyang Technological University

**Multiple Opinion Climate Indicators: Significance of  
Offline-Online Opinion Climate Perceptions on  
Engagement and Voting Behaviour**

Dr Elmie Nekmat  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Communications and New Media  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
National University of Singapore

**Swing Voters vs. Non-Swing Voters: Comparing Their Demographics, Political Attributes, and Media Usage Patterns**

Associate Professor Zhang Weiyu  
Department of Communications and New Media  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
National University of Singapore

**Using Text Analytics in Analysing GE2015 Online Content**

Professor Lim Ee-Peng  
Director  
Living Analytics Research Centre  
School of Information Systems  
Singapore Management University

4.00 pm – 4.15 pm

**Tea Break**

4.15 pm – 5.00 pm

**Discussion**

***Moderator***

Dr Carol Soon  
Senior Research Fellow  
Institute of Policy Studies

5.00 pm

**End of Discussion**



## **SYNOPSES**

### **Explicating Social Media Use: How Expressive, Informational and Relational Uses of Social Media Shape Participation**

Dr Natalie Pang

The presentation explains how social media was used during the General Election in three ways — expressive, informational, and relational. These different uses are examined for their impact on political participation and perceptions.

### **Posted and Shared: Personalised Communication and Knowledge Gap in Singapore's General Election 2015**

Dr Debbie Goh

While alternative media sites facilitated greater political knowledge gain among voters in the 2011 General Election, their influence remained limited by a dominant mainstream media. GE 2015 saw intensified election coverage across digital platforms, with established alternative news sites and a slew of news start-ups competing against legacy media to provide “on-demand” election information that digitally empowered Singaporeans could repurpose and share on social media. This presentation discusses how Singaporeans' personal values influenced their production and sharing of election information on social media. It also examines whether personalised communication made election information more relevant to voters and reduced the knowledge gap.

### **Multiple Opinion Climate Indicators: Significance of Offline-Online Opinion Climate Perceptions on Engagement and Voting Behaviour**

Dr Elmie Nekmat

Voters in Singapore's digitally networked society face an increasingly non-monolithic and multi-layered nature of public opinion when deliberating on issue positions and making voting decisions. This largely perceptual process is done by comparing their personal opinions with those perceived from majority others in society as well as those produced by aggregated “others” on different social networking platforms. This talk disentangles individual opinion on three separate issues pertaining to population, transportation, and housing, from the perceived opinion of others: (i) in society; (ii) on open-group social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter); and (iii) on closed-group social media platforms (e.g., Whatsapp, Facebook messenger), and relate them to actual voting decisions controlled for demographic variables (age, gender, education level) and political predispositions (interest, perceived knowledge, partisanship).

## **Swing Voters vs. Non-Swing Voters: Comparing Their Demographics, Political Attributes, and Media Usage Patterns**

Associate Professor Zhang Weiyu

The presentation identifies self-reported swing voters, including those who voted for one party in 2011 and another party in 2015. To be specific, swing voters are those who swing from supporting the ruling party to the opposition, and vice versa. This presentation compares the demographics, political attributes and media usage patterns of three groups of voters: Voters who swung from the PAP to the opposition, voters who swung from the opposition to the PAP, and voters who did not swing.

## **Using Text Analytics in Analysing GE2015 Online Content**

Professor Lim Ee-Peng

This talk describes an ongoing project to develop text analytics technology to collect all online content relevant to General Election 2015 and to classify them for supporting socio-political studies. Using small-amount human-coded content, we demonstrate that classifiers can be used to categorise large number content posts generated during GE2015. The labels assigned to these posts also lead to interesting insights about the election campaign. This work is a collaboration between the Living Analytics Research Centre and IPS.

## CURRICULA VITAE

**ELMIE Nekmat** is currently Assistant Professor in Communications and New Media, National University of Singapore, joining the faculty from a one-year postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 2014. He obtained his Ph.D. in communication and information sciences with an interdisciplinary minor in educational and social psychology from the University of Alabama, where he received the 2013 Knox Hagood Doctoral Student Award. Elmie studies media effects and the social-psychological processes and effects of online communication on public opinion, collective action and strategic communication. He also researches media literacy, with emphases on parental mediation and literacies pertaining to new media technologies. His research has been published in major communication journals that include *Communication Research*, *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Information, Communication and Society*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, and *International Journal of Strategic Communication*.

**Debbie GOH** is Assistant Professor at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University. She received her Ph.D. in mass communication from Indiana University Bloomington. Her research focuses on digital inequalities, media framing, and the processes that influence how marginalised communities engage with new media technologies.

**LIM Ee-Peng** is Professor at the School of Information Systems of Singapore Management University (SMU). He is also the Co-Director of the Living Analytics Research Center (LARC) which is funded by the National Research Foundation. His research interests include social media mining, urban informatics, and information integration. He is currently the Associate Editor of the ACM Transactions on Information Systems (TOIS), ACM Transactions on the Web (TWeb), IEEE Transactions on Knowledge and Data Engineering (TKDE), Information Processing and Management (IPM), and Social Network Analysis and Mining.

**Natalie PANG** is Assistant Professor at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, and Principal Investigator at the Centre of Social Media Innovations for Communities (COSMIC) at Nanyang Technological University (NTU). Prior to joining NTU, she has worked on public opinion research projects in The Gallup Organization, and citizen science and participatory methods in Monash University and Museum Victoria. Her teaching and research interest is in the area of social informatics, focusing on basic and applied research of social media, information behaviour in contexts of uncertainty and crises, and structural models of technology in marginalised communities. She teaches courses in social informatics, information management, qualitative research methods, fieldwork and documentation, information behaviour and records management.

**Carol SOON** is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies. Her research interests include social media and politics, digital engagement, how individuals and organisations use digital technologies to engender change, and online communities. Her work has been published in several peer-reviewed journals, including the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *Information, Communication and Society*, *Asian Journal of Communication*, and *Social Science Computer Review*. She recently led the project on the study of media and Internet use during General Election 2015. Dr Soon has won several teaching awards and is currently teaching a module on new media and politics at the University Scholars Programme in National University of Singapore (NUS). She received the Research Excellence Award (2015) awarded by the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, and her paper on political bloggers in Singapore won the Top Peer-Reviewed Paper at the Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government in 2013. In 2012, Dr Soon was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University, with support from the Australian Endeavour Award.

**TAN Tarn How** is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies. His research areas are in arts and cultural policy and media and Internet policy. He has written on the development of the arts in Singapore, in particular, fostering partnerships between the people, private and public sectors, on the creative industries in Singapore, China and Korea, on cultural policy in Singapore, and on arts censorship. He has also carried out research on the management and regulation of media in Singapore, the impact of the Internet and social media on society, the role of new and old media in the 2008 Malaysian election and the 2006 and 2011 Singapore elections, and the way in which the Internet and social media has influenced the development of civil society and democratic development. He is working on a book on Flourishing Life, which examines issues arising from instrumental economics-oriented thinking in politics, society and education.

**ZHANG Weiyu** is Associate Professor at the Department of Communication and New Media, National University of Singapore. She holds a Ph.D. in Communication from Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on civic engagement and ICTs, with an emphasis on Asia. Her published works have appeared in *Journal of Communication*, *Communication Theory*, *Communication Research*, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *Information, Communication, & Society*, *International Communication Gazette*, *Computers & Education*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, and many others. Her recent project is to develop and examine an online platform for citizen deliberation.