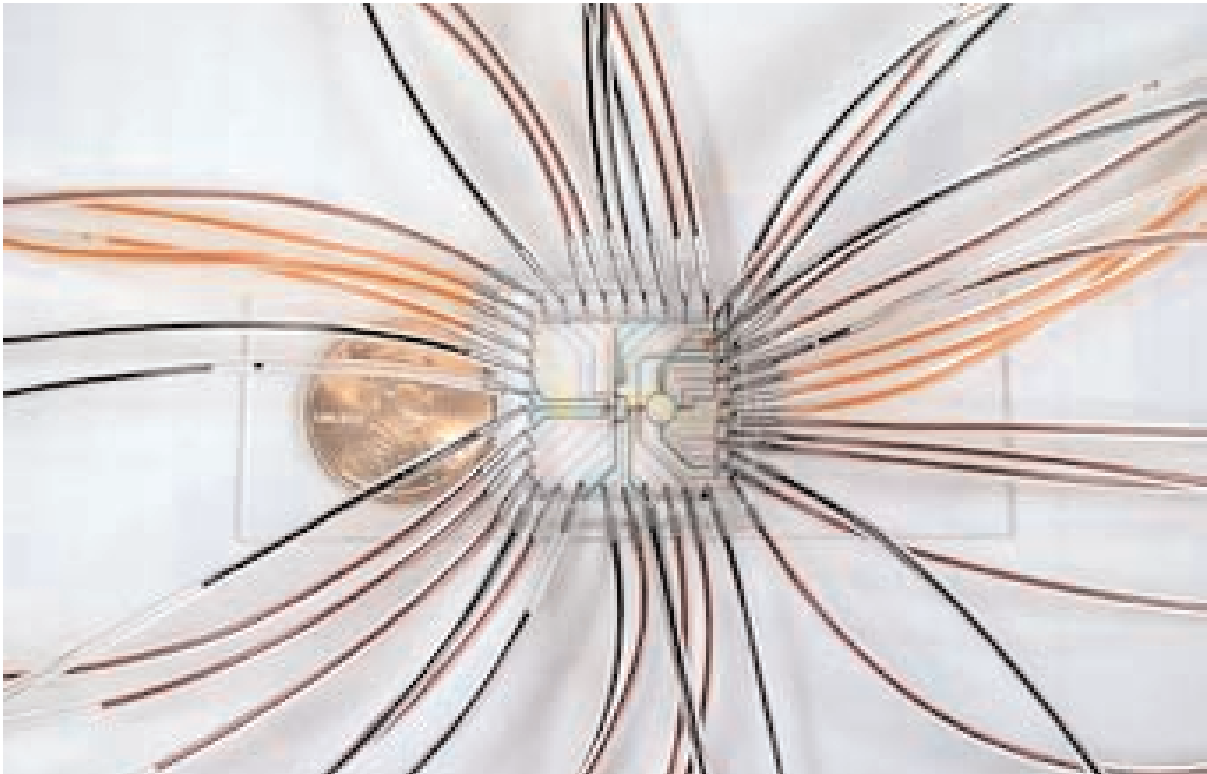


The Wolfe Institute

*The Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute for the Humanities,
in cooperation with the Department of Computer and Information Science and the Department of Sociology,
presents*

An Interdisciplinary Colloquium

Decoding Liberation



Technological artifacts of the past consisted only of hardware: engines, motors, pumps, levers, switches, gears. To control the hardware was to control the technology. Hardware is expensive to acquire and maintain, so technology was invariably controlled by large economic entities—states, then corporations. Concerns about social control invariably addressed control of technology; Marx's concerns about the control of the means of production were focused on the hardware that both crystallized and generated capitalist power. The 20th century brought a new form of technology, one in which hardware and control are explicitly separated. The means of production no longer inhere solely in hardware; control is transferable, distributable, plastic, and reproducible, all with minimal cost. Control of technology may be democratized, its advantages spread more broadly than ever before. The reactionary response to this promise is an attempt to embrace and coopt this control to advance entrenched social, economic, and political power. It is this reaction that free software resists. In this colloquium, speakers will discuss the social, economic, and political significance of free software, using as a touchstone Samir Chopra and Scott Dexter's recently published book, *Decoding Liberation: The Promise of Free and Open Source Software* (Routledge, New Media and Cyberculture Series, 2007).

Samir Chopra is Associate Professor of Computer and Information Science at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in 2000. His research interests include the philosophical foundations of artificial intelligence, the legal theory of artificial agents, and the politics and ethics of technology.

Scott Dexter is Associate Professor of Computer and Information Science at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. He earned his Ph.D. in Computer Science and Engineering from The University of Michigan in 1998. His research interests include network security, digital watermarking, computer science pedagogy, and the social implications of technology.

Timothy Shortell is Associate Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College. He earned his Ph.D. in social psychology from Boston College and has published work on the discourse of public controversies in the U.S. He is author of an open-source software application for text analysis.

Benjamin Mako Hill is currently working as a researcher in the MIT Media Lab's Electronic Publishing and Computing Culture research groups. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Free Software Foundation.

Thursday, November 15, 2007

10:50 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Glenwood Lounge

For information: (718) 951-5847