

*School of Management and Marketing*  
*Seminar Notice*

TITLE : **Digital technology and governance in transition: the case of the British Library**

SPEAKER : **Dr Martin Harris**  
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BIOGRAPHY

**Martin Harris**, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Accounting, Finance and Management, University of Essex, UK. Martin has carried out research on new information technologies and post-bureaucratic organizational forms in a wide range of settings (including advanced manufacturing, broadcasting and education). He is currently collaborating with Stewart Clegg and Harro Hopfl on an edited collection entitled *Managing modernity: Beyond bureaucracy?* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). [E-mail: [martinhxx@hotmail.com](mailto:martinhxx@hotmail.com)]

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TIME : 4.00-5.00p.m.

VENUE : **40A.681**

ABSTRACT

Comment on the organizational consequences of the new information and communications technologies (ICTs) is pervaded by the idea that 'virtual' forms of production are synonymous with disaggregation and the 'end' of bureaucracy. This paper takes issue with this view, drawing on case study analysis of the British Library (BL) to show the ways in which bureaucratic modes of governance are shaping scholarly access to information resources. This research produces two main findings, each of which has a strong bearing on virtualisation and the theme of 'governance in transition'. First, radically decentralized 'virtual' forms of service delivery are dependent on heavily 'managed' forms of capacity-building and information aggregation. Second, the digitisation initiatives explored in the case study are embedded in an inherently contested and contradictory context of institutional change. Current developments in the management and control of digital rights are consistent with the commodification of the public sphere. However, the evidence also suggests that scholarly access to information resources is being significantly influenced by the 'information society' objectives of the BL and other institutional players within the network of UK research libraries.

Seminar Convenor

*Patrick Dawson*