

A STUDY GUIDE SERIES ON PEACE AND CONFLICT  
FOR INDEPENDENT LEARNERS AND CLASSROOM INSTRUCTORS

# The Impact of New Media on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management



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# Preface

The international system has witnessed dramatic changes in the recent past. Questions relating to how and when ordinary citizens can stand against oppression, injustice, and abuse without resorting to violence challenge all of us to rethink our understanding of international peace and conflict. As academicians, educators, practitioners, private citizens, and students, what is our role in this increasingly complex global picture? What can we do to nurture and preserve international security and world peace?

One thing is certain. We must make sure learners and educators have access to the best available information about the issues concerning peace, justice, freedom, and security. Our country's future depends upon their interest and understanding of these complicated topics. In the belief that knowledge of these issues is vital to civic education, we have developed this study guide to expand our readers' perspectives and knowledge of some aspects of international peace and conflict.

## About the Study Guide

This study guide is designed to serve independent learners who want to find out more about international conflict and its possible resolution, as well as educators who seek to introduce these topics into their curricula. The main text of each guide briefly discusses the most important issues concerning the subject at hand, especially those related to the critical task of managing conflicts and building international peace.

Other features of each study guide include

- a glossary to help the reader build vocabulary essential to discussions about the topic;
- discussion questions and activities to encourage critical thinking and active learning; and
- a list of readings and multimedia resources for additional investigation and learning opportunities.

It is our hope that citizens around the world will find the contents of the study guide useful as they strive to deepen their understanding of international peace and conflict.

### *Note to students who are planning to enter the National Peace Essay Contest*

*This guide is a brief summary of the key issues surrounding the topic of new media and international conflict. Please do not use the guide as a reference in your essay or as a bibliography citation. We encourage you to consult the references listed in the resource section and in the notes.*

*These resources may be included as references in your bibliography.*

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# About the United States Institute of Peace

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan institution established and funded by Congress. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent conflicts, promote postconflict peacebuilding, and increase conflict management tools, capacity, and intellectual capital worldwide. The Institute does this by empowering others with knowledge, skills, and resources, as well as by its direct involvement in conflict zones around the globe.

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## Introduction

Across the globe, innovations in technology are changing the way people get information and connect with those around them. Over the past several decades, there has been a paradigm shift in communications and many more people now have the opportunity to be producers of information rather than just passive consumers of it. Traditional media like newspapers, film, or radio have typically been owned by either governments or large corporations and were once the primary ways to disseminate information. But, today, new media tools such as smart phones are in the hands of average citizens and represent the new face of global communication. And, how these technologies are being used is also changing. Social media like Facebook, for example, uses Web-based technologies to allow individuals and organizations to create networks and to facilitate online discussions. Moreover, information can now be sent around the world instantaneously and at almost no cost, an unprecedented phenomenon.

While there is little doubt that these changes in communications technology are significant, there is no consensus about the consequences. In fact, the nature of the impact of this communications revolution may depend, in part, on the availability of the technology (throughout the society or only among elites) and the type of political system and communications restrictions. In particular, as this review shows, these developments have important implications for the peacebuilding and conflict resolution field. The use of these new types of media has made access to information—either about peaceful protests or violent actions—that much more immediate and, in many ways, brought the world closer together.

For example, citizen journalists from conflict zones such as Sri Lanka and Sudan have used their cell phone cameras, blogs, and intimate knowledge of local realities to fill in vital information and to make their voices heard on a global stage. These tools are also being used in practical ways, such as improving coordination between humanitarian groups after a crisis for more effective aid delivery.

Yet, despite the tremendous growth of mobile phone coverage, there is still a significant digital divide. While those in the West struggle with information overload, many in developing countries do not have access to the information provided by new media and still rely on traditional forms, radio in particular.

And, for those who do have access to new media, there are many diverse viewpoints about its role. This difference of opinion often aligns along two perspectives: “cyber utopians” and “cyber skeptics.” Cyber utopians emphasize how new media tools have been used to hold governments accountable, bring citizens together to protest violence, coordinate relief efforts, empower citizens, and build bridges of understanding across boundaries. Cyber skeptics, on the other hand, question whether new media really impacts political reform and point to its role in polarizing society, thwarting peace movements, promoting violent agendas, conveying inaccurate information, and perhaps providing totalitarians with an unprecedented tool for controlling their citizens.

But, media’s role in peace and conflict is not a concern of new media alone, nor a recent debate. There is a long history of political and civic leaders using different forms of media to advance one agenda or the other. The Nazi regime used radio propaganda to gain broad support for racist policies as well as popularity for an all-out aggressive war effort. Television reporting of the carnage during the Vietnam War also fueled a large antiwar movement and contributed greatly to the United States pulling out of the conflict. While media overall has played a positive and informative role in society (as noted in a USIP report on the *Use and Abuse of Media in Vulnerable Societies*), it can also be manipulated by actors who want to instigate violent conflict or may be abused in societies struggling with civil conflict.

In Rwanda in 1994, for example, “radio broadcasts were used to lay the groundwork for genocide.”<sup>1</sup> And, also in the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia, Serbian president Slobodan Milosovic used a government-controlled media to promote a nationalist agenda that

*Politicians, analysts, and citizens around the world are taking notice of the role that young people and new media play in shaping international peace and conflict. From innovations like Facebook, which was founded by a twenty-something computer scientist, to social action, like Egypt’s April 6 movement, which was organized mostly by twenty-something media-savvy activists, young people are making significant contributions to the tools and uses of new media.*

villified other ethnic groups. On the other hand, media can play just as important a role in peacebuilding. Search for Common Ground's Radio for Peacebuilding program, for example, provides resources and training for African journalists to produce radio shows that promote peace.<sup>2</sup> There are many other examples of the positive roles that media play in peacebuilding.

Ultimately, media tools—whether newspapers, radio, blogs, or podcasts—can be used to promote any agenda, even that of peace or conflict. Although it is tempting to become preoccupied with the “bells and whistles” that the latest technology offers, the content—and the intentions and motives behind that content—still matters.

# Part I: Exploring Online Worlds

## What Is New Media?

New media is a term that has been around for decades, but there is not a lot of agreement on the definition. One source explains it as “the many different forms of electronic communication that are made possible through the use of computer technology,” and especially the Internet.<sup>3</sup> Another explanation for new media is content that is accessed on a digital device. A key element of new media is its interactivity, which allows users to engage with others and produce and disseminate their own content. For the purposes of this review, new media is an umbrella term that covers media tools being used in participatory and interactive ways.

Rather than going through media “gatekeepers,” i.e., executive editors at newspapers who decide what is newsworthy and what is not, users can now access information at any time on different electronic devices, create their own content, provide feedback, or actively participate in discussions. And, where media professionals once took time to develop and disseminate content, that process now happens in real time and is in the hands of many more contributors. Most agree on the democratizing effect of this wider access, but some note that this new development has caused quality and accuracy to suffer. That debate is ongoing and particularly relevant to those making a living as professional writers, editors, and broadcasters. It is also relevant to a public that wants accurate information with minimal bias. What is noteworthy about new media though is how quickly it has changed the whole media landscape—and global communications more broadly—in just a couple of decades.

But, how did the new media revolution begin? To answer that question one needs to take a closer look at the history and growth of the Internet itself. The early Internet was initially developed by the U.S. Department of Defense for military purposes. It slowly began to link research centers and academic institutions, but even by 1980 only a couple hundred of these computers were networked. As private companies started to provide Internet services, the number of users grew rapidly. Internet users (or computers with an address linked to the Internet) grew from 90,000 in the late 1980s to 1.3 million in 1993 to 248 million in 1998. In 2010, that figure was nearly 2 billion, meaning that over one-quarter of the world’s population was connected to the Internet. English is still the top language used, but Chinese is quickly catching up and Asia as a whole has close to 30 percent more users than North America.<sup>4</sup>

Most people utilize the Internet by sharing and accessing information on the World Wide Web (or Web). The Web has been making a transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. Static websites defined the former. Web 2.0, in contrast, opened up the space to more participatory discussion, or user-generated content that is shared with others. One example is Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia that allows many anonymous volunteer writers to add content or edit information. Anyone with access to the Internet can contribute to Wikipedia, and such social media have expanded over the past few years.

Hardly groundbreaking for today’s young “digital natives,” these tools have allowed users to share their content—be it in audio, text, or multimedia forms—in a social environment. Examples include tools like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Blogs came onto the scene in the late 1990s and have grown exponentially since (see sidebar). While the interactivity of blogs varies, and some only attract a few followers, there are others with audiences in the millions.

As the Internet came of age in the 1990s, traditional media, such as newspapers and news weeklies, began to see their audiences and advertising dollars decline in favor of the more targeted approaches that new media allowed. Today, traditional media increasingly finds ways to coexist with new media, and new partnerships between the two are being formed. Mainstream media coverage is often supplemented by information from Internet users—such as when the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* includes quotes from bloggers. Businesses, too, have jumped on the new media

### Back to the Future?

*Nikola Tesla, the radio and engineering pioneer who many thought of as a mad scientist, was one of the first to envision the unifying role of communications technology and he was well ahead of his time. In an interview with Colliers magazine in 1926, he stated: “When wireless is perfectly applied, the whole earth will be converted into a huge brain, which in fact it is, all things being particles of a real and rhythmic whole. We shall be able to communicate with one another instantly, irrespective of distance. Not only this, but through television and telephony we shall see and hear one another as perfectly as though we were face to face, despite intervening distances of thousands of miles; and the instruments through which we shall be able to do this will be amazingly simple compared with our present telephone. A man will be able to carry one in his vest pocket.”*

<http://www.livinginternet.com/i/ii-mcluhan.htm>

## Examples of Social Media Platforms

**Twitter** is a social media platform that allows users to post short “tweets” or 140 character messages. For many, it’s a good way to share links and keep up with breaking news about a given topic.

**Facebook** started out as a social networking site to connect college students, but now claims 500 million active users worldwide. Although its main purpose is to keep up-to-date with friends, it is increasingly being used by advertisers and many users are concerned about the privacy of their information. **YouTube** is a video sharing website that allows people to share videos—either amateur or professional. In mid-2010, it exceeded two billion views per day, but it sometimes faces criticism over offensive, violent, or illegal content. A **blog** is an online journal where an individual can post regular commentary and receive feedback. Blogs—especially from expert commentators—are increasingly being referenced by mainstream media and linked to other social networking sites, but are also critiqued for their lack of accountability. According to BlogPulse, there were more than 161 million blogs in May 2011.

bandwagon in pursuit of profits and this pursuit has caused an increasing amount of advertising online. As these trends accelerate, some note that new media is used less for educational purposes and more to support commercial interests.<sup>5</sup>

## New Media and World Affairs

What impact have these technological advances had on world affairs? In an increasingly connected world, they have allowed businesses, governments, political interest groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and individuals to communicate and collaborate in ways they never did before—and in real time via computer links, video conferencing, and smart phones. The online space has also seen a proliferation of transnational advocacy groups that lobby for change on any number of global causes, like the environment. Such communities have made extensive use of online tools to coordinate outreach and are generally composed of activists, NGOs, social movements, international organizations, and other civil society actors.

The Department of State and other agencies have taken steps to use technology tools to engage citizens and public opinion on diplomacy issues. Opinion Space is an online tool used by the State Department to permit the public to visually map their opinions on current issues and vote on the ideas of others.

These technologies, along with the growing influence of international corporations, intergovernmental organizations, and nonstate actors have created a world without boundaries and made the nation state less relevant. Others believe that national governments are just as strong as ever and that there is no evidence to indicate their demise. States still have the power to tax citizens, pass laws, go to war, control territory, and in some cases, silence dissent from citizens and others. Nonetheless, the communications revolution has played a role in transforming global politics. Where once only statesmen made crucial decisions about world affairs, and traditional mass media informed the public, there are now many more voices, like social movements and minority communities, clamoring to be heard. Is this all for the better?

Many working in this field acknowledge that the increasing connections made possible in an information age have led to more capacity and integration, but also to more chaos and division (see discussion on page 10). And, it has changed diplomatic practices, which historically have been based on face-to-face relationship-building and dialogue. Largely because of the speed at which information now moves, diplomats today face increasing pressure to deal with overwhelming amounts of information and to react quickly, neither of which may benefit sensitive negotiations that take time to develop. Take the painstaking work behind the Camp David Accords in 1978 when U.S. president Jimmy Carter brought Egyptian president Anwar El Sadat and Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin together for nearly two weeks to negotiate the Israeli-Egyptian peace accords. In an information-saturated world that demands instant responses, it is not clear that today’s diplomats, advisers, or policymakers can provide private advice and engage in patient long-term discussions or negotiations in a world of instantaneous and nonsecret communications. A case in point is the confidential diplomatic memos released by a site called WikiLeaks in 2010, which led to both extensive media coverage and the assertion by various branches of the U.S. Government that the leaks had put U.S. security at risk.<sup>6</sup> Balancing transparency and engagement with security needs, therefore, is an ongoing concern that underlies all of these issues.

## A Closer Look at the Digital Divide

As the above statistics indicate, Internet usage has grown significantly worldwide, but not necessarily in an equal way across countries. Much of the world’s population—particularly in the developing world—simply doesn’t have access to the Internet. This fact has important implications for how the Internet is used and whose voices are really heard.

The number of people who have Internet access in Asia surpasses the number in North America. However, when access is examined as the percentage of total regional population who have access to the Internet, the comparison among the regions reveals a different picture. Only 10.9 percent of people in Africa and 21.5 percent of people in Asia have access to the Internet, which compares to 58.4 percent in Europe and 77.4 percent in North America.<sup>7</sup> Or, looked at another way, data from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) shows that (as of 2008) the number of Internet users for every 100 people was 2.3 in low-income countries, 17 in middle-income countries, and 68.3 in high-income countries.<sup>8</sup> In many parts of the world, costs are too high, access too limited, and connections too slow for the majority of people to be online. The ITU verifies that fixed broadband access remains out of reach for many people, and that paying for these services represents a much larger share of a person's income in poorer countries. Despite these barriers, the rates of adoption around the globe over the last decade show that Internet penetration will only continue to grow. Between 2000 and 2010, Internet penetration grew in Africa from less than 5 million to close to 111 million, in the Middle East from around 3.3 million to more than 63 million, and in Latin America and the Caribbean from 18 million to well over 204 million.<sup>9</sup>

Access to mobile phone technology is, however, a different story and is the way that most people in the developing world are getting and sharing information. Mobile cellular subscriptions for every 100 people (in 2008) was 22 in low-income countries, 56.5 in middle-income countries, and more than 106 in high-income countries—meaning more than one cell phone per person in the latter case.<sup>10</sup> The ITU expects the global number of mobile cellular subscriptions to top five billion in 2010, and that's a significant portion of the world's population of almost seven billion. Most of this growth comes from the developing world.<sup>11</sup>

But, it's not just about making calls. Mobile phone technology is touted as bringing significant social change to the developing world. With SMS (short message service) capabilities, information sent over mobile phones has allowed farmers to get better prices for their crops, enabled health workers to track disease outbreaks, spawned new microenterprises, and allowed wage earners to send money home to families safely and efficiently through mobile money transfers. In conflict and disaster zones, too, mobile phones represent the best way to communicate because they are portable and don't require substantial infrastructure, or a stable political situation. "Information has always been a source of power," notes an article in *The Guardian*, "but when mobile phones were first invented, few could have predicted that this technology would become a workhorse to create social change in developing and rural communities where modern-day infrastructures are weak or nonexistent."<sup>12</sup>

The recent advent of the smart phone—a handheld mobile phone device with computing capabilities, such as the iPhone, BlackBerry, and Droid—is likely to open up even more social and economic opportunities. Whereas Western countries put substantial investments into the infrastructure needed to connect personal computers with the Internet through landlines, many developing countries are poised to skip this step altogether and jump straight into using new wireless technologies like the smart phone. Mobile phone companies, like Nokia for one, see huge markets for connecting billions of additional people to the Internet via these new technologies and, by default, to more social media opportunities.<sup>13</sup>

## *New Media for Peace and Social Change, Part I*

*"Technology for social change" is a related, but broader term that is gaining currency and essentially means how new communication tools can be used to improve people's social and economic circumstances. Examples include bringing mobile banking services to those in conflict or disaster zones, using mobile phones to develop surveillance systems that quickly identify disease outbreaks, and the use of software like FrontlineSMS that allows civil society organizations in developing countries to communicate with large groups via mobile phones. As the links between digital devices become more seamless—and as more and more people in the developing world get access to cell phones and smart phones—there are likely to be an increasing number of these initiatives.*

*<http://www.fastcompany.com/pics/good-goes-mobile?slide=1>*

*<http://www.frontlinesms.com/aboutthsoftware/about-the-software>.*

*[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rahim-kanani/the-2010-global-philanthr\\_b\\_564329.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rahim-kanani/the-2010-global-philanthr_b_564329.html).*

## Part II: A Grassroots Revolution

### New Media, Transparency, and Governance

Is it important to be concerned about how freely information can be shared in an Internet age? Many of the barriers to communication have come down with the dawn of new media. The reality remains, however, that governments can exercise a lot of control on the kind of information that is shared by and with their citizens. This is even truer in conflict zones where information may be controlled or manipulated to advance the agendas of the government or one political faction or the other. So, freedom to acquire and disseminate information is still a very relevant discussion.

Where does information flow most freely? Most people in the developed world depend on information disseminated by the media. In societies with a high degree of media freedom (e.g., Sweden, Switzerland, Australia, United States, and Japan) those individuals reporting the news—either in new electronic or other forms—have independence and are not controlled by government authorities. Media freedom has an important role in democracies. In situations when reporters are allowed to operate freely and are not harassed, they can help ensure transparency and public scrutiny of the actions of elected leaders. Their constituents can hold them accountable, or opposition leaders can offer something better. Citizens armed with information about what their elected leaders are doing—or not—can either reelect them, protest, or vote them out of office at the next election cycle.

The popularization of new media has made it much more difficult for leaders—elected or not—to hide behind a veil of secrecy. “The revolution in information technologies is contributing to a growing global transparency,” say John Baker and Ray Williamson in *Power and Conflict in the Age of Transparency*. They attribute this to “timely and detailed information on events both at home and abroad becom[ing] widely available as a result of global news reporting, Internet information sources, worldwide communication systems, and even commercial satellite imagery.”<sup>14</sup>

These new tools have also helped nonstate actors collaborate to provide a check on corruption. One good example is Publish What You Pay, a “global civil society coalition that helps citizens of resource-rich developing countries hold their governments accountable for the management of revenues from the oil, gas, and mining industries.” The organization works in nearly seventy countries to monitor and research these regimes and budget processes, and reaches “out to governments, companies, and international financial institutions to advocate for greater revenue and expenditure transparency.”<sup>15</sup> Here, one can find reports (by country) posted by civil society groups.

And, there are plenty of international human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, that are using digital technologies and social networking tools to bring attention to the plight of those who have been denied basic legal rights. On the human rights front, there are plenty of homegrown organizations and spontaneous uses of technology to call attention to abuses by public officials. The Egyptian blogger and journalist Wael Abbas has posted videos documenting police abuse, corruption, and torture in his country on his website since 2005. In 2007, his efforts at raising awareness for human rights abuses earned him the International Center for Journalists/Knight Foundation 2007 International Journalism Award, the first blogger to win.<sup>16</sup> The videos he posted led to the conviction of abuse perpetrators, including government agents, but prompted increased scrutiny from Egyptian officials. The Egyptian government shut down Abbas’ YouTube and Facebook accounts (both now restored), and interrogated him. During the popular uprising of February 2011 that led to Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak’s resignation, the government arrested many anti-Mubarak activists. Fearing retribution for his continued coverage of abuse, Abbas had to go into hiding.<sup>17</sup> Of course, many governments—particularly repressive ones—aren’t so keen to have a spotlight on their activities. In countries like North Korea, Turkmenistan, and Burma (Myanmar), access to information is very controlled and

journalists—either professional ones or citizen reporters and bloggers—may be at grave risk for criticizing the state.<sup>18</sup> Control and restrictions can definitely extend to the means of delivery, e.g., with governments monitoring communications over the Internet or cell phones. The military junta in Myanmar (Burma), for example, has used its power to shut down Internet access altogether and it controls the prices of mobile phones. Other tactics used by repressive regimes include charging astronomical and out-of-reach user fees, actively monitoring Internet conversations, or blocking websites that might pose a political or moral threat.

An October 2010 article in *The Guardian* points out that several other countries in this region (like Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia) “have all moved or are moving toward monitoring Internet use, blocking international sites regarded as critical, and ruthlessly silencing web dissidents.”<sup>19</sup> China’s government is particularly well-known for actively censoring new media. Rebecca MacKinnon, a blogger known for her work on China’s Internet access, comments that “While the Chinese government has supported the development of the Internet as a tool for business, entertainment, education and information exchange, it has succeeded in preventing people from using the Internet to organize any kind of viable political opposition.”<sup>20</sup>

## New Media and Political Dissent

How much of a role do new media really play in political dissent? Do they make a difference? And, is such dissent to be seen as welcome reform, or does it create new kinds of conflict and chaos? There are no easy answers, but there are a lot of diverse opinions on these questions.

In the past few years, the mainstream media has paid a lot of attention to the part that mobile phones and social media have played in helping activists organize protests in places like Myanmar (the Saffron Revolution), Ukraine (the Orange Revolution), and Iran (the Green Revolution). All of these cases provide examples of civilian-based movements that used nonviolent—although sometimes confrontational—tactics to oppose a particular power structure or an election that was perceived as flawed.

In Ukraine in 2004, for example, citizens were frustrated over perceived corruption in the electoral process that favored the ruling elite. Civic groups harnessed some of that energy into a get out the vote campaign that used SMS messaging on cell phones to organize protests that attracted hundreds of thousands of people, worldwide attention, and, ultimately, enabled a reelection that brought opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko to power.<sup>21</sup> The election did, however, reflect deeper ethnic-linguistic divisions in the society between the Russian-speaking, industrial east and a Ukrainian-speaking, nationalistic, pro-European, and agricultural west.<sup>22</sup> A new media campaign didn’t make those realities go away.

New media also played a much publicized role in the Iranian elections in June 2009. During the election campaign, supporters of incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his opponent Mir Hussein Mousavi used the Internet as a tool to mobilize support. After the election, which was widely viewed as rigged to keep Ahmadinejad in power, hundreds of thousands of protestors took to the streets and many used cell phones and social networking sites to communicate with each other. Ahmadinejad’s government subsequently responded to the protests “by arresting perceived leaders and intimidating others through beatings and shootings. Cell phone communications were shut down in Tehran, and Internet access, while not cut off, appears to have been rendered difficult and slow.”<sup>23</sup> Clearly, the use of new media became a threat to the regime, which also used these tools to identify the leaders of the grassroots effort and, thus, put them at great risk. Many remain concerned about using text messaging for such purposes until they are assured that their messages cannot be tracked.

The broader question, however, is “Do new media have power to create real change?” In the USIP report, “Blogs and Bullets: New Media in Contentious Politics,” the

### *Twitter Revolution in Iran*

*Much of the information that was circulating about what was happening in Iran at the time came via short messages or “tweets” that people were sending via Twitter. While much was made of Iran’s “Twitter Revolution,” others were skeptical that the social networking tool was really as important as it was made out to be. “Tweets’ impact on the protests was almost certainly extremely modest, despite its prominence in driving external attention to the conflict,” notes a U.S. Institute of Peace report, which reiterated that the number of active Twitter users in Tehran was very small.<sup>24</sup> Most of the people tweeting about the protests were, in fact, living in the West and were simply passing along English-language messages. Still, the report notes that updates coming out of Iran—including uploaded videos—played an important part in supplementing and amplifying what the traditional media were reporting and, thus, drew international attention to the election and its aftermath. At the same time, by sharing images of the protests, the tweeters inadvertently helped the government identify dissidents for retribution.*

## New Media for Peace and Social Change, Part II

*If you are reporting from a conflict zone, should you report certain facts even if doing so might mean more casualties? Some would say that it is a reporter's job to report the news regardless of outcomes. Others believe that they should be advocates for peace and take on a more agenda-driven reporting style, which has come to be known as "peace journalism." These activists, who might be more accurately termed "citizen reporters," often use citizen and social media tools to promote peace.*

authors assert that while "new media can plausibly shape contentious politics, they are only one among a number of important political factors."<sup>25</sup> In addressing the role of the Internet in China, MacKinnon, a co-founder of Global Voices Online, adds that the "Internet generally and blogs more specifically can potentially be a *medium and tool* for political change in China," but "being a medium should not be confused with being a *cause* of change." The causes, she says, "will be much broader social, economic, and political factors," not to mention "people deciding to take action in large numbers, organized by charismatic and capable leaders."<sup>26</sup>

Noted author Malcolm Gladwell wrote a controversial piece in the *New Yorker* in October 2010 raising similar questions about the impact of new media. Referencing the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960s, Gladwell claimed that activism that challenges the status quo and attacks deeply rooted problems requires "strong ties," but that social media are built around weak ties. "The Internet lets us exploit the power of these kinds of distant connections with marvelous efficiency. It's terrific at the diffusion of innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, seamlessly matching up buyers and sellers, and the logistical functions of the dating world. But weak ties seldom lead to high-risk activism," claimed Gladwell. Movements that create change, he argued, need leadership structures, clear lines of authority, and strategic goals to succeed.<sup>27</sup>

There's certainly disagreement on the points that Gladwell raises, as chronicled by responses to his article in the blogosphere. Critics say, for example, that there simply isn't enough research yet to make judgments about the influence of new media, that even "weak tie" phenomena can make a big difference, that social media tools continue to be the coordinating platform for many citizen campaigns, and that effective networks do not need to have a person or organization in a leadership role.<sup>28</sup> Activists who use them are certainly enthusiastic. Ai Weiwei, a revered and popular Chinese artist who openly criticizes his government stated, "The Internet is a miracle. It is the thing that will change China, definitely. Of that I have no doubt."<sup>29</sup> Chris Hughes, a co-founder of Facebook, expresses a middle point in this ongoing debate, when he notes that "the best networks enable people to come together, communicate with one another effectively, and devise a system that invests a leader with the authority to set an agenda to achieve the group's goals."<sup>30</sup>

## Reporting from Conflict Zones

Where digital technologies and social media platforms are having a significant impact in this field is in their ability to add new and powerful perspectives on the costs of war. Through blogs, tweets, SMS messages, camera phones, and other tools, citizen journalists have been able to provide eyewitness accounts of conflicts worldwide that mainstream media may be missing, or prevented from covering. Although the digital divide is still a barrier (see Part I), many point to the important role that new media can potentially play in giving people directly affected by conflict a chance to share their perspectives, needs, concerns, and even their demands instead of having information funneled through media gatekeepers, like national or international news bureaus.

"Over the past decade," note Donald Matheson and Stuart Allen in *Peace Journalism, War, and Conflict Resolution*, "many individuals caught up in conflict have sought to bear witness—whether civilians in Belgrade waiting for NATO bombs to fall, U.S. soldiers in Iraq with personal digital cameras, or humanitarian workers in Somalia—through eyewitness accounts shared via digital media networks." While few of them may identify themselves as journalists per se, their voices have provided "honest testimony of the horrors of war's impact on everyday life, as well as richly perceptive—if deeply subjective—interpretation of its conduct."<sup>31</sup> Citizen reporters are also filling a void as mainstream news bureaus cut their overseas staff due to financial constraints.

Reporting from conflict zones has its own share of challenges. Verifying the accuracy of information is an ongoing concern since the neutrality of conflict zone

reporting is not guaranteed. Or, the parties in conflict may work hard to control the information that is released, including spreading their own bias or threatening reporters. As Ivan Sigal notes in *Digital Media in Conflict-Prone Societies*, “Militaries have long been savvy about the influence of media and information on the conduct of war, and they go to great lengths to control or restrict access to and reporting on conflict zones.”<sup>32</sup>

The topic of citizen reporting from a conflict zone took on some new dimensions with the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India, in November 2008. Microblogs posted by eyewitnesses over Twitter allowed for minute-by-minute updates of the crisis in real time, with uploaded videos enhancing the reporting. There was criticism, however, that “inaccurate, unfounded—or simply outdated—claims” were being retweeted by those who were not at the scene. This is often done by those who look for evidence to support their perspective or their side of a debate or conflict. Even mainstream media like the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) were criticized for reporting a Twitter claim that later turned out to be false.<sup>33</sup>

Generally, though, media professionals make a point of reiterating that information coming from these nontraditional sources needs to be checked to verify accuracy and separate fact from opinion. Many citizen reporters—and bloggers more typically—have their own political agendas. In Sri Lanka, for example, overseas news organizations were prevented from reporting on the conflict there between government forces and the Tamil Tigers in late 2008. People on the ground were able to fill this vacuum and share information and images from the conflict on digital platforms, but they were also influenced by years of propaganda. Michael Buerk of the BBC World Service noted in a podcast that the old saying, “truth was one of the first casualties” still applies to conflicts such as the war in Sri Lanka, where there was “strident partiality, little trustworthy reporting, or judicious commentary.”<sup>34</sup> Independent, and accurate, accounts were still hard to come by, although getting such accounts from citizens is at the forefront of citizen journalism sites like Sri Lanka’s Groundviews.<sup>35</sup> Independent media, however, are not always impartial. Free media outlets have been known to freely use hate speech.

At the end of the day, some of the best news gathering may come from professional journalists and citizen reporters working together to report from conflict zones, as each can supplement the strengths and weaknesses of the other. Thoughtful aggregations of new media stories by respected mainstream journalists were particularly relevant after the contested Iranian elections, because they summarized what was going on and provided a concise picture of what was happening.<sup>36</sup> Sites that aggregate information from multiple sources can also be useful in creating a diverse picture of international events and, ultimately, allowing users to make their own informed judgments. A website called Global Voices, for example, works with approximately three hundred bloggers around the world to collect and synthesize credible reporting from the grassroots on a wide range of countries and topics.<sup>37</sup>

## New Tools for Disaster Response

New mobile phone technologies are playing increasingly important roles in alerting people to potential disasters and coordinating responses to disasters themselves. During the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, there was no early warning system in place and the world was caught off guard by a disaster that claimed approximately 250,000 lives. Since then, significant efforts have been made to improve these systems and many of them involve new media. For example, a project is being developed by the United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh that will send out disaster alerts via SMS cell phone messages about impending floods or cyclones.<sup>38</sup>

While aid workers may be getting these advanced tools to better communicate with their field offices and with each other, a simple mobile phone in the hands of the average citizen can be just as critical—if not more critical—after a disaster. Currently, some of the most advanced work in this field is in crowdsourcing, which has been used to gather intelligence from those most affected by disasters.

But what does crowdsourcing mean in practice? The best example comes from Ushahidi, a website that uses open-source, crisis-mapping software to share critical information on disasters. After the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010, Ushahidi used an all-volunteer force to collect and analyze information coming from mobile phone text messages, traditional media, and social media (such as Twitter and blogs). Crisis mappers—originally a small team of students from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University—identified the most urgent “clusters” of needs and submitted this to first responders. Communications about trapped people, food distribution points, and medical emergencies were all conveyed via the Ushahidi platform.

Eventually, a worldwide network of volunteers—including an active Haitian community living abroad—transmitted vital information to a wide range of emergency responders. Once emergency responders had information about where the greatest needs were, they could more quickly mobilize resources to meet those needs. While the collaboration behind the effort in Haiti was remarkable, there is still significant work to be done on better authenticating crowdsourced information, prioritizing the information, and improving security.<sup>39</sup>

Technologies used for disasters cannot necessarily be automatically used in conflict zones because, in the latter, armed or state-supported violence may mean that authorities are creating additional barriers to the free flow of information.<sup>40</sup> However, the system that Ushahidi used did serve as an early-warning system for violence in Haiti, e.g., by reporting to the U.S. Marine Corps that angry mobs were gathering because they had not received aid.

There is certainly potential for more work in this arena. “Large numbers of SMS messages can not only provide specific reports that serve as indicators of the potential onset of conflict, but also have the potential to track changes in emotion at a societal level. This assessment can serve as an additional early warning sign of conflict to help assess the security situation,” notes the U.S. Institute of Peace report on crowdsourcing in Haiti.<sup>41</sup>

## Part III: Critical Thinking about New Media, Peace, and Conflict

### Hate Speech, Polarization, and More

There are many assumptions about how new media is being used to advance peace or create conflict, but research on this topic is still largely in its infancy. “The rapid spread of digital-based communications and information networks is likely to have an effect on twenty-first century wars, which increasingly center on internal conflict, disputed borders of new states, and separatist movements,” suggests Ivan Sigal, the executive director of Global Voices. “However, those effects have yet to be seriously analyzed; at present we have mostly anecdotal evidence about the relationship of digital media to modern conflict.”<sup>42</sup> He goes on to say that the “increased access to information and to the means to produce media has both positive and negative consequences in conflict situations,” i.e., it can be used to encourage dialogue or “to increase polarization, strengthen biases, and foment violence.”<sup>43</sup>

With all the global connections made possible via new technologies, it is easy to think of them as a force for good, but that’s not always how they are used. Messages sent over cell phones during the January 2010 riots in Nigeria, for example, were used to spread unfounded rumors, dehumanize others, and encourage violence. In Nigeria, text messages circulated that “warn[ed] Christians not to eat food from Muslim vendors as it had been poisoned. And Muslims circulated messages saying that the state governor had shut off water to Muslim communities. One human rights organization collected more than 150 messages that had circulated throughout the community inciting respective groups to violence.” More than 500 people died in less than a week of rioting, with other victims castrated or burned by acid.<sup>44</sup> Cell phone messages were not the cause of the conflict in Nigeria, which has a very long history that involves religious, ethnic, and economic divides. Still, they played a part in inflaming tensions.

Kyrgyzstan offers another example. In June 2010, violence in southern Kyrgyzstan between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz resulted in the deaths of at least 400 people and the internal displacement of roughly 400,000 people. “During the conflict,” noted a report, “online communities flooded social media sites with accurate and inaccurate information concerning the violence. While some young people used social media to post their needs and find resources, others fueled the conflict with ethnic judgments and hateful words.”<sup>45</sup>

Hate speech, or communications that attack others based on racial, religious, ethnic, or other backgrounds, is not an actionable offense in many countries that have freedom of speech laws. However, the increasing amount of such language online concerns many people. The Simon Wiesenthal Center, which tracks hate groups through its Digital Hate and Terrorism project, claimed that, as of March 2010, there were 11,500 websites, chat forums, and social network postings that promoted hate and terrorism. The Center’s report found a 20 percent increase from the year before, with most of this growth coming from sites like Facebook and YouTube.<sup>46</sup>

Terrorists groups have long used the Internet to, among other things, recruit and mobilize suicide bombers, provide instructions on building and using explosives, plan and coordinate attacks, and raise funds for their activities. The militant Islamist group al-Qaeda, for example, used the Internet to plan attacks on both U.S. targets in September 2001 and in Madrid, Spain, in March 2004.<sup>47</sup> Today, these groups are increasingly using social media platforms to find disaffected young people who can be recruited to their activities. There are certainly terrorist activities—like training—that can’t be done online, but terrorists are actively using online tools in their propaganda campaigns.

While terrorism and hate speech may be at one end of the spectrum, there is the more subtle question of whether online communities insulate people from diverse viewpoints. In other words, people tend to spend time online with those who hold

similar views. Or, they gravitate toward websites that support their values and beliefs. It is not unusual for people to seek out certain kinds of media that accord with their interests. However, as information is increasingly customized, the result may be that people close themselves off to hearing different perspectives.

If everyone focuses on different topics, suggests Cass Sunstein in the *Boston Review*, mutual understanding might be difficult and it may be harder for people to solve the problems that society faces together. Sunstein, head of the White House's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, lauds the aggregating abilities of new information technologies, but has also raised alarms about the group polarization occurring on the Internet, or the tendency for people to move toward more extreme points of view when they deliberate with other group members that have a shared identity. "Group polarization is occurring every day on the Internet," he suggests. "Indeed, it is clear that the Internet is serving, for many, as a breeding ground for extremism, precisely because like-minded people are deliberating with one another, without hearing contrary views."<sup>48</sup>

Not everyone agrees with Sunstein's predictions because there is the argument that online spaces give people access to many different and balanced news sources if they choose to seek them out. However, it is still worth considering what can happen when people surround themselves exclusively with like-minded communities. Among other things, it can reinforce negative stereotypes of anyone outside that group. It can also lead to a very harsh and intolerant level of discourse as "in groups" try to stake their positions apart from "out groups."<sup>49</sup>

## Communications for Peacebuilding

As scholars such as Kristen Lord point out, the increasing transparency and availability of information has a dark side. The information that is spread may, in fact, make conflicts worse if it dehumanizes others, facilitates the use of violence, reinforces tensions between groups, or exposes competing values.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, increasing understanding about another person's identity and culture—and recognizing a shared humanity—can be an important force for peace. Citizen diplomacy programs the world over are based on this concept. While face-to-face dialogue is still seen as the best way to foster these relationships, new online tools are connecting people globally in entirely new ways.

For example, take the forays into cross-cultural communication happening in educational spaces—like the online video conferencing that connects students from different educational institutions around the world. The Tony Blair Foundation's *Face to Faith* program uses video conferencing and online community to encourage young people to recognize the similarities between faiths and, more important, to respect and deal with the differences between diverse and sometimes conflicting worldviews. Soliya's *Connect Program* focuses on using new media and trained facilitators to connect students from the West with those in the Arab and Muslim World.<sup>51</sup>

Interfaith relations took on significantly more importance after the terrorist attacks on U.S. soil in September 2001. According to a report by the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, the Islamic community has used social media to help others understand the Muslim faith and to "help confront harmful anti-Muslim stereotypes that emerged after 9/11." Many faith communities, likewise, are using either social networking sites or purpose-specific websites to engage in interfaith dialogue.<sup>52</sup> The report concludes, however, that making such dialogues work requires a basic level of respect, trust, and openness and that the type of online medium used is less important than "the quality of the conversation and the goodwill of the participants."<sup>53</sup> Such online engagement also tends to be most productive when it is supplemented by face-to-face interaction.

The larger question in this debate is whether using new media to improve understanding between people of different faiths and cultures actually leads to peace. Significantly more research needs to be done in this arena. As it is, the use of these technologies to resist political oppression or promote conflict has garnered much

more attention than the use of these same technologies to promote peace and postconflict reconstruction.

In his blog on conflict early warning, Patrick Meier suggests developing maps of peace and cooperation as opposed to just “crisis maps” of war and violence. “By identifying the positive initiatives that exist before and during a crisis, we automatically identify multiple entry points for intervention and a host of *options for conflict prevention*,” says Meier, who makes a case for “systematically document[ing] peace.”<sup>54</sup> The Global Peace Index takes this approach by ranking the nations of the world by their peacefulness.<sup>55</sup> It remains to be seen, however, how new media tools can be used to identify and map such peace zones and the work of peacemakers.

Of course, there are many committed individuals and organizations globally that are seeking to bridge divides and build communities via websites, blogs, social media, and online member forums. Through these mediums, those working in the peacebuilding field can share resources, exchange information on best practices, and gather lessons learned about effective methods. As just two examples, the Alliance for Peacebuilding facilitates collaboration among a wide variety of peacebuilding organizations and the UN’s Peacebuilding Portal allows users to find peacebuilding initiatives globally by theme and country. (See box.) The U.S. Institute of Peace too houses a collection of media in its PeaceMedia online resource.<sup>56</sup>

People known as “bridge bloggers” can also play an important peacebuilding role. These are bloggers who are bilingual or multilingual and have familiarity with two or more different cultures. A bridge blogger who speaks English and Arabic and has lived in both the Middle East and the West, for example, can help audiences in each region better understand the policies and worldviews of the other.

## Conclusion

It is widely acknowledged that the use of new media and new media tools has created space for more people to become engaged with the important issues of our time. They have made an important difference in organizing people for political change, creating economic opportunities for those in the developing world, facilitating disaster response, linking networks across national divides, and sharing previously inaccessible information—like citizen reports from conflict zones. Social media tools in particular have allowed people to be producers of content and part of interactive dialogues that span the globe in real time. These changes may not be seen as revolutionary by today’s youth and digital natives, but they are revolutionary when viewed in the context of history.

In conflict zones, it’s important to remember that new media is only one element of a larger, more complex system where deep social and economic inequalities or state-supported violence may be at play. Like any media tool—including newspapers, radio, and television before them—new devices and applications can be used to convey accurate or inaccurate information and to support a hateful or tolerant agenda. Where peace and conflict are concerned, new media can help bridge divides, or create them. As the USIP report “Blogs and Bullets” points out, new media is often seen as an agent of democracy and peace, but “social networking and other new media technologies can just as easily be used to radicalize, exclude, and enrage.”<sup>57</sup> And these tools can rarely be a “silver bullet” for addressing long-standing religious and ethnic differences.

However, with new media, the individuals who use them can drive the tools’ influence. These new tools can be used to propagate conflict or peace. Those using new media also need to consider the consequences of their activities and their own responsibility to be honest, fair, and accurate; to check their facts; not to distort information; to question the motives of their sources; and to avoid creating stereotypes.<sup>58</sup> Critical thinking now, especially by the digital natives, about how to harness the power and potential of new media to manage conflict and build peace is one essential step in making sure that society does not miss this opportunity to contribute to peace.

# Glossary

Many of the following terms and definitions come from Peace Terms, our free online glossary (<http://glossary.usip.org/>).

## **Blogosphere**

An online community made up of weblogs and their interconnections. Blogs are personal or professional discussion spaces used to disseminate information.

## **Capacity Building**

Enabling people, organizations, and societies to develop, strengthen, and expand their abilities to meet their goals or fulfill their mandates. Capacity is strengthened through the transfer of knowledge and skills that enhance individual and collective abilities to deliver services and carry out programs that address challenges in a sustainable way. It is a long-term and continuous process that focuses on developing human resources, organizational strength, and legal structures, and it involves all stakeholders including civil society.

## **Citizen Diplomacy**

Unofficial contacts between people of different countries, as differentiated from official contacts between governmental representatives. Citizen diplomacy includes exchanges of people (such as student exchanges); international religious, scientific, and cultural activities; and unofficial dialogues, discussions, or negotiations between citizens of opposing countries, which is usually referred to as track II diplomacy. In the latter case, citizens in the United States may seek authorization from the federal government, to comply with the Logan Act, which prohibits unauthorized U.S. citizens from interfering in relations between the United States and foreign governments.

## **Citizen Journalism**

Refers to the efforts of people without formal journalism training to contribute to the coverage of events in a nonofficial capacity. It is a concept that has existed in limited form for hundreds of years, but is now exploding in prominence with the power of the Internet. Nontrained journalists have been releasing reports and coverage of important events since the invention of the printing press. Now, blogs, video sharing websites, and social media allow large numbers of people to provide commentary on and coverage of events instantly.

## **Civil Society**

A collective term for a wide array of nongovernmental and nonprofit groups that help their society at large function while working to advance their own or others' well-being. It can include civic, educational, trade, labor, charitable, media, religious, recreational, cultural, and advocacy groups, as well as informal associations and social movements. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family, and market, though in practice, the boundaries are often blurred. A strong civil society, or "public space," can protect individuals and groups against intrusive government and positively influence government behavior. Most definitions do not include commercial enterprises but do include business associations. Some definitions do not consider the media, most of which is for profit, to be part of civil society but rather a tool that can promote civil society.

## **Conflict**

An inevitable aspect of human interaction, conflict is present when two or more individuals or groups pursue mutually incompatible goals. Conflicts can be waged violently, as in a war, or nonviolently, as in an election or an adversarial legal process. When channeled constructively into processes of resolution, conflict can be beneficial.

**Conflict Management**

A general term that describes efforts to prevent, limit, contain, or resolve conflicts, especially violent ones, while building up the capacities of all parties involved to undertake peacebuilding. It is based on the concept that conflicts are a normal part of human interaction and are rarely completely resolved or eliminated, but they can be managed by such measures as negotiation, mediation, conciliation, and arbitration. Conflict management also supports the longer-term development of societal systems and institutions that enhance good governance, rule of law, security, economic sustainability, and social well-being, which helps prevent future conflicts. A closely related term is peacemaking, although peacemaking tends to focus on halting ongoing conflicts and reaching partial agreements or broader negotiated settlements.

**Crisis Mapping**

Applies information communication technologies to disaster- or conflict-affected areas in order to plot the dynamics of the situation and give relief workers better information to carry out their work.

**Crowdsourcing**

A model of distributed problem-solving and production. Problems are broadcast to an unknown and unmanaged group of potential problem-solvers; this “crowd” of users, often based in online communities, submits solutions; the crowd also vets the various solutions to highlight the best ones. Crowdsourcing thus draws on the talents and expertise of individuals otherwise unknown or unreachable to the problem-issuing entity to achieve results in a timely, often volunteer-based manner.

**Culture**

The shared beliefs, traits, attitudes, behavior, products, and artifacts common to a particular social or ethnic group. The term cross-cultural refers to interactions across cultures and reflects the fact that different cultures may have different communication styles and negotiating behavior. The term multicultural refers to the acceptance of different ethnic cultures within a society. Cultural sensitivity means being aware of cultural differences and how they affect behavior, and moving beyond cultural biases and preconceptions to interact effectively.

**Democracy**

A state or community in which all adult members of society partake in a free and fair electoral process that determines government leadership, have access to power through their representatives, and enjoy universally recognized freedoms and liberties. Democracy building or democratization is the exercise of consolidating and strengthening institutions that help to support democratic government. These institutions may relate to rule of law initiatives, political party development, constitution building, public administration development, and civil society education programs.

**Developed and Developing Countries**

There is no consensus on the standard for categorizing countries as developed or developing. In general, developed countries have a higher per capita income, and developing countries have a lower per capita income and a less developed industrial base.

**Development**

In general, development is the process of improving people’s lives. Originally, the term focused on the goal of greater economic prosperity and opportunity. But it now typically includes efforts at human development that take into account such issues as governance, education, the environment, and human rights.

**Dialogue**

A conversation or exchange of ideas that seeks mutual understanding through the sharing of perspectives. Dialogue is a process for learning about another group's beliefs, feelings, interests, and needs in a nonadversarial, open way, usually with the help of a third-party facilitator. Facilitated dialogue is a face-to-face process, often among elites. It takes place at a meeting site, whereas other third-party assisted processes may occur indirectly or by means of proximity talks.

**Digital Divide**

Most often refers to the division between the people with access to modern computing technology, including the Internet, and those who do not have access. Often, the lack of access can be attributed to a person/group's geographical remoteness, low economic development, or reluctance to embrace the technology. While the digital divide is shrinking (or rather, the side with access is growing and the side without access is shrinking), it still exists, especially in parts of the developing world.

**Digital Media**

Includes media that is stored in digital codes (usually numerical information), as opposed to analog media. Examples can include compact discs, video games, modern computers, and flash drives.

**Early Warning**

The assessment of high-risk situations so as to provide timely notice of escalating violence. Early warning systems have been used to assess environmental threats, the risk of nuclear accident, natural disasters, mass movements of populations, the threat of famine, and the spread of disease, as well as violent conflict.

**Governance**

The exercise of authority to implement rules and policies in an effort to bring order to the social, political, economic, and judicial processes that allow a society to develop. Good governance involves a process that is informed and to a degree monitored by, and ultimately serves, all members of society. Good governance also implies a level of accountability and transparency, both of which will help to ameliorate the risk of corruption, a corrosive and destabilizing practice.

**Hate Speech**

Speech that is intended to foster hatred against groups based on race, religion, gender, sexual preference, national origin, or other traits. At the least it fosters hatred and discrimination, and at its worst it promotes violence and killing.

**Humanitarian Aid/Assistance**

Traditionally associated with natural disasters such as floods, fires, and famines, but more recently applied to other disasters such as social or political unrest, usually with the consent of the host country. Assistance can include providing food, shelter, clothing, and medicine and medical personnel; evacuating the most vulnerable; and restoring basic amenities (water, sewage, power supplies). Aid can be given during the emergency itself and in the rehabilitation phase.

**Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)**

A diverse set of tools used to create, disseminate, and manage information. These technologies include the Internet, intranets, wireless networks, and cell phones, as well as such services as videoconferencing and distance learning. The new ICTs have led to the development of a new vocabulary, including such terms as blogosphere (the connected community of blogs), citizen journalism (nonprofessionals creating their own media

to report and disseminate the news), and crowdsourcing (outsourcing a task to a group of people through a collaborative open call).

### **Media Peacebuilding**

The notion that it is desirable and possible to enhance the capacity of media for building peace. Conflict-sensitive journalism goes beyond this by encouraging journalists to be aware of what effects their language and reporting can have on the conflict. Peace journalism is a more agenda-driven reporting style. It approaches activism, as it focuses attention on the search for nonviolent solutions to conflict. Media strategies include citizen journalism (blogs, wikis, etc.), social marketing, and media regulation.

### **New Media**

Refers to a melding of traditional forms of media, like print and audio/visual recordings, with modern communications technology. A key aspect of new media is its ease of accessibility through these technologies, allowing on-demand access to media content, greater interactivity with users, and more user-generated content. As computing technologies become cheaper, more powerful, and more portable, access to the means of media production and dissemination is increased. The means of mass communication have, therefore, devolved from relatively few outlets (newspapers and television stations) to billions (anyone with a connected device). This “democratization” of the content production and dissemination separates new media from the hierarchical and strictly professional realm of traditional media.

### **Nongovernmental Organization (NGO)**

A private, self-governing nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing an objective or objectives such as alleviating human suffering; promoting education, health care, economic development, environmental protection, human rights, and conflict resolution; and encouraging the establishment of democratic institutions and civil society. Some people use the term international nongovernmental organization (INGO) to differentiate those organizations that transcend national boundaries from local NGOs. Also known as private voluntary organizations, civic associations, nonprofits, and charitable organizations.

### **Peace**

The word “peace” evokes complex, sometimes contradictory, interpretations and reactions. For some, peace means the absence of conflict. For others it means the end of violence or the formal cessation of hostilities; for still others, the return to resolving conflict by political means. Some define peace as the attainment of justice and social stability; for others it is economic well-being and basic freedom. Peacemaking can be a dynamic process of ending conflict through negotiation or mediation. Peace is often unstable, as sources of conflict are seldom completely resolved or eliminated. Since conflict is inherent in the human condition, the striving for peace is particularly strong in times of violent conflict. That said, a willingness to accommodate perpetrators of violence without resolving the sources of conflict—sometimes called “peace at any price”—may lead to greater conflict later.

### **Peacebuilding**

Originally conceived in the context of postconflict recovery efforts to promote reconciliation and reconstruction, the term peacebuilding has more recently taken on a broader meaning. It may include providing humanitarian relief, protecting human rights, ensuring security, establishing nonviolent modes of resolving conflicts, fostering reconciliation, providing trauma healing services, repatriating refugees and resettling internally displaced persons, supporting broad-based education, and aiding in economic reconstruction. As such, it also includes conflict prevention in the sense of preventing the recurrence of violence, as well as conflict management and postconflict recovery. In a larger sense, peacebuilding involves a transformation toward more manageable, peaceful relationships and governance structures—the long-term process of

addressing root causes and effects, reconciling differences, normalizing relations, and building institutions that can manage conflict without resorting to violence.

### **Postconflict Recovery**

The long-term rebuilding of a society in the aftermath of violent conflict. It includes political, socioeconomic, and physical aspects such as disarming and reintegrating combatants, resettling internally displaced persons, reforming governmental institutions, promoting trauma work and reconciliation, delivering justice, restarting the economy, and rebuilding damaged infrastructure. Related terms include war-to-peace transitions and postconflict reconstruction. The term “recovery” has a broader connotation than reconstruction, which implies an emphasis on physical aspects.

### **Smart phone**

A mobile telephony device that also utilizes computing power to effectively create a small, mobile computer. Smart phones often are Internet-capable and incorporate audio/visual capture devices.

### **Social/Human Capital**

The stock of knowledge and skill embodied in the population of an economy. It can be increased through investments in education, health care, and job training. A related term is social capital, the resources that create a strong network of institutionalized relationships in society. These connections between individuals and between social networks facilitate civic engagement and encourage bargaining, compromise, and pluralistic politics, as well as contributing to economic and social development.

### **Social Media**

Refers to new media used primarily for social interaction and community-based content creation, facilitated by new computing and communications technologies. Social media utilize Web-based and mobile technologies to make traditional one-to-one communication into an interactive, many-to-many dialogue. These interactions result in content created and curated by various user communities. Social media includes blogs, microblogging, and wikis; social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace; virtual worlds like Second Life; and services like YouTube, Twitter, Pandora, and Flickr.

### **Terrorism**

The use of violence, typically against civilians, for the purpose of attracting attention to a political cause, encouraging others to join in, or intimidating opponents into concessions. Some terrorists aim to produce a harsh reaction by their opponents that will in turn generate support for the terrorists’ issues. Although the distinctions are not always clear, state terrorism generally refers to acts committed by governments either domestically or abroad, while state-sponsored terrorism refers to support for nonstate actors that commit terrorist acts.

### **Violence**

Psychological or physical force exerted for the purpose of threatening, injuring, damaging, or abusing people or property. In international relations, violent conflict typically refers to a clash of political interests between organized groups characterized by a sustained and large-scale use of force. Structural violence refers to inequalities built into the social system, for example, inequalities in income distribution.

### **Web 2.0**

Usually refers to online content that is dynamic rather than static; it is interactively produced and consumed by users of the content. Traditional static online experiences (Web 1.0) involve a user’s passive relationship with content, while Web 2.0 involves a user’s interactive relationship with content by both consuming and producing content for others.

## For Discussion and Investigation

This section provides a variety of interactive exercises that can be used in a classroom or group setting to encourage discussion. We recommend that learners who are studying independently also review the questions and activities to frame their existing knowledge and further delve into the many complex issues that surround this study guide's topic.

### Discussion I: Introduction to Technology and Media

Before reading "The Impact of New Media on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management," answer the following questions individually or as a group.

For learners who have not had a course in media or Web literacy, the instructor should use the questions below to introduce the concepts of media and communication technologies by leading a discussion about their role in society. (The Kaiser Foundation has a useful fact sheet containing media literacy resources. <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/Media-Literacy.cfm>)

#### Media

- How do you get information?
- Who are the major providers of information?
- What is the value of citizens and organizations having access to information?
- Who is involved in making sure that the public has access to information? Who has the authority? Who has the responsibility?
- How do media affect relationships in society?
- How do media affect attitudes and opinions?
- What are some of the ways that technology helps us share and access information?
- Are there channels through which you can inform or influence your friends, family, and community?

### Discussion II: Identifying the Role of New Media

After reading "The Impact of New Media on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management," answer the following questions individually or as a group.

#### New Media

- What is new media? What technologies are involved?
- What are some of the ways that new media have been used?
- Who are the stakeholders in new media?
- Do you have anything (groups, ideas, or questions) to add to the discussion on who is involved in the degree of use and access that the public has to new media? Who has the authority? Who has the responsibility?
- What are the ways that new media affect relationships in society? Are there channels through which you can inform or influence your friends, family, and community?
- Can you think of some ways that new media have been used to influence people or situations?
- What are the positive and negative results and potentials of the proliferation of new media? How about for international conflict and peacebuilding?
- How can new media influence international conflict and peacebuilding?

## Activity I: Facts and Opinions

After reading “The Impact of New Media on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management,” learners participate in the following activity.

### Description

Learners will read an excerpt of an analysis on Syria and Lebanon written in May 2010 and determine if components of the text are facts or opinions. Then, they will examine critically the factors that influence their personal attitudes and opinions.

**Time required:** 50 minutes with homework

**Materials:** copies of analysis excerpt (*Primary Contours of an Evolving Relationship*); map showing Syria and Lebanon

### Learning Objectives

Learners will:

- Be able to discriminate between fact and opinion.
- Given an opinion, identify facts that would support or detract from the persuasiveness of the opinion.
- Given an opinion, identify the attitude or value that may influence it.
- Distinguish between persuasive statements and informative statements.
- Consider the role of new media in information sharing and gathering.

### Part I: Identifying Facts and Opinions

#### Assignment (10 minutes for background and directions)

#### *Primary Contours of an Evolving Relationship*

*Several important developments over the past eighteen months have defined Lebanon’s changing relationship with Syria. In particular, three key events help sketch the contours of these evolving ties. First, the establishment of diplomatic ties between Lebanon and Syria in late 2008 was a historically significant event. It reflected an important, if symbolic, Syrian recognition of Lebanese sovereignty following Syria’s longstanding refusal to do so.<sup>1</sup> Formal diplomatic ties have led to the exchange of ambassadors and opening of embassies and provided an important opportunity to establish normal state-to-state relations.*

*Prime Minister Hariri’s two visits to Damascus— in May 2010 and December 2009— mark another important step in mending relations between the two countries. The visits suggest a determination by the Lebanese prime minister to move Lebanon forward on a path of rapprochement with Syria in pursuit of national interests. Moreover, Hariri’s visits signal a strategic decision that the previous status quo of a staunchly anti-Syrian government in Lebanon is not tenable over the long run and acknowledge the inherent difficulties of leading Lebanon without cordial ties with Syria.*

*Finally, the March 2010 visit to Damascus by Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt— often called the “weathervane” of Lebanese politics—exemplifies a broader power shift within the Lebanese political arena away from those who advocate confrontation with Syria. Jumblatt’s trip completed his transformation from one of Syria’s most vociferous critics in Lebanon to a strong advocate of warming ties with Damascus. The Druze leader formally pulled out of the anti-Syrian March 14 Coalition in August 2009. His withdrawal dealt a significant blow to the coalition and perhaps presages a reordering of Lebanese politics marked by the eventual obsolescence of the March 14th and Hezbollah-led March 8th blocs.*

#### Endnotes

1. After World War I, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, France gained mandatory power over

*Greater Syria, carving Lebanon out of the former Ottoman province. Until the establishment of diplomatic ties in 2008, Syria had not recognized Lebanese sovereignty.*

*Excerpt from Lebanon's Evolving Relationship with Syria: Back to the Future or Turning a New Page?, USIP PeaceBrief, May 2010 (<http://www.usip.org/publications/lebanon-s-evolving-relationship-syria>)*

As homework, instruct the learners to examine the excerpt and pick out the facts and opinions. They are to create two columns with headings "facts" and "opinions" and write them in the proper column. They may do research to add facts about Lebanon and Syria to the list, but must use only the opinions from the article. Optional: ask learners to list at least six items in each column.

### Example

FACTS	OPINIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prime Minister Hariri visited Damascus in May 2010 and December 2009.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prime Minister Hariri's visits mark another important step in mending relations between the two countries.</li> </ul>

## Part II: Facts and Opinions Game

### Tossing Around Facts and Opinions (10 minutes)

In this game, learners will use their completed assignment in a team competition. The players will take turns challenging their opponents with a statement that the opponent must correctly identify as fact or opinion. The quickness with which the learners must respond will mirror the quickness with which new media users make decisions and/or form opinions when presented with information. The final match will allow learners to put into practice what they have learned about facts, opinions, attitudes, and persuasion. The instructor controls the time spent on this activity by limiting the number of facts and opinions. Be sure to include the explanation of the final match before you begin the game.

In class, form two teams. Have learners line up so that the two teams are standing face to face. Players should stand in line with the reading and their completed assignment. Decide which team will state a fact or opinion first. Each fact or opinion is worth 3 points. Each wrong response is worth -2 points.

The first person in line from the team that begins the game with a statement "tosses" a fact or opinion to the first person in line of the opposing team, who must identify it as a fact or opinion. If that player is uncertain and does not want to take a guess, he or she can "toss" his or her turn to the person that is next in line. The player who gives an answer must justify his or her answer. If the answer is correct, it is his or her turn to toss a new fact or opinion. After a player tosses a statement or an answer and it has been answered correctly, he or she must leave the line.

Each statement must be unique. If a player cannot think of a statement or makes a statement that has already been used, he or she must leave the line. The turn goes to the person who is next in line on the opposing team.

When one of the teams runs out of players, it's time for the final match.

### Final Match (10 minutes)

Each team will construct "the most baseless, but persuasive paragraph in the world." Using no more than three sentences, each team is to use a combination of facts to come to an analytical opinion. The winner will be determined by blind vote.

The "most baseless, but persuasive paragraph in the world" will double their points.

### Teaching notes

- A fact is something that is verifiable now.
- An opinion reflects an interpretation of information based on values and attitudes. It may also be derived from facts and/or other opinions. An opinion could be proven to be a fact, when at some future point, it is verified.

### Examples.

- The economy is in terrible condition. (opinion)
- The manufacturing sector shrank this year. (fact)
- North Korea has detonated a nuclear device. (fact)
- North Korea has detonated a nuclear device to threaten Japan. (opinion)
- A referendum was held in Sudan to determine if Southern Sudan should become an independent nation. (fact)
- Sudan's referendum will allow South Sudan to responsibly manage its oil revenues. (opinion)

**Variation** to lengthen the game: Only the player who gives the wrong answer or "tosses" to their own team member must leave the line.

**Variation** Players that leave the lines in the main round can begin to work on the "most baseless, but persuasive paragraph in the world."

### Part III: Facts and Opinions Discussion

#### Debrief (20 minutes)

- Which were the most difficult passages to discern as fact or opinion? Why?
- Which were the easiest passages to discern as fact or opinion? Why?
- What are some factors and conditions that created confusion for you?
- What kind of decision-making process do you need to go through to be confident about the strength of the opinion?
- What can you do to be confident that what you accept as fact and hold as opinion are sound?
- What positive or negative role do new media play in information sharing and gathering?
- What can be done to make the role of new media more positive?

## Activity II: New Media Project

After reading “The Impact of New Media on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management,” learners participate in the following activity.

*Note for high school teachers:* Public school systems block many of the new media websites. It may be difficult for instructors to involve learners in first-hand experience of interacting with new media at school. Parts I, II, and III are written for learners who will not be able to access the blogs and instructors who will not be able to demonstrate new media in the classroom.

Instructors who teach where access to new media is readily available should consider incorporating hands-on use of new media in this lesson and designing lessons that encourage learner’s direct involvement with new media that contribute to conflict management and peacebuilding.

*For an example of an exercise that engages students in using new media, see Activity III.*

### Description

Students will read four articles, two written from a lens critical of Israel and two of Syria. By comparing the articles, the learners examine how lenses influence rational analysis. They also examine the merits and limits of one example case of using new media for peacebuilding.

### Learning Objectives

Learners will

- understand the factors that influence the role of new media in conflict management and peacebuilding;
- recognize the broad range of stakeholders who are involved in the use of new media;
- identify characteristics that contribute to the credibility of sources of information; and
- identify some of the complexities in conflict management and peacemaking.

**Time required:** 2 hours

**Materials:** copies of articles, a map showing Lebanon, Israel, and Syria

### Part I: Group Research

#### Analyzing Blogs (25 minutes reading comprehension and presentation preparation, 20 minutes information sharing)

Divide the class into groups of four or five. Give each group one of the four articles from the following online forum to read and summarize.

*Note:* These articles introduce actors, ideas, and events that will be new to learners. It may be helpful for the learners to have access to the library or the Internet as they read the articles. *Syrian Missiles to Hezbollah?* (bitterlemons.org, edition 11, volume 8 - May 6, 2010) <http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/previous.php?opt=1&id=310>

- “It’s not the Scuds, it’s Support for the Resistance” —David Schenker
- “Missiles, Missiles Everywhere” —Chuck Freilich
- “Beware the Scuds that Shoot down Hope” —Ferry Biederman
- “‘Til Israel do us Part?’ —Rime Allaf

Explain to learners that they will be reading articles about issues concerning a transfer of Scud missiles by Syria to Hezbollah that was reported in March of 2010.

After learners read the article, they answer the following questions in their groups and share their answers with the class.

1. Who are the key players (countries, people, and organizations)? List all that are presented in the article and describe their stand or role as described by the author.
2. What is the author’s attitude toward Syria, Israel, and Hezbollah? Does he or she seem to perceive one party to be more problematic than the other?
3. What are the key assertions or main points in the article?
4. Does the article mention the United States? What does the article say about American foreign policy in this conflict?
5. Is there an analysis or parts of an analysis that you favor and think is important to note? Why?

## Part II: Closer Look at New Media

### Discussion (20 minutes)

Tell learners about bitterlemons.org.

Ask students the following questions and make organized lists with their answers.

- How would you assess the quality of the information in this forum? Is this a blog that has good information? Why do or don’t you think so?
- How much of what the writer has presented about the facts, events, or actors reflects his or her bias?
- How do you think this forum might be contributing to peacebuilding?
- What are the features of the forum that work toward peacebuilding?
- Could it contribute to conflict rather than peacebuilding? How?

Based on the lists,

- If bitterlemons.org asked you for advice on how they could do their job better, what would you say?

## Part III: Brainstorming on Blogging (15 minutes discussion, 15 minutes presentation)

### Design a Blog for Peacebuilding

If you were to create a blog to contribute to peacebuilding, how would you do that?

- What would be the focus of your blog?
- What features or information would you offer?
- What goals would you have?
- Who would read your blog?
- Who would contribute to your blog?
- How could you make sure it does what you intend it to do?

## Extension Activity I

### Middle East Peacebuilding with New Media

Learners explore the Middle East conflict further and make suggestions for ways that new media can be used to manage conflict or build peace in the region. Here are some

### Suggested additional explanation:

*In March of 2010, a report of a transfer of Scud missiles by Syria to Hezbollah caused a stir even though the transfer had not been confirmed. Hezbollah is a complex Islamic organization that has a stronghold in Lebanon. It is a nonstate militant group and also a legitimate political party. By providing social services that are neglected by the Lebanese government to the Muslim population, Hezbollah has been able to build support. The group is popular among the Lebanese Shia Muslims, who make up about 40 percent of the population in Lebanon.*

*Hezbollah began as a Lebanese resistance movement against Israeli occupation in 1982. Israel withdrew completely from Lebanon in 2000, ending its occupation. However, Hezbollah continued to build its military strength, separate from the Lebanese military and police.*

*As recently as 2006, Hezbollah and the Israeli state bombed each other. It is important to note that Lebanon has a weak government and Hezbollah bombed Israel from inside Lebanon, without the Lebanese government’s involvement and, Israel, in bombing Hezbollah, bombed Lebanon. Although Hezbollah participates in Lebanese politics, Hezbollah’s military units do not act in an official capacity, nor are they the same as the Lebanese military.*

*Hezbollah is considered to be a terrorist group by some. Syria and Iran support this group’s active opposition and condemnation of Israel and Hezbollah’s mission to establish an Islamic state in Lebanon. Both countries give financial and political support to Hezbollah.*

*The United States struggles with its role in the Middle East because it must balance its peacemaking objectives with the need to keep a coalition of countries that are against Islamic extremists and terrorists. The United States does not want Lebanon’s government to be taken over by Islamic extremists.*

*You may want to give learners more background on Hezbollah or the Middle East conflict before the activity and current information on Lebanon after the activity. The BBC has an informative brief overview, Who are Hezbollah (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/1908671.stm>). The Institute has information on the recent collapse of the Lebanese government (<http://www.usip.org/publications/the-issues-lebanons-government>).*

**From bitterlemons.org**

The bitterlemons publications reflect a joint Palestinian-Israeli effort to promote a civilized exchange of views about the Israel-Arab conflict and additional Middle East issues among a broad spectrum of participants.

The publications are produced, edited, and in some cases written by Ghassan Khatib, a Palestinian, and Yossi Alpher, an Israeli. Complete organizational and institutional symmetry is maintained between the Palestinian and Israeli partners.

Every edition of each bitterlemons publication is posted on the relevant website. Readers can obtain a free subscription by entering their email address at each website home page. No personal information is required. bitterlemons-international.org is an Internet forum for an array of world perspectives on the Middle East and its specific concerns.

For each edition, bitterlemons-international editors decide on a topic and invite four writers or interviewees to discuss that subject on our pages. Bitterlemons-international is committed to presenting a range of views on the Middle East reflecting broad national interests and social concerns.

questions learners can use in their investigation. Since the issues are complex, direct learners to focus on one conflict in the Middle East.

- What are some of the immediate and long-term challenges to peace?
- Identify two or three foreign countries and/or international development organizations that work to build stability, manage conflict, or contribute to peacebuilding.
  - What are some of the needs that each group addresses?
  - Could their goals be helped by the use of new media?
    - If it is already being used, how can new media be used in a way to better contribute to building peace? What are some considerations in boosting the use of new media? Are there pitfalls?
    - If new media could be used, where can it play a positive part? In what way would it have the greatest influence?
    - Are there resources and impediments to the positive role that new media can play? What are some specific measures that can help to utilize the resources or overcome the impediments? Who should be involved in implementing those measures?

**Extension Activity II**

**Pros and Cons of New Media**

This exercise can be used to get learners to evaluate new media in the context of conflict or peacebuilding. They will think critically about the role and challenges of using new media productively in a conflict environment. Assign learners to a conflict case. They may focus on the conflict case from Part I.

1. State an assertion.

Ex. Based on what I have learned about the conflict case in \_\_\_\_\_(conflict case)\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_(new media)\_\_\_\_\_ can/cannot make a positive contribution to international conflict.

2. Briefly describe the conflict.

3. Briefly describe the new media.

4. List three to seven items in each column.

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

**Peer Review Rubric**

1. The presentation shows compelling facts.

Strongly agree (5 pts)      Agree (4 pts)      Somewhat disagree (3 pts)      Disagree (2 pts)

2. The presentation uses credible expert opinions.

Strongly agree (5 pts)      Agree (4 pts)      Somewhat disagree (3 pts)      Disagree (2 pts)

3. The presentation gives a balanced review of the topic.

Strongly agree (5 pts)      Agree (4 pts)      Somewhat disagree (3 pts)      Disagree (2 pts)

4. The presentation’s organization, style, visual, and delivery was

the best (5 pts)      very good (4 pts)      just okay (3 pts)      poor (2 pts)

## Activity III: Examining Peace Media

After reading “The Impact of New Media on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management,” learners participate in the following activity.

This activity requires an Internet connection, computers for participants, and the ability to navigate the Web. The multimedia content (videos, audio clips, photographs, websites, etc.) in PeaceMedia is appropriate for high school students.

### Description

Participants review the media resources available on [www.peacemedia.usip.org](http://www.peacemedia.usip.org) and learn about conflicts and stakeholders. They select the most compelling examples of media, discuss their potential, and use a new media tool. In the process, learners gain an understanding of their role in utilizing new media for peace.

### Learning Objectives

Learners will

- be able to describe how media and new media platforms can influence the promotion of peace and understanding of conflict;
- use new media to access and share information; and
- gain a deeper understanding of a specific regional or topical conflict.

**Time required:** 90 minutes

**Materials:** computers with Internet connection, access to [www.peacemedia.usip.org](http://www.peacemedia.usip.org)

### Part I: Reviewing Media

Review media clips (10 minutes for instructions, 15 minutes for video review, 20 minutes for small group discussion and presentation preparation, 30 minutes for presentation and discussion as a large group)

Divide the class into groups of four or five.

1. Each learner will spend 10 to 20 minutes and select a video from [peacemedia.usip.org](http://peacemedia.usip.org) that draws his or her interest.
2. Give the following directions.
  - Go to [www.peacemedia.usip.org](http://www.peacemedia.usip.org).
  - In the right side of the screen, go to “Sort by Region & Country.” Choose from the selection in the drop-down list of regions. Click the “Sort by Region & Country” menu for a list of countries within the region.
  - Next, select “Sort by Topic” and pick a topic (e.g., “Youth”).
  - Then, go to “Sort by Media Type” and select a type (e.g., “Documentary”).
  - Examine different pieces of content within the selection.
  - Choose the most compelling entry and be prepared to address the following questions.
    - Which region or country did you choose? Why did you choose this conflict?
    - Which topic did you choose? Why did you choose this topic?
    - Which media type did you choose? Why did you choose this type?
    - Whose perspective does the entry use?
    - What does it show?
    - What are the strengths of this entry?
    - What are the weaknesses of this entry?
    - How does this entry promote peace?
    - What did you learn from it?
3. In groups, each learner shares his or her top choice. Each small group chooses the best video from among the members and prepares a five minute presentation. The presentation must include answers to the questions above and a visual presentation of the media entry. In addition, each group must answer the following question:

- What can we do to promote peace with this entry?
4. Each group has five minutes to make its case and share selected scenes from the entry.
  5. The class votes to select the best media entry based on the content and the presentation.

### ***Part II: Active Participation in New Media***

#### **Become a part of the PeaceMedia community (15 minutes)**

Once the class has selected the best video and presentation, the instructor or group leader submits the results to the Institute.

1. Submit the link of the video chosen in Part I along with the accompanying description to [pmc@usip.org](mailto:pmc@usip.org). The classes that demonstrate active participation and learning, based on their descriptions, will be featured along with their choice of media on [PeaceMedia.usip.org](http://PeaceMedia.usip.org)'s home page. Each group's submission will also be listed on a separate page of the website during the course of the essay contest. Participants all over the country will be able to refer back to this page to see what their peers are recommending and why.
  - Please include the following information in the email.
    - Web (URL) address of the entry from the address bar
    - a paragraph containing the answer to the questions in Part I, numbers 2 and 3
    - school name, city, state, instructor's name, grade, type of school (private, public, home, etc.)
    - how you used this exercise (e.g., as part of the NPEC, extra credit assignment, etc.)
    - how many people in your group or class participated in reviewing media entries on PeaceMedia?
    - Use subject: NPEC PeaceMedia

***Note: In the event that a learner wishes to participate without a class or a group, he/she should feel free to follow the guidelines above for individual submission.***

2. At [www.peacemedia.usip.org](http://www.peacemedia.usip.org), learners can watch the top-ranked videos, rate them, leave comments, and contribute to the discussion threads.

# Resources

## Journal Articles

Denning, Dorothy. "Cyberwarriors: Activists and Terrorists Turn to Cyberspace." *Harvard International Review* 23, no. 2 (2006). <http://hir.harvard.edu/the-future-of-war/cyberwarriors>.

*Dorothy Denning looks at how people with a social or political message are using the Internet, not just to garner support, but to perform activist and terrorist activities in cyberspace, including hacktivism and cyberterrorism.*

Kellow, Christine and H. Leslie Steeves. "The Role of Radio in the Rwandan Genocide." *Journal of Communication*. Summer (1998) 107-28, <http://ics01.ds.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/2192/Rwandaradio.pdf>.

*This article is not about new media, it discusses a famous example of how traditional media can be used to incite violence, i.e., how radio programming was used in the Rwandan Genocide.*

MacKinnon, Rebecca. "Flatter World and Thicker Walls? Blogs, Censorship, and Civic Discourse in China." *Public Choice*. (2008) 134: 31-46. Springer Science+Business Media.

*MacKinnon argues that the permission of blogs in China will not directly lead to short-term political revolution; rather, they will create a space for collaboration and can contribute to long-term political evolution.*

Schneider, Andrea Kupfer. "International Media and Conflict Resolution: Making the Connection" *Marquette Law Review*, 93, Fall 2009. <http://epublications.marquette.edu/mulr/vol93/iss1/5/>.

*Schneider asks questions about the role of journalists and the media in society generally, and more specifically in the context of conflict. Do the media have a responsibility to report all sides? Do they have a responsibility to withhold incendiary information?*

Shirky, Clay. "The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change." *Foreign Affairs*. 90, no. 1 (January/February 2011).

*Shirky looks at social media as a catalyst of gradual political change, rather than sudden, mass protest movements.*

Voelcker, John. "Creating Social Change: 10 Innovative Technologies." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. (2006) [http://www.ssireview.org/pdf/2006SU\\_feature\\_Voelcker.pdf](http://www.ssireview.org/pdf/2006SU_feature_Voelcker.pdf).

*Voelcker examines ten new technologies that are effecting social change. Number 10 is entitled "Bridging the Digital Divide" and discusses a Brazilian nonprofit that works for that purpose.*

Wehrenfennig, Daniel. "Communication Technology, Conflict Resolution, and the North-South Divide." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Town & Country Resort and Convention Center, San Diego, California, USA, Mar 22, 2006 (2009). [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p98650\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p98650_index.html).

*Wehrenfennig discusses the idea of the "network society" and what this reorganization of the world means for conflict resolution and global dynamics.*

Wehrenfennig, Daniel. "From Analog Past to Digital Future: Information and Communication Technology in Conflict Management." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association's 50th Annual Convention, "Exploring the Past, Anticipating the Future," New York Marriott Marquis, New York, NY, USA, Feb 15, 2009.

*Wehrenfennig analyzes the new approaches being taken by peacebuilders in modern conflict environments, including interactions with new media.*

## News Articles

Barry, Ellen. "Protests in Moldova Explode, with Help of Twitter." *New York Times*. (2010) <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/08/world/europe/08moldova.html>.

*This article details the role of Twitter and cell phones in igniting violence in Moldovan protests in April 2010. The story highlights how many of Moldova's current social struggles are propelled by youth, who are also more likely to engage with new media technology.*

Cohen, Noam. "Twitter on the Barricades: Six Lessons Learned." *New York Times*, June 20, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/21/weekinreview/21cohenweb.html>.

*Noam Cohen provides a news analysis of the role of new media in recent conflicts, especially social networking. He writes in the context of Iran's so-called "Twitter Revolution" in 2009.*

Cohen, Noam and Brad Stone. "Social Networks Spread Defiance Online." *New York Times*, June 15, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/16/world/middleeast/16media.html>.

*Cohen and Stone describe Iranians' use of social networking in the postelection protests in 2009.*

Esfandiari, Golnaz. "Iran's Intelligence Minister Admits Hacking Into Opposition E-Mail - Radio Free Europe." December 27, 2010. [http://www.rferl.org/content/iran\\_hacking\\_email/2259973.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/iran_hacking_email/2259973.html).

*This report details some of the efforts of the Iranian government in thwarting the organizing strategies of protesters in the aftermath of elections in 2009.*

Gladwell, Malcolm. "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be tweeted" *The New Yorker*, October 4, 2010. [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa\\_fact\\_gladwell](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell).

*Gladwell, as others have done, questions the significance of social media in bringing about social change. He argues that it is "not the enemy of the status quo," and is really just a means of making "the existing social order more efficient."*

Parker, Kathleen. "Facebook and social media offer the potential of peace." September 5, 2010. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/03/AR2010090304363.html>.

*Parker discusses the potential of social media for promoting peace in the Middle East. It will not "create peace," she says, but it will "increase demand for it" by building virtual relationships between youth in each region.*

## Reports

Aday, Sean, Henry Farrell, Marc Lynch, John Sides, John Kelly, and Ethan Zuckerman. "Blogs and Bullets: New Media in Contentious Politics." September 2010. <http://www.usip.org/publications/blogs-and-bullets-new-media-in-contentious-politics>.

*Aday et al. report on new tools that are allowing researchers and policymakers greater insight into the effect of new media on conflict—whether it promotes conflict, deters it, or has no effect.*

Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, "Bridging Babel: New Social Media and Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding," Georgetown University, April 2010.

*Students at the Berkley Center at Georgetown University helped to produce this report on the sometimes productive, sometimes counterproductive role of social media in intercultural and interreligious understanding.*

Frohardt, Mark and Jonathan Temin. "Use and Abuse of Media in Vulnerable Societies." October 2003. <http://www.usip.org/publications/use-and-abuse-media-vulnerable-societies>.

*This report suggests a means of analyzing how media is used or misused in "vulnerable societies" and provides some policy suggestions for the international community.*

Heinzelman, Jessica and Carol Waters. "Crowdsourcing Crisis Information in Disaster-Affected Haiti." September 2010. <http://www.usip.org/publications/crowdsourcing-crisis-information-in-disaster-affected-haiti>.

*Heinzelman's and Waters' report discusses how crowdsourcing information from social media (like blogs, Facebook, and Twitter) was used to gain reliable information in Haiti in the aftermath of the January 12, 2010, earthquake.*

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*This report from the UN Foundation examines how nongovernmental organizations are using wireless technology to meet their social, civil, economic, and political goals. It finds, among other things, that 86 percent of NGO employees are using wireless technology in their work.*

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*This report "defines information literacy, identifies its role in transforming communities worldwide, and creates plans of action."*

UNESCO. "Power of Peace: Building Peace through Communication and Information," Report of UNESCO Global Forum in Indonesia, January 2007. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001534/153473e.pdf>.

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*This report provides a general review of the rise of information technology vis-à-vis conflict. It is particularly useful in assessing early predictions of conflict.*

## Multimedia/Web Resources

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*In this Ted Talk, Erik Hersman describes how cell phones are being used to map crises in Africa and how Africa is leading the world in utilizing crowdsourcing technology. Through this, not only does the local and international community have access to new data that will help address conflict situations, but Africa's capacity for innovation is also being developed.*

Hodge, Nathan. "Visualizing the Underwear Bomber's Online Life." January 7, 2010. <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/01/visualizing-the-underwear-bombers-online-life/>.

*This blog post discusses a means of visualizing Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's online activities over a three-year period and what the information can tell us about how his online life contributed to his actions.*

"Media, Conflict, and Peacebuilding." 2010. <http://www.usip.org/issue-areas/communications-and-media>.

*This website from the United States Institute of Peace provides a number of articles and resources on the nexus of media and peace. USIP considers communications and media to be one of its critical issue areas—a recognition of new media's importance vis-à-vis conflict and peace.*

"PopTech: PeaceTXT: Using Mobile Technology to End Violence." 2010. <http://www.poptech.org/peacetxt>.

*This is the website of a coalition of organizations that are aiming to harness the power of mobile technology to end and prevent violence.*

USIP. "Winter 2011 Peacewatch | United States Institute of Peace." January 2011. <http://www.usip.org/publications/winter-2011-peacewatch>.

*The Winter 2011 edition of Peacewatch focuses primarily on media, technology, and conflict.*

## Books

- Aaker, Jennifer and Andy Smith. *The Dragonfly Effect: Quick, Effective, and Powerful Ways to Use Social Media to Drive Social Change*. Jossey-Bass, 2010.  
*This volume marries social media and social consumer psychology to show how nonprofits and other organizations can effect social change.*
- Finel, Bernard I. and Lord, Kristen M., eds. *Power and Conflict in the Age of Transparency*. New York: Palgrave, 2000.  
*The editors point out that if wars occur as a result of misinformation, information technology proliferation that results in transparency could help prevent such wars. However, proliferation can also result in confusion and impede traditional diplomatic practices.*
- Gorman, Lyn and David McLean. *Media and Society into the 21st Century: A Historical Introduction*. (2nd edition): West Sussex, U.K. John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 2009.  
*Gorman and McLean's volume looks into the role and development of media since the late 19th century. Most of the volume focuses primarily on traditional media, but the second edition includes chapters on new media and the role of technology.*
- Joyce, Mary, ed. *Digital Activism Decoded: The New Mechanics of Change*. Amsterdam: International Debate Education Association, 2010.  
*This volume, edited by Mary Joyce, examines a number of different aspects of "digital activism," from the factors that interact with it to its practice and prospects.*
- Kanter, Beth and Allison Fine. *The Networked Nonprofit: Connecting with Social Media to Drive Change*. Jossey-Bass, 2010.  
*Kanter and Fine explore the increasing connectedness of the nonprofit sector, which may help nonprofits to be more effective in producing social change.*
- Keeble, Richard L., John Tulloch, and Florian Zollman. *Peace Journalism, War and Conflict Resolution*. New York: Peter Lange Publishing, 2010.  
*This book looks at the general role of media in war and conflict management, and offers chapters on blogs and websites in addition to traditional and indigenous media.*
- Lord, Kristin M. *The Perils and Promise of Global Transparency: Why the Information Revolution May Not Lead to Security, Democracy, or Peace*. New York: State University of New York, 2006.  
*Lord explores how increased governmental transparency has not always led to the kinds of positive social transformation that other authors and pundits have predicted.*
- Norris, Pippa. *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.  
*Norris examines Internet access on both a global scale, as well as within societies. She explores the question of whether the Internet represents a revolution and "great equalizer," or whether it reinforces the existing order.*
- Shirky, Clay. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. New York: Penguin, 2008.  
*The premise of Shirky's work is that new forms of social media provide individuals with the power to organize and mobilize without requiring the organizations that once performed those tasks.*
- Strobel, Warren P. *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997.  
*Written at the peak of traditional media's global primacy, Late-Breaking Foreign Policy examines the nexus of journalism and policy making.*
- Weimann, Gabriel. *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges*. Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2006.  
*Weimann looks at "cyberterror" as the latest front in modern warfare. Not only does the internet facilitate the coordination of terrorist activities, it is also a medium for attacks on information and infrastructure.*

## Classroom Resources

- "Common Craft—Our Product is Explanation." 2010. <http://commoncraft.com/> (accessed December 22, 2010).  
*This website provides videos that explain sometimes complex concepts in simple ways (for example, how to use various forms of social media). To access relevant videos, click on "Browse Videos," then the "Technology" tab.*
- Route 21, "Information Literacy." (2007). [http://www.p21.org/route21/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=24&Itemid=170](http://www.p21.org/route21/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24&Itemid=170).  
*This site provides some guidance on teaching information literacy in a K-12 context.*
- "PeaceMedia | Find, Engage, Share Peace." 2010. <http://peacemedia.usip.org/>.  
*Created in conjunction with Georgetown University's conflict resolution program, PeaceMedia is USIP's clearinghouse of online media related to the promotion of peace.*
- "Social Media Classroom." 2008. <http://socialmediaclassroom.com/index.php/resources>.  
*Social Media Classroom provides a number of class lessons on social media, as contributed by users in the "wiki" format, an example of participatory/Web 2.0 media.*

## Blogs

*We recommend that instructors give guidance to learners when directing them to blogs; not all blogs contain reliable and appropriate information for all learners.*

- Ashoka International, "Ashoka Peace: Social Entrepreneurs and Peace-Building." 2010. <http://peace.ashoka.org/>.
- Change.org, "Change.org." 2010. <http://www.change.org/>.
- Development Seed, "Blog | Development Seed." 2010. <http://developmentseed.org/blog>.
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- Global Voices, "Global Voices - Citizen media stories from around the world." 2010. <http://globalvoicesonline.org/>.
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- Meier, Patrick Philippe. "iRevolution." 2010. <http://irevolution.wordpress.com/>.
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- Netsquared, "Netsquared, an initiative of TechSoupGlobal.org | remixing the web for social change." 2010. <http://www.netsquared.org/>.
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