Internet Freedom Fellows Program
Funded by the U.S. Mission to the UN in Geneva
March 4- 16, 2013

B I O G R A P H I C A L   I N F O R M A T I O N

Mac-Jordan Disu-Degadjor
@MacJordaN

A co-founder and executive of the sole blogging association in Ghana, Blogging Ghana, Mr. Disu-Degadjor promotes the freedom of expression through blogs and social media both on and off-line. Starting in 2009, Mac-Jordan and other young Ghanaians organized 18 BarCamps across Ghana, providing aspiring Ghanaian bloggers with technical help and networking opportunities. These conferences are designed to inspire youth to get on-line wherever and however they can.

On several occasions, Mac-Jordan has presented on the need to use blogs and other social media to amplify youth voices. In 2009, *Global Voices* appointed him as their aggregator for Ghana, and Dr. Dorothy Gordon, the Director-General of *Ghana's Advanced Information Technology Institute*, stated that he was a critical and necessary voice for the advancement of the nation.

Michael Anti
@mranti

Michael Anti was a computer programmer before turning to journalism in 2001. He is a longstanding advocate for a freer internet in China, noting that social media is the force that may ultimately challenge the political foundation of the country. Mr. Anti believes that the internet will facilitate a new conception of civic participation, inspiring the Chinese to see freedom of speech as a fundamental right. Microsoft MSN was forced to delete his award winning blog under pressure from the Chinese government, causing a media uproar in 2005. He has been an advocate of Virtual Private Networks for Chinese citizens, stating that those who don't use them are "second-class citizens in the world of the internet." Mr. Anti is known for his prolific career as a journalist, his 2012 Ted Talk, and his commitment to a freer China.

Edetaen Ojo
@EdetOjo; @MRA_ Nigeria
Edetaen Ojo is the director of *The Media Rights Agenda*, an organization that promotes excellence and professionalism in journalism. He spearheaded and orchestrated the movement that led the Nigerian legislature to pass the Freedom of Information Act, which empowers journalists to seek and access information from government establishments.

Mr. Ojo holds over twenty years of experience promoting and defending internet freedom as part of the broader right to freedom of expression, through monitoring transgressions and limitations on freedom and human rights online. His involvement in international human rights includes positions on the advisory group for the *BBC World Service Trust-led Africa Media Development Initiative (AMDI)* and the *Task Force of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)*. Mr. Ojo also serves as Convenor (Chair) of the *International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX)*, a global network of organizations with its secretariat in Toronto, Canada.

Grigory Okhotin
@okhotin; @OvdInfo

Grigory Okhotin is a prominent journalist and human rights activist in Russia. Previously the director of the news site *Inosmi.RU*, Mr. Okhotin resigned in protest of the censorship imposed upon public media in Russia. After his resignation, Mr. Okhotin began writing publically about censorship and human rights violations in Russia.

After experiencing detainment himself, Mr. Okhotin co-founded the portal *ovdinfo.org* to provide a public forum for sharing information about Russian citizens detained while exercising their right to freedom of assembly. Mr. Okhotin's website is unique in that it provides real-time detailed information about those who have been detained, and features mini-interviews in which activists describe the manner of their arrest and the conditions of their confinement. According to Mr. Okhotin, "That helps us to understand what happens behind closed doors."

Usamah Mohamed
@simsimt

Usamah Mohamed is a computer programmer and human rights activist, who currently owns and operates an IT business in Khartoum. During the recent wave of anti-government demonstrations in Sudan, Mr. Mohamed organized peaceful demonstrations from the Twitter page he supervises and supplied international media with fresh pictures and news on demonstrations across the country. The government took several steps to halt Mr. Mohamed's work, including subjecting him to a period of detention. Undeterred, Mr. Mohamed continues to use social media to promote human rights in Sudan. The U.S. Embassy follows his blog daily, considering it an important source of news and opinions about Sudan. In April 2012, Usamah was chosen to be a part of the Sudan Social Media Team to meet with the U.S. Department of State's special representative to Muslim communities, Farah Pandith.

Mr. Mohamed currently trains activists to use online tools effectively and efficiently. This includes training on blogging, bypassing online censorship, using circumvention tools, digital and online security, citizen journalism, effective audio and video recording, and live-tweeting for the coverage of events such as protests, sit-ins, and forums.

Bronwen Robertson

Bronwen Robertson is the Director of Operations for a London based NGO called *Small Media*. While in Iran working on a PhD in music, Ms. Robertson became interested in working for the rights of repressed Iranians, especially homosexuals. In Iran, Ms. Roberson spearheaded a research project and report entitled "LGBT Republic of Iran: An Online Reality?" The report, published in May of this year, led to a number of projects that connect Farsi speaking communities worldwide. One such project is a website called *Degarvajeh*, which gives online support to the LGBT community by providing general information and the proper Farsi vocabulary to discuss LGBT issues in a non-derogatory fashion.

Through *Small Media, Ms. Robertson* works to counter Iran's efforts to block websites and censor information. *Small Media* spends much of its time working on creating new and innovative ways to make the internet safe and useful for Iranians. The group holds numerous online training sessions in personal online security, citizen journalism, and general information. They also report on related issues such as cultural censorship in Iran, Iranian women sports, and struggles faced by Iranian Bloggers. Recently, the group held an awareness raising workshop to demonstrate the challenges faced by Iranians using the internet under oppression.