present an interdisciplinary conference

Human and Digital Mutualism

Code, Culture and Communication

21–22 Nov 2025 | Mahindra University, Hyderabad

Overview

Around the world, technologies driven by AI, machine learning, and datafication are redefining what it means to be human. They shape how we interact, create, govern, work, learn, and even empathize. However, as Herbert Simon (1971) observed, "a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention," and the rapid evolution of digital systems often outpaces critical understanding, ethical foresight, and inclusive participation (Williams, 2018). This scenario calls out for a need of a global dialogue that brings technologists, media scholars, cultural theorists, artists, educators, and policy thinkers together to critically engage in quintessential and pressing questions such as:

- Can we design technologies that genuinely respect and reflect the diversity of human values?

- How do today's communication systems, as discussed by Hallin and Mancini (2004), act as mediators of trust, memory, and power in an increasingly digital-first world?

- And in an era saturated by synthetic media and algorithmic influence, in what ways can 'code' become culture—and culture, in turn, shape code (Katzenbach & Pentzold, 2024)?

These questions lie at the heart of the inquiry into human and digital mutualism. In the Global South, the stakes of digital transformation are uniquely complex. With vast linguistic diversity, deep socio-economic inequalities, and histories of techno-colonialism, countries in this region face both unprecedented opportunities and profound risks. Platform-driven technological adaptation is often shaped by dynamics of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019) and external influences, but this has also spurred innovative resistance—from community-led data governance to new storytelling forms that reclaim agency (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2014).

To deliberate and discuss on these pressing issues and scenarios, **Mahindra University, Hyderabad's School of Digital Media and Communication, in collaboration with the International Communication Association (ICA) Regional Chapter – India**, invites you to the first-ever edition of our collaborative international conference.
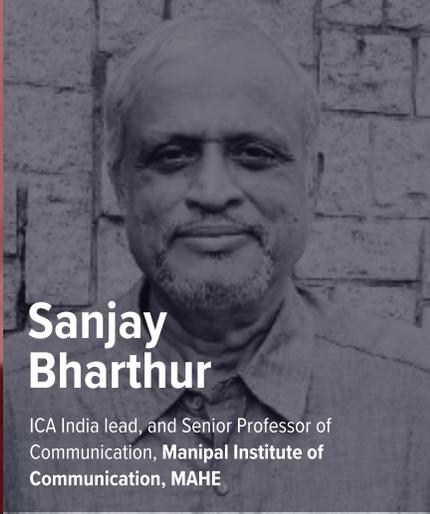
INAUGURAL
SESSION

Noshir Contractor
Former President of ICA and Jane S & William J White Professor of Behavioural Sciences, **Northwestern University, USA**

Sanjay Bharthur
ICA India lead, and Senior Professor of Communication, **Manipal Institute of Communication, MAHE**

Darryl Vaz
Senior Director, Product and Program Management, Broadcast Studio OTT , **LTIMindtree**
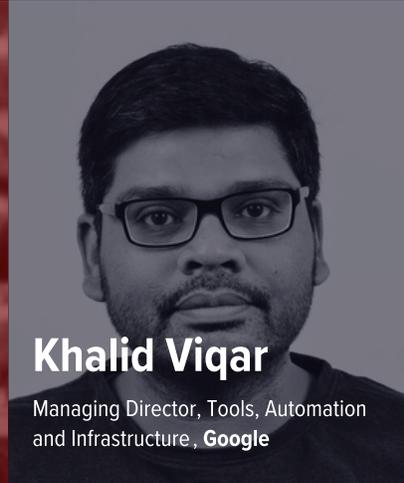
Derek Ham
Director of Entertainment Technology **Center** **Carnegie Mellon University, USA**

Jay Barchas-Lichtenstein
Senior Research Manager, **Center for News, Technology & Innovation, USA**

Khalid Viqar
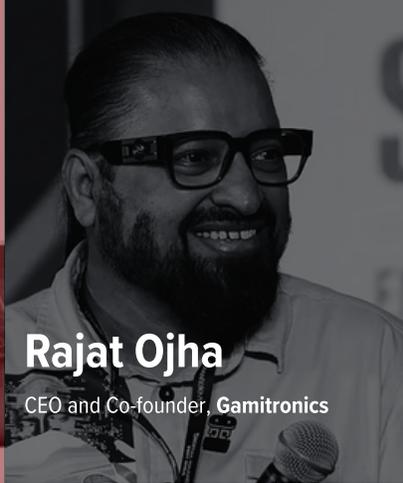Managing Director, Tools, Automation and Infrastructure , **Google**

Manish Bhide
Distinguished Engineer & CTO **IBM Data & AI**

Nikhil Malhotra
Chief Innovation Officer and Global Head of AI and Emerging Technologies, **Tech Mahindra**

Rajat Ojha
CEO and Co-founder, **Gamitronics**

Rudra Kasturi
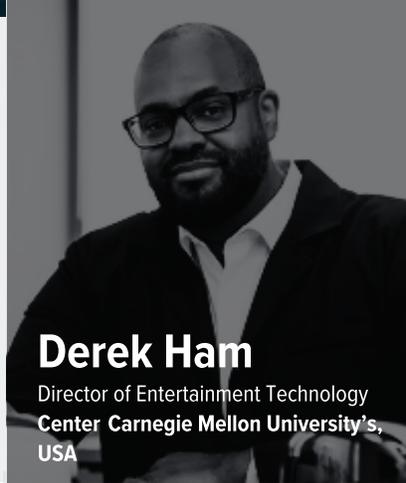Strategic Advisor - Building AI for Consumers, Creators, and Content Workflow , **Times Internet**

INDUSTRY
PANEL

KV Kurmanath
Moderator
Associate Editor,
The Hindu Business Line
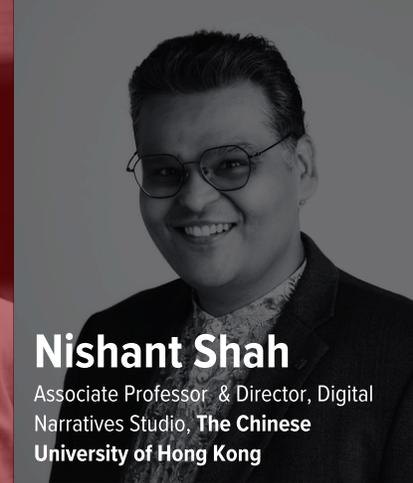
PLENARY
SESSIONS

Derek Ham
Director of Entertainment Technology
Center **Carnegie Mellon University's, USA**

Sri Kalyanaraman
Senior Associate Dean for Research
Michigan State University, USA

Nishant Shah
Associate Professor & Director, Digital
Narratives Studio, **The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

Sundeep R Muppidi
Professor of Digital Media & Communication,
University of Hartford, USA

Vibodh Parthasarathi
Associate Professor,
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Harsh Taneja
Associate Professor of New and Emerging
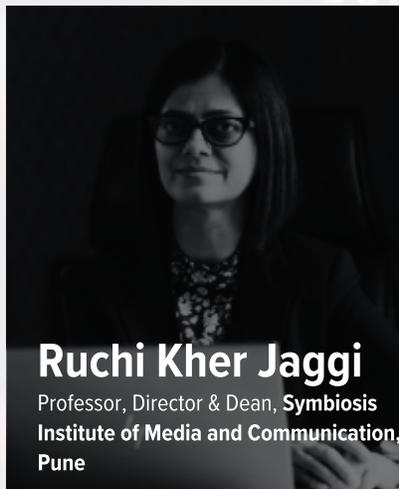Media, **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA**

Jay Barchas-Lichtenstein
Senior Research Manager, **Center for News, Technology & Innovation, USA**

ACADEMIC
PANEL

Ruchi Kher Jaggi
Professor, Director & Dean, **Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, Pune**
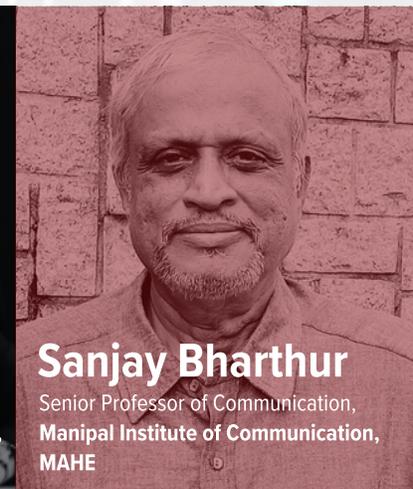
Sanjay Bharthur
Senior Professor of Communication,
Manipal Institute of Communication, MAHE

Shashidhar Nanjundaiah
Founding Dean & Professor, School of
Digital Media and Communication,
Mahindra University, Hyderabad

Usha Raman
Professor, **University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad**

Vinod Pavarala
Moderator , Senior Professor
University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad

EVENT SCHEDULE

21–22 Nov 2025

Mahindra University,
Hyderabad

Day 1   21 Nov 2025

8:00 - 5:00 pm **Registration**

9:00 - 11:00 am **Inaugural**

11:00 - 11:15 am **Break**

11:15 - 1:15 pm **Industry panel**
Humans and algorithms: Epistemic challenges for the industry and academia to achieve mutualism
Panelists: Darryl Vaz, Derek Ham, Jay Barchas-Lichtenstein, Khalid Viqar, Manish Bhide, Nikhil Malhotra, Rajat Ojha, Rudra Kasturi; Moderator: KV Kurmanath

1:15 - 2:15 pm **Lunch**

2:15 - 3:15 pm **Masterclass**
"@AI, is it true?" : Changing Informational Needs and Practices
Jay Barchas-Lichtenstein, Prabhat Mishra

3:15 - 3:30 pm **Break**

3:30 - 4:15 pm **Plenary 1**
Innovation through play
Derek Ham

4:15 - 5:00 pm **Plenary 2**
Computational media and empathy: The science of immersive storytelling
Sri Kalyanaraman

5:00 - 6:30 pm **Technical session 1**
Who am I, IRL?:
Coding identities and subjectivities
Moderator: Sunder Bukya
Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Mahindra University

Entangled realties: Code, culture and the communication of the digital self.
Priya Goel, *Jamia Millia Islamia*

Counterpublics on digital platforms: A study of Instagram influencers from Kumaon.
Simran Singh, *O.P. Jindal Global University*

Cultivating indigeneity and resilience on new media: (Re)construction of the Kurukh past.
Keshav Vivek, *SRM University AP*

Media advocacy and empowerment through digital mutualism: A survey of LGBTQ voices in central Mumbai.
Priti Saroj, Amrin Moger,
Guru Nanak College of Arts, Science & Commerce;
PJ Mathew Martin, *University of Mumbai*

From ritual to reel: Reimagining Kerala's folk characters in contemporary Malayalam cinema.
Soumya P, SDMC, Mahindra University

EVENT SCHEDULE

21–22 Nov 2025

Mahindra University,
Hyderabad

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about the conference

5:00 - 6:30 pm

Technical session 2
**Who's weaving the tangled web?:
Emerging complexities in digital media**
Moderator: Sreedhar Nemmani
SDMC, Mahindra University.

Understanding malleable computational media platforms for participatory development communication: A case study of MyGov, Gram Vaani, Devdiscourse, and Ushahidi India.
Y Sravan Kumar, *Indira Gandhi National Open University*

A communication model of technology hype cycles in platform capitalism.
Allan Harold Rex, *SDMC, Mahindra University*

The AI and communicative ecology nexus: Foundations of a symbiotic evolution.
Abhishek Kumar, *IIM Indore*

Too close for comfort: How hyper-personalized advertising redefines the relationship between people and algorithms.
Tanya Bhutani, *IILM University*

21–22 Nov 2025

Mahindra University,
Hyderabad

5:00 - 6:30 pm

Technical session 3

**Who's the generative generation, really?:
Platforms, cultures and ecology**
Moderator: Anuja Premika
SDMC, Mahindra University.

Algorithmic publics and generative AI: Navigating ethical communication in platformized cultures.
PV Satya Prasad, *Nitte University;*
Archan Mitra, *Amity School of Communication*

Parasocial policing and the female public: Gendered visibility, widowhood, and moral economies in Kerala's digital culture.
Anjitha Gopi, Ashraf Pulikkamat, *VIT-AP University*

Scroll, like, share, and influence: How Instagram reels are shaping political communication in India.
Akash K, Mochish K, *FLAME University*

Understanding social media usage preferences of senior citizens-types of content, platform choices, and device utilization.
Glen D'Silva, *SDMC, Mahindra University;*
Gurminder Pal Singh, *St. Joseph's Degree & PG College*

7:00 - 8:15 pm

Cultural programme

8:15 - 10:00 pm

Dinner

Day 2   ## 22 Nov 2025

8:30 - 10:00 am

Technical session 4

Documentary screenings
Moderator: Gunjan Sharma
SDMC, Mahindra University.

Kitchen Films (Telugu).
Lavanya Ramaiah, *O.P. Jindal Global University*

Ti Nadi Hoti (She Was a River) (Marathi).
Shashank Gadilkar, *SP Pune University*

Bhram Nagri: The Land of Pushkar (Hindi/English).
Danish Khan, Janvi Singh, *Bennett University*

Beyond the Binary: Voices of Trans Lives
(English/Kannada).
Bhargavi D Hemmige, *Jain University*

Mahashamshana: Jahan Mrityu Amar Hai (Hindi).
Krish Gaba, Diti Menghani, *Bennett University*

EVENT SCHEDULE

21–22 Nov 2025

Mahindra University,
Hyderabad

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10:00 - 10:45 am	**Plenary 3** Mutualistic media? Rethinking human–digital relations in hybrid publics **Sundeep R. Muppidi**
10:45 - 11:30 am	**Plenary 4** The First Line of Defense: Digital Care making within Technology Facilitated Gender and Sexual Violence (TFGSV) **Nishant Shah**
11:30 - 11:45 am	**Break**
11:45 - 12:30 pm	**Plenary 5** Governing dislocations in the platform economy **Vibodh Parthasarathi**
12:30 - 1:15 pm	**Plenary 6** Regions of attention: Human–AI mutualism in the platformized world **Harsh Taneja**
1:15 - 2:15 pm	**Lunch**

EVENT SCHEDULE

21–22 Nov 2025

Mahindra University,
Hyderabad

2:15 - 3:45 pm

Technical session 5
Who's framing our world now?:
Digital cultures and visual narratives
Moderator: Deepthi Krishna Thota
SDMC, Mahindra University.

What to expect? Materialism and consumerism in the
popular online discourse on maternity.
Rinisha P, Francis P Barclay, Haritha Harilal,
Central University of Tamil Nadu

Attention economy and the fragmented epic: Reimagining
long-form Indian mythology through AI-driven short-form
narratives.
Harsh Vardhan Sinha, Gauri D Chakraborty,
Bennett University

Dream team? An advertising framework analysis of
Dream 11's "apke team mein kaun" advertising
campaign.
Susmita Das, *Independent Scholar*

Exploring ecological advocacy in Nila Madhab Panda's
movies with special reference to "Kaun Kitney Paani
Mein," "Jalpari: The Desert Mermaid," and "Kadvi
Hawa."
Ajanita Kalita, *Dakshin Kamrup Girls' College;*
Bharati Bharali, *Gauhati University*

Human–digital mutualism in malayalam cinema:
semiotic reflections on lijo jose pellissery's visual
language.
Alga Albin, *SDMC, Mahindra University.*

2:15 - 3:45 pm

Technical session 6
Who tells stories anymore?:
News media in the algorithmic world
Moderator: Sumanth Inukonda
City University of New York

EVENT SCHEDULE

21–22 Nov 2025

Mahindra University,
Hyderabad

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Redefining journalism competencies in the age of AI:
A case study of Mumbai's media ecosystem.
Amrin Moger, *Guru Nanak College of Arts, Science &
Commerce;*
PJ Mathew Martin, *University of Mumbai;*
Sunder Rajdeep, *University of Mumbai*

Predatory journalism: An AI-assisted critical
discourse analysis of news corpus.
**Francis P Barclay, N Boobalakrishnan, Akila S,
Showkat Ahmad Jan,**
Central University of Tamil Nadu

Populist outrage and the algorithmic subject: A
media framing study of 'India's Got Latent'
controversy.
Lydia Glory Jose, *IILM University*

Human–machine interaction and journalistic
autonomy in newsrooms. Amaresh Jha, UPES;
Sanjeev Ratna Singh, *Chandigarh University*

AI at the ballot box: Media literacy and the role of
generative AI in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.
Vagdevi HS, Ravithej SP, Priya Evangeline,
St. Philomena's College

3:45 - 4:00 pm   **Break**

4:00 - 5:00 pm   **Academic panel**

Uncertain Times: The Future of
Higher Education in Media and
Communication
**Panelists: Ruchi Kher Jaggi, Sanjay
Bharthur, Shashidhar Nanjundaiah,
Usha Raman;
Moderator: Vinod Pavarala**

5:00 - 5:30 pm   **Valedictory**

Scan for more details about the conference

We look forward to your participation! Warm regards, Organising Committee
Human and Digital Mutualism: Code, Culture and Communication
School of Digital Media and Communication, Mahindra University | ICA India Chapter
For any enquiries write to us at **sdmc.conferences@mahindrauniversity.edu.in**

References

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics. Cambridge University Press.
Holtzhausen, D. R., & Zerfass, A. (Eds.). (2014). The Routledge handbook of strategic communication. Routledge.
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    Editorial to the special issue. New Media & Society, 26(9),4925–4937. *https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241265655*
Simon, H. A. (1971). Designing organizations for an information-rich world. In M. Greenberger (Ed.), Computers, communication,
    and the public interest (pp. 37–72). The Johns Hopkins Press.
Zuboff, S. (2019). The age of surveillance capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power.PublicAffairs.
Williams, J. (2018). Stand out of our light: Freedom and resistance in the attention economy. Cambridge University Press.