

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

Day 2, April 18, 2015: Afternoon Panel – 2:30-4:15p.m.

### ***A Global Roundup: How Journalists Are Using the Internet in Their Struggle for Democracy, Human Rights and Press Freedom Around the World***

**Chair: Maria Teresa Ronderos**, Director, Program of Independent Journalism at **Open Society Foundations**

#### **Panelists:**

- **Tamas Bodoky**, Editor-in-Chief, **Atlatszo**, Hungary
- **Haris Dedovic**, Editor-in-Chief, **Karika**, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Gopal Guragain**, CEO, **Ujyaalo Multimedia**, Nepal
- **Jahanzaib Haque**, Editor, **Dawn.com**, Pakistan
- **Mike Runey**, Program Manager, **Meydan TV**, Azerbaijan
- **Gregory Shvedov**, Editor-in-Chief, **Caucasian Knot**, Russia
- **Laura Weffer**, Co-Founder and Editor, **Effecto Cocuyo**, Venezuela
- **Anim van Wyk**, Deputy Editor, **Africa Check**

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**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Well, this is quite a group. So, how we're going to do this is.... These people that you have in front of you, some of them [are] creative, courageous, independent-minded, and hard-headed, clear thinkers, journalists that I've met, and they come from all over the world. And the best thing is that they never lose their sense of humor, not when they have been closed down by military, not like Gopal, or not like they have been declared against the national interest, like Russia, not like when the army accused them of being against their religion, not when they have been forced to leave their newspaper because it has been bought by cronies of the government and you are no longer needed there, not when you have to run your television station from abroad because in your country every voice has been silenced, every critical voice has been silenced, and not when your computers have been taken by the police because of your investigative reporting, or sometimes because they have destroyed national myths and exposed lies, like in the case of Anim.

So, they have to deal with all of the problems that we've been discussing here in these two days. They have to deal with the market. They have to deal with a business model in crisis. They have to deal with a situation that's not easy for the media, in general, in the world. But also they have to deal with volatile, unstable, uncertain, and ambiguous situations, which are political, which are economic, and which are social.

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In spite of all of this, they are actually using the technology and they are using it in the most creative of ways. So first of all, I would like to ask you, and each one of them is going to just very briefly, in a couple of minutes, tell you what they are, what their media is, what they do in their country. And then we're going to start our discussion. So, please, we will start with Tomos Bodoky. He's director at Atlatzso from Hungary. So, what is Atlatzso? What does it mean? What does Atlatzso mean in Hungarian? And what do you do in your country?

**Tamas Bodoky:** OK. Hi, everybody. My name is Tamas. I'm a journalist in Hungary. And to answer the question, Atlatzso means transparent, so we are transparent of issue, and we are a small, investigative, non-profit, and the first of this kind in Hungary. You might be interested why a country which is [a] member of the NATO and the European Union is represented in this lineup. Unfortunately, our government has taken an authoritarian turn and they want to discipline media and control media and to push aside critical voices, and that's why we felt it's very important to start an independent, non-profit outlet for investigative journalism.

We started in 2011, and we are constantly growing. We do a lot of freedom of information advocacy as well. And we run a couple of online services, like Freedom of Information. Every citizen can register and start/file requests themselves. We are a whistle-blowing platform. It's a digital and secured whistle-blowing platform for people who experience corruption in their work or in their neighborhood, and they're afraid to call into the press or to reach out for journalists so they can submit information anonymously. And we run a small bribe cracker website as well, which is to anonymously report if any public official is asking you to pay bribes, what is unfortunately very often the case in Hungary. So that's [it] in a nutshell.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Thank you very much, Tamas. Haris Dedovic, he is the Editor-in-Chief of Karike, a magazine that is for young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Haris Dedovic:** Hello, everyone. My name is Haris Dedovic, as the lady said. And I'm running a magazine. Actually, we are running a Youth Press Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I'm an Editor-in-Chief of our magazine. First of all, I want to tell you just a few things about my country. You probably all know about the war in the nineties. And after that, nobody won and nobody lost, so we kind of -- there was that big ethnic division. And now we also had a Peace Treaty in Dayton, where our constitution is, first of all, discriminative towards others, but never mind that, we have democracy on paper, which we think is a big problem. So, a few facts would be that [the] unemployment rate is 44.6%, and youth unemployment rate is over 60%.

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I'm running an organization that is [a] youth organization directed towards the media and we are in [the] top three largest associations in the country, people-wise. Our magazine is the only youth magazine in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we are one of the best magazines in the region. And we work on two important things in that magazine. [It] is, of course, free media or free reporting and also educating young journalists to practice, because our education system is also not really well.

So, I want to tell more about this project that we are running that is not our magazine, but it's the new thing that we've got going on, and it's online. My magazine is printed. It's called Views, and we push and empower citizen journalism through tools that we already have, so smartphones and YouTube. And we report about small, local—very, very local—problems, and we address the government with this. So, out of the seven videos so far, we've solved four problems, which I'm really proud of right now. And it's all happened with zero dollars in the budget. And we are now searching for the budget, so take care of the old guys.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** [laughs] Gopal Guragain is the CEO of the Ujyaalo Multimedia in Nepal. They have radio and they also have [an] online website. So...

**Gopal Guragain:** So, can I get some help. I have two or three PowerPoint. That will make it easy, so I can save some time. Within three minutes, I will keep myself. [They get the PowerPoint presentation setup.] OK. Ujyaalo, as Maria said, it is a radio station, as well as the news edition network. And we run Ujyaalo online and also live audio broadcast on the online 24 hours, because Nepali are all over the world and they love to listen [to] the radio programs we produce. So, these are the main components we produce: Ujyaalo FM: that can be heard in Kathmandu at 90 megahertz. Ujyaalo Satellite: that is to distribute the news across the country, that is broadcasted by more than 175 radio stations simultaneously. And Ujyaalo Online: that is the news portal as well as you can listen [to] the radio live and audio broadcast for the listener. This is Ujyaalo.

And we work for the teacher, civil servant, local political cadres. These are the primary groups [that] we are much more focused on, and the age group. We have categorized our audience in two categories: primary audience and the secondary audience. Primary audience are the policymaker of the country, not limited on the national level, also in the rural level. They are the teachers. They are the university teacher. They are the civil servant. They are the traditional decision makers. And the secondary group are the farmer, worker, small business person, migrant worker who works across the country or outside of the country.

These are the radio stations. No. So, we have -- our news is broadcast across the country by more than 175 radio station, but we are not limited only on

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the news. We produce and broadcast interviews, talk shows, music program. This is all about Ujyaalo. OK.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Thank you. Jahanzaib Haque is the Editor of [Dawn.com](http://Dawn.com). It's probably the most respected and the biggest group of media in Pakistan. Jahanzaib.

**Jahanzaib Haque:** Oh, thanks. Hi, everyone. So, my media organization is as old as Pakistan itself. So, we're talking 65+ years of legacy. And the average age of anyone in our print newsroom -- I mean, the average age comes to around 55 to 60, with our news editor being about 80 years old, and he still likes his typewriter. [laughter] But the media environment was changing so rapidly in Pakistan that management went a little crazy and they hired me as the editor for the online website. And yeah, this beard is strategic, yeah? It gives me a little age. [laughter]

But they hired me for a reason. So when I took over the website, it was getting about, oh, 25-million page views in a month, and this was January 2014. And by January 2015, we got that up to about 50-million page views a month. And additionally, and this is the metric I like the best, we went from about 4.5 minutes per user, in terms of spending time on site, to about 10.5 minutes right now. So, the question was, well, how did we manage to do that? Keeping in mind some of the things which we're talking about, which is freedom of expression.

I would probably start with the comment section. And I know that's a no-brainer, but it really was the comment section which did it in a large way. Because in Pakistan, yes, we do have problems with freedom of expression. Our tradition media is tied down. We've got multiple stakeholders. Some of them are non-state actors, like militants and terrorists. And it's a bad -- it's a very bad environment to act in. So, what we do -- at least what [Dawn.com](http://Dawn.com) did with this comment section is, we set up a very intelligent team of moderators. So, it wasn't just approve trash. It was approve trash keeping the context of every news story in mind. So, if there was something [Dawn.com](http://Dawn.com) couldn't dare to say, we would sneak that stuff in through the comments. So, our commenting community knows this, so they wait. So, sometimes we will take a straight news report and just put it up there, knowing full well that all the context that we need is coming within seconds through our commenters.

And we did this, and then halfway through the year, we expanded this, because we realized we had a big India audience. Now India and Pakistan are traditionally at war. You know, mentally, they are always at war. And the Indians were coming over and they were highly critical of the Pakistan audience. So, our comment section kind of developed into this—I almost call it, like—online diplomacy, because Pakistan and India are always talking with each other over there. And that level of engagement, we are talking about comment streams which go 700 comments deep. And we know that people

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are still reading them, because there's a little recommend button on that comment, so 700 comments down, and you've still got like 15 people recommending a comment. So, you know you're doing something right.

And the other thing which I think the internet and [Dawn.com](http://Dawn.com) manages to do is, we manage to sneak stuff in editorially, which just wouldn't be possible in traditional print or on TV. I mean, TV is, of course, the place where you are least safe. But the internet is still kind of like the Wild West, yeah? The people who are actually out to coerce journalists or kill journalists.... We had more journalists killed than Syria last year, so just to give you a context. But we still have the internet as this space. Part of that is because the penetration is only 20%, but part of that is because these stakeholders don't understand that space, so we manage to get away with stuff.

And one of the things I'd like to talk about really, really quickly is an example of the Blasphemy Law in Pakistan. So blasphemy, the Blasphemy Law in Pakistan says that, if you speak up against the Koran or say something against the Holy Prophet—you guys might know this—you get an immediate death sentence. There is no other option. So naturally, people are terrified of talking about it. Because mere criticism of it can lead to you being killed.

We had a blogger who came to us, and he said, "Well, I've done some research on this Blasphemy Law in Pakistan, and it turns out that the person who actually set up this whole law has himself declared that he did it based on a misinterpretation of a misinterpretation. And I have the audio, and I have the entire research. Would you be willing to publish it?" My print editor was terrified. And he's on like a high hit-list for like being killed off, so understandably so. But we did -- we did what any good newsroom does, which is, we banded together, we vetted the crap out of that article, and we ran it just online. And the response was remarkable, because we finally got to.... And people wanted to talk about it. It's just that the terror was so high that they couldn't do it.

And being legacy media, we managed to stay safe, and yet being online, we managed to get it out there. And the impact was so wide. I mean, I was happiest when Nicholas Kristof actually wrote about it in *The New York Times*. So it appears in a *New York Times* column, and he said, "Kudos to Dawn for running this." Because it's just that critical an issue that, you know, minorities are being persecuted daily in Pakistan because of the application of this law. So, I think that's kind of where online really played an important role. Thank you.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Thank you very much. Mike Runey. Mike is a native of Texas. [laughs] But he's working for Meydan TV, who actually is -- whose audience is Azerbaijan, but you are not in Azerbaijan. Please tell us why.

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**Mike Runey:** Hi. Yeah, so, I work for Meydan TV, which started two years ago as a TV station for Azerbaijan run out of an apartment in Berlin by a small group of Azeri exiles. And basically it just started as.... The word *Meydan* in Azeri means *public square*. So, they wanted to give a place where people from Azerbaijan could come and just discuss and hear topics that you otherwise don't get. You traditionally do not get [this] in these areas. So, they would be anti-corruption investigations, nepotism regarding government ministers, but also LGBT rights, disability rights.

And so, it started small. Actually, we started in April of 2013. We launched a website in September of 2013. Our first big hits that made us from this kind of -- a website that we more known for just irritating the government than having a large audience was this thing [that] happened in the 2013 Azeri presidential elections. It was called App Gate, where the Azeri government [was] trying to be like the cool uncle. It was like, "Wouldn't it be great if we could give everyone an app where they could follow the election results as they come in?" And they accidentally released the app the day before the elections with the presidential results pre-programmed in. [laughter] And so we posted them on the website, and it blew up, and they emailed us and said, "Could you take that down?" And we said, "No," and they threatened us. We said, "No, it's staying up there." And after that, it kind of got bigger and bigger.

And things have kind of changed in the last six months in Azerbaijan. It's kind of been—to put it bluntly—a transition from authoritarian to a totalitarian state. So, when we started, Meydan TV was one of many independent media voices coming out of Azerbaijan. Now, we are 50%, because there is us and one other. Because in the last six months, the government has switched from a strategy of arresting individual journalists and putting them in jail on ridiculous charges, kind of as an example to everyone else, to "let's just put everybody in jail." And it's not just been journalists. It's also been civil society organizations, including international civil society organizations. So, they've been seizing the bank accounts of like National Democratic Institute. But we're still going, because we have a healthy level of paranoia. And so, up until December of 2014, we had a Baku office, but it wasn't our main office. We're still running out of Berlin. I actually work in Tbilisi, Georgia. So, we actually have people working in four different countries, but there are less people working for Meydan TV than the Washington Post has engineers in their newsroom.

And yeah, so that's kind of where we are right now. We are really the only place where you can go online and get non-government-run media. And luckily, unlike in Pakistan, no one tries to kill us yet. I say that because I'm.... Yeah. But they do love to put people in jail. So, yeah. Right now, we're doing a lot of work because there's.... No one really knows why, but we like to speculate and we have speculated [that] perhaps they'd rather -- there's another election coming up this year. There's this thing called the European Games that none of you have heard about that are super expensive, and

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they are basically going to be another Sochi, but we can talk about that later. But yeah, that is Meydan TV. Thanks for listening.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Thank you. Gregory Shvedov. He's the Editor-in-Chief of the Caucasian Knot. It's a media that is now very famous. I think it's been all over the place. It covers the Caucasus, and from Russia.

**Gregory Shvedov:** Thank you. I would also like to show a little about our work. We are a media which covers another region in the world which probably many of you don't know what it is. It is a Caucasus. Thank you. Here it is. We are covering 20 regions actually. You have them listed in the screen. We are 24/7. We work for about 14 years right now. And our topic is human rights abuses. But we are not another human rights website. We are working on a professional level. We have up to 50 journalists in the regions who are covering on a 24/7 basis what's going on there. And our idea is that there are very bad human rights violations in the regions. Literally, there are kidnappings, honor killings, which are happening with less attention of both people in our part of the world than elsewhere. There are rape of men going on in public stations. Lawyers get beaten just in front of the Supreme Court. And there is less of professional coverage of these kind of things.

Our idea is that there are parts of the world using.... There are some statements—I heard them today and yesterday—which are not mobile. So, one of the speakers said, "Oh, we are not going *to be* mobile. We *are* mobile." So, yes, there are parts of the world which are not mobile, which are not even online. So, there is need to prepare professional and put information in internet. But what do we tell our users? What do we tell the people who live in the region? We tell them that it is not only up to the journalists to do all the work, to report about those human rights violations which are going on in the region. It is also up to the people who live there. And they are not mobile. They can use a simple Nokia phone to send a text message. Because it's up to them to tell if their neighbor was just beaten. It's up to them to tell that in their village it was just a counterterrorism operation and ten houses have been burned down. We tell to our audience, "You make the buzz. We amplify your voice, but it is up to you to report about things which are going on." And we use a text messaging system to receive 24/7 this kind of [messages] from our people.

Two more things to say. It was a lot discussed before the conference about impact. And I want to have a few words about impact as well. I believe we don't look to the audience when we think about impact. We don't look to ourselves when we think about impact, because Caucasian [is] not, thanks God, got really well quoted, so you can download Caucasian notes, search in Bloomberg, and you will find reports. You would see dozens in *New York Times* and a little less in *Washington Post*. But it's not that which helps the people in the region who are suffering. Really the buzz which comes from people is much more influential. So then, we see comments and numerous comments, as my colleague from Pakistan was just sharing. As we see likes,

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as we see downloads for those people who just kidnapped someone, who are currently torturing someone, they also see that. And guess what? Probably sometimes they get frightened, because people got released after this kind of buzz.

And my last point is that we have a lot of stories in English, and *you* can make a difference. You can really have an impact if you just go and search for these stories from Caucasian notes or from our media in Facebook, which is translated for you into the English language, or if you would follow us in Twitter, which is also available in English. We do see the examples and then you watch a video in YouTube. As you can see, we had a lot of them. And they're watched dozens of times. It makes no buzz. But let me open for you a page in Russian, and you can see that some of the videos with absolutely unknown people, which have just abused, have been watched more than a half-a-million times on YouTube. And that's why we translate them into English. That made a difference for those people who have been screened, those people who got attention from you. So sitting here in this room and those who are not sitting here in this room, you can influence, if you want to. You can make an impact, so please do so. Thanks.

[Applause.]

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Laura Weffer from Venezuela. She's the editor of *Effecto Cocuyo*, which is a newly born baby media, led by Laura and Rosemary Reyes, who are two incredibly audacious women from Venezuela. And this is her media.

**Laura Weffer:** Thank you, Maria Teresa. She's going to make me blush. Thank you, Rosental, for inviting us here. This is really a privilege and I'm extremely happy. Actually, *Effecto Cocuyo* is three months old. It's really, really a baby. And I'm very glad to be here. I'm not going to talk. I'm going to present a video that I think it speaks and basically presents what *Effecto Cocuyo* is. *Cocuyo* is the tropical version of a firefly. We put that name because in Venezuela we have darkness. We have information blackout. And we do believe that every person can be a *Cocuyo* or a firefly and bring light to the darkness that we have in our country. This video was done for a crowdfunding campaign. It ends tomorrow, so you are much very welcome to contribute [laughs] if you feel so. And this is the video.

[Video plays in Spanish. Written here is the closed captioning in the video.]

*Laura Weffer: In the last few years Venezuelans have lived through coups, economic crises, and dramatic rise in personal and legal security.*

*Woman: The media has not escaped this reality.*

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*Laura Weffer: Today, Venezuelan journalism faces censorship, lack of transparency, and difficulty to access information.*

*Woman: Furthermore, the purchase of mass media by powerful economic groups related to the government has reduced the spaces for the exercise of free journalism.*

*Laura Weffer: The few independent media that survives this process is isolated, weakened, and nearing disappearance.*

*Woman: It gets harder to hear the dissident voices.*

*Laura Weffer: This weakens citizen's rights.*

*Woman: Journalists have received threats, aggressions, and insults from government officials.*

*Laura Weffer: Common sense tells us "being quiet you look better." We are real journalists. We are street journalists.*

*Woman: And this is a vocation we won't relinquish. We present to you *Effecto Cocuyo*.*

*Laura Weffer: An independent media platform --*

*Woman: -- that investigates deeply and informs the facts. Moreover, it doesn't depend on any power group that can condition or limit its editorial line.*

*Laura Weffer: We offer contents with a comprehensive approach that help you know where you stand.*

*Woman: Starting from information, we help build a better democratic society.*

*Laura Weffer: With your support, we are going to go deep into subjects that few can tell. We want to make enlightening journalism.*

*Woman: We want to be the media that defends your right to be well informed.*

*Laura Weffer: This is a life project. At a time when some people suggest giving up, we have decided to show our faces. Take the step. Independent journalism need your help. Every contribution counts. Thank you very much. *Effecto Cocuyo*.*

[Applause.]

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**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Thank you, Laura. Now, Anim van Wyk. Last, but not least. She runs an amazing site called Africa Check from South Africa. So, what is Africa Check, Anim?

**Anim:** Hi, everyone. I'm Deputy Editor of Africa Check. So far, we are the only fact-checking website on the continent. We are independent, non-partisan. Set up two years ago as a project of the AFB Foundation. Nowadays, we have different backers. And we're also trying to offer training and research to diversify our revenue. Currently, we operate from South Africa, but we also have people on the ground in Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. We just received funding to set up a French language website later this year, and we also hope to branch out to Kenya soon.

The work that we do is, well, it's very pure journalism in that we hold leaders to account for what they say in public, whether it is politicians or the media or other leaders of society. We scrutinize those claims, hold it up against available data, research, and put it out to our readers for them to make up their own mind. Because our philosophy is that they don't trust Africa Check, trust the data, trust the research. So, the work we do is deeply unsexy. There's nothing cool about poring over Excel spreadsheets or government reports hundreds of pages long. But we're seeing an impact, for example, last year with the Ebola epidemic. There were lots of supposed cures and lots of treatments, you know, being pushed by quacks, so we looked into those and published it and hopefully made a difference.

Also with Boko Haram, many people sent around fake photos of things that are entirely unrelated to something that is happening. I don't know if you have perhaps seen a photo of badly charred corpses, and it's captioned most popular with "375 Christians burned by Boko Haram." And we actually traced that picture. Found out that it was from an oil tanker explosion in the Congo. It was an accident, but horrifically, those people were killed. And these images go around and incites more violence. So in that way, we contribute to a greater flow of information on the continent.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** The first question I wanted to make to all of you is, technology and the digital revolution, how does it help? How has it been useful for you in the way you do your work and the way you have connected and grown? But at the same time, how is it hurtful? How is it a threat to you? So, if you could, please, anybody who wants to answer.

**Tamas Bodoky:** OK, so in Hungary, the internet and online media is the last resort for investigative journalism, because the government can more or less control or at least frighten the mainstream channel. It's not to dig deep into the corruption cases. So, we have a couple of courageous investigative outlets on the internet, and a lot of people come to the internet if they want to read such content. So, I guess that this is very important when we think

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about media. That even if the mainstream media is controlled by the powers that be, on the internet, you can always remain critical.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** But isn't it the other way around? Don't you get internet blockage and that kind of thing?

**Gregory Shvedov:** Yes, exactly. Technology is also very well used by the state. And also people who are here in the room might be recipients of, for example, one of a very high level developed, high tech Russian propaganda channel, Russia Today, which I suggest you not to watch. But if you want to be part of something like Columbia University has t-watch program. Then you really watch that and understand how technology might be used. What kind of elephant is in the room about using technology? Which is doing propaganda on a high level. So, there are a lot of supporters of propaganda also not only in Russia, but elsewhere. They also use a lot of techniques, and not only techniques, but the software companies based in Canada, based in Europe, who help them to do better blocking on the websites. We all heard about China and Vietnam, but don't forget in Russia, we also have a whole army of trolls who do commenting. And we heard a very interesting report about commenting today. And we do know that commenting is not only what the average users are doing, but those who get paid for each comment. So technology is on both sides.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** How do you fight that? What do you do when you get the trolls or when you get blocked? How do you do?

**Gregory Shvedov:** Well, for example, trolling is one of the things we've been thinking how we should address. So, we suggest our users, for example, to register on our platform of Caucasian, not only use their Facebook accounts and Twitter. So, we've got about 26,000 users. Among there, there are certainly trolls, who come to just demotivate about human rights, who come for paid materials. So, we corrected the whole system for rating, where we suggest that our users rate the comments, not only us, like as we saw in the report about *The New York Times*, who rates, who has moderators to rate the comments. But we also put some attention to the responsibility of the users—how they can rate the comments. So, we believe that there are more free and independent people than those who are serving in the army of digital trolls. So, we propose that they also take a stand and write a comment or just put a plus or minus, just like or dislike about the comments which are hate speech type of comments. And that's one of the ways we address that, but that's certainly a very complicated way. So, that's why we need support from the audience, including English-speaking audience, who can come up and just stand for the rights.

**Jahanzaib Haque:** Yeah, I just wanted to add, at least in Pakistan, we are reaching this year a state where the internet, and I personally feel, it will no longer be a free space. In fact, it's quite dangerous. For one thing, Pakistan is introducing new legislation which says that anything that is anti-Islamic or

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anti-state could lead to prosecution online. And that's the sum of the definition of these words. So, we don't know what's going to happen in that environment, especially in the online space. And beyond that, thanks to the Islamic State, our own local militants have really ramped up their capabilities online. So, the spokesperson for the Tehrik-i-Taliban, the people who carried out the attack and killed 150 children in December, he's following me. And sometimes he's even commented on Dawn's articles through his Twitter account and said, "Hey, we don't like how you reported that." So, that's, yeah, I know.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** And what do you do?

**Jahanzaib Haque:** What I do is I've stopped using Twitter entirely. I mean, so, yeah, it's a dangerous environment. And this whole idea of surveillance from either side is really worrying.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Gopal, I wanted to ask you something. You developed—so it's not all bad news about the digital revolution—you developed a site and you developed a system using all kinds of technology to reach the migrant workers of Nepal, who are very badly treated in different countries in the Middle East. Could you tell us a little bit about this exercise that you did?

**Gopal Guragain:** OK. We have two types of experience on particularly using the digital media: One inside the country, [where] we are very much overwhelmed by the democracy business, because we have a full-fledged democracy like USA and Europe, most of the European countries, but that do not work anywhere. So, we have democracy, but we do not have consensus. Consensus without... Democracy without consensus. So, we do not have election, local election, for the last 14-15 years. The last election happened in 1987. And [what] we see on the street [is] people are younger, but they do not know how to vote. And we have gone through the concerned assembly two times, but we do not have consensus from last seven years, seven-eight years, and still, there is a political fight between. We have full-fledged democracy, but that do not provide any job, so nearly 1,500 young people leave the country to work outside every day. And we receive nearly three-to-four dead bodies in our airport. So, we thought, why we do not use the technology? In country, we have used, to engage the audience, using the mobile phone and the toll-free telephone, traditional telephone, and the latest telephone using the SMS-type of old technology these days.

When we started to work with the migrant worker, we developed a radio program. So, the challenge was how to engage them. And in the beginning, we started from the toll-free telephone, so people can react and people can comment, as well as provide feedback [to] what is going on the radio when we are not having our website. Then people were leaving message and recording message. We were writing the message over the telephone, as well as people are asking questions to the guest who was in my studio to tell

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about his or her thought. Then in the second phase, we request our audience to use the messages. So, we start to receive the messages, and these days, per year, we receive more than 2.5-million messages, SMS, in different programs.

And when we started the migration radio program in 2011, then the program has become so popular and effective among the migrant worker and their family. So, the program is positive for the family members as well as the migrant worker who are working. So, it can work like a platform between family and the family members. So, we have developed the website where [the] family member of the Nepal can send their message using the website, and the worker, who is working out in militia out in the Gulf countries, Qatar or Saudi Arabia, they can put their messages to their family too. So, it is developed like a common platform. And while they work on the other problem of the migrant worker, and we realize they are facing a huge problem in the working area, they are being seated, they are not well treated. And we install one IVR. IVR is basically Interactive Voice Response System. So, anybody can leave the message, voice message, and that comes automatically in our studio, and that provides a good feedback, as well as that renders lots and lots of questions.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** You set it up in Lebanon, no?

**Gopal Guragain:** Yeah, Lebanon and also in our studio. So, the family member call in our studio, and the migrant worker in the Gulf areas call in the local, nearby in Lebanon. So, both of the messages are coming in between, and we connect those messages in a similar program with the answer of the expert or the concerned body of the government official. So, it made the program very interactive in one way, and another way, the program has created a migrant community between Nepal and between different countries. And after developing the website, we started to use the Facebook and Twitter to gender question and participate and interact with them.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** OK.

**Gopal Guragain:** So, we are using very conventional type of telephone to lifestyle of the tweet to engage and to get the feedback of the audience.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** You use all the technologies.

**Gopal Guragain:** All the technology.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** OK. You wanted to say something, Anim?

**Anim van Wyk:** Well, we wouldn't be able or we wouldn't access if it wasn't for the internet. It makes it possible for us to reach our audiences. We are online, but we also send out our reports to other media to use free of charge.

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And to do our research, I mean, imagine if you had to go to government department to go and look up an annual report in their library; whereas, we can do it now from our office, and so can our collaborators in Zimbabwe or Zambia or Nigeria.

**Laura Weffer:** In Venezuela, because of the political situation, social media has become the channel through the people to communicate and to try to avoid the obstacles that the government is trying to put on freedom of speech and especially in access of information. So, Twitter and Facebook are heavily used. And most of the time, they are used with political comments. If you get into any Facebook or Twitter in Venezuela, you will see pictures. And I don't know, I have some pictures on my presentation of people denouncing shortage of food or basic products. So, it has been basically like the biggest speaker for the situation in Venezuela. It even has come to the point that if you, for example, have no medicines, because there is a strong shortage of medicines in Venezuela, you use Twitter in order to ask to someone else if maybe they have that medicine. And Efecto Cocuyo was created because my partner and I were seeing that there was no room to maneuver in terms of freedom of speech, and we were really, really tired, and we didn't want to [have] no one else come and say, "You cannot publish this." So, we decided to create this platform. And I think it has been received with so much warm and so positively, because the people see in Efecto Cocuyo a light of hope. And I think that for Venezuela, it's really, really important.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Thank you. Haris, you have to deal every day....

**Laura Weffer:** No, that was another picture. Sorry. No, that was.... We have received a lot of.... No, can you go a little bit back, please? Yes. This, for example, is when the milk gets to the supermarket. This is everything taken for Twitter. The previous one, please. This is people queuing up like for two or three hours just to buy anything in any supermarket, you know, like the basic products. And this is they were queuing up outside the supermarket, so everyone can see the huge line. So, they put it on the parking lot so no one can see, and there was these [tweets] from Twitter saying, "No, they have hidden us, so no one can see, but the queue is too long."

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Haris, I wanted to ask you something. You also have, like Jahanzaib, you have to deal with lots of very passionate people who are very divided in your country. And you want to send a different kind of media out of young people who are starting....

**Laura Weffer:** Yes.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** I'm talking to Haris, sorry.

**Laura Weffer:** That's all right.

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**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** But it's the same case in Venezuela. So, how do you do [it]? How do you manage the comments? How do you manage this?

**Haris Dedovic:** Well, we work closely with the Press Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we tend to know press code by heart. So, and everybody has their round, always, in a bag, in a pocket. So, we also think that we are responsible for comments and that editors should be responsible for comments and should edit it if they are not freedom of speech but hate speech or violent speech toward other people. Also, what we're trying to do is address the young people. We believe this is our strategy. Maybe it's not really good, but we believe that old people in our country are already without any hope. So, we address....

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** So, the old are hopeless?

**Haris Dedovic:** Yes, because—because of the old people, we have now youth who are also poisoned by hatred, multi-ethnic hatred, which is so ridiculous in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Basically, ethnicity means a different beer to drink. That's how different people in Bosnia are between three ethnicities and three languages and three whatever you want to know. So, this is how we deal with comments and this is how we deal with our strategy. We talk to young people. We try to tell them that this—what you see here—is not even closely democracy. And as one of a few media in our country, we want to defend this democracy and use it at least a little bit, as we can with this project that I mentioned, and a pretty decent amount with our magazine that we provide in 35 places of our country. So now, we are addressing young people, so we would have healthier generations and healthier adult people later. This is the strategy that we do.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Mike, you were telling me, "We wouldn't exist if it weren't for the digital revolution," but you work from three different countries. You collect information in one. You do social networking in another. How is it that you can work with this very strange kind of structure?

**Mike Runey:** I mean, it's not -- we didn't envision it as a great way to run a media organization. It was more just born out of necessity. Because most of the -- many of the people who work for us are political exiles; so therefore, they're limited as to where they can live. So, some people cannot.... Like, some people live in Germany, but they can't.... Like some people.... We have someone who works from the UK. We have people who work from Georgia. And there are people in Azerbaijan who are very secretive about what they're doing.

But yeah, we did try two years ago—I think just kind of as an exercise in futility to make a point—to get a terrestrial TV license in Azerbaijan, and they just refused to listen to it. This was clearly not going to happen. And we're also very fortunate that we don't deal with the sort of online trolling that Russian websites have to deal with. Whether that's intentional or not is kind

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of an open question, but some may say that they're just kind of waiting and watching us and tracking everyone. So, we have like 40,000 likes on Facebook, which is a lot for a tiny country like Azerbaijan, and so those people are kind of leaving a digital trail. The question is, are they watching?

If you were to go by the president of Azerbaijan's Twitter account, which by the way if you do not follow Ilham Aliyev on Twitter, I strongly recommend it. It is a *must* follow. He tweets in English. It will be silenced for two weeks, and then a billion tweets will come out in about five minutes. And they will all be about the glorious economic development of Azerbaijan punctuated with declarations of war on Armenia. There's really drawing. It's fantastic. I strongly recommend it.

So that's really.... It seems that's the level—at least in the internet—like pushback that we have to deal with. No one has ever really tried to take us offline. So, it's like, no, we never had like a denial service attack. During the last elections, the most they did was close a bunch of internet cafes in rural areas for health code violations right before the elections came. But no, it seems that it's never occurred to them, thankfully.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** We were talking with this, "We belong to the public." We were talking along this two days about impact, about what is your impact. I wanted to ask you, what is -- how do you see your impact? What is the story that you think has had the biggest impact of the things you have done?

**Gopal Guragain:** Can I share one? I have already told about the migration radio program, and this is the very interesting story. Again, a story, but we didn't make it. Two years before one of the guys nearby, but near Kathmandu City but it is in the rural area, left the country to work in the militia. And when he leave the country, his family was totally disconnected. The family did not know where he went, what he is working [on], [if] he's getting job or not, whatever he is getting. Totally, he lost his family and the family lost the guy. The family was so worried. And one of the family member came in our radio and talked with the team who is doing the migration radio program. And we made the story. They came with his photo. They were very much worried because there was no contact, so they came with the photo, and they gave us the photo. We posted their story online and also we interviewed their family on the radio program. When the radio program was broadcasted, and also the story was made online available, another guy who was working in militia with the guy, who was lost two years before from Nepal, and saw the story [about] the guy and said, "Your family is very much worried. It is a story about you. Why you do not call in your home?" And the guy realized the importance of the communication and he contacted the next day the story we posted on the website.

So, I think what type of impact you want, the media can create. That is what I think is the real impact that made in the community they were [in] by one

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of their stories. And there are many stories we have such type of. Many people have received the money they are cheated [out of] by listening to the radio program and completing the file against them. And many people have left, and many [of] their bodies, they were waiting month and month to come from Saudi Arabia because of the lack of money, and the radio program has helped to generate the [money] so the family has brought the dead body [home]. There are lots of impact. If the program or the content is designed [in a] more effective way, then I think a brave story made impact.

**Gregory Shvedov:** I just want also to share, we had Olympic Games in Russia. And they've been going on in the region where we work. And before Olympic Games, a special law was developed by Russian Parliament which actually allowed [the] Russian state to take property from people, and in a very short limited period of time, to pay some money back without any in-depth investigation [of] how much really this house costs. And that's what was going on in Olympic area. And one of our stories was about an old lady who was living alone in her very small house, and it was not only taken from her but also destroyed. That's what they'd been actually doing to build all these marvelous palaces for Olympic Games, very much as they do in Azerbaijan, we know from Meydan TV, as well [as] destroying houses in Baku prior to big events.

So, that was a story about this old lady. She had no place to go. So it is south of Russia. It was still summer, so she went to live in the forest. And we had just been doing stories about this old lady, and it was not a big amount of attention to that. Story after story, story after story, we'd been attracting attention to her. And guess what? Actually after some big story that she was visited by a bear there one more morning, we had some proof that animals come to her in a place where she lives in the forest, [and] actually officials recognized her, and she got a social flat in this city in South Russia. And there are such social stories, but also there are stories about human rights abuses. There are stories about people who get kidnapped.

And then we come to a moment, as yesterday, I think, or today, it was a point about speed. If you can fast report about kidnapping, and we do it via text messages, and people send us. We can check this information so it would be reliable from journalistic point of view. Those who kidnapped the person, if they see stories are coming, they see media starts to quote this story, and the most important people start to share this story. And we had cases of those people who had been kidnapped and most likely were supposed to be killed, they had been released, just because these people didn't want to have too much of a buzz. And that's what we call crowd-sharing. Not crowdsourcing, but crowd-sharing, where people really start to share their content. Not we as a media [are the] source of information. We are not the primary point in the story, but them as an audience, [they] share with us what they want us to report about. And we should do it journalistically professional. But we, I think, in the media, need to be very open to get that information [that] they want us to report about. It might be

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social. It might be human rights. But the most important thing, do we really do our work professional enough? And if we are, then the moment of impact, I think, comes down.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Tamas?

**Tamas Bodoky:** Our impact lies in corruption investigation, because we spend weeks to gather information on how public procurement and public money is hijacked by government loyalists. And then we put up a story. And then we suddenly get 100,000 page views and 20,000 likes, and it gets into other media, like news, the evening news of certain commercial TV. So, we spend a lot of time to prepare a story. But then we break an original story which has never been reported before; then, we get a huge wave of attention. I have a video on that. I prepared a video.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** We'll put the video [up] and then we'll open up for questions.

**Anim van Wyk:** I just want to share, Maria.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Yes, yes, go ahead. Sorry, I didn't see you.

**Anim van Wyk:** The impact when fact checking doesn't exist actually sparked our organization. Our executive director, Peter Cunliffe-Jones, was the AP correspondent in Nigeria around 2002. And at that time, there was a drive to finally eradicate polio from the country. But some community leaders accused vaccinators that it was a plot that was going to cause infertility in their children, and they urged their supporters not to vaccinate their children. The result was that polio surged. It spread to other countries. Hundreds more people died and were disfigured for life. So, the idea was just, you know, if the media at the time didn't just republish or quote these politicians, but actually went and looked at the evidence and reported critically about it, you know, then perhaps Nigeria could have been polio free by now.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** That's incredible.

[Video plays in Hungarian language. No transcript.]

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Doesn't it have titles?

**Tamas Bodoky:** It's Hungarian.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** OK. Can you translate, please, very quickly?

**Tamas Bodoky:** It's a short imagery in which we explain the big stories we break and we researched. And it is for fundraising purposes.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** OK. Next time, subtitles, please. [laughs]

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**Tamas Bodoky:** Oh, okay. Sorry.

[Laughter.]

### **Q&A Session:**

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** So, any questions from the audience?

**Dulce Ramos:** Hello. There. Hi, I'm Dulce Ramos. I'm the Editor-in-Chief of a Mexican website, Animal Politico. My question is for Laura from Venezuela. Given the economic situation in Venezuela, how did you build the message for such an amazing campaign of fundraising? And how is it going?

**Laura Weffer:** Thank you. Actually, we pick very carefully every word that we wanted to use, because we have an extreme polarized country, whether you are with the government or against the government. And one of the things that we wanted to do with Effecto Cocuyo is to make it inclusive. Like, everyone can join a conversation. Yesterday, I was listening to the experts talking about engaging audiences. And I was thinking on my non-expert mind that it means basically creating communities. And we want to create these communities where everyone can join, regardless of the political side that you are. So, it's been challenging—the crowdfunding. It's been really interesting, because it's the first time that it has been done in Venezuela. So, we are learning a lot. It's going very well even if we are not going to reach the goal that we established at the very beginning. I think, for us, it is a success anyway even if we don't get that much money. Because it means that everyone that has given just a cent or a dollar or whatever, it is the demonstration that the people [are] aware of the importance of being well informed, and that's what we want to transmit. That's what we want to let people feel, like they need to have access to information at the right moment, and they have the right to have freedom of speech. So, basically, we are very happy. And I know that in Venezuela, most of the people [are] very sad and depressed. And sometimes we feel guilty because we have so much energy [to] put on this and we want to do so many things. But I think that's the whole thing, I think, I hope.

**Man:** Hello. For the journalist, Runey, working in Azerbaijan and on LGBT rights, and also Shvedov, the Russian journalist, during the Sochi Olympics, I guess, in Azerbaijan as well, how does the press cover an issue like LGBT rights in a country that may have found cultural disagreements with the suppositions of secularized democracies like Western Europe and the United States? And I'm not saying inferior or superior. I'm just saying cultural differences. How does one defend LGBT rights in a culture milieu that has a different set of values? How does one go about convincing the public on those issues? For example, in Russia, where the public is strongly supportive of Putin's crackdown on LGBT free speech?

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**Mike Runey:** I mean, in Azerbaijan, primarily we do it through opinions and editorials. It's very difficult. There's not really many public LGBT activists in Azerbaijan, because although it's a secular Muslim country, it's a country with, you know, it's never been a topic they've had really a public debate about. And so just by one of our columnists writing a column saying that gays and lesbians are people too is, like, that's new. No one really did that before. A lot of it is rather unpopular. But she says... Her name is Gunel Movlud, and she gets emails from people who would say, like, "I'm gay and Azeri," "I'm a lesbian and Azeri, and I wanted to leave the country, because I thought there's no life for me here, but perhaps it can change." So, it's incredibly difficult, but that's kind of what we do is we take a lot of unpopular opinions sometimes. We had like a cartoonist who made a pro-Charlie Hebdo cartoon, and that was possibly our most watched cartoon and most disliked cartoon. No one thought that was funny. So yeah, you just keep trying and keep talking even if it's an incredibly unpopular stance.

**Jahanzaib Haque:** I just want to add that, in Pakistan, we've actually worked on the issue fairly extensively in the online space, and it was only possible online. Just like Azerbaijan, wildly unpopular. It's a crime and it's a sin in Pakistan. So, when we started this, and I actually started this at a much smaller startup news website, and my wife, who's actually the head of the blog desk there, she was adamant that we needed to start talking about this issue. And I said, "Yeah, let's do it." And we did it by carrying pieces by people from the LGBT community, but we ran them anonymously. So we took a huge risk, because yes, we did get a lot of flak. People were like, "These are just lies. There are no people, you know, gays or lesbians in Pakistan." But we were like, "Well, we're going to run this and we're going to keep running it anonymously, because that's what we're going to do." At the end of the day, what happened is that we had an enormous backlash, which even the print edition didn't realize was coming from this. We had hate pages set up. I still have some hate pages against me that say I'm anti-Pakistan just for that. But I'm doing it at [Dawn.com](http://Dawn.com), too, which is a much larger portal. And it's not all bad news. It's quite encouraging to see it's shock. It's shock for most local readers to actually encounter these stories. And we always do it with a personal narrative. We feel it's... I mean, I understand the opinion approach, but this just makes it... In some ways, it also reduces our liability in that we move it off and say, "Well, this is someone's perspective and we just happen to run it." But we're also protecting them by saying they are anonymous. So, that's kind of how we navigate over there. But yes, it is extremely risky and we're getting away with it for right now.

**Gregory Shvedov:** Concerning Olympic Games, it's very actually a good point, because Olympic declaration tells a lot about freedom of sharing information. So, it's good to keep in mind that during Soviet times, it was a Russian-American TV breach which became very popular, because one of the Soviet participants said that, "We don't have sex in Soviet Union." And that became a very popular... [laughter] There were no Twitter at that time. It would become a meme, "No sex in Soviet Union." So, what was happening

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during Olympic Games, one of the key responsible persons in the area of Olympics in the Sochi City, he says, "We have no gays." And, okay, that'd be great. A whole social boom, because people started tweeting that there are gays working in his administration, so he needs to recognize that there is an issue actually.

But if we keep a little bit more serious, we need to say that the gay community in Russia is under strong attack. We have a special law which forbids so-called propaganda. It's very unclear what is propaganda—promotional, ideas, sharing any information? And we as media, for example, have difficulties to have speakers from community to talk about their rights, to talk about their ideas. So for us, it was not so easy actually to find, to check those people who would be ready to talk openly or not openly on the issues they are having. So, Olympic Games kind of passed away without highlighting these issues. Although in the city of Olympic Games, there are gay clubs. There is gay community. They're working in the administration of a whole city, but they experience and they are really good in social apathy. So, they don't stand for their rights. They want to have an easier life. And who [are we] to judge them? So, that's how it is.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** There is another question.

**Hyung-eun Kim:** Very good answers and speech. I am Reporter Hyung-eun Kim at JoongAng Daily from South Korea. South Korean faced.... Many journalists all over the world are saying South Korean journalists are facing the big threat of the freedom of speech and freedom of media. During the last seven or eight years, the conservative party regime were having lots of scandals. Something relating to money and budget of the government, and some demonstrations against the government policy, like the Korea and US-FDA effects or something like that, and [in the] last election, the Central Intelligence Agency of Korea did something for the conservative regime candidates. And now the most recent effect was a disaster. Through those circumstances, lots of people say Korea's freedom of speech is decreasing by government. I'm sure it's happening, but more Koreans, I'm sure more than half of Koreans, especially older ones, thinks there is no problem. And it's uprising. That kind of thinking of the people are uprising. I don't how we can close these gaps. What do you think about these problems?

**Jahanzaib Haque:** Well, I mean, just from a Pakistan perspective, I totally empathize, because very often the public is going with the state narrative. It is, you know, we talk about the free media, but the media in Pakistan is perceived as—largely perceived as anti-state, unprofessional, and really quite often the enemy. We've had many journalists attacked. There's a lot of coercion. And yes, unfortunately, the public is very often on many issues tipped towards the problematic narrative. How do we deal with that? Slowly and very carefully. I mean, I don't have the answer, because it's such a broad question. But we have the exact same problem. And it's a huge issue which people just don't understand, because generally it's assumed that the

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public is, you know, public opinion stands with the good or the right, but that's not always the case, definitely not in Pakistan.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** But isn't it, Jahanzaib—I don't know—isn't it because of the internet, because of the digital revolution, a lot of people have voices and they can speak out their minds? But also, there's a lot of propaganda. There's a lot of manipulation. And there is a lot of trolls, like people faking as the general public, which they're not. So, you really, at the end, you don't know what is the public opinion, because it can be so manipulated. I don't know. I don't have an answer.

**Gregory Shvedov:** It is so, yeah.

**Jahanzaib Haque:** I mean, we have actual case studies. When our Punjab governor was shot and killed by his own security guard for trying to just criticize the blasphemy law, he was killed. And right after that, we had literally hundreds of Facebook pages popup in favor of the killer. And these were not just... And this was really the first time that people noted that, wow, there's something really messed up in the country if this is happening, because, hell, my cousins were part of those groups. Yeah. So, you have to understand that it was very visible that this was not just propaganda or fake pages being created. People who were very much in favor of the killer, they were very happy that he had killed a blasphemer, even though our Punjab governor had just criticized the law. He said nothing about blasphemy as such.

**Mike Runey:** Yeah, a similar thing for Azerbaijan is like there's this -- the hatred of Armenians among the public at large is so intense that there's very little that we can do to combat it. I was talking with Tamas about this yesterday. There's a very famous case, where as part of some NATO inter-military cooperation, this camp, for lack of a better word, that was taking place in Budapest... So, there was Armenian soldiers there and there were Azeri soldiers there. And there was in one bunk, like, a Hungarian soldier, and Armenian, and an Azeri soldier. And the Hungarian soldier woke up in the middle of the night to the Azeri soldier murdering the Armenian soldier in his sleep with a shovel.

**Gregory Shvedov:** Beheading that man.

**Mike Runey:** Yeah, he took his head off. And he was convicted and he went to jail. And then something happened that somehow the Azeri government convinced the Hungarian government to send him back to Azerbaijan to finish his life sentence there. Instead, it was like Barack Obama getting off a plane with like fanfare. And he never went to prison, and he's still in the military. He's positioned as like a national hero. And this is an incredibly popular opinion. It's something that we don't even really touch, even though everybody that we work with privately is like, "Yeah, this is kind of crazy." So

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yeah, we have the same thing. If you kill an Armenian, it's a really great way to become a national hero.

**Jahanzaib Haque:** Isn't journalism so much more fun in our countries?

[Laughter.]

**Mike Runey:** It's never boring.

**Jahanzaib Haque:** I mean, it's never boring. I'm always telling my guys.... They're like, "Oh, we're so sick of dealing with the terrorist attack every Friday after prayers." I'm like, "Guys, think about it. You're not reporting on traffic accidents." [laughter] Yeah, so I keep them happy that way.

**Mike Runey:** Wow.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Anybody else that's want to say something?

**Haris Dedovic:** I just want to add that basically any government would like to control media, so that's nothing new. If it wouldn't be like that, there wouldn't be public relation services and bribing and talking and negotiating and whatever. So, the struggle is always the same, just from different starting positions. We all have it here, and I believe that you already have your starting position, so it's just a fight to be fought. That's all.

**Gregory Shvedov:** I just want to add, we had a very interesting two and actually three days of discussion about technologies. But I want to bring a point responding to what has been said—that we need to think about the content very much. So, how fast we deliver, how much we share information on social networks, a lot tools, visualization. A lot of tools are essential. But what is the content? What [do] we produce? Do we produce only high news about things [that] happened or [do] we also take a stand to react on the social apathy or on a lack of interest of human rights? Do we only supply demand as a supermarket? Or, [is] media is that kind of business which is different from supermarket? Which is not only supplying the Coca-Cola or any other brands to the customers. Are we different from supermarket? Are we just having a supermarket strategy—having this show, that show, this opinion, that opinion? Here are the news. Here are the visuals. Here are the comments. If we want to be different from supermarket, I guess we need not only to do what our audience like. We need to do not only what our audience will consume with pleasure. But I guess that's a challenge for the media as well, because we want to keep professional. We want to be doing journalistic work and not opinionated pages about democracy. So, we don't want to become a democratic website that just promotes something. That's, I think, a challenge to speak about.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** And also, there is another area that I was thinking [of] yesterday. If you completely concentrate, if you completely

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answer the needs and what the audience wants to read and that's all you concentrate [on], you create little ghettos of people just reading things that they are already agreed with, and they just confirm their own prejudices. And this is not good for the kinds of societies we are talking about when we are trying actually to break those prejudices and get people to start collaborating instead of hating Armenians or hating the Muslim in Bosnia or hating whatever. You have like a higher responsibility, which is not just reproducing these niches of people that are very happy to read everything they agree with. We want them to read things they don't agree with. And that's something that we see probably stronger. I don't know if you think that.

**Gregory Shvedov:** Can I just give one small example to that? On human rights, we report about human rights very often, not only in media, but also international human rights groups from [the] position of [the] victim, but do we also need to share a different point of view? For example, talking about terrorism. We are always reporting in our part of the world that people are detained from point of view of a lawyer, human rights defendant, the family, but do we need to show the other side? To get out of this ghetto of human rights supporting people who want only to present the position of a victim. But I think our answer is to get out of the box. Not to be part of this ghetto. To be presenting very different point of view.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Laura, you said you wanted to say something.

**Laura Weffer:** Yeah. I just wanted to say that I think we as journalists have definitely a strong responsibility, and our profession has a strong commitment with people. But I think that people have to start to -- they need to start to be responsible of the information that they are looking for as well. It's very easy, and I agree completely with Maria Teresa, to sit down and wait [for] someone provides me the information that I'm waiting [for] or the information that I want. And it's better if it's packed in a beautiful package with very easy—I don't know—graphics and a nice picture, you know, black and white, so it doesn't make the death so awful or so terrible as it is. So, you put in in an artsy way and it looks better. But sometimes we as journalists have to provide or it's our obligation to provide [the] uncomfortable truth. And I guess that with new technologies and always keep on thinking on what the people need [and] what the people want. We have to deal with those two worlds. We have to provide what people want sometimes, but sometimes we have to give them uncomfortable truth.

**Maria Teresa Ronderos:** Well, okay. We are done then. Thank you very much. A big applause for this panel.

[Applause.]