



# **Berkman Klein Centre for Internet & Society, Harvard University presents: "At the Crossroads of Digital Imperialism & Digital Development"**

**By:**

[Berkman Klein Center](#)

May 20, 2021

At the Crossroads of Digital Imperialism & Digital Development: Featuring [Ofunmilayo Arewa](#), [Thomas Streinz](#), [Jacqueline Mwangi](#) and [Padmashree Gehl Sampath](#)

The global information economy has provided freedom-enhancing affordances for previously marginalized groups, but has also enabled extractive practices in the form of digital imperialism, or as others term it, data colonialism. For so-called “periphery” countries such as those in sub-Saharan Africa, the information economy represents an opportunity to chase the long-elusive quest for industrialization, now dubbed “digital industrialization”, “digital

development” or “data for development”. Despite the optimism represented in the digital development policy discourse, the limits and potentials of any kind of development are heavily constrained by background conditions rooted in past global power imbalances and a colonial legacy of non-contextual laws and institutions. This panel will examine questions of unequal power in the global digital economy (through U.S corporations, China, and Brussels (i.e. dominance through legal rules), and the ways in which this manifests itself in developing countries in Africa.

**Ofunmilayo Arewa**, author of the forthcoming book “Disrupting Africa: Technology Law and Development” (Cambridge University Press), and **Thomas Streinz**, Executive Director of the Guarini Global Law & Technology join BKC fellows **Jacqueline Mwangi** and **Padmashree Gehl Sampath** as they discuss the political economy of digital development in sub-Saharan Africa.

*This event will be recorded. Video and audio will be available soon after the event.*

Recommended Resources:

- [How the rise of ‘digital colonialism’ in the age of AI threatens Africa’s prosperity](#)
- [Confronting Data Inequality](#)
- [Video: The Costs of Connection](#)
- [The Beijing Effect: China's 'Digital Silk Road' as Transnational Data Governance](#)
- [Book Review: The Brussels Effect: The European Union as a Global Regulatory Power](#)
- [Colonialism, Legal Borrowing, and Disruption in Africa](#)

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**Register** [Here](#)

**Date:** May 24, 2021

**Time:** 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM ET

For more information, click [here](#)

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