Internet Freedom in the 21st Century
Integrating New Technologies into Diplomacy and Development

DOS photos

INTERNET FREEDOM

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"We need to work toward a world in which access to networks and information brings people closer together and expands the definition of the global community."
— Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

In a January 2010 address at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton delivered a major foreign policy address on Internet Freedom.

Secretary Clinton emphasized a commitment to defending the freedom of expression and the free flow of information in the 21st century. The free flow of information and ideas over digital technologies is in our national and global interests: it is important for economic growth; for U.S. diplomatic relationships; for building sustainable democratic societies; and for meeting global challenges in the years and decades ahead.

The State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are working with a wide range of partners outside of government to support these principles. They are pursuing an active agenda to promote Internet freedom, to boost online access across the developing world and to train civil society activists in online organizing.

Many U.S. Government development and public diplomacy programs emphasize to our partners the communication benefits of new technologies. In addition, the State Department and USAID are planning the following initiatives:

- The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor will soon be launching a series of projects that assist users in using mobile communications safely; increase access to uncensored content on the Internet; or assist organizations in protecting their data and communications systems.
- USAID is launching a public-private partnership with the Knight Foundation to implement the MATADOR (Media Assistance utilizing Technological Advancements and Direct Online Response) program, which trains and supports civil society groups and non-governmental organizations in the use of new media technologies. The first MATADOR projects, scheduled for implementation in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa, will focus on election monitoring, distribution of unbiased election news and information, encouraging youth participation in politics, getting out the vote, and engaging the public in monitoring corruption.
- The Middle East Partnership Initiative will support a series of pilot projects that will use new media to connect people—particularly young people—to expand civic participation and increase the capabilities of civil society in the Middle East and North Africa.
- In 2010, the State Department will begin working in partnership with industry, academia, and non-governmental organizations on harnessing the power of connection technologies to advance the United States' foreign policy agenda. This effort will leverage tools such as mobile phone applications and social media to help strengthen civil society, promote good governance, and encourage people-to-people contacts.

Five Key Freedoms of the Internet Age

- Freedom of Speech: Blogs, emails, text messages have opened up new forums for the exchange of ideas.
- Freedom of Worship: The Internet enhances people's ability to worship as they see fit.
- Freedom from Want: Online connections expand people's knowledge and economic opportunities including locating new markets.
- Freedom from Fear: Those who disrupt the free flow of information threaten individual liberties and the world's economy and civil society.
- Freedom to Connect: Connecting with others near and far offers unprecedented opportunities for human cooperation.