

Call for Papers: The Long 1990s in Global Internet Histories

Turning Points in Media Studies is an anthology series examining critical moments that shaped the development of media in various parts of the world, the circumstances and histories leading to these moments, and their impact on media development in subsequent periods. This volume, titled **'The Long 1990s in Global Internet Histories,'** emerges from internal workshops at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Advanced Research in Global Communication. The workshops reconsidered the coordinates and foundations of the Internet's development and expansion across the world. These conversations culminated in a satellite event at the annual conference of the Association of Internet Researchers in October 2023. Building on the insights shared by our symposium presenters, this edited collection steers clear of Anglophone, north-Atlantic media histories. Instead, it returns to 'the long 1990s', a period defined by major political-economic, social, and cultural transformations across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, to offer a global perspective on the history of the Internet. We explore the unruliness and abundance of media cultures that emerged out of the political-economic churn of the decades spanning 1980s, 1990s and the early 2000s to consider multiple ways of being and doing things on the Internet. Assembling an otherwise overlooked range of archives, material cultures and experiences, this volume reimagines the trajectories of Internet's development and proliferation across multiple analog and digital media.

We are interested in critical academic essays and reflections as well as experimental and multimodal work on the Internet's layered proliferation across the Global South. We ask: what new histories of the Internet emerge into view if we think from the moment of 'reform' and 'economic liberalization' in varied regional contexts? In what ways would our understanding of Internet histories and digital futures shift if we were to draw insights from media histories, practices, and environments from varied Global South contexts that do not, or will not, follow an easily comprehensible, linear path toward a seemingly inevitable digital horizon? How does a return to the long 1990s, however belatedly, recast Internet histories and re-imagine digital futures?

Thematic Concerns

Drawing inspiration from our collective conversations over the past three years, we particularly encourage contributions engaging with three conceptual threads:

- **Belatedness:** Following Ali Behdad, we invite essays that theorize "lateness" not as lag or deficit but as a productive, generative condition—one that allows us to rethink Internet and media histories outside the framework of 'catching up'. Belatedness enables us to revisit the 1990s and trouble the temporal frameworks of economic liberalization, economic reform, and neoliberal modernity.
- **Unruly Milieus:** We seek accounts of messy, heterogeneous media environments that refuse neat categorizations. Rather than simply positing a national account of the Internet, we ask how networked cultures emerge through the technical and material interactions of satellites, digital infrastructure, and other informal circulations.

- **Abundance:** We seek critical inquiries on the abundance of media forms and cultural production from non-Western and diasporic communities that highlight gender, labour and class relations. We invite reflections on how media technologies, practices, and personalities from this era – from FM radio and cable television to SD cards, cybercafés, and pirate film cultures – challenge teleological narratives of inevitable digitalization.

Formats and Interventions

Turning Points in Media Studies is supported by Manifold @Penn, an intuitive, collaborative, open-source platform for scholarly publishing. Manifold transforms scholarly publications into live digital works through rich media support and iterative texts. We welcome **interdisciplinary and multimodal contributions**, including but not limited to:

- Scholarly essays
- Photo-essays and visual interventions
- Critical explorations of early internet archives and objects
- Creative nonfiction, diaries, and fieldnotes
- Artwork or multimedia reflections, including audio-centered practices

Submission Guidelines

Please submit the following materials by **January 15, 2026** via the following [form](#)

- Title of the piece
- Type of Contribution
- Abstract (250–300 words)
- Author name, institutional affiliation, and email address

Selected contributors will be invited to submit full drafts (maximum **3,500 words**, including endnotes and works cited) by **April 1, 2026**. Submissions should follow **APA 9th edition formatting** and use endnotes rather than footnotes. If you have any further questions, email us at: cargc.turningpoints@gmail.com