The Open Internet
An Exploration in Network Archaeology
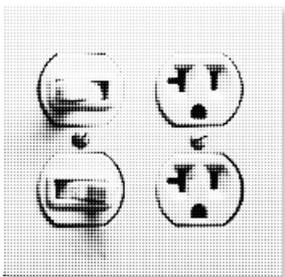
A Lecture in Critical Media and Digital Studies

Andrew L. Russell

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3:00 PM

Mann Assembly Room, Paterno Library

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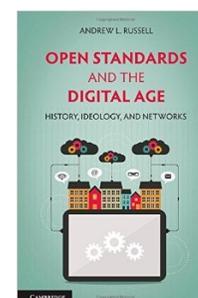**Digital Culture and Media Initiative**

Popular histories of the Internet feature a linear and teleological approach to their subject, one that marginalizes or ignores developments that do not fit neatly into a narrative of the Internet's success. Historians of technology know better than to accept such tidy narratives, but so far they have failed to convince scholars, policymakers, and the public to see nuance and contingency (rather than the bold march of progress) in the Internet's history. In this lecture I pursue an alternative strategy, adopting concepts from "media archaeology" and "network archaeology" to highlight two anecdotes in networking history — Bancroft Gherardi's "engineering of the present" in the American Bell Telephone System in the 1920s, and Louis Pouzin's "heterogenius computer network" in France in the 1970s. I argue that while Gherardi and Pouzin do not fit easily into heroic tales of how we got to now, their stories have more to offer those who have noticed some uncomfortable contradictions in 21st century discourses of innovation, network neutrality, and the Open Internet.

Andrew L. Russell is an Associate Professor in History and Director of the Program in Science & Technology Studies in the College of Arts & Letters at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey. He is the author of *Open Standards and the Digital Age: History, Ideology, and Networks* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) and he has published over a dozen articles and book chapters on standardization in the Bell System, the history of modular systems, Internet history, and digital cellular networks in the United States and Europe. He is a graduate of Vassar College (B.A. History, 1996), the University of Colorado at Boulder (M.A. History, 2003), and the Johns Hopkins University (Ph.D. History of Science and Technology, 2007).

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