

PENN STATE INSTITUTE FOR KOREAN STUDIES TALK SERIES



Technology as Culture: The Rise of South Korea as a Digital Nation

March 31, 4:30pm

Talk Description:

In the 2000s, South Korea was predicted to serve as the world's best laboratory for getting a glimpse of how broadband services might evolve in the future. Such expectations seem to have been fulfilled with the emergence of new businesses and cultural phenomena in the country, such as eSports, web dramas, webtoons, and mukbang. Oddly enough, however, the internet was not adopted by the nation on a mass scale until 1998, when the nation was undergoing a deepening economic crisis. In just half a decade, South Korea became the most wired nation. What caused such a drastic change? The speaker explores the historical and symbolic aspects of digital technology in order to answer this question. With a focus on the sociocultural implications of computers in the 1980s and 1990s, this talk examines the relationship between technology and the discourses of "modernity," "progress," and "national identity" in South Korea.



About Dr. Inkyu Kang:

Inkyu Kang is an Associate Professor of Journalism at Penn State University, The Behrend College. Prior to joining Penn State, he taught North-South Korea relations and Korean culture and civilization at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he earned a Ph.D. in Communication Arts. His major research interests are global media, the sociology of technology, and cultural studies. Kang has published in a number of academic journals, coauthoring or coediting anthologies, including *Future Yet to Come: Sociotechnical Imaginaries in Modern Korea* (2021), *Sport in Korea: History, Development, Management* (2018), *K-Pop: The International Rise of the Korean Music Industry* (2015), and *Korean Popular Culture Reader* (2014). He is also an award-winning journalist who has written extensively on social and technological issues.

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Moderator: Dr. Jooyeon Rhee

Zoom link for registration:

<https://psu.zoom.us/j/9876543210>