

# TRENDS

in Society and Information Technology

## 2011-2012 Seminar Series



**YOCHAI BENKLER, HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

**"Is Resistance Futile? Power Reasserted in Networked Society"**

**Thursday, February 9, 2012**

3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

6011 Donald Bren Hall

Free and open to the public; no RSVP required.

**ABSTRACT** A major hope for the networked information environment was that it would decentralize power and facilitate the emergence of a society where more people have more degrees of freedom to make their own lives and participate in their polity. As the network matures, a few companies appear to control a core set of platforms; the personal computer is giving way to the proprietary handheld, tied to a proprietary cloud; and social production systems like Wikipedia or the blogosphere begin to develop their own governance and hierarchical structures, we must begin to ask how robust is decentralized freedom in the networked environment, and what shape is it taking as it emerges from infancy.

**BIO** Yochai Benkler is the Berkman Professor of Entrepreneurial Legal Studies at Harvard and co-director of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society. His books include "The Wealth of Networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom" (2006), which won academic awards in political science, sociology and communications policy. His work has garnered civil society recognition – the Electronic Frontier Foundation's Pioneer Award for 2007, Public Knowledge's IP3 Award in 2006, and the Ford Foundation's Visionaries Award 2011 – and has been cited by the Financial Times as "perhaps the best work yet about the fast moving, enthusiast-driven Internet." His work can be freely accessed at [benkler.org](http://benkler.org).

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