INTERNEWS

Promoting an Open Internet

To support adoption in developing countries of the legal and policy framework for an open and democratic Internet, Internews and the Center for Democracy and Technology have joined forces to launch the Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI).

GIPI works with local stakeholders to promote the principles of a decentralized, accessible, user-controlled and market-driven Internet.

Of the Internet, GIPI Executive Director George Sadowsky commented, "There has never been a tool of such power that has spread so rapidly and that promises to change so fundamentally the way in which information becomes available."

Internews President David Hoffman said, "The issue of the decade is who will control the Internet. In the coming years, the Internet could flourish as an unprecedented vehicle for communication and commerce, promoting democratic societies, economic growth and development worldwide.

"Or it could fall prey to regulatory

ERIC S. JOHNSON

An Internet call center in Hyderabad is part of India's extensive Internet culture. India is one of fourteen countries where the Global Internet Policy Initiative has assessed Internet policy.

chaos, fractured by a digital divide, threatened by repressive regimes that

Russian TV Stations Share News Online

Regional television stations that are part of an unusual Internet-based news exchange in Russia have radically changed the way they work as a result of the new technology, based on software designed by Internews Russia.

"Our journalists say that they can't imagine how they ever worked without it," said Alexei Sobolev, general director of Luch, a station in Almetevsk.

"When we were installing it, I thought that they wouldn't want to learn an entirely new system of news production, especially since none of them had worked on computers before. In fact, just the opposite was true."

For journalists at many other participating stations as well, exposure to the InterNovosti program has been their first opportunity to work with computers and the Internet. This has spurred them to explore other uses of the Net, including creating web sites

OPEN MEDIA WATCH

Internews has launched a new section on its web site on media freedoms. Open Media Watch is updated daily: www.internews.org/openmedia/open_media.htm. This includes special sections on Internet issues and AIDS in the media.

INTERNEWS

RWANDA PRISONERS SEE GENOCIDE FILM

Approximately 8,000 alleged perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide recently watched "The Arusha Tapes," a two-hour documentary produced by

Women inmates at Kibuye prison wait to see the Internews film on the United Nations war crimes trials for Rwanda. Many of the prisoners are suspected of perpetrating genocide.

Internews on the trials of those accused in the 1994 genocide. The screenings were held in three prisons, where some prisoners have been detained for as long as seven years for their suspected involvement in the murder of some 800,000 fellow Rwandans.

Viewing the film acted as a catalyst for some of the prisoners to tell their stories for the first time since they've been in jail. "What you have shown us is what I did during the genocide. I am glad you have shown that, and I am very sorry for what I did," said a detainee from Kigali prison.

Others insisted they were not guilty. "For me, no one has come here to say I did this or the other. I have been here now for the last six years, I do not know the charges against me," a woman from Kibuye prison stated.

Award-winning filmmaker Mandy Jacobson directed "The Arusha Tapes."

REPORTING FOR PEACE IN WARTIME

Over the past two years, 150 journalists from conflict-ridden regions of Indonesia and East Timor have come together to learn how to de-escalate violence through objective and even-handed reporting.

One participant in Internews' "Reporting for Peace" seminars said, "I have been personally affected by the violence, which has taken the lives of several close relatives. Now I want to go back and report on what is really happening so that, as a journalist, I can contribute to rebuilding my community."

The program has been so successful that funders have recently called on Internews to expand the initiative to reach community leaders as well.

Although journalists will continue to be the main focus of the program, Internews specialists in conflict resolution have designed new training courses geared toward community groups, for a new initiative called "Communicating for Humanity."

"Freedom of speech means I'm able to freely express my thoughts without having to be afraid of anyone."

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

As pressures on independent media in Russia continued, a stunning 140 Russian local TV stations responded to Internews' call to air a specially produced video on freedom of speech on May 3, World Press Freedom Day.

The video also aired on TV stations in several other former Soviet republics.

"Freedom of Speech" features people from nine former Soviet republics and the US talking about what freedom of speech means to them.

The 13-minute video was produced by Internews Russia for Internews International.

INTERNEWS THAILAND OPENS

Internews Director of Radio Operations and Training, George Papagiannis, receives the blessings of a Buddhist monk in ceremonies opening the Internews office in Chiang Mai, Thailand in March. The office supports independent media within the Burmese pro-democracy movement in exile.

Digital Pioneer Sadowsky Takes the Reins

In just his first three months as Executive Director of the Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI), George Sadowsky has traveled three times to Europe and once to Asia, giving speeches, conducting workshops and meeting with Internet law experts.

While it's not a schedule typical of most retirees, Sadowsky wouldn't dream of lessening his professional involvement in information technology and the Internet. He has traveled to more than 40 countries, running computer-based projects on behalf of organizations such as The Internet Society (ISOC), the United Nations, USAID and The World Bank.
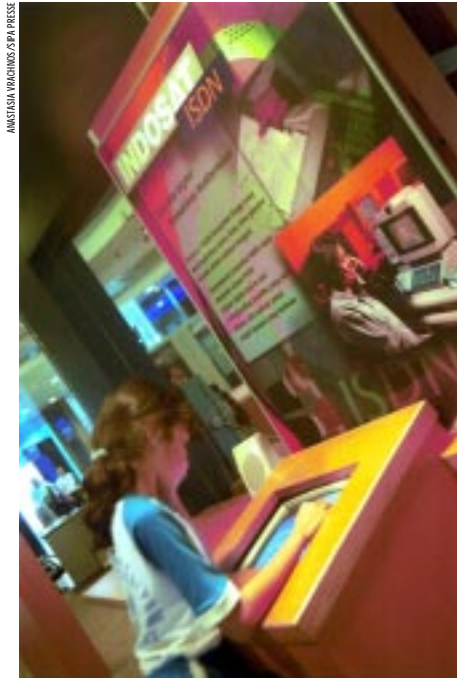
For most of the last ten years he has been substantially involved in helping developing countries obtain access to the Internet and exploit what it can provide to them.

"I want to put the Internet into the hands of as many people in the world as I can, in an affordable and effective manner," said Sadowsky in an email from Sri Lanka.

While most countries of the world are now connected to the Internet, barriers still exist.

"Governments are by nature conservative organizations when it comes to change, and the Internet is a technology that induces very fundamental change," said Sadowsky. "Because some governments don't understand how to deal with the Internet, their policy environments are hostile."

GIPI's country-specific approach,

In Indonesia, GIPI will encourage the government to adopt measures to make the Internet more widely avaialble.

working with local stakeholders, attracted Sadowsky, who has seen the need for policy reform in most of the countries he has visited.

Sadowsky's high energy will be needed for some time to come.

"There's lots of demand for the kind of help that this initiative provides and I think that we will be taxed to the limit trying to keep up," he said.

"We all need the Internet, in both developed and developing countries. GIPI has the potential to help level the playing field between the two in a fundamental way."

George Sadowsky's personal website is at http://pws.prserv.net/sadowsky.

"I want to put the Internet into the hands of as many people in the world as I can, in an affordable and effective manner."

— *George Sadowsky, Executive Director, Global Internet Policy Initiative*

Working for an Open Internet

try to control information and cripple democratic forces inside their borders."

He added, "The role of policy is critical—the days of benign neglect of the Internet are ending."

GIPI (www.gipiproject.org) started last year with assessments of Internet policy in fourteen developing counties including India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Brazil, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, as well as seven countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Already up and running in ten of these countries, GIPI aims to identify specific legal and regulatory impediments to Internet development in each country where it works. It will bring together key local stakeholders, convene national roundtable meetings to develop consensus for reform, educate government officials, the private sector and non-profits on Internet policy, and review and comment on local legal and regulatory proposals.

George Soros, whose Open Society Institute is one of GIPI's foundation and corporate funders, has noted, "GIPI's ability to work on the ground supporting local stakeholders sets it apart as a powerful grassroots force. It will play an important role in keeping the Internet open and democratic."

Internews is known as a leading voice for open media in the 23 countries where it operates. Internews' country offices include local lawyers who advocate in the legislative and executive branches for transparent, fair media laws. Internews' co-founding of GIPI is an extension of this work to the Internet arena.

A taxi driver asks a passenger for her destination as she cruises the Internet in downtown Sao Paulo. GIPI will advocate for a democratic Internet policy in Brazil and other countries.

Internews' partner in establishing GIPI, the Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT), is considered to be the one of the premier Internet policy organizations in the US.

SEE ALSO RELATED STORIES:

- Profile of GIPI Executive Director George Sadowsky, page 3
- Interview with CDT Executive Director Jerry Berman, page 5
- Profile of the Markle Foundation's Julia Moffett, page 5
- GIPI working with UNDP, page 7

Internet Software Lets Russian TV Stations Share News Online

News Factory software developers talk with a TV station representative at a broadcasters' exhibition in Moscow. Created by Internews Russia, News Factory is an Internet-based program that lets TV stations exchange transcripts of their news programs.

and even experimenting with Internet broadcasting.

An integral part of the InterNovosti project, organized by Internews Russia, is Fabrika Novostei (News Factory), Internet-based system software that organizes the process of creating news programs from research to final rundown. After using the software to create the script of a news program, the editor sends the text to a unified, searchable database, www.rustv.ru.

News Factory software has become an indispensable tool for over 170 regional TV stations across the country.

"We use information from the site at least once a week. Without News Factory, we couldn't work at all," said a representative from the news department of ATV-Stavropol in Stavropol.

Each day, about 40 new transcripts are made available. Thirty to 80 stations visit the exchange each day, and many begin their working day with a review of the InterNovosti site.

Through InterNovosti, journalists at 7x7 in Ivanovo learned from a broadcast in Krasnoyarsk that an important Ivanovo official had been arrested in Krasnoyarsk. This was news even to the law enforcement agencies in Ivanovo.

Since the implementation of the program in March 1999, the news programs at participating stations have improved significantly, according to Internews Russia. For example, almost all of the winners in the national News-Local Time competition last year, also sponsored by Internews, are active participants in InterNovosti.

Funded by grants from USAID and the Eurasia Foundation, the InterNovosti project provides training and technical support. Internews has trained over 500 professionals in the use of the News Factory program.

A Pragmatic Idealist Goes International

Jerry Berman is Executive Director of the Center for Democracy and Technology, a leading Internet policy organization in the US that is partnering with Internews on the Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI). Before founding CDT in 1994, Berman held key positions at the American Civil Liberties Union and the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

You were a student at Berkeley in the 60's and you were part of the free speech movement. How did that experience shape you?

What Berkeley taught me is that I am essentially a progressive, but I am also a realist. When I ran for public office at Berkeley, I not only campaigned for free speech, but also for beer in the Bear's Lair to try to get the fraternity vote as well as the free speech vote. I believe that I am a pragmatic idealist.

Why are you so committed to the Internet?

I think the most fundamental value is the marketplace of ideas and free speech. The Internet is the first electronic medium that, because of its global and decentralized nature, permits anyone to publish, has low barriers to access, and has few gatekeepers. That is inherent in the technology, the network of networks.

With the launch of GIPI, CDT is really expanding overseas. What made you decide to go international?

GLOBAL INTERNET POLICY INITIATIVE

GIPI (www.gipiproject.org) supports adoption in developing countries of the legal and policy framework for an open and democratic Internet. The project works with local stakeholders in consultative, coalition-based efforts to promote the principles of a decentralized, accessible, user-controlled Internet.

Jerry Berman is Executive Director of the Center for Democracy and Technology, based in Washington, D.C.

It's a global medium, and it is important that we make common cause with people who share commitments to freedom and openness.

We are excited about our partnership with Internews because of its global reach. Together I think that we can work with citizens all around the world and help them to educate their policymakers and each other about how we maintain an open Internet in a multicultural world.

What do you see as the main barriers to a more open, democratic Internet in the world?

The Internet poses threats to authority. Governments may attempt to clamp down on it, imposing a range of legal and regulatory actions intended to inhibit the openness of the Internet.

But most policy regimes like that are counter-productive. The Internet is a global medium and it routes around those kinds of restrictions. Also, governments need to realize that efforts to try to restrict the Net because of fears of political diversity will also restrict its economic potential.

What is your ultimate goal in this work?

We are witnessing the birth of a new medium. I think our job is to draft the fundamental policy structure for this new medium. And our goal must be to make it consistent with our values of free speech and human rights.

Markle: Bridging the Digital Divide

One of the earliest supporters of the Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI) was the Markle Foundation (www.markle.org), which works to realize the potential of emerging information technology to improve people's lives.

Julia Moffett, Managing Direcror and Chief Strategic Officer at Markle, has been at the center of the Foundation's efforts to bridge the digital divide through its Global Digital Opportunities Project.

The project is intended to demonstrate the power of information and communication technology (ICT) to address basic development challenges. Markle is providing both funding and guidance for GIPI as a key component of this effort. Moffett sees GIPI as a critical player in creating digital opportunity in developing nations.

"It is not until a country's policy, legal and regulatory environment is suitable to encourage the growth of ICT that those who most stand to benefit will be able to do so," she said.

Julia Moffett of the Markle Foundation

"GIPI's commitment to tackling the hard work of developing local stakeholder knowledge, participation and support is a fundamental part of this equation. The initial success of the project is a testament to its importance and its talented leadership," she said.

Before joining Markle, Moffett was Vice President of Communications for NBC News and also served for five years in the White House, most recently as the Director of Communications and Strategic Planning for the National Security Council.

Armenian Journalists Get Wired

The information age is transforming Armenian journalism—one station at a time.

Internews is providing Internet training and connectivity to Armenian journalists in an effort to increase the quality of news reporting and the flow of information to and from outlying regions.

"Most of the small towns outside the capital are isolated," said Internews Country Director Erik Pacific. "It isn't unusual for newspapers to reach these areas three to four days after being printed. Now that these small televisions stations have access to email and

Armenian regional journalists learn how to use the Internet effectively at an Internews seminar led by Anna Turchaninova (standing), the chief editor at Internews Russia's InterNovosti program (see story page 1).

the Internet, they are able to broadcast better quality news, allowing the people in their towns to be better informed."

This "virtual news exchange" allows the stations to share the news they produce online. Funded by the Open Society Institute and USAID, this is the first project to date that has connected users outside of Armenia's three largest cities to the Internet.

Internews Armenia's Internet connectivity project now extends to 24 television and radio stations across the country, establishing a nationwide information exchange network.

The effort has raised awareness of regional issues and has led to expanded and more detailed reporting about regional activities by reporters in the capital, according to Pacific.

Armenian readers can access the virtual news exchange website and archive at http://home.media.am.

TEACHING JOURNALISTS AROUND THE WORLD TO USE THE INTERNET

Providing computer modems and email access to scores of independent TV stations and other media organizations over the last decade, Internews has trained journalists around the globe to use the Internet effectively.

In 1993 Internews established the Information and Press Center (IPC) in Kiev, providing Internet-based research, reference services and training to Ukrainian journalists. In 1996 the IPC spun off into a separate entity.

Internews offices in Russia, Armenia, Indonesia, and Ukraine regularly hold seminars on various aspects of Internet usage, from web design and research techniques to providing equipment and teaching the benefits of connectivity.

In addition, all of Internews Indonesia's 50 partner stations have received equipment packages and training; those initially lacking Internet connectivity are now online. While equipment grants vary according to need, typical components include multi-media computers with modems and one year of Internet access.

Such Internet training and support has given even isolated regional journalists access to the world.

Partnership with UNDP Forged

Though only a few months old, the Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI) has already forged a powerful alliance. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has asked GIPI to partner with it to establish information and communication technology (ICT) policy in countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union where UNDP is active.

"Cooperation between GIPI and UNDP strengthens both entities," said

ERIC S. JOHNSON

Together with the United Nations Development Programme and others, Internews sponsored the first conference to develop national Internet policy for the Kyrgyz Republic.

GIPI Managing Director Eric S. Johnson. "GIPI's role as a neutral policy advisor and UNDP's role as an inter-governmental organization together provide a unique combination of civil society input and direct access to policymakers."

At UNDP's request, GIPI recently co-convened a special two-day session on ICT issues at the annual meeting of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Eastern Europe and CIS. The Resident Representatives met in Tbilisi, Georgia in April.

GIPI began its collaboration with UNDP in March by co-sponsoring Kyrgyzstan's first conference on ICT, which brought together representatives from the government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to develop a national Internet strategy.

Palestinian Web Site Fights Censorship

When Palestinian journalist Mohammed Daramegh wrote a risky article calling for Palestinians to normalize relations with Israel, his own newspaper refused to publish the piece.

Daramegh then turned to AMIN.org, a web site run by Internews Middle East that provides independent information in Arabic and English on current political affairs, democratic initiatives and civil society interests.

Posted on AMIN, Daramegh's article subsequently won a Common Ground Award for journalism that contributes to better understanding between people in the Middle East.

Journalist Said Ghazali, a senior reporter for *The Jerusalem Times*, has said, "As a journalist dedicated to the freedom of expression for nearly 20 years, in a society controlled by the official media, I can say that AMIN is the only web site in the Middle East which sets no boundaries of suppres-

LAUREN ROSS

From the Internews Middle East office in Jerusalem, Khaled Abu Aker directs the AMIN web site, an important source of Palestinian opinion on the Internet.

"AMIN is the only web site in the Middle East which sets no boundaries of suppression or censorship under the slogan of national interests."

— *Said Ghazali, AMIN contributor and senior reporter for The Jerusalem Times*

sion or censorship under the slogan of national interests. AMIN has given me the chance to write critical stories on corruption and on the misuse of power."

AMIN Director Khaled Abu Aker

said, "Censorship works in strange ways in the Palestinian areas." He explained that while the largest Palestinian daily, *Al Quds*, is censored by Israel's military, the other two dailies fall under the informal censorship of the Palestinian Authority.

"Journalists and media institutions can be punished if they step over one of the Palestinian Authority's unwritten 'red lines'—criticism of the government, any news on the private lives of public figures, criticism of the handling of political negotiations with Israel, and investigations of corruption."

Internews Middle East founded AMIN in 1996 to fight such censorship. Dedicated to publishing news that does not make into the local press, as well as serving as a portal to Arabic-language online newspapers around the world, AMIN currently serves up an average of 5000 page views per day.

New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman has lauded AMIN, saying, "In the 21st century (the Arab states) will thrive only . . . by democratizing. The battle is on, and thanks to the Internet and globalization the Arab democrats finally have some artillery."

AMIN stands for Arabic Media Internet Network, but its acronym also means "faithful" in Arabic. AMIN received startup funding from the Open Society Institute and is currently staffed on a volunteer basis.

Hoffman Testifies

Testifying before the US Congress, Internews President David Hoffman stressed the importance of open media around the world.

"Independent media have been on the front lines in the fight for freedom and democracy," he told the House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations in his testimony in March.

Citing Africa as a part of the world yet to achieve the goal of open, non-governmental media, Hoffman emphasized the critical role of media in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

"In the developing world, locally-produced radio programs and other media coverage are unparalleled in their potential to effectively educate mass populations about urgent social problems such as HIV/AIDS," he said, calling the development of a democratic and open media in Africa "a moral and a political imperative."

ABOUT INTERNEWS

Internews® is an international non-profit organization that supports open media worldwide. The company fosters independent media in emerging democracies, produces innovative television and radio programming and Internet content, and uses the media to reduce conflict within and between countries. Internews programs are based on the conviction that vigorous and diverse mass media form an essential cornerstone of a free and open society. Internews projects currently span the former Soviet Union, Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa and the United States. Formed in 1982, Internews Network, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in California, with offices in twenty-three countries worldwide.

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Yerevan, Armenia

ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS
P.O. Box 4448 • Arcata, CA 95518-4448 • USA
Tel: +1 707 826-2030
Fax: +1 707 826-2136
Email: info@internews.org
Main Web Site: www.internews.org

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Post Office Box 4448
Arcata, CA 95518-4448
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