



Media Advocacy and Digital Freedom

New technologies are transforming human rights advocacy. The Internet, social media, Skype, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube are fixtures of a globalizing world that were hardly imaginable a few decades ago. Technology, especially mobile, is amplifying information about human rights abuses and humanitarian crises. Compelling messages and powerful media together can mobilize action quickly. Technology has demonstrated the potential to create a truly global human rights community.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims the fundamental right to seek, receive and impart information through any media regardless of national frontiers. Despite this, authoritarian regimes around the world are seeking to strengthen state control of communication infrastructure and engage in censorship and surveillance of electronic communications. The same technology that enables political dissidents to speak truth to power has strengthened surveillance by authoritarian regimes, enabling them to identify and detain prominent bloggers and citizen witnesses.

The Human Rights Center's research on advocacy recognizes the fundamental importance of digital freedom for democracy and the protection and promotion of human rights. Effective media advocacy depends upon timely, accurate and reliable information, powerful messaging and free access to all media regardless of frontiers.

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