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Narrative in the Digital Age: From "Light Novels" to Web Serials

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NARRATIVE IN THE DIGITAL AGE: FROM “LIGHT NOVELS” TO WEB SERIALS

Dr. Satomi Saito
Wednesday, November 12,
11:30 - 1:00, BTSU 207

The success of Reki Kawahara’s web serial *Sword Art Online* sheds light on Internet sites as a viable venue for amateur creators in publishing original works outside of top-down corporate controlled media distribution. *Sword Art Online* became one of the pioneering works of successfully commercialized online serials when it was re-published in print in 2009 and made into animation in 2012. *SAO* triggered publication and anime adaptation of online serials as exemplified by numerous titles that came out recently, including *Maoyu* (2009; TV animation series in 2013) and *The Irregular at Magic High School* (2008-11; TV animation series in 2014). The unique attributes of these novels are their creative appropriation of characters, settings, and themes commonly available in the Internet knowledge communities with the narrative structure unique to the serializing platform of the Internet, which encourages more user participation. Participatory culture of web serials provides a space where not only creators can publish their original/derivative works but readers classify the published works according to a variety of attributes, including plot structures, genres, characters, and settings. Dr. Saito will trace a historical development of science fiction and fantasy novels in Japan, thereby examining online communities’ role in a recent literary shift that has impacted the modes of world-building and narrative creation/consumption of these web-serials.

Satomi Saito is Assistant Professor of Japanese Studies in the Department of German, Russian, and East Asian Languages. He is now working on a book manuscript on Japanese popular media, a part of which will be published in the upcoming issue of *Mechademia* (University of Minnesota Press) as “Beyond the Horizon of the Possible Worlds: A Historical Overview of Japanese Media Franchises.”



Dr. Saito’s lecture is part of the ICS Faculty Fellows Lecture Series. All events are free and open to the public. For more information, call (419) 372-0565.

