

# Conference Participants About Us

## Conference Participants

**Armin Medosch** is a London-based writer, artist and curator, and senior associate lecturer in interactive digital media at Ravensbourne College, UK. He is a member of the University of Openness, an institution for self-learning. He has published extensively in books, catalogues, magazines and Internet platforms.

**Avinash Kumar** has done his doctoral research from the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, on "Making of the Hindi Literary Field: Journals, Institutions, Personalities (1900-1940)". He has written extensively on popular publishing in Hindi during the colonial period.

**Awadhendra Sharan** is a historian and visiting fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. He is currently working on a research project that connects environment and urban space, with reference to the city of Delhi.

**Bjorn Wijers** is with the Waag Society, Amsterdam. His interests are in multimedia art and design, with a specific focus on the technical and conceptual areas of new media. He describes himself as a "complete information and music junkie".

**Brian Larkin** is assistant professor of anthropology at Barnard College, Columbia University. He has published widely on the materiality of media technologies and the relationship between media, urbanisation and globalisation.

**Cori Hayden** is assistant professor of anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. She has worked extensively in the areas of the anthropology of science and intellectual property, benefit-sharing, and the politics and practice of bio-prospecting in Latin America, particularly in Mexico.

**Danny Butt** is an independent consultant. He is a facilitator for Fibreculture, Australasia's peak network for Internet research and theory.

**Daya Shankar** teaches at the Bowater School of Management and Marketing, Deakin University, Melbourne. He has been working with the Indian government and various non-governmental organisations in India and abroad, in different managerial, management and academic positions.

**Doron Ben-Atar** is professor of history at Fordham University, New York, and co-director of "Crossroads of Revolution to Cradle of Reform: Litchfield, Connecticut, 1751-1833". He has published widely and is a frequent guest speaker on radio and television stations in the New York area.

**Dorothy Kidd** is associate professor of media studies at the University of San Francisco. A long-time community radio and video producer, she researches the history of autonomous media, particularly the tensions between the communications commons and the state, and the corporate enclosure of information.

**Hou Hanru** is a Paris-based independent art critic and curator. He is widely published in journals on contemporary art, and has curated exhibitions all over the world. His work addresses questions of globalisation and identity, and understanding contemporary art practice as it exists beyond geographical and regional boundaries.

**Jane Anderson** is a research fellow in Intellectual Property at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, an Indigenous organisation with a long history in research and advocacy for Indigenous rights in Australia.

**Jane Gaines** is professor of literature and English at Duke University, where she founded the programme in film/video/digital media studies. She has published widely on documentary film theory, and is the author of two award-winning books: *Contested Culture: The Image, the Voice and the Law* (1991), and *Fire and Desire: Mixed-Race Movies in the Silent Era* (2002).

**Jaromil** is the author of free/open source software distributed under the terms of the GNU/GPL General Public Licence. He describes himself as a “UNIX programmer and rastaman mediterranean gypsy of relevant geekness”.

**Jeebesh Bagchi** is a media practitioner, researcher, artist and filmmaker with Raqs Media Collective, and one of the initiators of Sarai. He coordinates Sarai’s Cybermohalla project with Ankur, Delhi, and the Knowledge/Culture Commons project with Alternative Law Forum, Bangalore. He is currently working on a series of inter-media and digital projects at the Sarai Media Lab.

**John Frow** is professor of English language and literature at the University of Melbourne. He has taught at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Queensland, and has published widely in the areas of cultural studies and literary history.

**K.M. Gopakumar** is currently working as an Advocacy Officer with the Affordable Medicine and Treatment Campaign. He has worked for the National Innovation Foundation, Ahmedabad, and the Institute of Intellectual Property Development, New Delhi.

**Laikwan Pang** is assistant professor of cultural studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She has published widely in international journals on popular culture, literary theory, gender, media and sociology.

**Lawrence Liang** is a legal researcher with Alternative Law Forum, Bangalore. He is currently working in collaboration with Sarai on a project that seeks to interrogate the politics of media and intellectual property laws.

**Lenita Cunha e Silva** studies history at the University of Sao Paulo. Her areas of interest are sociology, economics, Indian history and the social history of medicine.

**McKenzie Wark** teaches media studies at the New School University in New York. He has published widely, online and in print, on the subjects of cyber culture, Internet theory and research and digital technologies.

**Moinak Biswas** heads the department of film studies at Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He has researched and published extensively on the subjects of Indian film and culture.

**Monica Narula** is a media practitioner, artist, filmmaker and photographer with Raqs Media Collective, and one of the initiators of Sarai. She is the coordinator of the Sarai Media Lab. She is currently working on a series of inter-media and digital culture projects at the Sarai Media Lab.

**Narendra Pachkhede** is an Ottawa-based independent artist, ethnographer and theorist.

**Naveeda Khan** is a post-doctoral fellow in the department of anthropology at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. She is currently engaged in turning her dissertation, which studies religious identity, sectarian violence and political affect in Pakistan, into a book.

**Nick Dyer-Witford** is associate professor in the faculty of information and media studies at the University of Western Ontario. He has published widely on Marxist theory and culture, and on the politics of digital technology.

**Nitin Govil** is professor of media studies at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. He is completing a co-authored study of the contemporary Indian film industry, and is researching the intersections between cultural flows, audiovisual piracy and global media policy.

**Peter Jaszi** teaches at the Washington College of Law of American University in Washington, DC, where he also directs the Glushko-Samuelson Intellectual Property Law Clinic. He has published widely on copyright history and theory, and is an experienced copyright litigator and specialist in domestic and international copyright law.

**Peter Linebaugh** is professor of history at the University of Toledo in Ohio. He is the author of *The London Hanged*, co-author of *The Many-Headed Hydra*, and editor of *Albion's Fatal Tree*, among other publications.

**Philippe Cullet** teaches in the law department of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. He specialises in international and comparative environmental law and intellectual property, and has published widely in these areas.

**Ravi Sundaram** is a fellow of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, and one of the initiators of Sarai. He coordinates the Publics and Practices in the History of the Present project at Sarai.

**Rosemary Coombe** teaches at York University, Toronto. Her research focuses on the intersection of anthropology, law, and cultural studies on issues relating to cultural rights and the politics of globalising intellectual property. She has published widely in these areas.

**Sanjay Sharma** is a historian teaching at Delhi University and Zakir Husain College, New Delhi. He has worked as a freelance journalist and a broadcaster for the BBC, and is an editorial collaborator in Sarai's Hindi publications.

**Sharon Daniel** is associate professor of film and digital media at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research involves collaborations with local and online communities, using information and communication technologies as new sites for public art in the interest of social justice.

**Shuddhabrata Sengupta** is a media practitioner, artist, filmmaker and writer with Raqs Media Collective, and one of the initiators of Sarai. He coordinates the distributed research network project at Sarai. He is currently working on a series of inter-media and digital culture projects at the Sarai Media Lab.

**Shujen Wang** is associate professor in the department of visual and media arts at Emerson College. She has published widely in international journals of anthropology, popular culture, film and media, and authored studies on piracy. She is currently working on a book project examining global copyright governance and film and music industries in post-WTO China and Taiwan.

**Sibaji Bandyopadhyay** is a literary critic and creative writer, and senior fellow at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata. He has authored a number of volumes of critical essays in Bengali and English.

**Silvan Zurbruegg** is a Zurich-based software programmer. He recently worked on the development of code for the cultural file-sharing application Apnaopus (<http://apnaopus.var.cc>), which emerged from a digital collaboration with Raqs Media Collective, Delhi.

**Siva Vaidhyanathan** is assistant professor of culture and communication at New York University. Earlier a professional journalist and now a cultural historian and media scholar, he has published widely on the subject of intellectual property.

**Solomon Benjamin** is an independent researcher who has collaborated with Sarai on various projects in the area of urban studies. He has recently initiated the Collaborative for the Advancement of Studies in Urbanism through Mixed Media in Bangalore. His work focuses on urban governance/planning and local economic development.

**Sophea Lerner** is a radiomaker, sound engineer and new media artist teaching sonic arts and media at the Centre for Music & Technology in Helsinki. Her work focuses on collaborative practice, physical performance, experimental radio and new media art.

**Sudhir Krishnaswamy** teaches law at Pembroke College, Oxford. He pursues his interests in intellectual property law as an independent research fellow in collaboration with Sarai's Knowledge/Culture Commons project.

**Swapan Chakravorty** teaches at the department of English, Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He writes on contemporary literature and print cultures. He has published widely in English and Bengali, on the subject of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century cultural studies, as well as the Renaissance.

**Tahir Amin** is a lawyer currently working with Alternative Law Forum, Bangalore, on intellectual property issues and the public domain. He also works on legal issues for the Affordable Medicine and Treatment Campaign in India.

**Victoria Donkersloot** is a Rotterdam-based graphic designer. She recently worked as the interface designer for the cultural file-sharing application Apnaopus (<http://apnaopus.var.cc>), which emerged from a digital collaboration between Silvan Zurbruegg, a Zurich-based software programmer, and Raqs Media Collective, Delhi.

Ideas from the presentations of Armin Medosch, Lawrence Liang, Naveeda Khan, Sharon Daniel, Shujen Wang, Solomon Benjamin and Sophea Lerner appear in their contributions to *Sarai Reader 05: Bare Acts* (Delhi, March 2005). A pdf file of this publication is accessible for free online browsing and download at [http://www.sarai.net/reader/reader\\_05.html](http://www.sarai.net/reader/reader_05.html)

## About Us

ALF and Sarai-CSDS came together on the cross-disciplinary collaborative research project 'Intellectual property and the Knowledge/Culture Commons' in March 2002. Despite our diverse backgrounds, we recognise the central role that intellectual property law (IPL) plays in the globalised 'knowledge economy', and acknowledge that in the near future, intellectual property will be one of the most significant sites of conflict over the production and control of knowledge and culture.

The emergence of new digital environments and low-cost methods of replication and proliferation has transformed contemporary media experiences. Millions of people now have access to some form of communication technology, resulting in serious social conflicts around property rights over films and music in digital formats. Further, the emerging interface between communications technology and software is being registered at the ground level more than ever before: the entire VCD and MP3 copy industry is software driven. On the one hand, if cheap copy culture has broadened people's access to communication and media forms, the new TRIPS-based international legal regime seeks to restrict and regulate access through stronger laws and increased enforcement.

In this fast-changing scenario, there is not a single social science study on the impact of intellectual property law on the expansion of media access or how this has transformed daily life in India. The discourse on intellectual property law is dominated by consultancy firm reports on piracy, the rhetoric of legal firms committed to an increasingly unsuccessful enforcement regime, and dramatic journalism documenting intellectual property violations. As a result, the entire debate on intellectual property (policy, legislation and newspaper reports) rests on an extremely thin research base. Not surprisingly, this discourse is silent with regard to the complex and unequal social arrangements that shape media and computer cultures and meanings in the localities and streets of urban India, where so much of media is consumed and distributed.

### **The ALF-Sarai project explores the following areas:**

>The modes whereby intellectual property issues have been shaped by social and cultural practices around communications technologies in contemporary India. These include the new urban networks and markets that allow easy distribution and exhibition of a new constellation of media products: video CDs and DVDs, audiotapes and CDs, media software and cable television.

>The nature of the legal regimes emerging around IPL: policy change, law enforcement and piracy debates, dramatic enforcement efforts, emerging jurisprudence in the lower courts, and the lobbying by law firms around IPL.

>Legal innovations to overcome the limits of US-style enforcement, and to creatively address the large informal networks of media distribution in India. These include public domain architectures, open licences and registries, and a dialogue with open source practices. We seek to read licences, not merely as legal documents but also as cultural texts. We will attempt to survey the various innovative licensing mechanisms that have arisen after the GNU/GPL.

## Pedagogical Initiatives

The first serious challenge to redefine the idea of a collaborative community came in the form of the free software and open source movements, which saw the development of the operating system GNU/Linux through contributions by thousands of programmers across the world. Taking our inspiration from the open source movement, we examine the following questions:

>How can we attempt to replicate the open source model in the social sciences and in legal scholarship?

>What does it mean to create a community of researchers in significant contemporary legal areas?

>How do we sustain such a community?

## Critical Public Legal Resources (CPLR)

We seek to create a body of critical resources for the legal research community, through the compilation of cases and other readings collated collaboratively. The idea is similar to the way in which the source code for GNU/Linux grew, namely, contributions by academics, students and other users from different disciplines. These materials will be available as traditional resource books as well as online. The first set of these public resources will be on the three core areas of intellectual property: Copyright, Trademarks and Patents. These resources will also include specialised areas for which individuals can take editorial responsibility.

## Media Archive

This will host a large body of ethnographic and other materials from fieldwork relating to film, cable TV, music and software networks. It will include interviews, media materials, court documents and affidavits, background materials for critical cases on IP, and documentation of advocacy groups working in the field of intellectual property.

## Engaging the Public

It is critical for ALF and Sarai that we build a strong community that contributes to the debate on intellectual property and contemporary practices. We maintain an email discussion list (commons-law@sarai.net), that over several months has seen an active community developing around the issues of intellectual property and the public domain. The list archive contains interesting debates on culture and IP in India and the world, and is available at <http://mail.sarai.net/mailman/listinfo/commons-law>

## Previous ALF-Sarai Events

**'The Daily life of Intellectual Property Law'**, December 2002 Workshop, Delhi  
<http://www.sarai.net/events/ipl/ipl.htm>

**'New Technologies, Social Knowledge and Intellectual Property Law'**,  
November 2003 Workshop, Delhi (in collaboration with Hivos, Bangalore)  
[http://www.sarai.net/events/sk\\_ip/sk\\_ip.htm](http://www.sarai.net/events/sk_ip/sk_ip.htm)

**'Social Practices and Intellectual Property Law'**, July 2004 Workshop, Bangalore

**'Contested Commons/Trespassing Publics'**, January 2005 Conference, Delhi  
[http://www.sarai.net/events/ip\\_conf.htm](http://www.sarai.net/events/ip_conf.htm)

**Sarai-CSDS** is South Asia's first public initiative on urban culture, media and daily life. Established in 2000, Sarai includes both scholars and practitioners who collaborate with the wider community in generating critical research insight and knowledge in the public domain. The past few years have witnessed the explosive growth of a new urban media culture in India, transforming the terms of popular culture as it is lived at the level of daily life. Sarai is an effort to understand and creatively intervene in this new media space. Sarai is a programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in Delhi, one of India's best-known research centres, with traditions of dissent and a commitment to public intellectual discourse.

[www.sarai.net](http://www.sarai.net)

**Alternative Law Forum (ALF)** is an important reference point for critical legal practice in India. Its activities include *pro bono* litigation, alternative dispute resolution and research. In 2001, ALF organised India's first Alternative Lawyering Conference in Bangalore, which witnessed presentations by leading civil liberties, *adivasi* rights, and feminist lawyers among others. ALF is made up of a team of young practitioners, academics and researchers whose greatest challenge is to experiment with various creative forms of engaging the law, both within its own terms as well as interrogating it from an interdisciplinary perspective. The IPL project is one of ALF's most significant research initiatives. [www.altlawforum.org](http://www.altlawforum.org)

**The Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT)** represents the confluence of energies to shape the contours of public broadcasting in India in a manner that validates the public nature of the media in our society. It is an attempt to foster a shared public culture of broadcasting that is as exciting and cutting edge, as it is socially responsive and representative of democratic values. In seeking to do this, PSBT attempts to situate a new vocabulary and activism at the very heart of broadcasting in India.

[www.psb.org](http://www.psb.org)

**The Sarai Reader Series** is a cutting-edge collection of original writing and images by theorists, critics, philosophers, activists, artists, designers, media practitioners, programmers and photographers from around the world. The books bring to the fore a series of questions, reflections and experiences that mark the encounter between knowledge and power, crises and media, technology and culture, people and machines, and cities and citizens.

The Sarai Readers that are published annually, focusing each time on a new and different theme, have become important aids for those who wish to explore the frontiers of the world of ideas and deal with the range of new issues that confront us today. The Reader is a unique product, even in terms of form: neither book nor journal, it is a purely experimental enterprise that combines contributions that range from the academic to the literary, from the purely textual to the visual, from detailed ethnographic reports to fairly dense theoretical writings. In fact, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the Sarai Reader embodies, in every sense, the collapse of all boundaries of form, style and genre.

– *Seminar*, September 2005

**Sarai Reader 01: The Public Domain**  
Paperback; 248 pages, Rs 250

**Sarai Reader 02: The Cities of Everyday Life**  
Paperback/Hardback; 364 pages, Rs 250

**Sarai Reader 03: Shaping Technologies**  
Paperback; 379 pages, Rs 295

**Sarai Reader 04: Crisis/Media**  
Paperback; 484 pages, Rs 295

**Sarai Reader 05: Bare Acts**  
Paperback; 584 pages, Rs 350

Books are also available for free download in pdf format on the web at:  
<http://www.sarai.net/journal/journal.htm>

The Sarai Reader Series is published by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi.