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Digital China: From bits to bots

Walk down a street in any Chinese city, and you will encounter countless layers of digital mediation: wi-fi and 5G networks, QR codes and mini-programs, app promotions and social media engagement, augmented reality advertisement and automated delivery vehicles. Open up any digital device you own, and it is very likely that a large part of it is manufactured, assembled or designed in China. In short, the digital is everywhere in China, and China is everywhere in the digital. How did this come to be? Is there a 'Chinese internet', and how has it changed in the three decades after the first e-mail sent from Beijing? Why has China become key global player in artificial intelligence, and how is this shaping the country's technological development? Is China the future, or is the future Chinese - and do these questions even make sense? This lecture program will offer an interdisciplinary overview of China and the digital throughout the first quarter of the 21st century, asking participants to join in three critical discussions structured around the following sociotechnical approaches:

- From infrastructure to platforms: Three decades of Chinese internet
- Wisdom + ability: Artificial intelligence with Chinese characteristics
- Technics out of time: On Chinese technological pasts & futures