

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

**Day 2, April 1, 2011:**

**Keynote Address: *Redefining Asia, Redefining Media***

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**Keynote Speaker:**

- **Madanmohan Rao:** Editor, *The Asia Pacific Internet Handbook*, India

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**Rosental Calmon Alves:** I will ask Amy Schmidt Weiss to make the introduction to our first keynote speaker this morning.

**Amy Schmidt Weiss:** Good morning, everyone. Just a quick announcement about social media for those out there. Again, Twitter hashtag ISOJ and also Foursquare. Make sure to go search online for the ISOJ info on Four --

**Man:** Gowalla.

**Amy Schmidt Weiss:** Sorry — on Gowalla. [laughs] And then find us on Facebook as well. It's my pleasure to introduce today our keynote address this morning of Madan Rao, who's going to be talking about *Redefining Asia, Redefining Media*. Madan Rao is a prolific author, blogger, and tweets on several different subjects ranging from knowledge management and new media to world music and travel. Madan shuttles regularly between Singapore and Bangalore and is the editor of five books; in particular, one of the most well known is *The Asia Pacific Internet Handbook*, which he was here about two years ago to talk about, which it's great to have him come back again now two years later to this symposium. Without further ado, I'd like to introduce Madan. Welcome.

[Applause.]

**Madanmohan Rao:** Hi. Good morning. I can't tell you how happy I am to see all of you here today. I came at eight o'clock for breakfast and there was nobody there. And I thought, oh, my God! Did I oversleep? Is it Sunday today? Have I missed the whole conference? But it's good to see all of you here today. I must thank Rosental for inviting me here. I first met him almost maybe 15 years ago in the early years of the dot-com era, during various conferences hosted by *Editor & Publisher Magazine* and the Kelsey Group and whatnot. And I'm very happy to be here. I was here in 2004, seven years ago, and I presented some results from my first set of books, including *The Asia Pacific Internet Handbook* series, some results from the book, *News Media & New Media*. Today, I'll talk a little bit about some of the findings from the second set of books, which talks about the Internet in India and other parts of Asia as well.

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But in the spirit of Indian hospitality, let me begin with giving all of you some freebies. Who's taking pictures? Please take a picture of this and tweet it immediately. [laughter] This is the Mobile Africa Report. I released this last week in Mombasa at the Digital Africa Summit. You can go to the [MobileMonday.net](http://MobileMonday.net) website and download a 50-page PDF on some of the new innovations in Africa—African news on mobile, broadband, etc.

I also have the honor of being on the jury board, member of jurors of these two big award ceremonies. One is in South Asia, the best awards for online and mobile content including news, as well as the WSA Award, World Summit Awards. And on both these sites, you can find lists of over the last two-to-six years, who are the winners of best practices in online news, mobile news, in Asia and countries around the world. So, lots of good stuff over there for you.

For instance, if you go to the Mobile Monday website—Mobile Monday, by the way is a global network of mobile innovators in 100-plus cities around the world—on some Monday of the month, people get together and talk about what's happening in mobile in their countries, in their cities. There's a chapter in Austin as well. I'll introduce them to you, Rosental. And if you are in a city where there is no Mobile Monday chapter as yet, send me email or come to this site and find out how you can sign up to a chapter.

So on this site, you can find the report I was talking about. On the top left you can see "Innovation Africa." That's the summit where we released the Mobile Africa Report. This is a snapshot from the website of World Summit Awards Mobile, and these are some of the winners from last year's Best Content Award Winners for Mobile News. This one called Apontador Traffic. I believe it's a traffic news website from Brazil. And there's also YouReporter, a social media citizen journalist site from Russia. Sort of like the iReporter of Russia.

This is the mBillionth Awards from India. These are the best winners of mobile news in South Asia last year. One is Reuters Market Light. This is a step-down version of Reuters News, Reuters news feed for farmers in rural Asia. There's also another one called See'n'Report, which is a citizen journalism service in Pakistan. Many citizens...many reporters over there are under the line of fire for covering reports of events leading to the Taliban and stuff like that, so now citizens are stepping up and becoming citizen reporters in Pakistan. So, these are the kind of things you can see on those links that I just sent you.

So, what I'll do in the next 30 minutes, I guess, is run you through some of the trends and learnings from what we've seen with news in emerging markets such as Asia and Africa. I try and come up with a grand unified theory of news media, which obviously is not possible, but let's try. And with some very exciting news hopefully for all of you on how we can work together on some projects on using a crowdsourced kind of a format.

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So, I'll begin with the first model which I presented at the first conference when I came here, which is the framework reviews for comparative studies, which is, how do you compare the online news environment in countries across the world? We did this in Asia. So the first slice we took was what I call the Eight C's of the Digital Media. And as you can guess, they're all pretty self-explanatory.

Connectivity is, how many people in a country are connected to narrowband [or] broadband? What kinds of content [are] available? Video? Text? What kinds of social media are being used by people in that country? What is the culture of news organizations in the country? How are newsrooms in that country dealing with the challenges of new media? Are they innovators? Are they lead adopters or are they early followers? What kind of cooperation is there between the online news industry and advertising, for instance? Can you pay for content in that country? How do you pay for content? Do you pay through credit card or do you pay through PayPal? Do you pay through SMS as in some countries in Africa? And finally, what are you investing? What are the news organizations in these countries investing, and how do they measure their return on investment? We had some good sessions yesterday which talked about how to measure, what kinds of metrics you can come up with in your online news environments.

That is one dimension—the eight C's that we use—and the second one is this one, which is, what is the end user view of online news? How are citizens using online news? And the second part is the industry of online news. Many of you are global providers of content. You've become whole industries of content, video, text, etc., such as the BBC's and CNN's of the world. When you marry these together, you get this slide. Photograph, please. This is a classification of online news environments in the Asia Pacific. So, you have, for instance, on the one hand, very restrictive countries, unfortunately, countries like North Korea, Myanmar, where there's really tight restrictions [and] censorship of the media, all the way down to countries like Japan and South Korea, which are not only very advanced in terms of the way they use mobile media, but they also are exporting their models of mobile news, digital news to other countries. A good example here, for instance, would be NTT DOCOMO, which is the most successful mobile news player in Japan. They're now expanded to India to bring some of those same models to India as well.

Now, even at the speed of which I'm speaking, I can't cover all the trends in Asia, of course, so I'll give you maybe my list of [the] top ten trends in online news in Asia and maybe how we can share lessons with one another. I come from a part of the world which has lovely, spicy food and great music and all that, but unfortunately lots of disasters, like tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes, cyclones and whatnot. So for many of the news organizations in Asia, a key part of the online news operation is, how do you respond when there is a hit when they get an earthquake or a tsunami, etc.? So, online is

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critical in not just making money, but in saving lives. And as you can see from the examples, you've probably searched some of them yourself. The aftermath of the tsunami, of the earthquake in New Zealand, etc.—mobile news, mobile location is very important.

Secondly, diaspora populations. Asia has huge diaspora populations. There are about 20-million Indians of Indian origin living outside of India. Maybe 40-million people of Chinese origin living outside of China. And the net is the best medium to stay in touch with news from our home countries when we're abroad.

We thought a lot yesterday about mobiles and tablets. We also have another category very popular in Asia—the mini-tablets, which are somewhere between the cell phone and the tablet in terms of size. So Samsung's or some of the versions of the Galaxy are very popular that way in South Asia. In fact, in many markets in Asia, it was not the iPad which was the first tablet, but actually the Samsung or the HTC's tablet computers.

We also are seeing some very interesting variations of social media use with an Asian touch. For instance, there's a site called CyWorld which is actually the first second-life kind of an installment in Asia, in South Korea. In India, for instance, it's very popular to have online marriage matrimonial sites. Any of you who've seen a Bollywood movie know that the most common plot is a boy falls in love with girl, but parents of boy want him to marry somebody else, and the parents of the girl have arranged for her to marry someone else, so there's good girls and bad girls on both sides, but they can all sing and dance at least six times in the movie. [laughter] That's enough plot of a Bollywood movie. So, this whole matchmaking thing is very popular in Bollywood.

Some very interesting innovations coming out of, believe it or not, Kenya, which is becoming a major hub of mobile innovation in Africa. You may have heard of...how many of you have heard of Ushahidi? Okay, great, you all know about it. So, this came out of Kenya and is being used even now in Japan to monitor relief, to monitor supplies of medical equipment, etc., to Japan. They also are one of the capitals of mobile payment. X%—I forget the number—10% of GDP of Kenya every month goes through mobile payment networks of m-Pesa. And they're now expanding this model to other parts of Africa as well.

We also are fortunate, I think, in Asia, to be a bit less enamored, you know, hero worshipping of Bill Gates and Steve Jobs and all that stuff. So we don't have too much of these Apple fanatics and Blackberry fanatics in Asia. We like this stuff, but we're not necessarily that enamored of the whole culture behind the stuff. So we are a bit more critical, for instance, of Apple not embracing Flash and things of that sort, but this is sort of heresy for people who worship Apple.

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We also have very interesting examples—I'll show you later—of how we're using crowdsourcing and crowdfunding. Asia is very crowded, so crowdsourcing works very well. We also have some very interesting examples in mapping: social cartography, communities mapping neighborhoods and mapping this onto local Yellow Page listings, local business reviews, etc.

I'll talk a little bit on some of the very interesting stuff coming out of North Africa and how that's spilling over across the Middle East into parts of Asia as well, which is, how are news organizations dealing with this whole phenomenon of smart mobs and swarms and flux of people? How these become social movements and eventually topple governments in some cases. And we also see the lighter side—activism light—sort of an armchair activism. You click on a cause and say, "Yes, I support a particular signature resolution," that kind of stuff.

For the most part yesterday, we talked a lot about consumer news. I want to talk a little bit today also about the business news, the B-to-B environment of digital content, and finally, the end of the day, I also want to put out a note for the humble SMS. We're getting so carried away with all the rich media stuff, but we forget that in many cases SMS works very good, very well for publishing, marketing, for short bursts of news, but differently for emergencies, alerts, and things of that sort.

So, I'm going through a few examples of each of these and come to the next two parts afterwards. This is from a new book, "NetChakra: 15 Years of the Internet in India." We asked 30 experts in India to tell us what's happening and what are the impacts of online news, e-government, digital music, all that stuff. Our first experience actually was with crowdsourcing. What we did was this—me and my coeditor, we put together a list of what we thought were key developments of the growth of the Internet in India, and then we just tweeted the link to this particular page, and we asked people, "Tell us what you think are the important highlights in the growth of the Internet in India. Tell us about online news. Tell us about e-government. Tell us about civil society online. Tell us about e-learning." And we got about 200 or 300 responses within just a few days. And we assembled all this stuff into this big chronology, and we're very happy with how it covers so many things which we didn't even know about when we asked people to do this stuff.

So, I shared this example with some of my colleagues in other parts of Asia, and we are going to launch the Internet Chronology Project in other parts of Asia as well. And that's one of the projects which we can all talk about, how can we come up with a similar chronology in each of our countries as well?

Another example. Very culture specific, but also SMS specific. This is one of my other books, a book on Indian proverbs. In India, we love all this yoga and wisdom and spiritual stuff and all that. So, this is a book which you can get on Twitter. You can get one tweet a day, an Indian proverb. Even more

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interestingly, you can also get it by SMS in India. So, there are many more mobile subscribers than Internet users in India, and many of them are coming on this site, paying in advance, and getting three or four proverbs every day by SMS, such as, for instance, "Neither the pillow nor the mattress understands your joys and sorrows." "What cannot be cured must be endured." So, some of these are translated pretty well from Hindi into English. So, these are going by SMS, coming to the social media parts of political uprising in North Africa and elsewhere.

This is one of the cuter articles I read which is, "An Egyptian baby has now been named Facebook." Now, I don't know how a baby can—a boy can go around saying, "Hi, my name is Facebook Sharif," or something like that, but I guess this happens. So, this is one of the cuter, humorous aspects of this whole social media phenomenon.

But more seriously, when I was in Africa last week, there were some countries very nervous about what's happening in Northern Africa. So in sub-Saharan Africa, they also have their share of dictators and whatnot. And in Cameroon they said, "Oh, my God, we can't let this happen in Cameroon." So, they immediately banned access to the Twitter shortcut for SMS. Now in many countries, in Asia and Africa, SMS access is much more widespread than any other kind of phone, so now Twitter actually has set up a short code with many operators, so you can tweet. You can send an SMS to the short code. It comes out as a tweet at the other end on your Twitter account. So some countries are getting nervous with this stuff.

Those of you interested in this whole political aspect of social media should check out this book. This is called "Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom," which says all is not hunky-dory in the world of social medium. Even dictators and tyrants can use social media very effectively. And this talks about examples of how governments actually are setting a big brother kind of presence on social media as well.

I was very happy yesterday to hear the speaker from CNN talk about how they're getting into advocacy journalism also. That's a project called Citizen Freedom about—Project Freedom—I forget the name. And they're using this kind of a model, which is—if you won't promote different kinds of political causes, advocacy causes, here's how we use different kinds of social media, especially, for instance, in mobilizing people, in doing outreach—they're getting people online and then assessing the impact of online activism. So, those few with an interest in online activism, you can take a look at some of these models. I can share these with you later.

This is from a paper published by one of the cofounders of Ushahidi who's trying to look at, what are we seeing in Egypt? What are we seeing in Libya? Why do some things happen in Egypt, but not in Libya? So, his study breaks it up into three categories. He calls them mobs. I prefer to use the word *swarms*, because mobs sometimes can become violent. But in Egypt, many

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of the mobs were not violent. So I prefer the word maybe *flux* or *swarms*. So, many swarms together can over a period time lead to a social movement, and the big challenge for them is, after the social movement, how to create a civil society organization or some kind of a stable form of government, etc. So, this is where news would fit in. How can news help trigger flux and help harness a social movement into some kind of a political action?

Coming to disaster management, New Zealand had a pretty bad earthquake a couple of months ago and almost half of the second largest City of Christ Church was flattened with this earthquake. And again, they used SMS very heavy at the time of the earthquake to alert people to what was happening and which neighborhoods to move to and move out of. This is Ushahidi, which you all know about.

And coming to the end of the first part of the presentation, which is political aspects of new media, what we have is right from the days of.... I guess each century had new definitions for new media. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, telegram and telegraph were the new media. And one of the classic examples given is during the British colonization of India, one of the governor generals sent a one-word telegram to his boss, "Peccavi," which is the Latin word for sin, "I have sinned." But sinned is also a very clever pun. It sounds like the word Sindh, which is a province in India. So, this was his way of telling his boss, "I have conquered the province of Sindh." A very clever use of—one of the first uses, perhaps, of new media in this political case. All the way down, you can see the use of cassette tapes by Khomeini in Iran, the deposition of Estrada in the Philippines by using SMS to coordinate an uprising, all the way down to what we just talked about in Tunisia and Egypt.

Now a lot of discussion is focusing on, who's next after Egypt and Libya? Will it be Bahrain? Will it be Saudi Arabia? Will it be Yemen? In sub-Saharan Africa, a lot of people are saying, how do we compare what happened in Egypt to what's happening in our countries?

So, here's where news fits in. One is, it takes a lot of youth to be involved in these movements. A lot of these movements have been happening in very urbanized pockets. There are very strong socio-political sentiments along with a very high risk factor. People are willing to give up their lives for socio-political change. Freedom of the press is not dead as much in countries like Egypt, which is why social media will conduct an entirely different—a very wide space of expression all the way down to new media consumption patterns.

What is very interesting in the case of Egypt was, one of the guys involved in the movement was the Chief Marketing Office of Google for the Middle East. And I was at this conference in Barcelona a couple of months back, and the CEO came out and said, "We're very proud of what Ghonim has done in this whole Egypt movement." And he made a very interesting quote, which was,

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“What’s most important about the future of new media is that it is for the masses and not for the elite.” In other words, the elite already have whatever they need in terms of TV media, all that stuff, but the people who can extract the most out of it in the future will be the grassroots, the masses, etc.

There’s also a good quote from Twitter. I don’t know if people call Twitter a micro-blogging service, but as we discussed yesterday, there’s a big gap between awareness and engagement, and this gap can be bridged very well by sites like Twitter through voting through mobilization and things of that sort.

Some more examples from the political aspect of news and mobile. We’re seeing a lot of cases of SMS being used as a tool for election monitoring. So, there are short codes used by election observers who will say things like, “Short code #6 means there was no tampering with this ballot box.” Short code #8 could mean there was tampering with this ballot box. So, you can very quickly involve citizens in monitoring the elections by using mobile phones.

This is citizen journalism in South Africa. A site called Turn It Around. Unfortunately, parts of South Africa have very high crime rates, so they use citizens reporting, SMS activism, etc., to report all of these kinds of things, such as residential burglary, shooting, driving under the influence of alcohol, etc. So, these are citizens who send information by mobile phones about what’s happening with crime in their neighborhood, and then reporters come and report on trends in crime and things of that sort.

This is from China. How social media is also making an impact in China. A lot of people think that, oh, China blocks Facebook and Twitter and all that stuff, which is partly true, but China had its own homegrown social media. For instance, there’s a site called Tencent, which is like Twitter in Chinese. It’s got more users than Twitter, but it’s used only within China. And people are using social media very actively. They are mobilizing, and this is making the government very nervous. They don’t want a repeat of what happened in Egypt to happen in China as well.

There’s been, of course, a lot of hype about social media going to change the world and save the world, etc. What’s more interesting now is how some of the big players are taking this message very seriously. You all know this guy from Craigslist. He learned something like Craig Connects to connect people to causes, to environmental organizations, for instance, who need different kinds of help and rally them to support. Something else very recently launched, still in beta stage, Jumo. This is a social networking site for activists launched by some of the cofounders of Facebook. So, these guys are taking this whole social aspect of activism very seriously.



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This is crowdfunding. I talked about crowdsourcing in the early example. This is from the Philippines. There was a group of people who wanted to make a documentary on slum children, and they weren't able to get money from the government or from NGOs. So, this guy put up a website and said to the whole world out there—he tweeted the link—"Who can help me raise money to fund my documentary movie which I will then show on TV?" And he was able to get enough money through crowdfunding to fund this particular project. So, there are very good examples of crowdfunding in Asia.

Some differences of course. I mentioned earlier CyWorld is one of the first second-life kind of implementations in the world, but it is largely in Hangul, the language in Korea, and didn't come much out of South Korea. This is from Thailand. There was a bunch of very serious concern about flooding in Thailand a few months back. And a number of citizens took matters into their own hand and created this social networking site called ThaiFlood geared towards sharing news about floods in Thailand and how to mobilize people around this area. You can see the little button in the middle, "Google Crisis Response," so Google is becoming a big platform for many sites like this. And there's a very good piece on how social networks can prove invaluable in times of crisis.

This presentation, by the way, will be with the organizers, of course, so no need to write copious notes and all that stuff.

This is from Pakistan—how during the floods in Pakistan SMS was used again by farmers to share news of what was happening in the area, etc. This is a Twitter account about the volcano Merapi in Indonesia. And as you can see down here, there are different kinds of announcements for, "We need baby food. We need oil. We need a few kinds of supplies in different parts of Indonesia."

This is more of the business part of things. This is business use from Nokia in partnership with Reuters to offer farmers news in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This started in India two years ago, and has now been launched in Nigeria just a couple of months back.

So, what are the lessons from all these various examples from social media? We did a few examples of focus group discussions with news media in Asia and here's what we see—Asia media segmenting interactions with news media. Photograph, please. This is from Level 1, which is people just relaying and copying information all the way down to seeing information online and then meeting up and doing different kinds of activism, etc. This is the whole spectrum of social media.

We also see a segmentation of users. This is a segmentation which some Asian online news organizations are doing, which is how to classify all the people on your Twitter stream, for instance. Some people just link. Some people start scamming. Some people start spamming, etc. So, this is sort of

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a different classification of how you would classify your social media followers and accordingly target maybe linkers at the beginning and then later on thought leaders of society in your groups, in your communities, afterwards.

One site you must watch is Al Jazeera, which has become a very influential player in terms of news in the Middle East and also very correctly using social media. So, they actually have maps. You can see maybe the maps of four Middle East countries over there with real-time charts of Twitter usage and Twitter following in these parts of the world for stories published by Al Jazeera.

Now, the second part of my talk is on theories of news and how we can come up with the grand unified theory of news, which is a bit difficult, but I do see four very interesting families of theories converging, thanks to news media. One is the mass media world. We heard yesterday about gatekeeping and gatejumping. So these are theories from the world of mass communication.

Then you have theories from the world of telecom. This is the kind of stuff that we heard yesterday, for instance, from our friends from Norway, who were saying, "We have 110% penetration of mobiles. Our broadband penetration is absolute," etc. So, these are theories about how much telecom penetration is there, and therefore, how much utility would be there for these networks.

Then you have the political communication theories, which talk about, how are news media framing the context for dispute? Who is called a terrorist, for instance? How do you move towards a resolution of the crisis, etc.

Then you have some super theories coming out from Manuel Castells. We heard yesterday from a speaker from Spain who talked about Castells and his theory of two-way self-mass-communication. It's a really nice way of describing what's happening with social media. People are communicating with one another, but it's the masses communicating with the masses, not necessarily with the media. So, that is the part of the news media.

I would end now with, how can we go ahead with some nice projects with all the creative energy that we have? I often speak at conferences, and what I like is the nice brainstorming, but then all the energy dissipates at the end of the conference. We come back again next year, "Yeah, let's do this; let's do that," and then nothing happens.

So, here's my suggestion for three projects we can all do as a community. One, come up with an online news chronology for each of the countries that we have here. So, I want one representative from each country to come up to me afterwards and say, "Yes, let us crowdsource this whole thing." Which means, come up with a list of, in each country, when did each newspaper launch their website? When did the TV come online? When did readers come online? That'd be one project.

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The second one is benchmarking the social media policies of news organizations. Yesterday, a couple of speakers talked about, what is the social media policy of different news organizations? Maybe this is something we can also crowdsource and ask people from around the world.

**Woman:** ...the world. I was so glad that here in this setting you mentioned SMS as an overlooked method of communication, because where I live we've done some studies about where low-income populations, which where I live are often black populations, get information using their phones. And the most common ways that people get health information are by text messaging, because most of their phones aren't smartphones. Penetrance may be better than you think, but anyway I just wanted to say it's the first mention I think we've had at this conference of that.

**Madanmohan Rao:** Thank you.

**Woman:** It's been sort of jumped over technologically.

**Madanmohan Rao:** Yeah.

**Woman:** But we can't forget it obviously.

**Madanmohan Rao:** Absolutely, yeah. Thank you, yeah. All this rich media stuff is great. iPads and all that stuff is lovely. But there are certain times when you need SMS. One of my friends does a conference on M-Health, Mobile Health, and the best applications eventually are SMS alerts for things like medication, SMS alerts about disease outbreak, bird flu, and things of that sort.

**Rosental Calmon Alves:** Any other questions?

[Laughter.]

**Rosental Calmon Alves:** No questions. So, we're going to move onto the next [research panel].