

Queer Web Series in South East Asia

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The web series format is increasingly recognised for the new opportunities it offers creative workers to produce niche content long neglected by traditional or legacy broadcasters. Web series - scripted or non-scripted video in episodic format accessible via the internet - share certain characteristics with television series and can range over various genres including sketch, drama, comedy and vlog. However, academic studies have highlighted a number of differences in terms of production techniques, subject matter and particular structuring, whereby it is not enough to simply characterise web series as television watched online on a computer. These developments have opened up spaces for marginalised and niche groups to create, produce and consume content traditionally excluded from legacy networks. While this exclusion is characteristic of traditional television in many parts of the world, exclusion is often specifically accentuated in South East Asian due to strict regimes of censorship and government regulation, which has particular impact on the queer creatives and audiences. The recent nomination of the Singaporean series *People Like Us* for an International Emmy, and the large audiences for the 2012 Vietnamese series *My best gay friends*, and the strong following for the Indonesian series *Conq* are just three examples of the range of queer web series being produced in South East Asia

The academic study of web series from South East Asia is still in its infancy, despite the large audiences series can attract and the cultural and commercial potential offered by the format. Studies of queer series from the region are even fewer, though the burgeoning queer content being produced across the region is evidence of the value of the format for creatives marginalised or excluded by legacy TV. This panel invites papers which address the variety of queer web-series now being produced in South East Asia. We are particularly interested in papers that address queer representation in all kind of web series (for example; web series that engage with health and well-being (HIV, Covid-19, Mental Health, Sexual Health, boy love series, coming out narratives and youth dramas with a strong if not exclusive focus on queer characters). We are also interested in papers focused on industry, production, sponsorship and screening platforms and how these provide space for queer content. Studies which take an audience studies or fandom approach will also be welcomed. We are particularly interested in papers that take a region wide approach, or which focus on web series from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia or the Philippines.

Single session (90 minutes) 4 Presenters