

St Antony's International Review

The Internet: Power and Governance in a Digitised World

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1, MAY 2007

Notes on Contributors	3
Editorial Introduction: Roham Alvandi, Anna Hakala and Shefali Virkar	5
Keynote Speech: The Use and Abuse of the Internet in the Age of InfoTerror James Der Derian	12
Local Power, Global Reach: The Domestic Institutional Roots of Internet Governance David Bach and Abraham L. Newman	23
Virtual China: The Internet as Threat or Opportunity? Gary D. Rawnsley	42
Virtual China: The Internet as Threat or Opportunity? A Response Daniel Koldyk	58
Citizen Journalists and the Evolution of Political Media Diana Owen	64
De/re/coding Security in 'Societies of Control': Data-mining as Political Practice Solon Barocas	80
News Journalism in the Digital Era An Interview with Steve Herrmann	91
Book Reviews	99

David Bach is Professor of Strategy and Economic Environment at the Instituto de Empresa Business School in Madrid, Spain.

Solon Barocas is a Program Associate at the Russell Sage Foundation.

James Der Derian is Watson Institute Research Professor of International Studies and Director of the Institute's Global Security Program at Brown University.

Daniel Koldyk is the Wai Seng Senior Research Scholar at St. Antony's College and a DPhil candidate in political science at the University of Oxford.

Abraham L. Newman is an Assistant Professor at the Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

Diana Owen is Associate Professor of Political Science and Chair of American Studies at Georgetown University.

Gary D. Rawnsley is Professor of Asian International Communications in the Institute of Communications Studies, University of Leeds.

Editorial Introduction: 'The Internet: Power and Governance in a Digitised World'

5

ROHAM ALVANDI, ANNA HAKALA AND SHEFALI VIRKAR

Ten years since its emergence as a mainstream global medium, the Internet plays an active role in both contentious political debates and alternative visions for order in world politics. Today, the issue is no longer *whether* the Internet has altered the world we live in, but *how* we can understand the political changes it brings. Unlike print or broadcast media, which have largely remained the designated territory of communication scholars, the study of the Internet has attracted researchers from various disciplines to explore its implications for their own fields of expertise.

With social scientists starting to examine the political impact of the Internet, concepts such as power and governance have increasingly entered the study of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). An analytical focus on power issues is necessary when considering recent news stories concerning the politicisation of the Internet. For instance, when the search engine firm Google sought to expand their business operations in China, they chose to actively collaborate with the Beijing authorities, even if that risked appearing to legitimise censorship rules.¹ In Iraq, the use of Internet media by insurgent groups for information dissemination and recruitment purposes has greatly problematised the ability of the United States (U.S.) and Iraqi forces to contain the instability.² While at the United Nations, talks over the infrastructure and economic value of the Internet have often been split down North-South lines with many representatives from developing countries arguing that the medium should be upheld as an international public good and be defended from undue private sector influence.³ In short, to better explain how the structures of the Internet are conceived, how participation and actions within them are enabled, and how distributional outcomes are achieved, the importance of power, and by association, forms of governance need to be addressed.

For different reasons, however, there has always been considerable disagreement amongst social scientists over understanding power. Disputes have historically pivoted around the scope, domain, effects and meaning of both the capacity and exercise of power.⁴ For some, power

is inherently contestable and is even underestimated as a category of analysis.⁵ For others, the extent and merits of such conceptual 'stretching' should not be read as a source of strength for either scholarly communication or theory-building. As Robert Gilpin once remarked, 'the number and variety of definitions [of power] should be an embarrassment to political scientists.'⁶ This special issue of *STAIR* in part aims to contribute to these broader conceptual debates, but it does not seek to offer an essentialist notion of power, nor does it treat different types of concepts as engaged in a kind of gladiatorial battle. The point is not to search for a single or dominant notion of power that would command universal extent, but to open scholars of the Internet to a more rigorous and sustained examination of the concept. With this in mind, and in keeping with *STAIR's* intension to foster methodological pluralism, the approaches to power analysis in this issue are diverse and should serve as an inspiration for others.

As the structure and scale of the Internet has evolved, researchers have debated the appropriate levels, modes and mechanisms for governing the medium. In the study of international affairs, 'governance' has become a fashionable and adaptable concept.⁷ Some might argue it as a 'fitting' term for an increasingly digitised world, capturing the idea of collective rule-making within multiple hierarchies. But like 'power,' it is a very slippery notion, and scholars of the Internet have considered it from different viewpoints. As William Drake has underscored, there is considerable disagreement on how to define Internet governance, not to mention the issues and institutions that should be involved.⁸ Nevertheless, while Internet governance is a contested subject, it is important to keep in mind that the concept is underpinned by ideas about control, and thus links back to power.

Yet the study of the global political implications of the Internet remains in its infancy, and there is much we do not understand. There are numerous questions that remain unanswered: Can the Internet be regulated and if so, how? What roles do state and private actors play in global Internet governance? How has the Internet altered power relations in the fields of global security, journalism and communications, and governance? In preparation for this issue, these questions were successfully addressed at a conference organised by *STAIR* and the Oxford Internet Institute at St Antony's College in December 2006. Some of the articles in this issue are derived from this conference and help us to confront these questions again. They do so by examining the impact of the Internet through the double lens of power and governance. There are four major themes that can be identified—terrorism, the Internet and authoritarian regimes, Internet governance and online journalism.

Terrorism

The advent of new ICTs has significantly impacted on how states and societies relate to one another. In particular, the so-called information revolution has underlined several challenges to global governance. These include the creation of electronic platforms where new, or hitherto less powerful actors have emerged and influenced policy agendas while bypassing established channels of participation; the changing conception of how states define their interests, their power bases and their security; and increasing challenges to states' ability to govern and control the dissemination of information.⁹ The world has also seen the rise of a new type of battle—the information war—which involves the disruption of information networks through the use of aggressive software¹⁰ and where loosely organised terrorist networks use the Internet to communicate and co-ordinate attacks.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 demonstrated that terrorist networks are widely connected to each other and are able to harness the flexibility afforded by the Internet to achieve their objectives. Transnational terrorism has always been a security issue of great concern, and such groups have consistently taken advantage of communications media. However investigations spurred by the recent 'global war on terror' throw into sharp focus terrorist groups' usage of the Internet not only as a communication and propaganda vehicle but also as an active tool in their recruitment strategies and for delivering instruction and training. In this regard, the papers in this special issue raise some important questions: How, James Der Derian asks, has the use of the Internet by both state and non-state actors redefined the idea of national and international security? Can we consider the increase in transnational terrorism as an asymmetrical 'war' with Western states, and to what extent is it being fought online? How have traditional security tactics and strategies been altered? With respect to issues of surveillance and censorship what, Solon Barocas asks, is the most suitable role for state authorities to play, and how might they use the Internet to counter existing threats and pre-empt potential ones? Furthermore, what consequences would digital data collection and oversimplification of terrorist typologies have more generally on state-citizen relations?

Many scholars of the Internet have argued how the medium can be used to transcend all barriers of territorial distances and borders—a quality which could lead to the declining power of authoritarian regimes. The decentralised nature of the Internet allows for websites to be hosted anywhere in the world, and low communication costs and rapidly increasing computing power make it a cheap and easy way for a larger number of non-state actors to coordinate their activities with greater effectiveness and efficiency. Many commentators feel that technology has challenged previous practices that once served to reinforce the power of the state—from border controls to autonomous governments—and that the idea of the state as a site of authority and power will soon become a thing of the past.¹¹ On the other hand, others believe that while predictions regarding the importance of technology have proven right, instead of undermining the control governments have over their populations, it has further enhanced their capability to monitor and keep watch. In this issue, Gary Rawnsley explores how the Internet is challenging authoritarian governance in China. He argues that what is good for governance in China—the free flow of information and ideas—is ultimately corrosive for the Chinese government. With the rapid proliferation and appropriation of new communications technologies and the confusion of author, publisher and audience, Rawnsley argues that authoritarian governance faces an ever more articulate, opinionated and daring public sphere in China.

Internet Governance

In the early days of the Internet, it was predicted that the medium would constitute a separate and independent jurisdictional space, and as a result, its governance would require global rule-making in which governments would play little, if any, role.¹² In this respect, Internet governance was expected to differ considerably from other areas of international economic governance. However, ten years hence, few aspects of Internet governance are the product of carefully coordinated global rule-making. Instead, the field is characterised by an unconventional and slow policy-making process whereby governments continue to compete for influence with private, non-profit actors such as ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) and various international organisations. ‘Multistakeholderism’ has been identified as the only legitimate way to

develop the Internet regulatory environment, but as the United Nations' World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003 and 2005 demonstrated, state and NGO interests stand in conflict, and there is little consensus as to how these global stakeholder coalitions should be built.

The articles in this issue emphasise the power of domestic actors in the ongoing global policy-making process. For instance, in their thought-provoking article, David Bach and Abraham Newman argue that states continue to yield power in the field of Internet governance and that domestic regulatory politics in dominant markets are playing out transnationally. The authors present a domestic institutional model of global Internet governance that identifies domestic market size and regulatory capacity over that market as the principal determinants of international influence. Through case studies of data privacy protection, domain name administration and online gambling regulation, Bach and Newman argue that their model helps explain prevailing patterns of influence in global Internet governance.

Online Journalism

The World Wide Web has become an alternative and rival to newspapers, TV and radio as a major news source. In recent years, the world has seen the development of a new set of Internet-based applications, collectively known as Web 2.0, that are characterised by more dynamic Web pages and user generated content. This has consequently provided further opportunities for online journalism. The key characteristics of Web journalism—speed, hypertextuality, interactivity and ‘multimediality’—have not only given rise to completely new conceptions of reportage, but they have also raised questions about the underlying power dynamics between traditional media and their audience. A key question here is: has the Internet, by allowing two-way communication, empowered new actors and encouraged dissemination of alternative voices, or has it ultimately reinforced the power of the traditional media organisations? To what extent has the Internet altered the processes shaping news production and distribution?

These questions are addressed in several articles in this issue. In her empirical exploration of citizen journalism, Diana Owen argues that ‘digital tools in the hands of citizens are historically unlike any other technologies in their ability to empower citizens to challenge established hierarchies.’ In her view, this virtually limitless ability to quickly disseminate content using readily available digital tools has

enabled citizens to broker information and create new services that will strengthen their collective position in society. Elsewhere, Gary Rawnsley discusses the power of blogging in his article on the Internet governance in China. He stresses how weblogs provide an alternative perspective on events from those offered by other media sources and thus may challenge established political orders and styles of governance. Finally in an interview, Steve Herrmann, Editor of BBC News Interactive, addresses questions about the changing news environment and the discrepancy between the BBC's broadcasting mandate and its online services, which can only reach less than two thirds of the British population due to the prevailing digital divide.¹³

Conclusion

In the early years of the 21st century the world is building up nascent Information Societies, its people still searching for meanings and concepts to describe the new age they are creating. The diverse collection of papers in this issue explores the way in which the Internet has changed notions of power and governance from a range of theoretical and empirical positions. Running through all the articles are important questions regarding the place of effective sovereignty in the information age. This particularly includes questions about the way in which the Internet and other digital technologies have given new powers and new responsibilities to those actors who, through embracing the Internet, are fast becoming central to the new electronically networked civil society. Some commentators believe that information technology has replaced the state as the remover of market and other inefficiencies, consequently undermining the importance of physical space and national boundaries. Still others believe that state remains crucial to the emergence and maintenance of the Information Society and that the Internet only serves to reinforce the functioning of the state, whatever type of government it may be.

The Internet has redefined the world around us and will continue to define it. The papers in this issue offer fresh and meaningful perspectives on the areas of our lives touched by the Internet, and we hope that they will in the long-term contribute to the ever-evolving debates in the social and communication sciences.

¹ Amnesty International, *Undermining Freedom of Expression in China: The Role of Yahoo!, Microsoft and Google* (London: Amnesty International UK, 2006).

² Bruce Hoffman, 'The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists' (Santa Monica, Arlington and Pittsburgh: RAND Publications, 2006); Available from <http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2006/RAND—CT262-1.pdf>.

³ See Milton Mueller, *Ruling the Root: Internet Governance and the Taming of Cyberspace* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002).

⁴ For one of the classic introductions to the analysis of power, see Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2005). Within the study of international relations, also see Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall, 'Power in International Politics', *International Organisation*, 59, 1 (2005): 39-75.

⁵ For example, some scholars have addressed how material power is intimately bound to strategies of legitimation on the part of privileged actors. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

⁶ Robert Gilpin, *US Power and the Multinational Corporation: The Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 24.

⁷ For a conceptual introduction to the idea of 'governance', see Thomas G. Weiss, 'Governance, Good Governance and Global Governance: Conceptual and Actual Challenges', *Third World Quarterly*, 21, 5, (2000): 795-814.

⁸ William Drake, 'Reframing Internet Governance Discourse: Fifteen Baseline Propositions.' [Available Online] Social Science Research Council Research [cited, May 2007]; Available from <http://www.ssrc.org/programs/itic/publications/Drake2.pdf>.

⁹ Martin Libicki, 'Rethinking War: The Mouse's New Roar?' *Foreign Policy*, No.117, Winter (1999-2000): 30-43.

¹⁰ John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, 'The Advent of Netwar (Revisited)' in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt (eds.), *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica: RAND Publications, 2001), 6.

¹¹ Michael D. Birnhack and Niva Elkin-Koren, 'The Invisible Handshake: The Re-emergence of the State in the Digital Environment', *The Virginia Journal of Law and Technology*, Summer (2003): 2-3.

¹² Andrew Chadwick, *Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 230.

¹³ William H. Dutton, Corinna di Gennaro, and Andrea Millwood Hargrave, *The Oxford Internet Survey (OXIS) Report 2005: The Internet in Britain* (Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, 2005), 10.

Keynote Speech: The Use and Abuse of the Internet in the Age of InfoTerror

JAMES DER DERIAN

An Untimely Meditation

It is wonderful to be back at St Antony's, and even better to return at the behest of students. Change in disciplines and institutions, especially venerable ones like Oxford's, comes slowly and usually from below and outside. So I want to applaud the *St Antony's International Review* and the Oxford Internet Institute for their joint efforts to innovate academic approaches as well as to advocate new policies for the Internet.

My 'untimely meditation' on the Internet is presented in the spirit of essays written under the same title by Friedrich Nietzsche in the 1870s. Surveying the state of contemporary European culture, three of his essays feature historical figures: a writer (David Strauss); a philosopher (Arthur Schopenhauer); and a composer (Richard Wagner). The fourth is on history itself: 'On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life'—or, as it is more commonly translated, 'The Use and Abuse of History'. Ever the contrarian, Nietzsche uses the moment of Germany's victory over France to challenge the prevailing notion that the march of empire and culture were in lock-step, heading towards an inevitable and glorious end, the end of history itself. He raises questions that go begged today. Does history traffic in frivolous information or actionable knowledge? Enhance life, or become a substitute for it? Serve the interests of the powerful or of the powerless?

Anticipating a theme of this conference, Nietzsche's opening paragraph questions the relationship of academic study to powerful new social forces:

[W]e must seriously despise instruction without vitality, knowledge which enervates activity, and history as an expensive surplus of knowledge and a luxury, because we lack what is still most essential to us and because what is superfluous is hostile to what is essential. ... To bring this phenomenon to light as a remarkable symptom of our time is every bit as necessary as it may be painful.²

J. Der Derian, 'Keynote Speech: The Use and Abuse of the Internet in the Age of InfoTerror,' *STAIR* 3, No. 1 (2007): 12-22.

Nietzsche launches into a devastating critique of the academic study of history that would strip life of contingency and choice, further enervating modern man: 'We would serve history only so far as it serves life; but to value its study beyond a certain point mutilates and degrades life.'³ His thoughts are, as he put it, 'out of season', because they do not join in the triumphal (i.e. German) appropriation of history that would make of it a *hod-carrier* for national virtue. Nietzsche cautions: 'an excess of virtue can obviously bring a nation to ruin as well as an excess of vice.'⁴

Nietzsche's criticisms find their modern mark with the 'virtuous' global war on terror and in Iraq and the attendant curtailment of civil liberties both on and off the Internet. But Nietzsche's indictment strikes directly and deeply into the ethical underpinnings of governance discourse that surrounds the Internet and this conference. As Nietzsche asks of history, I wish to inquire whether our desire to govern the Internet is a symptom of a much greater, more historical failure—one of self-governance. Consider the vices of the Internet, like pornography, that provided the earliest, most primitive and continuous accumulation of capital (its absence as a conference topic is noteworthy). Similarly, I wish to ask whether an 'excess of virtue' in the guise of governance (global or otherwise) will bring not salvation but 'ruin' to the Internet.

Nietzsche would appreciate the irony that countries like Saudi Arabia, China and Belarus use retooled U.S. anti-pornography software to block religious, political, cultural and other forms of vice from defiling their populations. Indeed, Nietzsche recommends a critical approach for uncovering the gap between the ideal and the actual that gives rise to such ironies:

To this extent moral judgment is never to be taken literally: as such it never contains anything but nonsense. But as *semiotics* it remains of incalculable value: it reveals, to the informed man at least, the most precious realities of cultures and inner worlds which did not know enough to 'understand' themselves. Morality is merely 'sign' language, merely *symptomatology*; one must already know what it is about to derive profit from it.⁵

Nietzsche's epigones would be similarly intrigued by the ironic play of signs; but unlike them, he is as interested in the disease as the symptom. Nietzsche's critical insight is on how the language of morality mutates from the ironical to pathological when the will to power is repressed, domesticated or bureaucratised through a larger collective.

'Madness,' says Nietzsche, 'is rare among individuals; in entire nations it is common.'⁶ What does that signify for the Internet? No individual country, or for that matter the European Union (EU), United Nations (UN) or Google, can keep the Internet open, innovative or, God forbid, 'neutral'. Better I say to put our trust in the efforts of quasi-autonomous, university-based groups, like the CitizenLab at Toronto, the Berkman Center at Harvard, the Oxford Internet Institute and the Cambridge Security Group. They possess the critical tools and the intellectual as well as 'ironic' distance to network the individual efforts of programmers, hacktivists and other non-governmental actors. Consider how much they have done, compared to state or international institution efforts, to identify repressive regimes restricting access to blogging and other dissident websites. They do not rely on virtuous declarations or global governance to counter those regimes. They deploy transparency and direct action, including new hacktivist software like 'psiphon', recently released by CitizenLab to circumvent government censorship on the Internet.⁷ They know what Nietzsche (and after him, Foucault) knew: every new form of power produces resistance, which in turn produces new forms of power. Keeping up is the challenge.

To be sure, the Internet has given rise to a variety of virtual communities of cooperation and collaboration. But that should not blind us to a permanent struggle that continues to dominate the Internet, in which the will to power is played out on a global scale. Again, Nietzsche instructs better than do most digerati. On and off the Web, politics is driven by a contest of will and a desire for recognition. However, the will to power should not be reduced to lust for power. True, when repressed, the will to power can produce a reactive and resentful longing for *only* power, leading to the triumph of nihilism that mars more than one commercial videogame. But under conditions of freedom and responsibility, the will to power acts as an affirmative force which challenges and reassesses all imposed values. It pits individuals against themselves, not others, in an act of self-overcoming.

Following this Nietzschean interpretation, I would say institutional over-regulation poses more of a threat to the Internet than any latter-day Übermensch. I would view much of the academic study and many of the calls for global governance of the Internet with the same suspicion that Nietzsche reserved for the 'will to a system'.⁸ Such systems might promise edification and protection for the disempowered, but they end up corrupting life, leading to decadence and the mastery over others, rather than a self-becoming and mastery over oneself. In the discourse of governance, the will to power is subordinated to the need for security, producing a collective resentment of others as potential threats and

agents of uncertainty. This, in turn, triggers further insecurities. As networks connect and contain multitudes, true security only comes when one recognises and learns to live with the heterodoxical as well as heteropolar nature of the Internet.

If we interpret, *qua* Nietzsche, the regulatory imperative to secure the Internet as a metaphysical symptom, we inevitably confront the Greeks, whom Nietzsche extolled as finding an alternative path to unity amidst diversity. In the last passage of 'The Use and Abuse of History', Nietzsche writes:

There were centuries when the Greeks found themselves in a danger similar to the one in which we find ourselves, that is, the danger of destruction from being swamped by what is foreign and past, from 'history'. The Greeks never lived in proud isolation; their 'culture' was for a long time much more a chaos of foreign, Semitic, Babylonian, Lydian, and Egyptian forms and ideas, and their religion a real divine struggle of the entire Orient. ... The Greeks learned gradually to organise the chaos because, in accordance with the Delphic teaching, they directed their thoughts back to themselves, that is, to their real needs, and let the apparent needs die off. So they seized possession of themselves again.⁹

For some, this raises the spectre of multiculturalism, or worse, a relativism where 'anything goes' for the Internet. However, Nietzsche's related concept of 'eternal recurrence' provides a principle of self-constraint that travels well across diverse identities, interests and belief systems. The cosmological idea of 'eternal recurrence' carries with it an earthly imperative for ethical responsiveness to the Other. When one faces the prospect of reliving the consequences of one's choices, small or great, again and again, shared recognition and mutual respect become behavioural codes. And where else do we witness this more frequently than on the Web? It is quite possible that former Senator George Allen's 'macaca moment', captured on video and looped on YouTube, might well be the reason he lost his seat and the Democratic Party gained a majority in the U.S. Senate. Perhaps not. But Allen and his ilk learned through a convergence of ubiquitous media and repetitious messages that racist discourse comes at a high price.

Taking into account the deterritorialised space and global scale of the Internet, one could argue that the stakes are even higher now than when Nietzsche offered his untimely meditations on efforts to re-secure the sovereign and metaphysical powers of his day. The Internet is not the first medium to challenge monopolies of power and truth; but it is the first to stage a convergence of so many media (including radio, film, television, computers, telephones, cell phones, iPods and beyond) that can by sheer scale and scope so effectively evade efforts of unipolar control. Historically, it is hard to find a meshing of technology and topicality that posed a comparable challenge to authorised power. Moreover, there is a new force-multiplier at work, further blending and darkening medium and message: the phenomenology of terror.

We are in a time of terror, or so we are told, non-stop. The message is disturbingly familiar to those who have taken to heart Nietzsche's diagnosis of the nihilism that lurks under the enlightened veneer of modernity. Paramount among them is Walter Benjamin, whose gnomic warnings against the twinning of political pathologies and media during an earlier interwar bear repeating (as I do at just about every public opportunity): 'History decays into images not stories;' and 'In times of terror, when everyone is something of a conspirator, everybody will be in a situation where he has to play detective.'¹⁰

Playing detective is made difficult by the semantics of 'terror' and all the more slippery by the manipulations of our political leaders. We might make an effort, in an academic way, to distinguish 'terror' as noun (a catch-all political signifier to differentiate radically between friend and foe) from 'terror' as verb (an act of symbolically intimidating and/or illegitimately eradicating that foe). But just as multiple media converge through the Internet, so too distinctive forms of violence—personal, state and global—collapse into the black hole of terror. We can, again, in an academic way distinguish the terror of Al Qaeda from the counter-terror of the Iraq War, Guantanamo Bay and the out-sourced prisons for coercive interrogation. But on the Internet, terrorism and counter-terror morph into a political pornography of modernity: one truly and only knows terror when one sees it.¹¹

As Adobe Photoshop renders the image ever more malleable, as jihadist websites multiply weekly and as Hollywood, Silicon Valley and Washington join forces in the war on terror, this new convergence warrants its own tag—what I call the 'Age of InfoTerror.' Just as the invention of scientific genocide and the management of a nuclear

balance of terror weapons became the key issues of the twentieth century, so too has the new nexus of terror, information and technology become the most pressing question of the twenty-first.

My second, timelier meditation is aimed at those who might doubt that ubiquitous media and mimetic terror have transformed not only the ways of war and peace but also our very ways of being. Some, particularly those living in developing countries, might still be able to avoid the Web of information and terror, but few can escape the Internet's power to create ways of being rendered radically contingent through images of fear and terror. Even Donald Rumsfeld said so. Last year, when still the U.S. Secretary of Defence, he opened a talk to the Council on Foreign Relations with an anonymous quote: 'We are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of Muslims.'

These were not, said Rumsfeld, the words of 'some modern-day image consultant in a public relations firm in New York City;' they were of 'Osama Bin Laden's chief lieutenant, al Zawahiri.' Rumsfeld's dramatic words were intended to highlight the need for the United States to catch up with its enemies, who 'have skilfully adapted to fighting wars in today's media age,' in what has become known in military parlance as 'information operations'. Rumsfeld criticised the United States for lagging behind in an asymmetrical struggle:

They know that communications transcend borders—and that a single news story, handled skilfully, can be as damaging to our cause and as helpful to theirs, as any other method of military attack our federal government is only beginning to adapt our operations for the 21st century. For the most part, the U.S. government still functions as a 'five and dime' store in an e-Bay world.

Rumsfeld further provided a laundry list of the virtual means by which this unconventional war would be lost or won: 'e-mail, blogs, ... Blackberrys, Instant Messaging, digital cameras, a global Internet with no inhibitions, cell phones, hand-held video cameras, talk radio, 24-hour news broadcasts,[and] satellite television.'¹²

On the other side of the multi-media war we find the jihadist hard at work. Many probably remember last October when the British police arrested Younis Tsouli, a twenty-two year old living in London, for conspiring in a bomb plot. Using the Internet to distribute everything from beheading videos and recruitment tapes to weapons manuals and computer hacking information, Tsouli—a.k.a. 'Irhabi ['Terrorist' in Arabic] 007'—was providing a virtual training camp for would-be

jihadists. He was just one node in a growing global network that relies on the Internet for information, communication and organisation. In the early 1990s there was one Al Qaeda website (www.alneda.com); whereas today they are in the hundreds, as demonstrated in June by the number that carried Bin Laden's tribute to the slain Iraqi terrorist, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

We are witnessing a new global media war, on our theatre, television, computer and cell phone screens, all tied together by the Internet. After the 'CNN-effect' (coming to us by cable news in the first Gulf War), the 'Al-Jazeera-effect' (by satellite phones and broadband computers in the Iraq War), and the 'Nokia-effect' (by cell phones in the global war on terror [GWOT]), it is only a matter of time before someone dubs and taps into the 'iPod-effect' or the 'YouTube-effect' on global politics.

Forgetting the Past to Remember Lost Futures

In 'The Use and Abuse of History', Nietzsche warns against the kind of 'monumental history' that would 'bury the living with the dead.'¹³ Is this not the history of 9/11 and of the infoterror that plagues us today? If so, we need to resurrect not only Nietzsche's warning but also his cure, the 'antidotes against the historical' that he calls the *unhistorical* and the *super-historical*.¹⁴ By promoting the 'unhistorical', Nietzsche advocates a power to forget the superfluous and monumental histories that weaken the individual in the face of an oppressive collective memory. By calling on the 'super-historical', Nietzsche seeks to restore the creative and empathetic aspects of art, culture and religion that have been diverted by 'a scientific way of considering things' in which 'only the observation of things is true and right.'¹⁵ In other words and contexts, we cannot escape the infoterror until we forget the hermetic logic of post-9/11 national security and begin to create new stories and to narrate new possibilities.

The causes of infoterror are overdetermined and difficult to isolate. Oil and religion along with the pathological narcissism of Bin Laden and the oedipal complex of Bush dominate the websites. But regardless of the cause, we went and others will continue to go to war because of how we see and speak of each other: that is, how we construct the difference of other groups as well as the sameness of our own through mimetic acts of signification. The popular mobilisation of a mimesis of violence and counter-violence, terror and counter-terror, is not new. But with the

Internet, the prophets of fear and hatred tap self-fulfilling powers. We need to face the fact that the Internet, as a mimetic enabler and estranger, has few peers.

Again, medical history gives us an important clue, if not a cure, for this late modern condition. In medicine, mimesis was defined as 'the appearance, often caused by hysteria, of symptoms of a disease not actually present.'¹⁶ Historically, terrorist movements either evolve into states or (without a mass base) quickly weaken, rarely lasting longer than a decade. Empires, by over-reach or defeat, inevitably fall. However, this particular mimetic struggle, instigated by clashing fundamentalisms, magnified by the media, fought by asymmetrical technologies of destruction and unchecked by the UN or U.S. allies, developed a logic of its own in which assimilation or extermination become plausible solutions, even credible policies. In the process, what was hysterically apparent became politically real.

We now face a peculiar state of affairs, in which 'symptoms of a disease not actually present' have produced greater pathologies. Unlike the political and academic study of terror, Nietzsche can take us deeper, showing us how symptoms can be mistaken for the disease, and how the pathology can also lie within the very nature of the cure. The Greeks had a single word for it: *pharmakon*, the cure as poison.¹⁷ The curative poison (in contrast to the poisonous cure that Nietzsche advocates) is for a disease 'not actually present', one that provides our leaders with legitimacy—that is, the right to project the very dangers against which they swear to protect us, and thereby perpetuate the fear and insecurity by which our loyalty is demanded. Is sovereignty really the cure for anarchy? Or is it the poison that feeds it? Is it a symptom or a disease itself? In medicine as in politics, it might not simply be one or the other but both, in the way that an internally-generated disease (say, terrorism) triggers an auto-immune response (counter-terrorism) that worsens rather than heals the host (the national security state).

The confusion between cause and effect, disease and symptom, reality and virtuality abounds on the Internet. But we should not abuse the Internet by giving it too much credit for generating this confusion. It was the United States, not the Internet, which activated the war machine to plan, execute and represent a global conflict with the wrong enemy. The killing of others has always been sanctioned by myths of ethical superiority and enabled by claims of military invincibility. Wrapped in virtue and warped by faith, a war of religious and technological fundamentalisms makes short work of reality itself while producing terribly real effects. This was supposed to be a virtuous war, justified by

political virtue (to bring democracy to the Middle East) and executed through a virtual strategy (quick victory with low casualties through technological superiority). The first battle of the war was handily won, but a terrible peace was to follow. The mimetic pathology was worsened by a proliferation of historical, and ultimately false, analogies: it was Munich, the Cold War and Vietnam redux. Realism, as well as reason itself lost out to a faith-based national security policy.

What are we to do (and not to do)? By celebrating (rather than trying to regulate) the heterodoxical nature of the Internet, we can help revitalise the heteropolar promise of the 'International'. By promoting the will to power of authors and users through free access, fast connections and open source code, we can resist the will to a system that would seek, usually in the name of governance, to regulate and normalise the Web. By organising the chaos within rather than forming protection rackets against the anarchy without, we can de-securitise the Internet. By acknowledging a mutual need for recognition and respect, we might be able to embrace rather than estrange the Other.

But we must not confuse the symptom (the Internet) for the disease (the state as suicide machine). We need to acknowledge how, in an age of infoterror, both can produce similar outcomes: the virtual disappearance of embodied life. This was a lesson I recently learned in what Baudrillard (and after him *The Matrix's* Morpheus) called the 'desert of the real'. It happened last spring, when I was embedded with Charlie Company, First Battalion, 25th Marines at 29 Palms, an expansive training area located in the south-eastern deserts of California. They were engaged in 'Mojave Viper'—a counter-insurgency urban warfare exercise, the last of many before they were to depart for one of the deadliest places on the planet, Al Anbar Province in Iraq. Early during my stay 'Gunny' Walz, my affable public affairs handler, asked if I would like to meet the guy 'who saved the pig'. Corpsman Cleveland's job was to treat the wounded on the battlefield. To better the survival odds, the Marine Corps had recently developed a two-week program in which an anaesthetised pig is wounded with increasing severity, beginning with a knife, then a 9 millimetre handgun, followed by an AK-47, and finally with smoke and fire. The task of the corpsman is to keep the pig alive as long as possible. Corpsman Cleveland was good: he kept his pig breathing for twelve hours. No one wanted to talk about the possibility of their own deaths on the battlefield, but it seemed like every Marine had a story about the pig. And every squad wanted a corpsman who had gone to 'pig school'.

This battlefield convergence of the military and medical arts triggers my last meditation, what Nietzsche aptly calls an 'unhistorical' response. Some time in the seventeenth century, with the advent of gunpowder

and the need to manoeuvre at greater distances, the nature of battle changed; innovations in communication were needed. In response, armies developed a new visual system of signalling. At roughly the same time, the incipient practice of modern medicine was applying novel instruments and methods for the scientific study of symptoms of disease. In their respective theatres of operation, the medical and the military fields coined a new term to describe the study of symptoms and signs: *semiology*, or as we know it today, semiotics. In this originating moment, the professional arts of healing and killing shared a common imperative: survival of the body as well as the body politic meant getting the signs right. Facing the pathologies of infoterror, I have tried to tell a super-historical tale about the Internet. I just hope I have not killed the pig to save the Web.

Notes

¹ This speech was delivered at the conference 'The Internet: Power and Governance in a Digitised World' organised by *STAIR* and the Oxford Internet Institute at St Antony's College on 6 December, 2006.

² 'The Use and Abuse of History for Life' [Available Online] The Nietzsche Channel [cited May, 2007]; Available from <http://www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/history.htm>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Reginald Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 55.

⁶ Walter Kaufmann, ed., *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Press, 1954), 71-72.

⁷ See <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/27/technology/27censorshiphtml?r=I&o-ref=slogin>.

⁸ Quotations are from, in order: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 53; *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1989), 21; *Twilight of the Idols*, 25; 'The Wanderer and His Shadow', in Kaufmann, ed., *The Portable Nietzsche*, 71-72.

⁹ See 'The Use and Abuse of History for Life'.

¹⁰ Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1973).

¹¹ For a fuller account, see James Der Derian, 'Imaging Terror: Logos, Pathos, and Ethos', *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005): 5-22.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See 'The Use and Abuse fo History for Life'.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ From Walter Benjamin to René Girard, the relationship of mimesis to violence is well-charted, especially in showing how the desire of the other leads to rivalry and hatred. See Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf, eds., *Mimesis: Culture, Art and Society*, trans. Don Reneau (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995); on mimetic desire, René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), and the more analytical interpretation of mimesis and poesis, in Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

¹⁷ 'The god of writing is thus also a god of medicine. Of "medicine": both a science and an occult drug. Of the remedy and the poison. The god of writing is the god of the pharmakon'—Jacques Derrida, 'Plato's Pharmacy', in *Dissemination*, from Peggy Kamuf, ed., *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 123. See also how Larry George has insightfully developed this concept, 'The Pharmacotic War on Terrorism: Cure or Poison for the US Body Politic', in *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 4 (2002): 161-186.

Local Power, Global Reach: The Domestic Institutional Roots of Internet Governance

23

DAVID BACH AND ABRAHAM L. NEWMAN

Ten years into the Internet revolution it is clear that early claims about power and governance in a digitised world have largely missed their mark. In his 1996 Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace, John Perry Barlow flatly told governments: 'You have no sovereignty where we gather. ... You have no moral right to rule us, nor do you possess any methods of enforcement we have true reason to fear.'¹ Barlow of course was and is a cyber-libertarian, a former songwriter for the Grateful Dead. Other leading legal scholars struck a similar chord. In an influential 1996 essay, law professors David Johnson and David Post argued, 'The rise of an electronic medium that disregards geographical boundaries throws the law into disarray by creating entirely new Phenomena that need to become the subject of clear legal rules but that cannot be governed, satisfactorily, by any current territorially based sovereign.'² The Internet, the reasoning went, constituted a separate and independent jurisdictional space, one that required new forms of governance and a unique set of rules.

Even governments bought into the notion that the Internet was somehow different, that its speed, flexibility and global reach meant that cyber-governance was best left to the private sector. In their 1997 *Framework for Global Electronic Commerce*, President Clinton and Vice President Gore said that the United States (US) 'will encourage the creation of private fora to take the lead in areas requiring self-regulation such as privacy, content ratings and consumer protection and in areas such as standards development, commercial code and fostering interoperability.'³ In response, Europe's then Commissioner for Telecommunications, Martin Bangemann suggested that business should take the lead in developing an international e-commerce framework that would rely heavily on 'market-led, industry-driven, self-regulatory models.'⁴ On both sides of the Atlantic, business was near universally seen as more qualified and better equipped to govern digital markets. Because of leading e-commerce firms' global reach, empowering business was seen as a way to ensure consistent global rules, thus avoiding regulatory fragmentation along state lines.

More than ten years into the Internet revolution, we can see that things have turned out quite differently. Early conventional wisdom on Internet governance has been wrong on two important points.⁵ First, while private actors have undoubtedly played important roles, governments have been in the driver's seat as far as questions of Internet governance were concerned.⁶ This is because the Internet has become a victim of its own success; it penetrated economies and societies more quickly and more thoroughly than even its most enthusiastic advocates expected. This penetration has made the neat separation of online/offline or cyberspace/physical space as envisioned by Barlow and others impossible.⁷ Governments have asserted authority over cyberspace to defend existing—often pre-Internet—policies, regulations and interests. Secondly, while the underlying communications networks powering the Internet may be global, Internet governance has not been an exercise in consensus driven global rule-making. Rather, as individual governments have asserted authority, often incompatible or conflictive domestically rooted solutions have been advanced globally, usually through the extraterritorial application of domestic rules.

In this setting, Europe and the US have been most influential, largely to the detriment of developing countries. But the two have frequently been at odds over how to respond to new digital challenges. Whereas European policymakers have favored strict rules protecting personal information, the US has advocated a more market-based approach. Conversely, European countries have been permissive of Internet based gambling whereas the US has aggressively sought to prevent its citizens from visiting online casinos and poker halls. Even in areas where an early transatlantic consensus existed, as in the case of domain name governance, there has recently been a fair amount of discord.

How can we explain policy positions and varying patterns of influence in global Internet governance? This paper argues that much of contemporary Internet governance is the result of domestic political struggles unfolding transnationally. Both policy preferences and power are rooted in domestic political and regulatory institutions. By focusing on the domestic institutional determinants of individual government influence, we can shed light on why Europe has prevailed in some areas, the US in others and why other countries have generally been rule-takers in the field of Internet governance. Domestic regulatory institutions are a critical determinant of power in global governance and Internet governance is no exception.⁸ Countries with a clearly defined set of domestic market rules are best positioned to advance their preferences internationally, particularly if they can leverage sizeable domestic markets towards that end.

The next section outlines a domestic institutional argument of global governance. International regulatory influence, we argue, is a function of both domestic market size and the extent of regulatory capacity over that market. Jurisdictions with large and attractive domestic markets can wield extraterritorial influence if they have the capacity to formulate, monitor and enforce a set of domestic market rules despite globalisation. The importance of large domestic markets explains why the US and the European Union (EU) have enjoyed disproportionate influence over Internet governance.⁹ The focus on the role of domestic regulatory capacity explains why the US has prevailed in some areas and Europe in others, as domestic regulatory capacity tends to vary across sectors, issues and time. In the second part of the paper, we illustrate the argument through case studies of governance in the fields of data privacy, Internet domain names and online gambling. The final section concludes with thoughts on the future of power and governance in a digitised world.

Localising Global Internet Governance

To properly understand global Internet governance, research must re-examine the role that states play in creating the rules for digital markets. Contrary to the predictions of early cyber-libertarians, the state has not relinquished its authority. Internet governance also confounds international relations theories that expect nations to resolve conflict through intergovernmental negotiations. Instead, much of global Internet governance is the result of domestic rules developed on the national level spilling over and affecting other countries. The very trans-territoriality of the Internet allows national rules to reverberate internationally.¹⁰ The prosecution of Yahoo! in French courts for material made available on the company's U.S. website but accessible by French citizens typifies this new global governance of the Internet.¹¹

The complexities and perceived messiness of Internet governance notwithstanding, there are clear patterns of influence. When and why a state can shape the rules governing global digital markets thus becomes the critical question. We argue that two factors are decisive. Jurisdictions with large markets have the ability to leverage their market size to induce compliance with their preferred policies. Firms in other countries fear being excluded from such markets and want to minimise the costs of complying with multiple rules.¹² While market size is a necessary condition for regulatory influence, size alone is not sufficient. Markets,

whether in physical or cyberspace, are defined by rules.¹³ We argue that regulatory capacity—a jurisdiction's ability to define, monitor and enforce a set of market rules at home—is the other critical determinant of influence over global Internet governance. If both factors are present, a state is well positioned to shape regulation in a digitised world.

Drawing on the realist theories of international relations, political economy research has emphasised the power that large markets have to influence international economic governance.¹⁴ James and Lake termed this 'the second face of hegemony' and argued that great powers leverage trade relations to alter the relative prices of goods in foreign markets.¹⁵ Nations with large markets are thus better positioned to win favorable outcomes in international negotiations. They can also alter the preferences of firms in other jurisdictions so that foreign firms support greater power preferences in their home markets.¹⁶ More recently, Drezner has applied this logic to the case of Internet governance.¹⁷ He argues that the character of global governance can be explained by the positions of the US and the EU, owing to their dominant market size. When the two jurisdictions share a common position, as he claims is the case in Internet protocols and intellectual property rights, a stable negotiated settlement is possible. When they disagree, as in cases such as harmful Internet content or data privacy, governance will be at best a sham or at worst characterised by competing rival standards and fragmentation. While Drezner notes that smaller economic players can influence negotiations, he concludes that lasting international solutions to Internet governance depend on agreements between the great powers.

Drezner's contribution offers an important corrective to earlier work that emphasised the role of private actors, such as firms and NGOs, in global Internet governance. We agree that research on Internet governance must take seriously the role that states play in international bargains. However, the current conception of state power, which looks only at the material character of markets, is both theoretically and empirically unsatisfactory. In many areas, one jurisdiction has prevailed in international debates despite transatlantic discord. In both the case of data privacy and Internet domain name governance, one great power has dominated the debate despite opposition from the other. At several critical moments in these debates, large markets were either absent from formal international discussions or were incapable of formulating a coherent international position. The ability of great powers to exert their influence over Internet governance has varied across sectors and time, variation that is not easily explained by market size alone.

To correct the limitations of existing work, we examine a jurisdiction's regulatory capacity, which encompasses its ability to define,

monitor and enforce a set of domestic market rules.¹⁸ A jurisdiction's regulatory capacity is determined by at least two factors—expertise and statutory authority. Expertise refers to the knowledge that is necessary to formulate an agenda and define a coherent policy solution to a regulatory challenge. Particularly in the arena of Internet governance where many issues lie at the intersection between two highly technical fields—computer science and law—regulatory expertise is crucial. Jurisdictions build up expertise in a field through years of experience, and the creation of policy networks combines experts in that field.

Once a jurisdiction has defined a clear set of market rules, they must have the authority to punish violations. Statutory authority to control market access and fine regulatory breaches provide a jurisdiction with the mechanisms to translate market size into a powerful tool for international regulatory influence. While market size determines the potential costs that great economic powers can inflict on others that fail to abide by their demands, regulatory capacity determines the likelihood that a great power can actually carry out such threats.

Integrating the analysis of domestic regulatory institutions into international Internet governance debates sheds light on state preference formation, issue coherence and bargaining influence. We briefly discuss each in turn. Internal regulatory regimes involve a tremendous amount of institutional-sunk costs for governments and firms. Governments often create intricate bureaucratic structures to administer regulatory regimes, and these bureaucracies invest in and defend their competencies. If challenged—for example by a new technology such as the Internet—they try to defend existing domestic solutions.¹⁹ When the challenge has a transnational character, as is generally the case with the Internet, this often involves promoting international rules that mimic domestic regulation, thereby safeguarding the domestic status quo. Similarly, firms invest considerable resources into domestic regulatory compliance. While some firms may view international challenges as a way to lower regulatory standards, many prefer simply to minimise adjustment costs.²⁰ Domestic regulatory institutions, then, shape national interests vis-à-vis international governance.

Similarly, domestic institutionally-rooted regulatory capacity affects the ability of a jurisdiction to formulate a coherent international governance position. Once preferences exist, the state must be in the position to define an international agenda. The absence of a regulatory spokesperson with expertise acquired domestically limits a jurisdiction's ability to do this.

Finally, regulatory capacity shapes the bargaining strength that a jurisdiction can wield in formal or informal international debates. While

great powers rely on the size of their domestic markets to incentivise foreign adjustment, they depend on their regulatory capacity to back up demands with credible threats of non-compliance costs. In cases where great powers cannot enforce their domestic market rules, foreign firms have little to fear from great power blustering.

Internal regulatory capacity is particularly critical for global Internet governance as many regulatory debates take place outside traditional intergovernmental fora. While nations have engaged United Nations (UN) agencies and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in several high profile areas, most notably intellectual property, Internet governance on the whole has evolved in other institutional settings. In contrast to those that predicted a new field of global cyberlaw, great economic powers have worked to externalise their domestic regimes through extraterritorial provisions of national law. The global architecture of the Internet amplifies this change as decisions taken in one jurisdiction quickly appear on the policy-making agenda in others.

To illustrate the argument, we explore in the next section three cases—data privacy, Internet domain names and online gambling—that demonstrate the importance of market size in conjunction with domestic regulatory capacity for global Internet governance.

Data Privacy

Starting in the 1960s with the advent of computer technology, societies have long confronted concerns dealing with the collection and processing of personal information. In response, governments enacted data privacy laws. These laws enforce a set of basic data privacy principles on the use of such information. While advocates of privacy legislation made similar appeals across the globe, national legislation varied across countries. Some countries, including Germany and France, adopted comprehensive regulations covering both the public and the private sector. These laws were overseen and enforced by independent regulatory agencies—data privacy authorities. In other countries, such as the US and Japan, legislation was restricted to the public sector. Regulations applied primarily to government bureaucracies with some additional application in sensitive sectors such as health-care and banking. In general, however, industry-led, market-based efforts defined the governance strategy for business use of personal data. Other countries ranging from Italy to Argentina adopted no regulations at all throughout the 1990s. As

a result, the world entered the digital era with a wide array of strategies and a high degree of regulatory fragmentation.²¹

This changed, however, with the passage of the European data privacy directive in 1995. In addition to requiring all E.U. member states to adopt comprehensive rules and to create formal regulators, the directive included an extraterritorial provision. This provision prevents the transfer of personal information to countries that have failed to implement 'adequate' privacy safeguards.

The European privacy directive has had significant international ramifications. A number of countries ranging from Albania to Argentina that did not previously have data privacy legislation have adopted comprehensive rules. Another set of countries, including Japan, Canada and Australia, which had previously relied on limited public sector regulations, extended coverage to the private sector to meet European demands. Altogether over 30 countries have adopted the European approach since the passage of the data privacy directive.²² Even the US was strong-armed into signing an international accord, the Safe Harbor Agreement, which requires U.S. firms active in European markets to safeguard data processed in the US by European rules.²³ The US signed the agreement even though it was the most vocal supporter of self-regulatory solutions for global Internet governance, including data privacy. Similarly, multinational corporations have moved to comply with European rules in their global data management systems to minimise the regulatory costs of complying with multiple regulatory regimes.²⁴

Why was Europe able to export its domestic regime? Regulatory capacity played a critical role in the international spread of European privacy rules. First, Europe had a coherent strategy regarding the international governance of privacy that it leveraged in international fora. Parallel to internal European debates on privacy during the early 1990s, the European Commission pushed for a privacy exemption in international trade rules. While negotiating the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the Commission team found that the US offered no resistance to its demand for a cultural exemption for privacy.²⁵ The US, at the time, did not have the regulatory competence to foresee what such an exemption could mean. It was only after the adoption of the privacy directive that the US argued that privacy rules breached international trade law.²⁶ Owing to the earlier negotiation, however, Europe had already constructed institutional protection for its approach.²⁷

Similarly, Europe has used its statutory authority to control market access. It has done this to persuade foreign jurisdictions to adjust their

domestic regulatory policies. In three cases—Hungary, Switzerland and Canada—the Commission ruled that national reforms met E.U. standards. In other cases, the EU has refused to confer adequacy status, forcing national governments to further reform their national policies. Australia is an important example. After years of following a limited regulatory path, Australia reformed its national legislation to cover the private sector in 2000. Despite this reform, the EU identified a number of loopholes in Australian legislation. A regulatory network of national data privacy regulators in Europe, the Article 29 Working Party, released an opinion that found the Australian regulations inadequate.²⁸ The EU has worked with the Australian government to amend its law and Australia has passed several reforms that have addressed the most critical problems.

In the case of data privacy, Europe has thus relied on internal regulatory capacity to shape international Internet governance. With the passage of national legislation in the 1970s, Europe created independent regulatory agencies with considerable expertise and statutory authority. European regulation expanded both of these resources in the 1990s. The EU, combining its market size with its regulatory capacity, externalised its internal regulatory regime, forcing global harmonisation around its preferred policy.

Internet Domain Names

Since 1998, global governance of the Internet's Domain Name System (DNS) has been officially in private hands.²⁹ That year the U.S. government delegated administrative authority over the DNS to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a California non-profit organisation. ICANN performs this role under a contract with the U.S. Department of Commerce, a contract that is periodically reviewed and can be cancelled unilaterally by the U.S. government. For at least the past five years, a growing coalition of governments—especially from developing countries and emerging markets—has sought to place DNS governance under international governmental oversight.³⁰ Many even demand the transfer of all ICANN responsibilities to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), a U.N. affiliate in Geneva. In the run-up to the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the European Union joined the camp of ICANN skeptics, leaving the US isolated as the current system's only major proponent.³¹ Nevertheless, at the WSIS meeting, efforts to change the status quo failed

yet again. Why did the US opt for private domain name governance in the first place and how has it upheld its preferred policy internationally?

From its inception in the early 1980s, the DNS had been run by a small group of computer scientists and network engineers led by Jon Postel, an Internet pioneer who coordinated the system under a contract with the U.S. Department of Defense through an entity he called the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA). When authority over the Internet moved from the military to the civilian research community in the early 1990s, the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded a contract to manage registered domain names and to run the system's authoritative 'A' root server to Network Solutions, Inc. (NSI), a small company in Virginia. The explosion of domain name registration following the Internet's commercial breakthrough raised the stakes, turned NSI into a multi-million dollar enterprise, and eventually led to a rupture between NSI and Postel's IANA.³² The resulting uncertainty about who was in charge of such a critical asset prompted the Clinton Administration in 1997 to step in, assert regulatory authority over the DNS based on prior Internet funding and contracts and to draw up plans for a new order.

To the U.S. government, private sector governance of the domain name field had two decisive advantages. First, as U.S. Internet firms, including NSI, had thrived in an environment characterised by little government intervention, creating a new national or international bureaucracy was seen as contrary to U.S. interests. This was especially true given that the DNS—as one of the Internet's few central access points—could in theory be used to enforce all kinds of policies, even those wholly unrelated to domain names. Secondly, private governance offered an opportunity to ensure considerable U.S. influence while avoiding the charge that the U.S. government was taking over a global resource. The White House directed an Interagency Workgroup to draw up a plan for a 'contractually based, self-regulatory regime.'³³ A new private body was to coordinate the DNS under a U.S. government contract and was also to enter into contractual relations with domain name registrars, registries, and other stakeholders around the world.

Despite rhetoric that private governance was by definition global, the ensuing process was heavily US-focused. Of the 400 comments received on the initial proposal, only seven percent came from outside the US.³⁴ The European Commission was the only non-U.S. governmental entity that officially commented on the proposals, and it only stressed the need to take the views of European stakeholders into account.³⁵ In the words of one ITU official at the time, 'it was simply impossible to find high-ranking government officials in Europe who were interested

in this.³⁶ Most governments were still trying to come to terms with the Internet as a whole, let alone something as seemingly mundane and technical as domain name administration. The way Postel had previously run the DNS was an important reason for foreign governments' ignorance. As self-appointed head of IANA, the job of delegating authority over particular domain suffixes—including country code domains such as .uk or .nl—fell to him. Yet his method of delegation 'tended to bypass completely the institutions in other countries that historically had possessed authority over communication, such as government ministries or post, telephone, and telegraph monopolies.'³⁷ Foreign regulatory expertise thus formed in the private sector and local research communities, not among governments.³⁸

With international concerns largely sidelined, the focus of U.S. policy deliberations shifted towards reconciling two sparring domestic camps—the old Internet's engineering elite led by Postel and the new commercial interests represented by NSI. The resulting ICANN based global governance structure reflects the domestic political bargain brokered by the U.S. government. The Department of Commerce picked ICANN to administer the DNS and appointed Postel as its head. However, it also guaranteed NSI a privileged position in the new system of registries and left it in charge of the critical 'A' root server, thus depriving ICANN of important leverage from the start. Ostensibly to 'keep the peace' and thus safeguard the Internet's stability, the Commerce Department retained policy authority over the DNS and reserved the right to intervene or overrule ICANN. Subsequently, the U.S. government backed away from its stated intention to eventually transfer all policy authority to ICANN, prolonging regulatory uncertainty and considerably irking non-U.S. stakeholders who had since awoken to the issue's importance.

While the Clinton Administration made much of the claim that private governance was truer to the character of the Internet, by definition global and inclusive, and in any event superior to government regulation, domestic political and economic considerations were the principal source of policy preferences. The domestic arena is also the source of U.S. power in this area because it is there that regulatory capacity building occurred. It is true that the U.S. domestic market for domain names was considerably larger than any other during the critical period—it accounted for roughly 50 percent of the world total and was more than ten times as large as the UK and Germany, number two and three respectively.³⁹ Likewise, even after its monopoly on .com, .net, and .org registrations had fallen in 1999, NSI remained by far the world's largest domain name registrar with more than two-thirds of the market.⁴⁰ However, just as important as market share has been domestic regulatory capacity. Before anybody

else, the US began the process of building governmental regulatory expertise in this area and laid the legal foundation to exercise authority over the DNS. Once it had formally asserted policy authority, the Commerce Department barred ICANN and NSI from making any changes to the 'root zone file'—the information stored on the 'A' root server that directs inquiring computers toward their target—without its written approval. The U.S. Commerce Department thus holds de-facto market exclusion power over the domain name market, not just for the US, but essentially worldwide in an extraterritorial fashion.

Because of its sweeping authority over the DNS and associated extraterritorial reach, the US has been able to largely ignore foreign pressure, at times even overtly snubbing its critics.⁴¹ In light of a united front at the November 2005 WSIS meeting pressing for change, the US made some small concessions and agreed to the establishment of an Internet Governance Forum under U.N. auspices to advise on critical questions of Internet governance.⁴² But it again refused to commit to relinquishing unilateral U.S. oversight over the DNS. This seemingly changed a few months later when the Department of Commerce and ICANN presented the latest iteration of their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Indeed, the U.S. government suggested ICANN could obtain independence by 2009, but observers were quick to denounce the move as merely rhetorical. According to a group of ICANN experts, 'The US and ICANN have responded to these concerns by dressing up their MOU relationship in new clothes. The object seems to be to strengthen the public's perception that ICANN is relatively independent. But the basic relationship between the US [government] and ICANN is fundamentally unchanged.'⁴³ Some countries, including China, are now openly toying with the idea of setting up an alternative root.⁴⁴ But for those unwilling to risk a root split and potentially parallel and incompatible Internets, pressuring the US to share DNS oversight with other governments is the only option. So far this has been to no avail.

Online Gambling

In both data privacy and domain names, global governance has converged around a set of policies. In the former case they were set by the EU and in the latter by the US. The case of online gambling is different because global rules remain unclear and contested. For domestic political and regulatory reasons, the US has banned online casinos and poker halls within its jurisdictions. But because the Internet enables U.S.

citizens to just as easily place bets with offshore websites in Antigua, Bermuda or Gibraltar, stamping out online gambling by U.S. citizens has required stringent new regulation with extraterritorial reach. This has angered not only online casino operators and authorities in prominent offshore locations but increasingly also irks governments in Europe and Australia where an online gambling industry is taking hold.

Gambling has always been a controversial issue in the US.⁴⁵ After a complete ban in the early decades of the 20th century, Nevada became the first state to legalise gambling in the 1930s. By the mid-1970s, other states began to open their market and by 2004, about half had legalised gambling. Gambling has also been legalised in self-governing Native American reservations. Several decades before the Internet, communication technologies posed a fundamental challenge to the federalist approach of letting individual states set gambling policy. The diffusion of household telephones enabled Nevada bookmakers to accept bets from outside the state by phone, and two-way wire transfers took care of the financial side. In response, Congress enacted the Interstate Wire Act (also known as the Federal Wire Act) in 1961, which made it a crime to place or receive a bet via a wire communications service.

The rise of Internet based online casinos, poker halls, and sports betting services posed an even more formidable challenge to U.S. efforts to restrict gambling to certain locations. This is because U.S. consumers have turned out to be among the world's most avid online gamblers. In 2006, an estimated 23 million Americans played poker over the Internet every day. Since 1998, the number of Americans gambling online has grown about twenty percent a year, piling up more than US\$6 billion in revenue in 2006.⁴⁶ The U.S. market thus represents about half the world's total, estimated at about US\$13 billion.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, several leading online gambling companies such as BetOnSports, 888 Holding and PartyGaming depend to a very large extent on revenues from the US.

After the Bush Administration took office in 2001, the U.S. Department of Justice took the position that the 1961 Interstate Wire Act also applied to the Internet and that Internet based gambling was therefore illegal. Leading online gambling firms catering to the U.S. market thus moved their operations offshore, especially to the Caribbean. The policy change did not have much of an effect as U.S. gamblers continued to use their credit cards to place online bets. That the receiving institution was based offshore was hardly noticeable to them. To enforce its ban, the Justice Department therefore decided to crack down on U.S. payment service providers. After some initial resistance, even the largest credit card

providers such as Citibank bowed to government pressure and pledged not to permit transfers to known offshore gambling sites.⁴⁸

While offshore gambling providers as well as U.S. gamblers found ways around the new enforcement measures, the industry nevertheless suffered. By 2004, the number of Antiguan jobs in the offshore gambling industry, for instance, had fallen by more than half. Antigua and Barbuda, a tiny island nation of 68,000, thus charged the US with breach of international trade in services rules and extraterritorial application of U.S. law, and took the case to the WTO.⁴⁹ The EU, Japan, Canada, Mexico and Taiwan all filed briefs in Antigua's support.⁵⁰ Defending its measures as legal, the US referred to escape clauses in existing trade agreements that permitted exceptions to uphold public morals. While the WTO agreed in principal that a defence of public morals could indeed be invoked in this case, its dispute resolution panel nevertheless found in favour of Antigua.⁵¹ In 2000, the US enacted the Internet Horseracing Act which explicitly legalised placing bets via the web on horse races, provided such betting was legal in the states of both transacting parties and provided such bets were placed with U.S. firms. In its ruling, the WTO found dual discrimination—Antiguan firms were excluded from the U.S. horse racing market and the US permitted some forms of Internet based gambling but not others. Nevertheless, in the spring of 2006, the US let a deadline lapse to comply with the WTO finding.⁵²

The international debate over online gambling came to a head in the fall of 2006. First the British CEO of BetOnSports was arrested in Texas on his way to Costa Rica where his company is based,⁵³ and then, in a move that surprised even industry insiders, the still-Republican Congress passed the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act, elevating previous Department of Justice policy to the level of federal law.⁵⁴ Under the new law, banks are formally prohibited from allowing payments by U.S. residents to online gambling services. The regulation sent shockwaves through the industry, crashing share prices of online gambling services, prompting several leading providers to issue new rules to explicitly exclude U.S. gamblers, and setting off a process of industry consolidation.⁵⁵ While some experts predict that ways around the new payment ban will be found, the industry outlook in the aftermath of losing its largest market is still quite gloomy.

Meanwhile Britain in particular is becoming increasingly hospitable to the idea of online gambling and especially to providers of online gambling services. Almost all publicly listed online gambling firms trade on the London Stock Exchange and British offshore locations such as Gibraltar or the Isle of Man host a fair number of websites. British authorities are ready to legalise online gambling under strict rules aimed

at protecting minors and stamping out financial fraud. Indeed, Britain has hosted an international summit of the sector to evaluate options for a global approach to legalisation.⁵⁶ For the time being, however, other European governments have refused to go along with this. France and Germany are trying to protect their domestic gambling monopolies and the European Commission consequently sees no immediate future for efforts to harmonise gambling regulation throughout the EU.⁵⁷

While far from settled, the case of online gambling regulation is consistent with our domestic institutional framework for Internet governance. Global rules are not resulting from an internationally coordinated public policy process. Rather, global governance is shaped by domestic regulatory politics in the largest and most influential markets playing out transnationally. The U.S. position on online gambling is a mix of commercial and political interests. U.S. land based casinos, and especially those collecting taxes on land based casino operations, see online gambling as a threat. Moreover, the strong general opposition to legalised gambling in part of the US mixes with special concern for minors and fraud victims in the case of online gambling. The U.S. government has thus applied existing, pre-Internet rules to the new medium. Its global influence in this area is rooted on the one hand in the size and importance of the U.S. gambling market and on the other hand in conscious efforts to strengthen already considerable regulatory capacity in this area. European countries' positions are similarly shaped by domestic political trajectories. Britain, where a competitive betting industry has long flourished, views legalisation more favourably than countries such as Germany and France that are concerned about the implications for state monopolies. Europe could shape global Internet governance in this area if it rallied around a common position and built the regulatory capacity to effectively regulate legalised online gambling, including services provided from offshore locations. It is too early to tell how the matter will end, but it is clear that governments embedded in domestic political contexts have been calling the shots, not private actors operating in an allegedly borderless cyberspace.

Conclusion

Taking stock of global Internet governance a decade after the onset of the digital revolution, it is clear that something remarkable has happened. The state has reasserted itself by defining and enforcing the rules for digital markets. Contrary to early predictions of a sweeping new field

of global cyberlaw, however, Internet governance has been driven primarily by local decisions. The three cases examined—data privacy, domain names and online gambling—demonstrate several intriguing features of global Internet governance. Domestic regulations reverberate internationally through the trans-territorial nature of the underlying communications networks. Large markets are best positioned to externalise their domestic regulations by using control over market access to affect the preferences of firms and governments in other jurisdictions. Large markets do this by employing domestic regulatory capacity to activate latent power vested in domestic markets.

This finding has a very practical implication. It suggests that governments and firms have an interest in building up their domestic regulatory institutions. These are the agencies and organisations that defend national interests in international regulatory debates over emerging Internet governance questions. To the extent that political efforts in the US to undermine government regulation of the economy have succeeded, the US may well be in a weaker position to shape the next round of Internet governance questions. At the same time, Europe has invested heavily in the creation of a regulatory state and many other countries have come up to speed with the Internet and are building regulatory capacity.⁵⁸ Perhaps the most significant developments in this respect are recent Chinese efforts to develop powerful domestic regulatory institutions in the field of information and communications technologies. While still in its infancy, China's regulatory state has already become a source of influence in global technology governance.⁵⁹

On a more theoretical level, our argument calls on scholars of Internet governance to ground their analysis in historical legacies. Discussions of most technological innovations assume a *tabula rasa* environment that allows total governance experimentation. As this paper shows, nations confront new technological challenges with an existing palette of resources. The weakness of the US in current privacy debates, for example, dates back to decisions made in the 1970s; its opposition to online gambling is deeply rooted in federalism and the power of moral politics in some states. To get a fuller picture, we need to look at how national regulatory trajectories interact with one another over time and thereby produce global regulatory outcomes.

- ¹ See John Perry Barlow, *A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace* (1996).
- ² David R. Johnson and David Post, 'Law And Borders - The Rise of Law in Cyberspace,' *Stanford Law Review* 48 (1996): 1367-78.
- ³ William J. Clinton and Albert Gore, *A Framework For Global Electronic Commerce* (1997).
- ⁴ See Commission of the European Communities, *Globalisation and the Information Society: the Need for Strengthened International Co-ordination* (1998).
- ⁵ 'Internet governance' means many different things to different people. See William J. Drake, 'Defining ICT Global Governance,' Working Paper for the Social Science Research Council's Research Network on IT and Governance' (2004). In line with recent thinking on the subject, we use the term 'Internet governance' broadly to refer to the governance of new markets and other social spaces enabled by the Internet.
- ⁶ See Daniel W. Drezner, 'The Global Governance of the Internet: Bringing the State Back In,' *Political Science Quarterly* 119 (2004): 477-98, and Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu, *Who Controls the Internet?: Illusions of a Borderless World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- ⁷ See, for example, Lawrence Lessig, *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), Christopher T. Marsden, ed., *Regulating the Global Information Society* (New York: Routledge, 2000), James N. Rosenau, 'Information Technology and the Skills, Networks, and Structures that Sustain World Affairs,' in *Information Technologies and Global Politics: The Changing Scope of Power and Governance*, ed. James N. Rosenau and J.P. Singh (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), and Henry Farrell, 'Governing Information Flows: States, Private Actors and E-Commerce,' *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2006).
- ⁸ David Bach and Abraham L. Newman, 'The European Regulatory State and Global Public Policy: Micro-Institutions, Macro-Influence,' *Journal of European Public Policy* 14:6 (2007).
- ⁹ Daniel W. Drezner, 'Globalisation, Coercion, and Competition: The Competing Pathways to Policy Convergence,' *Journal of European Public Policy* 12:5 (2005): 841-59.
- ¹⁰ Abraham Newman and John Zysman, 'Frameworks of Analysis for the Political Economy of the Digital Era,' in *How Revolutionary was the Digital Revolution?: National Responses, Market Transitions, and Global Technology*, ed. John Zysman and Abraham Newman (Stanford, CA: Stanford Business Books, 2006).
- ¹¹ 'Yahoo!'s French connection,' *The Economist*, 20 November 2000.
- ¹² See David Vogel, *Trading Up: Consumer and Environmental Regulation in a Global Economy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), and Elizabeth DeSombre, 'Baptists and bootleggers for the environment: The origins of United States unilateral sanctions,' *Journal of Environment & Development* 4:1 (1995): 53-75.

¹³ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart Inc., 1944).

¹⁴ See, for example, Albert O. Hirschman, *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), Stephen D. Krasner, 'State Power and the Structure of International Trade,' *World Politics* 28:2 (1976), 317-47, and Robert Gilpin, *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹⁵ Scott C. James and David A. Lake, 'The Second Face of Hegemony: Britain's Repeal of the Corn Laws and the American Walker Tariff of 1846,' *International Organisation* 43:1 (1989): 1-29.

¹⁶ This is the mechanism underlying what Vogel describes as the 'California Effect.' See Vogel.

¹⁷ Drezner, 'The Global Governance of the Internet'.

¹⁸ Bach and Newman, 'The European Regulatory State and Global Public Policy'.

¹⁹ David Andrew Singer, 'Capital Rules: The Domestic Politics of International Regulatory Harmonisation,' *International Organization* 58:3 (2004): 531-66.

²⁰ Elizabeth DeSombre, *Domestic Sources of International Environmental Policy: Industry, Environmentalists, and U.S. Power* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

²¹ Colin J. Bennett, *Regulating Privacy: Data Protection and Public Policy in Europe and the United States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

²² See Abraham L. Newman, *Creating Privacy: the Politics of Personal Information in the United States and Europe*, PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2005.

²³ Henry Farrell, 'Constructing the International Foundations of E-Commerce: The EU-US Safe Harbor Arrangement,' *International Organization* 57:2 (2003).

²⁴ Dorothee Heisenberg, *Negotiating Privacy: The European Union, the United States, and Personal Data Protection* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005).

²⁵ Interview with the Commission official responsible for data privacy in the Internal Market Directorate during the GATS negotiations.

²⁶ Peter P. Swire and Robert E. Litan, *None of Your Business: World Data Flows, Electronic Commerce, and the European Privacy Directive* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998).

²⁷ Newman, 'Frameworks of Analysis'.

²⁸ See Article 29 Data Protection Working Party, *Opinion 3/2001 on the Level of Protection of the Australian Privacy Amendment Act 2000* (Brussels: European Community, 2001).

²⁹ The DNS is a hierarchical, inverted tree-like database that links domain names such as *sant.oxford.ac.uk* to numerical computer identifiers (so-called IP addresses) and thereby allows users to 'locate' content or other users on the Internet.

³⁰ See Frances Williams, 'Pressure grows on US over control of internet,' *Financial Times*, 7 October 2005. See also contributions to William J. Drake, ed., *Reforming*

³¹ Tom Wright, 'EU and U.S. clash over control of Net,' *International Herald Tribune*, 30 September 2005.

³² The best account of DNS governance, up to and including the creation of ICANN, is Milton L. Mueller, *Ruling the Root: Internet Governance and the Taming of Cyberspace* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002).

³³ See William J. Clinton, *Presidential Directive on Electronic Commerce: Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies* (1997). This Presidential Directive was issued at the same time as the previously cited Clinton and Gore paper outlining a framework for electronic commerce.

³⁴ The data come from Marc Holitscher, *Die Regulierung des Internets zwischen technischer Koordination und politischer Steuerung: Eine explorative Einzelfallstudie am Beispiel der Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers zur Rolle privater Akteure in den internationalen Beziehungen*, PhD Dissertation, University of Zürich, 2004.

³⁵ On the European Commission's role in this process, see Volker Leib, 'ICANN-EU can't: Internet governance and Europe's role in the formation of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers,' *Telematics and Informatics*:19 (2002): 159-71.

³⁶ Interview with ITU official involved in issues of domain name governance.

³⁷ See Mueller, 'Ruling the Root,' 88.

³⁸ See, for example, Daniel J. Paré, *Internet Governance in Transition: Just Who is the Master of this Domain?* (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002) for an account of the British case.

³⁹ Data from Matthew Zook, [Available Online] UC Berkeley and Zooknic [cited 2001]; Available from <http://www.zooknic.com/Domains/international.html>.

⁴⁰ Data from Matthew Zook, [Available Online] UC Berkeley and Zooknic [cited 2001]; Available from <http://www.zooknic.com/Domains/market.html>,

⁴¹ Declan McCullagh, 'U.S. to retain control of Internet domain names,' [Available Online] *CNET News* [cited June, 2005]; Available from <http://news.com.com/U.S.+to+retain+control+of+Internet+domain+names/2100-1028-3-5770937.html>.

⁴² Declan McCullagh, 'U.S. reaches Net detente with U.N.,' [Available Online] *CNET News* [cited November, 2005]; Available from <http://news.com.com/2100-1036-3-5955245.html>.

⁴³ 'ICANN's New MoU: Old Wine in a New Bottle,' [Available Online] Internet Governance Project, [cited September 30, 2006]; Available from <http://www.internetgovernance.org/news.html#ICANNoldwine-093006>

⁴⁴ Mark Ward, 'Big push for Chinese net domains,' [Available Online] *BBC News* [cited March 3, 2006]; Available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4767972.stm>.

⁴⁵ For an overview of the history and politics of gambling regulation in the US, see Denise von Herrmann, *The Big Gamble: The Politics of Lottery and Casino Expansion* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002).

⁴⁶ Justin Berton, 'Online poker players face new Prohibition,' *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 August 2006, A1.

⁴⁷ Shelley Emling, 'New law deals devastating blow: U.S. ban on money transfers hurt,' *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 10 November 2006.

⁴⁸ Matt Richtel, 'Citibank Bans Credit Cards From Use in Web Gambling,' *The New York Times*, 15 June, 2002, C2.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Fowler, 'Antigua asks WTO to condemn U.S. ban on Internet gambling,' *Associated Press*, 24 June 2003.

⁵⁰ 'Antigua and Barbuda welcomes WTO ruling on challenge against US,' *BBC Monitoring Americas*, 31 October 2003.

⁵¹ See 'Antigua beats odds: WTO confirms ruling against US on web gambling,' *Agence France Presse*, 10 November 2006, and Liz Benston, 'WTO ruling provides scope for U.S. online gambling ban,' *Las Vegas Sun*, 7 April 2005.

⁵² Alan Beattie, 'Antigua hits at US over WTO ruling,' *Financial Times*, 20 February 2006.

⁵³ Stephen Foley and Julia Kollewe, 'US charges online gaming chief,' *The Independent*, 18 July 2006.

⁵⁴ 'Busted flush,' *The Economist*, 5 October 2006.

⁵⁵ 'Online gambling bosses forecast consolidation,' *Reuters News*, 3 October 2006.

⁵⁶ Eric Pfanner and Heather Timmons, 'U.K. seeks global rules for online gambling,' *International Herald Tribune*, 1 November, 2006.

⁵⁷ Huw Jones, 'McCreevy says no hope of pan-EU gambling approach,' *Reuters News*, 15 November 2006.

⁵⁸ On the rise of the regulatory state in Europe, see Giandomenico Majone, *Regulating Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1996) and Michael Moran, 'Understanding the Regulatory State,' *British Journal of Political Science* 32:2 (2002): 391-412. On other governments coming to terms with the Internet, see Taylor C. Boas, 'Weaving the Authoritarian Web: The Control of Internet Use in Non-Democratic Regimes,' in Zysman and Newman.

⁵⁹ See David Bach, Abraham L. Newman, and Steven Weber, 'The International Implications of China's Fledgling Regulatory State: From Product Maker to Rule Maker,' *New Political Economy* 11:4 (2006).

Virtual China: The Internet as Threat or Opportunity?

GARY D. RAWNSLEY

This paper assesses the challenges that China—its government and people—face by embracing the Internet. It considers how a state apparatus determined to cling on to power and contain the democratic potential of the information revolution is increasingly challenged by a dispersed and fragmented, yet vocal and politically agitated ‘critical mass’ equally determined to balance and sometimes confront the Communist Party’s (CCP) monopoly on communication. This brings to the surface critical questions about the authority over discourse and narrative in modern China, and presents for governance there serious problems and opportunities in equal measure.

Governance in the Harmonious Society

In February 2005, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao called for the creation of a ‘harmonious society,’ which would include ‘democracy, the rule of law, equity, justice, sincerity, amity and vitality.’²

Such a harmonious society will give full scope to people’s intelligence and creativity, enable all the people to share the social wealth created in reform and development, and forge an ever closer relationship between the people and government, and result in lasting stability and unity ...³

One of the architects of the harmonious society and an adviser to the Communist Party’s Politburo, Jing Tiankui of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, described its foundation as a ‘[g]overnment that commits itself to a co-operative and equal relationship with the diverse groups that make up its population.’ This was necessary, he said, because ‘complaints are arising and mutual trust is collapsing, while “relations between the government and the people are being threatened.”’⁴

A less politically loaded assessment of the problem was offered by Kenneth Lieberthal in 2004 when he identified the most serious difficulties facing governance in China, and in doing so reflexively

described the need for the harmonious society. Under the conditions created by the economic reforms, he wrote, Chinese people:

Act primarily according to their interests ... One unintended result of this ... has been a poverty of thinking about values and a major retreat in the efforts to nurture and shape the principles that guide behaviour. In lieu of serious attention to values, the political system has instead come to rely overwhelmingly on a combination of appealing to people's material interests or to their fear of punishment.⁵

The demand for the creation of the harmonious society, we might argue, reveals the return to addressing values and principles as an approach to governance.

Discussions about the harmonious society, while inevitably managed by the central government, attest to the growing recognition of the underlying problems in modern China. Poverty, rural-urban migration, unemployment, vast inequalities in wealth, impending environmental collapse and corruption all present urgent difficulties for governance. In the transition to a market economy based on decentralisation, financial incentives and the accumulation of wealth and individualisation, the state is no longer in a position to impose its will on the people using its revolutionary legitimacy or by simply resorting to coercion. Effective governance in China has required the introduction of technical and institutional methods to facilitate development—privileging the 'expert' over 'red'. The possibilities of executing macro-control over a decentralised and increasingly fragmented system are diminishing. Modernisation is creating a revolution of rising expectations that, if not met, can lead to a serious credibility gap, which in turn erodes popular confidence in the government and damages governance.

The foundation of the harmonious society is 'stability' (*wending*) and a constant vigilance against 'chaos' or 'disorder' (*luan*). Stability has been at the top of the political agenda since the student unrest in 1989. Now, however, the calls for a harmonious society suggest that stability no longer means controlling the campuses and preventing calls for western-style democracy and electoral competition. Rather, the harmonious society addresses the problems that are a direct consequence of reforms that have generated undercurrents of primarily economic anxiety and frustration among the working class.⁶

The Internet presents a series of striking contradictions and grave challenges to a Chinese government trying to create a harmonious

society and find new approaches to legitimacy. To what extent is the Internet compatible with the aims of governance in a harmonious society? Does the Internet undermine the premise of stability, or is the call for a harmonious society a reflection of problems to which the Internet has contributed? And can the 'critical mass' use the Internet to express its grievances, scrutinise the political elite and ultimately overcome the fragmentary quality of opposition in China today?

The Chinese Success Story

The contradictions of governance in modern China are most apparent in cyberspace, in what we might call 'virtual China'. To fully appreciate the scale and severity of these contradictions, it is important that in the blizzard of bad-news stories about censorship⁷ we do not lose sight of the progress that the Chinese government has made in accommodating and promoting new information technologies

China's government has fully accepted that modernisation and economic development depend on becoming fully embedded in a globalised world believing that it is no longer possible to avoid attachment to new global communications networks that facilitate the flows of information. To this end, the Communist government in Beijing has been at the forefront of the information revolution, aiming to overcome the problems and frustrations associated with a complex bureaucracy that is increasingly viewed as distant from the people, discrediting the flow of information from its offices. Beijing has demanded a comprehensive informatisation (*xinxihua*) by promoting widespread access to the Internet through massive investment in national infrastructure projects. By the end of 2005, the government had invested US\$500 billion in the information technology industry to facilitate the provision of nation-wide access.⁸ In addition, Beijing, in pursuit of *toumingdu* (transparency), has benefited from the business community's application of the Internet for commercial transactions and the delivery of services—e-commerce everywhere predates e-government. As early as 1993 all government offices were instructed to have an online presence that would facilitate interactivity, thus encouraging new ways of delivering government related services. This was given a positive boost in 1999 with the launch of the Government Online Project (*zhengfu shangwan gongcheng*) that promoted the use of Chinese Internet domains. In 1998, only 145 gov.cn sites were available on the World Wide Web; with support from the

Government Online Project this soon increased to 1,470 sites representing 720 government departments, rising to 7,796 sites by 2003.⁹

Moreover, the use of the Internet as an asset in the economic development of China is indicated by the prominence devoted to information by policymakers at the highest levels in their five-year plans. The impact on governance has not gone unnoticed, as a report by the U.S. Embassy in Beijing clearly suggests the increasing levels of toumingdu:

Chinese regulations have gone from being largely unpublished, confidential, in-house edicts ... to published texts that are more detailed with each iteration. Some Chinese government agencies have even published proposed regulations online and asked for comments, although this is still very unusual.¹⁰

The speed and scale of Internet use in China is best represented in the following table:

Table 1: Internet Growth in China: Total subscribers to Internet services (millions), 1995-2002 (including Taiwan).¹¹

Year	Total Subscribers
1997	0.2
1998	0.7
1999	3.0
2000	9.0
2001	36.6
2002	52.5
2004	94.0 ^a
2005	111.0 ^a
2006	123.0 ^b

a: Figures do not include Taiwan. Source: moldova.org, <http://it.moldova.org/stiri/eng/8396/> accessed 9 November 2006.

b: 18th Statistical Survey Report on the Internet Development in China (July 2006), China Internet Network Information Centre, <http://www.cnnic.cn>.

The figures reveal that the number of Internet subscribers has increased at an extraordinary rate. In fact, China is second only to the United States in Internet use.

Keeping pace with this level of uptake has presented its own unique challenges for the government and governance in China. While embracing the Internet's value as an indispensable instrument of social and economic development, the government has at the same time limited the Internet's use, access, content and also therefore its potential to act as a viable competitor for political power. The government's concerns were first voiced in 1996—only three years into the promotion of e-government—with the publication of the 'People's Republic of China (PRC) Interim Regulations Governing the Management of International Computer Networks.'¹² Given the stark contradictions that are present, the question that confronts the government and every Chinese Internet user is: Can Internet technology be encouraged for one purpose and discouraged for another?

The Internet and Governance in China

In China—an example of a neo-authoritarian political system—systems of communications are required to assume specific responsibilities *on behalf* of the state; they are not expected to confront political power nor to set the political agenda, and the state finds it extremely difficult to tolerate inquisitive and belligerent media. Deficient in the political (electoral) legitimacy enjoyed by democratic governments, authoritarian regimes structure their communications systems to reinforce their political and coercive power. While democratic communications are based on a vertical (two-way, government-citizens-government) and horizontal (citizens-citizens, i.e., communications within civil society) flow of information and opinions, in authoritarian systems they rarely extend beyond transmitting, framing and interpreting for the audience the decisions and actions of the government (a vertical but one-way—top-down—flow of information). As noted above, the Internet facilitates this vertical flow of information under the guise of e-government which encourages government agencies to post documents, regulations and policies, but which still limits the level of popular interaction. Hence we should note the implications of Lieberthal's otherwise sanguine observations:

As compared with the period in the early stage of the reforms, problems are more thoroughly researched and receive fuller vetting internally

before decisions are reached. Information is more widely available, opinions are more freely offered, and the statistical tools and models employed are more sophisticated. International technical advice is now available on everything ... and is accorded significant attention.¹³

Lieberthal here describes a political system that is more open to information than at any time in the past, a development that will have beneficial consequences for governance. However, the implication is that this flow of information is limited to elite political society; the information is gathered and used for policy-making, and there is an absence in Lieberthal's remarks suggest the absence of any consideration of public opinion.

Since it launched comprehensive economic and social changes in the mid-1980s China is now among a spectrum of authoritarian regimes that see the value of communications but worry about the chaos that pluralism and freedom of information may cause, upsetting not only its developmental strategies but also shaking its cultural and political foundations. It especially brings into sharp relief the problems of maintaining stability and creating a harmonious society. Moreover, it raises the possibility that the Chinese government would lose control of the discourse on the harmonious society and therefore also lose control of its reception, interpretation and implementation.

As we have noted above, China does appreciate the benefits of communication to its programme of modernisation, but it clearly fears the potential consequences of free communications on the political system. Thus China conforms to the 'pro-active' strategy discussed by Kalathil and Boas whereby governments 'guide' how the Internet develops and is used to help fulfil policy requirements, particularly in the economy.¹⁴ When one considers the provocative discussions about the Internet in the West, a proactive strategy of control is understandably attractive. Harold Rheingold, for example, has referred to the Internet having 'democratising potential'.¹⁵ Among the first to articulate the democratising promise of the Internet in China was U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in 1991 who said:

It is in our interest that the next generation in China be engaged by the Information Age ... the US feels that the Internet and information technology is a way in which democratic ideas will flourish and assist in managing the change that will come some day.¹⁶

Baker was followed by Gordon C. Chang and his prediction about *The Coming Collapse of China*. He noted that 'the regime may patrol cyberspace,' but 'it cannot help but be changed by the process.'¹⁷ Jianhi Bi agreed with this prophecy and stated that China's dependence on the information age would inevitably collide with the Communist Party's determination to safeguard its power, causing political change.¹⁸

With so many predicting that the information revolution will force the eventual collapse of the Communist Party, the current siege mentality that appears to have gripped the Chinese government is understandable. The question then is: When will China's political leadership realise that free speech and freedom of publication are indispensable for governance and are especially crucial for the continuing success of China's modernisation and development? This is particularly pressing given the speed and scale of Internet take-up across the country, a development the government has encouraged provided it can be supervised. The Internet is designed to facilitate the decentralised dissemination of information and make possible horizontal communications, practices that are essential for successful economic modernisation but are completely incompatible with a system of governance based on vertical and centralised communication.

Managing the Internet

What makes the Internet so attractive to liberals is its speed, the allure of greater levels of interactivity and connectivity, the (supposed) absence of hierarchies and, above all, the possibility of finally having at our disposal a truly free medium that is beyond the control of either media or governments. It is, we are led to believe, a genuinely popular and empowering communications technology. In accessing the Internet, citizens can connect to and form global, regional and local networks to engage in debate, dialogue and exchange or even plot their linked political activity and thus help to set the political agenda. Vast political 'rhizomes'¹⁹ are formed as groups share information, create links (virtual and real) with each other and post information about each other's activities on their own websites. In short, the Internet creates 'virtual forums' or new public spaces, and can even assist in the development of a more direct form of democracy.

Advocates of the Internet as a medium for promoting democracy claim it can be most effective in facilitating the construction of an autonomous public sphere that encourages discourse within 'civil society',

sometimes with a possibility that this will lead to political mobilisation. Users depend on cyberspace to bypass the official version of news and opinion, but are confronted by a raft of legislation and extra-legal measures designed to curb their access. This presents a significant challenge for governance as, more than at any point in the past, new information technology allows citizens to find alternative information from across the globe, exposing them to new ideas and narratives. Centralised systems of governance are therefore under siege from rejuvenated civil societies harnessing the power of the Internet to inform their opinions and organise their activities.

The Chinese government's reaction to the information revolution establishes that beyond a superficial level it is confused about how communications media, including the Internet, is linked to governance. We have acknowledged that the government seems to recognise and accept the value of the Internet but is still worried about its potential. For example, Premier Wen Jiabao issued at the close of the 10th National Congress in March 2006 a statement that reinforced the principles of the harmonious society, recognising that a 'people's government should accept the democratic supervision of the people,' but he added that '[e]very citizen must also consciously abide by the law and order.' Websites, he said, 'should be able to convey the right message and information,' and people need to be educated and 'properly guided' to understand how to use the media to express their concerns.²⁰ On the surface, this statement provides grounds for optimism, and the Premier's apparent commitment to freedom of speech and publication as a prerequisite for high-quality governance is encouraging. Yet the statement also lacks clarity, and arguably, such vagueness is a typical and deliberate method of maintaining state control. It supports strong government but not good governance in a society that is seeking to develop as a pivotal player in the globalised international arena.

This absence of lucidity is likewise noticeable in the 'Measures for the Administration of Internet Information Services' approved by the Chinese State Council in 2000. This lists illegal Web content, including information that is judged to diverge from the constitution, endanger national security, threaten national honour, spread rumours or undermine social stability and any other information prohibited by the law, administrative regulations, or both. In other words, the Chinese State Council has enacted a deliberately ambiguous legal framework that provides room for political expediency; it has created a climate of self-censorship among Internet users (as publishers and audience) to complement the elaborate architecture of state-managed censorship of information. Many Chinese Internet users are understandably

cautious about the websites they access, and Internet providers are equally vigilant about the information they publish. The transparency and dialogue upon which good governance depends is absent.

Since accepting the need to embrace the Internet, the Chinese government has tried desperately to keep up with the proliferation of users, sites, chat rooms and blogs. China's police force has established Internet departments in more than 700 cities and provinces since 2000. Websites and e-mails are closely monitored by the 'Net police' for 'heretical teachings or feudal superstitions' and information 'harmful to the dignity or interests of the state.' Since 2002, all Internet service providers have been required to sign a form guaranteeing self-censorship before receiving permission to operate. Most famous is the 'Great Firewall' (as it is known to its detractors) or the 'Golden Shield' (the CCP's term), protecting the nine gateways that connect China to the World Wide Web. Internet cafés are required to use software that restricts access to particular prescribed websites and to register all users and the sites they visit. Between 6 and 8 September 2006, in the space of just 48 hours, the Ministry of Public Security 'closed 320 "illegal" websites and suppressed 15,000 "items of hazardous information" on the Internet ... Most were allegedly implicated in criminal activity such as online gambling or fraud, or the sale of arms, explosives or narcotics.'²¹

Such drastic measures signal the Internet's potential strength. Governments only attempt to control technologies, information and people they judge dangerous and subversive. Nevertheless, we are forced to concede that the ability to manage the Internet undermines the utopian idea that it is impossible to censor or regulate Web content and that individual states lack authority and sovereignty in cyberspace. Individual states are determined to control the Internet within their own borders, reinforcing and preserving their dominion at a time when we are told that globalisation is reducing the relevance of sovereignty.

The problem with trying to control the flow of information in a globalised, communication-led world is that people have a remarkable tenacity with which they seek information that is being denied to them. As technology advances, it is becoming incredibly difficult to seal one's borders and prevent access to alternative sources of information and opinion (though the PRC has developed elaborate technological methods involving huge manpower to hunt and close proxy servers that are located inside China and block those situated outside its borders). Audiences possess a stubborn curiosity about news that their government does not allow them to receive and so will actively search for alternative sources, often at considerable risk to their own lives.

For example, we have evidence that the Chinese government's blatant censorship practices only whet the popular appetite for forbidden information. When Zhao Ziyang—considered by many a hero after his intervention in the 1989 student-led demonstrations—died in 2005 after fifteen years of house arrest, the Chinese government controlled news about both his passing and his funeral. However, the Chinese people were not deterred, and took to the Internet not only for details but also to comment on the censorship.²² Remarks posted in blogs, chat rooms and other discussion sites after Zhao's death are especially notable for two reasons.

First, the comments demonstrate that the information revolution helps curious users circumvent the officially managed media and offers alternative sources of news, information and opinion. This is a crucial issue for governance in China because access to alternative sources of information means that observers are now discussing the existence of a credibility gap whereby the news and information Chinese people are obtaining from the Internet conflict with the narrative circulating in the official media. The credibility gap exposes and discredits the government and undermines popular confidence in the political elite.

Second, it is clear from the evidence that the Internet is providing new public spaces for participants to discuss the state's management of the media. In other words, through the Internet, China is experiencing a rejuvenation of social-civic engagement that discusses and debates the control of the flow of information as a political issue. Again, popular trust and confidence in the system are shaken, thus disrupting governance and progress towards a harmonious society.

That the control of information is a political issue is demonstrated by the events of July 2006, when Century China, a website and chat forum (Century Salon) popular with liberal critics of the government, was closed by the authorities. The reasons for this, stated in a notice issued on 19 July by the Communication Administration Bureau, were that the website 'illegally provide(d) Internet news without proper qualifications' and had violated the 'Regulations of Internet News Service' and Article 19 of the 'Regulations of Internet Information Service.' Specifically, Century China had not obtained a licence to provide news information, thus demonstrating the subtle and legalistic methods the authorities use. One hundred (very brave) writers, scholars and lawyers from both inside and outside China signed a letter that was subsequently published in the *New York Review of Books*. The letter was very candid:

Throughout history oppressive governments worldwide have suppressed freedom of speech, but in today's world, this type of

suppression is becoming increasingly intolerable. The shutdown of Century China is just another instance of the Chinese government's suppression of the freedom of its people. Therefore we must stage a focused and unyielding protest against the government's abuse of power.²³

So, despite the obstacles many Chinese Internet users are both circumventing restrictions *and* forcing the government to follow discourses that begin in popular discussions online. The most famous example occurred when the Chinese airforce shot down a US spy-plane over Hainan Island in April 2001. This story first appeared in the *Qiangguo* (*Strong Nation*) chat room attached to the *People's Daily* newspaper. Most stories that materialise here begin as postings of news reports lifted from the western press. Usually these may be news stories that are not reported in the Chinese media or whose coverage is delayed. The story of the spy-plane, for example, was lifted from Associated Press reports and appeared in this chat room two hours before the first official Chinese reports were published. The Internet is therefore able to steal a march on the official media and force the press to respond to an alternative agenda, rather than give the media the room and freedom (under guidance from the authorities) to set the agenda themselves.²⁴ The online discussion followed a hard-line nationalist discourse that the government had at first tried to avoid, but eventually had to accept.²⁵ In other words, Internet users were able to influence the political agenda and force the government through the power of popular pressure to respond to the event in a manner different to how it had originally intended.²⁶

One can speculate if the Internet will therefore become a tool that is as important for the government's supporters as it is for its critics, and if it will have consequences for the mobilisation of popular sentiment around a distinctly nationalist agenda. Again, this has implications for governance, since it implies that the Chinese communist style of governance is under threat from the ability to access multiple sources of information that challenge the official narratives (as it discovered to its cost during the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Guangdong in November 2002, when new methods of communication—namely text messaging on mobile telephones, e-mail and the Internet—alerted users to first the existence and second the magnitude of the problem). Credibility gaps have existed for as long as governments have tried to manage information, but they only became part of conventional discourse during the Vietnam War. In other words, credibility gaps are not new. However, new communications technologies

with their instantaneous global reach do make it much easier than at any time in the past to identify and expose credibility gaps, which means it is becoming increasingly possible to force governments on the defensive and challenge their approaches to governance.

Chinese Voices: The Blogger Culture

Most appealing to those who have seized the opportunities presented by the Internet—and therefore most worrying to authoritarian governments like China—is its capacity to empower individuals; the Internet has the ability to turn even the most casual users into author, publisher and audience of news, information and opinion. This is, of course, the foundation of the ‘blogger’ culture that has given us a glimpse of life in closed or repressed societies (Iran, China), or on the home-front of cities under military attack (Iraq 2003, Lebanon 2006). Many of these blogs—online reports, diaries and even simple musings—have been published and have become best-sellers in many high-street bookshops in the West, signifying the cross-over of formats in a multimedia age. They provide an alternative perspective on events from those offered by other media sources, they set their own agendas and most importantly (and most disturbingly for authoritarian governments), they serve as an authentic bottom-up process of unmediated and unfiltered communication that may challenge established political orders and styles of governance.

Throughout China, the blogging culture is increasing in popularity, spurred by the strong growth in broadband Internet usage. According to research conducted at Tsinghua University in Beijing there are now 36.8 million blog sites and 16 million bloggers in China.²⁷ The most popular of these have discussed sex, and the sexual exploits of bloggers are regularly posted. Perhaps the most famous is Mu Zimei, a twenty-five year old (alleged) Communist Party member who runs an anonymous sexually provocative blog. Although not directly political, such blogs can present a challenge to the moral codes of Chinese society and undermine the traditional culture of deference and respect for taboos. If such private and provocative acts as sexual intercourse can be openly discussed, why can’t politics? In this over-sensitive climate it is not surprising that more overtly political blogs have been closed, and the best documented are those written and posted by Tibetan writers and open supporters of the Dalai Lama.²⁸

The possible political consequences of uncontrolled blogging have worried the Chinese government; it is a challenge to governance and the

government because it raises a fundamental question about official and unofficial narrative. Who is allowed to tell the real story? Whose voice is heard? Whose version of history is legitimate and accepted as such? How do the powerful deal with narratives that challenge the official version of a story? The anxiety is suggested in comments published by *Xinhua*, China's official news agency, that some bloggers used the protection offered by anonymity to disseminate 'irresponsible and untrue' information. Bloggers are, said *Xinhua*, a 'bad influence'. In response, the authorities in Beijing have tried to design ways of managing this new form of communication by, for example, requiring bloggers to register under their real names but still allowing them to write under pseudonyms, thus reducing the anonymity that is fundamental to the blogger culture.

How does this impact governance? If one is using democratic approaches to governance, then blogging is a testament to the power of the free flow of information; while it does not guarantee an audience, especially among political or social elites, it nevertheless represents confidence in the democratic political system. The government does not feel threatened, and therefore there exists mutual trust in the system between government and citizens. In contrast, a Chinese authoritarian view of governance inevitably perceives blogging as a menace that potentially challenges the stable social order that the political system views as essential for further economic development.

Conclusions

The Chinese government faces a critical short-term dilemma. Its legitimacy is based increasingly on its performance in delivering benefits and services to help alleviate the strains of the transition to a market-led economic system and less on doctrine or revolutionary heritage. Yet this must transform the Chinese style of governance, because a communist style political and social system is ultimately incompatible with market (capitalist) forms of economic organisation which are embedded in and depend on global information networks. In its quest for a harmonious society, the government is still willing to use coercive methods of social control or deliberately vague and arbitrary regulations to maintain its monopoly on power, so a potential crisis in governance grows ever closer.

In an age of global media with information available to everyone with access to a computer—even the Great Firewall is not impermeable—it is becoming less and less easy to manage the flow of information and control

the materialisation of new public spaces in cyberspace. The architecture of this control reveals much about the nature of government, elite opinion and the power of communications. What is good for governance in China—the free flow of information and ideas—is ultimately corrosive for the Chinese government. With the rapid proliferation and appropriation of new communications technologies and the confusion of author, publisher and audience that comes with them, Chinese-style governance is facing an ever more articulate, opinionated and daring public sphere.

Notes

¹ B. Gilley, *China's Democratic Future: How it will Happen and Where it will Lead* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 72.

² 'Wen: China to Build a Harmonious Society' [Available Online] Chinadaily.com [cited February, 2006]; Available from <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-02/07/content-415880.htm>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ 'Interpreting the Call for 'Harmonious Society'' [Available Online] Chinadaily.com [cited March, 2005]; Available from <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-3/08/content-422680.htm>.

⁵ K. Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*, 2nd ed. (New York: WW Norton & Co, 2004), 202.

⁶ V. Shue, 'Legitimacy in Crisis?' in *State and Society in 21st-Century China: Crisis, Contention and Legitimation*, ed. P.H. Gries and S. Rosen (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004)

⁷ Michel Hockx has written that Internet censorship 'does not necessarily confront Chinese writers and readers with an unfamiliar situation. Censorship is the norm, rather than the exception' ('Virtual Chinese Literature: A Comparative Case Study of Online Poetry Communities', in *Culture in Contemporary China*, ed. Michel Hockx and Julia Strauss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 151). Censorship, he observes, is 'a fact of life' and we are too often guilty of 'foregrounding censorship' which means 'highlighting what does not appear on the Chinese internet' and drawing attention away 'from what does appear' (Ibid., 149).

⁸ The distribution of Internet use and access across China is as expected. The heaviest concentration is in Beijing, Shanghai and along the eastern sea-board. Internet access becomes sparse as one travels west. For details, see the interactive maps available on <http://www.nytimes.com/specials/chinarises/cityofdreams/index.html>. Also see the reports published by the China Internet Network Information (CINN) available at <http://www.cnnic.cn> and J. Tang, 'Recent Internet Developments in the People's Republic of China: An Overview,' *Online Information Review* 24(4) (2000): 316-321.

⁹ 'CPPC Member Proposes Expansion of E-Government' [Available Online] *People's Daily Online* [cited March, 2006]; Available from <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200203/08/eng20020308-91731.shtml>.

¹⁰ 'Kids, Cadres and 'Cultists' all Love it: Growing Influence of the Internet in China' [Available Online] U.S. Embassy, Beijing [Cited 2001]; Available from <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/english/sandt/netoverview.html>.

¹¹ Stephanie Hemelryk Donald and Robert Benewick, *The State of China Atlas: Mapping the World's Fastest Growing Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 30.

¹² Z.A. Tan, 'Regulating China's Internet: Convergence Toward a Coherent Regulatory Regime,' *Telecommunications Policy*, 23 (1999): 261-276.

¹³ Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*, 202.

¹⁴ S. Kalathil and T.C. Boas, 'The Internet and State Control in Authoritarian Regimes: China, Cuba, and the Counterrevolution', *Firstmonday* (cited 2001), <http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue6-8/kalathil>.

¹⁵ Harold Rheingold, *Virtual Communities: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier* (London: Addison-Wesley, 1993), 279.

¹⁶ James Baker, 'America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community,' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.70, no.5 (1991), 16-17.

¹⁷ Gordon C. Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China* (New York: Random House, 2001): 90.

¹⁸ Jianhai Bi, 'The Internet Revolution in China,' *International Journal*, Vol.56, no.2. (2000): 421-41.

¹⁹ Andrew Robinson, 'The Rhizomes of Manipur' [Available Online] Nottingham University [cited May 2007]; Available from www.nottingham.ac.uk/iaps/manipur%20illustrated.pdf.

²⁰ People's Daily, 2006, 'Chinese Premier Addresses Media on Major Issues', 15 March.

²¹ 'Three Cyber-Dissidents Arrested and Websites Closed in New Wave of Internet Censorship' [Available online] Reporters Without Borders [cited May, 2007]; Available from <http://news.sina.com/ausdaily/201-104-103-107/2006-09-21/02011341893.html>.

²² Emily Parker, 'Cracks in the Chinese Wall,' *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, 26 January 2005.

²³ Liu Xiobo et.al., 'One Hundred Intellectuals' Letter of Appeal on the Shutdown of Century China' [Available online] New York Review of Books [cited May 2007] Available from <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/19517>.

²⁴ P.H. Gries, 'Popular Nationalism and State Legitimation in China' in *State and Society in 21st-Century China: Crisis, Contention and Legitimation*, ed. P.H. Gries and S. Rosen (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).

²⁵ P.H. Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, politics and diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

²⁶ A comprehensive discussion of this incident that compares the response of the official media with that of chatrooms is provided by Xiguang Li, Qin Xuan and Randolph Kluver, 'Who is Setting the Chinese Agenda? The Impact of Online Chatrooms on Party Presses in China' in *Asia.com: Asia encounters the Internet*, ed. K.C. Ho, Randolph Kluver and Kenneth C.C. Yang (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 143-158. Li, Xuan and Kluver (2003), 143-158.

²⁷ Howard W. French, 'Chinese Discuss Plan to Tighten Restrictions on Cyberspace,' *New York Times*, 4 July 2006.

²⁸ 'Banned, Blocked Tibetan Writer Vows to Speak Out in China', www.rfa.org (cited 1 August 2006), <http://newsblaze.com/story/200608184242nnnn.nb/newsblaze/TOPSTORY/Top-Stories.html>.

Virtual China: The Internet as Threat or Opportunity? A Response

DANIEL KOLDYK

With China set to overtake the United States (US) as the world's largest Internet market, Gary D. Rawnsley focuses on a very interesting and equally important topic. Specifically, Rawnsley sets out to answer several key questions:

To what extent is the Internet compatible with the aims of governance in a harmonious society? Does the Internet undermine the premise of stability, or is the call for a harmonious society a reflection of problems to which the internet has contributed? And can the 'critical mass' use the Internet to express its grievances, scrutinise the political elite, and ultimately overcome the fragmentary quality of opposition in China today?

In answering these questions, Rawnsley brings up several issues that are worth highlighting. The first is that new technologies such as the Internet are creating 'a revolution of rising expectations that, if not met, can lead to a serious credibility gap, which in turn erodes popular confidence in the government and damages governance.' Since the Internet provides an open source of information, it has made it increasingly difficult for the Chinese Communist Party (hereafter referred to as 'the party') to effectively manipulate information and promote its version of events to the population. Prior to the mid-1990s, the party determined how news was reported in addition to what news was reported. Rawnsley is correct to point out that today this is no longer the case, and he uses the examples of the EP-3E spy plane incident and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) as examples. Rawnsley could have also cited the 1999 bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade. In each case, Rawnsley points out that the Internet circumscribed the party's ability to control the manner in which information was disseminated and reported. He writes that 'Internet users were able to influence the political agenda and force the government through the force of popular pressure to respond to the event in a manner different to that it had originally intended.' Indeed, a senior representative of Shandong University told me that the university was at a loss as to how they could control the fervour of their students after

D. Koldyk, 'Virtual China: The Internet as Threat or Opportunity? A Response,' *STAIR* 3, No. 1 (2007): 58-63.

news of the Belgrade bombing was broadcast via the Internet.¹ Ultimately, the university's administration was forced to act in a responsive fashion. A few years earlier, the university's administration would have organised, or even scripted, the student protest, if they decided to report the incident at all. The best example of the power of modern communications, however, is the rise of the Falun Gong movement. Before the party suppressed Falun Gong, it grew into an enormous and influential organisation. Some reports claim that there were as many as 50-80 million members within China alone. It has been widely reported that their surprise protest in Beijing in 1999 was organised via text messaging and e-mail and that China's security authorities were taken aback by the sophisticated coordination of the protest.²

Rawnsley concludes that these examples indicate significant implications for politics in China. These events imply 'that the Chinese communist style of governance is under threat from the ability to access multiple sources of information that challenge the official narratives.' He continues by stating that 'a communist style political and social system is ultimately incompatible with market (capitalist) forms of economic organisation which are embedded in and depend on global information networks.' Unfortunately, I believe Rawnsley's argument falls short of providing sufficient evidence to support such conclusions. My primary criticism is that Rawnsley's argument fails to take into account several realities about the Chinese state and population.

While I agree that modern communications present new and significant challenges to the party's monopoly of power, the fact that the party continues to rule unchallenged ten years after the introduction of the Internet indicates that we need to reconsider some assumptions about the power of the Internet. For the rest of this paper, I would like to call into question the underlying assumption of Rawnsley's paper, namely that China's authoritarian system of governance is incompatible with a market-based economy and that the power of the Internet (information) will ultimately lead to modernisation. I will do so by briefly discussing demographics and bloggers, resilient authoritarianism and political discourse.

Demographics and Bloggers

When analysing the Internet's impact in China, it is important to think about the demographic make-up of Internet users. The latest statistic for the number of Internet users in China is 137 million, which makes China the world's second biggest market.³ As impressive as this aggregate

number sounds, it is somewhat misleading. If there are in fact 137 million users, then a further 1.25 billion people do not use the Internet. In other words, approximately 90 percent of China's population is not online, a fact that calls into question Rawnsley's argument that the Internet is causing popular trust and confidence in the system to falter. As such, when discussing the Internet in China, we are really only talking about a new and small urban middle class. This is an important point since it is exactly this demographic that has fared the best since Deng Xiaoping's administration initiated economic reforms in 1978. While we read that popular protest is growing at unprecedented rates (the Ministry of Public Security has publicly stated that there were 87,000 'mass disturbances' in 2005, up from 74,000 in 2004),⁴ most of these disturbances are led by rural residents and the urban working class. The urban middle class has instead been loyal to the party since it has more to lose than to gain by rocking the boat.⁵ Therefore, the demographic that has the most access to the Internet is also the demographic that is the least likely to challenge the party.

Rawnsley rightly points out that there has been a good deal of blogging that has been critical of government policies and actions; however, this point is on balance not a convincing one for at least three reasons. The first is that bloggers rarely criticise either the party's legitimacy or its right to rule unopposed. The second is the self-censorship in which all websites (even popular websites like sohu.com) engage. A sophisticated network of filters and monitors, known as the 'Great Firewall', allows all websites to capture and embargo blogs and email traffic that contain sensitive terms such as Falun Gong and democracy.⁶ The degree to which the Internet can be used as a platform to sow dissent or challenge the party's discourse is thus questionable at best. Rawnsley does give the EP-3E spy plane incident as an example of how this can happen, but at the end of the day 'offensive' bloggers were shut down. To date, even during times of heightened political activity, bloggers, or other potential activists, have not been able to challenge or hinder the party's dominance. The third and most important reason why Rawnsley's argument is unconvincing is his lack of primary data. Until we have data that is not based on anecdotal accounts, we cannot make any convincing claims that the Internet is challenging the party's dominance.

The second point that I would like to raise is China's 'resilient authoritarianism', especially in terms of the party's organisational structure and its ability to remain informed. Unlike the party, protesters and bloggers are disorganised groups that tend to be responsive and spontaneous in nature. The party has easily controlled these groups with an organisational system that reaches all the way down to the community level. Few appreciate the extent of this organisational capacity. While economic reforms dealt a blow to the party's organisational structure and allowed space for groups like Falun Gong to rise up, the party reorganised its base with the *shequ jianshe shequ* (community construction) policy in the early 2000s.⁷ Reinvigorating shequ became an effective way to regain the ability to engage (through innovative new social and political programs), monitor and control potentially unstable populations that have developed grievances in the transition from socialism to capitalism.⁸ In terms of coercion, the party also regained its ability to employ a time tested strategy of 'killing the chicken to scare the monkey'—arresting protest organisers to scare the protesters. Due to *shequ jianshe*, it seems unlikely that another group like Falun Gong will be able to gain a foothold, no matter how secretive modern communications like the Internet and mobile phones allow organisers to be.

On the matter of information and feedback, Rawnsley states that one of the key challenges authoritarian regimes face during times of sustained economic growth is poor information networks. This is a fair point that is well established; however, not all authoritarian systems necessarily have poor information networks, or in the case of China, poor information networks need not be a permanent disability. During the Maoist years, for instance, poor information and feedback was one of the primary reasons for the Great Leap famine (1959-1960) that killed as many as 20-30 million people. But, this is no longer the case. Nor is it correct to assume that the Internet must be a critical tool for accessing information.

Through partnerships with local and international research organisations, central and local governments are conducting myriad surveys on a wide range of social, economic and political issues. Rawnsley is mistaken when he writes that there is a lack of 'consideration of public consultation.' In my own personal experience, I have participated in joint research efforts between the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Ministry of Finance and Commerce; CIDA, Shandong University and more than a dozen municipal governments;

Shandong University, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and Zouping County; and Beijing Normal University and numerous municipal and district-level governments. In most of these projects, public consultation was achieved through interviews or sophisticated surveys.

Chinese academic presses and journals also routinely publish books and articles that critique government policies that are in place, such as the one child policy, and debate the merit of policies that are under consideration, such as the new private property law. Innovative Chinese magazines such as *Caijing* publish investigative reports that are critical of economic policies and of the leadership. Behind closed doors, even more critical research and discussions take place. It is important to remember that the line in the sand for public discourse is not drawn at criticism of government policy but instead at criticisms of the party's legitimacy and right to rule. This distinction allows dialogue to take place between decision-makers, experts and the population.

Political Discourse

The final point for discussion is political discourse. Rawnsley makes a very interesting point when he suggests that:

Alternative sources of information means that observers are now discussing the existence of a credibility gap whereby the news and information Chinese are obtaining from the Internet conflict with the narrative circulating in the official media. The credibility gap exposes and discredits the government, and undermines popular confidence in the political elite.

While Rawnsley does not provide any evidence of this, and I believe he is overstating this point, it is an important consideration.

What is required is more research on the manner in which political discourse is formed and/or manipulated in China. Until we have better data on this topic, we cannot assume that the party has lost its ability to control political discourse, or that the adoption of the party's *wenming* (civilisation) rhetoric by some netizens is purely instrumental. In a recent seminar at the University of Oxford, Luigi Tomba described how middle-class residents in Beijing have absorbed the party-state's discourse on civilisation, individual rights and harmonious society.⁹ In fact, this is not altogether surprising to anyone who has polled the urban elite on the suitability of democracy. In my own interviews, the urban

elite and senior academics routinely state that China's rural residents and poor urban residents are not 'ready' for democracy due to their lack of education and understanding of politics, or their low *suzhi* (quality).

On the whole, Rawnsley provides us with an interesting and provocative debate about the Internet's growing influence in China. His argument may prove accurate in time; but without better support, it seems premature at best.

Notes

¹ Shandong University professor (name withheld), interview by the author, Jinan, Shandong, May 2003.

² For more information on this topic, see Vivienne Shue, 'Global Imaginings, the State's Quest for Hegemony, and the Pursuit of Phantom Freedom in China: From Heshang to Falun Gong,' in *Globalization and Democratization in Asia: The Construction of Identity*, ed. Catarina Kinnvall and Kristina Jonsson (London: Routledge, 2002), Nancy Chen, *Breathing Spaces Qigong, Psychiatry, and Healing in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), Clemens Stubbe Ostergaard, 'Governance and the Political Challenge of Falun Gong,' in *Governance in China*, ed. Jude Howell (Oxford: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004).

³ 'Beijing Opens Boot Camp for Net Addicts,' *Reuters*, 12 March 2007.

⁴ 'China Confronts Public Disorder,' *Reuters*, 19 January 2006.

⁵ For a detailed argument, see Luigi Tomba, 'Creating an Urban Middle Class. Social Engineering in Beijing,' *The China Journal* 51 (2004).

⁶ Vivian Wu, 'Internet Police Keep Tight Grip on Blogs,' *South China Morning Post*, 8 March 2007.

⁷ For more information on *shequ jianshe*, see Allen C. Choate, 'Local Governance in China, Part II: An Assessment of Urban Residents Committees and Municipal Community Development,' in *The Asia Foundation Working Paper Series* (Asia Foundation, 1998), Benjamin L. Read, 'Revitalising the State's Urban "Nerve Tips,"' *The China Quarterly* 163 (2000).

⁸ James Derleth and Daniel Koldyk, 'The Shequ Experiment: Grassroots Political Reform in Urban China,' *Journal of Contemporary China* 13, no. 41 (2004).

⁹ Luigi Tomba, 'Community, Space and Authority in Urban China,' (University of Oxford, 15 February 2007).

Citizen Journalists and the Evolution of Political Media

DIANA OWEN

In 2006, *Time* magazine departed radically from tradition by naming 'you'—the average citizen—its 'Person of the Year'. This choice was precipitated by the observation that citizen to citizen communication via the World Wide Web was revolutionising relationships in all realms of life. As the cover story proclaimed, 'It's about the many wresting power from the few and helping one another for nothing and how that will not only change the world, but also change the way the world changes.'¹ The rise in digital media celebrated by *Time* has influenced politics. Digital communications technology offers opportunities for new actors to gain a foothold in the political process and for established participants to recast their political engagement. They can enable average citizens to redraw the boundaries of authority in the political realm. This article will examine the extent to which this possibility has or will become a reality.

A significant development in the era of digital media is the rise of citizen journalists—amateur information producers who actively distribute news, insights and opinion. Armed with readily accessible technological tools that facilitate the transmission of information quickly, widely and without gatekeepers, citizen journalists have proliferated online as the sophistication of their efforts has increased. The presence of digital citizen journalists has sparked much debate about their role in the political and media systems. It may be the case that the privileged position held by the institutionalised press will be eroded by citizen news producers who have the ability and inclination to act as government watchdogs and to champion public debate while gaining the attention of average people, politicians and mainstream journalists. At the same time, the potential power of citizen journalism may be undercut by its haphazard development, disorganised content and freeform style—some of the very traits that make this type of civic activation so compelling and accessible to participants and audiences. Established journalists and media organisations, envisioning a threat to their position in the communications hierarchy, have been adapting their own behaviour to both embrace and undercut citizen journalism.

This article will examine the state of citizen journalism today. This is no easy task, as new developments in this emerging communications form are ongoing and frequent. It will begin by defining the rather

slippery concept of citizen journalism. Then it will describe the varieties of citizen journalism that are currently being employed, including those that are primarily the domain of amateurs, those dominated by professionals and hybrid forms. This overview will provide a context for the consideration of the role of traditional journalism and citizen journalism as news and information providers in the digital era. I will argue that the digital environment creates unprecedented opportunities for citizen forays into public communication. While radical changes are far from apparent at present, the transition in the political media environment that has been in the works since the late 1980s has the potential to produce fundamental shifts in the power relations between citizens, journalists and public officials. This discussion will be based primarily on the situation in the United States (US), although the rise in citizen journalism has been witnessed around the globe.

What is Citizen Journalism?

The term citizen journalism has come to mean different things depending upon the context in which it is employed and the perspective of the commentator. The concept has been labelled alternately peer group journalism,² do-it-yourself journalism, grassroots journalism and 'we-media'.³ While citizen journalism shares certain characteristics with traditional journalism, it differs in significant ways.

Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis, who prefer the label 'participatory journalism', provide a generic definition that is a useful starting place for explicating the term: 'The act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information. The intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires.'⁴ Like traditional journalism, the citizen variety is concerned with providing accounts of events, issues and actors that are relevant to an audience. One characteristic of citizen journalism is the notion that news is not a one-way conversation in which political elites and their journalistic compatriots talk down to the public at large. Instead, citizen journalism represents collaboration within communities that produce, consume and circulate content online. What distinguishes citizen journalism from other conversational forms of communication, like call-in talk radio and television, is that reports have the informational components and form of a news story that invites commentary in a semi-structured format. The model of the news

audience as primarily passive consumers is reconstituted as users who actively engage with the information environment.⁵

There is a tremendous quantity of digital content produced by citizens, but only a small amount qualifies as citizen journalism. It is important to draw a distinction between a blog relating personal stories about a family vacation to a small group of friends and legitimate journalistic endeavours. There is a significant difference between a digital diarist or storyteller and a journalist. Of the 12 million Americans who keep blogs, 34 percent consider their blog to be a form of journalism. Only 11 percent publish information related to politics, government, and current affairs broadly construed, and view this activity as a public service designed to serve an audience.⁶ Citizen journalists in the digital age are individuals who have acquired the knowledge of how communications technologies work and the skills to convey successfully relevant information to audiences in the public interest. Although citizen journalists are often freelancers in the broadest sense of the word, their reporting efforts are sustained and have garnered an audience base.

Kevin Kawamoto underscores the fact that digital journalism, including the citizen variety, is largely limited to those who are tech savvy and have access to high speed technology. For Kawamoto, digital journalism is, 'The use of digital technologies to research, produce, and deliver (or make accessible) news and information to an increasingly computer literate audience.'⁷ Acts of citizens engaging in journalism are located in sophisticated technological spaces, including websites, blogs, newsgroups, discussion forums, chat rooms and podcasts. They are facilitated by collaborative publishing systems and peer-to-peer applications like instant messaging. In fact, many of the most well sustained, highly trafficked and widely publicised exercises in citizen journalism are populated and promoted by members of the technorati, academics, political elites and former journalists who have abandoned their ties to established media organisations.⁸

The majority of citizen journalists are from higher socioeconomic and educational groups. In the United States, younger people have contributed significantly to citizen journalism, although the ranks of citizen news providers increasingly include representatives from all strata of society. Younger people also are responsible for innovating in terms of exploring new formats and methods of expression. A profile of bloggers, who represent but one aspect of the citizen journalism movement, illustrates this point. A 2006 study finds that of the 12 million Americans who blog, 54 percent are under the age of thirty, 54 percent are men, and the majority hail from urban and suburban areas. Thirty-seven percent have a university degree, and an

additional 38 percent are full or part time students. Sixty percent of bloggers are white compared with 71 percent of the online population as a whole.⁹

Citizen Newsgatherers

Some observers have made the claim that in today’s environment anyone can be a journalist.¹⁰ However, a distinction must be made between citizen journalists and ‘citizen newsgatherers’¹¹ or ‘citizen witnesses’. Much has been made about the fact that average people armed with information-gathering technologies have provided important contributions to breaking stories. The astounding proliferation of handheld technologies has enabled unprecedented media coverage of events from the significant to the mundane. In 2006, over 40 percent of European households owned digital cameras. More than 60 million Americans possessed camcorders. Over half of the mobile phones sold in North America contained cameras, many of which were video-enabled. Evidence suggests that people are using mobile phones in ways that facilitate their ability to receive and gather information. As Table 1 indicates, 35 percent of Americans use their cell phones to send text messages, while 28 percent use them to take photographs.

*Table 1: Americans’ Uses of Cell Phone for Purposes Other Than Calling in 2006*⁴⁵

<i>Purpose of Usage</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Text Messaging	35%
Taking Still Photos	28%
Accessing the Internet	14%
Sending and Receiving Email	8%
Searching for Information	7%
Recording Video Clips	6%
Watching Television or Video	2%

Citizens used camera phones, camcorders and other digital devices to capture the devastation of the tsunami in Southeast Asia in December 2004, the bomb attacks on the London transportation system in July

2005 and Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. Images and stories from people on the scene were incorporated into news reports of mainstream organisations and posted on blogs, message boards and other digital forums run by citizens. Newsgatherers can provide information fragments, act as sources and express opinions. In the case of the London bombings, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) received over 1,000 photographs, twenty pieces of amateur video, 4,000 text messages and 20,000 email messages within six hours of the event. The volume of information, in fact, threatened to overwhelm the small staff of four journalists assigned to the story.¹² Average citizens can keep stories alive by funnelling material to news producers to fashion into coherent pieces. These efforts contribute to the richness of the reporting and provide insights that may be overlooked by professional organisations.

Varieties of Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism is a fluid enterprise encompassing a wide expanse of digital content that is difficult to categorise and constantly morphing. These efforts can be entirely amateur operations, the work of professional journalists, or a combination of both. Citizen journalism differs as well based on whether the effort is entirely independent or has some level of organisational commitment, such as being sponsored by a media corporation or a nonprofit group. It also varies in the degree to which the effort is sustained or episodic and the platform that is used to disseminate the information. Finally, the audiences targeted for particular offerings by citizen journalists range in size from a handful of concerned locals to millions of people worldwide.¹³

The purest form of citizen journalism is entirely produced by amateurs, which include lone individuals who use digital technology to create their own mini news organisations¹⁴ and those who write blogs that are hosted by mainstream news operations. Stand-alone citizen journalism sites often deal with local news, rather than tackling national issues. They may be subject to some level of editing to screen out inappropriate or illegal postings by a site owner or moderator, or the content may be entirely unedited. Citizen blogs hosted on news organisations' websites generally are subject to some form of oversight and editing. The development of 'citizen bloghouses' that invite individual bloggers to publish in a variety of areas that are catalogued on a website is a growing trend.¹⁵ A form of amateur citizen journalism that fully incorporates the notion of collective composition allows people to

write and post stories that anyone can edit. Wikinews is the model for this type of journalism.¹⁶

Amateurs generally lack formal training in journalism. However, the digital environment gives them access to many of the tools used by professional journalists. As news organisations have cut back on their field units, professional and amateur journalists frequently rely on the same online sources of information.¹⁷ Lacking a formal institutional structure, amateurs have developed their own collaborative methods for fact-checking by the community of content users who scrutinise their work. In some instances, this process has been akin to investigative reporting, as amateur journalists have uncovered incidents of government malfeasance, hoaxes and other improprieties.¹⁸ Proponents of amateur journalism contend that this form of self-policing weeds out irresponsible reporters as audiences gravitate towards high-quality content and away from uncorroborated information.

Low-cost production tools enable amateurs to easily publish their own writings, share photos and stream audio and video. Some amateurs have been ahead of the curve in technological innovation, as they employ a wide range of digital formats to disseminate their work, including websites, blogs, chat rooms, discussion boards, Web zines and podcasts. Their efforts can serve as an experimental laboratory from which professionals can learn. The information amateurs disseminate is as diverse as newspaper-style accounts; facts and opinions about issues, events and political leaders; neighbourhood crime watches; and highly-personalised ramblings about individual experiences. Amateur citizen journalists can be effective facilitators of community conversations, inviting comments, moderating discussions and encouraging others to engage in political discourse.¹⁹ The peer-to-peer dimension of amateur enterprises facilitates the development of active collaborative communities, as users are more likely to feel comfortable taking part in a conversation with people like themselves than with professional journalists.

In contrast to purely amateur productions is 'citizen journalism' practiced by professional journalists. While most professionals who engage in citizen journalism are hosted formally by their news organisations, some have branched out and published on independent sites or their own personal sites. Professional citizen journalism differs from traditional journalism in that stories are written in a more conversational and colloquial style than typical news articles, and accounts tend to be more personalised, detailed and lengthy. Practitioners claim that they are stepping out of their professional role and writing as members of the citizenry at large, which gives them greater leeway to stray from journalistic conventions and to express opinions. One tactic professionals use is to engage citizen 'add-on reporters'

by soliciting personal accounts to enliven reports on topics ranging from road rage at cyclists to experiences with government officials.²⁰ For some of these efforts, the claims to being citizen journalism are tenuous, as user participation is absent or restricted to allowing citizens to post comments on stories that can be pulled at any time. Much professional citizen journalism, in fact, represents another venue for those who already have plenty of opportunity for expression and does little to facilitate community dialogue.

The amount of legitimate citizen journalism practised by amateurs without professional intervention or sponsorship is limited. A snapshot of this reality can be observed in Table 2, which indicates the number of significant news-related blogs published in conjunction with professional media organisations, by professional journalists outside of their official organisational affiliation and by amateur citizen journalists in November 2006. The list, compiled by cyberjournalist.net, includes blogs that publish significant public affairs content, including 'hyperlocal' blogs. While not comprehensive, the list includes blogs from the United States, United Kingdom, Israel and other English-speaking nations. Of the approximately 500 blogs represented, only 77 or 15 percent are amateur citizen initiatives. The majority of blogs (56 percent) is published by news sites as either ongoing or event-specific efforts, and primarily host work authored by professionals. Twenty-nine percent of the blogs belong to professionals who post them either on an independent site or on their own personal site.

Table 2: Number of Professional and Citizen Journalist Blogs, November 2006

<i>Journalist Blog Type</i>	<i>Number of Blogs</i>
Ongoing Blogs Published by News Sites Authored primarily by professionals, with some citizen journalists	198
Limited Time Blogs Published by News Sites for Events Authored primarily by professionals	85
Independent Blogs Published by journalists, but not on a news site	95
Personal Sites of Journalists	51
Amateur Citizen Journalist Initiatives Significant, sustained initiatives	77

Source: "J-Bloggers: The CyberJournalist List," Retrieved on November 24, 2006 at <http://cyberjournalist.net/cyberjournalists.php>.

Hybrid forms of citizen journalism in which amateurs and professionals interact to produce a story are becoming increasingly prevalent. Some observers believe that these collaborative efforts have the greatest potential to provide quality information, by subjecting stories to formal journalistic standards while giving citizens a meaningful voice in the process. Networked journalism is the most sophisticated of the hybrid forms of citizen journalism. It represents the collaboration of professional journalists and members of the public with the goal of investigating and reporting on news stories, many of which may fly under the radar of established news organisations or fail to generate in-depth coverage. The approach relies on open source methods to sustain a network where 'professionals and amateurs work together to get real story.'²¹ Professional journalists act as editors who manage the process in terms of soliciting story ideas; commissioning reports from the field, interviews and other source material; supervising fact-checking; and overseeing the production of the final piece. In the most advanced forms of networked journalism, participating parties circulate drafts of the piece, in order to develop a final copy. Acting in this capacity, professionals 'are less the manufacturers of news than the moderators of conversations that get to the news.'²²

A prime example of hybrid citizen journalism is OhmyNews, a South Korean online news site established in 2000 that has introduced Japanese and English language versions.²³ Between 70 and 80 percent of the stories on OhmyNews are the result of joint professional-amateur interactions. OhmyNews maintains a staff of ninety professionals, fifty-five of whom are journalists, and has a network of over 44,000 citizen contributors who receive a small stipend for their work. The online paper produces between 150 and 200 articles per day.²⁴ Unlike Wikinews, which is an entirely amateur operation that permits anyone to edit a post, OhmyNews requires articles to be vetted by a professional staff.

A Media System in Transition: The Digital Environment and News

The rise of citizen journalism coincides with a significant transformation of the news media system that has been in evidence since the late 1980s. Existing communications platforms, such as radio and television talk programs, and novel formats, like Internet websites and chat rooms, have acquired significant political roles. A distinguishing characteristic of these formats is the enhanced opportunities they provide for citizens

to become active participants in the political and media systems.²⁵ During the early phase of the new media era, citizen engagement with these formats was sporadic and often came in response to a significant event, such as a presidential election, the 1990 Gulf War or a high profile legal case, like the O.J. Simpson murder trial. As the novelty of new media wore off, audiences waned and reliance on traditional media persisted. New media served primarily to supplement traditional mainstream media, such as television news and newspapers, especially for 'news junkies' who already were established participants in the political process. The media system is currently in the midst of a second phase in this transition, which is characterised by an increasingly sophisticated digital environment coinciding with a fundamental change in the nature of news.

Digital technology enables a collaborative and flexible environment for journalism. The dominant one-to-many model of traditional journalism is no longer relevant, as communication can take place multi-directionally. Ever improving digital technologies that are faster, lighter, smaller, more mobile and cheaper have become widely available to the general public. These technologies, including laptop computers, mobile phones, PDAs, and iPods, accommodate more flexible platforms for disseminating information that are readily integrated. Broadband and wireless technology further facilitate access to and dissemination of information. The public seems anxious to adopt these new technologies. For example, between 2002 and 2006, Apple sold 67,642,000 iPods.²⁶ The number of mobile phone subscribers worldwide has reached 859 million.

It is important to note that the proliferation of technologies enabling citizens to take part in this type of digital revolution in information production is not uniformly distributed throughout the population. Particularly excluded are individuals from lower educational and socioeconomic status groups.²⁷ At the same time, there is evidence that the digital divide between those who have access to and use new technologies and those who do not has been shrinking.²⁸

Data indicate that audiences are migrating to formats facilitated by digital communications and are beginning to abandon older platforms, such as newspapers.²⁹ In the United States, the number of people who use the Internet to find information about politics has increased notably in recent years.³⁰ It should be noted, however, that the number of people who use the Internet for finding news and political information lags far behind those who use it for other purposes, such as for tracking the weather; finding information on sports, entertainment and travel; gaming and financial management. Table 3 indicates that 19 percent of adults, or 26 million Americans, sought political information online

from traditional news sites in 2006 on an average day. During the height of a political campaign or other major event, the number of people accessing news online can reach 54 million. More impressive is the increase in the proportion of people who are accessing information via non-traditional alternatives to standard news sites. Thirty-nine percent of American adults, or 57 million people, read blogs regularly.³¹ A November 2006 study revealed that 12 percent of American adults have downloaded a podcast so that they could listen to or view it at a later time, up from seven percent six months earlier.³² A joint study by the BBC and Independent Communications and Marketing (ICM), conducted in November 2006, found that online and handheld video use had increased rapidly in Britain. Forty-three percent of Britons claimed to have watched video online or on a mobile device at least once per week, and three quarters of these users reported that they were watching online video more than they had a year earlier. A full 20 percent of those who watched online had reduced their viewing of traditional television. Online watching was most prevalent among 16-24 year olds, whose rate of watching traditional television had declined by 2.9 percent over the preceding year. Of those who did not watch online video, two thirds said that they hoped to begin watching within the year.³³

Table 3: Percentage and Number of Adult Americans (Over 18) Who Access Traditional Online News Sites Daily⁴⁶

<i>Year</i>	<i>% of Adult Population</i>	<i>Number of People</i>
July 2002	13%	11 million
November 2004	18%	21 million
August 2006	19%	26 million

In addition to these technology-related developments, the core notion of what constitutes news has changed. The traditional definition of news as significant current events has given way to news as information in the broadest possible sense. What journalists provide and audiences accept as news ranges from fact-based reporting and rigorous investigative journalism to casual observations, gossip and rumours. Opinion content runs the gamut from professional editorials, opinion polls of vastly fluctuating quality with related commentary and personal viewpoints that are slimly invested with fact.³⁴ Citizen journalism, with

its emphasis on the collective accumulation of material and on seeking untold stories, no matter how small, contributes to this shift in the perception of what constitutes news itself.

The Power of Citizen Journalism

The emerging digital news media environment provides improved opportunities for democratic representation by enhancing average people's ability to engage in political and civic life. Citizen journalism allows ordinary people unprecedented access to the public sphere. Political leaders and the mainstream media have become attentive to the writings of citizen journalists, who can provide insights into public opinion on issues and act as watchdogs monitoring the actions of government and the mainstream press. Citizen journalism has the potential to limit the professional journalist's role as the essential gatekeeper between government actors and the general public.³⁵ It allows average people to set the agenda for public affairs and to decide which issues and events they consider to be consequential for their lives. Further, digital media can be used to strengthen associations by allowing people with similar concerns to come together in virtual communities and to exercise their strength in numbers.

Citizen journalism has had a tangible influence on traditional journalism. At the very least, the movement has made it clear that journalists are agents of their audiences and need to be more attentive to their public. Citizen journalists make visible small news stories that people care about—stories that are often neglected as professionals working for media conglomerates chase down the same big story. Eyewitness accounts and personal storytelling that are the hallmarks of citizen journalism create personal connections between users. Citizen journalists can also bypass the filters imposed by the professional press. During the war in Iraq, citizen journalists posted photos deemed by the mainstream media to be unsuitable for consumption by the American public, sparking strong reactions by citizens.

As revelations of shoddy reporting practices have undermined the credibility of even the most revered news organisations, such as the *New York Times*, and citizens have been increasingly dissatisfied with tabloid-style news content, the potential for citizen journalism to carve out a significant audience niche is evident. The popularity of citizen news sites, especially at the community level, has encouraged the mainstream press to adopt some of the features of citizen journalism, such as the

use of amateur newsgatherers and add-on reporters who contribute to stories. Some organisations have hosted citizen journalists on their news sites. For example, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the U.S. news organisation MSNBC established 'citizen journalist' features on its website, asked eyewitnesses to share their accounts and images and invited reactions from users. They maintained the feature for several months, but it did not become a permanent part of the news product. Alternately, the BBC views citizen journalism as part of its mandate due, in part, to its public funding as well as its desire to strengthen the level of audience trust in its broadcasts. It has taken steps to reconstitute its news coverage by forging partnerships with the public. These include the development of digital storytelling projects, in which people make their own videos for broadcast, and the creation of Action Network, a website which allows people sharing similar concerns to exchange information and organise campaigns.³⁶

Limitations of Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism faces co-optation by the mainstream press. With few exceptions, mainstream press organisations embrace citizen journalism reluctantly and often in name only. They are not inclined to take actions that will shift established patterns of authority in which they hold a privileged position.³⁷ Despite their claims to the contrary, few online newspapers provide meaningful opportunities for citizen voices to be represented on their sites. Those that incorporate citizen content are careful to maintain traditional authoritative hierarchies by editing content and limiting the potential for interaction with other citizens, journalists and public officials via the site.³⁸

There are practical considerations that limit the potential power of citizen journalism as well. As political scientists Arthur Lupia and Gisela Sin note in their study of blogs, 'Evolving technologies can make some collective endeavour harder to maintain or easier to destroy.'³⁹ One of the major drawbacks, especially for amateurs, is the challenge of maintaining ongoing projects. Doing journalism well is difficult, as is sustaining a quality product. The time investment, commitment and skills required to keep up with a constantly changing media and technological environment are substantial. The financial investment in equipment and connectivity is unlikely to be recouped. Citizen journalism is unprofitable, especially in a media market that is saturated with choices.⁴⁰ Concerns have been raised that in some instances news organisations are exploiting citizen

newsgatherers by making money from information and images that they receive for free. Citizens may eventually rebel against this practice with the likely result being that news organisations will discontinue their public outreach efforts rather than pay for material. Further, the effort required of audiences to seek out, evaluate and potentially contribute to citizen journalism is greater than that needed to attend to established media.

Some observers contend that the haphazard underpinnings of citizen journalistic efforts limit their long term viability, including their acceptance by audiences and their ability to attract the attention of public officials. The *New Yorker* columnist Nicholas Lemann laments the presence of 'journalism without journalists'. He believes 'Citizen journalists are supposedly inspired amateurs who find out what's going on in the places where they live and work, and who bring us a fuller, richer picture of the world than we get from familiar news organisations, while sparing us the pomposity and preening that journalists often display'.⁴¹ Critics are concerned that citizen journalism lacks the accountability in terms of established standards of quality and responsibility practiced by media institutions to safeguard the public interest. Where formal, institutionalised editorial procedures are lacking, as is the case for some forms of citizen journalism, fact checking and sourcing are compromised. Critics contend that the egalitarian, free-for-all ethic that characterises amateur journalism is at odds with professional goals, privileges entertainment over fact and even invites fabrication. Overly aggressive citizen journalists can compromise the privacy of their subjects with paparazzi-style photography and rumour mongering.⁴² As Fred Brown concludes, 'A professional journalist's No. 1 concern is to be accurate. A citizen journalist's No. 1 obligation is to be interesting'.⁴³ It should be noted that these charges against citizen journalism mirror those levelled repeatedly against the mainstream media.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Professional and amateur journalists are striving to generate news products that exploit the characteristics of the digital environment—capacity, immediacy and interactivity. They are seeking to establish their roles in a communications milieu that is in an unprecedented state of flux. Consequently, information disseminated by mainstream press and new media actors is becoming increasingly indistinguishable.

Established press institutions are slow to change, and emergent media systems always maintain vestiges of previous eras. The transition in the political media environment that has been developing since the late 1980s may signal a shift in the patterns of influence established between citizens, journalists and public officials. In particular, citizens will no longer be relegated to negotiating through media elites to gain access to political leaders. The digital tools now available to the public are historically unlike any other technologies in their ability to empower citizens to challenge established hierarchies. The virtually limitless ability to quickly disseminate content using readily available digital tools has enabled citizens to broker information and create new services that will strengthen their collective position in society.

Notes

¹ Lev Grossman, 'Time's Person of the Year: You,' [Available Online] *Time* 168, no.26, 25 December 2006 [cited January, 2007]; Available from <http://www.time.com>.

² Jay Rosen, 'Terms of Authority: Readers and Viewers,' [Available Online] *Columbia Journalism Review* (Sept./Oct 2003): 35-37. Available from <http://www.cjr.org/issues/2003/5/alt-rosen.asp>.

³ Dan Gillmor, *We the Media* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2006).

⁴ Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis, 'The Future is Here, But Do News Media Companies See It?', *Nieman Reports* 59, no. 4 (2005): 6-10.

⁵ Rosen, 2003.

⁶ Amanda Lenhart and Susannah Fox, 'Bloggers: A Portrait of the Internet's New Storytellers,' [Available Online] *Pew Internet and American Life Project*, 19 July 2006; Available from <http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP>.

⁷ Kevin Kawamoto, (ed.) *Digital Journalism: Emerging Media and the Changing Horizons of Journalism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

⁸ See, for example, pressthink.com; BuzzMachine.com.

⁹ Lenhart and Fox.

¹⁰ Joyce Cohen, 'Armed With Right Cell Phone, Anyone Can Be a Journalist,' *The New York Times*, 18 July 2005, Technology Section: 1.

¹¹ Allison Romano, 'Why Everybody is a Reporter,' [Available Online] *Broadcasting and Cable*, 22 August 2005; Available from <http://www.broadcastingcable.com/article/CA6249821.html>.

¹² Richard Sambrook, 'Citizen Journalism and the BBC,' *Nieman Reports* 59, no. 4 (2005): 13-15.

¹³ Diana Owen, 'New Media' and Contemporary Interpretations of Freedom of the Press,' in *Freeing the Presses*, ed. Timothy E. Cook (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 139-161.

¹⁴ Bowman and Willis.

¹⁵ Steve Outing, 'The 11 Layers of Citizen Journalism,' [Available Online] *Poynter Online*, 13 June 2005 [cited 20 October 2006]; Available from <http://www.poynter.org/content/content—view.asp?id=83126>.

¹⁶ See <http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Main—Page>.

¹⁷ Jay Rosen, 'Terms of Authority: Readers and Viewers,' [Available Online] *Columbia Journalism Review* (Sept./Oct 2003): 35-37. Available from <http://www.cjr.org/issues/2003/5/alt-rosen.asp>.

¹⁸ Dan Gillmor, *We the Media* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2006).

¹⁹ Rosen, 2003; Gillmore, 2005, 2006; Bowman and Willis, 2005a.

²⁰ Outing.

²¹ Jeff Jarvis, 'Networked Journalism,' [Available Online] *BuzzMachine*, 5 July 2006 [cited 19 November 2006]; Available from <http://www.buzzmachine.com/index.php/2006/07/05/networked-journalism>.

²² Ibid.

²³ See <http://english.ohmynews.com>.

²⁴ Moon Ihlwan, 'OhmyNews' Oh My Biz Problem,' [Available Online] *BusinessWeek.com*, 1 November 2006 [cited 20 November 2006]; Available from <http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/nov2006/gb20061101—539412.htm>; Outing.

²⁵ Richard Davis and Diana Owen, *New Media and American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

²⁶ Steve Dowling, 'Apple Reports Preliminary 4th Quarter Results.' [Available Online] Apple press release, 18 October 2006 [cited 18 November 2006]; Available from <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2006/oct/18results.html>.

²⁷ See World Internet Project for information on specific countries; <http://www.worldinternetproject.net>.

²⁸ See World Summit on the Information Society, 2005; <http://www.itu.int/wsis/tunis/newsroom/stats>.

²⁹ Michael Hill, 'Transforming the News,' [Available Online] *Baltimore Sun* [cited 19 November 2006]; Available from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/ideas/bal-id.newspaper19nov19,1,5275384.story>.

³⁰ World Internet Project, 2005.

³¹ Lenhart and Fox, 2006.

³² Mary Madden, 'Data Memo: Podcast Downloading,' [Available Online] *Pew Internet and American Life Project*, 22 November 2006 [cited 23 November 2006]; Available from <http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/193/report—display.asp>.

³³ 'Online Video 'Eroding TV Viewing,' [Available Online] BBC News, 27 November 2006 [cited 27 November 2006]; Available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/6168950.stm>.

³⁴ Hill, 2006; Owen, 2005.

³⁵ Mark Deuze, 'Journalism and the Web,' *Gazette* 61, no. 5 (1999): 373-390.

³⁶ Sambrook, 2005.

³⁷ Bowman and Willis, 200b.

³⁸ Jack Rosenberry, 'Few Papers Use Online Techniques to Improve Public Communication,' *Newspaper Research Journal* 26, no. 4 (2005): 61-73.

³⁹ Arthur Lupia and Gisela Sin, 'Which Public Goods Are Endangered?: How Evolving Communication Technologies Affect the Logic of Collective Action,' *Public Choice* 117, no. 3-4 (2003): 316.

⁴⁰ Ihlwan, 2006.

⁴¹ Nicholas Lemann, 'Amateur Hour,' [Available Online] *The New Yorker*, 7 August 2006 [cited 1 November 2006]: 44. Available from <http://www.newyorker.com/printables/fact/060807fa—factr>.

⁴² Mark Glaser, 'Did London Bombings Turn Citizen Journalists Into Citizen Paparazzi?' [Available Online] *Online Journalism Review*, Annenberg School of Journalism, University of Southern California, 12 July 2005 [cited 16 October 2006]; Available from <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/050712glaser/print.htm>; Romano, 2005.

⁴³ Fred Brown, "'Citizen' Journalism Is Not Professional Journalism,' *Quill* 93, no. 8 (August 2005): 42.

⁴⁴ See Davis and Owen, 1998; Leonard Downie, Jr. and Robert G. Kaiser, *The News About the News* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002).; Stephen J. Farnsworth and S. Robert Lichter, *The Nightly News Nightmare* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); James T. Hamilton, *All the News That's Fit to Sell* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁴⁵ Lee Rainey and Scott Keeter, 'How Americans Use Their Cell Phones,' [Available Online] *Pew Internet and American Life Project*, 3 April 2006 [cited 20 October 2006]; Available from <http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/179/report—display.asp>.

⁴⁶ John B. Horrigan, 'Data Memo: Politics Online,' [Available Online] *Pew Internet and American Life Project*, August 2006 [cited 3 September 2006]; Available from <http://207.21.232.103/PPF/r/187/report—display.asp>.

De/re/coding Security in 'Societies of Control': Data-mining as Political Practice

SOLON BAROCAS

The decentralised nature of the terrorist threat thus leads to exponentially more—and widely scattered—information to process and share. The reality is that every hour of every day, our intelligence and law enforcement agencies, health care providers, private companies and numerous other players receive information that might be relevant to uncovering a terrorist plot and preventing an attack.¹

Introduced into the popular imagination in 2002 by the doomed Total Information Awareness research project (later renamed Terrorism Information Awareness [TIA]),² data-mining has remained a permanent feature of counterterrorism debate and practice. Recent investigative journalism has revealed continued and classified support of data-mining research and development across United States (U.S.) intelligence agencies and internationally. Current examples include Tangram at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence,³ ADVISE (Analysis, Dissemination, Visualisation, Insight, and Semantic Enhancement) at the Department of Homeland Security,⁴ and the whole-sale adoption of TIA technology by Singapore in the form of its Risk Assessment and Horizon Scanning programme.⁵

In spite of such revealing accounts, the data-mining debate suffers from ongoing terminological confusion. Mary DeRosa has offered the following pithy definition: “Data mining” ... has a relatively narrow meaning: it is a process that uses algorithms to discover predictive patterns in data sets.⁶ But as Kim Taipale notes, there are really three types of data-mining in the context of counterterrorism: (1) *subject-oriented link analysis*, or a guilt by association model, which identifies other suspicious people based on a documented relationship to established terrorists; (2) *pattern analysis*, which automates the investigation of discovered terrorist networks so as to develop predictive models; and (3) *pattern matching*, or predictive data-mining, which employs predictive models to automate the analysis of massive datasets so as to uncover otherwise unrecognisable threats where no prior information exists.⁷ It is in the context of this third category that I seek to corroborate Lon Troyer’s bold claim that ‘[c]ontemporary

counterterrorism ... is poised to become the regulatory regime par excellence of potentialities.⁸

Counterterrorism data-mining algorithms design-in our most fraught political suppositions: what mundane, everyday, related behaviour makes—or is likely to make—someone a terrorist. What distinguishes the application of pattern matching data-mining to threat detection is the attempt to develop predictive models based on non-iterative behaviour or outcomes. In other words, because so few terrorist attacks employ the same tactics, these data-mining algorithms must instead measure those secondary everyday actions that, pieced together, confer the status of danger or a proclivity to becoming dangerous. Data-mining relies on an extant infrastructure of data collection that developed in the move towards a digital transactional backbone. Roger Clarke coined a term for this practice: 'dataveillance'.⁹ It refers to the in-line production of user data through our voluntary participation in a digitally mediated economy and society. Many other terms have developed around this one, including such artful expressions as 'datatrails' and 'digital footprints', which each attempt to capture the waves of transactional data we leave in our wake. While much of this implicitly refers to commercial data (e.g., travel, purchasing or so-called attention data), these often combine with other public data (e.g., biographical, legal and employment information) to help construct putatively more accurate digital representations of individual identity, behaviour, preferences and associations. Such advanced data syntheses sustain simulations of entire populations at an individual component level.

But data-mining also represents a uniquely seductive response to the threat of terrorism, the unexpected and violent outbursts of which challenge what Jef Huysmans terms 'the principle of determinability',¹⁰ or the ability to secure authority in distinction-making between the malign and benign and between friend and enemy. The attempt to detect potential dangers through data-mining is an attempt to re-establish the ontological grounds for detection as such. Such identification, of course, never reveals the social models of deviance and danger that power the decision-rendering engines of the data-mining programs. The strategic coding of security, so to speak, effaces the moment of political decision—the privileging of a certain set of risk factors in threat assessment algorithms—and truncates the range of political deliberation to the domain of algorithmic design. This paper therefore treats data-mining not simply as a vehicle for privacy infringement but as an important new locus of sovereign decision-making in the face of ontological uncertainty. It seeks to politicise¹¹ data-mining.

Huysmans has drawn a useful distinction between 'ontological security, which concerns the mediation of chaos and order,' and 'daily security, which concerns the mediation of friends and enemies.'¹² Security not only identifies enemies and establishes order, but also constitutes the very grounds upon which the distinctions between friend/enemy and order/chaos can be made. It must fulfil an ontological guarantee—to secure authority in distinction-making in the first place—before its related meanings can usefully perform operations on those distinctions. As Michael Dillon notes, however, 'Security has to know life if it is to realise its mission to secure life.'¹³ We are drawn into a security discourse of life, Huysmans posits, only in relation to a fear of death. We come to know life because we fear death, a double fear of death at the hand of another and the very uncertainty that characterises its untimely occurrence. Fear of death, Huysmans tells us, is simultaneously an epistemological fear: 'a fear of not knowing'.¹⁴ Nietzsche has therefore asked: 'Is it not the instinct of fear that bids us to know? And is the jubilation of those who obtain knowledge not the jubilation over the restoration of a sense of security?'¹⁵ The fear of death is managed through a process of objectification: an attempt to fix the ontological status of both the object to be feared and the grounds upon which such an objectification can take place.

Security ultimately confronts the fear of death through a thorough survey of life:

Facing the void is unbearable. In modernity, human beings constantly hide it, keep it at a distance. To do this they literally objectify it. They create objects about which they can develop 'true' knowledge. The general category of death is displaced by concretised dangers, inimical forces ranging from the devil to criminal and rival states. ... Once death is concretised, the fear of the unknown transcends into a fear of the concrete enemy or danger.¹⁶

Once fixed as discrete objects, the concrete threat of death can be brought under the exclusive control of security as a simple mediation of danger. In other words, in securing the very principle of determinability through the objectification of danger, security defers and ultimately conceals its precarious ontological origins; security is reduced to a politics of technical threat assessment. Such knowledgeable practices fill an ontological void: 'Besides guaranteeing a particular content it also represents the principle of

determinability as such ... that is, the possibility of creating an acceptable degree of certainty.¹⁷

Huysmans's helpful separation of everyday from ontological security takes on added meaning in the context of terrorism. If security can, in practice, secure the foundations upon which its ordering procedures are enacted—indeed, the ability to pose stable ontological distinctions altogether—it nonetheless remains vulnerable to subversions in its everyday performance. Everyday and ontological security are codependent, linked in such a way that the success of everyday social ordering rests upon a prior ontological conceit of determinability, which in turn depends on the corroboration of an everyday objectification of danger. Ontological security makes possible everyday security, while everyday security defers a crisis in ontological security. The problem, however, is that 'the daily security struggle [can] collapse into an ontological security question.'¹⁸

Terrorism signals precisely such collapse: an inability to identify, *ex ante* and in concrete form, the threat, and thus to pose any credible claim to protect against the violence it may deliver. The fear of terrorism draws to light the arbitrary, strategic nature of the everyday/ontological divide. Terrorism exposes, and therefore threatens, the principle of determinability. It prompts an ontological crisis in the objectification of danger that, in turn, casts doubt on the supremacy of existing epistemological procedures. The threat of terrorism is so potent precisely because it confounds the modern process of objectification that has for so long helped manage the anxiety of life-threatening danger. For this reason, Steven Simon and Daniel Benjamin (2001) refer to the threat of terrorism as, simply, 'The Terror.'¹⁹ But as Huysmans concludes, 'The ordering strategy of security is to postpone the limits of reflexivity as far as possible by accumulating truth about how the world works.'²⁰ Of course, there can be no ontological guarantees in the context of terrorism between what is and what is not—only strategic manoeuvres that reassure us of the possibility of knowing. Or as Ulrich Beck suggests, the question becomes '*how to feign control over the uncontrollable*.'²¹ To do so, security ditches its modern, taxonomical ontology of danger in favour of a coded, relational ontology of terror.

Radical Relationality as Strategic Recourse

Michael Dillon has argued that 'there is no ontology ... that does not legislate for its own empowerment technologically,²² and indeed, data-mining's attention to the relationship between fluctuating, component parts rather than the character of an impermanent whole suggests a

radical rethinking of the basis for causal explanation. Data-mining signals a shift from a preoccupation with physical and isolated entities, whose relations are described largely in terms of interactive exchange, to components 'in-formation', as well as components of 'information'. The structures of such components are decisively influenced by the mode of relation governing their connectivity with each other and their 'environments'.²³

Stable taxonomy and mechanical predictability are thus displaced by the relationalities and problematics of what Dillon calls 'being-in-formation'. Relationality revives the everyday/ontological security divide through an assessment of potentialities: while the fear of death can no longer be objectified in concrete form, it now adopts the character of a modular simulation. Ontological security, the mediation of order and chaos, re-establishes its authority in the ability to model and interpret component data. Threats are no longer wholly on or off, true or false, but rather somewhat predisposed to certain component arrangements. The ability to model, and therefore control this potential extends the life of the security discourse outlined by Huysmans. The political consequences of this move, however, are much less obvious. Dillon elucidates this superbly:

It is no longer simply a matter of fixing boundaries, of operating within secure boundaries or of policing the boundaries and identities of things as they are; of preserving them in their essence, however that essence is specified. Security becomes a boundless science of the very engendering of the tracking of the virtual potential for what are now essentially conceived as bodies-in-formation in the process of becoming dangerous.²⁴

Essential differences and stable boundaries, both crucial to the objectification and consequent mediation of danger, fail to contain the terrorist threat. Whereas the field of possibility for authorising what constitutes an everyday and ontological threat has in the past relied upon the ability to discipline differences and boundaries, security must now manage the potential for almost anything to become dangerous. An accumulation of information, indeed all possible information, represents a last-ditch effort to stave off both terrorism itself and the ontological crisis it provokes. The objectification of danger, and the basis upon which objectification is ensured, has nothing to do with threats as we already know them to be but rather as the component parts of individual

Data Doubles and the Database

Security practices of this sort dispense almost entirely with the visual surveillance of the population to be secured, superseded by data simulations. Subjects are instead invested with dispersed identities, identities of which individuals might not even be aware. Mark Poster therefore argues: 'The scandal, perhaps, of societies of control is its flagrant violation of the great principle of the modern individual, of its centered, "subjectified" interiority.'²⁵ Security no longer operates through a mediation of fixed individual identities; it instead reduces individuals to an information flow amenable to risk management. In other words, 'The subject is not encountered as a unique person with some sort of indispensable singularity or unity, but as an aggregate of risk factors, a modulation that can be managed and tamed through continuous monitoring.'²⁶ The ontological status of danger, and the authority to identify such danger, relies here not on the ability to (visually) observe subjects in their fixity, but rather on the capacity to track and calculate their shifting component parts that constitute the risky subject. As Gilles Deleuze concludes, societies of control cultivate a dynamic process of subject objectification.²⁷ The function of data-mining is not so much the institution of dominant power structures against the individual but in restructuring the very nature of the individual.²⁸ Populations are reduced to a corresponding double within the database, upon which various operations can be performed. Data-mining interprets subjects as bodies-in-form, through an ontology of radical relationality.²⁹ In other words, the ability to establish what something is has to do with an understanding of the contingent arrangement of its component parts.

Data-mining, of course, also signals a belief in the possibility of a kind of foreknowledge of the event. Simulations of potential futures increasingly inform current security decisions and thus determine the reality of the present.³⁰ Security no longer seeks to identify, and therefore fix, the ontological status of danger, nor does it seek to authorise that identification through positivist epistemologies; instead, emerging security practices attempt to mitigate the convergence of component parts that constitute the dangerous subject. Data-mining aims to manage '[h]ow things happen, how they can be made to happen, and how matters can be construed so that certain kinds of happenings are encouraged or discouraged.'³¹ Data-mining does not function in the binary terms of friend/enemy, but

fabricates the enemy within the social order as potentially dangerous.³² Thus, as Rens van Munster posits, preventative security is virtual security: it is one step further away from danger in its potentiality, but at the same time it is real, for the future increasingly determines present security choices.³³

Security in Societies of Control: Data-Mining

The ability to reconstruct the events leading up to and including a terrorist attack will increasingly present a challenge to governments that peddle in the continuous collection of real-time data. Political entities, and their institutional collaborators,³⁴ will find themselves unable to manage the impression that data collection of this sort could and therefore should allow for preventative, rather than investigative, action. The detailed and rapid reconstruction of the 7 July 2005 bombings in London, for instance, spoke as much to the strength of the investigation as to the simple availability of untold data—the collection of which occurred in spite of having failed to anticipate the attack. The collection and storage of this data, while clearly helpful from an investigative standpoint, will seem a liability to those charged with the prevention of such actions. Likewise, the general response to the events on 11 September 2001 was to view this as a failure to connect the dots—dots that, many suggest, registered independently throughout the intelligence apparatus, but were in no meaningful way correlated.³⁵ Though this restores confidence in the government, it likewise reveals an extant infrastructure in which future under-utilisation might be a source of political culpability. Does data-mining insist on data collection, or does data collection itself call forth a politics of data-mining?

The result is that new technologies have developed to automate the extraction and interpretation of data concerning ‘relations among people, organisations, places and things’ to allow for ‘the identification of connected items of information from multiple sources and databases whose significance is not apparent until the connections are made.’³⁶ Data-mining, therefore, has less to do with discrete data than the relations some data fields maintain with others. Programmes track the evolving relationship between, for example, financial transactions, travel, nationality and religious affiliation. The ability to name the terrorist threat, according to such a system, stems from the ability to map the constituent relations of the dangerous subject—a confluence of information that itself confers the status of danger. In other words, data-

mining reconfirms security's principle of determinability through relational ontologies of terror.

This is why the codes of the algorithms through which we pass data are so important. The architecture of the database, or how its multi-nodal relations are coded and therefore valued, over-determines the results of its potential recommendations. These algorithms perform highly opaque valuations of specific multi-nodal relations. In order to do so in any meaningful way, however, certain relations must be privileged over others—for example, that of nationality, age and religion. In other words, political judgments must be coded in. As Benjamin Muller points out, such tactics are uniquely seductive:

Allegedly purged of the ugly politics of us and them, friends and enemies, inclusion and exclusion, the securitised, bureaucratised and 'scientised' realm of [this new technology] ... provides a seemingly sanitary means of identifying/authenticating threats.³⁷

No doubt these models result in categorical suspicion, an ongoing concern voiced by privacy and civil rights advocacy groups. But I believe this misses the point. Such security practices do not concern themselves with terrorism's political motivations. Data-mining instead signals a rejection of political resolution or public deliberation in favour of situational controls. As Dillon and Reid conclude, 'Once you have cracked the operation of code, [security] becomes a function of the informational strategies required for devising networks of a preferred sort.'³⁸ The primacy of one set of relations (e.g., poverty, education, age, etc.) suggests a privileging of a certain kind of being, of a certain mode of intervention (e.g., into the potential connection between poverty, education and terrorism).³⁹ Data-mining ensures the political evacuation of discussions of terrorism.

Conclusion: Representability and the Politics of Algorithmic Design

The interests of its creators and users are already built into the network, through its software protocols and configurations. ... Among other things, this means that software used for sorting behaviors, preferences, and practices operate in particular ways.⁴⁰

What is perhaps of most concern about data-mining is the illegibility of its assessment mechanics. As Adrian Mackenzie argues, 'No longer is representation simply threatened or infiltrated by technology, technologies are actually under-represented in their specificity and situation.'⁴¹ This should not be confused for low visibility. People are increasingly fluent in the channels of dataveillance but have little concept of how data, once obtained, figures in any secondary analysis. In this case, the internal architecture of the database, and the coding of algorithms resist simple, transparent representation. In order to discuss data-mining in political terms, one must get a handle on it as a unique political practice and formula, not simply a passive machine from which results emerge. The question therefore becomes: How does one represent the politics of algorithms? How can one contest, or even evaluate, their political character if they so readily resist representation? Data-mining succeeds, politically, because we find it so hard to make plain its technical architecture, to conceive of technology as an agent or practice rather than mere tool.

Data-mining thus effaces the moment of political decision. It renders invisible, or beyond representation, the crucial political judgments that always already structure threat assessments and the basic ontology of insecurity. The principle of determinability is here restored in the apparent absence of any political agent: automated data-mining determines the object of insecurity without recourse to dubious essential differences. It perfects the objectification of danger in a way that shields the emergent security discourse from the vulnerabilities of foundational distinction-making. The result is a remarkably insular system of self-validation, the blunt efficacy of which has yet to be proven.⁴² However reassuring it might seem otherwise, data-mining, as both practice and discourse, shuts down the space of political intervention. Any meaningful discussion of security must now, therefore, account for the politics of the data-mining algorithms at play in societies of control.

Notes

¹ The Markle Foundation, 'Creating a Trusted Network for Homeland Security' (New York: The Markle Foundation, 2003).

² 'Report to Congress Regarding the Terrorism Information Awareness Program' [Available online—cited 20 May 2003]; Available from <http://www.eff.org/Privacy/TIA/TIA-report.pdf>.

³ Shane Harris, 'Terrorist Profiling, Version 2.0,' *National Journal*, October 20, 2006.

⁴ United States Government Accountability Office, 'Data Mining: Early Attention to Privacy in Developing Key DHS Program Could Reduce Risks,' (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Accountability Office, 2007).

⁵ Sharon Weinberger, 'Son of TIA: Pentagon Surveillance System is Reborn in Asia' [Available online], *Wired* [cited 22 March 2007]; Available from <http://www.wired.com/politics/online/rights/news/2007/03/SINGAPORE>.

⁶ Mary DeRosa, 'Data-mining and Data Analysis for Counterterrorism,' (Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004).

⁷ Kim Taipale, 'Data-mining and Domestic Security: Connecting the Dots to Make Sense of Data,' *Columbia Science and Technology Law Review* 5 (2003): 2.

⁸ Lon Troyer, 'Counterterrorism: Sovereignty, Law, Subjectivity,' *Critical Asian Studies* 35, no. 2 (2003): 272.

⁹ Roger Clarke, 'Information Technology and Dataveillance,' *Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery* 31, no. 5 (1988): 498-512.

¹⁰ Jef Huysmans, 'Security! What Do You Mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier,' *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 2 (1998): 226-55.

¹¹ The distinction I draw here between 'the political' (the delimitation and authorisation of the range of politics) and 'politics' (the everyday technology and bureaucracy of governance) derives from the Schmittian conceptualisation deployed by—among others—Jenny Edkins, *Poststructuralism & International Relations: Bringing the Political Back In* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1999); also see Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, Geirge Schwab, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹² Huysmans, 228.

¹³ Michael Dillon, 'Virtual Security: A Life Science of (Dis)Order,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 32, no. 3 (2003): 533

¹⁴ Huysmans, 235.

¹⁵ Quoted in James Der Derian, 'The Value of Security: Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, and Baudrillard,' in *On Security*, ed. Ronnie D. Lipschutz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 33-34.

¹⁶ Huysmans, 237.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 238-240.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁹ Steven Simon and Daniel Benjamin, 'The Terror,' *Survival* 34, no. 4 (2001): 5-18.

²⁰ Huysmans, 245.

²¹ Original emphasis; Ulrich Beck, 'The Terrorist Threat: World Risk Society Revisited,' *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 4 (2002): 41.

²² Dillon, 'Virtual Security,' 547.

²³ Michael Dillon, 'Poststructuralism, Complexity and Poetics' *Theory, Culture & Society* 17, no. 5 (2000): 11.

- ²⁴ Dillon, 'Virtual Security,' 538.
- ²⁵ Mark Poster, 'Database as Discourse, or Electronic Interpellations,' in *The Second Media Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 93.
- ²⁶ Rens Van Munster, 'The War on Terrorism: When the Exception Becomes the Rule,' *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 17, no. 2 (2004): 150.
- ²⁷ Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscripts on the Societies of Control,' *October* 59, no. 1 (1992): 3-7.
- ²⁸ Poster, *The Second Media Age*, 82.
- ²⁹ Michael Dillon and Julian Reid, 'Global Liberal Governance: Biopolitics, Security and War,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 1 (2001): 57.
- ³⁰ See Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).
- ³¹ Dillon, 'Poststructuralism, Complexity and Poetics': 7.
- ³² Van Munster, 'The War on Terrorism,' 151.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 147.
- ³⁴ For an impressively detailed account of public-private cooperation in data-mining for terrorists leading up to and following the 11 September 2001 attacks, see Robert O'Harrow, *No Place to Hide* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005).
- ³⁵ See *9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004).
- ³⁶ 'Report to Congress Regarding the Terrorism Information Awareness Program.'
- ³⁷ Benjamin J. Muller, '(Dis)Qualified Bodies: Securitisation, Citizenship and "Identity Management",' *Citizenship Studies* 8, no. 3 (2004): 280.
- ³⁸ Dillon and Reid, 'Global Liberal Governance,' 57.
- ³⁹ Recent empirical scholarship has disproved this supposed correlation; see Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, 'Education, Poverty, Political Violence and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?' *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, no. 4 (2003): 119-144.
- ⁴⁰ Lawrence Lessig, *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace* (New York: Basic Books, 2000): 96.
- ⁴¹ Adrian Mackenzie, 'Transductions: Invention, Innovation and the Problem of Representing Technology' [Available online-cited 20 March 2003]; Available from <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/mackenza/papers/Transduction.pdf>.
- ⁴² See Jonathan David Farley, 'The N.S.A.'S Math Problem,' *The New York Times*, 16 May 2006; Bruce Schneier, 'Data-mining for Terrorists' [Available online-cited 9 March 2006]; Available from <http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2006/03/data-mining-for.html>; Bruce Schneier, 'Terrorists, Data-mining, and the Base Rate Fallacy' [Available online-cited 10 July 2006]; Available from <http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2006/07/terrorists-data.html>; Taipale, 'Data-mining and Domestic Security'; Kim Taipale, 'Technology, Security and Privacy: The Fear of Frankenstein, the Mythology of Privacy and the Lessons of King Ludd,' *Yale Journal of Law and Technology* 7, no. 123 (2004).

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVE HERRMANN

Steve Herrmann is editor of the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) News Interactive. He joined the BBC News Interactive website shortly after it was launched in 1997 and became editor in 2005. In an interview with Christine Gemson, he offers an insider's perspective on online news journalism.

STAIR: *How has the Internet transformed the nature of news journalism?*

Steve Herrmann (SH): Ten years ago it felt like you were a bit of a pioneer, part of a small group of people who were perhaps puzzlingly enthusiastic about this new way of doing journalism. Many of our colleagues in mainstream parts of the media didn't necessarily understand why we were so enthusiastic. Ten years on, it feels much more like we're part of the mainstream media, others may not see us like that yet but it's starting to feel that way.

In terms of how it has changed reporting and journalism, I think the things I would pick out are obvious but still very important and perhaps overlooked. The most obvious is that it's on demand in terms of what the audience can access, they can access whatever they want, whenever they want it. That means that you need to be quite disciplined and it's quite a pressure to be under because your deadline is always now, as news is happening. So you have to be fast and you have to understand what the audience's appetites and needs are. It gives you the flexibility to do things quickly and simply but also to do things in greater depth. Again that's something that the audience can decide about. If you provide a lot of depth on a story, if the audience thinks it's important to go and read it, they can, but they don't have to.

Another perhaps obvious thing about it is that it's not a medium, so when our journalists join it doesn't matter what background they are from. We have a number from print background, from the news agencies, from radio and TV. They all bring particular skills and strengths. The fact that the Internet is a multimedia platform is really important. It makes the journalism different and I think it's a real asset in terms of providing something different for the audience. They can consume the news in a whole range of different ways.

A third way in which it's changed journalism is that it's interactive, so there's a direct return path from the audience to get back to us. It existed to a limited extent in radio, TV and print. But with news websites, the scale and the ease of that communication is a different order of magnitude, so you get huge volumes of feedback. Even if you don't ask for it you get it. We ask for it everyday, it's a key part of our proposition. The value of that to us is two key things. One of them is that it broadens our agenda, it gives us a much more diverse range of voices and opinions from people out there in this country and around the world who've got views on different subjects. The second thing it gives us is additional newsgathering capabilities because, as is happening increasingly, if there's a major news story, people are going to be there before our reporters unless it's a scheduled event.

The last thing is that it's a truly global medium for journalism in a way that I'm not sure we've ever had at the same level. Newspapers were always within a defined geographic area where the newspapers were distributed. There were some global radio broadcasters: the BBC World Service has been a global broadcaster for a long time, but even that wouldn't reach everywhere. Certainly not in every language. Same goes for television. Although satellite TV has extended the reach, I think the Internet is a medium which allows you to make your journalism global. It means that anyone, anywhere in the world can read news not just about international events but they can read news about their home towns or about their local football team even if they are on the other side of the world.

Q: You spoke of the global reach of the website. What responsibility does BBC News Interactive see itself having towards the international public? Particularly towards people who have access to the site in non-democratic countries where they may not have access to open, impartial information. Does this influence the decisions concerning what news stories you cover?

SH: We have a very clear mandate to provide news and information for an international audience. BBC News Interactive produces news for the UK audience but also the international audience. A portion of our funding comes via the [BBC] World Service in grant and aid money which originates from the Foreign Office. That funding is there specifically to allow us to cater for an international audience. That's why we have two editions of the front page of the website, which allows us to showcase the best of our international reporting for an international audience on the one hand while catering for a UK audience on the other.

We're aware of the fact that in a number of countries throughout the world information is restricted, controlled, governments seek to limit people's access to information, particularly the Internet and the websites they can look at. An example of that is China where our site is blocked. We're aware of that, and what we do is continue to report based on our journalistic judgment, based on the BBC's core editorial principles, we continue to report events in those countries and we hope that people can get access to that information. I suppose that it doesn't affect what we do editorially. Our duty is to make that information available, to put it out there. If the government is pressurising Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in certain countries to block access to certain websites, it's very hard for us to intervene in that. But obviously we want our material to be seen by the widest possible audience.

Q: When the Internet first started, it was heralded as this new medium that could be used for the advancement of democracy by providing access to information, allowing citizens to get involved, allowing individuals to interact with each other more easily. How has the BBC's online ventures contributed to the public sphere, in aiding citizens to involve themselves in civil society? Do you think the Internet has contributed towards making society more democratic?

SH: What we're about is providing people with accurate, timely and balanced news and information about the affairs of the day. I think the Internet is unsurpassed as a medium for doing that. Access to the information and trust in that information is one of the cornerstones. I think what we're doing on the BBC website is important in that respect. But if you go on to ask 'Has that increased people's sense of civic involvement or made them more likely to get involved in social, political issues?' I think the jury is out on that. It's certainly given them the tools to do it if they want to.

An affiliated site of the BBC News website is the 'Action Network'. We set that up a number of years ago as a way of seeing whether or not we could help to facilitate people's engagement in local or international affairs by providing them with extra information. On top of that, we aimed to help people to understand how to campaign around issues, like how to contact your Member of Parliament (MP) or how to get a petition together. We tried to build up some of those building blocks of knowledge about how to organise and get actively engaged in issues. I think that had limited success, to be really candid about it. I think what transpired was that the bits of what we provided that were the most valued were the core information that we were providing, the links

to other resources, to further information about this subject, whether it was something to do with the National Health Service (NHS) or something to do with accessing your MP or whatever. It was the information that people valued most.

Q: Due to the interactive nature of the Internet, the public is now providing you with news stories. You also have online forums where your audience can contribute ideas and opinions. How do you mediate that? How do you determine what can be posted? How do you decide what information to use from the public?

SH: In terms of comments and opinions, we have some basic house rules which we publish on the site, and we publish them prominently so that people who are e-mailing or posting comments see them. Those are basic rules regarding profanity, we don't allow swearing on the site because it would offend people in the audience. Legality, what you say has to be legal, you can't be defaming people or inciting racial hatred. If it does conform to those, then we publish it. On busy days, when something happens and we get a lot of messages, sometimes the sheer scale and the logistics mean that we don't publish all of the comments.

As far as how we decide editorially regarding what we should follow up, that's a slightly different category. If something has happened somewhere—there's been an earthquake somewhere and we say to people: 'Are you there? Tell us what's happening'—and they send us accounts or pictures. How we decide what to publish is based on editorial merit, does it add to the story? Does it tell us anything new? And if it does, we'll want to publish it. Before we use it there's a whole series of checks that we need to carry out just like with any journalistic information processing. In essence, it's really no different than any journalist who's checking out a contact and is then checking what they have to say and seeing how that fits in with the wider story. It is labour intensive but it can be hugely valuable as a way of getting information about stories that we would otherwise not have access to.

Q: How has the online medium changed the power relationship between journalists and the audience?

SH: I think that's a really good question. I think it has changed the balance. Previously, if you were the editor of a publication or a broadcaster you put your news out there, and it was more or less take it or leave it for the audience. It was quite difficult for people to challenge

what you were doing or to provide an alternative account to the one you were providing and the Internet has really turned that upside down. Now, there are any number of other websites, blogs and sources on the Internet that can quite simply challenge our account of events or our interpretation of a story. And they do. I think that this shift in the balance of power, if you want to put it like that, presents a real challenge for journalists, particularly for the ones who are working on the Web. But it's not just them, it's journalists in general. It is not in any sense the exclusive preserve of journalists to report and comment about events. It's easy now for anyone to do that. It means that we have to be more accountable than perhaps we were before. It means we have to justify everything that we do. We have to be transparent about why we've done what we've done. Because people will question it and I think that's no bad thing. It makes our job harder but that doesn't mean it's wrong. I actually think it's a good way of providing checks and balances when we go about our day to day journalistic work. But it's definitely challenging.

Q: So there is now additional pressure on you for a greater degree of transparency and accuracy. How does the BBC maintain this accuracy and make ethical decisions regarding what to post online when faced with the pressure for immediate and up-to-the minute information?

SH: That is a real challenge in the way the media works because of the Internet and because of continuous news on television as well, there is an expectation that news will be immediate. That places huge demands on journalists, and our view is that it's important to be quick and it's important to be right. If you have to choose between the two, it's more important to be right than it is to be quick. But we aim always to be both.

If anything has changed over the last five to ten years in that pressure, it's that news is more quickly and readily available to the audience. So the expectation is there that they can get it when they need it. Whether it be on a 24-hour news channel or on the Internet. But I think there's also an expectation from the audience that if something is happening, even if it's not absolutely crystal clear, what's unfolding and what all the facts are, there's an increasing expectation from the audience that we share what we do know with them. We even share our uncertainty with them. What that means for us is that we need to find ways of communicating what we do and don't know to the audience. So we say, reports are coming in of this, one report says whatever, this is as yet unconfirmed.

I think that's a shift that's happened over a number of years whereas perhaps in the past, we would have been more inclined, as journalists, to wait until we had the whole story, until we were sure before we went with anything. With developing stories, breaking news stories, increasingly there's a tendency to explain how the story is unfolding. With certain very dramatic stories, we ran an account of events which was very simple bullet points with times next to them with every new piece of information that we acquired and the sources of that information. That provides a growing chronology list of facts, some of which were later contradicted or discounted. Whenever we do that kind of coverage alongside our main news story that does always extremely well. People are very hungry for that sort of information.

Q: The Internet has clearly transformed the speed of delivery and the immediate impact of news stories. However, news stories aren't just quickly covered but they are also quickly forgotten and replaced by other news stories. How does this affect thoughtful contemplation on major issues?

SH: You can probably tell that I'm a fan of online journalism because you can have the best of both worlds in this medium. It is very well suited for immediate breaking news: bite-sized chunks of information as a story unfolds. Increasingly video is an essential part of telling that story, and we provide videostream on the Web, too. The Web is ideal for all of that, but it's also ideal for contemplative, analytical, in-depth information which you need to really understand the story in it's entirety. That's because we have in effect unlimited space to do that on the Internet because you can provide links through to source material in a way that you can't in television. You can provide a whole range of different perspectives and analyses, and you can collate those so that they are clearly aggregated together so that people have a body of information which they can digest and which they can use to go as deeply into a story as they want to.

Q: With the Internet people can choose the stories that they read. There is a concern regarding the Internet, that interests will be splintered. What does the BBC do to challenge this splintering? Do you actively try to find ways to encourage people to consult a variety of news stories that they would have been exposed to if they'd watched the news on television or heard it on the radio?

SH: The fact of the matter is, we can't force people to watch or read any of our content. We can't say 'Read this story and not that one' on the Internet. That's what I like about the medium. The power is in the hands of the viewer. But we have on the website an area that is driven by the number of users' reading stories at any particular time. If you look at that, you will see that at any minute of the day you can see what the most popular stories are, who's reading what, in which regions of the world they are reading it. What that is, is the audience's agenda. Does that dictate our agenda? No. But it's very useful for us to know what the audience is finding interesting.

Q: How do the different branches of the BBC interact? How do radio, TV and the Internet influence each other in terms of news coverage?

SH: There's a central part of the BBC that's called BBC Newsgathering, and they really control the correspondents and the reporters who go out and do the reporting. They are deployed on behalf of everyone in news. We're in close touch with Newsgathering, so we know what their correspondents are doing. If we have requests for the website, we'll put them into Newsgathering, and we will try to source material from the correspondents for the site. We also write a lot of the stories ourselves, but we'll go to the correspondents to provide additional analysis, background, colour, reportage. Newsgathering is really at the heart of the journalistic operation in news. TV, radio and online do talk to one another. They do collaborate. I think in the early days there was not enough of that, we weren't terribly good at that. But I think we're improving. I think on big stories, on big projects we do it quite well. I think what is really important is that the benefit of the good, original journalism is maximised to the widest possible audience.

Q: What do you think sets the BBC News website apart from other news websites?

SH: We do a very broad range of stories: globally, nationally and locally so a lot of the journalism on the site emanates from other areas of the BBC. It's not all produced by the website team. For example, BBC World Service journalism is an integral part of what we do—of our global news coverage. Locally the BBC's network of local radio stations and reporters is another strength we can draw on, so that at the local level we have news being written in the English regions and out in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. That also forms a part of our coverage. So I think there's a great range of material.

I think it's also a website that's been well resourced from the outset. BBC recognised the importance of the Internet as a medium for news at a relatively early phase and committed resources to it and then followed up and invested more as things took off. I'd also say that because we're also a broadcast organisation, when video comes into its own on the Internet with the rise of broadband, I think we'll be very well placed to take advantage of that. Also the interactivity has been something that we've made a feature of our news journalism and the BBC News website, in a way that not every other website has done.

Q: How do you envisage news websites in ten years?

SH: If I had to predict any big trends they probably wouldn't be very adventurous predictions because they've started happening already. I think the rise of video on the Web is inexorable and I think that as a way of consuming news, it will become increasingly important. I think that we need to make sure that the way we present that news for our Web audience is the best it can be. We also need to understand whether there are new ways of telling stories on the Web with video, which are actually different from how television is made.

I think the other area which may well take off in a way that it hasn't quite yet is consumption of news on mobile platforms, whether it's personal digital assistants (PDAs) or mobile phones; increasingly they are almost indistinguishable anyway. But the appetite to get hold of sports scores, news headlines and share prices while people are on the move I think will increase as it becomes easier, better publicised and crucially the cost of doing so becomes more transparent and perhaps drops. Then I think you will see people using their mobile devices more for news. It's something that we are very aware of, and we've developed our website in such a way that it works well on mobiles, but at the moment it's still a very small proportion of our audience that consumes our news on mobile platforms. But I expect that to change.

Ernest J. Wilson III. *The Information Revolution and Developing Countries.*

Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006. 456 pp. \$25.00 (pbk).
ISBN 0262731789.

SLAVKA ANTONOVA (Massey University, New Zealand)

Ernest J. Wilson's *The Information Revolution and Developing Countries* is an excellent example of how one must 'never judge a book by its cover'. Behind the inconspicuous title, the reader discovers both a fascinating story of how the global 'digital divide' was created by private economic and political interests, and a compelling demonstration of why 'social scientists should start their investigations by reviewing deeply rooted indigenous practices and institutions.'¹

The significance of this book emanates from the expectation that, in the next ten years, mainly developing countries will determine Internet-user growth. As the author explains, the 'eventual membership' of the 'five billion people who live outside the West will be momentous,' for it 'will have material consequences for future global growth, modern governance, and military strategies.'²

The process will depend on efforts to redress the digital divide. Yet the intriguing question that the author asks is '[w]hy did private-sector elites choose to take up the divide when they did?'³ Wilson's experience with the failure of the Global Access to Information and Communication Technology initiative (he was one of the GAICT's creators and its first administrative head in 1995) compels him to infer that 'once the basic parameters of the global ICT regime were established around new rules governing property rights, efficiency, and private-sector leadership, then efforts to address the divide equitably were considered legitimate to the degree they fit within the constraints of these new rules.'⁴

Wilson's investigation of the thorny path of the Internet from the developed to the developing countries suggests that power should be studied—to paraphrase Foucault—in its social networks, in its capillary forms, at the locations where it can be resisted. Similarly, when Wilson recounts the personal battles of Internet advocates in Brazil, Ghana and China to persuade their national governments to adopt the Internet and allow new markets to grow, distinct power-relations networks surface from the bulk

of details and peculiarities. From this, the author concludes that the 'information revolution is a local work of local construction.'⁵ This is an upfront challenge to the dominant technology-diffusion model, which assumes that 'agency and innovation are originated at the global center.'

To do justice to the complexity of the studied phenomenon, the author creates, and successfully applies, an 'open-architecture' investigative space of intersecting matrices, parameters and factors, which he names a *strategic restructuring model*. In his exploratory analysis, social structures, institutions and policies interact with an innovator's agency and cultural traditions. All these are the independent variables that a researcher has to consider when exploring a society-specific path of technology diffusion. In their interplay, the variables influence the political balance between public and private sectors, monopoly and competition, domestic and foreign ownership.

Along with its conceptual and analytical intensity, this book is captivating with its normative span and activist passion. The author is convinced that the 'world community now confronts a deficit of collective goods, collective will, and collective action'⁶ to close the worldwide digital divide. He assigns particular responsibility to developing countries themselves: 'Until they seize the moment and define the challenges more effectively, the efforts of the G9, private companies, and Northern NGOs will make little headway to reduce the global digital divide.'⁷

The significance of this observation was recently confirmed by two U.N.-level events—the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) (2003-2005) and the inaugural Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Athens (October 2006). At these global gatherings, government, business and NGO representatives from developing countries voiced concerns about prohibitive connection costs, the need for 'universal access' and the lack of local content on the Internet. They shared their experiences in building capacities in different local contexts. In effect, this is exactly what Wilson advocates they do—'seize the moment and define the challenges more effectively.' In this light, *The Information Revolution and Developing Countries* can be assessed as a thought-provoking introduction to understanding how global policies and discourses on the information revolution and the information society are embedded in local practices.

Notes

¹ Ernest J. Wilson III, *The Information Revolution and Developing Countries* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006), 399.

² Ibid., 2.

³ Ibid., 343.

⁴ Ibid., 343.

⁵ Ibid., 403.

⁶ Ibid., 389.

⁷ Ibid., 390.

Sarah Oates, Diana Owen and Rachel K. Gibson, eds.
The Internet and Politics: Citizens, Voters and Activists.

London: Routledge, 2006. 228 pp. \$135 (hbk). ISBN 041534784X.

EVELYNE BOZZI (St Cross College, University of Oxford)

The burgeoning field of Internet and politics can be narrowly split into four areas of inquiry: e-participation, e-mobilisation, e-campaigning and e-government. *The Internet and Politics: Citizens, Voters and Activists* focuses on the first two, offering a broad survey of the Internet as a medium and its real or potential impact on civil society, institutional mobilisation and participation.

The book sprang out of papers written for a European Consortium of Political Research workshop on 'Changing Media and Civil Society,' gathering a varied group of contributors—lecturers, research fellows and Ph.D. candidates—on a wide range of case studies drawn from the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Palestine, Northern Ireland, Russia and Ukraine.

The contributors to this volume are grasping at a far-reaching issue: 'Can the Internet really make a difference in building, preserving or challenging democracy?' This open-ended question will have to be answered on one's own, most likely well beyond the work at hand, and after a deep incursion into the growing literature on 'Internet studies'. Moreover, the chapters do not always live up to the editors' ambition of a shared 'central notion of a definition of a central hypothesis' about the Internet's political function.¹ Nevertheless, the volume makes up in breadth what it lacks in coherence. It does make some advances in answering its introductory question about whether the Internet is qualitatively different from more traditional forms of media.

The first part of the book attempts to define and evaluate the role of the Internet in the civil society of 'advanced industrial democracies'. Chapter Two looks at the use of the Internet for political information, decision-making and activism among U.S. youth. Chapter Three provides a case study on Internet mobilisation via the Minnesota E-democracy Project, while Chapter Four asks whether the Internet can be a revival tool for traditional mass organisations such as the U.K. Countryside Alliance, which opposes the British government's ban on hunting with dogs. Chapter Five looks at the ways in which British local government Internet discussion boards shape political participation in the counties of Cumbria and Suffolk. In the two latter cases, it can be concluded that the

Internet does not necessarily attract new citizens into politics but mostly strengthens existing resources for those already politically active.

The editors then shift their focus to the Internet as a medium reaching traditionally marginalised political groups in a case study of Hizbollah mobilisation efforts in Palestine and cyberterrorism in Northern Ireland. Finally, the third part of this work moves to yet another question: the role of the Internet in non-democratic states, with two studies on the use of the Internet as an organising tool for political parties and a mobilising force for NGOs in Russia. The final study compares online coverage of the 2000 political crisis in Ukraine with coverage in traditional media. The concluding chapter, leaving the realm of case studies, is an interesting contribution to the debate on the place of the Internet in civil society, as framed by the ideas of Habermas.

Such a wild tour of the Internet as a media tool in political communication, mobilisation and organisation has the advantage of showing the extent to which digitised democracy is a reality across geographical and political landscapes. It also illustrates the degree to which electronic media have already permeated most spheres of contemporary politics. In addition to the mixed conclusions picked out of the various case studies—for example, that the Internet is better at organising activists than at engaging citizens—the book also highlights some fundamental questions about the Internet as a tool for political institutions and civil societies. In the process, it helpfully exposes the pitfalls and challenges facing the researcher of e-politics as the pace of technological change obscures its ‘context and direction’. As noted by the editors, the Internet is a ‘sphere that can involve virtually all levels of the political world simultaneously’ and therefore necessitates an explicit framework of analysis for a given topic.²

This book does not provide such a framework however. It constitutes a snapshot of the field at a specific time and in a specific, fast-changing technological context. It provides a good overview of how the Internet as a medium has been used in a variety of geographical, social and political contexts. Yet it may ultimately suffer from a short shelf-life in terms of providing a compelling analysis of the Internet as a durable and exciting political tool. For such an exercise, one might look at *Internet and Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies*.³ The present book might then be a good companion to more coherent and targeted works on the topic.

¹ Sarah Oates, Diana Owen and Rachel Gibson, eds., *The Internet and Politics: Citizens, Voters and Activists* (London: Routledge, 2006), 2.

² Ibid., 2.

³ Andrew Chadwick, *Internet and Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

Brian John Hilton, Chong Ju Choi and Carla Miller.
*The Global Silk Road: Globalisation, Islam and the
 Creation and Distribution of Knowledge Using the
 Internet.*

Victoria, British Columbia: Trafford, 2006. 362 pp. \$29.48 (pbk).
 ISBN: 1412065267.

NADRA HASHIM

As the long subtitle suggests, *The Global Silk Road* takes on an enormous range of topics. As a result, it never fully resolves debates about 'strong society versus strong state,' about the role of cultural norms in determining economic 'advancement,' or about whether the Internet, the so-called new Silk Road, truly promotes cooperation. Hilton, Choi and Miller posit that the Internet allows knowledge and enterprise to transcend state and organisational or communal boundaries.¹ For example, the authors imply that had the Internet been in existence in past decades, decision-making in legal and monetary institutions may have been held to a higher level of scrutiny and as a result organisations such as the World Bank may have produced more enlightened policy. They attribute the World Bank's inability to comprehend the success of state-planned economies in Asia, and their decline in the Middle East and Africa, to a lack of knowledge that the Internet could presumably have supplied. Little attention is paid to the glaring reason such oversights were possible, namely the World Bank's aversion to state-planned economic policies.

The *Global Silk Road* is easy enough to follow, until the authors suggest that the 'organisations' and 'institutions' transplanted by the 'West' to Asia led, in some way, to the economic crisis in 1997.² Once again, the reader must extrapolate. If the electronic Silk Road had been as popular as it is today, would this crisis have been averted? Hilton et al. seem to believe so. They suggest the Internet can overcome a variety of 'transaction' costs,³ because it promotes a 'dynamic identity', fostering 'trust' among strangers in strange institutions.⁴ Yet, despite the best information the Internet has to offer and the best intentions of its users, the pull of Western free markets in one direction, and tug of Eastern communalism in another, may continue to foster crises. The authors do not consider this eventuality.

One of the most compelling discussions in the *Global Silk Road* concerns the role of 'emergent communities' that function outside the cultural mainstream. These include various ethnic diasporas, travelling businessmen and, in the past century, European colonial elites (Chapters Six to Seven). Like the Internet, these groups connect with one another, in spaces where the state has not yet reached or in which it has no interest. The story of how these emergent communities, especially in feudal Europe, pushed the local economy to grow and led the region towards global economic integration is quite interesting.

In this unlikely comparison with feudal guilds, the hypothesis that the Internet can connect people beyond state boundaries is tested and finally prevails. Ironically, some of today's 'emergent communities' are surfing the Net looking for comrades interested in opposing the expansion of the silk-road global economy. Specifically, these individuals recruit groups to protest against the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at various venues. Such groups meet online, plan vast protests at global economic conferences and chant outside meetings where they have not been invited and where their views will probably not be considered. The authors do not discuss this very intriguing use of the Silk Road, perhaps because they are singularly committed to viewing the Internet as a tool to improve commerce.

Hilton et al. only briefly consider people who are not interested in participating in the global economy. Regarding these, they describe the Internet as a potential 'release valve', expending pressures created by communities that have 'out-grown' state institutions.⁵ An inverse concept, that the Internet and emergent communities can be contained by a state that is expanding, is not really considered. Yet in China and some countries in the Middle East, the Internet is censored for political and social content. In the West, the Internet is unrestricted, so much so that child pornography is available to those who wish to view it, including emerging communities of very young, highly literate children. Here, the release valve is an accurate description. Some countries use it to monitor their societies and others use it to confine such behaviour to a sphere considered to be outside the public 'commons'.

Hilton et al. seem to project onto the Internet what they wish it to be. This tendency is most obvious in the last third of the book, where they compare the Internet to James Lovelock's *Gaia*. When Lovelock published *Gaia* it immediately became fertile ground for tautological manipulations, especially regarding the environment.⁶ Even in the current global warming debate, American environmental activists

suggest that it is necessary to control CO₂ emissions because Gaia (the Earth) sustains life. Meanwhile, wise-use conservatives suggest that as Gaia sustains life, and has sustained it in past millennia, it can 'sustain' changes to its climate. Lovelock's *Gaia* did not resolve an old debate; it started a new one. Like *Gaia*, *The Global Silk Road* is a mind-expanding treatise, but it does not arrive at any incontrovertible truths about the global economy, or for that matter, the Internet.

Notes

¹ Brian John Hilton, Chong Ju Choi and Carla Miller, *The Global Silk Road: Globalisation, Islam and the Creation and Distribution of Knowledge Using the Internet* (Victoria, British Columbia: Trafford, 2006), 45.

² *Ibid.*, 53, 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 213-216, 257-263.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 77-81.

⁶ James Ephraim Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

Philip N. Howard. *New Media Campaigns and the Managed Citizen*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 288 pp. £40.00 (hbk). ISBN 0521612276.

EDWARD A. RIEDINGER (St Antony's College, University of Oxford)

Faxes, e-mail, websites, listservs, instant messaging, blogs, digitising, scanning, virtual reality.... The relentless advance of electronic production and distribution of information over the past two decades now suffuses all aspects of society. Nearly everything moved or stored, manufactured or retailed, relies on the electronic grid of cyberspace.

These developments have significantly affected American political activity. Indeed, it is the thesis of this book that they now dominate it, having transformed a phenomenon of mass media into one of hypermedia: electronic documents embedded with text, data, graphics, images, video and audio. To cope with this transformation, citizens must know not only the nature of the technology driving it but also recognise the roles of the new specialists managing and manipulating it. Citizens must now fathom and navigate the results of accelerated technology, fevered agendas and ample funding.

People are increasingly aware of the identity theft that jeopardises financial, medical or personal security. Philip Howard is sending out an early warning 'heads up' to citizens regarding political identity hijacking. High-tech metadata scavengers build archives with individualised political profile information that can then be tailored and distributed in a mass of instant messages or baited polling. Such massaged data can be retailed to well-funded politicians seeking the personal touch in alluring voters. The bit in the mouth of citizens is reined by the bytes in the hands of the governed and their technocrats.

Howard's key concern lies in the consequences of political hypermedia for the nature of democratic citizenship. He identifies the emergence of thin, shadow and privatised citizens. Hypermedia provide for and reinforce thin citizenship by storing huge reserves of data from which a browser can passingly pick. Simplification and disengagement are encouraged. Shadow citizenship results from the data cast from one's accumulated electronic operations. Out of this socio-economic scattering, what becomes 'meaningfully represented in contemporary political institutions is not you but your data shadow, the political personality deduced from data about you.'¹ The conditions for

privatising citizenship are a particularly sinister preface to the privacy of the polling booth. Political hypermedia 'move democratic conduct from the public sphere of rallies, town hall meetings, and ... debates to the private sphere of screens, key strokes, and highly personalised news services.'² Information that formerly was publicly negotiated is now 'commodified and provided by independent businesses.'³

Howard has given us a penetrating alert regarding the virtual political landscape we have entered. His work is written, nonetheless, to convince fellow scholars and specialists in policy and communications. Its prose is dense. One hopes, therefore, Howard's message may reach a larger audience of concerned citizens through other means.

Where does one find evidence of diminishing social substance due to hypermedia or earlier and deeper factors? The National Opinion Research Center (University of Chicago) has registered since 1973 a steady annual decline in confidence by the American public in medicine, religion, the press, Congress and trust in others. The only institution steadily rising in favour is the military. Furthermore, evidence accrues of less participation in formal organisations and of growing participation in atomised virtual ones: chat rooms, blogs, Web groups, e-lists....

Where does this leave us? From Crassus to Francis Urquhart, many have known how to mine for data and massage a message. The difference now is that such manipulation can be done instantly, massively and anonymously. Recalling the *Communist Manifesto* where 'Alles Ständische und Stehende verdampft, alles Heilige wird entweiht,' one might remark that 'All that is pixel fades; all that was substance merges in pixel.'

Notes

¹ Philip N. Howard, *New Media Campaigns and the Managed Citizen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 189.

² *Ibid.*, 190.

³ *Ibid.*, 189-190.

Zixue Tai. *The Internet in China: Cyberspace and Civil Society*.

New York: Routledge, 2006. 365 pp. £60.00 (hbk.). ISBN 0415976553.

ROBERT A. SAUNDERS (State University of New York at Farmingdale)

As of early 2007, there are approximately 137 million Internet users in the People's Republic of China (PRC). With a modest ten percent penetration rate and healthy growth in a country of 1.3 billion, China is likely to overtake the current leader (the United States) soon in terms of total netizens. Therefore, Zixue Tai's investigation of the inextricably-linked and multifaceted relationship between Chinese cyberspace and civil society is indeed timely. *The Internet in China: Cyberspace and Civil Society*—the second title in Routledge's series 'New Media and Cyberculture'—is an indispensable text for scholars and experts who study the dynamic nexus between the state, the market, the media and society in China. Similarly, it provides a valuable resource for understanding the impact of the Internet on the world's most populous country and its fourth largest economy.

Tai's thesis is that the advent of the Internet and complementary information and communication technologies in China have enabled an 'imperfect Habermasian public sphere' for twenty-first century China.¹ Tai devotes the first part of his book to exploring the concept of civil society and its unique characteristics in the Middle Kingdom. The author details how China's recent history, and especially the excesses of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), suffocated the rather weak civil society that had emerged at the turn of the last century. Despite the dismal state of civil society in the Maoist era, Tai sees hope on the horizon (though he admits that a well-established civic culture is still lacking in mainland China). Tai suggests that *informatisation*—the rather unimaginative Chinese buzzword for the creation of a 'knowledge economy'—has unexpectedly provided the necessary infrastructure for the re-emergence of civil society in the PRC.

Ironically, it was China's political elite who stimulated the resurgence of civil culture—a development which has severely constrained the Chinese Communist Party's unquestioned dominance in recent decades. In order to ensure that China was not left behind in the information technology revolution as it had been by the industrial revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Chinese leadership actively

backed wiring the economy to the outside world. By supporting a robust and outward-facing national information infrastructure, elites in Beijing set the country on an ineluctable path towards ever-increasing levels of popular participation in the affairs of the state. At the same time, Tai points out that the 'full-arm embrace of the Internet and the knowledge economy ... does not mean that the Chinese leadership is willing to let the liberating and free-wheeling spirit of the Internet run its own course.'² Regardless, cyberspace provides citizen-activists with new tools to coordinate their actions and to receive and transmit information on local, national and global bases. The result is increasing complexity in the PRC's system of 'fragmented authoritarianism', which produces policy increasingly through bargaining and consensus.³ Consequently, as a Web-linked civil society grows, the ability of its Internet-enabled elites to shape policy increases. One of Tai's critical findings is that cyber-media have revolutionised traditional media inside China. While the state-run news agencies continue to take their marching orders from the Communist Party, digitally-linked 'smart mobs' are now dictating coverage of certain stories which might otherwise be swept under the carpet. In the book's second half, Tai provides ample evidence of this emergent phenomenon with case studies on SARS, official corruption and police brutality among others. Considering the growing influence of Web-based activists in addressing these issues, Tai contends that the Internet has gradually eased its way into the Chinese political process.

The text would have been better served by a liberal pruning of portions of the author's dissertation which—while serving the needs of a thesis—are best left out of a volume of this type. Furthermore, the analysis in Chapter Five relies a bit too heavily on outdated texts by the mid-1990s cyberspace gurus Rheingold, Turkle and Castells. However, Tai's interesting and compelling argument for conceiving of the Internet as a 'fourth place' for the reification and maintenance of communities of interest ameliorates the minor flaws in this crucial chapter. My only serious criticism is the absence of the Chinese diaspora in Tai's otherwise comprehensive treatment of civil society and cyberspace in China. Overseas Chinese (*haiwai huaren*) are major players in Chinese cyberspace. Likewise, they are seminal actors in the promotion of civil society in the PRC. Despite these undeniable realities, diasporic Chinese netizens remain strangely invisible throughout the book. Those interested in exploring this additional dimension should consult the works of Guobin Yang, whose scholarship similarly explores the contributions of the Internet to Chinese civil society.⁴ Putting aside these minor criticisms, Tai's text deserves paperback publication to make it available to a wider

audience that will undoubtedly benefit from his exhaustive bibliography, erudition and keen insight.

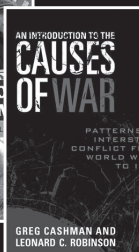
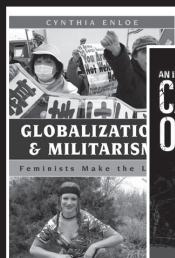
Notes

¹ Zixue Tai, *The Internet in China: Cyberspace and Civil Society* (New York; London: Routledge, 2006), 183.

² *Ibid.*, 97.

³ See Kenneth G. Lieberthal, 'Introduction: The 'Fragmented Authoritarianism' Model and Its Limitations,' in *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China*, eds. Kenneth G. Lieberthal and David M. Lampton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

⁴ See especially Guobin Yang, 'The Co-evolution of the Internet and Civil Society in China,' *Asian Survey* 43, no. 3 (2003): 405-422, and Guobin Yang, 'The Internet and the Rise of a Transnational Chinese Cultural Sphere,' *Media, Culture & Society* 25, no. 4 (2003): 469-490.



NEW IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES 2007

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS

A member of the Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group

ORDER FROM: NBN International, Estover Road,
Plymouth, Devon PL6 7PY. UK

E-mail: orders@nbninternational.co.uk

Tel: +44 (0) 1752 202301

Fax: +44 (0) 1752 202331

GLOBALIZATION AND MILITARISM: Feminists Make the Link

By Cynthia Enloe

£12.99 Paper 978-0-7425-4112-2 200pp

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CAUSES OF WAR:

Patterns of Interstate Conflict from World War I to Iraq

By Greg Cashman and Leonard C. Robinson

£15.99 Paper 978-0-7425-5510-5 432pp

DEMYSTIFYING THE EUROPEAN UNION:

The Enduring Logic of Regional Integration

By Roy H. Ginsberg

£17.99 Paper 978-0-7425-3655-5 448pp

EUROPE TODAY: A Twenty-first Century Introduction, Third Edition

Edited by Ronald Tiersky and Erik Jones

£26.00 Paper 978-0-7425-5501-3 448pp

PUTIN'S RUSSIA: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain

Edited by Dale R. Herspring

£19.99 Paper 978-0-7425-5393-4 244pp

CHINA'S TRANSFORMATIONS: The Stories beyond the Headlines

Edited by Lionel M. Jensen and Timothy B. Weston

£15.99 Paper 978-0-7425-3863-4 378pp

ELUSIVE SECURITY: States First, People Last

By Laura Neack

£15.99 Paper 978-0-7425-2866-6 278pp

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS: Classic and Contemporary Theory

By Valerie M. Hudson

£14.99 Paper 978-0-7425-1689-2 234pp



The Politics of Human Trafficking Call for Papers

Abstracts due August 30, 2007

Papers due December 30, 2007

In the year of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade, the global trade in human beings is back on the policy agenda. This illegal trade is no longer restricted to a singular westward flow across the Atlantic, but now occurs in such diverse regions as South Asia and the Middle East. International crime control, migration agencies and the media show great concern over the upward trend in human trafficking based on the new opportunities created by increasing global mobility. But, despite this growing alarm, there remains insufficient serious scholarship addressing human trafficking. There is no consensus as to the precise meaning of the term, as its elements of victimhood and agency remain obscure, whilst economic analysis of human trafficking, and its relationship to the international labour market remains hazy at best. Similarly, despite the existence of research on the international abolitionist movement and drug policies, little comparative analysis exists between forms of trafficking. For these reasons, the St Antony's International Review (*STAIR*) invites academics, young researchers, and policy experts to submit abstracts of papers that explore one or more of the following lines of enquiry for the forthcoming issue on 'The Politics of Human Trafficking.'

Agency and 'Victimhood'

The popular portrayal of human trafficking often resembles a Dickensian landscape of suffering and pain, with voiceless children and powerless women caught in a trap of violence and exploitation. Whilst this may be true of a number of cases, it is now frequently asserted that such depictions unfairly obscure the complex web of coercion and consent that underpins and characterises the diverse processes of contemporary human trafficking. In many cases the boundaries between voluntary labour migration and forced exploitation are so thin as to hide the intricacies of the choices that people actually make. Why do some parents encourage their children to go and what motivates them to leave? What do men and women stand to gain from illegally crossing borders and are all at risk of abuse if they do? Are traffickers inherently

evil or do they provide an unregulated service in an apparently failing economy? Is there room for agency even in situations of extreme hardship? And if so, why does the discourse of disempowerment and victimhood so dominate the standard narrative?

Economics of Trafficking

The impacts of human trafficking are manifold. Aside from creating human misery, and straining political systems, the economic impact of human trafficking on national economies can be enormous. Academics and policymakers highlight the need for greater research in order to better understand both the relationship between trafficking and development and that between trafficking and the dynamics of the international labour market. How should we integrate the supply-side and the demand-side in our analysis? How can the existence of remittance flows help us to better understand the processes and motivations of trafficking? What is the relationship between trafficking and economic migration, and what role do global social inequalities, freedom of movement and corruption play in this relationship?

Politics and Policy Making

The fight against human trafficking has become an increasingly salient political issue for governments around the world. In spite of widespread agreement on the need for multilateral cooperation in addressing this problem, its very persistence highlights the important weaknesses that still remain in the identification of appropriate countertrafficking policies. How can national legislation foster a more inclusive approach to trafficking? What are the best methods for adapting to increased global mobility? What has been the role of immigration laws and policies and is a victim-centered approach appropriate? Does international trafficking lead to more internal trafficking and if so, what role do governments have in dealing with this? What is the role of non-state actors involved in the fight against trafficking? How can the monitoring and evaluation of counter-trafficking policies be improved?

Methodology: Trafficking in International Affairs

Trafficking research is not well integrated with the academic study of politics and international affairs because of the apparent lack of data, methods and analytical models. How can trafficking studies draw on existing research, such as international trade theory, transnationalism

and migration studies, to benefit the discipline and our understanding of both the trade and its policy responses? What conventional types of sources are available for analysing illegal trades and are there feasible alternatives, such as with end-users? Do criminology or anthropology offer useful alternative methodologies or do they take us too far from the disciplinary mainstream? And does it make sense to compare human trafficking across different regions and/or contrast it to other forms of illegal trade in drugs, diamonds or arms? If so, what can be learnt from such comparisons?

In conjunction with the general Call for Papers for the forthcoming issue on 'The Politics of Human Trafficking', *STAIR* also seeks to publish book reviews of works that adhere to the advertised theme of the issue. If you are interested in submitting book reviews related to the theme "The Politics of Human Trafficking", please contact book.reviews@stairjournal.org

Notes for Contributors are available at <http://www.stair-journal.org>.