Bishembarnath & Sheela Mattoo
CENTER FOR INDIA STUDIES

The Dr. Krishna Gujavarty Seminar on Leadership and Values

Siva Vaidhyanathan
Robertson Professor of Media Studies
University of Virginia

The Facebook Burden:
How One American Company's Altruistic Efforts Misread India

Wednesday, April 13, 2016, 4 PM
Wang Center Theater

Prof. Siva Vaidhyanathan will discuss the errors in policy and public relations that doomed Facebook's "Free Basics" effort in India, a plan to offer a special mobile data plan to Indians who could not afford standard plans. But the services would be limited to those that Facebook approved. Facebook's attempt to seem altruistic and the arrogant statements of its leaders and supporters doomed the efforts with Indian regulators. The conflict reveals important lessons about the legacies of colonialism, the 20th-century development ideology, and the culture of Silicon Valley. It also unmasks some basic problems with efforts to make companies socially responsible.

Siva Vaidhyanathan is the Robertson Professor of Media Studies and director of the Center for Media and Citizenship at the University of Virginia. He is the author of *The Googlization of Everything—and Why We Should Worry* (2011); *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How it Threatens Creativity* (2001), and *The Anarchist in the Library: How the Clash between Freedom and Control is Hacking the Real World and Crashing the System* (2004). He co-edited (with Carolyn Thomas) the collection, *Rewiring the Nation: The Place of Technology in American Studies* (2007). Vaidhyanathan has written for many periodicals, including American Scholar, Dissent, The Chronicle of Higher Education, The New York Times Magazine, Salon.com, Slate.com, openDemocracy.net, BookForum, Columbia Journalism Review, Washington Post, Esquire.com, The Virginia Quarterly Review, The New York Times Book Review, and The Nation.

After five years as a professional journalist, Siva Vaidhyanathan earned a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. He has taught at Wesleyan University, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Columbia University, New York University, and the University of Amsterdam. He is a fellow at the New York Institute for the Humanities and a Faculty Associate of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University.

For more details, contact: Mattoo Center for India Studies 632-9742 or indiastudies@stonybrook.edu

Stony Brook University