



# Voices

for  
MEDIA DEMOCRACY

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Freedom of the Press**

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The following individuals are some of the hundreds of associates of WIFP. Many have been with us since the early days of the 1970s. Not all of those we work with are Associates, but the network of Associates helps us experience continuity in our endeavors over the years. We've shared projects and ideas. We've lent each other support. We continue to look forward to the energies of the newer Associates joining with us to bring about a radical restructuring of communication that will bring about true democracy in our countries.

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## Chinese Internet Censorship: Is There a Change Underway?

By Emilia Ninova

In January of this year Internet giant Google Inc. announced that the company had evidence that China had launched a series of cyber attacks in order to gain access to the e-mail accounts of Chinese human rights activists.<sup>1</sup> In response, Google refused to continue censoring its content in China and contemplated pulling out of the country entirely.

Many applauded the American company for taking a stand against government censorship. Other firms, however, probably viewed this decision in terms of the amount of revenue Google would lose by withdrawing from

the world's most populous nation and one of the fastest growing economies.

The gamble, however, paid off as China recently renewed Google's license.<sup>2</sup> For now, the battle has been won, but the "internet war" continues as other American companies which have not ceased to censor their content, including Microsoft and Apple, are yet to follow in Google's footsteps and do their best to promote the democratic values of freedom of speech and freedom of information.<sup>3</sup> It is important to remember that these multinational corporations are becoming increasingly more responsible for their

business practices which not only affect the company itself and the bottom line, but also the lives of millions of people.

Others are also fighting for free Internet and the ability of all individuals to gain access to this incomparable source of conflicting opinions, news, archives, and a myriad of other information.

The Global Internet Freedom Consortium, formed in 2006, is an alliance of organizations aiming to develop and deploy anti-censorship technology specifically for use in nations with oppressive regimes.<sup>4</sup>

Save the Internet is also working toward net neutrality and freedom by education the public and rallying for local as well as global action on the matter.<sup>5</sup>

## Internet Offers Media Democracy ... For a Price

By Elisha Sum

As a major hub of information and connectivity, the Internet has substantially ousted other forms of telecommunications. Now with the advent and rise of new media, it plays an increasingly significant role in the establishment of a democratic one in allowing the voice of people from all types of backgrounds to be heard. As a major communications platform, it brings the power of the press to average people. However, the problem of digital divides manifesting in disproportionate demographic representation on the net still exist.

The variation in those who have access to the Internet and also the ability to utilize it meaningfully is socially patterned. These two issues should not be conflated and are both important to consider. Furthermore, the prevalence of the Internet does not simply trans-

late to “equal ubiquity,” as gender, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and geographic location all affect the likelihood of having net access and the knowledge to effectively use it.<sup>1</sup>

As a response to the issue of internet diffusion, in March the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) unveiled their national broadband plan, which aims to increase the number of homes with access to 100Mbps of broadband to 100 million by 2020.<sup>2</sup> However, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. recently ruled that the FCC lacks the legal right to impose net neutrality rules in Comcast v. FCC. Net neutrality precludes the selective blocking or slowing of Web content, such as applications and information.<sup>3</sup> Without this regulatory power, the FCC may not have the authority to stop broadband providers from engaging in

anti-consumer and -competitive practices that go against the principles of net neutrality nor the power to ensure broadband provider transparency, consumer privacy, and federal funding of the expansion of broadband access.<sup>4</sup>

To overcome the setback, FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski proposed the reclassification of broadband under a “third way” in order to establish the agency’s authority over broadband.<sup>5</sup> The proposal calls for the classification of “the transmission component of broadband as a ‘telecommunications service,’” thus giving the FCC the authority to act within the bounds of the Communications Act to regulate it.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Genachowski seeks “to apply only 6 of 48 Title II regulations to broadband access providers,” including those that would align company practices to net neutrality principles.<sup>7</sup> This new legal framework could be a crucial step to real-

izing net neutrality, protection of consumers, and universal, affordable, high-quality broadband access.<sup>8</sup>

The FCC’s notice

respectively.<sup>10</sup>

Comcast, however, expressed concerns over the potential risks of Title II regulations, which may

**NET NEUTRALITY:** In order to ensure the success of the national broadband plan and promote competition and net neutrality, the FCC must wield the power to implement rules and regulate broadband.

of inquiry concerning the new proposal closed on July 15 and received a majority support from the 25,000-plus organizations and people who responded. The Free Press organization, a staunch supporter of net neutrality, cited the unlimited power of broadband companies to control the flow of the Internet, a “public platform for free speech, equal opportunity, economic growth and innovation,” as a primary reason to support the proposal.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, people like commenter William Haynes and Paula Nessa depend on the Web for its utility as a communications platform ensuring the power of free press and free information,

decrease the investment and innovation needed to improve broadband and expand its access.<sup>11</sup> Senior Vice President of Federal Regulatory Policy Bob Quinn at AT&T agrees on the company policy blog, affirming the likelihood in the decrease of private investment and job creation.<sup>12</sup> According to The Center for Responsive



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Politics, opponents of the new proposal, including Comcast and AT&T, spent over \$20 million to lobby during the first quarter of 2010.<sup>13</sup> It is not surprising though that the companies with vested interest in their own profits would oppose any form of regulation that may equalize the playing field and perhaps result in short-term losses. Nonetheless, the feared regulations concerning net neutrality were applied without much incident to telephone companies, DSL services, and wireless telephony, according to Public Knowledge.

Furthermore, regulation is extremely necessary as “the broadband market is extremely concentrated, with most consumers having the choice between only two broadband access providers ... and more than 40 million Americans have either no choice or one choice of broadband access providers.”<sup>14</sup> Such a limited market without operation

guidelines is neither fair nor just. The Web has tremendously developed and grown since its inception, providing countless valuable services; it should be accessible to all. In order to ensure the success of the national broadband plan and promote competition and net neutrality, the FCC must wield the power to implement rules and regulate broadband. The self-interest of profit-seeking broadband companies should not determine the future of the Internet.

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## Learning How to Holla Back

By Trent Serwetz

“One of the odd things about street harassment is that it’s everywhere but it’s invisible,” says Lisa, one of the members of the activist group the “Street Harassment Project.”<sup>1</sup> Their project is one of dozens of blogs and activist groups arguing that “women are terrorized daily in public spaces” and committing to breaking the silence.<sup>2</sup>

“Street harassment,” the explicitly sexual intrusion upon a person’s (especially a woman’s) personal space in a public area, is a commonplace phenomenon often overlooked as a minor problem. Titled “a super-insidious form of sexism” by Jessica Valenti of Feministing.com, street harassment is a form of sexual terrorism finally receiving the attention it deserves.<sup>3</sup>

Statistically, its prevalence is unchallengeable. In a long-range study of Indianapolis women from diverse ethnic and socioeco-

conomic backgrounds, every single woman cited examples of being harassed by unknown men in public.<sup>4</sup> In a survey of San Francisco Bay Area women, 100 percent had been the target of offensive or the daily lives of women in every part of the globe. A Beijing survey indicated that 70 percent of its respondents had been subjected to a form of sexual harassment.<sup>7</sup> Almost two thirds of the women interviewed in a Tokyo area survey reported being groped

problem. On one hand, sexual harassment is not an easy charge to substantiate with proof. A woman can be ogled, verbally assaulted, threatened, and even groped without leaving any physical evidence behind. Unless the crime is witnessed by bystanders who will proactively intervene on behalf of the victim, street harassment usually passes by silently. If the criminal is not caught red-handed, it can be impossible to verify that a crime has taken place and to enlist police attention.

Police neglect is compounded by the fact that there are “few reported street harassment cases in which convictions have been upheld,” since most instances of street harassment are found to be “insufficient to violate the anti-harassment statute.”<sup>9</sup> “Since police rarely intervene when a woman is being harassed, we need to watch our own backs and those of other women,” Jessica Hulett suggests in a *Bitch Magazine* article.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand,



Image courtesy of HollaBackUK, <http://hollaback-uk.blogspot.com/>

sexually-suggestive remarks at least occasionally.<sup>5</sup> One multi-gender Manhattan questionnaire indicated that 63 percent of its respondents had been sexually harassed before.<sup>6</sup>

Street harassment is a reality that haunts

while commuting.<sup>8</sup> The question has become not whether street harassment is a significant issue, but how best to combat it.

Relying on the power of law enforcement seems like a naïve solution to a complex

what are women to do when the law enforcement officials themselves are the perpetrators of harassment? An article in *The Sexist* listed numerous instances of DC-area

solution. The sites are structured as local blogs on which visitors can anonymously post instances of street harassment, when and where the incident occurred, including a

confrontation is often inadvisably risky, since literally hollering at the assailant can provoke an escalated and more physical response.

Street harassment's invisibility may be in part due to the fact that, once the harassment has taken place and it is clear that no legal repercussions await the perpetrator, victims tend to want to forget the incident as quickly as possible. As Emily May, the executive director of "HollaBack," puts it, "one of the main reasons that women don't Hollaback is because by the time they get home, they just kind of want to forget that it happened."<sup>15</sup> "HollaBack" gives victims an opportunity both to share their stories and to feel some solidarity in the fact that others have endured similar experiences and may offer effective strategies for reconciliation. To help increase the likelihood that women will at least report instances of street harassment, "HollaBack" has funded a new iPhone application which

allows users to post directly to the blog from their mobile phones, complete with optional photograph.

Yet the full utility of "HollaBack" is far more concrete than its empowering mission. It helps to accrue data about an extremely underreported crime. Each website features a local map where visitors can pinpoint the location of their harassment experience, to help highlight the most dangerous urban areas. On a macro level, "HollaBack" provides a resource which can assist "law enforcement looking to cut down on the behavior, legislators trying to pass stricter laws against it, and activists holding the feet of both to the fire to actually do so."<sup>16</sup> But it has already achieved results on a micro level. On "HollaBackDC," for example, one woman posted a snapshot of a man who had taken an upskirt photograph of her, and the man was later arrested by the Arlington police.<sup>17</sup> In another "HollaBackDC" case, a bystander witnessed street harass-

ment taking place and intervened on behalf of the victim, leading to the perpetrator's arrest.<sup>18</sup> The website is not only providing comfort for women who have been sexually assaulted, it is valuably connecting people committed to stopping street harassment.

Is "HollaBack" a comprehensive solution? Absolutely not. The prevalence of street harassment makes it clear that it is a problem deeply woven into the way men and women interact. Our society, as well as others around the world, will require major ideological and legal shifts before women's bodies are no longer viewed as objects for the taking. But blogs and activist groups dedicated to ending street harassment are providing power and communication where once there were only tears and isolation. Learning to "holla" back in new and constructive ways is vital to changing women's experience of the world from the ground up, one step at a time.

**"HollaBack" gives victims an opportunity both to share their stories and to feel some solidarity in the fact that others have endured similar experiences and may offer effective strategies for reconciliation.**

sexual harassment by firefighters, police officers, security guards, and metro employees.<sup>11</sup> According to a Pentagon survey, one third of all women in the U.S. military reported being sexually harassed.<sup>12</sup>

It is easy to feel powerless when those employed to protect us are personally responsible for sexual abuse. Street harassment "can transform the way we as women walk, dress, commute and live," writes Smita Satiani of the *Huffington Post*.<sup>13</sup> So what can be done to ameliorate this ubiquitous problem, short of toppling the legal system itself?

A growing chain of websites called "HollaBack" offers a potential grassroots

photo of the assailant. The first "HollaBack" blog started in 2005 was "HollaBackNYC," but as of 2010, its affiliates include websites for DC, Boston, San Francisco, Toronto, and others. The sites' goal, according to "HollaBackDC," is to help make "public spaces... safe for women and LGBTQ individuals."<sup>14</sup> The websites generate a resistance against street harassment in several substantive ways.

Breaking the silence is a key piece of the "HollaBack" mission. Experiencing street harassment can be an alienating affair. Harassers may be physically imposing, verbally intimidating, or even outright threatening in their behavior. Direct

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## Men's Groups Working to End Violence Against Women

By Elisha Sum

Often, we hear parents exclaim the excusatory phrase "boys will be boys," perhaps with a smile or a sigh of slight exasperation, in response to aggressive behaviors and violent acts in boys and young men. Nothing more than a cursory admonition, the oft-repeated saying frames these actions as rooted in male biology, purporting that they are innocuous manifestations of encoded genes.

Our culture offers no distinction between healthy and harmful masculinity. Subscribing, even implicitly, to a biological determinist perspective that considers violence as essential to maleness is dangerous. This problematic perspective bolsters the influence of our sexist system that valorizes a masculine ethic of toughness and aggressiveness while devaluing opposing values, that are then associated with

femininity. It also perpetuates gender expectations that encourage exaggerated conformity to sexist ideals, and thereby maintains gender inequality by insisting on a strict gender binary, which allows only a limited degree of free gender expression.

Lacking models of constructive masculinity, or at least those that are glorified, men might subscribe to a limited one that maintains the status quo of gender inequity. Violent crime statistics reveal that men are highly overrepresented across various categories, such as rape, murder, and sexual and aggravated assault,<sup>1</sup> with women overrepresented as victims of rape and sexual assault.<sup>2</sup>

Violence is gendered, and it implicates men. The way in which women are viewed and treated can be changed through efforts that challenge the problematic con-

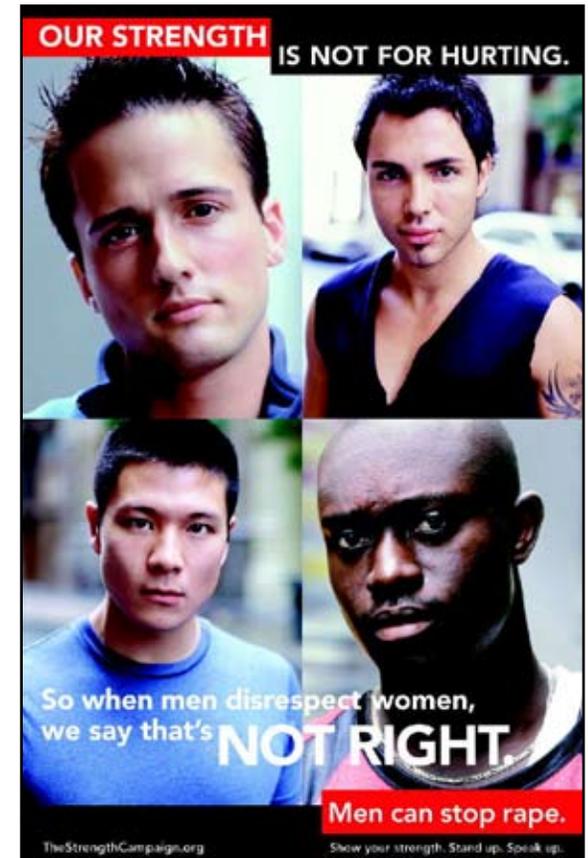
structs of masculinity. We can either rest on our laurels of scientific complacency and accept that perhaps male violence is inevitable, or take action and approach the issue from a feminist and sociological perspective to seek potential solutions.

Men's organizations that pursue the creation of violence-free cultures have chosen to do the latter. They emphasize the need to redefine and change cultural conceptions of masculinity that influence males to reproduce gender inequality through their attitudes, behaviors, and actions. A prime example is the international organization Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR), which focuses on the redirection of the idea of male strength into positive venues to create a violence-free society.

Since its inception in 1997, MCSR has worked to challenge and redefine problematic definitions of masculinity. According to the website, the organization mobilizes male youth through an education system that

nurtures the capacity to reject detrimental characteristics of traditional masculinity, to esteem different notions of male strength, and to realize their vital role as allies of women and girls in order to cultivate healthy relationships and achieve gender equality.

In order to address the socialization of young men that leads to the reproduction and perpetuation of gender inequity, MCSR launched a Strength Campaign. In 2000 it developed the Men of Strength (MOST) Club to urge high school boys to redefine masculinity in a way that will promote safe and healthy relationships and ultimately reduce instances of sexual violence. The National Crime Prevention Council profiled MOST Club "as one of the nation's most promising '50 Strategies to Prevent Violent Domestic Crimes,'"<sup>3</sup> and in 2003, MOST Club was selected as one of the top four gender violence prevention programs by



Advertisement courtesy of the Strength Mediaworks Campaign, <http://www.mencanstoprape.org/>

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Currently, MOST Clubs have been established in 100 schools in over 10 states, including every D.C. public high school.

In 2008 MCSR developed the Campus Strength program to expand their reach to an older audience and address the same is-

ssues as the MOST Club with college men. The program engages them in violence prevention on campus and in society at large, and also supports student groups, faculty, and staff who work to end violence against women, providing training and technical assistance. Campus Strength encourages

college men to apply their knowledge and take initiative to enact social change.

MCSR's public education message initiative Strength Mediaworks is a public awareness campaign aimed to raise awareness for sexual assault prevention and the role men can play in it. The campaign seeks to reframe the ideal of the strong man, emphasizing the alternative possibility of being strong without the need to be aggressive, violent, and hurtful to others.

Another men's organization of the same ilk, Men Stopping Violence (MSV) approaches the fight to end violence against

women from a perspective emphasizing the interconnected nature of all forms of oppression, contending that social justice work in areas of race, class, gender, age, and sexuality is a vital part of ending violence against women.<sup>4</sup> Similar to the objective of Men Can Stop Rape, MSV aims to break down the system of beliefs, social structures and institutional practices that result in the oppression of women and children and the dehumanization of men.

The organization began in 1982, a year after therapist Dick Bathrick, M.A., and Gus Kaufman, Jr.

Ph.D., launched the first education program for batterers in Atlanta at the behest of Kathleen Carlin, the then executive director of the Cobb County YWCA Women's Resource Center. Currently, MSV works to effect systemic change in order to realize a vision of women's safety.

Men Stopping Violence provides education programs aimed at men to teach them various ways in which to create safer communities for girls and women. One of their initiatives, Tactics & Choices offers a twice-monthly class aimed at men arrested for domestic violence offenses in Dekalb

County, Georgia. During class, the participants examine the "abusive and intimidating tactics" men employ to maintain their power and control over women and discuss their own behavioral choices.<sup>5</sup> The program then explores the myths and ideas surrounding being a man in a relationship. Additionally, a similar class that takes place over the course of 24 weeks explores male violence against women, with the goal to teach men ways to become involved in the solution.

In 1987, MSV began its Community Restoration Program (CRP) as a follow up to the 24-week course. The innovative program provides the graduated men with support and opportunities to volunteer with MSV and work in community advocacy. The men of CRP plan and execute initiatives aimed at changing policy and law. A notable achievement was the passage of the reauthorization bill of the federal Violence

Against Women Act in 2006 in Georgia through a statewide campaign and lobbying.

Additionally, a mentoring program was created to address gender inequality and also the lack of male success in schools. Trained mentors con-

necessary to stop violence against women in their community.

Challenging masculinity remains the major common denominator of Men Can Stop Rape and Men Stopping Violence, although they focus on differing facets of the same problem. They

**MEN CAN STOP RAPE: Recruiting and engaging males as agents of change to advocate for the end of violence against women is a vital component of creating a safer world for both genders.**

vey to male students the importance of examining gender inequality and debilitating models of masculinity in order to create an egalitarian society, particularly one that helps males do well in school.

One of their most recent programs, Because We Have Daughters®, which started in 2005, engages fathers and daughters through shared activities geared to teach fathers more about their daughters. Discussions follow to highlight the new insights garnered that day. The program hopes to teach men the empathy and the skills

are dedicated to ending violence against women by dismantling the miseducation of boys and young men in our society, for decisions and choices made every day ultimately shape our culture. Recruiting and engaging males as agents of change to advocate for the end of violence against women is a vital component of creating a safer world for both genders.

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## New Booklet in the Works!

### Women's Print Periodicals: 1960s to 2010

We have been compiling a list of all of the women's media periodicals that we know about from the sixties to the present day. The WIFP staff has gone through all the past annual print issues of the Directory of Women's Media (starting with 1975!) and added them to the names of the ones that are currently in existence. Nowhere is there a list of all known print women's media. In addition to a printed booklet, we intend to make this list available on the WIFP website so it can be accessed for free from anywhere in the world. We will also encourage people to send in the names of women's print periodicals that we don't currently know about and therefore the list will continue to grow. We expect our print booklet will be utilized primarily by libraries. We'd love feedback on this idea as we finalize the booklet -- and would welcome some quotes, particularly by editors of some of the early periodicals!

~Martha Allen

## Are Bloggers Journalists?

By Becky Little

Are bloggers journalists? A Google search of that question under “web” and “news” yields one possible answer, at least as far as mainstream perceptions of bloggers and journalists are concerned. Choosing “web” will include a variety of blogs in your search. Choosing “news” will include newspaper and magazine articles as well as certain blogs.

These “certain blogs” are either attached to mainstream newspapers and magazines (“The Washington Post Blog,” etc.) or are considered reputable news sources in their own right (“The Daily Beast,” “The Huffington Post,” “Salon”). Although news sources that are strictly in blog form may still be regarded as less legitimate in the eyes of some, it is not really these blogs that must defend themselves as journalism.

The question of whether bloggers are (or can be) journalists is usually taken up with respect to individuals who do not work

or write for a media corporation. And since access to a computer with internet service is the only prerequisite for blogging, the question of whether a blogger can be a journalist has really become: what divides a person who has access to a computer from a journalist?

Although the question of blogger-journalists is not new, recent court cases have made it a legally-relevant question.

“From California to New Jersey to Iceland, bloggers and free speech advocates in case after case are arguing for protections under shield laws,” reported Matthew L. Schafer in “Are Bloggers Journalists? Judge Says, Don’t Confuse ‘New Media’ with ‘News Media.’”<sup>1</sup>

Schafer writes that shield laws were designed to protect journalists from having to turn over their new sources. However, new media has made blurry the issue of who is considered a journalist, and therefore who is allowed protection

under shield laws.

Twenty-four-year-old Josh Wolf is one such blogger who went to jail for not giving up video footage that he had recorded, which he says he had the right not to release under shield laws.

In Alex Koppelman’s Salon interview with Wolf, Wolf identifies himself as “a journalist and a video blogger.”<sup>2</sup> When asked what he thinks makes him a journalist, he responded:

“A journalist can be a blogger, a blogger is not necessarily a journalist -- unless they, I mean, and that gets kind of fuzzy because if the sole focus on your blog is your pets, then I guess you are engaging in journalism about your pets, but it’s a very, very fine-tuned scope.”

Wolf seems careful in his response, perhaps in an attempt not to match the words of people like Judge Anthony Parillo, who ruled in a recent case that shield laws do not apply to bloggers.

“Simply put, new media should not be confused with news media,” wrote Parillo, according to Schafer’s article. “There is, of

necessity, a distinction between, on the one hand, personal diaries, opinions, impressions and expressive writing and, on the other hand, news reporting.”

In his statement, Parillo makes a distinction between “factual” journalism and personal writing that is viewed as opinion-based and perhaps even frivolous, though journalistic pieces are not so strictly divided.

Wolf elaborates on the fuzziness of the line between journalism and non-journalism, fact and opinion, when he says that he thinks “a line is crossed when you don’t disclose your own personal bias.”

It is interesting that blog-journalism should be viewed so skeptically so long after the advent of New Journalism in the 60s and 70s. Like many pieces of blog-journalism, New Journalists like Joan Didion, Hunter S. Thompson, and Gloria Steinem rejected feigning objectivity in their journalism. They included their experience as the observer and participant in the events they reported,



**Blogger Josh Wolf, who claimed protection under journalistic shield laws governing the release of classified video.**

*Photo courtesy of IndyBay.org, <http://www.indybay.org/>*

as well as their own analysis and opinions of the events. “Personal diaries, opinions, impressions and expressive writing” were often characteristics of New Journalism, and such pieces have therefore constituted a type of journalism for several decades.

Wolf’s approach to the question of who a journalist is focuses not on the person’s publicly-recognized status as a journalist but the content of the material being written. But in “After 150 Years of Selling News, media Outlets Need to Think About Turning Back the Clock,” Jane Podesta of Huffington Post questions whether “selling” the news in

a publicly-recognized fashion will even be a viable alternative in the future.<sup>3</sup>

New York University Professor Mitchell Stephens says that citizen-journalists may take the place of paid “professional” journalists that many today are more apt to take seriously, writes Podesta.

“If you take a long, historic view, its really only been a century and a half where journalists were able to sell news,” Stephens told Podesta. “There are numerous signs that this is ending, and we are going back to an era when news and facts were spread for free.”

“We can watch the press conferences

ourselves or watch excerpts on YouTube. We don't need some Washington reporter taking notes and telling us. We can watch it. We can get it fast from bloggers and tweets and smartphones. The idea that we need highly trained veteran journalists to tell us what is happening strikes me as an increasingly outdated idea."

Because of this, Stephens says that those who analyze the news are becoming more relevant than those who simply record the events. This trend points away from the traditional journalism that Judge Parillo upheld and towards the type of blog journalism that is widely read today, an extension of the New Journalism that came before it.

The logical conclusion of this thinking is that everyone has the

potential to become a journalist. And really, that was the intention of the inclusion of freedom of the press in the 1st Amendment. Schafer points out that in 1972, Supreme Court Justice Byron White remarked on the irony that the question of who is a journalist would one day need to be legally hashed out in light of this amendment:

"Sooner or later, it would be necessary to define those categories of newsmen who qualified for the privilege, a questionable procedure in light of the traditional doctrine that liberty of the press is the right of the lonely pamphleteer... just as much as of the large metropolitan publisher," White wrote.

Some still question whether individuals or groups who do not work for a publicly

recognized media corporation can be trusted to deliver news accurately. The idea that citizen-bloggers are a credible source of news has recently come under scrutiny in light of the Andrew Breitbart fiasco.

Andrew Breitbart posted a video of Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod on his blog. The video had been edited so that it appeared that Sherrod, a black woman, had refused to help out a white farmer because of his race. Ta-Nehisi Coates at "The Atlantic" sums up the actual content of her speech as follows:

"In the video Sherrod talks about [how] her family and friends were repeatedly victimized by racial violence and how she carried that into her career to the point of almost not helping a white farmer in trouble.

But when she saw the white farmer was being ripped off by a white lawyer, who she'd referred him to, she saw that it wasn't about black v. white but rich v. poor. She ultimately was able to save the guy's farm."<sup>4</sup>

But before anyone in the media realized that the footage had been doctored, the story was picked up, the Obama administration called for Sherrod's resignation, and the NAACP condemned her actions.

Journalism Professor Sara-Ellen Amster wrote in "Why Old Media Rules Still Count in New Media Age" at "HuffPo" that Andrew Breitbart's article is a result of not being trained in the proper ethics of journalism.<sup>5</sup> "Journalists require training in professional ethics, in copy editing, in the necessity of avoiding libel or repeating slander," Amster wrote.

Others say that Breitbart's actions are not indicative of any flaw in citizen-journalists untrained in the ethics of journalism, but rather that Breitbart's actions reflect the bad

journalism, outright libel and slander, and racist reporting that media outlets such as Fox News practice on a regular basis. Such analysis locates the problem not with untrained blogger-journalists as a group but with any media outlet, corporate or non-corporate, which practices inaccurate, racist journalism.

The fact that this story was picked up so quickly by the mainstream corporate [read: legitimate] media without being fact-checked should be evidence that a news corporation's publicly-recognized legitimacy does not guarantee that they will practice good journalism.

If anything, the Breitbart incident is a display of how necessary alternative media voices like blogger-journalists are to media democracy. Breitbart's story was picked up by corporate and non-corporate media, but the un-doctored footage was also able to be spread quickly afterward by means of alternative media sources. The fact that Fox News continues to be sympathetic towards

Breitbart in the face of such overwhelming evidence against him is an indication of how necessary these alternative media outlets are to checking the corporate media. Though corporations like Fox News and individuals like Breitbart practice poor journalism, the multiplicity of voices that exist on the internet are able to provide counter-reports to their stories.

But returning once again to the legal aspect of journalism, how does the fact that anyone can be a journalist relate to the shield laws? We shall see. Currently, there are no federal shield laws. But if one of the many cases involving alternative media journalists makes it to the Supreme Court, or if the stalled Free Flow of Information Act passes in Congress, what a "journalist" is, for good or for bad, will need to be legally defined.

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## Chronicling Media Democracy

*A History of the Women's Media Booklet*

By Sara Friedman



Image courtesy of WIFP, <http://wifp.org>

We are currently working on compiling a list of all of the women's media periodicals that we know about from the 1960s to the present day. The WIFP staff has been hard at work going through all of the print issues of the Directory of Women's Media (published since 1975) and other sources of information about women's periodicals. We are compiling this list into a booklet for anyone who is interested. As production editor of this booklet, there

is some background on women's media that I would like to share.

Every year, WIFP creates a print edition of the Directory of Women's Media, a directory of media owned and operated primarily by, for, and about women. This is an important resource for those interested in women's media. While male owned publications directed towards women have often existed, those by women have been not been as consistent.

Things began to

change in the 1960s with the rise of the women's movement. In 1963, two key things happened that began the start of women's media movement. First, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, exposing the role of male-owned traditional women's magazines in limiting women's options. Second, President John Fitzgerald Kennedy's President's Commission on the Status of Women publicly released its report, *American Women*, on October 11, 1963. Radical women in-

involved in the civil rights and peace movements started to think and act on the issues that face women. Awareness of the discrimination against women grew.

In March 1968 the first periodical of the new female liberation movement, *The Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement*, was published. It was followed immediately by others, each year bringing more. Now we have hundreds of print and internet periodicals, as well as a variety of other forms of media, and we

know that women will never go back to the times when we had no media to communicate.

Women's media did not operate the same as those of the corporate media or other periodicals predominantly by men. Martha Allen, who edits the *Directory of Women's Media*, found eight identifying characteristics. Women were speaking for themselves and not for others. There was a preference for a collective rather than hierarchical structures and an emphasis on sharing instead of competitive.

The analysis of the mass media's role in relation to women was key. The non-attack approach with no name-calling or discrimination also became apparent in addition to the need for an "open forum." An emphasis to report on information not reported in the mass media and an activist orientation were also key components of the first multi-issue women's periodicals.

An important change in the world of women's periodicals came with the arrival

of the 1990s and the 21st Century with the arrival of the Internet. The Internet changed how people access information and provided that information to a much wider audience.

Instead of publishing only in print, periodicals were also able to create online editions of their works. Over time, some publications have switched from print to online production when printing costs were too great, rather than ceasing publication entirely. Many periodicals began solely as online 'zines.

Women's periodicals provide a woman's perspective on today's issues and women's lives. They share information that is not found elsewhere. They are a vital voice of the women's movement.

This list of women's periodicals will provide an important resource for the history of women's media and issues of concern to women throughout these decades.

## Associate News Flash

### WIFP Associate Senay Ozdemir

"Some years ago Senay Ozdemir, a Dutch-Turkish journalist and entrepreneur, launched what remains to this day one of the best women's magazines I've ever read. Aimed mostly at Muslim women, Sen (named for its founder) included articles not just on health and beauty but also on the politics of being a young Muslim in a Western secularized culture, with essays supporting lesbianism (considered haram, or forbidden, in Islam), discussions about dating both within and outside the faith, and features on domestic violence in Muslim homes. In a kind of 'Dear Abby'" column, Ozdemir offered advice to young women, arguing Islam's compatibility with Western norms and advocating such values even when more religious Muslims rejected them. It was an endeavor that sought to bring modern, secularized culture to the lives of young Muslim women, supporting their emancipation without demeaning their religion or their heritage--and it worked."

~Abigail R. Esman

Forbes.com July 26, 2010

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Front L-R: Sara Friedman, Rebecca Little;  
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