Despite their importance and ubiquity, payment infrastructures are little studied outside the payments industry, and within the industry the rapid development of new systems of value transfer exceeds the ability even of experts to keep up. The talk will address the question of the public interest in payments – the public good provided by the means of value transfer, and whether and how the state’s monopoly of the legitimate means of exchange (state-issued currency) is challenged by new, private payment infrastructures, which often “ride the rails” of public systems. The case study is mobile phone-enabled banking and payment, heralded as a boon for “financial inclusion,” the formalizing of informal or the “cash only” world.

Date: Tuesday 19 March, 2013
Time: 4.30pm to 6.00pm
Venue: ‘Green Brain’, Storey Hall, Building 16, Level 7, RMIT City Campus
RSVP: priyanka.willis@rmit.edu.au

Bio
Bill Maurer is a cultural anthropologist who conducts research on law, property, money and finance, particularly new and experimental financial and currency forms and their legal implications. He is the Director of the Institute of Money, Technology and Financial Inclusion and the Co-Director of the Intel Science & Technology Center for Social Computing at the University of California, Irvine. He is the editor of six collections, as well as the author of Recharting the Caribbean: Land, Law and Citizenship in the British Virgin Islands (1997), Pious Property: Islamic Mortgages in the United States (2006), and Mutual Life, Limited: Islamic Banking, Alternative Currencies, Lateral Reason (2005). The latter received the Victor Turner Prize in 2005. Professor Maurer served as Special Advisor to the Royal College of Art’s Future of Money project.