Confucius Institute of Rutgers University (CIRU)
Distinguished Lecture Series Spring 2017

"The New Chinese Exclusion: Chinese Computing in the Age of Alphanumeric Hegemony"

Thomas S. Mullaney
Stanford University
Thursday, March 30, 4:30 p.m.
Brower Commons A (2nd Floor)
145 College Ave, New Brunswick, NJ

Thomas S. Mullaney (PhD, Columbia University) is Associate Professor of Chinese History at Stanford University. He is the author of *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (UC Press, 2011) and *The Chinese Typewriter: A Global History of the Information Age* (MIT Press 2017); and he is principal editor of *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation and Identity of China's Majority* (UC Press, 2012). He is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Dissertation Reviews*, which publishes more than 500 reviews annually of recently defended dissertations in nearly 30 different fields in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and also directs DHAsia, a new Digital Humanities initiative at Stanford University focused on East, South, Southeast, and Inner/Central Asia.

Abstract: Early in the history of computing, Western engineers determined that a 5x7 dot matrix grid offered sufficient resolution to print legible Latin alphabetic letters. To do the same for Chinese would have required no less than 18x22. In the 1960s, the development team behind the ASCII code determined that a 7-bit coding scheme and its 128 addresses offered sufficient space for all of the letters of the Latin alphabet, along with numerals and other symbols and functions. Chinese characters, by comparison, would have demanded no less than 16-bit architecture to handle its more than 70,000 characters. Whether in terms of screens, character encoding schemes, optical character recognition algorithms, or otherwise, Chinese has faced repeated acts of exclusion, and at the same time has consistently pushed the world of computing far beyond its familiar alphabetic ecologies. In this talk, Professor Mullaney charts out the ecologies of Chinese computing, an unfamiliar terrain that remains unmapped despite China's present-day status as a global I.T. powerhouse.

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