



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Forum on Internet Freedom in East Africa 2015

Developments (policy and practice)
influencing the State of Internet
Freedom in Africa



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UNESCO works towards strengthening the environment for free expression, press freedom, journalistic safety and self-regulation, **for both online and offline media platforms**, and especially in post-conflict countries and countries in transition, through favourable policies & practices and support to national media institutions by:

- Creating an enabling regulatory framework;
- Awareness-raising for international standards;
- Campaigns for safety of journalists and ending impunity;
- Free & independent media in countries in transition & post-conflict;
- Investigative journalism, reporting elections, self-regulation;
- Journalism education, MDIs, and development projects supported by IPDC.

Media Freedom

New media are increasingly relevant in the region, despite limited internet access in many countries.

Governments are increasingly aware of the potential influence of online publications and bloggers.

In the attempt of interference journalists have resisted constraints, and citizens have been able to express themselves relatively freely via the media, in particular on internet forums and call-in radio talk shows.

There has generally not been registration required for internet use as such, although increasingly registration for SIM card ownership has been required.



Media Freedom (Cont.)

Websites and blogs with international domain names have been allowed to be set up freely.

Only a few countries have required registration or licensing by a regulatory authority.

Systematic filtering or censorship of internet content has remained the exception; certain opposition websites have been blocked in some countries with nationwide internet filtering of political content much less common.

Most countries seemed to lack the technical means to filter internet content, but there has been growing concern over the setting up of monitoring mechanisms that could lead to filtering.



Media Freedom (Cont.)

Although there was evidence of systematic filtering and/or surveillance by just two African governments, there are indications of a growing trend in the number of governments that have attempted to introduce legislation to this effect.

Some governments have blocked access to SMS in times of unrest.

Authorities have tended to resort to more direct forms of internet censorship, such as the harassment or arrest of bloggers and online journalists, rather than sophisticated URL blocking or systematic filtering because they did not yet have the technical capability to do so.

Governments in the region have been wary of the potential influence of the 2011 uprisings in parts of the Arab region on the sub-Saharan region. Recognizing how social media acted as an enabling factor in the uprisings, some governments have banned reference to those events on both the internet and traditional media.



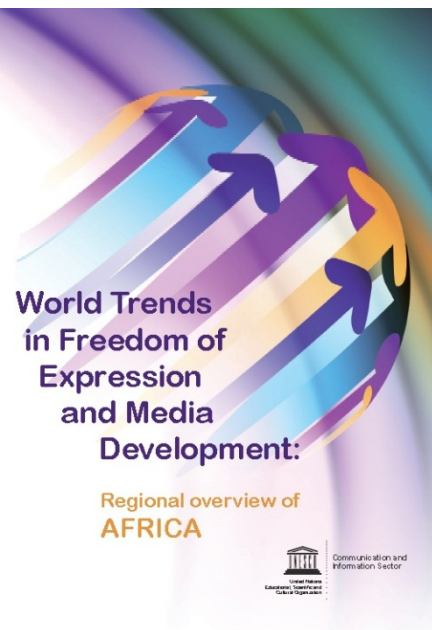
Media Pluralism

Access

- The rate of internet penetration in Africa nearly quadrupled between 2007 and 2012.
- Over the same time period, the ITU found that the rate of mobile-cellular subscriptions nearly tripled.
- Cellular phones have increased public access to participation in radio programming across the continent.
- Most newspapers and radio stations have internet outlets for their content.
- Online channels – in larger numbers of local languages have widened access to a wider range of media users.
- A study of mobile media services in two East African countries concluded that despite the high level of mobile phone use, the use of mobile media services remained at a low level.

Content

- Action against independent media in some countries saw a number of journalists enter exile to launch several ‘internet newspapers’, radios and a satellite news channel.



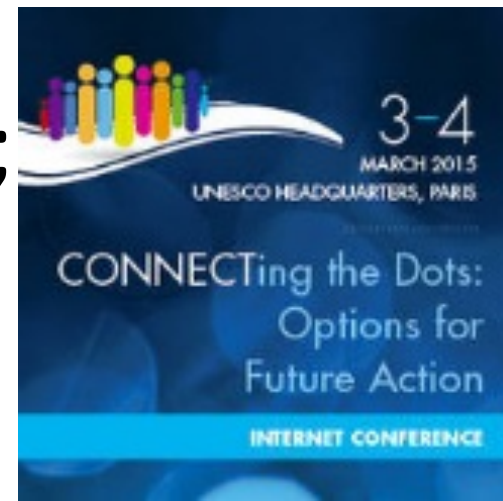
Issues

Access to information & knowledge;

Ethical dimension of information society;

Freedom of Expression;

Privacy.

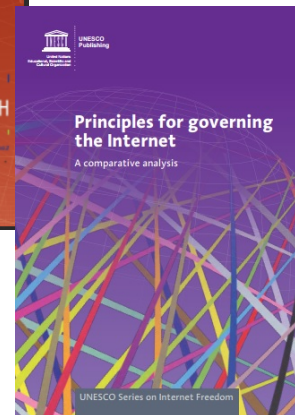
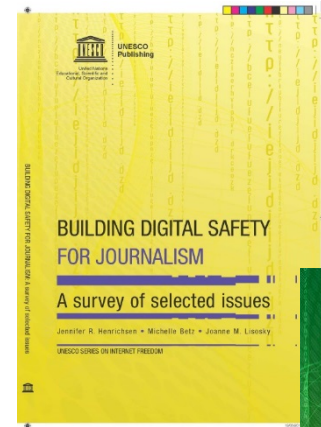


Thematic areas.....

Building Digital Safety for Journalism, a Survey of Selected Issues;

Fostering Freedom Online, the Role of Internet Intermediaries;
Countering Online Hate Speech;

Principles for governing the Internet.



Building digital safety for journalism

Surveillance and mass surveillance;

Software and hardware exploits without the knowledge of the target;

Phishing attacks;

Fake domain attacks;

Man-in-the-Middle (MitM) attacks;

Denial of Service (DoS) attacks (and DDoS – distributed denial of service);

Website defacement;

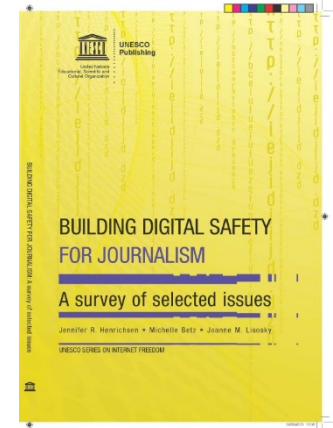
Compromised user accounts;

Intimidation, harassment and forced exposure of online networks;

Disinformation and smear campaigns;

Confiscation of journalistic work product, and

Data storage and mining.



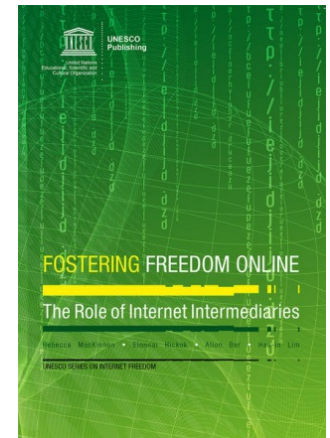
Fostering Freedom Online, the Role of Internet Intermediaries

State Commitments and Limitations on Expression;

Privacy, Data Protection, and Surveillance;

Intermediary liability;

Self-regulation and Co-Regulation.



Countering Online Hate Speech

Hate Speech and the ICCPR;

Other international legal instruments;

Private spaces of expression and hate speech;

How hate speech is defined and regulated in private spaces for expression.



Principles for governing the Internet

A comparative analysis

Access

Openness

Freedom of Expression

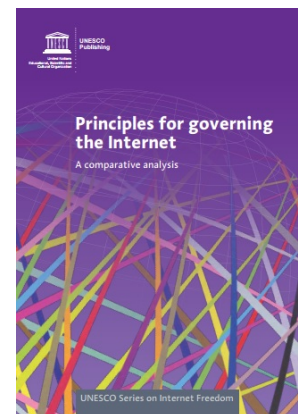
Privacy

Ethics

Multistakeholder Participation

Gender Equality

Sustainable Development



THE WAY FORWARD

CSOs

Raising Awareness and Advocacy for issues

GOVERNMENT

Enabling Environments and addressing impunity

PRIVATE SECTOR

Access, R&D,
Implementing standards

UN SYSTEM

Operational Activities,
Monitoring and Evaluation, Policy Analysis,
Mobilization Campaigns

ORGANIZATIONS

International Standardization Bodies
R&D Promotion
Raising Awareness among Policy Makers



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