



## Negotiating the brave new digital world

Imagine a world where you were not allowed access to the internet. Imagine a world where you were not allowed to say or write your opinions or thoughts. Imagine a world where you had no rights to products you create or things you write. You may have noticed that in recent times, concepts such as 'net neutrality' and 'freedom of speech' have been topics of heated debate – in the media, among policy makers, activists and others.

Prof. Lawrence Liang works in these areas. He is an academic and lawyer who specifically works in the area of law and society. His interests lie at the intersection of law in social, political and cultural life.

Prof. Liang has made major contributions particularly to the study of Indian society's experiences with property law, access to resources and information, and creativity. His work helps to place current issues dealing with law and society in a historical context so that people understand from where their law makers and elected officials are coming.

Liang's work in the emerging field of digital technologies has helped shed light on an area where traditional legal measures may no longer apply. The digital world is a new world that requires new rules and regulations. Who has access? Who benefits? How do we determine what must be freely available?

These are the kind of questions with which we grapple. Care must be taken that the ordinary citizens' rights are not infringed upon and that everyone in a democratic society has access to all the information that is rightfully theirs.

As much as it is important to have access to information, it is equally important that created work is protected. Liang's work on free speech jurisprudence (the theory of law) has helped understand law not simply as written text but as a lived reality for the people it seeks to serve.

Among Prof. Liang's published work are *The Public is Watching: Sex, Laws and Videotape* and *A Guide to Open Content Licenses*. He also writes extensively on subjects of intellectual property, and technology and culture.

Liang's current research engages with law and cinema. He shows how cinema shapes the legal and political imaginations of millions of people. He uses landmark Hindi films like *Awara* and *Sholay* to make the case that Hindi cinema presents three simultaneous images of law and justice in India: law as hope, law as limit, and law as violence.

