

DATE & TIME



Thursday, November 15, 2012

3:30pm - 5:00pm

LOCATION



NWQB 1st Floor Lounge

2025 E Newport Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53211

SPEAKER



Dr. Jean-François Blanchette

Associate Professor,
UCLA Graduate School of Education
& Information Studies (GSEIS)

Jean-François Blanchette is an Associate Professor in the Department of Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. His is the author of *Burdens of Proof: Cryptographic Culture and Evidence Law in the Age of Electronic Documents* (MIT Press, 2012), and "A Material History of Bits," *JASIT* 62 no. 6 (2011).

Please RSVP: online by November 15th
sois.uwm.edu/heavyclouds

As a label for the most significant infrastructural works of our time, the "Cloud" is sheer marketing genius. An industrial process of massive concentration of processors, network wires, and storage media is subsumed under an ethereal image of wispy vapors. The shift to the Cloud is further wrapped in revolutionary narratives whereby data centers are poised to liberate us from the desktop computers that had themselves liberated us from an earlier version of the computing infrastructure, mainframes. Finally, the Cloud's appeal rides on a promise of infinite (and infinitely cheap) computing capacity, the necessary condition for Big Data to fulfill its mandate of an "intelligent planet." While compelling in their own right, these narratives provide few conceptual tools with which to analyze the mechanics, significance, and consequence of this important shift. In this talk, I propose that a useful framework for analyzing the cloud and the future evolution of the computing infrastructure proceeds, perhaps surprisingly, from the material basis of digital information. From such a framework, a different set of potential cloud narratives emerge, that foreground rather than obscure essential infrastructural dynamics: design trade-offs, the dialectics of abstraction and implementation, the long-term persistence of infrastructures, and the politics of scarce computational resources.

This talk is co-hosted by:

UWM Communications Department
UWM Computer Science Department
Milwaukee School of Engineering
Milwaukee Institute



School of Information Studies



SOCIAL STUDIES
OF INFORMATION
RESEARCH GROUP

INFORMATION our focus
INTERNATIONAL our scope
INTERDISCIPLINARY our mindset



HEAVY TOWARDS A MATERIAL ANALYSIS OF COMPUTING CLOUDS

SSRIG Speaker Series

You are also invited to join Jean-François for an informal discussion on the relationship between Science and Technology Studies and Information Studies. Please bring your own ideas for research areas or teaching approaches

Friday, November 16, 2012 • 12:00 - 1:00PM • NWQB 1405