

- From traditional to online media:
Best practices and perspectives

14th Central Asia Media Conference
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
5-6 July 2012

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From traditional to online media: Best practices and perspectives is a compilation of all presentations given at the 14th Central Asia Media Conference, organized by the Representative's office, which brought together international and local experts from five Central Asian participating States of the OSCE. This publication is designed to serve as a record of the events of that conference and is intended for journalists, government and regulatory officials and students.

The views expressed by the contributing authors in this publication are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

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Foreword

Adilia Daminova¹ and Ana Karlsreiter²

Issues related to the inexorable transition from traditional print media to online media have become a common subject of debate in newsrooms, academic and governmental halls throughout the OSCE region. That is why the 14th Central Asian Media Conference was dedicated to the topics related to this transition.

The conference was for the first time held in Ashgabat on 5-6 July 2012. A wide range of issues were considered, including regulation of the Internet, social media as a tool to enhance the free flow of information and an examination of business models designed to ensure financial stability of online media.

As in previous years, one day of the conference was devoted to discussions of regional trends and developments in each of the Central Asian states. Participants from Afghanistan joined the discussions for the first time.

A master class on practical aspects of online media regulation was also held for the first time. It allowed participants to improve their knowledge in this important and sometimes controversial topic.

This book is an account of the conference, featuring all the presentations of the speakers. It should serve as a valuable reference book on contemporary media issues for journalists, scholars and officials.

We would like to thank the Governments of France, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States for their financial support for the conference and this publication.

¹ Daminova is a Project Officer for the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

² Karlsreiter is a Senior Adviser to the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Declaration

The 14th Central Asia Media Conference, organized by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media with the assistance of OSCE field operations in Central Asia, was held on 5-6 July 2012 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

Throughout the years the Central Asia Media Conference has become a unique forum to discuss media issues and co-operation among journalists in Central Asia. We gather for the first time in Ashgabat.

The two-day conference hosted more than 150 journalists, media experts, government officials, parliamentarians, civil society representatives and academia from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. We welcomed our colleagues and observers from Afghanistan, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The focus of the conference was social and online media. Conference participants explored issues related to international standards and national practices regarding freedom of the media in social media and online broadcast regulation. Participants also discussed the latest media developments in Central Asian states. Furthermore, legal challenges and policies and practices pertaining to online and social media, economic models and prospects for online media outlets were discussed during the conference.

The Conference: Acknowledges the importance of rotating its venue for maintaining the spirit of co-operation and trust and thanks the authorities of Turkmenistan for being a good host;

1. Welcomes the fact that representatives of the media, civil society, as well as government representatives from all countries of Central Asia were able to take part in the conference and discuss important issues in the field of online and social media on the regional level;
2. Acknowledges that online and traditional media provide opportunities to strengthen implementation of existing commitments of the OSCE participating States in the sphere of media freedom;

3. Welcomes the fact that online media allow for more diversity and pluralism;
4. Emphasizes the actual benefits that the Internet offers, including advancements in education, economy, individual communications and acknowledges its importance as a tool to seek, produce, receive and distribute information;
5. Calls on governments to ensure protection of the fundamental rights to freedom of expression and freedom of information by adopting appropriate laws, policies and practices and by ensuring independent judicial oversight and effective public scrutiny of their implementation;
6. Stresses that restrictions to the right to free expression on the Internet are only acceptable if in compliance with international law, necessary in a democratic society, prescribed by law and are in the public interest. Access to online media can be restricted only by court decisions. Decisions to block web sites should be transparent and well-grounded. The list of restricted online media resources should be made public and accessible;
7. Believes that national laws should facilitate openness and transparency of the Internet, including online media;
8. Urges governments to consider access to and use of the Internet and its services, including social media and social networks, a human right and promote the universal access to it;
9. Urges to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnership of governments with all relevant parties to close the “digital divide” among different population groups, promote education on use of new media and foster general access to the Internet;
10. Urges telecommunication companies to safeguard network neutrality to ensure that online information and traffic are treated equally regardless of the device, content, author, origin or destination;
11. Acknowledges the active role that users assume in generating content, thus exercising their right to free expression;

12. Urges authorities to promote the use of social media tools, to promote transparency and easy access of citizens to government-held information and information of public interest, as well as strengthen accountability of the officials;
13. Calls for close co-operation of the governments with civil society and telecommunication companies to ensure that the Internet remains an open forum for public debate and that the rights of the users are protected,
14. Emphasizes that in order to fully exercise their rights, Internet users should be protected from unlawful breaches of privacy,
15. Calls on authorities to ensure that journalists, as well as bloggers and “citizen reporters”, can work unhindered.

Welcoming remarks

Ivo Petrov¹

On behalf of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, let me warmly welcome you to the hospitable capital of Turkmenistan and to the 14th Central Asia Media Conference.

This is the first time that Ashgabat is hosting the Central Asia Media Conference and I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the government of Turkmenistan for its support for this important event and for their wonderful hospitality.

This conference is a good example of the ever-increasing co-operation between Turkmenistan and the OSCE in the area of media. It is a special privilege to welcome the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović, whose visits to Turkmenistan in 2011 opened new opportunities for dialogue between Turkmenistan and the OSCE on media-related issues. The Centre used these new opportunities and, in 2012, together with the Office of the Representative, launched a project aimed at assisting the country in modernizing its media legislation. We are looking forward to further contributing to the country's efforts in upgrading it.

During the last few years, the Centre has also supported a number of successful projects aimed at enhancing the capacity of national media. The Centre has established fruitful co-operation with the "international journalism" department at the Institute of International Relations, and it is a special pleasure for us to see the faces of students from this Institute among the conference's participants today.

The Office of the Representative every year chooses a topic which is of particular interest. The topic of this year's conference is the transition from traditional to online media. Today it is impossible to overestimate the importance of this topic.

We live in an age of swift technological progress and our media environment is changing faster than we even would have imagined 10 years ago. Throughout this diverse world, online media – while not replacing the traditional media – are creating very strong competition to them. The Internet is becoming a primary

¹ Ambassador Petrov is head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat.

source of information for more and more people. Online analogues of various newspapers frequently supersede their print peers that we used to read over our morning coffee. Nowadays the first thing we do in the morning is switch on our laptops and computers and check our e-mails and favorite news portals. With the development of social media, more and more people can practice the job of a journalist, if even not professionally, and take an increasingly active part in the process of information sharing.

While offering new opportunities, these new technologies place, at the same time, a great responsibility on media managers and journalists producing news as well as on governments whose regulatory policies should not impede media pluralism.

The Central Asia Media Conferences offer a valuable platform for the exchange of views and experiences on this matter and we look forward to lively discussions among different stakeholders.

It is very symbolic that this year's Central Asia Media Conference is being held a few days before Turkmenistan marks the 20-year anniversary of its signing the Helsinki Final Act and becoming a full-fledged participant of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE's predecessor, and herewith assuming commitments and responsibilities deriving from its participation in the Organization.

The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 outlined a number of provisions related to freedom of the media. Over the years, the 56 OSCE participating States broadened these commitments to reflect the changes both in the OSCE area and in the global media environment, but the fundamental commitments set out by the Helsinki Final Act remain as relevant today as almost 40 years ago.

Today's conference, as well as other events held by the OSCE and its participating States to address media-related issues, constitutes an important part of the Organization's activities aimed at promoting media freedom and pluralism and assisting participating States in implementing their media-related commitments.

By hosting the 14th Central Asia Media Conference, Turkmenistan, in its turn, is demonstrating the country's interest to take a more active part in the Organization's activities.

In conclusion, let me wish you a very interesting and productive conference. I would also like to invite all our guests to explore Ashgabat, the beautiful, rapidly changing capital of Turkmenistan, and get acquainted with this amazing country and its wonderfully hospitable people.

Rashid Meredov²

Allow me on behalf of the respected president of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Myaligulyyevich Berdymukhamedov, to welcome you to Ashgabat and wish you successful work at this forum.

The broad representation at this conference, including the delegation of states of the region, international organizations and also representatives of the mass media and experts community is proof of the timeliness of the issues on the agenda and the interest of the participants in discussing them.

We hope that the conference will be a notable event in the development of the information society, and the strengthening of the legal and organizational foundations of activity in the media space.

I think this could be facilitated by combining our potentials and making use of the experience of cooperation gained at regional and international levels. It is in this context that I would like also to review the potential of this international meeting.

In speaking of this, I would like to emphasize that the objective, comprehensive and timely coverage of events and processes occurring in a country or in the world is the fundamental activity of modern mass media. Therefore, today it is very important to move in the direction of a search for new approaches and methods of delivering information to citizens using high-technology solutions.

On the whole, we proceed from the understanding that the information sphere must be innovative in nature and function in accordance with international standards. In addition, the practical implementation of these standards, in our view, must be realized on the basis of a reasonable balance between universally recognized norms and the special features of the history, culture and mentality of the people of each country.

In that connection, the further improvement of the international legal basis for activity in the information field appears relevant. We consider this one of the key issues for the functioning of the media in a law-based society.

² Meredov is Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan.

At the same time, the educational component in the information sphere must remain a priority, the development of which undoubtedly will foster the understanding of the significance of mass information and the great responsibility of persons working in the media space.

A very important component of the effective activity of journalists, correspondents, print agencies, television and radio channels, and electronic media is also employment of the latest technological developments.

Proceeding from the above, I believe that these enumerated fundamental directions of our cooperation in the information sphere, such as legislation, education and technology could become the subject of professional consideration and an exchange of opinions at this and future meetings.

In that context, the experience of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and its authority as an influential international organization, undoubtedly will foster the successful development of regional cooperation on the issues of mass media development in Central Asia.

The Turkmen government clearly sees the prospects for such cooperation within the framework of the OSCE, values the progress in our relations, which has recently become particularly notable, and also clearly acknowledges the significance of mutually respectful dialogue with partners.

And here I would like to thank the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatović, and her team for their understanding, support and joint work.

Opening Statement

Dunja Mijatović¹

I am pleased to return to Turkmenistan on the occasion of our 14th Central Asia Media Conference. This is my third visit. I came for the first time in September 2011 to discuss the media-freedom situation and then again in November when I discussed media law reform and lectured at the Institute of Foreign Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

My Office has been actively engaged with the government of Turkmenistan and the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat in the fields of media law reform and media education since my first days in office in March 2010.

In April of this year our expert participated in week-long discussions on the new media law with the members of the working group established by the Parliament in 2011. We look forward to a discussion of this draft whenever it is formalized and presented for our legal review. And I hope that, as a result of our co-operation, the Parliament will adopt a modern, liberal media law that meets the highest international standards and demands of the 21st century. We also are encouraged by our dialogue with the Institute of Foreign Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Following my lecture, an exchange between the Institute and MGIMO University in Moscow was arranged.

This visit is particularly important because Turkmenistan is hosting our conference for the first time ever and I am sure all participants and experts are excited to be here in Ashgabat. I would like to thank the authorities for their kind hospitality and, in particular, Rashid Meredov, for his instrumental support and personal involvement in the implementation of this important initiative.

I am also pleased to welcome more than 150 journalists, representatives of non-governmental media organizations, parliamentarians, government officials, academics, as well as well-known international experts from all Central Asian states and Afghanistan.

¹ Mijatović is the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

I would also like to thank the authorities of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan for ensuring the participation of their delegations at this conference.

I should also note the excellent work carried out by OSCE field operations in Bishkek, Astana/Almaty, Dushanbe and Tashkent, as well as our international partners, because without their support and assistance this conference would not have been possible. Special thanks go to our OSCE colleagues in Ashgabat.

Finally, my thanks go to the governments of France, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States, whose generous financial support to this conference cannot be overestimated and deserves a special mention.

The Central Asia Media Conference has been a tradition of my Office for 14 years, in essence since this Office was established, to bring together journalists to discuss important media topics and media freedom challenges in the region.

This year we are discussing online and social media, and introducing a new format.

We will start with international experts sharing their experiences and then follow up with some practical, hands-on master class in online media regulation led by Albany Associates, an international consulting firm.

Tomorrow our colleagues from Central Asia states and Afghanistan will speak about their realities, reflect on what is going well and finding solutions to the existing challenges.

We have an interesting topic for you. The emergence of new media and ever-growing use of social media tools have completely changed the ways people stay connected and informed. The transition from traditional to online media has fundamentally changed the way how people obtain and exchange information. These changes are present in Central Asia as well. New media offer more equal participation and interactivity. Today Central Asia is witnessing the ever increasing role of online media in society.

But we face troubles worldwide, including here in Central Asia.

The Internet has become subject to unnecessary restrictions in too many places.

Every government has a duty to fight terrorism or illegal activity such as child abuse on the Internet, but no government has a right, under the guise of fighting cybercrime, to block websites or adopt restrictive laws. We should remember that there is no security without free media and there is no free media without a secure environment.

Governments should invest in infrastructure to ensure that more people have access to the Internet and promote Internet literacy to empower users to make educated choices about how to use the Internet. However, in many places, the Internet remains out of reach because the costs are simply too high. And in some locales, those who use the Internet, including journalists and bloggers, are increasingly subject to harassment and jail.

The political environment and legal constraints in the region pose challenges to the development of online media. Systematic blocking, filtering and censoring of websites are shaking the basic principles of freedom of the media. I am mandated by the OSCE commitments to work for an open, free and safe Internet. Twenty two years ago participating States agreed, during the Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimension, that everyone has the right to free expression and to communication without government interference and, in Permanent Council Decision 633 of November 2004, the participating States expressly committed themselves to ensuring that the Internet remain an open and public forum for freedom of opinion and expression. This is what I expect from Central Asia states and all the other participating States.

One should not have to make the case for the Internet; its benefits are obvious. We are standing at a crossroads in the development of the Internet. Unless individuals and businesses make their voices heard we may see the end of an open Internet – taking choice and control away from the user and putting more power in the hands of those who would limit our access to information.

At the end of the conference I hope we will adopt a declaration on this important subject which will be translated into all languages of the Central Asian participating States.

I will share it with your authorities, so the discussions that we will have here continue in your home countries after the conference.

I wish you all an interesting and fruitful conference.

**Session 1: Transition from
traditional to social media:
International standards
and pressing challenges**

Social media and journalism

Christian Möller¹

“We already live in the digital age, a time in which we can create truly democratic cultures with participation by all members of society; and in only a few years from now this participation will virtually include most of the world’s citizens.”

Dunja Mijatović

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Social media and social networks change the way news is generated and accessed. They influence media in three dimensions: as a tool for journalists to create content, as a tool to distribute and impart information, and as a tool to seek, receive and access information. The exercise of these fundamental rights by journalists and citizens also relies on unhindered access to the Internet.

Internet Access as a human right

Access to and the use of the Internet and all its services – including social media and social networks – is widely considered a human right in the 21st century.

As the Internet increasingly becomes an indispensable tool for all citizens to receive, seek and impart information across borders, access to the Internet becomes closely linked to the basic human right to freedom of expression and, therefore constitutes a human right in itself.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression in a recent report stated that “the framework of international human rights law remains relevant today and equally applicable to new communication technologies such as the Internet.” Cutting off users from the Internet, regardless of the justification provided, is considered a violation of article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).²

1 Möller is special adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

2 “UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression” . A/HRC/17/27. 16 May 2011.

In their Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and the Internet, the respective Representatives of the UN, OSCE, OAS and ACHPR said that “giving effect to the right to freedom of expression imposes an obligation on States to promote universal access to the Internet.”³

In her presentation of a study on Internet regulation in the OSCE region in July 2011, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media commented that “[s]ome governments already recognize access to the Internet as a human right. This trend should be supported as a crucial element of media freedom in the 21st century.”⁴

In its 2010 Belgrade Resolution, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly invited the OSCE to enable the Representative on Freedom of the Media “to be more active in the field of promoting free movement of information and knowledge and its free access, as this is one of the pillars for guaranteeing effective participatory democracy and the strengthening of human rights.”⁵

The OSCE PA also stressed “the need for free access to information, especially through an Internet network easily accessible to all population groups.”⁶

The Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in a model law on the principles of Internet regulation from 2011, stated that the rights and freedom of citizens, including the right to use the Internet and to access information on the Internet should be assured.

Access to the Internet is not an end in itself. It is only a means to benefit from the many services the Internet offers, e.g. for individual communication, education, e-commerce, entertainment and also journalism.

3 (2011) The United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, 1 June, 2011.

4 “Internet blocking practices a concern, access is a human right, says OSCE media freedom representative at launch of OSCE-wide study” July 8, 2011. <<http://www.osce.org/fom/80735>>

5 OSCE PA (2010).

6 OSCE PA (2010).

Social media and social networks

Social media and social networks form ever newer ways to communicate, many of which we could not have imagined just a few years ago, and many to come that we cannot envision today. They make use of innovative technologies and combine them with already existing features to form Internet services which can be used by journalists and citizens alike.

Facebook, Twitter & Co. make it easier than ever before to share information, impart and receive news or comment on and discuss ideas and developments. Bloggers widened the scope of classical journalism and added the new form of “blogging” or “citizen journalism” to the media landscape. Now, social media and social networks add even another dimension.

The term social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. They can be defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of the so-called Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.⁷

Enabled by ubiquitously accessible and scalable communication techniques, social media substantially change the way of communicating among organizations, communities, as well as individuals and can take on many different forms, including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, micro-blogging, wikis, podcasts, photographs or pictures, videos, rating, social bookmarking and social networking.⁸

Whereas this definition sees social networking as a part of social media, the distinction between social media and social networks in reality is blurred. Micro-blogging services such as Twitter serve both as personal networking tools and at the same time as a platform to disseminate news – or even undertake journalistic research. Social networks such as Facebook or Google+ are used for individual communication, but more and more also for institutional communication, news distribution, research through crowd sourcing and many more purposes, including many still to be developed.

⁷ “Social media” <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Social_media&oldid=458549677>

⁸ “Social media” <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Social_media&oldid=458549677>

Freedom of (social) media?

Beyond the use for individual communication, social networks today serve as an indispensable tool for the work of journalists and bloggers. Research, publication, distribution, funding, collaboration, follow up and discussion – all this happens on social networks and through social media. At the same time users rely on social media and social networks to receive news reports. This multi-dimensional usage of social media and social networks also brings with it implications for the basic right of freedom of the media.

Freedom of the media as a human right is not reserved for media companies or editorial offices. This right cannot be interpreted only in the context of traditional media, but applies to any form of editorial work that is meant for public distribution. As it is a basic human right, there cannot be different subsets for traditional media and new media.

Freedom of the media and freedom of expression are universal rights that apply to all forms of media, no matter whether online or offline, no matter whether professional or citizen journalism, no matter whether print or social media.

The right to freedom of the media also includes the right to seek and receive information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of choice.

Consequently, this means that social media and social networks themselves fall under the protection of the right to freedom of the media, as today they serve manifold purposes in the production and consumption of news.

The protection of Internet services through the right to freedom of expression is also in line with the above-mentioned human right to access to the Internet as well as existing OSCE commitments relating to freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the media that apply to all forms of their exercise, including digital media on new platforms.

Today's news is social

The online circulation of traditional newspapers is growing.⁹ The use of social media and social networks is increasing rapidly worldwide. In November 2011, the popular social network, Facebook had more than 800 million active users, 75 percent of which are based outside the United States. More than 50 percent of those 800 million people log on to Facebook in any given day.¹⁰

At the same time, Internet and mobile technologies are at the center of how people's relationship to news is changing. The importance of social networks for news consumption is growing. People use their social networks and social networking technology to filter, assess and react to news.

A 2010 study by the Pew Research Center showed that in the United States the Internet has surpassed newspapers and radio in popularity as a news platform on a typical day and now ranks just behind television. Six in 10 Americans (59 percent) get news from a combination of online and offline sources in a typical day.

In the study, 75 percent of U.S. online news consumers say they get news forwarded through e-mail or posts on social networking sites and 52 percent say they share links to news with others via those means. A third of cell phone owners even access news on their cell phones.¹¹

In another 2010 study, about the news consumption and sharing habits of the international readership of CNN, 43 percent of online news sharing occurs via social media networks and tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and MySpace, followed by e-mail (30 percent), SMS (15 percent) and instant messenger (12 percent).¹²

Increasingly, online news consumers follow news organizations or individual journalists on social networking sites and journalists distribute news online or share the stories behind the story that did not make it into the print version.

9 "Newspaper Circulation Figures Show Some Digital Growth", November 1, 2011 <<http://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/01/newspaper-circulation-figures-show-some-digital-growth/>>

10 "Statistics". <<https://www.facebook.com/press#!/press/info.php?statistics>>

11 "Understanding the Participatory News Consumer" <<http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Online-News/Summary-of-Findings.aspx>>

12 Indvik, Lauren (2010) Social Networks Dominate Online News Distribution. In: Mashable, October 7, 2010. <<http://mashable.com/2010/10/07/cnn-news-study/>>

Thus, the Internet with its social media and social networks today form an indispensable infrastructure for the right to seek and receive information – across borders – that is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Citizen journalism

Beyond seeking information online or simply swapping stories and commenting on them via e-mail, some 37 percent of U.S. Internet users also contribute to the creation of news, comment about it or disseminate news via social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. They have done at least one of the following: comment on a news story (25 percent); post a link on a social networking site (17 percent); tag content (11 percent), create their own original news material or opinion piece (9 percent), or tweet about news (3 percent). Among those who get news online, 75 percent get news forwarded through e-mail or posts on social networking sites and 52 percent share links to news with others via those means.

Blogging, vlogging, posting videos, aggregating news, sharing articles online and syndicating content are some of the forms of journalism that the innovative technology of Web 2.0 allows for.

“The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the Internet to create, augment or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others. For example, you might write about a city council meeting on your blog or in an online forum. Or you could fact-check a newspaper article from the mainstream media and point out factual errors or bias on your blog. Or you might snap a digital photo of a newsworthy event happening in your town and post it online. Or you might videotape a similar event and post it on a site such as YouTube. All these might be considered acts of journalism, even if they don’t go beyond simple observation at the scene of an important event.”¹³

“There is some controversy over the term citizen journalism, because many professional journalists believe that only a trained journalist can understand the rigors and ethics involved in reporting the news. And conversely, there are many trained journalists who practice what might be considered citizen journalism by

¹³ Glaser, Mark (2006) Your Guide to Citizen Journalism. In: , 27. September 2006. <<http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2006/09/your-guide-to-citizen-journalism270.html>>

writing their own blogs or commentary online outside of the traditional journalism hierarchy.”¹⁴

Another definition of participatory journalism describes it as the “act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. The intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires.”¹⁵

Or, in short: “citizen journalism is when people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another.”¹⁶

According to the Council of Europe, “any natural or legal person who is regularly or professionally engaged in the collection and dissemination of information to the public via any means of mass communication” qualifies as a journalist.¹⁷ This would include bloggers who publish new articles regularly.

At the same time, the Council of Europe suggests that with regard to the increasing importance of the Internet as a means of mass communication, there should be a debate on whether the protection of journalists’ sources should be enlarged to other persons engaged in the dissemination of information.¹⁸

In a world in which individuals communicate on public or semi-public platforms, the line between professional journalism and other forms of content production is not easily drawn. Also, collaborative works, such as wikis, make it difficult to identify a single author.

Rather than judging by the origin of content, the content itself should qualify as “journalistic,” and this definition should be broadly applied.

This said, it is crucial to also mention the importance of the right to privacy, data protection and the confidentiality of individual communication, although it might take place on the same platforms as public communication.

14 Glaser, Mark (2006) Your Guide to Citizen Journalism. In: , 27. September 2006. <<http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2006/09/your-guide-to-citizen-journalism270.html>>

15 Bowman Shayne/Willis, Chris (2003) . <<http://www.hypergene.net/wemedia/weblog.php>> (Letzter Besuch 03.11.2011)

16 Prof. Jay Rosen, pressthink.org

17 Recommendation No. R(2000)7 on the right of journalists not to disclose their sources of information.

18 PACE Doc. 12443 The protection of journalists’ sources, Committee on Culture, Science and Education Report, 1 December 2010

Social media and social networks as tools for journalists

Social networks and social media at the same time offer a great tool for journalists for research and as a source for stories. Twitter, Facebook or YouTube offer coverage by other journalists and normal citizens of many events, including events to which there is limited access for journalists, e.g. for safety, financial or other reasons.

The use of Web 2.0 tools for this form of research – or ‘crowdsourcing’ – is still underdeveloped and journalists need to develop skills to check and verify sources in order to guarantee reliable and accurate information. Recent cases¹⁹ demonstrated a considerable lack of fact checking of social media sources by journalists. Awareness should be raised and tools for journalist training in the use of social media and social networks should be developed.

Social networks and social media also enable journalists to collaborate with fellow journalists or citizens (mass collaboration) on the Internet, for examples in wikis or other tools of online collaboration, or through commenting on articles, fact checking and making use of the “wisdom of the crowd.” Accountability is an issue, though when it comes to anonymous wikis and professional journalism ethics should be further developed in this field.

¹⁹ A gay girl in Damascus comes clean, Washington Post, June 12, 2011 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/a-gay-girl-in-damascus-comes-clean/2011/06/12/AGkyHORH_story.html>

Internet Regulation Global Concerns and Evolving Models

Douglas Griffin¹ and Dieter Loraine²

Introduction

Since the advent of the Internet, it has been heralded as an exciting new medium—one that has revolutionized communications, led to citizen journalism, and made many types of commerce easier and cheaper. In 1996, as the Internet was just beginning to take shape on the edges of society, John Perry Barlow issued a letter to governments declaring the “independence of cyberspace”:

*Cyberspace consists of transactions, relationships, and thought itself, arrayed like a standing wave in the web of our communications. Ours is a world that is both everywhere and nowhere, but it is not where bodies live... We will spread ourselves across the Planet so that no one can arrest our thoughts.*³

Barlow’s statement was divisive because it drove some digital pioneers to rebel at the mention of any sort of Internet regulation and subsequently encouraged a new realm in which monopolies could flourish. Since then, the Internet has played a part in mass political movements such as the “Arab Spring” and revolutionised business around the world. In 2011 in the United Kingdom alone, the total value of e-commerce was £408 billion and growing at 24.9 percent.⁴ Google, a single private company easily used daily by most people accessing the Internet, is worth more than \$200 billion with annual revenue at \$43 billion.⁵ As for social media, LinkedIn has become the main method for competitive firms to recruit new hires.

1 Griffin is Director of Albany Associates.

2 Loraine is Managing Director of Albany Associates.

3 <https://projects.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html>

4 <http://www.indez.com/stats>

5 <http://uk.finance.yahoo.com/q/ks?s=GOOG>

Some aspects of the Internet have also worried governments that seek to maintain standards of decency in the online realm. How can harmful or illegal content or activity be monitored and prevented when the government has no jurisdiction over the publisher? How can the publisher even be identified? What actions can the government take?

This discussion is becoming increasingly globalised, as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) considers whether and how to attempt global regulation of the Internet. The ITU is situated under the United Nations, and has organised the World Summit on the Information Society (2002 and 2004) at which international representatives debated a multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance. The ITU is responding to pressure from governments unable to control the Internet at a national level, and freedom of expression advocates are alarmed that global regulation could diminish the very qualities that make the Internet such an exciting means of communication and such a unique tool for commerce. One of the criticisms of the ITU process has been that the public has little information on the discussions to date. Forums are scheduled throughout the summer, with an Internet Governance Forum scheduled for Baku in November, and a review by the ITU of this very issue in Dubai in December.

Vincent Cerf, Google's "Internet evangelist", writes on the problems that would arise if the ITU moves to bring the Internet under its watch via "international standards" and agreements of Internet governance.⁶ Such legislation is being pushed by China, Russia and others. Cerf's critique of the ITU is the lack of involvement from civil society stakeholders who he claims contributed to the growth of the Internet in the first place. While some believe the ITU can help expand Internet access to developing countries, Cerf thinks that ITU involvement would only hinder economic growth and infringe on basic human rights.

It is interesting to note that Cerf mentions that those calling for ITU regulation of the Internet are wary of large U.S. companies (i.e. Google and Facebook) profiting disproportionately from a lack of regulation. He does not address the details of such concerns, but with the privacy debates surrounding Google⁷ and Facebook's IPO scandal⁸ the question of companies getting "too big for their own good" is understandable from the consumer perspective. However, it is unclear

6 http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/25/opinion/keep-the-internet-open.html?_r=3

7 <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/26/growing-too-big-for-a-conscience/>

8 <http://news.yahoo.com/insight-morgan-stanley-cut-facebook-estimates-just-ipo-051601330--sector.html>

if regulation from a centralized international authority would be effective or in the best interests of the public.

Several Attempts at Internet Regulation Around the World

Three regions that have fairly advanced regulatory systems in place for the Internet are the Gulf States of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and also China and Australia. While culturally they are dissimilar, their efforts to enforce a regulatory scheme provide lessons for other countries looking to do the same.

THE GULF

The UAE and Saudi Arabia use filtering software at the ISP level, called SmartFilter. The software is meant to prevent access to certain broad categories of content, such as pornography, references to drug use, gambling, religious conversion as well as tools that allow one to circumvent the filters. The major problem with this approach is that it is a blunt instrument, over-filtering acceptable content (i.e., blocking research on the city of Essex, England because it contains the word “sex”) and under-filtering some illegal and offensive content. There is also a negative perception attached to such software as it is usually used by repressive regimes.

AUSTRALIA

Australia’s regulatory body, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), regulates Internet content via a public complaints process. The ACMA is not required to proactively search for violations, rather it operates a co-regulatory scheme, administered by the federal government, involving the public and Internet industry. Once ACMA receives a complaint, it must investigate and if the content is deemed prohibited, ACMA tells the Internet content host to remove the content. Failure to do so results in a fine for the host.

The Australian government has recently announced plans to require Australian ISPs to block access to restricted content online in order to better regulate content hosted both in the country and abroad. The current complaints system does not apply to restricted content hosted off-shore, which is a significant disadvantage as perpetrators can easily export illegal content to Australia.⁹

⁹ <http://www.lawhandbook.org.au/handbook/ch10s04s06.php#>

Australia's Internet Industry Association has developed its own Code of Practice, supplemented by ACMA where necessary. The Code is voluntary and self-regulatory, though ACMA can enforce compliance among Internet service providers and content hosts.

CHINA

China's model of Internet regulation surpasses attempts by most countries and involves extensive government coordination and management. In order for a social media website to run, it must be registered and approved by the government. There are six media regulatory authorities within the Chinese government, including the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Public Security and Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. ICP/IP registration with the appropriate ministry is required for every single web site. Only government agencies are licensed to report news and one agency (Xinhua) has the authority to report important, breaking news.

Social media is available to anyone with a mobile phone in China, but anything that is considered a threat to national stability is monitored on these networks, including rumours about top leaders, news about collective movements and riots, petitions for collective actions and pornography. These pose challenges to individuals that host social media sites, from financial constraints to political issues, making it difficult to make a business out of a social media enterprise. Whereas American companies such as Facebook and LinkedIn have produced billionaires, Chinese social media entrepreneurs are struggling to stay afloat because investors are less willing to take the risk on them.¹⁰

Content is monitored based on sensitive users and words, meaning that certain online personalities are targeted, which raises issues about human rights, privacy and human security. A challenge to regulators and the government (one in the same, really) is that users have developed complex circumnavigation tools to get around firewalls. One example is that individuals can use VPNs to access Facebook, which is banned on Chinese servers. As VPNs are discovered and shut down, their audiences move to new VPNs -- a constant game of cat and mouse, but one that the sophisticated user seems always to win.

¹⁰ Presentation, Alex Mou, Zousa.com Co-Founder and CEO, Oxford Internet Institute, Conference on Chinese Media Law and Regulation, 15-16 June 2012.

The United Kingdom: A Changing Regulatory Model

Usually when discussing problems with regulatory frameworks for media, the target is one of the more embryonic systems, such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda or Somalia. These are all countries where Albany has worked on regulatory activities since 1997, and all are at different stages of addressing media and Internet regulation. But, recent events in the UK have illuminated certain weaknesses in both the media itself and the regulation of it. So, whilst one may discuss the UK model as a good example, it is also one where we can learn from its mistakes.

Currently in the UK, a country once known as the bastion of freedom of the media and democratic independent regulation, regulation is under scrutiny. Recent events such as the UK media's hacking of mobile phones, alleged bribing of police officers for information on celebrities and politicians, and accusations that people in government were aware of such on goings has brought about a wide-ranging and lengthy inquiry into how the media operate in the UK. Couple this with the prospect of new legislation and technological and market change, and regulation is at the center of great debate about the media. In effect, media regulation is at a crossroads, as it was twenty years ago when one part of the media, the printed press, was told to clean up its act or the government would bring in statutory regulation. It did, through a robust system of press self-regulation. It seems that the time has come again for another long hard look at how regulation can be improved, especially when the Internet is playing an ever increasing role in how we access news, information and entertainment.

The British Home Secretary announced in June 2012 a draft Communications Data Bill that expands the amount of personal online data that telecom operators must store, for up to twelve months, for access by officials (with a warrant). The Home Office claimed that increased data storage, including concerning web sites visited, is necessary because of "criminal and terrorist" use of social media and online gaming sites that allow evasion of existing surveillance. The bill has met resistance among NGOs and MPs who feel it goes too far and will violate innocent civilians' liberties. One MP said the criminals who are meant to be caught by such a bill would be able to circumnavigate data collection by using Internet cafes, proxy servers and hacking into other peoples' wireless networks.¹¹

¹¹ <http://m.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-18434112>

In Albany's experiences of around the world advising on broadcasting, communications and press regulation, we have encountered a myriad of different views and models on how to regulate the media. There is increased discussion of models, especially now as some countries move quickly to digital technology, making current media regulatory practices obsolete virtually overnight. Albany has absorbed many perspectives whilst understanding that you cannot just take one regulatory regime model and transplant it in another country.

However, Albany's work highlights three principles that serve as basic starting points for regulators anywhere:

First, the press (as opposed to the broadcast media), whether in printed form and bought in a shop or as an online publication, should not be controlled by statute.

Second, freedom of expression is a fundamental right for human needs, human rights and social and economic development and should be at the heart of any regulatory regime.

Third, efforts to constrain Internet content, whilst unpalatable to supporters of freedom of speech, are often understandable given the freedom of access and availability. But, we should be ever mindful that people generally value freedom and choice, which is at the heart of the Internet. Regulators should be very careful to approach this matter in a way that preserves the openness and creativity of the Internet rather than regulates for regulation's sake. It is also easy to understand why some governments feel excluded from Internet policymaking and want more control over the process. Indeed, as mentioned above, the UN is wading in on the issue at the end of the year by convening a conference on Internet regulation where there are strong rumours that they will discuss international control over the Internet using the monitoring and supervisory capabilities of the International Telecommunication Union.

Albany has also witnessed more recently that the regulatory status quo may not give viewers the protections and assurances they expect in a world of superfast broadband networks, fixed and mobile devices now delivering content live, on demand and online through connected TVs. As a result there is a need for a much more coherent overall approach to digital media, covering normal linear broadcasting at one end and Internet publishing at the other. A coherent approach means not necessarily a single structure, like a regulatory authority dealing with the entire sector.

In the UK, the future of press regulation is under scrutiny at a time when newspapers are rapidly expanding the scale and scope of their digital services and this needs to be considered in this broader context.

There are four straightforward principles that might help us navigate to a sensible destination for regulating the media in the digital Internet age:

- Any regulatory regime must start and finish with the public interest. Public expectation and trust must override commercial, political or institutional self-interest.
- Where regulation *is* judged necessary, it must be effective and capable of building and sustaining public trust.
- The approach must work for both ‘traditional’ media such as broadcast and print, which have clear boundaries, as well as digital media whose boundaries are more fluid.
- Finally, but equally important, it must help rather than hinder business to compete, invest and innovate and in doing so, strengthen an economy as a hub for digital services and creativity.

Technology and markets

This section starts by outlining some of the current and future technology that will be driving technology and market developments. It also raises important questions when it comes to how to regulate in these fast moving digital environments. Whilst these examples may be UK-centric, they do provide valuable lessons for other countries embarking on regulatory regimes.

- The UK will have 4G mobile broadband up and running very soon, even before the country has a new communications law. This new technology will provide significant enhancements in mobile connectivity for 98 percent of the UK’s population.
- Tablets such as Apple’s iPads and smartphones will feed off this network, offering mobility-hungry consumers superfast connectivity that will drive new services, coverage and take-up.

- Internet connected TVs will in turn feed on a fixed network of dramatically increased capacity, in parallel with enhancements in terrestrial and satellite distribution.
- Services that combine linear and on-demand viewing will become commonplace. Electronic Programme Guides will go backwards as well as forwards, and searching archives will be standard.
- Social media on the primary screen or in parallel on a second screen will often enrich our experience and sometimes just distract us.

So, what should we make of all this in a regulatory context? Can we balance the freedom of expression needs with regulation when media is moving forward at lightning speed?

In such an increasingly converged world, it is simply not possible to provide the comprehensive audience protection from the Internet world. With so much more content delivered to our televisions, there will inevitably be greater risk in relation to harmful content. With the greater freedom and access comes an erosion of the mechanisms we have historically used to protect audiences. The world in which we are entering is one of robust conventional broadcasting, alongside an incredibly fertile environment of new content and applications.

So, what, then, are audiences' expectations and priorities in this world?

Recent research from OFCOM, the UK's converged regulatory authority, sought to understand the public's expectations when it comes to Internet freedom.¹² Some of the major points of their research are as follows:

- The research indicates that people recognize the importance of the freedoms of the Internet but also see an important difference between the TV in their living room and Internet access through a computer.
- Audiences have continuing high expectations for the regulation of normal broadcasting but want more assurance that content will be protected for video on demand services.

¹² <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/tv-research/946687/Protecting-audiences.pdf>

- Converged or Internet connected televisions, which incorporate broadcast, video-on-demand and open Internet services, are considered to be closer to a TV-like experience. Audiences therefore expect content transmitted over these devices to be more regulated than Internet content accessed through laptops.
- Protecting minors from harmful content is seen as one of the most important parts of existing regulation. Most people want the existing degree of protection, or something better, extended across more audio-visual services and platforms.
- Viewers want to see more provision of information to make sure that they can understand what is regulated and what is not, as part of an overall system of regulation which they can understand.
- Interestingly, people rank the protection of privacy below harm and protection of minors. This is perhaps because people believe that invasions of privacy happen to public figures rather than ordinary viewers.
- But, probably the clearest messages of this research are that people like what the UK model of broadcasting regulation delivers. They want more protection in broadly similar areas of any kind of content that enters the living room through the television. In other words, and perhaps surprisingly, they want more regulation rather than less.

Now, similar research carried out in other countries may provide different views but the point is that to devise regulatory regimes that meet the needs of the audiences, protect freedom of speech but also keep up with the speed of technology, research is essential.

How then should we respond to these challenges and changes?

First, as a principle, we should all strive to preserve the spirit of the open Internet. This is desirable in and of itself. In light of the hundreds of thousands of services emanating from places well beyond national borders and more importantly regulatory jurisdiction, it is also recognition of what is practical.

That is not to say that people should be left unsupported to navigate this virtual

world. Governments, regulators and industry should provide clear information, education and a framework of personal responsibility through which individuals and families can exercise informed choice. Policy, both old and new, should be properly communicated to the public.

Furthermore, when something looks, feels and acts like television, but is delivered over the Internet and into people's living rooms, we need something that meets audiences' expectations and provides the right degree of reassurance.

In this context, establishing a core set of principles and aims that are held in common across a diverse media terrain with different regulatory environments may be the way ahead. Such a set of core principles could be established between the different regulators that emerge from the current debate. They might aim to articulate the minimum standards regardless of the nature of the service or its specific regulatory setting.

Indeed in the UK, the codes of practice of OFCOM (the regulator of broadcast and telecommunications), the Press Complaints Commission (the self-regulatory body for the printed press) and the BBC (the public service broadcaster) all have many similar provisions, and work well together.

The UK's Press Complaints Commission (PCC) is run by a group consisting of representatives of both the press and civil society. A few years ago, under mounting pressure from citizens' complaints on Internet publications, they broadened their mandate – with the full blessing of the press – to include those publications that have Internet versions. This has proved to be a great success and has improved the accuracy and balance of reporting online. It is and probably will remain an opt-in process whereby those in the press that agree to be bound by the PCC's rules regulate themselves. This leaves those that do not opt in outside the system of self-regulation. But, many are opting in all the time, and soon more will be in than out.

There was pressure to extend the mandate to all other online publications without a printed version but this would have been impractical and in all likelihood unenforceable. The key here is to get the support of the press before embarking on a self-regulatory regime to include the Internet.

Conclusion

The first goal is the need to understand and to meet audiences' views of what kind of regulation they want and need.

Second, this needs to be balanced with what we know about the nature of different media and the ideals that we value that might be in tension with regulation. The freedoms at the heart of the Internet are one such example.

Third, there is a need for a coherent overall approach to digital media, covering linear broadcast at one end and Internet publishing at the other. Press regulation is under scrutiny around the world at a time when newspapers are rapidly expanding the scale and scope of their digital services. A coherent approach will anticipate this world, one where the rigid boundaries defined by traditional means of delivery will be gone.

Fourth, for regulation to be both independent and effective there is a fairly clear set of criteria that must be met in whole or in large part. Of course, local context in individual countries must always be addressed and acknowledged, but adhering to international standards will ensure that measures are neither too harsh nor too weak.

And finally, we should strive toward simplicity and clarity in the overall regulatory system – an objective that will serve the public well, but also will promote a broader interest in offering a positive environment for investment, innovation and creative businesses.

Above all, and whatever approach is taken, the acid test will remain the ability of the system and its individual elements to build and sustain public trust, support industry growth, keep up with technology and uphold the values of freedom of expression.

Digital media and the Internet market: Audiences, multimedia content and business models

Anna Kachkaeva¹

“In the three short decades between now and the twenty-first century, millions of ordinary, psychologically normal people will face an abrupt collision with the future. Citizens of the world’s richest and most technologically advanced nations, many of them will find it increasingly painful to keep up with the incessant demand for change that characterizes our time. For them, the future will have arrived too soon.”

Alvin Toffler, Future Shock

Many parents of modern children understand that they are dealing with the “digital generation” which is overtaking them in mastering the possibilities of new communications technologies. This generation of new users of future media content and workers in the coming “impressions economy” are called multitaskers (they are accustomed to using three or four communications devices at the same time and are plugged into several media environments); “visual” (the world is increasingly perceived through the visualization of information with the help of “pictures”); voyeuristic (modern communications have legitimized peeping and life-casting); interactive (connected to the life of people and communities with the aid of mobile devices and social networks); innovative (communication – frequent, accessible, remote access, virtual – is becoming the basis for the “creative” of innovative business, for whom going to an office is optional, as you can have an idea, like-minded people, a notebook computer, and access to the web). Today we can already say that the modern person is above all a communicative person.

Why is the increase in the role of communications occurring? How is the web, with its horizontal nature of ties, connected to mass and interpersonal communications? Networks have a new power. They connect these two worlds, these two forms of communication, although such a “connection” is not anything particularly new and relies on the already established practice of connections among two models of communication. But the main thing that must be kept in

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mind, “social media” – new channels of communications – are becoming the drivers of change.

New Internet technologies and mobility are producing a new type of “social product” connected to the architecture of these technologies. The individualization of consumption is growing at the expense of the “narrow attraction of active groups”. *Imaginaire relationnelle* (relationship virtuality) is being established as an oppositional practice of using the computer as a “rational reality.” Forms of entertainment are becoming more complex and are virtualizing, actively founded on play and scene-making as a way of life (exchange of fantasies, the building of a “spectacle” around oneself [*mise en scène de soi*], play with identity).

Multimedia, crossmedia, transmedia – these new characteristics of the nature of media, are fundamental. Multimedia leads to an instrumental universality of platforms which become crossmedia, and inherently production is the “subject,” and not the type of media. Transmedia and convergence become a philosophy of content, platforms, new professions and modern consumers of media. The role of journalists is changing. They no longer only record, obtain, film, write. They chose, verify (or don’t verify!), they “package” the information of eyewitnesses, who are armed with mobile telephones, keeping blogs, sending SMS texts, and exchanging information on social networks. Editorial boards are “directing” information streams; media business divisions are involved in cross-marketing. The nature of multimedia influences the competitiveness of mass media, and changes the strategy of traditional media and their online versions as the marketing tool develops the concepts of “augmented reality” and “second life” (a means of virtual existence as a person and as media).

The significance of digital media for an active audience is increasing and the amount of time users spent on the Internet is growing. The user’s faith in traditional advertising and marketing is falling. Today, not only the printed versions of newspapers and traditional radio but even mass broadcast television are yielding their positions to the Internet as a channel of communication. Speed, mobility, multimedia, universality, interactivity – these are the key words for the modern editorial office and media space. The audience -- increasingly called “journalism providers” – are becoming co-participants in the process of producing multimedia information, primarily visual (photo, video, clips).

The Internet market in Russia (Internet media, media on the Internet, online services) is growing vigorously. The monthly audience for Runet in 2012 in Russia was 57.8 million (50% of the population older than 18 years); the reach was 49%, and the Internet market in Russia in 2011 was worth 54 trillion rubles (1.4 to 1.7% of Russia's GDP, according to the Russian Association of Electronic Communications). In age groups up to 45 years, the Internet supersedes in reach all other media, including television. The audience of the mobile Internet is growing twice as fast as the stationary Internet (source: TNS Web Index, Russia, cities of 100,000+, age 12+, January 2012, Communications, 2011), which makes the Russian Internet market one of the most promising in Europe. The audience for Yandex in April 2012 for the first time exceeded the audience for First Channel on television. Yandex was visited by 19.1 million people a day, and First Channel was watched by 18.2 million a day (figures from TNS). With all the caveats regarding the comparison of results from television-watching and using a search portal, the trend is both illustrative and symbolic. Now television can be called the most mass media also now with caveats. Web viewers on the radio, online broadcasting on the portals of news agencies and radio stations, radio news on newspaper sites, infographics, animation, comics, photo films and audio slideshows are everywhere. This is already the customary selection of content for modern multimedia mass media.

The most important trend in the development of the new media is the speed and presence of millions of non-professionals who compete with professionals in producing content. For Russia media, awareness of the final lost battle for speed of information with the networks came after the tragic terrorist act at the Domodedovo Airport (social network users overtook all media, and the media widely incorporated the content of eyewitnesses). Any modern editorial board is hard to imagine today without active promotion in social networks, without special columns (variations of diverse mobile reporters), incentivizing (for fame or for money) the former consumers of information to become its producers. Social media, more than traditional media, is oriented to discussion and creation of new values. This natural feature of social media is being used by the more advanced traditional media for creation of a loyal audience and design of new business models in the digital environment.

Modern media helps people to realize themselves, to create social communities, especially in niche markets. Initially these process are connected to the desire for personal communications, therefore social media is dialogue in essence. Local municipal newspapers, moving to the web, become platforms for resolving

problems of local communities. A vivid example is the newspaper of the small town of Berdsk near Novosibirsk and the special project “I want to go to day care!” Young mothers with the help of journalists and the possibilities of social networks (discussion, posting of documents, coordinating of actions and oversight of decisions by the administration) were able to get transparency regarding the allocation of places in day-care facilities, where waiting lists had become a real disaster in Russian cities in recent years). Everything that is collectively created and written collaboratively (blog-hosting sites, pages on social networks, Wikipedia and so on) creates a new social milieu, which is increasingly becoming a driver of social action.

Of course, the web is not only a good thing. The power of the networks, like any good, can be used in different ways. Whatever ends up on the Internet can be disseminated instantly, because “gatekeeping” is losing its meaning at the entrance to a social network, although the meaning is growing of “gatekeeping” to the entrance to the Internet as a whole and the mass communications media of the Internet (to which a social network refers). The power of networks can be realized through corporate control of the telecommunications and the media environment. According to the theory of Manuel Castells, the corporate power of networks is the imposition of products, services, consumption, and the political power of networks is related to the capacity of “gatekeeping” of political networks to media networks. The internal web power is realized through the procedure of controlling the agenda. The web-formed power is in the hands of a group of corporations and holding companies.

Since web power is also power, it is very important to understand how millions of people live in the “networks”. Russia is in first place in Europe in popularity of social networks. The average Russian user spends 9.89 hours a month on social networks, whereas the average European only spends 4 hours.

Recognizing the scale of the coming changes, media managers would like to “marry” television with its passive viewing with the activity of the social networks. This is seen as a possible of enabling a renaissance in television, which is losing its viewers. The Smart TV technology offers such a possibility (at the technical level – smart-viewers are already being released and have built into them the ability to log on to the web or Skype during TV viewing and share impressions. Samsung and LG are already offering a payment service through smart wallets), and television corporations -- often the most unprofitable of the traditional media

– are beginning to recognize the challenges and develop principles and rules for work with television content in social networks. Of course, “big” television can battle with the social networks. But it is more productive, without a doubt, to integrate. For that, the oldest and youngest companies propose different methods:

- organizing offline life around TV, immerse and attract the viewer in the life of the editorial office (editorial meetings at Dozhd’ [Rain] TV in Russia and special sites about how news is made -- “internal editorial interiors” at CNN).
- learning to get satisfaction from telling stories and letting people earn money (competitions for viewers for programming the channel at Current TV and involvement of users in the creation of news content at Russia 24);
- “plant and grow loyalty” -- creating sites and pages on social networks devoted to programs, heroes, actors (examples of serials and comedy shows on the Russian channels TNT and STS).
- make partners, when viewer/users can compete for favorite content, prolong its screen and web life, as for example, the program Top Gear;
- creating a “second life” for television content (Mid-America Novelties, about a store which sells “fashionable goods from Uryupinsk”.) Besides the show on the Internet, there is an online version of the same store where you can really buy the merchandise; there are contents parodying the work of such stores in which the characters on the serial talk to the viewer/user; and the option to buy virtual presents on Facebook in the form of goods from the store. Yet another serial, “Shit My Dad Says” has become a CBS sitcom, made on the basis of a popular account on Twitter (about a man who lives with his father).

Already on the horizon – and the next thing after the stage of “sitting” and “second life” -- is “embedding” so to speak. Already the service Hulu has appeared, which is a television aggregator, offering an app for Facebook with which you can watch video with friends and leave comments, embedded on the video. Or a device which brings video to the user’s television from any source,

enabling not only the discussion of impressions from viewing, but the clipping and sharing of videos liked, enabling the creation of your own channel, including your own broadcasting.

Communication with an audience 24/7, the use of transmedia storytelling, the realization of digital special projects, the creation of a second life, “embedding – are already in the literal sense the integration of people and devices.

**Session II: Social media
and general media developments
in Central Asia**

The role of New Media in contemporary journalism in Kazakhstan

Diana Medvednikova¹

Let me express my gratitude to the organizers of this conference for their constant interest and attention to the problems of media in Central Asia. It would be more difficult to resolve various questions without the support and participation of international organizations, in particular, the OSCE.

I would like to present some statistics in order to provide a picture of the situation in the media market of Kazakhstan. Today, according to figures from the Ministry of Culture and Information, there are 2,695 mass media outlets in operation, 90% of which are newspapers, 9.5% of which are electronic media and 0.5% of which are news agencies. Each year, according to the Ministry, the number of media outlets is increasing by 1,000 to 1,200 organizations. Formally, 85% of the media is independent and only 15% are government-owned. These optimistic figures, however, do not reflect the full extent of the situation in the media market.

First, it is necessary to speak of the changes in media law in the last year. A positive factor was the reform of civil legislation. Since April 2011, legal persons who file a lawsuit in defense of honor, dignity and business reputation do not have the right to demand compensation for moral damage. This is a very important norm for Kazakhstan since, in previous years, as media experts actively indicated, legal persons could not experience moral suffering and, consequentially, it was illogical to attempt to prove this in court. Often such lawsuits became an unbearable financial burden for the media organization which took on the role of the respondent in civil cases.

In addition, some very insignificant changes have been introduced to the law on criminal prosecution of libel which, unfortunately, does not achieve the main goal of decriminalizing libel.

Also, a month ago, a new concept for the Criminal Code was introduced in Kazakhstan. Despite the fact that much had previously been said about an anticipated humanization of the code, the new document provides for increased

¹ Medvednikova is president of the North Kazakhstan Media Law Center.

liability for insult and libel. Taking into account that today the code provides for up to 5 years of deprivation of freedom for libel, one can only anticipate in horror how the drafters of the code plan to worsen the punishment.

A positive event could be seen in the law “On Access to Public Information” which has been in the drafting stage for several years and is expected to be passed this year. The media community is placing big hopes on this law. In particular, it is planned to help incorporate in practice effective mechanisms for providing information and increasing the liability of officials for refusing to provide access to information in the public interest.

The remaining new amendments in the law are aimed largely at attempting to have the government control events in the media arena by any means. Despite the active resistance on the part of media experts and the journalism community, at the end of last year, the law on Television and Radio Broadcasting was signed, which to a significant extent increases government control over the electronic media and restricts the right of citizens to freedom of choice. Also passed was the law on National Security in which “informational influence of public and individual awareness through the use of deliberately distorted information and dissemination of unreliable information” is treated as a threat to national security.

The law on Protection of Personal Data, presented recently by the Interior Ministry, provoked major debate. There are concerns that this law would enable public persons to become even more hidden from the press. For now, this document is only being discussed.

Coming to the situation of free speech, it can be said that Kazakhstan’s position is not enviable. According to Freedom House’s rating, our country occupied the 175th place among 197 states. In comparison to last year, Kazakhstan’s rating was lowered by three positions.

Unfortunately, many problems remain unresolved and unsolvable. As before, the mass media market is not transparent, and it is not known who is the owner of a given media outlet. Media giants flourish – state-holding companies completely financed from the state budget and, as a result, propagandize government policy exclusively. According to the results of the Media Center’s research, the media receives more than \$30 million a year to conduct state policy. Moreover, this year, according to the budget of the Ministry of Culture and Information, the budget

for state information policy for just two television channels alone – Khabar and Kazakhstan – was more than 20 billion tenge. That's approximately \$135 million for two television channels. It is entirely unclear how the effectiveness of the funding of these channels is evaluated. Thus, normal competitive relations are disrupted, and independent media finds it extremely difficult to develop as a business.

The practice of self-censorship in editorial boards is very entrenched, particularly where the journalists know the rules of the game in advance and where the editorial policy is very clearly restricted by the owners of the media.

The situation with attacks on journalists remains critical. In April, Lukpan Akhmedyarov, a journalist from the independent journal *Uralskaya nedelya* [Urals Week] was brutally beaten. He himself and his colleagues are certain that the incident is related to his professional activity; however the investigation is not officially looking at this possibility. In October 2011 in Aktau, a cameraman and journalist from the Stan-TV web portal were beaten. They are also certain that the attack was related to their work.

Also, Igor Vinyavsky, editor-in-chief of the opposition newspaper *Vzglyad* [Viewpoint] accused of attempting to overthrow the constitutional order, was held in pre-trial detention for nearly two months early this year. In the end, the charges against him were reduced, and he was granted amnesty.

It should be noted that the Office of the OSCE Representative for the Media always immediately reacts to problematic events in the mass media in Kazakhstan, which is a great support for Kazakh journalists and helps in their advocacy of their own rights and freedoms.

Against the backdrop of a rather complicated situation with freedom of speech, the Internetization of all of Kazakhstan is actively under way. The number of Internet users is growing rapidly, despite the fact that the data on their number varies somewhat.

According to the Agency for Statistics, in 2011 the percentage of Internet users in Kazakhstan out of the total population reached 53.4% (last year, it was 34%), an increase of almost 60%. At the end of 2011, Askar Jumagaliev, minister of communications and information, stated that the number of Internet users had

crossed the 40% threshold. According to Jumagaliev, the Internet is used by about 7 million people. He also promised that by 2015, every Kazakhstani would be provided with broadband Internet.

In April of this year, President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced that 70% of the population was already using the Internet, largely young people.

According to the latest data, published in May by the press service of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, the number of Internet users had risen to 9.4 million people.

According to the Minister of Information, about 60,000 names have been registered in the KZ top domain. The annual growth is 20 to 25%. But the Kazakh Center for Web Information (KazNIK) says that out of 71,754 registered domains, more than 25% are actually in operation.

According to the press service of Prime Minister Kajimkan Masimov, in 2011 the speed of the Internet doubled, the cost of wholesale Internet service was reduced by 65% and the number of users grew 34%.

Unfortunately, a fairly strong monopoly over the Internet market has been maintained, and first place is held by Kazakhtelekom, a company with part state ownership. Due to the fact that proper competition in the market virtually does not exist, Internet costs are greatly higher than in European countries.

Young people are mainly active in the social networks of Facebook, Twitter, V kontakte, and Moy Mir. A small percentage watches television online.

As for journalists, today the opportunity to have your own blog and web page is a kind of alternative to traditional journalism, particularly for those journalists who work in pro-government publications. Many journalists are very active on the Internet and use new media as an additional tool to disseminate information.

In this context, the problem of blocking of sites is very acute. According to Adil soz [a non-governmental fund], in 2011, more than 150 sites were officially blocked by courts in Kazakhstan for propagandizing religious extremism and terrorism. Some sites are periodically blocked without any explanation; moreover, no one takes responsibility for this. And the most alarming is that all this is done

under cover of secrecy and government classification – information about which sites were blocked and for which reasons is not accessible to the public.

The law on regulation of the Internet is one of the most popular and discussed topics today. As is known, in 2009 Internet web sites were legally equated with mass media, and this became the topic of vigorous discussion in society and among experts. The fact that the same measures of liability that apply to any printed media could be applied to any Internet source continues to provoke bitterness in the journalist community. The desire of state agencies to protect the population from “incorrect” information and impose a certain status on all channels of dissemination of information on the Internet is unambiguously a crossing of the permissible boundaries for restriction of freedom of expression of opinion.

The government’s regular attempts to regulate everything happening on the Internet provoke certain fears. First of all, this concerns a toughening of the regulations on copyright and protection of intellectual property. New amendments to the Criminal Code and the code of Administrative Offenses provide for criminal and administrative liability for posting illegal content on the Internet. Moreover, not only the owner of the site is liable, but users who post the content on the web are as well.

All of this is certainly a certain chilling factor for many journalists.

In the Concept for Information Security of Kazakhstan passed by the president at the end of 2011, the idea of the need to control, incentivize and incorporate an optimal model for development of kaznet can be traced like a red thread. On the one hand, theoretically the government is pursuing a noble purpose, on the other hand there is an excess of interference in the activity of the media market, making endless attempts to take under control everything that is happening here.

It should be added that recently the international organization Reporters without Borders published an annual list of countries which obstruct freedom of speech on the web. Kazakhstan fell into the category of “countries on a watch list.”

It is necessary to speak separately of the developing system of state electronic services and the electronic government. With each passing year, more and more services accessible to the population via the Internet are appearing. This includes

the registration of various documents, electronic subscription and other services. Unfortunately, this does not help to completely root out corruption despite great expectations; nevertheless, this enables many important problems to be made public.

Recently, journalists have begun to communicate with high officials through their personal blogs, for example, the blogs of ministers. This does not always have results, but provides an opportunity to knock on the doors of those on high. Moreover, some problems that citizens write about on blogs become the subject of journalistic investigations and end up in the view of the law-enforcement agencies.

It should be noticed that the government recently has actively promoted the policy of supporting and developing Internet versions of print publications. Thus Kazkontent has developed sites at no cost for regional and Kazakh-language publications. For low-budget publications, this is a very good assistance and an opportunity to integrate with the Internet space.

A separate topic is the appearance of electric versions of print publications. This process continues to be rather difficult. First, the owners find it hard to understand how they can earn money on the functioning of the site; second, not all of them understand that the site can be not just a copy of the newspaper, but an independent Internet publication. Nevertheless, sites are appearing and becoming popular and that is how citizen journalism is flourishing. On many sites there is a section for “people’s news,” which provides the opportunity to involve the public as newsmakers, establishing quality feedback and increasing a target audience. But there are a number of problems here related to censorship. The media owners are obliged to independently control the content of forums and comments so as not to become a respondent in a court case. So on many media sites, much is moderated and removed.

If we are to give prognoses for the development of kaznet, then we can note several trends. First, there will be further vigorous development of a competitive environment, attraction of new users, an increase in the number of users of electronic payments systems, and an increasing popularity of news sites, political blog platforms and social networks. A significant role in this process has been played by the release of the third generation (3G) of cellular communications.

Second, this year there has been a sharp increase in the number of events related to the Internet. There have been barcamps, the Central Asian Internet Forum, the Kazakhstan Internet Week, the National Internet Award, the Congress of Kazakh-Language Bloggers, the Blog Camp Kuryltay ZhasCamp, and various other Internet conferences.

There are serious concerns, however, regarding the investment attractiveness of kaznet, and this is illustrated by the uneven distribution of advertising funds among Russian and Kazakh sites. Often we have good ideas, but don't have the means to develop an Internet site. The majority of Kazakhstanis continue to prefer Russian sites to domestic sites, and this is connected with the common language, the developed social networks and the different in the volume of ad money.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the development of the press and freedom of speech in Kazakhstan is to a large degree connected precisely with the political situation in the country and the degree of independence the state is prepared to grant the mass media. Unfortunately, we see an intensification of government interference, a toughening of legislation and a desire to control all media processes. But it must be noted that despite this environment, civic activism is notably growing among public figures, human rights defenders and journalists and is fortunately becoming a more customary phenomenon.

Traditional Media and Social Media in the Kyrgyz Republic

Artem Goriainov¹

Along with rapidly developing new media, Kyrgyzstan continues to develop traditional media as well, increasingly crossing over and transitioning to convergence, where various forms of media are used in one product. Traditional media largely remain the chief source of information, especially for the rural regions of Kyrgyzstan, where Internet penetration and the computer literacy of the population are still at a low level.

In 2010, public radio and television appeared in Kyrgyzstan and a government program was launched to transition to digital broadcasting by the year 2015.

One of the factors that had great influence on the development of both online and traditional media was the decriminalization in 2011 of the offense of libel. An additional impetus for the growth of the number of online publications in Kyrgyzstan was the fact that Internet publications do not fall under the “Law on Mass Media” and do not require licenses. Nevertheless, in Kyrgyz legislation there exists such concepts as “insult” and “defense of honor, dignity and business reputation” and also “incitement of inter-ethnic enmity”. These can serve as the basis for suing both online as well as traditional publications for criminal and administrative offenses.

According to information from media organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic, there are now about 400 registered media outlets, of which more than 200 are active. Since the concept of mass media in Kyrgyz legislation is fairly broad, state agencies claim that there are more than 1,300 mass media outlets registered in Kyrgyzstan.

There are about three dozen private and state television channels, but only some of them broadcast throughout Kyrgyzstan; the broadcast range of the majority of the channels is limited to the capital and its suburbs. In some regions, there are local television companies and radio channels that broadcast exclusively to that specific region. Entertainment stations are the most popular.

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About 140 newspapers are published in Kyrgyzstan, and of these, 80 are in the Kyrgyz language. Traditional newspapers continue to occupy a visible place among media. Proof of this is the print run of several of the publications. For example, the newspaper Vecherniy Bishkek [Evening Bishkek], which comes out five days a week, has a print run of up to 50,000, whereas the daily number of visitors to the website reaches 3,000-4,000. Government print publications – the Russian-language newspaper Slovo Kyrgyzstana [Word of Kyrgyzstan] and the Kyrgyz-language newspaper Kyrgyz tuusu, founded in the early 1920s – have not lost their status even after several changes in government. To this day, they remain mouthpieces of the government. To be sure, the print runs of these publications are quite modest -- from 5,000 to 7,000 issues.

Recently, the displacement of Russian-language media from the Kyrgyz media arena has become more visible, due to the increase in the number of publications in the Kyrgyz language. Four years ago, more than 50% of the media market was made up of newspapers, news agencies, television and radio in the Russian language. Today, the situation is rapidly changing in favor of Kyrgyz-language media. To a large extent this is caused by a reduction in the role of the Russian language, a decrease in the number of speakers of the language and the overall fall in the level of journalism in Kyrgyzstan. The low level of salaries in the media forces Russian-language journalists who have reached a certain professional level to search for work abroad.

The pace of growth in the number of Internet users in the Kyrgyz republic is overtaking other countries of Central Asia. Today, we can state that the number of active Internet users has reached more than 30% of the overall number of residents of the country. Seventy percent of Internet users are residents of the capital; the remaining 30% are in the regions and only 5% in rural areas. About 60% of Internet users are young people from ages 12 to 25.

Moreover, it must be noted that the Internet, or to be more precise, the social networks and forums on the Internet, remain for citizens of Kyrgyzstan a place for active self-expression, where expression of one's point of view is possible almost without restrictions. The Internet is actively used by the opposition and ordinary active citizens for defining their goals, criticizing the government and even for calls to active demonstrations. The liberal government policy regarding Internet regulation is a value of society, which has been validated twice during revolutionary changes.

In the past, during moments of political tensions in the country, Internet media were often subjected to political pressure or blocking. For example, on the eve of the events of 2005, hacker attacks were organized against opposition web sites, and before the events of the spring of 2010, there were attempts to close access to a number of Internet publications which criticized the government at the time: Ferghana News [ferghananews.com], Bely Parus [White Sail at parusk.info], and Azattyk [Kyrgyz Service of Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe. The Diesel forum was also closed, which had served as the main platform for political discussions and exchange of opinions; and there was persecution of journalists. These factors were what influenced the change in public awareness during the events of 2005 and 2010.

As of April 2012, the following numbers of users from Kyrgyzstan were registered in social networks:

- Moy Mir [My World] - more than 700,000
- Odnoklassniki [Classmates] - 626,995
- V kontakte [In Contact] - 163,306
- Facebook - 74,660
- Twitter - 9,000

About 300,000 users are registered on local social networks such as Namba media (namba.kg), whereas the Diesel forum (diesel.elcat.kg) has about 70,000 registered.

The great popularity in Kyrgyzstan of local social networks that have appeared relatively recently is explained by free web hosting inside the country, whereas access to foreign sites is very expensive.

Nevertheless, among university and grade school students the sites Odnoklassniki and Moy Mir, which has more than 600,000 registered, remain popular. Facebook is popular among the older generation and has a more professional character. Many members of parliament, civic figures and human rights advocates have their own pages on Facebook.

Essentially, today social networks in Kyrgyzstan are centers of expression of public opinion and are more timely than news agencies. In 2010, voluntary people's brigades were organized by means of social networks and offered help to victims.

As a means of timely and diverse information, new media and social networks are playing a greater role in the formation of public opinion in Kyrgyzstan, but can hardly replace the traditional mass media in the near future. Although social networks, in contrast to traditional mass media, offer people much more interactivity, there are pitfalls, and the most dangerous of them are the lack of self-censorship and absence of responsibility for publications. The very “young” qualitative contingent among Internet users is not capable of appropriately reacting to various information on social networks and often distorts primary information. The destructive influence of social media particularly manifests itself in specific cases (such as occurred in the July events in Kyrgyzstan), when the reader is remote from knowledge about information technologies and not protected against disinformation.

This situation is very successfully used by traditional media to avoid responsibility for dissemination of deliberately false information or for protection of a source of information. In both cases, the same method is used – reprint of a blogger’s article or the personal opinion of an Internet user with a reference to an online source. The reader who has become accustomed to seeing the newspaper as an analytical, verified source of information perceives material reprinted from the Internet at the same level as well.

Monitoring of 32 Kyrgyz-language and 13 Russian-language newspapers over the course of six months yielded the following results: out of 320 articles published in these newspapers and dealing with the topic of inter-ethnic relations, 21 items had a sharply expressed sub-text, evident even without linguistic expertise, which incited inter-ethnic conflict between different ethnic groups. All of these materials were reprinted from social networks and online publications.

The government of Kyrgyzstan regularly tries to initiate various laws for control over Internet content, at the same time that the main disseminator of information, including false information, is usually the traditional mass media.

Including online publications in the list of mass media cannot solve this problem due to the trans-national nature of the Internet. Any online publication closed inside the country can move to a foreign hosting service and gain an even greater audience – if it is blocked. For example, according to the site www.socialbakers.com, after Tajikistan blocked the social site Facebook, its audience in Tajikistan grew by 150% within a few days.

An interesting picture can be seen from the data on alexa.com regarding the traffic dynamics of the website fergananews.com in 2010-2012. By the end of 2010, when the peak of passions after the Osh events had begun to subside somewhat, the website's traffic also went down. But during the work of the parliamentary commission on the Osh events and after the removal of the blockade of the site fergananews.com from the news space in Kyrgyzstan, the number of views of articles rose, along with the time spent by users on the site. That is, a growing interest in a web page can be assumed by a certain group of users.

The interest in the site has not fallen because the blocking of fergananews.com created a precedent for managing content on the Internet in circumvention of lawful procedures. According to the current legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic, the blocking of Internet sites may be done only by court order, whereas this blocking order was issued by the government at the suggestion of the Jogorku Kenesh [upper house of Kyrgyz parliament].

The problem of using information from social networks is that the overwhelming majority of users are not professional journalists, and the social networks and online resources they use for communication, expression of their opinion and blogging cannot serve as sources of reliable information without additional verification. In this regard, numerous special legal cases emerge. The case of the blogger Vladimir Farafonov is a vivid example of the collision of legal norms regarding the assignment of responsibility between traditional media and bloggers. Despite several sensational cases launched under Art. 299 of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic ("Incitement of national, racial, religious or inter-ethnic enmity"), this is the first case where a specific person is under investigation, accused on the basis of online sources. Moreover, according to monitoring results, there are far more cases that fall under this article from print publications. Given that the appearance in our region of social networks is a new phenomenon and the public is only learning to use this tool and familiarizing itself with the rules and ethical norms inside this community, in the majority of cases, on social networks, we are dealing with rumors and conjecture. The exceptions are articles whose authors are people with a good reputation in the news sense -- these people are usually well-known persons, public figures and experts.

One of the first positive experiences of the use of online media in Kyrgyzstan was back in the early 2000s, which led to the incredible popularity of the news agency AKIpress. At the AKIpress web site, the option for visitors to exchange opinions

and even post their own news was added to the news feeds. Subsequently, AKIpress was forced to close this option because the frank comments by the users led to pressure from the authorities and the popularity of the site plummeted. After the censorship eased on the part of the government, AKIpress released platforms for blogs which were maintained by journalists of the news agency in order to get the reaction of users to their stories, and of course, the opportunity for adding comments was restored.

But this did not raise their popularity, because the market for social networks and online publications was already saturated, and the competition was already much greater. Recently, the majority of the traditional mass media outlets are also putting up blog platforms; the online versions also try to actively penetrate social networks, believing this is a necessary requirement of the new times. Many experts believe that traditional media are obliged to react to such a phenomenon as social networks and consider their presence on social networks to be completely necessary.

Special editors are hired for this; entire companies are engaged in promoting newspapers and journalist on social networks. But experience has shown that less than one percent of visitors to web sites come to media sites from social networks. That is, the social networks do not justify the hopes that only through them can small sites get their start. Social networks are not capable of daily providing thousands and tens of thousands of click-throughs to one and the same site. The main thing that social networks can give media sites is an increase in their recognition. If the users go on the site on the recommendation of a social network, then they will remember it if the content interests them. That is, everything depends on the media site itself – whether it holds the further interest of the visitor with its material.

Such social networks can serve as a platform for commentary on media materials. People who regularly keep blogs and post photos and videos in communities, and actively discuss the events of the day with links on the sites – such a social network creates the Internet audience which mass media needs. This audience could create a community on a media site which could later be monetized with the help of paid services or ads, which AKIpress successfully did in our country in its day. The social networks cannot be ignored. They simply have to be utilized correctly. Another problem with interaction with social networks and media is that the format of information used by traditional media is not always compatible with social networks. That is, the information from the media has to be re-packaged

separately for each platform, and not posted as mechanical announcements. It is this barrier the Kyrgyz traditional media cannot overcome without professional training. Practically all the popular Kyrgyz newspapers have an electronic version, but these sites are less popular than the newspapers distributed in traditional fashion.

In looking at the influence of traditional media on the development of social networks, we can surmise that at the end of the “tunnel” will be a merger of the social network with mass media. That is because traditional media are more subject to influence and regulation on the part of the government or certain interest groups than social networks. Accordingly, the time will come when the majority of such media cannot completely fulfill the demands of society.

Now we are observing a most interesting phenomenon; in the majority of cases, television, radio and newspapers are a tool or property of the political elite. But society demands the opposite. The nature of social networks will have its imprint, both on the desire of people to receive objective information as well as on dissatisfaction with the unfolding situation. And social networks will either take upon themselves the functions of the mass media, or their partial or full merger will take place, which will enable the satisfaction of the demand for free speech by all users of the web.

What prevents Tajik media from transitioning to online? Today's realities

Zebonisso Tadjibaeva¹

Allow me to describe the current situation in Tajikistan regarding the issues which we have been actively discussing these last two days. Since I am more of a practicing journalist than a media expert, I will rely on examples in order to depict the situation regarding transformation of traditional Tajik media to online media.

Today, according to the latest data provided by Civic Initiative for Policy, a public organization, there are about 2.3 million users in Tajikistan. Every day, about 1.3 million users access the Internet. That is, on average, Internet penetration is more than 30 percent. However, these figures are not an indicator of the popularity of Internet media.

The public's preferences are for resources that are far from local and far from news. In principle, this situation is peculiar to many countries of Central Asia.

But if we compare, for example, the figures for how many users from Tajikistan visit the sites of runet and tajnet every day (based on Live.ru statistics), then the difference is enormous – more than 15 times as many users from Tajikistan visit runet sites; that is, 123,000 users visit runet compared to 8,000 users visiting tajnet sites on the average. Obviously Live.ru does not display the full picture for the TJ top domain, since only an insignificant number of Tajik sites use this service to calculate their own statistics. Nevertheless, it is significant.

And this depends on the two fundamental reasons which I will explain a bit later. At the present time, there are 268 registered newspapers published in Tajikistan, of which 56 are government, 136 private, 36 public and 39 industry publications. There are 136 journals published, of which 12 are government, 49 are private, 23 public and 52 industry publications. Eight news agencies are in operation, one of which is state-owned. There are 44 radio and television organizations in Tajikistan, in which 16 are government and 28 are non-governmental. That is, on the average in Tajikistan, potentially about 450 web sites devoted to mass information could be counted.

¹ Tadjibaeva is executive director of Asia-Plus Informational Agency.

In fact, however, 29 sites are news resources – those which are refreshed at least once a week, including the websites of radio and TV – and there are another 35 information sites that are refreshed at least once a month. In total today there are 6,251 domains registered under the TJ top domain. Only 2,846 have sites, or about 45% of those registered. But not a single one of these local websites, regardless of their orientation, entertainment or news, is capable of attracting an average of more than 10,000 Tajik users a day. I will not speak now about the situation with entertainment sites, but will focus just on the news websites. So why, despite the seemingly significant number of Internet users, which public organizations cite, is the Internet media of Tajikistan not popular?

The first reason is the access to services. Despite the fact that the telecommunications market in Tajikistan is fairly developed, the services of local providers are a fairly expensive enjoyment. And in the last two months, the cost of services has risen another 4% to 5% in connection with the excise tax on Internet services.

It would seem that the cost of the Internet isn't related directly to the number of visitors of news websites, if such sites were hosted in Tajikistan, since the domestic traffic in Tajikistan is not subject to tariff. But Internet news portals prefer the more expensive hosting outside of Tajikistan instead of the cheaper hosting inside the country, sacrificing part of their audience, which can only visit domestic websites due to their financial limitations.

Why is this happening?

This is related to the fact that not a single host in Tajikistan is capable of giving a guarantee to an independent Internet news portal that it will not be blocked or completely closed, on orders from the Communications Service of the government of Tajikistan, which has taken upon itself recently the role of Internet censor.

In choosing to host a site outside of Tajikistan, we are sacrificing part of our audience in exchange for the security of our websites. As an example, I can cite the Tojnews agency, which had placed its website on a local host. A single letter was sufficient to get the site completely blocked both for local users and for those abroad. Of course, the problem was resolved, but the agency changed its hosting service.

A little less than a month ago, the Asia-Plus news agency also encountered the blocking of its site in Tajikistan. Since this site is hosted outside of the republic, it remained accessible through a proxy-server for foreign users.

The blocking of the Asia-Plus site by Internet providers was carried out on the basis of a letter from the head of the Tajik governments' Communications Service. Fourteen Internet providers received this instruction stamped "secret." As it was determined later, the reason for the blocking was commentary that was left by one reader on the site. This commentary was determined by the head of the Communications Service to be libelous and offensive. After negotiations, we were able to get the site unblocked, but the fact remains: the Communications Service, which gives out and withdraws licenses to Internet providers, is taking upon itself the role of censor in our Tajik Internet space. And the providers themselves, fearing the loss of their license, do not analyze the lawfulness of the instructions of their regulator and fulfill them virtually immediately. In fact, a written instruction is not even necessary for the providers to block a website; a verbal instruction over the telephone is sufficient. That was how it was done with the website Islamnews. This site was also temporarily blocked on the basis of an oral instruction from the Communications Service. The reason was never explained.

In March of this year, the popular social network Facebook was blocked in Tajikistan. Only after the statements of several authoritative organizations, including the OSCE, was it unblocked.

Meanwhile, I would like to note that in Tajikistan there is no legal mechanism for blocking certain websites. That is, there is no procedure as such, which would precede the decision close access to a site. Everything is undertaken on the basis of a written or oral instruction from the Communications Service; moreover, in the case of the Asia-Plus site, we could not even file any specific claims against the Communications Service, since the blocking was done by the providers.

The second reason is the lack of personnel in the publications themselves to transition from traditional to online media; moreover, this is all accompanied by a fear of losing a permanent audience and, consequently, revenue.

Today, the most popular sites on tajnet are the sites of news agencies. Among them the news agency Asia-Plus is the leader, then the site of Radio Ozodi (Radio Liberty in the Tajik language) and the Avesta news agency.

This category on tajnet has a solid lead in traffic ratings. Faster than others, the news agencies understood the advantage of using the opportunities of ICT.

And only in the last year have some of the print publications, including the Asia-Plus newspaper, decided to embrace a part of the Internet audience as well. But this is done reluctantly and without particular enthusiasm.

Editors are afraid that they will lose part of their audience which will go on the Internet and stop buying newspapers. That will lead, in their opinion, to a reduction in the print run, and consequently, a loss of stable profits. Of course, they understand perfectly that in order to retain the reader, it is necessary to offer diverse content and newspaper content must differ from what is offered to users of the website. This enables them to keep part of their audience, but for promotion and further monetarization, the website also needs its own audience, which must receive new and diverse content.

But for this personnel is needed; editorial boards which are used to putting out a newspaper once a week must be retrained to work every day and in various formats – video, photo, text, information graphics. The websites also have to have materials from citizen journalists and bloggers. In sum, users must receive the most diverse content, and a journalist must be able to present it. Tajik journalists, however, have mainly their own clear specialization; a print journalist cannot take video and edit it; a radio journalist can't take photos and write captions.

Of the local websites, for now only the Asia-Plus news agency site is offering a variety of content, as is the site for the Tajik Service of Radio Liberty, Radio Ozodi. In addition, our editorial office publishes a newspaper twice a week. Fears that we would lose our audience after all the materials intended for the print version were placed on the website evaporated within a few months after the start of the experiment. Not only did we not lose our audience, we increased the traffic on our website.

But Tajik sites, including ours in the first instance, do not have enough of the content that is built on feedback from our readers. We don't have blogs and we don't have citizen journalists. That is what would help at times in promoting the site.

As for blogging, this is a phenomenon that is completely undeveloped in Tajikistan. We have both individual platforms as well as places on our site and the Radio Liberty site, but the authors there are mainly either journalists or former journalists. And the main thing for these lines – blogging, citizen journalism – are given constant attention at various seminars and trainings. But the Tajik reader and the journalist as well prefer to share their opinions or comments on social networks, including Facebook. There are more than 35,000 users from Tajikistan now on Facebook.

Political bloggers in Tajikistan are entirely absent. In the opinion of experts, Tajik politicians and journalists still do not recognize blogs as a channel for disseminating information.

Citizen journalism also remains as yet untapped, almost all the websites in Tajikistan provide the opportunity to send your news, photo or video to the editors, but readers are unwilling to use feedback, preferring social networks.

Perhaps a picture that is not entirely radiant has been given here, and much remains to wish for the better. Nevertheless, in closing, I would like to add that in Tajikistan there is the potential for the development of social media as well as for the transition from traditional media to online media. The only thing we lack is time, which moves faster than we can adjust to it.

From Traditional to Online Media: Leading Practice and Prospects

Serdar Durdyev¹

It is a great honor for me to speak to you in my capacity as a representative of the Foreign Ministry of Turkmenistan. I would like to express gratitude to the organizations of this conference, in particular, Ms. Dunja Mijatović, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and to Ivo Petrov, Acting Head of the OSCE Center in Ashgabat and Mr. Andrey Rikhter, Director of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, for their great contribution in the preparation and convening of this forum.

The topic of my speech is Turkmenistan's experience of international cooperation in the development of mass media. This is a broad and relevant topic as it touches not only on the purely professional aspects of the activity of the journalist community in Turkmenistan – the editors and reporters – but is directly linked to the broad vector of development of our country, the improvement of its political system, the establishment of democratic institutions and civil society, and the integration of Turkmenistan with the main trends of global development.

It must be said that Turkmenistan has given due attention to the development of international partnership in the information sphere in recent years. In September 2007, respected President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Myaligulyyevich Berdymukhamedov announced from the high tribune of the UN General Assembly the readiness of the country for broad international cooperation in all areas. In essence, this statement provided the impetus to Turkmenistan's general vector of openness to the relevant processes of today's global development, determining the subsequent concrete steps, including in the area of media and communications. Gradually but consistently, the mechanisms for the cooperation of Turkmenistan have managed to be arranged with specialized international institutions responsible for media development, in particular the relevant offices of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe. Moreover, this is not being done in a fragmented manner, but on a systematic basis. A good-willed working dialogue is being established, in the course of which the most diverse aspects of joint activity are discussed. Ms. Dunja Mijatović, OSCE

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Representative on the Media and Andrei Rikhter, Director of the Office of the OSCE Representative on the Media, are now visiting Turkmenistan once again. Their professional skills and interested participation are noted in our country and are highly appreciated.

Specialized seminars and trainings with the participation of international experts are fairly regularly organized, in which not only journalists take part, but representatives of the government agencies of Turkmenistan, including directors of the press services and departments of public liaison of various ministries and agencies of our country. Just in the last year, in particular, two such practical seminars took place in the Foreign Ministry of Turkmenistan, which provided a great deal of useful practical information and skills.

We must definitely note the effective practice of the organization of business trips for Turkmen representatives – journalists, parliamentarians, government officials, university teachers – to foreign countries to learn the experience of our partners in the area of media development. In that connection, I would like to note the interested and effective approach to cooperation with Turkmenistan shown by the British media corporation BBC and the German Deutsche Welle, which have conducted a number of study visits to London and Berlin, respectively. These visits were beautifully organized, packed with diverse meetings, and I hope brought quite a great deal of mutual benefit. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the organizers of these trips.

Today it is apparent that the direction of our cooperation, its content, if you will, its philosophy, have been rightly selected. Developing in accordance with generally accepted practice in the world, nonetheless it is devoid of the imposition of any unified standards and templates, and implemented on the principles of mutual respect, professional ethics and taking into account Turkmenistan's national, historical, and cultural specifics. In such work, there is not, and cannot be teachers and pupils, masters and apprentices, but there are responsible partners with equal rights, united in their common purposes, common world view and common striving to achieve tangible results.

In that connection, I would like to focus on several practical tasks in our cooperation, the undertaking of which, as I see it, could become a real contribution in the development of mass media in Turkmenistan at a modern level. I would divide them into two blocs:

First -- issues of institutional development;

Second – issues of professional improvement in the work of the media

I would like to make the caveat that as a representative of the Foreign Ministry's information service, I have not touched upon another important aspect of media activity – issues of legislative regulation. This is more related to the sphere of parliamentary activity and requires the appropriate competent opinion.

Thus, as to the first aspect: I think that today, what is important is a step-by-step adoption of the concepts and approaches of the work of the media as the most important institution of the functioning of society and the state. Our partners in the OSCE have a rich experience accumulated through the decades in this line. Introduction of this with the aim of creatively comprehending and applying it in the conditions of Turkmenistan would evidently be very productive. This is a question of the basic principles; the role and place of the media, the combination of responsibility and openness, relations to the media on the part of the state and citizens. At the present time, for our country, the questions of institutional development are relevant, including consideration of the expanding thematic range of Turkmen media and their growth in number. Recently, new specialized print publications have appeared in the country, including independent publications, and television channels which cover various segments of national development – not only civic life and politics but the activity of entrepreneurial organizations, sports, literature, art and tourism.

All of this requires comprehension, a clear vision by journalists and editors of the essence and prospects for their work and its public significance. I think that here, the assistance of our international partners, both methodological as well as in the sense of basic principles and values guidelines, is capable of providing a positive effect.

The second bloc involves issues of professional craftsmanship, the mastery of the skills of modern journalism, the use of technological capacities, methodologies for gathering and displaying material and so on. Here we must keep in mind that today, a new generation of Turkmen journalists is entering the profession, growing up and being formed in the period of independence. The old Soviet traditions of journalism, even with all their well-known strong aspects, nevertheless do not reflect the objective social demands, the realities of development of the state under market conditions. Modern, substantive, meaningful and technological methodologies and techniques are needed, and a new national school of

journalism, which could keep abreast of the trends in the world information and communications space. It should be noted that cooperation in this area is under way; with the assistance of our partners, master classes and trainings are being held. We believe that we must devote the proper importance to that aspect of the development of the media in Turkmenistan.

I would like to mention in conclusion one more important aspect. As is known, in 2017, for the first time in the history of our country, the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games will take place in Turkmenistan. Our respected President of Turkmenistan accords special attention to the preparation for the Games, focusing all operating organizations on conducting these competitions at the highest level. Of course, a major role in the success of the Games from the perspective of their international resonance must be played by the media. In that context, the assistance of our partners would be very valuable in the preparation of Turkmen journalists in their work in covering the Games, studying the skills of modern sports journalism, the conducting of effective public relations campaigns to stimulate broad international interest in Turkmenistan as the country hosting the Asian Games. We already have done some groundwork along this line, in particular, with the assistance of the Embassy of the United Kingdom, a Turkmen delegation visited London at the end of May to become acquainted with British experience in preparations for the 2012 Olympics. I believe together with our partners, we could think of concrete aspects of cooperation in this specific area as well.

Let me once again express my gratitude to the organizers for the current conference, to our respected partners in the OSCE for their work in Turkmenistan and for their constructive partnership cooperation.

Social and new media in Central Asia

Firdavs Abdukhalikov¹

Let me welcome you on behalf of the National Association of Electronic Media of Uzbekistan, which I represent.

I would like to thank the organizers of the forum for the opportunity provided us to gather together and discuss the issues of development of the media on the Internet. This is not our first meeting this year, which is vivid proof of the active work of the OSCE Representative on the Media and her team, thanks to whom we are all taking part in the process of developing the information sphere at an international level. I also must note the master classes on regulation of television broadcasting which were organized by OSCE in Istanbul, in which I and representatives of our Association took part. I will note the high level of professionalism of the trainers who acquainted the participants with modern trends in development of television broadcasting and the legal mechanisms for its regulation. Today we are actively working with the OSCE project coordinator in Uzbekistan, Deirdre Sabo. Later I will discuss in detail our joint work.

In keeping with the conference topic, I will permit myself to briefly touch upon the modern trends in development of the information sphere.

We live under the conditions of a new information era. The enormous influence of information on all aspects of the life of society in the global world is evident. Humankind has gained the opportunity to keep up with events occurring at different ends of the earth. All of this has led to the transformation of traditional media into a global web. At first, electronic versions of traditional printed publications appeared, then individual information web sites. The development of television and radio broadcasting also reached a qualitatively new level and digital television appeared, which in turn enabled the organization of Internet radio and Internet broadcasting.

Today, for example, Internet broadcasting airs “real-time” programs on events unfolding simultaneously during the program. These broadcasts can duplicate the broadcasting of traditional television, and can be re-releases or original Internet

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programs. According to K.A. Shergova “During the live broadcast, the user has the opportunity in real time to interact with the producer of the broadcast; he can receive additional information from him, direct questions to the program guests, take part in interactive surveys, and influence the further outcome of the program.”²

Various video hosting sites such as YouTube and social networking sites Facebook, Twitter and others have enjoyed great popularity. Without a doubt, all these factors have influenced the development of pluralism of opinions and freedom of speech – the main components of democracy.

As a representative of the television industry, I would like to acquaint you with the experience Uzbekistan has had in its development. Today the Program to Transition to Digital Television Broadcasting is being implemented in the country, and non-governmental television and radio broadcasters have been actively involved in it. Modern digital broadcasting equipment has been installed at the radio and television stations in nine oblasts. Four more regions are planned to be converted this year.

Another example of the effective development of digital television in Uzbekistan is the organization of broadcasting in the “high-definition” format. In 2011, for the first time in the CIS, UzHD, a television channel with terrestrial broadcasting in the HDTV format was put into operation. Furthermore, at the present time in the republic four foreign channels are broadcast in HDTV format.

It must be said that at the present time, a great role is ascribed to the Internet in the future development of the media sphere in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has chosen the path of active development of Internet technologies. Today, the number of Internet users in Uzbekistan exceeds nine million. The Program for Further Adoption of ICT Development is being implemented. Almost all the traditional media already have their sites on the Internet. In addition, about 200 sites are registered as separate Internet media. Powerful modern data processing centers have been created in Uzbekistan, enabling users, including the media, to store and process large volumes of data. A total of more than 750,000 users visit domestic media sites each month.

² K.A. Shergova. Documentary telefilms and Internet. Academy of media industry. Electronic and print media newsletter. Newsletter 12.

Since I have begun speaking about trends in development of Internet media, allow me to briefly acquaint you with the media landscape in Uzbekistan.

In the last decade, the number of print publications in the country has risen by a factor of one and a half; electronic media has grown seven-fold. As of April 1, 2012, the total number of registered media in Uzbekistan was 1,254 outlets. Moreover, about 53% of all television and 85% of all radio channels are non-governmental. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that even 21 years ago, during the Soviet period, there were only four television channels, of which three were providing broadcast from the communist center -- Moscow. Today in Uzbekistan in the non-governmental sector alone, there are more than 100 different channels on the air

Our Association unites more than 100 non-governmental television and radio stations in Uzbekistan and has as its purpose the activation of media community's participation in the building of civil society, providing assistance in creating quality media content with the use of modern equipment and advanced technologies.

All of this would have been impossible to achieve without reforms implemented in the country in all spheres, including in the information sphere. Today, a sufficient legislative foundation has been created in Uzbekistan for the activity of a broad spectrum of the media. Meanwhile, the times themselves bring about new tasks for the improvement of the media market. A program of action defining the priorities going forward is the "Concept for Further Deepening of Democratic Reforms and the Formation of Civil Society in the Country" advanced by President Islam Karimov. As the head of state notes: "The guarantee of the liberties and rights of citizens in the information sphere, including such components as the freedom and realization of rights to receive and disseminate information and one's ideas, are a cornerstone in the foundations of the construction of democratic society in Uzbekistan."

The drafting of new laws in the framework of realizing this Concept is underway now in the republic. These are such laws as "On the Openness of Activity of Government Authority and Management Agencies"; "On Television and Radio Broadcasting"; "On Economic Foundations for Media Activity"; and "On Guarantees of State Support of Media". We are relying on international experience in this effort. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the OSCE in the person of Dunja Mijatović and her team for the support provided us in the

preparation of draft laws. To date, within the framework of this joint work, several meetings have taken place with the participation of experts from Uzbekistan and the OSCE. I hope that this dialogue will yield good results, and the laws drafted in Uzbekistan will correspond to international standards in the field of the media.

One of the practical steps in implementing the Concept was the Decree issued by the head of state which went into effect on January 1 of this year, which provides media and publishing houses with a number of privileges and preferences for a period of five years. And likely this is the only example in the world today where the media pay only a five-percent tax, and the dividends received by the founders are also free of taxes. Already the editorial offices are feeling the results of these measures. The freed-up funds have gone toward the modernization of the media, the strengthening of the material and technical base, and the incentivizing of journalists' work. The Parliamentary Commission on Management of the Funds from the Public Foundation to Support Non-Commercial Non-Governmental Organizations and Other Institutions of Civil Society in the Oliy Majlis [parliament] has provided great support in developing of the electronic media, giving grants, subsidies and contracts for social work.

This year, the National Association of Electronic Media (NAEM) also received the right to implement two grants provided by OSCE, thanks to which a unique training center was created to improve the professional qualifications of creative and technical staff at non-governmental television and radio stations. I note that classes conducted here, including those online, are for representatives of regional television and radio stations.

Speaking of the social orientation of the electronic media, it must be noted that in the last two or three years, the percentage of socially-oriented and information programs have significantly increased in the broadcast branches of non-governmental regional television and radio stations. If in 2009, 30-40% of the general budget for regional television studies was spent on their creation, then last year this figure rose to 80%. Such dynamics bears witness to the activation of the civic position in electronic media and their owners. One of the most important principles of the work of non-governmental television and radio broadcasters is the principle of an active civic position, which was at the foundation of the Charter of Associations and is implemented by every member of the NAEM.

Today, for the television channels that have chosen a clearly expressed social orientation, NAEM is carrying out a unique project. Upon the founding of the association and 23 regional television companies, a unified broadcasting network was created – UzNTT. In its organizational and legal form, it is the first public television corporation on a national scale. UzNTT at the present time is one of the popular television channels in the republic and has an audience of more than 23 million people. A non-governmental radio network, NRT, was created on the same model, which today covers the whole republic, and furthermore aggregates information from the regions.

NAEM is developing the issue of organizing online broadcasting for regional television and radio stations. We are creating the conditions for each region to be heard and seen. That is, if at the present time, UzNTT is selecting materials of the regions as well and, thanks to Internet access, each regional television and radio station gains the opportunity to expand its audience and show it more broadcasts.

Without a doubt, Uzbekistan faces a great journey in developing the television and radio broadcasting sphere. As a part of the world community, we have made the goal of creating media content in accordance with world standards, and of course, this process itself implies further transformation of the media on the Internet. But I would like to draw your attention to one more very important issue, which is that new technologies are being actively used by various destructive forces for their own purposes. On the worldwide web, there is more and more information of a terrorist, nationalist and extremist nature. No one will dispute that in all the major terrorist acts of the 21st century, information technology was actively deployed. And this has provoked concern in many countries of the world.

For example, the European Commission of the European Union has repeatedly drawn attention in its reports to the underestimation by consumers of various threats from the Internet and audio-visual mass media. Officials have also been making states as well on the problem under review. Thus, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, at a meeting of the UN Security Council on combating terrorism, said that Germany was concerned about cases of the use of the Internet for recruiting militants to terrorist groups. The statement by former French President Nikolai Sarkozy also gained wide publicity that all those who visit sites justifying terrorism and propagandizing hate will bear criminal responsibility.

For the countries of Central Asia, these issues are very timely. Everyone knows perfectly well that the region borders on such a breeding ground of instability as Afghanistan, torn by internal conflicts, incited by religious extremism, the narcotics trade and various types of external forces. Against this backdrop, various forces are trying to destabilize the situation in Central Asia.

Speaking in a message on the Day of Memory and Honors, traditionally celebrated in Uzbekistan on May 9, President Karimov drew attention to these problems. In particular, he noted: “The conflict and armed clashes continuing in many regions of the world, the bloody tragedies and the unstable environment around us require our constant vigilance. It has been unstable in neighboring Afghanistan for already 30 years, and the situation isn’t normalizing. This presents a huge threat not only for Uzbekistan and its people but for all the residents of our region. Naturally, this alarms each person who worries about the future of his country, his family and children. Today, despite that fact that it has been 67 years since the victory over fascism, to enormous regret, in various countries and regions of the world, such an evil as fascism once again raises its head, and such a most dangerous phenomenon as chauvinism is spreading further, and undoubtedly, ignoring this, and indifference to these threats can lead to severe consequences. We must repeat again and again: a timely revelation of such dangers, the exposure of the true intentions of their carriers is more relevant than ever.”

As a consequence of this, a legitimate question emerges: what steps should states take to resolve problems from the use of Internet technologies by destructive forces? Of course, the majority of the countries of the world have banned the public dissemination of information imposing violence and religious extremism, the propaganda of inter-ethnic enmity and so on. This could not stop the destructive forces, however, in their use of the Internet and information technologies. Where can we find a panacea in this case?

Here I would like to recall a widely-known saying in Uzbekistan: “You can only fight an idea armed with an idea; with a thought only by a thought; with ignorance only by enlightenment,” which the electronic media of the country are putting into practice.

We are counting on the development of youth journalism. You all know well that any organization pursuing destructive aims is interested above all in young people who are more vulnerable in that sense.

There are 30 million people in Uzbekistan; more than 60% of the population in fact is made up of youth. As a result, the electronic media of Uzbekistan are focused on creating content which enables the formation of free-thinking and educated youth who can withstand the dissemination of nationalist, chauvinist and religiously extreme sentiments.

NAEM, in cooperation with the Forum Foundation and other organizations, has been implementing a project called “Youth Television Studios.” Thus, on the one hand, through television or radio shows, we try to attract young people to the life of society, so that they take their appropriate place in it. On the other hand, we hold to the opinion that media production oriented to the youth audience must be created by youth itself; therefore together with partners, on a systemic basis we conduct training seminars and practical exercises, including with the participation of prominent foreign trainers.

Thus, just in the last three years, our Association, with representation from OSCE, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and UNESCO has organized trainings and master classes with the participation of the leading specialists in the field of mass media from Germany, Russia, the US, India, Switzerland, Czech Republic and other countries.

In five years, about a thousand young men and women have taken part in the “Youth Television Studios” project, which in time filled the staff of the television channel UzNTT. Furthermore, young journalists have become members of the creative team of the first non-state satellite television channel, Forum-TV.

I want to draw particular attention to a unique project implemented with the support of the Forum for Culture and Arts of Uzbekistan Public Fund, well known in Uzbekistan, and NAEM: the satellite television channel Forum-TV. This is the first non-governmental satellite channel in Uzbekistan which at the initiative of the Fund and our Association, within the framework of the Government program “Youth Year” in 2008, began broadcasting to foreign countries. Now the Forum-TV programs are distributed across the territory of Europe, Central Asia, the Russian Federation, the western and northern parts of China, the northwest part of India, the Arabian Peninsula, the Middle East and the northern part of Africa. We are now conducting talks with Israel and the US on broadcasting shows.

Forum-TV is also one of the first non-state television channels which organized Internet broadcasting. Today on the television channel’s site you can see

broadcasts. Moreover, Forum-TV is one of the first television channels which aired mobile reports, that is, what citizens of Uzbekistan themselves film.

The chief purpose of the television channel is to show foreign states the rich culture and historical heritage of the Uzbek people, national values and traditions, today's life of the youth of Uzbekistan, with its achievements in various fields, its reforms in news and the educational field, the development of modern information technologies, and also the presentation of objective information about democratic transformations in the country.

Returning to the theme of our discussion, I would like to sum up. Information technologies will be more actively developed in the coming years – that is indisputable for each one of us. Along with this, destructive forces will go on continuing to actively use information technologies for their purposes.

In that connection, the question becomes relevant of the use of new technologies for the further progressive development of humanity, and the preservation of peace and stability. Today, we must unite our efforts for a dynamically and progressive move forward, which is based on the principles of creativity and not destruction.

Afghan media: The overview today

Masuma Mohammad Juma¹

The first newspaper in modern-day Afghanistan, Siraj-ul-Akhbar (Lamp of the News), was initially published on January 11, 1906, with Abd al-Rauf as the editor. After this first and only issue in Dari (Persian), its publication was stopped.

In 1919, under King Amanullah Khan, Aman-i-Afghan (Afghan Peace) replaced Siraj al-Akhbar as the newspaper of the government, with several smaller, private journals appearing from different ministries. Radio Kabul began broadcasting in 1925 which inaugurated a new era of mass media in the country. The 1964 Constitution of Afghanistan and the Press Law of 1965 provided for freedom for the press with conditions and boundaries of appropriate behavior. The press was editorially independent from the government but was instructed to safeguard the interests of the state and constitutional monarchy Islam and public order. Afghan journalism progressed and developed from the 1950's through 1970's, though it remained limited.

When King Zahir Shah's government was overthrown in the 1973 coup by his cousin, Daoud Khan, approximately 19 newspapers were shut down and media came under severe restrictions. It was the end to a period of relative freedom. The first color television broadcasting appeared in 1978. The media fell into the control of Soviet influences during the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) from 1979 to 1992.

After the ouster of the Taliban from power in November 2001, the media scene in Afghanistan exploded. Under the Taliban, only one government radio station was allowed to operate and there were no independent media. Ten years later, the Afghan media scene is a lively place with more than 175 FM radio stations, 75 TV channels, four news agencies, and hundreds of publications, including at least seven daily newspapers. Afghanistan's main cities are close to media saturation; in Kabul 30 TV channels and 42 radio stations, and in smaller cities 10 to 25 TV channels and approximately 20 radio stations are operating. Even the provincial capitals have local TV and radio stations. Foreign broadcasters such as VOA, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, BBC, Deutsche Welle, and others augment

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indigenous media. Most Afghans live in villages which don't have access to newspapers, television, or radio.

Most of the media is not independent or sustainable. A large number of media in Afghanistan was established using international resources and support and, naturally, sometimes they influence reports and news. Estimates of the number, type, and frequency of print publications vary substantially. Approximately 800 publications are registered with the government, though only about 300 of them, including seven daily newspapers, are publishing. Meanwhile, few of them are commercially successful or can last very long.

There are different challenges that the media faces. Reporters without Borders ranked Afghanistan 147 out of 178 countries in terms of press freedom in 2010. However, Afghanistan has more press freedom compared to six neighboring nations, including Pakistan. But the 2010 ranking was lower than those of previous years. Afghanistan also is recognized as one of the most dangerous countries in the world. This contrast is driven from the fact that official laws protect freedom of speech but there are other forms of restrictions in Afghan society which are more powerful than laws. These restrictions limit and threaten freedom of speech in the country. The government, religious leaders and warlords are major threats to journalists in Afghanistan.

Since 2001, 22 journalists have been killed in Afghanistan, though overall violence against journalists seems to be diminishing. A study released in 2011 reported that there were 67 "incidents of violence" against journalists including beatings, arrests, injuries and deaths in 2009 while the number was 26 in 2010. Threats come not only from the insurgency, warlords and criminals but also from government security forces.

Afghanistan's 2004 constitution guarantees press freedom with some limitations. For instance, any content that is contrary to the state religion of Islam is prohibited. Four media laws have been passed since 2002 and a committee, which includes some journalists, is working on a new media law. The latest version was published recently but it has many critics. Journalists believe that this law will limit freedom of the media in Afghanistan; changes are too few and insignificant and proper support is not provided for journalists. There are many cases in which laws are not clear. So, in areas where the rule of law is mostly undeveloped, any journalist reporting a story that challenges any powerful figure or any other vested interest is potentially at risk.

Another challenge for media is sustainability. While most media in Afghanistan run based on donations and resources provided by political parties, the government and foreign nations, they cannot claim independence and ensure sustainability. The Western effort to create independent media in Afghanistan is not without its critics. Some Afghan media managers and NGO media developers lament the lack of a long-term media development plan and the sporadic annual funding by donors. Others complain that the money and support pumped into fledgling media has created unreasonable expectations of commercial viability.

Thus the new, vibrant and expanding Afghan media faces significant risks. One is the business risk that many radio, television and print operations will not be able to exist if direct and indirect donor support dries up. The second is the national government's continuing restrictions on the free press. The third is the physical danger journalists face everyday. And the final criticism is that once U.S. forces draw out, the Taliban may gain considerable power and may eliminate or severely restrict press operations.

Most journalists who work in Afghan media do not have any journalism education background. Most of them have learned through experience or participated in short courses that some organizations offer. The journalists who graduated from universities also have their own problems because public and private universities that offer journalism are not standard; their curriculums are very outdated and need renewal. In 2011 a standardized institution of media was founded with the help of Internews (an international NGO that works in the field of media worldwide). It is believed to be a good start to turn Afghanistan's professional journalists into ones meeting international standards. Nai Media Institute (NMI) is a vocational institute recognized by Afghanistan's media industry as a provider of high quality, professional and standard media and journalism studies. Since media in Afghanistan has grown rapidly it needs more standard educational programs in journalism to support them. The present educational system lacks quality and quantity and the need for standard media schools is felt more than ever.

Besides traditional media, new media such as online and social media are starting to have an important role in Afghanistan. It can be argued that the growth of social and online media is much faster than other mediums. Not more than 4 percent of the Afghan population has access to Internet but Internet cafes can be found in major cities. Sixty-one percent of Afghans have cell phones which some use to listen to radio. Cell phone use has expanded rapidly also. According to the

Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology, there are more than 3,900 communication towers in the country and more than 14 million Afghans (approximately half of the nation's 29 million) using cell phones. According to one survey, more than half of the subscribers use their cell phones to listen to radio and 10 percent use them to get news and information.

The population with access to the Internet, however, is tiny but growing and is mainly located in urban areas. One study reported 20,000 Afghan bloggers in 2008 and this number is rapidly increasing. Newspapers, radio stations and television networks usually have websites that function as weak reflections of their reports and programs. The most important innovation in online media is the passing from one signal way to a multi-stakeholder approach between the media and its audience. This part of online media in Afghanistan is not yet recognized. Lack of technological knowledge and lack of access to Internet are the two major problems that have prevented online media development. Most online media is just a "copy and paste" of what is already provided in newspapers. Only in social media is there some effort being seen to show the potential of multimedia.

Blogging is another type of online media which seems to be growing. Today, thousands of Afghans have their own blogs; and they cover a variety of subjects from politics to sports to ordinary life. They use text, photos, audio and video files to communicate more effectively. In absence of local blog service providers which could support local languages, developing a blog for an Afghan is more difficult compared to many other parts of the world. Afghan bloggers present a picture of Afghanistan that is quite different from that what more traditional media outlets offer. The blogs publish more than just war, crime and suicide bombing. They write about daily life, arts, social activities and support local interests and ideas.

The most popular means of communication online in other parts of the world is social networks. Among all social networks Facebook is the most popular among Afghans. Even governmental organizations and companies communicate with people through social media and especially through Facebook. Social and online media upon arrival gave every person a voice to express themselves. For the first time people are not just audiences but can report on their favorite subjects freely. The best example of this happened on April 15, 2009 when hundreds of Afghan women gathered outside of a mosque in Kabul run by a hard-line Shia cleric to protest against a law that effectively legitimizes marital rape. About 200 women chanted slogans and carried banners outside the Khatam-Al Nabiin mosque and seminary run by Mohammad Asif Mohseni, the cleric who has strongly promoted

a law that also bans women from leaving their homes without the permission of their husband.

How did this group of women coordinate and organize such a gathering? Women with a variety of educational and occupational backgrounds, housewives and members of Parliament, all gathered together to protest the law. Neither political parties nor civil society organizations organized the demonstration. A group of Shia women started to communicate through e-mail, text messaging and phone calls to their friends saying that if you do not oppose this law it will happen to other ethnicities and sects as well. A large number of women from other ethnic groups and Islamic sects joined them. Before this protest, neither national nor international media covered the story. They were convinced that Afghan women do not have a problem with such a law but, after this protest, “Shia family law” was headline news all over the world.

The law, which only affects Afghanistan’s Shia minority, had been quietly passed by President Hamid Karzai. It prompted international fury when the Guardian revealed details of the legislation that the U.S. president, Barack Obama, described as “abhorrent”. The Guardian wrote: “Today’s demonstration shows at least some Afghan women are as angered by the law as leading international critics, who also included Gordon Brown, Hillary Clinton and Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the NATO secretary general. Eventually, as a result of this protest, President Karzai was forced to send the law back to Parliament for revision.

The “39 campaign” that happened recently on Facebook is another good example of social change that the young generation want to see. According to some, 39 is an unlucky number. Ordinary people do not use phones, cars or houses that have the number 39 in them. It started when media reported that members of a Jirga refused to be a member of the “39 committee.” Some media reported that there are thousands of car license plates which contain the number 39 and people refuse to use them. Facebook users wrote that 39 is just a number and avoidance of the number should not be accepted as fact in society and government. One Facebook user changed his profile picture with a photo showing the number 39. Most young Afghan Facebook users also changed their profile photos to the same picture. Soon, many famous figures, including politicians and one parliament, member joined this campaign.

In some cases the media and the reporters use social media such as Twitter as a medium and resource. On April 15, 2012, when rockets were fired at the

Parliament and some embassies, and the government urged people to remain in their places, people did not know what was going on in the city. They started to tweet, post on Facebook and text each other. People who had access to the Internet and cell phones were aware of the incident faster than the official media in the country.

All of this is quite new, but still there are problems that prevent online and social media to be more effective. The major problem is literacy. Every year the number of people who have access to education is increasing and the literacy rate is growing rapidly, but it is still low, and to use online media, some basic knowledge of technology is essential.

Another challenge is limited access to electricity. Afghanistan is in the bottom 10 percent of the world in electricity consumption per capita and, as mentioned, only 4 percent of Afghan people have access to the Internet. This is because the majority of Afghan people live in villages in where access to electricity is limited.

In conclusion, all forms of media are becoming more accessible, popular and reliable every day, even with all the challenges and problems that exist. People, especially the younger generation, by participating in social networks and going online, are playing an important role in the development of their society. Professional media in Afghanistan needs to be supported. Freedom of speech and the safety of journalists need to become less fragile. It seems that, similar to other parts of the world, Afghanistan can have a shortcut to reach free speech: “social media and online media.” The foundation for this kind of media needs to be built. Education, electricity, and access to the Internet are essential parts of social media and online media anywhere in the world.

References:

An Explosion of News: The State of Media in Afghanistan, A Report to the Center for International Media Assistance by Peter Cary, February 23, 2012

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/apr/15/afghan-women-protest>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/blog/2012/apr/15/kabul-attacks-live-updates>

<http://www.nmi.edu.af/>

Afghanistan Media Survey -Report Prepared for BBC Trust

Appendix

Agenda

Day 1, Thursday, 5 July 2012

09.30 – 10.00 **Registration**

10.00 – 10.30 **Opening Session**

Moderator: Andrey Rikhter, Director, Office of the OSCE
Representative on Freedom of the Media

Welcoming remarks Ivo Petrov, Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat

Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of
Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan

Opening address Dunja Mijatović, OSCE Representative on Freedom of
the Media

10.30 – 13.00 **SESSION I. Transition from traditional to social
media. International standards and pressing
challenges**

Moderator: Andrey Rikhter, Director, Office of the OSCE
Representative on Freedom of the Media

International speakers Christian Möller, Expert, Office of the OSCE
Representative on Freedom of the Media

Freedom of the media in social networks and social media

The presentation will provide an overview of:

- Web 2.0, user generated content, blogging, social media.
- Social media as a tool for journalists and citizens to seek, receive and impart information.
- The notions of media, citizen media and grassroots journalism.
- OSCE commitments and freedom of expression in social media.

Douglas Griffin, Director, Albany Associates

Internet and Internet Protocol television (IPTV) regulation

The presentation will provide an overview of:

- Legal challenges and issues pertaining to the Internet content regulation.
- How Internet, Internet TV and IPTV regulation fit into the media law framework.
- IPTV vs. broadcasting regulation.
- Means of IPTV regulation: best practices.

11.30 – 12.00

Coffee break

Prof. Anna Kachkaeva, Dean of Media Communication Faculty, National Research University – Higher School of Economics (Moscow).

Digital media and internet market: audience, multimedia context, business-models

The presentation will provide an overview of:

- Internet market and digital media.
- Tendencies in development of digital media.
- Philosophy and main characteristics of digital media.
- Social media and traditional media outlets.

Dieter Loraine, Managing Director, Albany Associates

The importance of self-regulation in upholding freedom of expression

The presentation will provide an overview of:

- Principles of self-regulation of media.
- Self-regulation mechanisms in the United Kingdom.
- Self-regulation of online publications.

13.00	Group photo
13.30 – 15.00	Lunch
15.00 – 18.00	SIDE EVENT. Master class/executive training course in online and social media regulation issues.
Moderator:	Andrey Rikhter, Director, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
Keynote speakers:	Douglas Griffin, Director, Albany Associates, and Dieter Loraine, Managing Director, Albany Associates
16.30 – 17.00	Coffee break
<p>The side event will consist of a facilitated discussion on regulatory practices in their own countries, different practices of media regulation generally and Internet regulation in particular. During interactive session participants will look at the examples of Internet issues/regulation/practices in other countries and discuss self-regulatory models and how they could be applied to Internet. During break-out session participants will divide into groups to discuss hypothetical case studies and draft possible regulatory policy responses.</p>	
20.00	Reception hosted by the Government of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat hotel.

Day 2, Friday, 6 July 2012

10.00 – 13.00

SESSION II. Social media and general media developments in Central Asia

Experts from Central Asia will make presentations on the developments in social media, transformation of traditional media to online media, and media developments in their respective countries (including current cases, legislative initiatives and challenges). Presentations will describe the situation regarding the use of social media tools in traditional and online media, as well as the role that social and community media play in their countries. An overview of the existing and potential policy and legal responses to social media employed to regulate online content will be presented.

11.30 – 12.00

Coffee-break

Moderators

Ana Karlsreiter, Senior Adviser, Office of the
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Adilia Daminova, Project Officer, Office of the OSCE
Representative on Freedom of the Media

KAZAKHSTAN

Diana Medvednikova, President, Public Foundation
“North Kazakhstan Legal Media Centre”

KYRGYZSTAN

Artem Goriainov, Deputy Director, Public Foundation
“Civil Initiative on the Internet Policy”

TAJIKISTAN

Zebonisso Tadjibaeva, Executive Director, Asia Plus
Information Agency

TURKMENISTAN

Serdar Durdiyev, Councillor, International Information
Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan

UZBEKISTAN	Firdavs Abdukhalikov, Chairperson of the National Association of Electronic Mass Media of Uzbekistan
AFGHANISTAN	Masuma Mohammad Juma, Senior Advisor, Afghan Cultural House in Kabul
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	CLOSING SESSION. Discussion and adoption of the Conference Declaration
Moderator	Andrey Rikhter, Director, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Closing remarks

Dunja Mijatović, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

The session will provide an opportunity to:

- Discuss the draft of the Conference Declaration.
- Provide feedback and additional recommendations to be included in the Declaration.
- Highlight the main messages of the Conference.
- Adopt the Conference Declaration.
- Discuss potential follow-up activities in the region.
- Evaluation of the conference.

Cultural event

20.00	Reception hosted by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.
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Invited participants

AFGHANISTAN

Masuma Mohammad Juma	Senior Advisor, Afghan Cultural House in Kabul
Zmarialai Abdulwudud Wafa	General Manager, Afghanistan Network Information Center

ARMENIA

Anna Israelyan	Editor, Aravot website
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AZERBAIJAN

Ali Novruzov	Blogger, analyst, activist
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KAZAKHSTAN

Askar Aktleuov	Journalist, Head, Public Foundation Tilshi
Yessengul Kap	President, Public Foundation Minber
Oleg Khe	Publisher, Group of Companies Business Resource
Igor Loskutov	Director General, YurInfo company
Diana Medvednikova	President, Public Foundation North Kazakhstan Media Law Centre
Eduard Poletayev	Editor-in-chief, Izvestia-Kazakhstan
Shavkat Sabirov	President, Internet Association of Kazakhstan

Usen Suleimenov Ambassador-at-large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Marzhan Yelshibayeva Executive Director, Internews Kazakhstan

KYRGYZSTAN

Aibek Musaev Expert, Information Policy Department,
Government of the Kyrgyz Republic

Meerim Asanaaly kyzy Journalist, Radio Editor, Internet portal Kloop.kg

Guljan Azhimatova Journalist, Chief Public Relations Specialist,
Office of the Mayor of Osh

Artem Goriainov Deputy Director, Public Foundation Civil
Initiative on the Internet Policy

Abdumomun Mamaraimov Journalist, Editor, Internet portal Voice of
Freedom Central Asia

Ernist Nurmatov Journalist, Correspondent, Radio Azattyk, Osh

Elmira Toktogulova Journalist, Director, Public Foundation Media
Consult

Sergey Vysotsky Journalist, Blogger, Internet portal Kloop.kg,
Karakol

TAJIKISTAN

Asomuddin Atoev Director, Public Fund Civil Internet Policy
Initiative

Sirojiddin Izatulloev Deputy Head, Information Analytical
Department, Executive Office of the President

Nuriddin Karshiboev	Chairman, National Association of Independent Mass Media in Tajikistan
Talat Numanov	Executive Director, Centre of Information and Communication Technologies
Qurbonali Rahmonov	Presidential Advisor on Science and Modern Technology
Shohin Samadov	Attaché, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan
Sukhrob Sharipov	Member of the Namoyandagon Madjilisi Oli, lower house of Parliament, member of the committee on international relations, public associations and information
Zebonisso Tadjibaeva	Executive Director, Asia Plus Information Agency
Shamsiddin Zardiev	First Secretary, Information Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

TURKMENISTAN

Serdar Agayev	Chief, Human Rights Protection and Security, Turkmen National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan
Sahra Ahmedova	Fourth-year student, International Journalism Department, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Agadurdy Akmuradov	Head, International Cultural Affairs Department, Ministry of Culture

Kakabai Amanmyradov	Senior Professor, International Journalism Department, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Aigozel Aramedova	First Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Hemra Arazmyradov	First Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Atajan Atdayev	Journalist, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation TRT
Jumaberdy Artykov	Professor, International Journalism Department, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Oraz Babakhanov	Journalist, Jihan News Agency (Turkey)
Aibolek Babaniyazova	Third-year student, International Journalism Department, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Bilbil Babayeva	Deputy Head, International Cultural Affairs Department, Ministry of Culture
Rovshan Bagyyev	Counselor, International Information Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Gulnabad Begenzhova	Third-year student, International Journalism Department, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Maksat Bekiyev	First Secretary, International Organizations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Serdar Durdyev	Counselor, International Information Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sulgun Eyeberdiyeva	Professor, International Journalism Department, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Gopal Garayev	Editor, Turkmenistan TV Channel, State Committee for TV, Radio and Cinematography
Vladimir Gubanov	Chairman, Committee on Science, Education and Culture of Parliament
Janmamed Gulamov	Journalist, Fars News Agency (Iran)
Marat Gurt	Journalist, Reuters (UK)
Osman Hemzhayev	Professor, Department of World Languages, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ravilya Kadyrova	Journalist, Pakistan Press Network News Agency
Begench Karayev	Head, International Information Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Perdemyrat Kurbanov	Member, Committee on Science, Education and Culture of Parliament
Halil Kylych	Head of Office in Turkmenistan, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation TRT
Lu Jingli	Journalist, Xinhua News Agency (China)
Ezizmuhammed Mammedov	Fourth-year student, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Jumageldy Muhammedov	Journalist, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation TRT
Serdar Muhammedov	Journalist, Anadolu News Agency (Turkey)
Serdar Muradov	Counselor, International Organizations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Muslim Musayev	First Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Amangeldy Nurmuradov	Journalist, RIA News Agency (Russia)
Jeren Orazova	Editor-in-Chief, Altyn Asyr: Turkmenistan TV Channel, State Committee for TV, Radio and Cinematography
Ainabat Osmanova	Professor, International Journalism Department, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mikhail Pereplesnin	Journalist, Turkmenistan magazine (Russia)
Lachyn Rasulova	Fourth-year student, International Journalism Department, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Tariq Saaedi	Journalist, NCA News Agency (USA)
Dovletmyrat Seitmamedov	Executive Editor, Foreign Policy and Diplomacy of Turkmenistan of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Vyacheslav Sarkisyan	Journalist, Turkmenistan.ru (Russia)
Igor Sasin	Journalist, Agence France Presse (France)
Sapar Televov	Deputy Director General, Turkmentelecom, Ministry of Communications
Ismail Ufakdemir	Journalist, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation
Aleksandr Vershinin	Journalist, Associated Press (USA)

Shokhrat Yemshikov	Journalist, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation TRT
Gulyalek Yuzbashiyeva	Third-year student, International Journalism Department, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
UZBEKISTAN	
Firdavs Abdukhalikov	Chairperson, National Association of Electronic Mass Media of Uzbekistan
Abdulaziz Abdullaev	Director, Public Fund for Support and Development of Independent Print Media and News Agencies of Uzbekistan
Salim Doniyorov	Head, Independent Institute for Monitoring the Formation of Civil Society
Ravshan Juraev	Chairman of the Board of Internet portal Uzreport.com
Murat Nasirov	General Director, Ecological Publishing House Chinor ENK
Olim Turakulov	Editor-in-Chief, International Information Department, Uzbekistan National News Agency

OSCE CENTRE IN ASHGABAT

Ivo Petrov	Head of Centre
Begoña Piñeiro Costas	Human Dimension Officer
Svetlana Ostroushenko	National Public Information Officer

OSCE CENTRE IN ASTANA

Aidar Botagarov National Political/Media Officer, Liaison Office in Almaty

OSCE CENTRE IN BISHKEK

Fabio Piana Senior Political Officer

Burulkan Usmanalieva National Media Officer

OSCE OFFICE IN TAJIKISTAN

Daler Dodojonov Media Development Assistant

Michael Unland Media Development Officer

OSCE PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR IN UZBEKISTAN

Ambassador Gyorgy Szabo Project Co-ordinator

Sulghiyo Ruzieva Programme Assistant

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS

Douglas Griffin Director, Albany Associates

Anna Kachkaeva Dean, Media Communication Faculty, Academic Adviser of Higher School of Journalism of National Research University – Higher School of Economics (Moscow)

Dieter Loraine Managing Director, Albany Associates

OFFICE OF THE OSCE REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

Dunja Mijatović	Representative on Freedom of the Media
Andrey Rikhter	Director
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Anja Schwabedal	Senior Project Assistant

Press Release

OSCE media freedom representative calls on Central Asian governments to ensure Internet freedom

ASHGABAT, 5 July 2012 – The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović, at the 14th Central Asia Media Conference which opened today in Ashgabat, called upon the authorities in Central Asia to ensure that the Internet is a free and open space and to guarantee freedom of the media and expression online.

“The Internet should be an open and public forum for free expression, free from undue governmental interference and restrictions,” said Mijatović,

Together with Rashid Meredov, the Vice Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, and Ambassador Ivo Petrov, the Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, Mijatović addressed more than 150 journalists, government officials and representatives of civil society and academia from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as Afghanistan.

“Blocking and filtering are not solutions. If the authorities are concerned for the safety of their citizens they should foster Internet literacy and self-regulatory models and should not use blocking as a tool for Internet governance,” said Mijatović.

“Political prerequisites and legal constraints not only in the region of Central Asia, but in the whole OSCE region, run counter to the very basic principles of freedom of the media.”

At the end of the conference participants are expected to adopt a declaration that would serve as the basis for follow-up activities.

During her visit to Ashgabat, the Representative held meetings with, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, Mejlis Speaker Akja Nurberdiyeva and Chair of the Mejlis Committee on Science, Education and Culture Vladimir Gubanov, as well as Yazdursun Gurbannazarova,

the Director of the Turkmen National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, to discuss media freedom issues and future co-operation between her Office and Turkmenistan.

The OSCE Central Asia Media Conference takes place annually and provides an opportunity to co-ordinate efforts to promote and support the fulfillment of OSCE media freedom commitments in Central Asia. This year's conference is hosted for the first time by Turkmenistan and is organized by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat and with assistance of the other OSCE field offices in Central Asia. The event is financed by the governments of France, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Alongside the conference, Albany Associates, an international communications firm that works with governments and broadcast regulatory agencies, will facilitate a master class on online and social media regulation.



The 14th Central Asia Media Conference took place in Ashgabat on 4-5 July.

Четырнадцатая Центральноазиатская конференция СМИ состоялась в Ашхабаде 4-5 июля.



Conference participants peruse publications of the Representative's Office.

Участники конференции внимательно изучают публикации Бюро Представителя по вопросам свободы СМИ.



Participants consider the conference agenda.
Участники изучают повестку дня конференции.



OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović and Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat Ambassador Ivo Petrov at the Opening of the 14th Central Asia Media Conference in Ashgabat on 4-5 July.

Представитель ОБСЕ по вопросам свободы СМИ Дунья Миятович и глава Центра ОБСЕ в Ашхабаде, посол Иво Петров, на открытии Четырнадцатой Центральноазиатской конференции СМИ прошедшей в Ашхабаде 4-5 июля.



International speakers at the 14th Central Asia Media Conference in Ashgabat on 4-5 July.
 Международные эксперты на Четырнадцатой Центральноазиатской конференции СМИ прошедшей в Ашхабаде 4-5 июля.



Douglas Griffin of Albany Associates discusses issues related to internet and Internet Protocol television regulation at the 14th Central Asia Media Conference in Ashgabat on 4-5 July.

Дуглас Гриффин директор консалтинговой фирмы «Albany Associates» обсуждает вопросы регулирования Интернета и IP-телевидения на Четырнадцатой Центральноазиатской конференции СМИ прошедшей в Ашхабаде 4-5 июля.



Participants of the 14th Central Asia Media Conference in Ashgabat on 4-5 July.

Участники Четырнадцатой Центральноазиатской конференции СМИ прошедшей в Ашхабаде 4-5 июля.



OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović and Dieter Loraine of Albany Associates at the 14th Central Asia Media Conference in Ashgabat on 4-5 July.

Представитель ОБСЕ по вопросам свободы СМИ Дуња Миятович, и Дитер Лорейн управляющий директор консалтинговой фирмы «Albany Associates» на Четырнадцатой Центральноазиатской конференции СМИ прошедшей в Ашхабаде.

