

Opening Remarks of ITS Chair Stephen Schmidt for “ITS webinar: The Lesser Evil? Public Opinion on Regulating Fake News in Japan, South Korea and Thailand” (21 October 2021)

Welcome!

Thank you to everyone who is joining us today – we have participants spanning 18 of the world’s 24 time zones, which is remarkable.

Thank you, in particular to those joining us from very challenging time zones – in Asia where it is quite late right now and on west side of North America, where it is quite early right now.

Today’s webinar is the *9th ITS webinar* since the onset of the pandemic and *1st webinar* that we have originated out of Asia and with a substantial focus on Asian countries.

Auspiciously, this webinar also kicks off a trio ITS webinars, this fall, on digital platforms, with additional webinars coming up on 22 November, on *digital markets* and a further webinar, on 9 December, about *OTT content*.

Our topic today is timely and acutely important to people around the world. Our webinar addresses the global phenomenon of online misinformation, through the experience of three Asian countries.

As COVID-19 has circulated the globe, a *second pandemic*-- of false information -- has followed. False information about masks, treatments, and vaccines has undermined public trust, sowed confusion, and affected the spread and containment of the virus. Today’s webinar will offer important lessons and insights relevant to this second pandemic.

I would like to thank:

- **Our academic hosts:** 1) Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies and Institute for Digital Society, Waseda University and 2) Japan Society of Information and Communication Research (JSICR)
- **My ITS Board colleague and ITS Vice-Chair, Dr. Hitoshi Mitomo**, who planned this event and will moderate our discussion today
- **Our main speaker, Dr. John W. Cheng**, whose research we’ll learn about today
- **Our two distinguished panelists, my ITS colleague Dr. Seongcheol Kim and Dr. Tavida Kamolvej**
- **And thanks to all of you, who have chosen to invest your time and attention with us. We are very grateful.**

I hope that everyone enjoys today!

Stephen Schmidt
ITS Chair