



*Deep Currents*  
*Research Program*  
*2014&2015*

*June 2014*

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**Hacked Matter**

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# Deep Currents Program

Hacked Matter - investigating China, Technology, Future

**HACKED MATTER: DEEP CURRENTS** researches the evolution and increasingly intimate interrelationship of the sectors of making and manufacturing as they engage with the next wave of hardware. We investigate the process through which technologies developed in expensive and exclusive research labs are becoming commoditized: made accessible to and subsequently re-made by hobbyist makers, start-ups, and lay experts.

Through the spread of information as well as lowering costs, knowledge and means of production have become accessible enough to be tinkered with, adapted and transformed. For machines to spread they must be hacked.



China with its expertise in mass manufacturing and its unique and locally grown open source system of *Shanzhai* is rising as the new hub for hardware innovation. It is China where the global maker movement and the forces of industrial production come together to reshape how emerging technologies including IoT, wearables, virtual reality, robotics, and more are designed, developed, made, marketed and distributed.

**DEEP CURRENTS** aims to articulate how China is reshaping long held narratives of IP, open source, as well as the design and production of new technologies that are central to our understanding of global capitalism and the innovation economy.

photo: a Chinese shanzhai 山寨 phone designed to look like a cigarette pack.



# 2014/15 Research Plan

## Hacked Matter Salon

A monthly salon based on in-depth readings and invited experts. Topics will include technological infrastructures, materiality, questions of labor, smart cities, biotech, design in manufacturing, virtual currencies and critical investigation of sci-fi and cyberculture.

Hacked Matter salon takes places concurrently at the Shanghai Library and the School of Information at the University of Michigan.

## Transmedia Platform

Hacked Matter has collected hundreds of hours of research materials over the last 3 years. We are in the process of cataloging and analyzing the findings. We are building a transmedia platform and archive through which this material can serve as a research archive for scholarly investigation as well as be presented to a wider public audience. This collaborative project will grow as the research develops.

## Publications

Hacked Matter produces both academic and journalistic publications.

# Hacked Matter

**Hacked Matter is a Shanghai based research hub dedicated to investigating the process of technological innovation in China. Through a series of immersive events, public programs, online outreach and offshoot publications, we bring together key stakeholders (scholars, makers, artists and entrepreneurs) to explore the rich interconnections between DIY making, product design, hardware manufacturing, and speculative thought.**

Established in 2011, Hacked Matter is rooted in a long-term engagement with grassroots creativity in urban China, which began with the founding of Xindanwei in 2009, and its offshoot Xinchajian in 2010. As one of Shanghai's few international and interdisciplinary research hubs, Hacked Matter focuses on the production of new technologies, the networks of shanzhai manufacturing and the role of China's maker culture.

## **What we do**

1. Build platforms that enable rich collaborations and long-term partnerships between international and Chinese designers, scholars, manufacturers, and innovators of new technologies.
2. Engage with existing creative practices in China in order to reframe the Western-centric discourse on innovation, maker culture, outsourcing and manufacturing.
3. Develop a rich theorization of the social, cultural and material aspects of cutting-edge technology production.
4. Hacked Matter draws upon interdisciplinary methods: Ethnographic Research, Curated Workshops, Public Lectures, Professional Interviews, Publications, Design Methods, Web-based Outreach.

# Research Team



## ANNA GREENSPAN

Anna Greenspan is a professor at NYU Shanghai working in the areas of urbanization and cybernetic culture. Her research draws on a background in philosophy to develop rigorous conceptual tools adequate to contemporary trends in global techno-capitalism. [www.annagreenspan.com](http://www.annagreenspan.com)

## SILVIA LINDTNER

Silvia Lindtner is a post-doctoral fellow at Fudan University, Shanghai and an incoming faculty member at the University of Michigan. She researches, writes and teaches about DIY (do-it-yourself) maker culture, with a particular focus on its intersections with manufacturing and industry development in China. Drawing on her background in interaction design and media studies, she merges ethnographic methods with participatory and human centered design methods. This allows her to provide deep insights into emerging cultures of technology production and use, from a sociological and technological perspective. [www.silvialindtner.com](http://www.silvialindtner.com)



## DAVID LI

David Li has been contributing to open source since 1990. He is member of Free Software Foundation, committer to Apache projects and board director of ObjectWeb. Over the past 20 years, David has started several open source software projects and contributed to many others. In 2010, he co-founded XinCheJian, the first hackerspace in China to promote hacker/maker culture and open source hardware. He also developed Ardublock, the most popular visual programming environment for Arduino. In the past two years, he has become interested in urban farming and is an enthusiastic proponent of aquaponics, which brings the spirit of open source to farming and gardening.



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