



Watching It Unfold: Emerging Live Digital Landscapes of Disaster

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Chair: **Assoc Professor Lin Weiqiang**
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ABSTRACT

The growth of live-streaming platforms (including YouTube, Discord and Twitch) and cultures has generated new ways to engage with unfolding hazard events. During events – including cyclones, wildfires and floods – platforms host thousands of streams that advertise ‘live’ and ‘unfiltered’ content from both traditional news media and social media ‘personalities’. Already, streams have contributed to both fatalities (of streamers) and lives saved (watchers directing emergency services). Recognising their increasing role in the experience and management of events, this paper examines the design, function and affective geographies of hazard live-streams. It positions streams within digital cultural economies that seek to keep watchers ‘in’ the unfolding (potential) disaster. Drawing on participation observation and interview data, the paper discusses how channels utilise platform functions and event-specific discourse to drive both increased and continuous engagement. It concludes by reflecting on the implications of emerging streaming cultures for hazard communication, sense-making and governance.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Simon is a Lecturer in Geography at the University of Plymouth (UK), where he leads the Geography and Geology programmes. His research examines how people contextualise and familiarise themselves with catastrophic events (notably, natural hazards), and how they place these events in ongoing narratives of person and place. He is currently PI of a ESRC-funded (UK) project on emerging digital forms of hazard governance, is an editor on the forthcoming book *Critical Geographies of Disaster*, and has regularly contributed to media coverage (including The Guardian and New York Times) of natural hazard events.

Convenors

Professor Brenda Yeoh | Professor Dariusz Wojcik | Assoc Prof Lin Weiqiang | Dr Remi Luo