

WORKSHOP REPORT FORM

Number and title of workshop

Date and time of workshop 1 November 2008, 17-19 hrs.

Moderator (Name and Institution) Darius Cuplinskas, Director of the Information Programme at the Open Society Institute (OSI)

Rapporteur (Name and Institution) Conrad Zellmann, Transparency International

Panellists (Name, institution, title)

Julian Assange, **Wikileaks, Advisory Board**
Ellen Miller, **Sunlight Foundation, Executive Director**
Ines Selwood, **Clarín, Journalist**
Nicolas Hernandez, **OCASA**
Shazka Beyerle, **International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, Senior Advisor**

Main Issues Covered

Darius Cuplinskas opened the discussion by giving an overview of the opportunities for the promotion of transparency presented by social media tools like wikis, blogging, google-earth based mapping and others.

The panellists presented, from their various perspectives, a number of examples for the use of social media strategies in promoting transparency and anti-corruption.

Ellen Miller of the Sunlight Foundation presented the work of her organisation along two main lines: the development of technology tools to gather in databases, analyse and make available to citizens in an easy to access manner public interest information, specifically about the American congress, and the mobilization of citizens in the struggle for greater transparency and government accountability.

Julian Assange highlighted the huge impact that Wikileaks has made in revealing corruption cases by allowing whistleblowers from around the world to come forward in a safe online environment and leak classified documents. Wikileaks has triggered reporting by the world's leading news outlets on large-scale corruption scandals in different countries.

Ines Selwood contributed the perspective of a journalist and blogger on various themes of civil society activism. She highlighted in particular how citizen journalists, through the use of cheap online publishing tools are changing how information is being produced and consumed. This fundamentally affects the role of traditional media in challenging its monopoly on the distribution of information. Like traditional media outlets, civil society organisations must respond to this by adapting their media as well as citizen engagement strategies.

Nicolas Hernandez spoke about the experience of OCASA in using internet-based social media tools to mobilise young people against corruption. OCASA uses online discussion fora,



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online training, facebook groups and databases to engage – in a very cost-effective way - young people across a very large country. For OCASA, social media tools like its Facebook group are a fundamental part of their organisational strategy to engage youth in the fight against corruption.

Shaazka Beyerle spoke about what she called the Facebook revolution – the April 6 movement in Egypt. At the heart of a large-scale strike movement to protest rising prices, corruption and political repression was a Facebook group that grew to more than 70,000 participants in a short time. Shaazka in particular spoke about the need to integrate online campaigns with real-world mobilisation and social action, ideally on issues of direct relevance to people's lives. Also, she highlighted the use of mobile phones for advocacy purposes, such as recording video of election fraud and immediately distributing it.

The audience contributed a number of pertinent questions to the debate, such as regarding the government control of internet access, the safety of online whistleblowers, the digital divide and how civil society organisations should respond to opportunities and challenges of the online information society.

Main Outcomes

The audience and panellists agreed that the tremendous opportunities presented by online advocacy, distributed research and citizen engagement need to be harnessed for the fight against corruption.

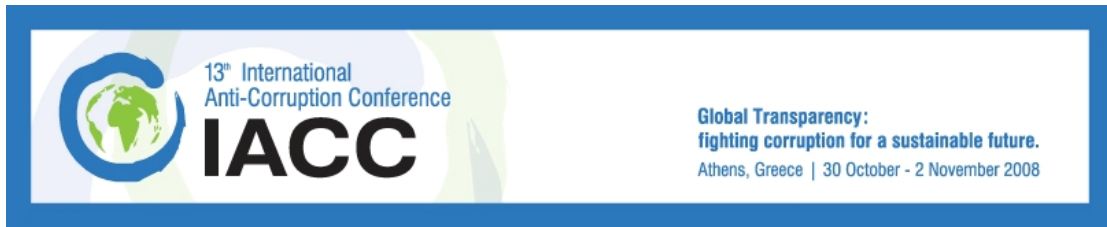
At the same time, full disclosure of information online has huge potential to increase accountability and transparency of governments, business and civil society organisations.

Main Outputs

A blog <http://socialtransparency.wordpress.com> will gather examples mentioned in the workshop as well as further social media strategies for the fight against corruption.

Recommendations, Follow-up Actions

The panellists challenged the audience to take into account the enormous opportunities offered by social media tools. They offer tremendous potential to build support and engage citizens in the fight against corruption and make institutions more accountable.



Workshop Highlights (including interesting quotes)

Signed

Conrad Zellmann