INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SUPPORT (IMS)

Reflections on media environment trends ANNUAL REPORT

ims
INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SUPPORT

2016
2017

Cover photo: The reflection of journalists is evident in the sunglasses of a woman protesting against the murder of the Mexican journalist Miroslava Breach outside the Attorney General's office in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico on 25 March 2017. The tape over her mouth reads "Not one more [casualty]".

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INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SUPPORT
FOR FREE AND PROFESSIONAL MEDIA

International Media Support is a non-profit organisation that works to support local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition.

We support the production and distribution of media content that meets internationally recognised ethical standards and work to ensure safe media environments with sound laws for journalists. We do this because citizens and leaders need information they can trust to make the decisions that develop their societies in a peaceful and democratic way.

mediasupport.org

Assault on journalism and freedom of expression

Pushing norms and standards in politics, conflict and media to new extremes, leaders in every region of the world in 2016 consolidated and expanded their powers at the expense of freedom and democracy. From armed conflict and forced migration to the spread of misinformation and the rise of right-wing populism, the chaotic and disheartening developments of the year in many ways marked the new frontiers of global repression and inequality.

From footage of Syria's horror to every minute detail of the US presidential election relayed on social media, the year displayed vividly the increased global connectedness of people and communities as technology continued to influence news and information and the way it is produced, regulated and repressed. In this context, the year also saw journalism facing a crisis of a fundamental nature spurred on by technological advancement, political power play and global inequality — a crisis that challenges basic notions of truth, relevance and trust.

This report is devoted to these topics — to exploring how we can make journalism relevant in an age of post-truth no matter which part of the world we are in, and to examine what trust in media entails and how we can rebuild and maintain it. In that sense, this year's IMS Annual Report takes a different approach from that of previous years by focusing more generally on the current trends and challenges facing our industry of media development. A brief overview of the achievements of IMS and partners around the world can be viewed on the map on page 8. The report also looks ahead, encouraging us to revise and expand our notion of media development as the internet and everything digital continues to shape and define the environment in which all media operate.

It is in this environment that IMS in 2016 launched its new strategy, which gives us the tools to make sure that we can deliver on our mission to develop strong, independent media in some of the most difficult places on earth — media that give citizens access to better, more reliable and more relevant information and which deliver on the promises of the Sustainable Development Goals that IMS works to contribute towards. Our new strategy positions IMS to achieve better results by supporting our partners around the world in increasingly effective and efficient ways. It is a strategy that helps us enable them to do their crucial work as they risk their lives and freedoms on a daily basis.

"Journalism is facing a crisis that challenges the basic notions of truth, relevance and trust"

At a time where the development of free and professional media has rarely been more important, we are particularly proud to work with journalists, human rights defenders and others who push forward positive change in their media sectors and in their communities. They work tirelessly and courageously against the backdrop of the profoundly challenging developments that came to define 2016 and which are still shaping 2017. IMS, with the generous support of our donors, is proud to enable them to continue their pursuit of the truth. In the midst of adversity, there are many examples of progress. In Pakistan, journalist safety hubs have been established at five Pakistani press clubs representing half of the country's community of 18,000 journalists, thus improving media's response to threats. Pakistan is also featured as an example in the efforts led by IMS to document best practice models of locally-led safety mechanisms for jour-

Jesper Højberg, IMS Executive Director. Photo: Angelique Sanossian/IMS

nalists in seven countries. The research carried out between mid 2016 and 2017 also includes Colombia, Philippines, Indonesia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Nepal.

In Niger, sustained support to media associations and the national media regulator has led to their institutional growth and co-regulation agreement. In the Mena region, an online MENA Media Law Reform platform has been launched with partners which gathers news and good practices on media law reform policies and processes in the countries in the region. Finally, support to developing investigative journalism continues to be a cornerstone of IMS' work to enhance good journalism through cooperation with investigative journalism networks in some of the world's most difficult environments for journalists such as Russia and the MENA region.

Journalists and human rights defenders in these countries and the many other countries in which IMS works stand strong against routine violations of their rights, physical assault and accusations of treason, of aiding terrorism and of fabricating lies. The demoralising blows they endure are significant, but their devotion to solid, fact-based reporting is the only way to make sure good journalism will persevere.

Jesper Højberg
IMS Executive Director

Where we work

■ ▨ **Programme countries and countries with smaller regionally linked projects**
These are countries with full-scale IMS programmes, as well as countries in which we had small-scale activities that are tied to our regional engagement in the Middle East and North Africa (striped countries).

Africa	Asia	Eastern Europe, the Caucasus & Central Asia	Latin America	Middle East & North Africa
1 The Gambia	5 Afghanistan	11 Azerbaijan	14 Colombia	15 Algeria
2 Niger	6 Myanmar	12 Turkey		16 Egypt
3 Somalia	7 Nepal	13 Russia		17 Iraq
4 Zimbabwe	8 Pakistan			18 Jordan
	9 Philippines			19 Lebanon
	10 Sri Lanka			20 Libya
				21 Morocco
				22 Palestine
				23 Syria
				24 Tunisia
				25 Yemen

■ **Thematic countries and countries with short-term engagements**
These countries include those in which IMS was engaged primarily with thematic issues such as safety of journalists or investigative journalism, and countries where we have short-term engagements. These countries are:

Bangladesh, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Ukraine

Tunisia: The National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists has strengthened internal processes and is taking lead in policy and legal discussions related to media freedoms and engaged in advancing social, labour and economic rights of media workers.

MENA: A new online platform: (menamedia-law.org) launched by IMS collates for resources and news on media law reform and policies in the MENA region. It aims to build knowledge and support advocacy efforts for reforms in the region.

The Gambia: A peaceful transition from dictatorship to democratic rule prompted an IMS mission and new initiatives to help strengthen the Gambian media reform process through capacity support to key stakeholders.

Colombia: Launched with IMS support, Journalistsprotection.org is a new digital platform by The Foundation for Freedom of the Press (FLIP) which gathers information on national media safety mechanisms around the world.

Niger: Sustained support to media associations and the national media regulator has led to their institutional growth and a co-regulation agreement, a new law on advertising and a national charter for community radios.

Somalia: Somali media workers who had attended IMS-Fojo safety training modules in 2016 explained that they felt better equipped to cope with the a series of bomb blasts in Mogadishu that took place in 2016 and 2017 aimed at media centrals.

MENA documentary filmmaking: With IMS support, Jordan's Roya TV, Lebanon's Al-Jadeed TV and Palestine's Al Wattan broadcast documentary film from the region in a mass media environment where documentaries are still rarely broadcast on national TV.

Syria: The Syrian Network for Print Media's joint print and distribution in Turkey and Northern Syria ensured a steady supply of newspapers. Roughly 70% of the total volume was distributed inside Syria. SNP launched snpsyria.org - a joint web platform to show the very best content produced by the seven members and to increase cost-effective dissemination.

Russia: Increased interest in carrying out SCOOP supported investigative journalism from journalists, despite continued pressure on independent media. Pointing to its relevance in the restrictive environment more investigations have been initiated than originally planned.

Jordan: The online media 7iber launched a new and very successful format for short viral explainer videos that break down complex issues of societal importance rarely covered by traditional media.

Myanmar: The IMS-Fojo media programme in Myanmar has supported the establishment of the Women Journalists Society which has helped ensure that the plight of women in media is raised in various public fora for a such as at the 5th Myanmar Media Development Conference in Yangon in late 2016.

Pakistan: A national code of conduct for journalism in Pakistan was launched in 2017 following a 2-year consultation process involving 1,500 journalists, editors and media leaders across the country.

Somalia: Partners in Somaliland successfully challenged the government's monopoly on issuing press cards when they had press cards issued by Somaliland Journalists' Association recognised as valid by authorities.

Afghanistan: Dialogue among major media outlets, authorities and umbrella organisations was established to enhance journalists' safety by Afghan Journalists Safety Committee, which also helped in a large-scale relocation of journalists at risk due to Taliban advancement.

The relevance of journalism in a post-truth era

By Michelle Betz

Perhaps more than ever, journalism faces a serious crisis of credibility, of public trust[1] and ultimately of relevance. At the same time the advent of fake news also seems to suggest that transparent, fact-based journalism is more important than ever.

In a time when consumers have more options than ever before, media houses need to try to understand their audiences and what drives them to specific content if journalism is to remain relevant. That means they need to find their audiences, speak to their audiences, talk to potential audiences and learn about them. What drives them to some content and keeps them away from others? Media development organisations like IMS are grappling with these same questions. What do we mean by relevant? Relevant for whom? The consumer? The producer? Both? Which consumer?

If we think relevance is critical for the survival of journalism then how do we as media developers work with local partners to make their work relevant, particularly in the contexts of conflict, post-conflict and fragile states that IMS operates in?

RELEVANCE IN JOURNALISM TIED TO AUDIENCE

As a core news value, it was relevance that prompted generations of editors to ask the key question of any story: Who cares? For relevance in journalism was tied to the audience – a story had to be closely connected or appropriate to the audience. But who is the audience today? And how might this audience be different than the mass audiences that the mass media have appealed to for decades?

The media experience used to be a shared experience and it was that experience, perhaps, that was of relevance. But today, as sociologist Raymond Williams points out: "There are in fact no masses. There are only ways of seeing people as masses." Without masses, what then of mass media?[2]

In the case of mass media, the coverage of the U.S. 2016 presidential elections showed a lack of understanding of who the masses were. Referring to the mainstream media's failures in covering those elections, Marty Baron, Executive Editor of the Washington Post, said: "For the most part, the press failed to detect, and explore, the depth of anxiety and grievance in America". Baron suggested that the press needed to work harder to "give the people of America insights into each other" by embedding itself in and reporting on the culture of communities across the country.[3]

And perhaps therein lies the crux of the issue – who makes up this culture of communities? What communities are they and who defines them? How do media interact with and report on these communities? And if the content produced by mainstream media during the 2016 election was not relevant for this culture of communities then who was it relevant for?

What Baron is suggesting is that mainstream media essentially lost their connection with, or their relevance to, the audience. This is not surprising given the current state of prolific media intently focused on the core issue of survival while losing sight of the culture of communities that makes up the U.S., focusing instead on the political happenings in Washington, D.C.

The same happens in the environments in which IMS works – most media houses in most of the countries IMS works in are based in capital cities. This capital-centred media, as was seen in the U.S., poses some challenges – audiences do not deem it relevant. And if there's no relevance, there's no audience and therefore no income.

In other words, knowing and understanding people as individuals and communities, rather than as masses, is a necessity for media to operate and thrive. In his recent book, "The Power of Everything", journalist and researcher Mark Lee Hunter takes this idea one step further and stresses the importance of stakeholder-driven media which he defines as "media created and controlled by communities of practice and interest" and stakeholders as "people who affect or are affected by issues and organisations."[4]

Hunter's broad definition brings together partisan media, mission-driven media, and reader-centric media into what some may not consider a natural grouping. One critique of stakeholder-driven media suggests that "unlike the typical mainstream media organisation, which positions itself as an impartial messenger of the news that it thinks matters to readers, stakeholder-based organisations are heavily invested in the goal of empowering readers to affect the topics they care about".[5] But one might argue that perhaps this is precisely why stakeholder-driven media may be successful – because audiences want content that touches them – something media developers may want to bear in mind.

This may suggest a certain level of advocacy, which can make journalists uncomfortable. Yet, the original public service mission of journalism had, almost by definition, an aspect of advocacy – that is advocating for the well-being of the public or community served by that media outlet. As such, one could argue that the media must be audience-centered and have a clear understanding of who the audience is. Indeed, this has been an ongoing challenge in many of the environments media developers work and ultimately calls for more audience research than is currently done. Such a focus on the audience, however, should also demand responsible and transparent engagement with the audience.[6]

There is already some evidence of a shift to stakeholder-driven media. Recent grants to U.S.-based non-profit newsrooms, for example, suggest the importance of national and local nonprofit newsrooms as new models "for reporting through creativity, collaboration, and civic engagement [and] in so doing, they bring new people into journalism, highlight new voices, and tell fuller and deeply relevant stories."[7] This too suggests the importance of relevance – identifying communities, engaging them and collaborating with them and is an important lesson for media developers.

That relevance in journalism is about transparency, accountability, public service, a clearly identified audience, and impact should not be news to anyone in media development. What is challenging, however, is how these factors are connected to and influenced by today's ever-changing media environment.

GLOCALISATION OF INFORMATION

The question of relevance and (mass) audience is today coupled with the shear velocity with which the sector continues to change. The diffusion of internet, mobile and social media has fundamentally changed, and continues to change, the media – with numerous implications for relevance.

On the one hand are those who believe that these changes have moved us to "horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global in chosen time".[8] This move from horisontal and interactive networks of communication rather than vertical, top-down and institutional is significant as it emphasises that the media are not the holders of power but rather constitute the space where power is decided.[9]

On the other hand are those who warn that there is a sort of "digital scepter that allows one to govern the masses efficiently without having to involve citizens in democratic processes"[10] which would suggest even more urgency in ensuring responsible citizen or audience engagement.

"Information today is often hyper-local yet can reach audiences around the globe"

But what does the so-called networked world look like today – particularly in the contexts in which IMS works and what does this mean for the relevance of journalism?

The diffusion of media and the move to horisontal, interactive networks of communication have led to the glocalisation of information: information which is characterised by both local and global considerations. As a result, information today is often hy-

per-local yet can reach audiences around the globe. On the other hand, there is significant influence of global media networks on local audiences resulting in a blend of global, local and glocal information systems. This is worthwhile considering when planning for media development as one would intuitively think focus should be on local yet the media eco-system is global in nature with everyone everywhere having the potential to play a role with a tweet, Facebook update or a blog post.

"Two-thirds of all internet users, or 67%, live in countries where criticism of the government, military, or ruling family was subject to censorship"

Yet, there are many communities where significant portions of the population do not have access to internet-based content or social media. According to the ITU, nearly 4 billion people remain cut off from the vast resources available on the internet and while developing countries account for the vast majority of internet users (2.5 billion compared with one billion in developed countries). Internet penetration tells a different story: 81% in developed countries are connected compared with 40% in developing countries and 15% in the least developed countries with at least half of the latter being conflict-affected.[11]

Coupled with this is the issue of accessibility. Freedom House's most recent Freedom on the Net report found that in 2016 "more governments [around the world] aggressively targeted social media and communication apps than ever before." The report found that two-thirds of all internet users, or 67%, live in countries where criticism of the government, military, or ruling family was subject to censorship. Many of these are countries in which IMS operates.

This clearly has implications for media developers with regards to relevance in platform choice and suggests the need for ongoing research regarding accessibility – both what is being accessed and how

as well as how that information is being used. Attention should also be paid to how media developers can work around or address issues of censorship.

These factors stress the importance of looking at each individual, local context in terms of its political, social and cultural characteristics as well as its media context and how these interface with one another. The way in which communities access information is heavily conditioned by language, literacy, infrastructure and regulation, and is thus highly variable between contexts, including urban-rural and male-female.[12] This is further compounded by the changing nature of the media itself and how it is produced, used and accessed.

Because information today is both hyper-local yet global in reach, media developers should bear in mind both global media networks and audiences as well as local information systems and audiences and how they interact. This interaction is changing. As one academic writes: "Where once the journalist was on the inside looking out, telling the audience what was happening to them, it is now the audience telling the story alongside journalists whether that be in their own blogs, participatory journalism ventures such as hyperlocal community sites or user generated content and comment often commissioned, often unsolicited. Editors ask readers to submit their opinions, photos, blogs and videos and journalists are increasingly under pressure to know what is significant and relevant to their readers."[13] Relevance, in this case, can only be ascertained by communicating with the audience.

But hyperlocal is not new. While some today believe hyperlocal is print or digital/mobile, community radio could be considered the original hyperlocal medium serving a targeted community – it was community content for and by the same community. It is this type of hyperlocalised content that we are seeing today be it stakeholder-driven media, niche media or simply community radio: it is hyper-local content in a glocal digital and mobile world.

In order to further understand the needs and demands and interactions of the audience, particularly in this hyperlocal, glocal world, there must be substantive qualitative and quantitative audience research which has largely been missing from media development. Until now, much of the literature has tended to examine media as its own space rather than as part of more complex systems. As such, media developers should consider conducting research that takes a bottom-up approach.[14]

In addition to understanding the audience, there also needs to be further understanding of the interplay between the audience and ever-changing media technologies. While on the surface it would seem today's media technology provides an endless stream of media options, the reality is that more choices and the algorithmic programming of social media may drive the consumer, who may also be producer, to media that acts to reinforce existing beliefs and thereby rendering moot efforts to ensure pluralism. Because of social media's capability of enabling a wider range of participants and perspectives, social media is viewed as emancipatory on the one hand while on the other also creating filter bubbles, exposing people only to content that supports their preexisting beliefs thereby polarising public opinion.[15]

"If the public loses confidence and becomes apathetic then the media also lose relevance"

In his new book, Cass Sunstein discusses how today's internet is driving political fragmentation and polarisation and explains why online fragmentation endangers the shared conversations, experiences, and understandings that are the lifeblood of democracy.[16] And when these shared conversations disappear and are replaced by content that is politically aligned then the media may inadvertently be used as "proxies in the battle between rival political groups, in the process sowing divisiveness rather than consensus, hate speech instead of sober debate, and suspicion rather than social trust. In these cases, the media can be anti-democratic, contributing to cynicism about government and democratic decay. The public loses confidence in the media and in democratic institutions in general. The result is public apathy and democratic breakdown."[17] And if the public loses confidence and becomes apathetic then the media also lose relevance. Therefore there must be an understanding of how to garner relevance and how to maintain it.

GOING FORWARD: IMPLICATIONS FOR MEDIA DEVELOPERS

Given these issues of audience, technology and relevance what are the implications for IMS and media developers? How can we ensure that our partners continue to be relevant despite ongoing changes in the media eco-system and the challenges they present?

First, we need to put the *audience first* – whether it is an international, regional, local or hyperlocal audience – and we need to ensure that our content partners know and understand the needs of their audience. Who makes up the culture of communities in the contexts in which we seek to work? What content do they consider relevant and why? Only with an understanding of the audience and who we are producing for and with can there be responsible engagement on which trust can then be built. So find out who cares about what and why – that will drive content production and help us be clear about the audience we seek to work with.

Second, we should not underestimate the power of *hyperlocal content*. Hyperlocal journalism, sometimes called microlocal journalism, refers to coverage of events and topics on an extremely small, local scale,[18] tends to use citizen journalists, and is usually delivered on the web or through a mobile app. In some cases, due to linguistic, cultural, social or limitations of the platform, it may be most sensible to produce and target for a hyperlocal audience.

Related to this is ensuring that we work with and support partners that serve underserved communities beyond capital cities. While there has been and continues to be a trend towards increased urbanisation, there are still millions of people living in hard to reach rural areas who do not have access to information that is relevant to them. That means either the media need to get out of the capital and go to these underserved or unserved communities or media houses need to be supported in those difficult to reach or underserved areas. Another option is to connect media workers in larger cities with their colleagues in rural zones and vice versa.

One digital strategist suggests that most, if not all, national or international stories are grounded in a hyperlocal community. The strategist works with what they call the inverted impact pyramid, a model that depicts the way in which a hyperlocal story intended for a small audience can become relevant to ever greater numbers of people, leading to a higher potential for impact.[19] The inverted impact pyramid and horisontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global are relevant here: what is important or relevant to one person is likely relevant to one million. It's a matter of engagement, story-telling and accessing the appropriate platforms.

An IMS-Fojo radio workshop in 2016 outside Yangoon, Myanmar, strengthens insight into community media. Photo: Chris Peken

Issues of relevance have the potential to be shared on a larger scale – a story may begin as hyperlocal but can have impact beyond the immediate community. Securing a larger audience is likely to lead to different communities, or the culture of communities, being connected, possibly in a way they were not before. This is an increasingly important evolution in a media system that encourages either hyper-local, in-group echo chambers or national-level discourse that is perceived to represent the interests of an elite.[20] This is critical for media developers, particularly those working in conflict-prone or transitional environments, as linking up different hyperlocal efforts of one country or one region with others can illustrate or reinforce shared experiences and dilute the otherness they may perceive. Such activities could potentially be extremely powerful as relevance goes beyond the individual or even the hyperlocal or local, illustrating the potential, and perhaps the reality, of common ground. The power of the hyperlocal and the importance of operating on the appropriate platform, was on full display in post-earthquake Nepal. IMS' work following the earthquake in April 2015 began as support to community radio programmes focusing on hyperlocal accountability issues such as local government promises to rebuild schools or infrastructure. Ultimately these issues, the impact and the programme itself made their way to national levels. Why? Because they were highly relevant to the population whose only way of holding local officials accountable in the post-earthquake environment was to talk to the media, in particular community radio.

As seen in the Nepal example, relevant journalism can also be journalism that provides solutions. In this case, the journalism served a public interest and held officials (from hyperlocal to national levels) accountable. This accountability, some believe, is actually a service and "journalists and news media companies are actually in the service provision business".[21] This essentially takes us full circle and brings us back to the original mission of journalism – that of serving the public which often entails audience engagement and results in some form of accountability. This can also be good for the bottom line.

Harnessing the power of hyperlocal and forging part-

nerships with national, regional or even international outlets is also important for economic survival. Ensuring that the audience's needs are met and trust is built suggests a certain buy-in which would make maintaining or ensuring the survival of that particular outlet in the community's best interest. Partnering with other hyperlocal outlets in the same region or country may not only increase reach but can also illustrate common ground. There also needs to be a clear understanding of access. How is the audience accessing information? What is the most relevant platform or platforms on which to engage with the audience? In addition, it is imperative to understand the interplay between audience and media technologies as well as an understanding of how the audience engages with content producers.

The Syrian Network for Print Media's joint print and distribution of newspapers in Turkey and Northern Syria, supported by IMS, relies on a wide network of individuals to deliver the newspapers and secure a steady supply of information. Roughly 70% of the total volume is distributed inside Syria, where pictures of the publications in various locations is shared with editors, as proof of the papers reaching their end destinations. Photo: Private

Ultimately, it is important to consider the power the audience wields, and to know that the media are not exclusive holders of power in the media eco-system. By recognising this and addressing the issues of relevance, trust, transparency and access, the media may be able to fulfil their potential of ensuring that audiences also access and use the reliable, factual, high impact news information they are provided with. They may be able to deliver on their promise of providing citizens, marginalised or not, with both a voice and a platform for finding common ground and solutions to the challenges they face. And they may become relevant again.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle Betz is a senior media development specialist with experience designing, implementing, managing and evaluating US, European and UN-funded projects in conflict, post-conflict and transitional countries.

ENDNOTES

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India has the world's second largest number of Facebook users with 213,000 million users registered in 2016. Source: Statistica.com.
Photo: Scanpix

The internet as the new frontier in oppressing free speech

"Censorship in all its forms reflects official fear of ideas and information, and it not only harms the speaker or reporter or broadcaster, it undermines everyone's right to information, to public participation, to open and democratic governance."

— David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. 6 September 2016, Special Report to the UN Assembly[1]

By Susan Abbott

Since the collapse of the Berlin Wall, nearly 30 years ago, the voice of media development actors has intensified around the world in its clarion call for freedom of expression, rights to access to information, and rights to privacy, all foundational aspects of media development work. In roughly the same time span, the rise of internet culture (various social phenomena associated with the internet and other new forms of the network communication[2]) together with the disruption caused by the digital revolution, the internet has led to profound consequences for how we think of freedom of expression, and has opened up a Pandora's box for legal scholars, advocates, and digital rights activists in terms of their efforts to guard against censorship and acts of suppression of speech in various forms. The battle to build or undermine relevance and influence is increasingly waged online, with state and non-state actors participating both in favor of and against an open Internet. The objectives are well-known; the methods are many: censorship, misinformation, fake news, shutdowns, online violence and abuse, legal threats against freedom of expression and legislation that ostensibly provides security but, by accident or design, has dire consequences for free speech. The responses, though, are only just slowly starting to materialise.

This article seeks to shed light on the nature of the problem, map out the issues and offer some examples and illustrations for how and why the internet can be considered as the new frontier in oppressing free speech. As the paper will show, both state and non-state actors pose a threat to internet freedom as well as freedom of speech and expression. This paper will offer some examples of how this happens, and then put forward some ideas for ways forward. The overarching take away for the media development community is that it is essential to get a seat at the table in terms of internet governance, and helping to inform and shape the digital rights agenda.

The internet or the internet-enabled technology has impacted nearly all aspects of our lives. In media development terms, core media law and policy issues like freedom of expression, access to information, and rights to privacy are equally at home in internet governance and freedom of expression online circles. To put it simply "digital rights are basically human rights in the internet era".[3] In this regard, improving linkages between the internet governance, internet freedom and media development communities is vital.

HOW DOES FREEDOM OF SPEECH APPLY TO THE INTERNET

For internet freedom fighters and digital rights activists, the free and open concept about how the internet *should be* drives much of their work and

activism. For journalists, and media development practitioners, the ideal of internet freedom is sadly merely aspirational. It didn't take long for the rules and legal norms that govern the laws of the land in a nation-state manner to get juxtaposed into the cultural, societal and state practices that relate to freedom of expression around the world. Moreover, as recent hue and cry over "fake news" also illustrates that many of the internet companies that pushed the boundaries of freedom of speech and expression are now leading efforts to control content, establish community standards, and laying the groundwork for restricting speech in ways that could undermine rights of users. The challenge that the internet poses to free speech is summed up nicely by a *Forbes* commentator, with the wry observation:

"The web is facing such growing pains and is evolving from its roots as the anti-censorship platform of free speech and towards the very corporate-controlled moderated medium beholden to commercial and governmental interests that it rebelled against. This is the brave new world of our ever-changing web."[4]

The doom and gloom about the threats posed to internet freedom, and by proxy freedom of expression, are well-founded. While the history of the internet may still be in its early days – imagine for a moment what the internet will look like 100 years from now – the legal and social norms and standards that we develop now will be essential for the legal architecture that informs issues like freedom of expression, privacy and security in the future. One of the major roadblocks is the uneasy tension between the concerns and policy agenda of internet freedom community, wherein freedom of expression is a major concern, and the actions, policies and interests of the state or the corporation, wherein free speech and expression sometimes feel like an afterthought or burden. Moreover, this tension is not simply one of the "West" vs. the "Global South." Restrictions of freedom of expression, and the slippery slope of curtailing individual rights and liberties as a matter of protecting national security are common practice – in fact, as press freedom advocates have noted, the practices in the US and the UK have garnered these countries a ranking on the annual Reporters Without Borders once annual rankings of Enemies of the Internet.[5] This puts them in the same company as Syria, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, Azerbaijan, in other words countries considered to have abysmal human rights track records.

While freedom of speech *is* indeed enshrined in most national constitutions, *is* given significant attention by a host of state actors, and *is* considered a valuable right, governments, companies, and individuals all in various ways at the same time seek to control the online space. Through their actions, they place restrictions on what people can and cannot say. As is pointed out by human rights monitoring and by internet and press freedom advocates. It is often the case that developing countries and some of the world's most repressive regimes, enact laws, snap decisions, and place unfair restrictions on online speech in ways that will have a chilling effect for years to come and will also further entrench wayward attitudes and national customs when it comes to supporting the type of legal and regulatory environment needed to uphold freedom of expression. These actions will have and currently do have disastrous consequences for journalists, bloggers and media outlets.

STATE ACTORS AND NON-STATE ACTORS

Internet freedom is under attack from multiple directions. Governments, corporations, political organisations, religious institutions and individuals all feel they have a stake in dictating what can and can't be said on the internet. The motives of these groups may align, but usually they use different methods. There is blurring, though, and frequently government or other groups prefer, if their actions are going to be identified, to be seen to be operating through individuals. The targets also vary. They can include subjects who it might be considered reasonable to restrict their speech, such as supporters of terrorism, but they also applied to supporters of free speech. In particular, women and minorities are disproportionately affected by these actions.

THREATS TO INTERNET FREEDOM FROM NON-STATE ACTORS

Non-state actors are attempting to control public opinion by inhibiting open discussion about a topic. Non-state actors may be influenced by politics, but also social issues, such as gender and racial equality, have also been a frequent battleground. Many of these actors feel threatened by an increasingly open society and are working to undermine free expression in an attempt, in some small way, to revert discourse to a previous, more closed model.

In many cases, the behavior of these non-state actors can be compared to that of the playground

bully, who, unable to persuade by reasoned intelligence, can only use force and intimidation to get their way. Undoubtedly, this is not how they view themselves.

MISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS

While the internet has increased the speed and efficiency with which information can travel around the world, it has also increased the speed and efficiency with which *misinformation* can be spread. 2016 was rife with examples of the threat that "fake news" and misinformation poses for democracy, from the US to Russia to Syria. Many of the stories were fabricated out of political malice or just for the money and then spread out of naiveté. There's some evidence that state actors may have been involved in the creation and spreading fake news, and the dividing line is not clear. In Macedonia, generating fake news became something of a cottage industry in the run-up to the 2016 US presidential election, with people discovering they could make spurious websites with click-bait headlines and rely on social media to spread links. The motivation in this case was purely financial, with one teen profiled by WIRED making $16,000 from Google AdSense in a country where the average monthly salary is $371.[6]

"2016 was rife with examples of the threat that "fake news" and misinformation poses for democracy, from the US to Russia to Syria"

In a similar story in Lithuania, an email was sent to the speaker of the parliament alleging that a group of German-speakers had gang-rape a 15-year-old girl in foster care. As the alleged incident was supposed to have taken place near a NATO barracks and the email was found to have come from another country, it has been assumed that this was an attempt to smear NATO's peacekeeping presence in the Baltic nation.[7]

These examples also raise the question of what media development is meant to do to address the problems associated with "fake news". Facebook and Google, two sites that were implicated in the spread of fake news in the US election have introduced tools to help identify fake news to users. For Facebook this was an "informed sharing" programme that led to changes in how news was ranked based on how many people actually clicked on the link.[8] Facebook also deleted thousands of accounts associated with the spread of fake news, while Google similarly suspended AdSense accounts on fake news sites.[9] To make matters more complicated, decrying a piece of reporting as fake news just because you don't agree with it, rather than because you doubt its factual basis, is becoming a standard measure for politicians as it has been for authoritarian governments for many years.[10]

ONLINE VIOLENCE AND TROLLING

Likened to the internet equivalent of road rage, trolling is defined as the action of a making a deliberately offensive or provocative online posts with the aim of upsetting someone or eliciting an angry response from them. News headlines are full of examples of trolling gone bad, leading to all kinds of unfortunate outcomes. Hate speech, cyberbullying, harassment, and all other sorts of negative provocations have been the source of major concern for those who seek to advance freedom of expression online. One of the major questions that has baffled free speech advocates is how democratic societies can deal with abusive discourse while at the same time upholding international standard and best practices that govern and regulate freedom of expression. Central to their concern is whether free speech rights give us the right to anonymously troll strangers.

Trolling is particularly directed towards women and minorities. In Turkey, for example, rape and death threats are common against female journalists and pro-Kurdish journalists.[11] Turkey is a particularly worrying example as the trolls appear to be linked to the ruling AKP party. A negative comment from a pro-government commentator in a newspaper may be enough to set off a witch hunt against a specific journalist.

DOXING AND INTIMIDATION

Doxing is the practice of leaking personal documents or private information, perhaps obtained by hacking, to the public in order to intimidate the victim. The information is frequently as simple as a home address or phone number, but could be as personal as nude photos. Often one party will release the information and other parties will take over with the harassment. Doxing, like trolling, is common against journalists. Brazilian freelance journalist Ana Freitas was doxed after she published

an article on HuffPost Brasil about how women and minorities are not welcome on discussion boards. The harassment became so severe she had to leave her house for two weeks and editors she had worked with previously stopped taking her work.[12]

THREATS TO INTERNET FREEDOM FROM STATE ACTORS

Numerous countries around the world have responded to the free flow of information that the Internet offers by restricting access to certain sites, particularly social media sites. The most extreme control comes from limiting access to the internet itself to only sections of the population that the government trusts, as happens in North Korea. For example, in North Korea, only 4% of the country has access to the Internet and domestic websites number a mere 28.[13] This level of control is atypical, though. More usually general internet access is allowed, but content is selectively blocked. China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Vietnam and Turkey are all examples. The most famous of these is China, where undesirable content from outside sources is blocked by "the great Firewall of China", or as the government calls it, the Golden Shield. The Great Firewall has been so successful at suppressing free speech that is now considered a model for other authoritarian countries such as Russia and Turkey.[14]

Turkey is another interesting case, as the increasingly censorious uses a wide variety of techniques to prevent access to information, as recorded by the censorship monitoring site *Turkey Blocks*. File sharing sites such as Dropbox, Google Drive, and Microsoft OneDrive have been blocked permanently in response to a government directive, as has the browsing anonymiser Tor.[15] At a more granular level, Turkey has also blocked sections of certain sites, including the Instagram and Twitter accounts of alcohol brands.[16] In October 2016, the entire Internet was shut off to the southwest region of the country in response to unrest.[17]

INTERNET SHUTDOWNS

As seen with Turkey in the above section, temporarily disabling of internet access is often the response of repressive regimes to temporary periods of instability. Access Now, which monitors shutdowns, recorded 15 instances in 2015 and 56 in 2016, across a wide variety of countries, including India, Malaysia, Uganda and Brazil.[18] Many of these shutdowns are possible because of vague or outdated laws

that were passed before the Internet became a central part of communication. An extreme example is India, where shutdowns are legal because of an 1885 law that allowed the government to take over telegraph operators' networks.

NATIONAL NETWORKS

Many countries that oppressively restrict free speech have at the same time recognised the utility and desirability of the internet access. Yet most of the innovative online companies are based in the West and therefore are outside of the surveillance of the country and have free speech values that are at odds with the regime. In many cases, this has led them to be blocked. Facebook, for example, is blocked in Iran and China, but both countries have successful local alternatives: in Iran, Facenama and in China there are numerous social media sites to choose from, including Weibo. In these countries, the alternatives grew organically (indeed, China has in many ways been ahead of the West in developing social media). However, other governments have looked at this model and, lacking organically evolved sites, have sought to develop them. Thus, the Turkish government is building domestic alternatives to Google search and Gmail.[19] North Korea, Cuba and Burma have never connected themselves entirely to the global internet and have run their web more as a "national intranet". Iran currently is connected to the global Net, albeit with increasing blocking, but is interested in disconnecting to create a "Halal Intranet".[20] Iran's experiment will doubtlessly be watched by other authoritarian regimes to see if it can be carried out with a destabilising backlash.

SURVEILLANCE

Rather than restricting access to sites, countries may prefer to allow users to view sites but record or monitor their activity. Tunisia, for example, requires all ISPs to report on the activities of their users to the government.[21] In some countries, such as Syria, people have taken to using Internet cafes as a way to avoid surveillance, but this has often led to requirements that Internet cafes record usage and report it to the government. Surveillance is not just an issue for authoritarian countries. In 2016, the UK passed the Investigatory Powers Act, which, among other things, forces ISPs to keep Internet connection records of users and gives law enforcement and intelligence agencies powers to do targeted and bulk data collection.

Many governments have passed laws that restrict citizens' rights to protect their privacy. Targets have included Tor networks, VPNs and encryption. Law enforcement officials and politicians from both left and right in the US have advocated that they have access to back doors to access encrypted communications and devices. Privacy advocates, though, point out that technological solutions that prevent eavesdropping such as encryption are vital to many, for example in commerce to protect trade secrets and for pro-democracy campaigners in authoritarian countries.[22]

LIBEL AND INSULT LAWS

Many countries seek to muzzle discussion, both online and offline, by threatening hostile reporting with laws that cover libel, defamation or slander. This is not a new strategy, and Singapore's leader Lee Kuan Yew used defamation laws to silence criticism in the 1970s.[23] Today, many countries have libel laws that can be used to stifle criticism. For example, it is a common practice in Eastern Europe and Asia.[24] In Hungary, journalists can be held responsible for statements they quote if they turn out to be false, even if they were reported in good faith, and the libeled party can seek restitution. This law even covers quoting comments made by politicians during parliamentary debates.[25] In Slovakia, the president of the Supreme Court won EUR 31,000 in damages after a newspaper called him "arrogant".[26]

Authoritarian regimes often have laws that prohibit speech about broad areas that might cause general offense, such as indecency (for example, Iran), national unity (Syria) or "anything contrary to the state and its system" (Saudi Arabia).[27] More moderate regimes may have legislation against glorifying terrorism and laws against hate speech. While to many, these will seem to be necessary, they are controversial and have been misused. For example, in Spain a young woman was sentenced to a one-year jail term for a series of tweets that made poor taste jokes about the 1973 assassination of Spain's prime minister by the Basque separatist group Eta.[28] The court found that the tweets glorified terrorism and humiliated the victims of terrorism.

CYBERCRIME LEGISLATION

Many governments have been concerned that the rise of the Internet has created legal problems that just did not exist in the analogue age. The answer to this has been a series of "cybercrime" laws that are mostly very similar because they were copied from a couple of early examples. While legal scholars have been sympathetic to the need for updated laws for the digital age, these pieces of cybercrime legislation have been roundly criticized for being overly broad and vague and for stifling free speech. Trinidad's version of the law, for example, contains penalties for reporting on corporate corruption.[29] Some laws have even made it a crime to break a website's Terms of Service contract. However, the Terms of Service are rarely read and often are themselves overly restrictive.

INTERMEDIARY LIABILITY

Intermediary liability is the responsibility that content providers bear for information that appears on their platforms but which is posted by third parties. The policy discussions of the 2000s were mainly concerned with liability for copyright violations (say, if a video that infringes copyright is posted on YouTube) and lead to Safe Harbor laws that broadly protect the intermediary. However, the issue of liability is opening up into new frontiers, particularly around terrorism, hate crimes and protection of minors.[30] In India, 21 websites, including Facebook and Google, were prosecuted in 2001 over content posted on them that promoted enmity between ethnic and religious groups in the country. Initially, the websites refused to screen user content, but increasingly have capitulated to prevent being banned completely.[31] Social media is coming under increasing scrutiny over its content and the effect it has, including the effects of "fake news" and a series of grisly live-streamed events, including murders and suicides. If intermediary liability is made stricter that may force tech giants to apply aggressive filtering of their content that takes out innocent free speech as collateral damage.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Press freedom and internet freedom go hand in hand – they are inextricably linked to each other. According to Freedom House's *Freedom on the Net 2016* report, internet freedom around the world is on the decline, down again for the sixth year in a row. Their findings reveal that two-thirds of all internet users — 67 percent — live in countries where criticism of the government, military, or ruling family are subject to censorship, and that globally, 27 percent of all internet users live in countries where

people have been arrested for publishing, sharing, or merely "liking" content on Facebook.[32]

Contrast this with their annual Freedom of the Press report, which for 2017 indicated that "only 13 percent of the world's population enjoys a free press."[33] This is not great news for digital rights and independent media advocates and illustrates the tough road ahead. They also point to the urgent need to heed the call of CIMA and others to build bridges between the respective work of the media development and internet governance communities.

WHAT CAN MEDIA DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS DO?

The threats posed by state and non-state actors alike endanger freedom of speech, not to mention access to information and rights to privacy. As the media development community adapts to a converged world where the "internet of things" has quickly rooted itself into our culture and way of life, it must find ways to foster meaningful dialogue and opportunities to engage with the various entities and institutions that constitute internet governance – Internet Cooperation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), Internet Engineering Taskgorce (IETF), Internet Governance Forum (IGF), as well as the internet freedom community at large to take part in the conversations, gatherings and debate the help to shape the digital rights and freedoms that matter most to media development. In doing so, it cannot just have ad hoc representation or separate "internet freedom" projects – as a sector media development needs to take a holistic view and think on a systems thinking approach, i.e. by examining the linkages and interactions between the various components that comprise the media systems that we work within and seek to improve.

To help accomplish this, we need to do more to mainstream the ways in which media development organisations can help support a free and open internet. Media development involves capacity building for institutions or individuals related to freedom of expression, pluralism, and diversity of media, as well as transparency of media ownership. It's time to update the discourse and framing of the core components of media development undertakings to include and mainstream digital rights discourse and the types of issues and concerns as outlined above in the framing of how state and non-state actors undermine internet freedom.

A potential first step in this direction would be to update the frameworks and assessment tools that media development actors use to include many of the threats, concerns, and innovations that the digital revolution has had on journalism and internet-based communication and media. For IMS, efforts in this regard include expanding on our assessments of the media's enabling environment to include not only the classic media sector, but the broader information and communications environment and the widest possible selection of actors with a stake in this environment, including for example technology companies and telecommunication actors.

A second step would be to better align the goals and objectives of media development to be more in line with the realities of digitalisation and convergence. In light of the new threats and challenges that state and non-state actors pose to freedom of speech in an internet saturated world, it's time for an updated vision for media development's response and suggested approach to overcoming the problems and challenges the internet poses to freedom of expression. For IMS, this involves a heavy emphasis on issues related to digital media content and platform development as well as digital security. This includes working with everything from DDOS protection providers that protect our partners, to Facebook and YouTube to enable partners to improve their digital content and generate a more sustainable income. Further, IMS promotes the increased involvement of our local partners in global internet freedom communities as well as in policy and methodology development forums like the Global Network Initiative.

A third step is for media development actors to get more deeply involved and engaged in internet governance debates and forums. To help support the enabling environment for media development in the digital age we live in, the space between the internet governance and media development communities needs to get smaller. The way that the internet is governed, and the rights and duties afforded to all people with regards to freedom of expression and privacy online are at the heart of why media development should care about these issues.

Media development needs to have its voice heard in the debates of the internet governance bodies, and representatives from the media assistance community need to have a seat at the table when it comes to crafting new standards, norms, and rules that will shape legal and regulatory aspects of

freedom of expression issues that affect journalists and media outlets today and with an eye to the future. Here, IMS works with groups like the Center for International Media Assistance and the Global Forum for Media Development to get more media and media development actors involved in arenas like the Internet Governance Forum, ICANN and the ITU as many of our local partners can bring crucial on-the-ground perspectives to the table where politcies and standards with both global and local implications are discussed and developed.

Media development organisations have a unique opportunity to galvanize their networks, stakeholders and collective experiences to feed into the frameworks that are being developed that will shape and inform internet governance in the years and decades to come. Now more than ever do we need journalists, media actors and outlets to engage in reporting

and journalism that can shape public understanding of the battles that are being waged online that in turn have very real offline consequences. The collective work and impact of the media development sector stands to play a significant role in curtailing further erosion of internet freedom and relatedly press freedom, but before this can happen there needs to be some sense of re-imagining media development for the digital age. Fortunately, these conversations are starting to happen, and looking ahead to the next five to ten years, it will be exciting to see what changes the future brings.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Statistics showed 328 million monthly users of Twitter globally in the first quarter of 2017. Above, examples of IMS partners in the MENA region using Twitter to reach their audiences. Source: Statistica.com

Trust in the digital era

By Susan Abbott

By some measures, the digital era should be a golden age of journalism. There are more news sources available to more readers than ever before. And with citizen journalism and blogging, more people are using new technologies to get involved in making news as well. Yet this increased engagement has been overshadowed by a more dramatic trend: a collapse in trust in the media. The news-making process itself has come under intense scrutiny as "fake news" and bitter accusations of bias and lapsing ethical standards in journalism have dominated headlines. Social media, a technology designed to bring people together, seems to be doing the opposite by spreading false rumors and hateful speech. In reaction to these trends, the phrase "post-truth era", a term that reflects the prevalence of misinformation in modern discourse, was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2016.

The stakes are high; a free and functioning media is so often seen as a central pillar of an open society that there is concern that declining trust in journalism may ultimately undermine democracy itself. Moreover, if a digital democracy can't sustain trust between media and the public, will it still be possible for media development to bring about lasting political change in transitioning countries through supporting free and independent news? And if so, is rebuilding trust a prerequisite to such endeavors? This article looks at the complicated issues surrounding trust and the media, including where trust has broken down, why it has happened and approaches to responding to it.

WHERE HAS TRUST BROKEN DOWN?

Most reports that discuss the decline of trust in the media paint it as a universal phenomenon that affects all people in all countries and all forms of media. However, this is not a complete picture. While falling trust is certainly widespread, it manifests itself in different ways in different sections of the population, in different geographic regions and towards different types of media. To fully understand what has happened to trust, we need to understand these differences.

LEVELS OF EDUCATION

Edelman's 2017 Trust Barometer (see p.32) shows that there is a split in how much trust has eroded between people with a high level of education and those with a lower level. For the 2017 survey, looking at general trust in all institutions, those in the Informed Public category (defined as aged 25-64, college-educated, in the top 25% of income earners for their age group and high media consumers) were found to have a Trust Index value of 60 across the survey countries, whereas in the Mass Population category (anyone not in the Informed Public category) the value was 45. For the Informed Public, only six countries were "distrusting" (had a Trust Index of less than 50), while for the Mass Population, 20 out of the 28 countries counted as distrusting institutions. Moreover, in the 2016 report, overall trust in institutions rose globally, driven by increases in the Informed Public category.

This Informed Public/Mass Population split can more generally be characterised, particularly by those who have lost trust, as one between "elites" and the general public. Indeed, whereas the word elite previously has had positive connotations in the English language, it now has a pejorative sense and can imply an aloofness from or an indifference to the general population.[3] Similar dynamics are at work in other languages. For example, the French right-wing politician Marine Le Pen has emphasised the divide between the people and *la caste*.[4]

POLITICAL AFFILIATION

Closely related to the variance in trust levels between groups of differing education, is a split by

political affiliation.[5] The drop in trust is much higher among people who identify as conservatives, who often feel that the media does not represent them or their values. Conservative politicians regularly use terms such as "liberal media" and "mainstream media" to signal their rejection of and distrust in the media. In the US in particular, conservative politicians have engaged in a war of words with the media, to the extent that discrediting the media appears to be part of a political strategy. If the language is less combative in other countries, it may simply be that rather than bad-mouthing the media, politicians are able to take more direct action against it as seen in most of the post-conflict and fragile areas where IMS operates, where non-state media are struggling for survival due to either legal or physical attacks or because of the way the advertising market is structured.[6]

As well as being related to the divide in the level of education, this political division correlates with other categories in society, such as old/young, white collar/blue collar, urban/rural, secular/religious, internationalist/nationalist as well as race and ethnicity. All of these are intertwined, and studies have shown differences in media preferences across these boundaries. Clearly, if trust is to be rebuilt, these splits have to be understood and efforts can't just be focused on educated urban progressives.

COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

Media distrust is at an all-time high in the European Union and North America, but outside of these highly developed regions the results are far more mixed and it's harder to draw firm conclusions. Edelman reported in 2012 that globally it was seeing an increasing level of trust in the media, led by countries outside North America and Europe, such as China, India, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Brazil and Mexico, which all saw increases in media trust that kept their Trust Index levels in the 60s and 70s, with China leading the pack with 80. Since that report, many of those countries have seen declines, but China, India and Indonesia still show the strongest levels of trust globally (Trust Indexes of 65, 66 and 67 respectively). It could, therefore, be that we are seeing a different dynamic in other countries, or it could simply be that they are experiencing the same trends as the EU and North America but with a slight delay.

It is not clear if a country's political system is a factor here. The most obvious pattern is that war-torn countries, such as Syria[7] and ISIS-controlled Iraq[8] have very low levels of trust indeed. After that, the trends are less obvious to discern. There are a number of countries with authoritarian tendencies or increasingly authoritarian tendencies which show low or decreasing trust in the media. Examples include Turkey and Russia,[9] but China, with a highly centralised media ecosystem, could be considered a counter-example. Similarly, is Brazil's drop in trust between 2012 and 2017 (from an Edelman Trust Index score of 73 to 48) the result of specific and localised political scandal, or is it the result of more global trends?

While some Asian countries have shown strong levels of trust overall, the region's most industrialised democracies, Japan and South Korea, have consistently been beneath their regional peers, with Japan scoring a Trust Index of 32 in 2017 and South Korea receiving 40. This is a tantalising observation that suggests that regional differences in levels of trust are linked to differing levels of development or perhaps attendant negative aspects of development such as income inequality.

The data on all these points simply is not comprehensive enough to support any definitive conclusion. While there is a growing body of data that shows different regional patterns in trust, there is little research to link these patterns to underlying causes. This creates dilemmas for media development, as most models of distrust in the media are based on Western assumptions. Yet if the data show us anything, it is that there is no firm link between what is happening in the EU and North America and what is happening in the rest of the world. More research into regional differences and why they exist would certainly advance understanding in this field.

TYPES OF MEDIA

"Media" is a broad and increasingly complex industry, with advancements in digital technology and the consumption patterns they bring further increasing the diversity of the media universe. Within the different types of media, trust levels vary greatly. The European Broadcasting Union, breaks down levels of trust by media type. Across Europe, radio is the most trusted news source, with 55% of the population tending to trust it and 36% tending not to trust it, giving it a net trust value of +19%. TV has a net trust value of +1%; printed news, -7%; the Internet, -10%; and social media, -35%. Once again, though, the results are not geographically consistent. For example, while radio is the most trusted medium in 20 of 33 countries surveyed, TV dominates in other countries, particularly in southeastern Europe.

Social media has the most universal distrust. In the EBU report, Albania was the only country where social media has a positive net trust value, and Edelman's rather more limited data also point to a widespread distrust of social media. Some highly developed countries, such as Germany and Japan, have very low social media usage relative to Internet penetration due to privacy concerns.[10]

Social media's woes are well-known, particularly following the 2016 US presidential election in which the role of fake news and misinformation was extensively questioned. Although fake news is an issue that goes beyond social media, networks such as Facebook received heavy criticism for allowing the spread of political stories that were manifestly false. Facebook for a long time maintained it was not a media outlet and it had little to no role in regulating what users spread. However, intense scrutiny over the role of fake news has lead it to change its position since the election and it is in the process of introducing features. Other platforms including Google have also taken steps to eliminate the spread of fake news.

It remains to be seen what effect these will have and whether they will do anything to restore trust in social media as a news source or if the reputation has been permanently tarnished. What is clear, however, is the trust dynamics for social media are different from media that are still trusted, particularly radio.

WHY HAS TRUST DECLINED?

Numerous theories have been put forward on why trust in media has declined, although none of them are universally agreed upon and few believe that the cause of (or solution to) declining trust is simple or easily reducible. The following are some of the most commonly suggested reasons.

DECLINING TRUST IN ALL INSTITUTIONS
Media is not alone in experiencing declining trust. Politicians, corporations, financial institutions, scientists, non-governmental organisations, sports teams and personalities, organised religion and marriage have all experienced declining trust, as a result of a broader skepticism of authority. In that sense, media is not an outlier and is just experiencing the same trends that are affecting other societal institutions. Indeed, media plays an interesting role in that not only has it been affected by declining trust but it has also helped bring it about

through investigative reporting, as for example with the infamous Panama Papers that uncovered widespread money laundering by highlevel officials in government institutions and the likes, thus playing a part in eroding trust in institutions.

POLITICAL POLARISATION
The last fifty years have seen the slow steady decline of centrism in politics with a corresponding drift to the extremes.[11] The political landscape has become more partisan and politicians have also prioritised short-term political gains over long-term sound policy, in many cases with the resounding approval of their constituents. Media has responded in a variety of ways, with some outlets trying to maintain an objective, centrist position at the risk of losing the respect of those who no longer stand on that ground and others appealing directly to partisan positions.[12]

In this light, the current crisis in trust can be considered a political crisis. Stagnating wages, shuttered industries, increasing inequality, austerity and eroding benefits have lead citizens to be frustrated with their governments at the lack of progress and at the media for supporting the status quo that lead to this situation. This has lead them to distrust traditional centrist media and turn to outlets that reflect their views.

From the other side, centrist media outlets have struggled to cover movements that reject centrism and this has led to a vicious cycle. Journalists are loathe to give equal consideration to controversial views such as anti-immigration, climate change denial and the anti-vaccination movement and when they do they cover them from a distance as an outsider or even with open contempt. This in turn leads to accusations that centrist media outlets are biased as they are not covering these issues neutrally, which leads to a further alienation from mainstream politics.

FRAGMENTATION IN MEDIA MARKETS
The last 50 years of media have been marked by increasing fragmentation as more ways of consuming media have become available. Television took the lead as satellite and cable paved the way for an increasing number of channels to be presented to viewers all over the world. However, media choices really mushroomed with the Internet, which, while opening up choices for people, also challenged producers to fight harder to maintain their share in the fragmented market.

There are several negative effects that can be associated with this trend. Firstly, the authority of individual sources is diluted. Previously, large-name media sources, such as broadsheet newspapers and respected broadcasters with a national audience, would have been the principle way of receiving and interpreting news. Even in a nation with diverse political views, the way information was received was relatively homogenous. In a more fragmented market, there is no one source that everyone is familiar with.

Secondly, media fragmentation and the advent of everything digital has resulted in increased media consumption. Some worry that this has led to information overload and that people now have difficulty in telling which source to trust. This has produced a kind of decision paralysis, and people now often decide on the trustworthiness of a news source based on whether it is approved of by family and friends. This trend is called epistemic closure.

EPISTEMIC CLOSURE

Epistemic closure is a term that has recently sprung into popular use. In its lay use, the term describes how ever-dwindling trust in media has led news consumers to get their information from a smaller pool of outlets, resulting in an inability to accept new ideas that challenge ideological beliefs. The term was first used popularly by American conservatives who were alarmed at what they saw as a threat to their political movement by followers withdrawing into an intellectual cocoon.[13] The right's obsession with former president Barack Obama's birth certificate and the firm belief that it would prove he wasn't born in the United States has been held up as a prime example of the rigidity of thinking that epistemic closure causes. To people with these beliefs no amount of quality journalism from respected resources is going to challenge this core conviction, while any source that repeats the narrative, no matter how shoddy the journalism, will be trusted. This relates in part to confirmation bias; the tendency to interpret and favor new evidence or information in ways that confirm existing beliefs. This tendency also means that people give disproportionately less consideration to other sources of information when they do not fit with people's existing bias. As a result, people tend to dismiss news and information if it contradicts their beliefs and may in fact even strengthen their beliefs when provided with evidence that opposes them. Epistemic closure creates a huge challenge for media. While there is a nebulous feeling among people that distrust the media that journalists are being

biased, partisan or corrupt, epistemic closure suggests overcoming this will be hard. Those obsessed with Barack Obama's birth certificate did not continue to believe that he was born in Kenya because the quality of the journalism was lacking or the reporters covering the story weren't ethical enough. They believed the story because they wanted to and because confirmation bias made it possible.
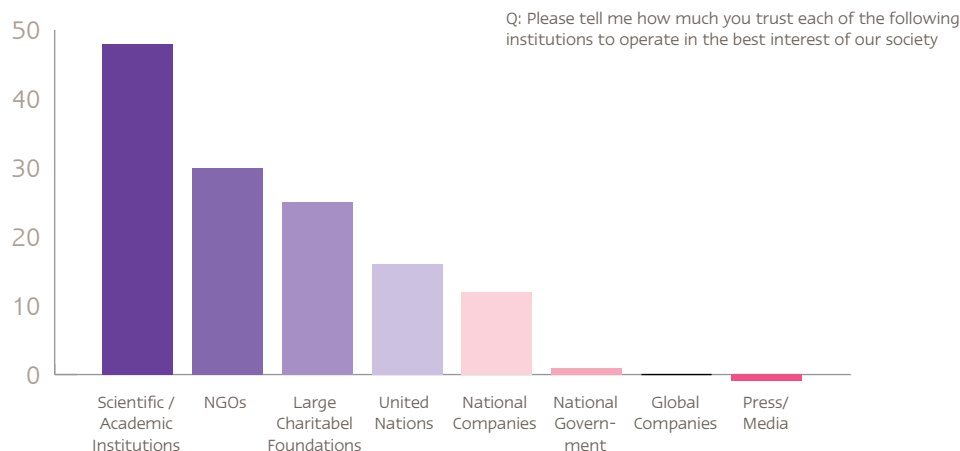
HOW CAN TRUST BE RESTORED?

The idea of trust is on the surface so simple. Yet psychologists caution that it is more than just a simple on-off switch. Trust is complicated, built up over time and affected by a myriad of personal and external factors. This makes the task of rebuilding trust between the media and the public, both of which are diverse and highly complex groups, even more daunting. Yet trust is also seen as an essential concept in a functioning society, and the collapse of trust in the media is generally seen as something that urgently needs to be addressed. That much is generally agreed upon. There's little consensus, though, on how trust can restored, only that it's an enormous project that will take time.

MEDIA LITERACY

Media literacy is the skill of being able to critically evaluate and analyse information presented through the media, recognising, for example, when it might be distorted or prone to bias. Proponents of media literacy development argue that civil society can be fostered by encouraging media consumers to deconstruct the news they receive. Indeed, to be a responsible citizen, they argue, this kind of detailed parsing of the media is a requirement and a kind of civic participation. Thus, the theory goes, people should be taught how to read media, and this has led to media literacy and cultural studies courses in schools, at both the elementary and secondary level, and universities. Whereas previously a literature class would have focused on classic novels, students will now be presented with a range of texts including newspaper articles. The media literacy movement started in the developed West, but has more recently spread globally in both public and private initiatives.[14] As a media development strategy, media literacy has been notably employed in response to misinformation campaigns.
In a "post-truth era", in which we are bombarded with fake news and misinformation, a more media savvy population would certainly seem essential for democracy to survive. Yet media literacy has its critics, who view it as a top-down approach and point

National governments, global companies, and press and media are the least trusted institutions globally

Q: Please tell me how much you trust each of the following institutions to operate in the best interest of our society

Source: Globescan Radar 2016

out that it has no consistent approach and that there is little data to confirm its success.[15] Moreover, media literacy is not a new concept. Many countries have had a range of media and cultural studies courses available in schools and universities since at least the 1970s, and yet still the trust has declined there. Can further penetration of such courses reverse the trend of falling trust? Without further innovation in this field, it seems unlikely.

RADIO

While it's tempting to think the state of media trust is dire, the data do not entirely bear this out. As shown by the European Broadcasting Union report, radio is still trusted as a medium in many countries. Radio has shown surprising resilience as a medium, especially in many of the regions where IMS operates, and in recent years audience figures for radio generally and for radio news have shown robust growth.[16] The perceived level of trustworthiness of radio may in and of itself attract more people to the medium. As such, radio news may serve as a beachhead for restoring faith in journalism and providing to society a common consensus of what is a reliable version of what is happening in the world. The exact reasons for the trust in radio are unclear, but two factors seem to be playing an important role here, namely community and stakeholder media and public service broadcasting.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER MEDIA

As media markets have become increasingly competitive, many news organisations have only been able to stay afloat with job layoffs and other outlets

have had to close completely. In the US, the number of staff employed in newspaper news rooms fell by 28% between 2007 and 2012[17] and in many cases local coverage has suffered. Re-establishing links between media and the communities they serve at the lowest level is seen by some observers as not only vital for news organisations but also for democracy.[18] This is particularly relevant in many of the regions IMS operates in where local, and sometimes hyper-local community and stakeholder-driven media help build trust in local communities.

PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

Secondly, the Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) ethos is still very much alive in the radio sector and in many countries, PSB radio stations are popular and trusted, even if they are not completely immune from accusations of bias. PSB has a unique advantage in that it, if established with the correct structure, for example with funding through a trust, can hold a reputation of being independent of both government and advertisers, a crucial factor in gaining the respect of audiences.[19] Supporting PSB has certainly been used as a media development tool, but interest has been dampened by a view that it is outdated as a media model. Certainly, there are risks involved in PSB, such as the possibility that government-funded PSB will be too beholden to government interests. Despite these concerns, there have been calls to re-evaluate PSB's unfashionable status, find 21st-century solutions for the problems it faces and re-engage with it in media development.[20] The data on trust should only encourage this re-examination.

Who measures trust in media?

The following are profiles of five organisations that have published research into trust and the media:

EDELMAN TRUST BAROMETER

Edelman is an American public relations firm which publishes an annual Trust Barometer that seeks to gauge global trends in levels of trust. Edelman's report covers 28 countries, covering different societal institutions, including media, and broad social trends, with a survey pool of 30,000 individuals. Edelman's emphasis is still on mostly industrialised countries. In 2012, Edelman introduced their "Trust Index" to measure relative levels of trust between countries and categories.

EUROPEAN BROADCASTING UNION

The European Broadcasting Union is an alliance of European public service media entities, with non-European organisations allowed to join as associates. As of 2017, there are 73 members in 56 countries operating nearly 2000 TV and radio stations in 122 different languages. The Union's research and publishing arm called Media Intelligence Services publishes its Trust in Media report, based on data from the European Commission Eurobarometer survey of EU member states and acceding and candidate countries. Like Edelman, the EBU has devised a trust index, this time based on net trust (the percentage point difference between those who trust and those you don't trust media).

GALLUP

Gallup is an American firm most famous for its polling activities. Since 2005, the company has produced its World Poll, based on a series of over 100 questions of global interest and a smaller number of region-specific questions asked in 160 countries.

In nations with high household telephone penetration, the surveys are conducted by phone, while in developing nations face-to-face interviews are used. Polling frequency is between semi-annual and biannual, depending on the country and results are published on a rolling basis. Topics covered include Politics and Government, Health and Social Issues. The Communication and Media section includes questions about access to different types of media and freedom of the media.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Pew Research Center bills itself as a "fact tank" to emphasise that it does not produce policy positions but instead merely analyses data in a non-partisan manner. Pew does systematic global polling research in 64 countries, but does not include questions on the media. It's Journalism and Media division is highly focused on the US, but occasionally has international research.

UNESCO'S MEDIA DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

UNESCO's Media Development Indicators (MDI) are used to evaluate national media landscapes. IMS has utilised the MDIs to conduct a number of media sector evaluations around the world, including Jordan, Myanmar and South Sudan.[1] The framework looks at five principal categories for media development work, including "media as a platform for democratic discourse," which highlights a key set of indicators related to levels of public trust and confidence in the media as key considerations.[2]

CONCLUSION

While it is widely known that trust between the public and media is declining, it is rarely considered a factor in media development programmes. Yet arguably, the declining trust is as important a shift in the media landscape as the digital revolution, and perhaps very related. Media is not the object of media development, but is rather just one part of a chain, from media that provides news and information, to individuals who consume this information and have it shape their views and opinions and influence general societal values and positive social and political change. If that chain is broken by distrust, the achieving profound change is unlikely to be realised.

How to fix it is less clear. There are many questions that IMS, along with other media development organisations, will have to explore to support the type of media that meets the needs and restores the trust of its audiences while remaining true to the guiding ethics of good journalism:

- Are the trends in declines of media trust driven by local or global factors?
- How relevant are ideas such as "objectivity" and "quality" to how we value news in a time of increased partisanship?

- Will technological solutions be able to overcome the problems of fake news in social media?
- As the digital age progresses, will people naturally develop literacy for online news and information and when to trust it or do we need to be taught this?
- Can Public Service Broadcasting help overcome distrust or will this philosophy fall prey to declining levels of confidence as commercial media already has?

There is little data to support any definitive answers one way or the other. For media development to be successful in the digital age, understanding trust and how it intermediates between media and people is going to be vital.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
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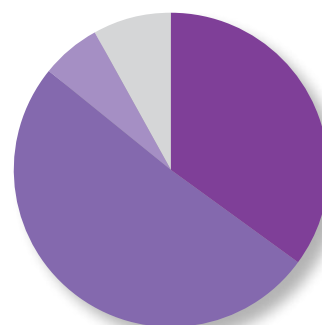
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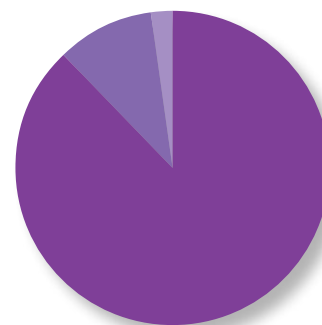
Financial overview 2016

FUNDING

	EUR	%
▪ Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Danida	5,796,116	35%
▪ Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Sida	8,505,870	51%
▪ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Norad	1,052,816	6%
▪ Other donors	1,255,598	8%
Total	**16,610,401**	**100%**

EXPENDITURES

	EUR	%
▪ Activities	14,504,052	88%
▪ Cost of doing business	1,703,083	10%
▪ Development & other activities	403,265	2%
Total	**16,610,401**	**100%**

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