

Workshop: Using Internet Paralanguages

As new platforms and technologies emerge, young people are inventing innovative ways to express ideas and communicate with their peers using mixed media on the internet. Most prominently, internet paralanguages that draw on non-lexical visual cultures are flourishing in mainstream, subcultural, and countercultural internet communities.

They have been used to communicate sensitive information across networks under the radar of authoritarian censors during global social movements, and situated to demonstrate different coded meanings for different audiences by prominent internet users such as Influencers. In this lecture and workshop, participants will explore some of these internet paralanguages, how they have been deployed by various brands in Scandinavia and Europe, and draw from their personal experiences of these communicative symbols.

Through brief case studies, the session will demonstrate how we can systematically track and understand the emergence of internet paralanguages through ethnographic methods, and how organisations may like to employ some of these internet-native communication strategies to reach their target audience. In the workshop to follow, participants will be invited to brainstorm innovative uses of internet paralanguages to promote various causes and initiatives for their businesses, and close with a short sharing session with other attendees.

45 min talk + 15 min Q&A, with a 1 hr workshop

Lecturer: Crystal Abidin