



---

## Democracy in the age of Google, Wikileaks and Facebook

John Keane

Wednesday, January 19, 2011  
5-7 p.m., Room A 300

---

## Invitation

---

We live in a revolutionary age of communicative abundance with many media innovations. In the field of politics, hopeful talk of digital democracy, web 2.0, cybercitizens and e-government is flourishing. Too little attention has been paid, though, to the troubling counter-trends, the decadent media developments that encourage concentrations of cunning power without limit, so weakening the spirit and substance of democracy. Clever new methods of government censorship - the Chinese and Russian cases are the most sophisticated - and the use by governments and corporations of spin tactics and back-channel public relations are the most obvious examples. Echo chambers, rumour storms, Berlusconi-style mass media populism, flat earth news, cyber-attacks, online gated communities, publicity bombs and organised lying and media silence in the face of unaccountable power are trends that also bode ill for democracy. The lecture offers a guide to understanding and explaining these trends, and how best to deal with them.

**John Keane** is Professor of Politics at Sydney University and Research Professor at the WZB. Among his publications are *The Media and Democracy* (first print 1991) and most recently *The Life and Death of Democracy* (2009). He has a blog on issues of democracy: <http://johnkeane.net/blog/>

**Wolfgang Merkel** is Director of the WZB Research Unit on Democracy.

*The WZB provides child care during the lecture. If you are interested, please respond by January 12, 2011.*

*To register, please reply by January 18, 2011, to Marie Unger: [marie.unger@wzb.eu](mailto:marie.unger@wzb.eu), fax: 030/25491-680.*

---

Social Science Research Center  
Berlin

Reichpietschufer 50  
10785 Berlin

Phone: 030/25491-0  
Fax: 030/25491684