Global mapping of technology for transparency and accountability

New technologies

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Global**Voices**
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GLOBAL INTEGRITY
Independent Information on Governance & Corruption

Contents

Executive summary

This report contains the key findings from having reviewed more than 100 projects and having interviewed dozens of practitioners in Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the former Soviet Union, and Sub-Saharan Africa who use new technologies as a means to increase transparency and accountability. This summary helps to 'take the pulse' of the Technology for Transparency and Accountability movement and suggests both exciting possibilities for scaling impact as well as important caveats and challenges.

For practitioners in the transparency and accountability space, it is useful to frame the potential for leveraging technology towards transparency and accountability initiatives in at least four ways:

- Bringing projects and interventions to scale.
- Bringing citizens closer to the policymaking process through new and improved channels of participation as well as citizen monitoring of government.
- Identifying policy priorities and service delivery challenges through 'data mashing' and other visualisation and data manipulation techniques of both government and private datasets.
- Improving the efficiency of civil society organisations working in the transparency and accountability space through adoption of best practice technology platforms.

Key findings

1. Online and mobile technology tools are beginning to change the transparency and accountability field despite the lack of a dedicated source of technical or financial support.

Many efforts are just starting, and some are better designed than others, but selected initial efforts appear to be moving ahead of traditional transparency and accountability organisations and their models, most of which continue to think that using 'tech' tools refers to tweeting and having a website. These traditional organisations often fail to take advantage of powerful online and mobile tools that could magnify their impact.

2. A key element of successful technology for transparency and accountability efforts is their speed, both in execution and in stimulating change.

Well-designed efforts are capable of producing relevant information that can be used to exercise or demand accountability quickly, whether by the creators and managers of the project, by third-party change agents or organisations, or by more collective public stakeholders. This is typically achieved by: 1) collecting and presenting new (or previously hidden) information that can be used to support the exercise of accountability; and/or 2) republishing or repackaging existing information in a way that makes it more usable.

3. Technology for transparency and accountability projects have a better chance of effectively producing change when they take a collaborative approach, sometimes involving government and/or service providers.

Projects that establish some sort of feedback mechanism between information generators – whether the public (e.g., crowd-sourcing) or information-generating organisations (e.g., NGOs) – and those whose performance they seek to influence (government, service providers) tend to show more results. Although this study did not aim to analyse these projects' ultimate impact, it is clear that projects whose strategies include the participation of different stakeholders are producing above average results.

4. Despite early successes, many efforts still lack credibility and could create distortions.

Some projects have been launched without sufficient knowledge or expertise to design an effective methodology or conceive of and execute a feasible strategy. Terms and labels such as 'demanding accountability' or 'exposing corruption' tend to be very loosely thrown about. Combined with a significant amount of unverified data in some projects, particularly crowdsourced efforts, these conditions have the dangerous potential to diminish technology for transparency and accountability as an approach without greater rigor. The projects listed in this study were chosen because they were considered to have a reasonable chance of success; however, some of these cases could benefit from methodological improvements.

5. Technology for transparency and accountability tools do not have to be sophisticated, but they need to be designed intelligently and with an eye towards local context.

While many of the projects we studied have attempted to match their tools to their target populations, for example by making data available via SMS as well as online, some still struggle to find the best tools for the contexts in which they operate. Launching a web-based effort in a locality that lacks reliable high-speed internet is one example of an effort that would lack a context-focused approach.

6. Overall, current technology for transparency and accountability efforts can often be classified as 'pull' or 'push' efforts. In some cases, they are both at the same time or could be perceived to outgrow the basic assumptions of this categorisation.

Push efforts aim to use technology to amplify the voices of 'the public' (in practice, usually a small set of the general public, for example voters or particular neighborhoods and communities) in ways that would not be achievable were those voices to individually share their concerns and preferences about the way in which government operates. Pull projects operate in the opposite direction. The theory of change driving pull projects is that 'the public' would demand better performance from government and service providers if only they understood the true extent and details of the governance deficits facing them. To raise that awareness on the part of the public, technology solutions in pull projects aim to provide an accessible information pool from which the public can pull relevant information to better inform their demand for improved governance and service delivery. Some of the projects profiled here are outgrowing that basic dichotomy in their desire to directly execute that which they advocate to solve, as is the case with efforts to collect and organise data that governments themselves need to better fulfil their mandates.

7. Trends

The majority of projects focus on the executive or legislative branches of government. A smaller number of projects focus on the judicial branch, the media, the private sector, and donors.

Nearly half of the projects studied focus on monitoring elections. While many of these use the free paltform Ushahidi, some have developed their own approaches, including aggregating election news from multiple sources on a single site and tracking official election monitors' reports on Google Maps.

Projects in multiple regions focus on transparency in the legislature, often tracking legislative bills and posting profiles for each representative that include biographies and voting records. Some also include profiles of political parties or records of legislative spending.

Projects that collect citizen complaints and deliver them to the relevant authorities or private companies are also popular. Some of these partner with traditional media

organisations to put additional pressure on authorities and businesses to respond to these complaints.

Data visualisation and navigation tools are a key feature in more than half of the projects we documented, as are diverse forms of data collection from citizens. Approximately one third of the projects use mobile phones in some way, most commonly by allowing citizens to submit or receive information via text message.

Many of the projects are founded by technology-savvy activists who have experience blogging, developing web applications, and/or using social media extensively. Others have sprung out of established organisations working in the transparency field or from the efforts and experience of investigative journalists.

Introduction

The technology for transparency and accountability field is an increasingly dynamic space as internet and mobile phone use rise and new actors join the field. The goal of the Technology for Transparency Network (TTN) over the past year has been to collect a sufficiently large sample of projects from a variety of regions and a variety of thematic categories in order to place our finger on the pulse of the field.

We have attempted to document the current trends in the hopes that doing so will be useful for current technology for transparency and accountability practitioners curious about what their colleagues are doing, for traditional transparency and accountability activists and organisations who may be interested in incorporating online and mobile tools in their work, and for grant-makers seeking an overview of the technology for transparency and accountability space.

In the first section of the report, we present our methodology, the scope of the project, and our proposed taxonomy, which we believe can help improve understanding of the broad range of technology for transparency and accountability projects around the world.

Our second section is an overview of the trends our research found in the course of the year. It contains detailed descriptions of different areas these projects are exploring, the ways in which they are updating and re-energising the field's traditional methodologies and how they are engaging actors from citizens and media to authorities and the private sector.

Finally, our third section offers conclusions and suggestions for further research.

2. Methodology and scope

This report focuses on the results of interviews conducted with technology for transparency and accountability practitioners in Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the former Soviet Union, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The research began with a widespread call for case study suggestions, focused largely on citizen-led projects. Researchers, members of the wider Global Voices community, and the general public were invited to submit their suggestions through an online form. Nearly 150 projects were suggested, and nearly 100 were selected for further study.

Interviews were then carried out by a team of more than a dozen researchers to profile over 60 selected projects. Team members had experience in transparency research and were intimately familiar with citizen media in their particular geographic areas of expertise. This report draws on these case studies, which can be found on the Technology for Transparency Network website (http:// transparency.globalvoicesonline.org/) along with additional short articles by our researchers on various aspects of the field. Additional projects that were identified as within the scope of our research but not interviewed due to time or other constraints are also listed on the site.

Selection criteria

Our selection criteria looked at whether the projects met the following conditions:

- The projects had a clear objective of producing data that can be used to support transparency and accountability efforts by: a) collecting and presenting data; and/or b) republishing or repackaging existing data in a way that makes it usable.
- Technology tools were essential to the development or existence of the projects.
- The technology tools and quality standards seemed coherent enough to assume that the projects had a reasonable possibility of accomplishing their stated objectives.
- The projects demonstrated collaborative approaches or had the potential to develop them. This refers to whether the projects appeared capable of establishing links with other actors who could boost or accelerate the objectives of the projects. In some cases, collaborative strategies are already in place; in other cases, they do not yet exist, but the projects seem capable of eventually developing them.

This research did not intend to evaluate the impact of each one of these projects, nor did it conduct an in-depth analysis of each project within its local context. The objective of the research was rather to collect a sufficiently large sample of projects to document current trends and show a snapshot of the current state of the field.

For an in-depth review of some of these projects we recommend reviewing a companion paper in this series, 'Technologies of Transparency for Accountability: An Examination of Several Experiences', by Archon Fung, Hollie Russon Gilman and Jennifer Shkabatur.

Taxonomy

The projects we reviewed are multifaceted, and we have attempted to develop a taxonomy that reflects this. For example, Dinero y Política (Money and Politics) in Argentina focuses on campaign finance; however, because of the type of technological tools it uses and its approach to financial data, it could also be considered an example of budget monitoring.

Therefore, our taxonomy allows projects to be categorised through four different lenses. This approach separates the actor(s) whose actions the projects target (for example, the legislative branch of government) from the function(s) these actors perform (for example, elections, budgets or government service delivery).

We have also categorised projects by the type of technology tools they use and have explained those trends in Appendix II: Commonly Used Tools. The fourth category refers to the geographic scope of each project.

Visitors to our website can browse and compare projects across multiple categories and sub-categories within this taxonomy. The categories and sub-categories we developed are:

Actor
Donors
Executive Branch
Judicial Branch
Legislative Branch
Media
Political Parties
Private Sector

Function
Budgets
Elections
Extractive Industries
/Natural Resource Governance
Government Services

Geographic Scale
Neighborhood
Municipal
Sub-national
National
International

Types of Tools
Data collection
Data visualisation
Connect and engage (social media)
Mobile
Traditional (print and broadcast)

2. Technology for transparency and accountability: an overview

This section is an overview of the trends our research found in the field and is organised by two of the areas identified in our taxonomy: actors and functions targeted by technology for transparency and accountability efforts.

Actors targeted by transparency and accountability efforts

Executive and legislative branches

In Malaysia, Penang Watch's objective is to encourage local government authorities to improve their performance by providing them with both positive and negative feedback. It also aim to empower citizens by providing them with electronic tools to demand solutions.

The project's website collects citizen complaints, which must come accompanied by pictures, documents or other types of evidence. A group of volunteers then brings those complaints to the attention of city officials and monitors the process. If the complaint has not received a response after two weeks, the responsible officials are 'named and shamed' on the website and via emails to all council departments and media organisations.

According to project coordinator Ong Boon Keong, about 50% of the complaints the project has processed following this procedure have been effectively resolved. While it is impossible to determine if the cases would have been resolved without Penang Watch's participation (there have been no randomised controlled trials to vet this), Keong said that project representatives often meet with authorities and that communication and relationship building have started to yield results.

Purely legislative projects track both individual politicians and legislative bills. Mam Prawo Wiedzieć (I Have The Right to Know) is a Polish parliamentary monitoring site that reports and aggregates publicly available information about candidates and current Members of Parliament. Project coordinator Anna Czyżewska said that the project visits candidates' websites, collects flyers, keeps track of media reports and directly asks politicians to disclose information. It is interesting to note that many politicians have started to respond to the group's requests, though some still ignore it.

One of the key features of the Polish website is its ability to pair candidates and MPs' profiles with their voting records, which is theorised to be a key monitoring technique to which the media and citizens in many countries often lack access. This approach of allowing citizens to match candidate profiles with voting records has also been taken by Colombia's Congreso Visible.

In Brazil, Excelências operates a similar database that tracks donations, representatives' absences in national and state assemblies, government spending, and bills. Excelências is used primarily by journalists seeking to uncover corruption in the Brazilian government and was awarded the 2006 Esso Journalism Award for the best contribution to the press.

In Slovakia, the Fair-Play Alliance, a project run by journalist Zuzana Wienk, is pushing for greater transparency in government finance. The Fair-Play Alliance operates a searchable online database containing information about the flow of public money to private hands (via state subsidies, privatisation, tax and customs remissions, grants and other mechanisms). The organisation works primarily with other non-profit organisations and with the media, who use the database to monitor government spending. Several times per year, the Fair-Play Alliance contacts the media to bring their attention to specific cases it deems worthy of further attention.[1] According to Wienk, information made available by the Fair-Play Alliance has helped increase awareness of government spending in Slovakia; the organisation recently worked to help draft and pass a new law on political party finance in the country.

Judicial branch

Projects related to the judicial branch monitor the selection of members of the Supreme Court or other senior members of the judiciary and reorganise and publish court decisions that are otherwise inaccessible.

In Guatemala, a country with severe impunity problems in which the selection of judges to the top courts is highly politicised, Guatemala Visible, set up a group of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), maintains a website that closely monitors the selection of the General Prosecutor, the Auditor General, the Public Defender and the national Ombudsman.

During the country's most recent selection process for Supreme Court justices, in 2009, the website published personal background information on the nominees as well as details of legal complaints that had been formally filed against them, directly exercising pressure on the members of the nomination committees to fully investigate the backgrounds of ostensibly unqualified candidates. The website also offered live transmissions of the sessions in which the nomination committees evaluated the candidates.

The United Nations' International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) praised the work of the website for its contribution to making the election process more transparent for citizens.[2] Guatemala Visible was inspired by a similar project in Colombia called Elección Visible, suggesting that in certain cases, successful technology for transparency projects can travel.

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[1] A list of times Fair Play Alliance's database has been used by the media is available on its site at http://www.fair-play.sk/index. php?u2=38andu1=6.

[2] Informe: Proceso de Elección de Magistrados a la Corte Suprema de Justicia y Cortes de Apelaciones y Otros Tribunales Colegiados de Igual Categoría Año 2009. CICIG. http://cicig. org/uploads/documents/Informe_proceso_de_eleccion_de_ magistrados_2009.pdf

Political parties

These projects tend to be aimed at providing voter education and offering voters a centralised source of information that helps them make sense of competing party and candidate platforms during what is often a noisy and propaganda-laden electoral process.

KohoVolit, operating in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, distributes questionnaires to politicians before elections to record their proposals and positions on diverse issues. The project then uses that information to develop a short quiz that allows voters to match their own voting preferences and political beliefs with those of the candidates. Most importantly, the website monitors whether political parties' actions in the legislature match their campaign promises. The initiative also publishes otherwise dense information, such as proposed laws and legislative debate, in a way that regular citizens can easily grasp.

In Hungary, Képmutatás works to increase transparency in political party finance by monitoring the activities of political parties via press releases and news articles, analysing different parties' expenses (for example, by tallying approximate costs for political advertisements in different publications or for the rental of venues for political rallies), then using this analysis to construct an estimated campaign budget for each party. Képmutatás' work was prompted by suspicions that most political parties far exceed the legal limit for campaign expenditure of HUF 386 million (just under $2 million). A 'running total' graph for 2010 estimated that two of six parties had far exceeded the limit, while a searchable database listed each estimated campaign expense.

In Argentina, Dinero y Política (Money and Politics) advocates for campaign finance transparency by publishing campaign finance data online. Users can navigate the website by political party, district, or type of donation or expense and can consult lists of campaign contributions from individuals. Large portions of the information are culled from data posted by the political parties on their websites in PDF format; Dinero y Política processes and transforms this data to make it easily searchable.

Media

Media-related projects generally attempt to inject more information into the news cycle and/or to provide members of the media with better tools and/or skills with which to do their work.

While our research did not attempt to evaluate these projects' claims of providing deeper reporting than the mainstream media, some projects were created by professional investigative reporters and, in one case, by a group of four media development organisations, suggesting that they indeed had the potential to create high-quality information.

Centro de Investigación e Información Periodística (CIPER, Centre of Journalistic Investigation and Information) in Chile publishes investigative reports developed by some of the top journalists in the country; the members of its editorial board include key names in American and Latin American journalism. Its reports include evaluations of the public health system and the Senate's expenses and coverage of sensitive issues such as crimes committed by members of the Catholic Church, among others. The difference between CIPER and other media outlets is not only in its distribution method but also in its focus: CIPER is dedicated to covering underreported stories about corruption in both the private and public sectors; it obtains its material by exercising Chile's access to public information laws; and it publishes its source documents. The organisation's approach to funding also differs from traditional media organisations: as CIPER obtains most of its funding from the Copesa Group (a Chilean media conglomerate) rather than relying directly on commercial funding, it is less vulnerable to retaliation for stories that expose corruption in the private sector.

In Puerto Rico, the Centro de Periodismo Investigativo (CPIPR, the Centre for Investigative Journalism) is the first non-profit investigative journalism project in the Caribbean. It uses an online platform to distribute investigative reporting conducted by its journalists. Like CIPER in Chile, which provided inspiration, CPIPR was founded by two top Puerto Rican journalists. Recent investigations include a report on the Caribbean Petroleum Corporation and a number of stories on corruption within Puerto Rico's judicial system.

Pera Natin 'to! (It's Our Money!) is an initiative of the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project, which was founded by four media development organisations (the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, the Centre for Community Journalism and Development, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines and the Mindanao News and Information Cooperation Centre). Pera Natin 'to! encourages civil society organisations (CSOs), individual citizens and journalists to work together to document corruption by providing an online platform where people can publish reports, complaints, photos, videos, podcasts and blog posts documenting instances of bribery or other corruption.

Other projects are based on citizen journalism under the guidance of professional journalists. One of them is CGNet Swara, a mobile phone-based service that operates in Chhattisgarh, India. Citizens – some but not all of whom have had training in reporting – call in and record a short update of anything they consider 'news'. Reports are vetted by a group of three professional journalists who then conduct their own reporting or add a disclaimer saying that the information has not been verified. When the updates are published, subscribers receive an alert via text message. Listeners can call in and hear the three most recent stories, some of which are translated from Chhattisgarhi into Hindi in order to reach a wider audience.

The African Elections Project covers several countries and has a different goal: to help the media use technology to cover elections throughout the continent. The organisation's website includes country-specific election portals that aggregate election-related news articles, blog posts, photographs, events, and editorials. The project monitors existing media coverage of elections, tracks the distribution of coverage across different parties, and allows journalists and other subscribers to receive news via e-mail and SMS.

Private sector

Only three of the projects we studied focus on efforts to promote transparency in the private sector. Reclamos, in Chile, receives information from individual consumers (for example, about businesses that fail to follow consumer protection regulations or poor-quality public services) and organises the information so that it can be used by other consumers, journalists and researchers to better understand consumer behaviour, preferences and product complaints. The platform has evolved into a large and vibrant community of consumers that has managed to effectively put pressure on corporations and has compelled some of them to respond to complaints posted on the website. It is now one of the biggest user-generated content websites in Chile.

Ishki is a Jordanian project that started with a similar goal: building an attractive, easy-to-use platform designed to crowdsource citizen complaints about both public and private sector service delivery. However, founder Waheed Al-Barghouthi explained that the website has not been very successful, in his opinion, in part because of a lack of resources to advertise the site and in part because Jordanians worry about commenting on public websites out of fear that their IP address will be tracked by the authorities. This is a useful example of where context truly matters in designing effective technology for transparency efforts.

In Costa Rica, Quien Paga Manda is a bridge between consumers and both public and private companies.[3] The website publishes information related to customer service and the low standards of consumer rights in the country and uses consumers' experiences to highlight legal gaps and commercial practices detrimental to the public interest that go unreported. The website assumes that visibility can be more effective than legal processes to counteract such practices. It intends to help consumers learn from the mistakes and experiences of others so they can be more proactive in defending their own interests and in making their rights effective. Among other tools, the website includes a blog, a rating system and a section to submit questions to experts. In some cases, the website connects consumers with government agencies, businesses or lawyers who react quickly to solve specific cases.

Donors

Ujima is the only project we interviewed that focuses on donor spending in the developing world. Ujima has created an online repository of aid-related datasets that includes data about USAID spending, lobbyists hired by foreign governments and organisations to influence US foreign policy, data from the African Development Bank, information on health spending by the Global Fund, and information on weapons sales. All of this information is publicly available but can be difficult for individuals in the developing world to access. The project was founded by two former *New York Times* journalists and is aimed primarily at supporting investigative reporting in Africa. Ujima does not track whether or how the information it provides has been used in the media or elsewhere. It also has a decidedly American focus in its choice of datasets, though it has recently begun to expand to include data from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the African Development Bank.

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[3] Disclosure: Quien Paga Manda is led by Hazel Feigenblatt, who is also the editorial advisor for the Technology for Transparency Network and a co-author of this report.

Functions targeted by transparency and accountability efforts

Government services

Nearly half of the projects we studied focus on some aspect of government service provision, largely surrounding citizen complaints and educating citizens about how governments are spending money on public services. Since most of the projects in this sub-category also fall in other sub-categories covered in detail elsewhere in the report (Executive and Legislative Branches earlier in the report and Budget later on), we have not reiterated the information here. However, one smaller category of projects took a slightly different tack worth describing: engaging citizens to tackle problems of government service delivery by collaborating with each other and/or with the government, rather than by 'naming and shaming' government authorities for failing to adequately address citizens' needs.

In Brazil, Cidade Democrática is an online platform that allows citizens, politicians, journalists and NGOs to collectively identify community problems and propose solutions. The project has had some success in the city of Jundiaí: for example, an online discussion about bicycle paths prompted the town's deputy mayor to commit $200,000 to the construction of new paths, while another discussion about how the city's public hearing schedule prevented full-time workers and students from attending prompted it to consider expanding or changing its public hearing hours.

In India, Praja ('Citizens' or 'Public') operates a similar platform to collect citizen input on civic issues of importance to them and to facilitate collaboration between citizens and government to develop solutions to these issues, and bring them to the attention of the proper authorities. Praja tracks the authorities' response to the complaints it raises by posting offline communication with government offices on its website.

In Russia, TakTakTak also works to connect citizens and to help them collaborate to solve social problems. TakTakTak was created by a group of Siberian journalists and a small web development company as an online meeting place for parties interested in social change. The creators intend their project to help people self-educate and to create what they describe as a 'crowdsourced citizen survival guide.' The organisation's platform allows citizens to submit both problems and solutions (called 'algorithms'). The project is intended to fill the gap between journalists, citizens, civil society activists, and government.

Elections

Several projects focus on monitoring elections. Many of these projects – Amatora mu Mahoro in Burundi, Cuidemos el Voto in Mexico, Eleitor 2010 in Brazil, Save.kg in Kyrgyzstan, Sharek961 in Lebanon, Sudan Vote Monitor, Uchaguzi in Kenya, and Vote Report PH in the Philippines – use Ushahidi, a well-known free platform that allows people to send in reports via e-mail, text message, Twitter, or a web form. The software then displays the reports on a map and on a timeline. Some projects have developed their own approaches and use other tools.

In Bangladesh, Vote BD publishes voter registration records online so citizens can check their registration status and monitor any errors in the voter lists. The site also tracks, compiles and disseminates information about politicians and electoral candidates. This information includes the results of a questionnaire on political beliefs and experience that Vote BD distributes to candidates, as well as information gleaned from candidates' affidavits and tax returns.

On the eve of Russia's 2004 presidential elections, election observation organisation Golos ('Voice') created a hotline to provide information about the elections and to collect reports of electoral fraud. After its initial success during the 2004 elections, Golos extended the project by uploading information submitted via the calls to a website, the URL of which matched the hotline number (http://www.88003333350.ru/). In 2009 and 2010, the hotline collected reports on eight different local, regional and national elections, including multiple allegations of electoral fraud.

The Association For Democratic Reforms (ADR) in India also ran a nationwide election hotline during the Lok Sabha (lower house of the national parliament) elections in 2009. The hotline was connected to MyNeta.info, a platform that provides information about electoral candidates to the public. Citizens could also access information on the platform via SMS.

Projects that use Ushahidi could be perceived in some instances as taking a more sophisticated strategy compared with the Golos or ADR approach and seem to be moving ahead of traditional transparency organisations and their methods. Among the projects we studied, this is best illustrated by Uchaguzi, a follow-up to the first use of Ushahidi in Kenya's 2007 elections. Uchaguzi's goal was to monitor the country's 2010 constitutional referendum. Months prior to the elections, Uchaguzi's organisers began talking to potential partners, including the Social Development Network (SODNET) and the Constitution and Reform Education Consortium (CRECO).

CRECO and Ushahidi then trained 500 official election monitors on how to report incidents to the Uchaguzi platform via text message. CRECO also established a partnership with the Interim Independent Election Commission (IIEC), which offered a channel of communication through which allegations of fraud reported via Uchaguzi would be investigated immediately by government authorities.

Uchaguzi received more than 1,500 reports during the referendum, some of which were forwarded to the IIEC for action. In one example, a monitor sent Uchaguzi a photo of a poster hung in two polling stations. In the poster the colours for 'Yes' and 'No' had been inverted. The error was reported to the authorities, and the IIEC removed the poster. Since the media could not possibly follow up on each small incident, and since traditional organisations could not collect and process 1,500 reports with the speed that Uchaguzi offered, this collaborative approach provides a promising model to explore.

However, one lesson from the Ushahidi/Uchaguzi experience is that the success of a tool in one context can inspire others to quickly launch projects using the same tool without a clear strategy or a solid methodology capable of yielding credible results. We identified a number of these cases during our research; while they are not profiled here, they reinforce the point that the 'cool factor' of technology tools can at times exacerbate the lack of rigor found in some initiatives. This poses a risk of diminishing the role that technology can play in the transparency and accountability field.

Extractive industries/natural resource governance

Few examples were found of local organisations using technology to push for greater transparency and accountability around extractive industries and natural resources. Most national resource initiatives continue to operate at the international level.

One of the most interesting projects we discovered had yet to launch at the time of our interview. In Tanzania, the non-profit organisation Daraja ('bridge' in Kiswahili) works to facilitate communication between citizens and the government. In November 2010 it launched a three-year program called Maji Matone ('Raising the Water Pressure'). Daraja founder Ben Taylor said that when rural waterpoints break down, it can take months or even years for the government to repair them; this is partly due to a lack of funding but also to a lack of communication between rural communities and the district centers, where decisions about repairs are made.

Maji Matone enables citizens to report waterpoint breakdowns to district water engineers, who are responsible for repairs, via text message. Text messages are sent daily to the engineers' phones via a partnership Maji Matone has established, and monthly aggregated reports

are also published. This information is sent to local radio stations, which sometimes broadcast the information and put additional pressure on the government to act quickly. Currently, only 54% of rural waterpoints in Tanzania are functioning properly. Daraja plans to monitor this number over the course of its project to determine if Maji Matone is having an effect.

Considering that several international projects (Publish What You Pay, Revenue Watch Institute, and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) work to increase transparency and accountability in the extractive industries, greater collaboration between these organisations, technologists and local organisations may help develop innovative approaches for integrating technology into the sector's transparency and accountability efforts.

Budgets

Projects focused on public budgets monitor local and national government budgets, donor funding, and at times campaign finance issues, especially if public funding is involved.

In India, the Accountability Initiative collects economic and budgetary data through open government datasets as well as through official Right to Information requests. It then makes the information available online, where users can search for relevant information such as food subsidy information, education and health spending and water sanitation resources. The organisation also provides a 'How to Read the Budget' primer that describes the language used in government budget documents and the structure of the documents in order to facilitate better citizen understanding of these documents.[4]

Lastly, the 'open data' movement, in which budgetary and other government information is made publicly available online, is beginning to spread from the United States and the United Kingdom to the rest of the world.[5] One example is in India, where Praja is working with the government of Karnataka State to develop a pilot open data project for government information.

Most of the budget-focused projects we documented make use of searchable databases and interactive graphs and charts to enable closer examination of the data by citizens, journalists, and NGOs. However, some efforts, such as Pera Natin 'to! in the Philippines, are limited to publishing budget analyses without making the budgetary data itself available to the public in a more detailed or interactive fashion.[6]

[4] Accountability Initiative, 'How to Read the Budget,' http://accountabilityindia.in/sites/default/files/know_your_budget.pdf.

[5] Becky Hogge, 'Open Data Study,' Transparency and Accountability Initiative, May 2010, http://www.soros.org/initiatives/information/focus/communication/articles_publications/publications/open-data-study-20100519/open-data-study-100519.pdf.

[6] Pera Natin 'to!, 'Looking Through the Presidential and Congressional Budgets,' http://www.transparencyreporting.net/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=65:looking-through-the-presidential-and-congressional-budgetsandcatid=52andItemid=77.

3. Conclusions and research recommendations

After reviewing dozens of projects from the developing world, we have found promising successes as well as less developed efforts that do not represent or do justice to the potential or the quality of work that increasingly characterises the technology for transparency and accountability field.

How to distinguish between projects, how to nurture credible efforts, and how to identify opportunities in specific contexts are some of the big questions currently challenging the transparency and accountability community, and the following conclusions intend to provide some elements to keep in mind when considering projects on a case by case basis. We also recommend some areas that could benefit from further research and analysis.

A framework for considering the potential for technology for transparency and accountability initiatives

For practitioners in the transparency and accountability space, it is useful to frame the potential for leveraging technology towards transparency and accountability initiatives in at least four ways:

- bringing projects and interventions to scale;
- bringing citizens closer to the policymaking process through new and improved channels of participation as well as citizen monitoring of government;
- identifying policy priorities and service delivery challenges through 'data mashing' and other visualisation and data manipulation techniques of both government and private datasets; and
- improving the efficiency of CSOs working in the transparency and accountability space through adoption of best practice technology platforms.

Bringing initiatives to scale: Whether crisis mapping applications of Ushahidi that involve thousands of public reporters, or software such as FrontlineSMS that allows project managers to communicate simultaneously with thousands of users via simple text messages, some of the most effective technology for transparency and accountability applications generate impact because they allow practitioners to rapidly scale their interventions cheaply and quickly.

Bringing citizens closer to the policymaking process: Projects such as Reclamos in Chile and Penang Watch in Malaysia are effective and innovative because they bring citizens directly into the governing process. In some cases citizens are empowered (and protected) to become direct reporters of service delivery problems or rights violations; in others, they act as regulators themselves by applying market-based pressures to service providers through collective action responses (as in the case of Reclamos).

Data mashing: Perhaps the best developed technology for transparency and accountability modality, the burgeoning practice of making government and private data more useful and accessible to the public has led to interesting, early successes. The World Bank's open data initiative, for example, has led to critical internal discussions of why aid projects, when mapped systematically by geography, are flowing to regions of a beneficiary country where service delivery challenges are not has severe as in other parts of the same country.[7] In other cases, the mapping and visualisation of government expenditures has helped to create accountability feedback loops by challenging government spending priorities where resources are scarce.

CSO efficiency: Arguably the least developed of the technology for transparency and accountability modalities, the leveraging of best-of-breed technology platforms to improve the internal efficiency and effectiveness of CSOs working in the transparency and accountability space has only just begun. Many CSOs, both large international organisations and domestic grassroots groups, rely on outdated technology and cumbersome project management tools (often, Microsoft Word documents and hard copy paper) to collect and disseminate their information, making replication of successful efforts exceptionally labor intensive and costly. One initiative that is seeking to address those challenges is the Indaba fieldwork platform, a web-based project management and information gathering tool aimed at easing the challenges associated with gathering and publishing data around issues of service delivery, government accountability, and transparency.[8] Indaba represents one of the few efforts thus far to explicitly target the internal processes of CSOs in the transparency and accountability space.

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7 'Data: The World Bank,' http://data.worldbank.org.   8 Indaba: http://getindaba.org.

Cross-project findings and trends

Findings and trends 1.

Online and mobile technology tools are beginning to change the transparency and accountability field, despite the lack of a dedicated source of technical or financial support.

Some efforts are just starting, and some are more solid and thought out than others, but selected initial efforts already seem to be moving ahead of traditional transparency and accountability organisations and their models, many of which continue to think that using 'tech' tools refers to tweeting and having a website. These traditional organisations often fail to take advantage of more powerful technology tools, even though they are experts on the transparency and accountability subject matter.

In the nearly 150 cases that were suggested to us for study, we found several traditional transparency and accountability NGOs proposing their websites, Facebook groups, and Twitter accounts as an innovative use of technology deserving to be documented. This shows their limited knowledge about technology tools and hints at a failure to envision and take advantage of the potential these tools offer.

Many projects are created and managed by social entrepreneurs, many of whom have a background in technology and spend countless hours and personal funds on their projects as a hobby; members of pre-existing groups or established transparency and accountability organisations already involved with transparency initiatives and who are moving their work to new platforms; and investigative reporters and journalists interested in promoting the spread of information to the public. Despite the lack of funds and, in many cases, substantial knowledge on the subject matter, these actors are proving capable of taking the transparency and accountability field to new levels by innovating with new tools and complementing their projects with offline strategies to create entirely new and seemingly effective approaches to promote transparency and exercise accountability.

Lawmakers and political candidates responding to questions from these types of project, meetings between government officials and the creators of these efforts, and mainstream media reporting from them as they would from any other traditional source of information, among many other situations, are clear signs that technology for transparency and accountability projects have effectively become active voices within their communities.

FIndings and trends 2.

Despite early successes, however, many efforts still lack credibility and could be counterproductive. Some projects are launched without sufficient knowledge or expertise to design an effective methodology or conceive of and execute a feasible strategy.

Terms and labels such as 'demanding accountability' or 'exposing corruption' tend to be very loosely thrown about. Combined with a significant amount of unverified data in some projects, particularly crowdsourced efforts, there is a dangerous potential to diminish technology for transparency and accountability as an approach without greater rigor.

The projects listed in this study were chosen because they were considered to have a reasonable chance of success. In some cases, research proved the opposite and we decided to exclude them; in other cases we kept projects that need refinement and could benefit from methodology improvements.

In addition to the lack of knowledge on an academic level, we also sometimes observed a lack of knowledge about the specific issues that project organisers intend to monitor or evaluate, such as electoral protocols or complex mechanisms of corruption in public procurement, all of which hurts the good intentions the creators of many projects have.

Lack of rigor also comes into play when successfully used tools inspire other actors to try to replicate them quickly without basic standards. While it is always desirable that citizens are interested in monitoring governments' actions, there is a line – sometimes a thin one – between serious and anecdotal efforts that needs to be marked.

Transparency and accountability literacy needs to be improved both on the side of individuals attempting to launch monitoring efforts and on the side of regular citizens who provide and/or consume the data produced by the projects. This is essential to ensure that less well thought out projects do not come to deepen existing misconceptions among citizens about what the exercise of transparency and accountability encompasses.

There is also a risk that such projects create or unnecessarily exacerbate citizens' distrust of government or elected officials. This could potentially be a counterproductive result of, for example, a project that claims to present data about electoral crimes committed by politicians during political campaigns and that criticises them for not engaging online with citizens. In that setting, citizens are reinforcing the perception that public officials refuse to be accountable, when in fact some politicians might be willing to engage in such efforts – as already seen in some cases around the world – should the project present reasonably verified data (to avoid presenting false information anonymously spread by opponents as a fact) in an accurate way (for example, not labeling unverified actions of a non-criminal nature as 'crimes').

Unverified reports collected through crowdsourcing tools can be processed and used offline in a way that results in credible, useful information. Each technology project should be considered in light of not only the type of tools it uses, but also its methodology, quality standards, and offline strategy. In many cases, the reputation and experience of the individuals behind a project can be a good indicator as well.

However, we recommend keeping an open mind when considering a project, as great ideas may come from the most unexpected sources, particularly in such a rapidly evolving field and in the current context in which these tools are still new for many practitioners. Traditionally ambitious objectives might be possible to take on using some of these tools. The trick is identifying the difference between projects whose approaches have a reasonable chance of success and those that simply lack the potential.

While several countries, mainly in Latin America, appear to have groups of transparency-focused organisations that collaborate and share experiences on technology for transparency and accountability projects, few projects were aware of similar efforts in other countries. We came across several projects that were funded by the same donor but were unaware of the existence of each other. Promoting more communication among technology for transparency and accountability practitioners could be very useful for them to take advantage of the lessons learned.

FIndings and trends 3.

A key element of successful technology for transparency and accountability efforts is their speed, both in execution and in stimulating change. Well-designed efforts are capable of producing relevant information that can be used to exercise or demand accountability quickly, whether by the creators and managers of the project, by third-party change agents or organisations, and/or by more collective public stakeholders.

This is typically achieved by: 1) collecting and presenting new (or previously hidden) information that can be used to support the exercise of accountability; and/or 2) republishing or repackaging existing information in a way that makes it more usable.

A project such as Uchaguzi, in Kenya, is a good example. It uses Ushahidi, a crowdsourcing tool, in conjunction with a more sophisticated approach consisting of creating key alliances: with a NGO able to provide 500 trained electoral

monitors and a NGO that had a partnership with the Interim Independent Election Commission (IIEC). As a result, when electoral issues were reported to Ushahidi, either by the official CRECO monitors or by members of the public, they could also be reported to the authorities, who took immediate action in several instances.

Since media cannot possibly follow each small incident, traditional NGOs cannot collect and process data with the speed that Uchaguzi can and authorities cannot be everywhere citizens are, this collaborative approach proved more effective than any of those actors alone could have.

In other instances, projects themselves step in to execute that which they advocate to solve, as is the case with efforts that collect and organise data that the government itself needs to better fulfill its regular duties. This is the case when government officials use public data as published by these projects, which in itself represents an improvement in transparency and accountability and in the conditions of service provision.

FIndings and trends 4.

Technology for transparency and accountability projects have a better chance of effectively producing change when there is a collaborative approach, sometimes involving government and/ or service providers.

As shown by Uchaguzi, just mentioned, projects that establish some sort of feedback mechanism between information generators – whether the public (e.g. crowd-sourcing) or information-generating organisations (e.g. NGOs) – and those whose performance they seek to influence (government, service providers) tend to show more results. Although this study did not aim to analyse these projects' ultimate impact, it is clear that projects whose strategies include the participation of different stakeholders are producing above-average results.

The overall vision and strategy the creators of a project elaborate around the use of the technology tool can make or break a project. Increasingly, though shyly, projects in developing countries are exploring new possibilities and knocking on new doors. Traditional media seem to be one of the first avenues they approach, and media seem to be welcoming them. However, projects whose entire strategy relies on media echoing their findings seem to be quickly finding this approach unable to produce the results they expected. Obviously, their area of work is highly specialised, while the media has broader areas to cover.

In certain contexts, government (and to a lesser extent the private sector, mainly because fewer projects target it) is showing willingness to engage with technology for transparency and accountability projects in the same way that it has routinely done with traditional NGOs and with the media. This includes answering questions, providing access to information, taking their data into consideration when proposing bills, processing and resolving complaints and more. This is a sign that traditional NGOs and the media

no longer have the 'monopoly' on this field. Of course, this can be the case more in some contexts than in others, depending on democratic stability and other conditions.

In several other contexts, though, online censorship is a real threat to technology for transparency and accountability projects. If we consider that in some countries bloggers are intimidated in many ways and that citizens fear posting information or commenting online because their IP addresses may be tracked, it is easy to see that developing full technology-based transparency and accountability initiatives is extremely challenging. However, there are clear cases showing that citizens are increasingly blogging, commenting and, in some instances, trying to develop more sophisticated technology projects, and there could be true potential in these cases to incentivise or contribute to change.

Determining this was not one of the objectives of the research conducted by the Technology for Transparency Network, and this report will not attempt to do yet more hypothesising about it, but we did find that there is extremely little data available to analyse the situation. We strongly recommend conducting in-depth research to further study the impact that technology tools can potentially have, specifically in tougher contexts, and to throw light on ways to nurture such initiatives and to provide guidance on where it makes more sense to dedicate resources should it be found appropriate.

FIndings and trends 5.

Technology for transparency and accountability tools do not necessarily have to be sophisticated to succeed, but they need to be designed intelligently and with an eye towards local context. Launching a web-based effort in a locality that lacks reliable broadband internet is one example of a project that lacks this approach.

Technology for transparency and accountability efforts must be careful to avoid exacerbating societal inequalities by disproportionately empowering elites. Mobile phone-based projects reach more people than online-only initiatives, but in some countries, large swaths of the population are still without access to mobile phones. In order for technology for transparency and accountability projects to reach the widest possible audiences, they should carefully assess their audiences and make their information available in as many formats as possible. This may involve making efforts to connect with both traditional transparency groups and with traditional media.

On a more immediate level, communication between leaders of a project and the developers – when they are not the same actor – is essential to avoid the creation of sophisticated but unfamiliar tools for the users.

Overall, current technology for transparency and accountability efforts may be seen as 'pull' or 'push' efforts. What is fascinating is that in some cases they are both at the same time, or could even be perceived to outgrow the basic assumptions of this categorisation.

Push efforts aim to use technology to amplify the voices of 'the public' (in practice, usually a small set of the general public, for example voters or particular neighborhoods and communities) in ways that would not be achievable were those voices to individually share their concerns and

preferences about the way in which government operates.

Pull projects operate in the opposite direction. The theory of change driving pull projects is that 'the public' would demand better performance from government and service providers if only they understood the true extent and details of the governance deficits facing them. To raise that awareness on the part of the public, technology solutions in pull projects aim to provide an accessible information pool from which the public can pull relevant information to better inform their demand for improved governance and service delivery.

Projects included in this research show that some are able to develop strategies fitting both categories, while others go further and can be perceived as outgrowing the basic assumptions of that binary categorisation in their desire to execute that which they advocate to solve. This is the case with efforts that intend to organise and publish public data that the government itself needs to better fulfill its regular duties.

As is the case in any field where constantly evolving information and communications technology is a factor, identifying risks worth taking and openness to design and try new approaches are indispensable abilities to produce innovation. The transparency and accountability field could substantially benefit from those abilities.

Annexes

Annexes I. Case studies

The Technology for Transparency Network interviewed dozens of projects that use online and mobile technology to promote accountability and transparency. These projects are based in Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, Southeast Asia, South Asia, the former Soviet Union, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Below are short summaries of each case study. Full interviews, including audio podcasts and related documents, are available on our website: http://transparency.globalvoicesonline.org/

Central and Eastern Europe

Fair Play Alliance

A lack of necessary laws, a lack of access to information, the lack of political will and a lack of access given to journalists all pushed Slovakian journalist Zuzana Wienk in 2002 to become a watchdog journalist. For the past eight years, Wienk and her team have been constantly pushing Slovakian politicians to become more transparent and have advocated for legal changes that bring about more openness and create the potential for public awareness. One of the first projects undertaken by the Fair-Play Alliance was a special database for politicians to submit their full financial reports. In Slovakia, only a small amount of publicly disclosed information is legally required, but more should be made available – this is where the work of the Fair-Play Alliance comes in.

Képmutatás

Képmutatás is a joint initiative by Freedom House Europe and Transparency International Hungary to bring more transparency to party and campaign financing in Hungary. The word 'képmutatás' means 'hypocrisy' in Hungarian. While parties profess their desire to clean up the current system and eliminate the corrupt practices surrounding it, they continue to spend as much as ten times the legal limit on their campaigns, abuse state and municipal resources for their campaigns, raise funds through illegal channels and spend money in ways that are incompatible with the word, as well as the spirit, of the law. This joint initiative seeks to estimate the true amount that parties spend on campaigns by analysing and estimating their likely expenses. It also incorporates the analysis and policy recommendations developed by the Eötvös Károly Institute[9] and the lessons learned from the organisation's own earlier attempts to exert pressure on parliamentary parties to arrive at a consensus on campaign finance reform.

KohoVolit

Just over 20 years ago the Czech Republic and Slovakia were a single country – Czechoslovakia – and its residents did not expect to have much of a say in how politicians ran their country. When the two countries transitioned to democracy, there was a lot of excitement about getting information from Parliament out to the public, but soon it became more difficult to access and harder to understand the parliamentary websites in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia. KohoVolit aims to take legislative bills, voting records and information about political parties and individual politicians and to organise this information more clearly and present it in a way that informs rather than overwhelms readers. The website has also developed a quiz so that prospective voters can compare how they would vote on key issues and which politicians are most closely aligned with those decisions.

Mam Prawo Wiedzieć

Mam Prawo Wiedzieć is a website created to help Polish citizens access information about their elected representatives in an easy, user-friendly way. The project collects information from candidates' campaign websites, flyers, politicians' blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and various other online and traditional media sources. The site then pairs profiles of each candidate or MP with their voting record, where applicable, so that citizens can learn more about their politicians while also tracking their behavior. Before Poland's 2007 parliamentary elections and the 2009 European Union elections, Mam Prawo Wiedzieć distributed a 'Questionnaire of Experience and Opinions' to all candidates. The answers were then made available online so voters could match their political beliefs to those of the candidates.

Sejmometr

Sejmometr (from the Polish words 'Sejm,' or parliament, and 'metr,' or monitor) is an online portal that aims to provide easily digestible insights into the legislative processes of the Polish government, particularly the Sejm (Poland's parliament). Launched two years ago, the site has gained popularity due to its content and in the summer of 2010 underwent a major re-development to move to a second, more sophisticated version. Supported by international sponsors, the new version of the portal allows users to browse key parliamentary decisions by sponsoring party and by status in the Sejm. New features, including profiles of individual members of parliament, will continue to be added over the next year.

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[9] Eötvös Károly Institute, http://www.ekint.org/ekint/ekint_angol. head.page?nodeid=27.

East Asia

InMedia HK

Inmediahk aims to overcome the problem of Hong Kong's shrinking public sphere after the handover of sovereignty to mainland China by providing independent reporting. Its goal is to protect freedom of speech in Hong Kong, and it both digs deeper into published government documents than other media outlets and conducts independent investigative reports. InMedia HK's goal is to promote a better, more rounded understanding of issues that the mainstream media tend to gloss over.

Latin America

Adote um Vereador

Adote um Vereador (Adopt a Politician) encourages Brazilian citizens to blog about the work of their local elected officials in order to hold them accountable. The organisation suggests that each citizen adopt a local politician and write about his/her activities on a blog so that politicians know that they are being watched – and also to create a bridge between their work and online users who may ask questions or leave complaints as blog comments. A wiki was created to group and coordinate participants who adopt politicians. The organisation also plans workshops to teach citizens how to use internet tools to become involved in the project.

Centro de periodismo investigativo de Puerto Rico

The Centro de Periodismo Investigativo de Puerto Rico (CPIPR, the Puerto Rico Centre for Investigative Journalism) is a non-profit entity created by journalists Omaya Sosa Pascual and Oscar Serrano to promote access to information through investigative reporting and judicial litigation, using an online platform to distribute the information. CPIPR works on the assumption that the practice of journalism in traditional media is marked by a pattern where investigative journalism is increasingly less visible, due to political, economic and editorial pressure. Since the exercise of investigative journalism is closely connected with the strengthening of democracy, CPIPR sees itself as an instrument of transparency required of public and private practices that relate to the public interest.

Cidade Democrática

Rodrigo Luna, the founder of Cidade Democrática (Democratic City), observed that when citizens complained about their city's problems they typically blamed those problems on 'others'. He realised that there was not enough communication across different demographic communities about the issues a city faces. After learning about online technologies and the possibilities of collaborative websites, he decided to create a site with the goal of being an open space so that people could point out problems, propose solutions and generally share their opinions about their own city. In October 2009, Cidade Democrática was inaugurated by the Seva Institute, an NGO based in São Paulo, with a platform that enables citizens, organisations and government institutions to comment on problems and propose solutions on a variety of issues related to their city. The content published on Cidade Democrática is organised by category, user-defined tags, city and neighbourhood.

Registered users can: 1) document problems and propose solutions; 2) support proposals created by other users; 3) comment, question and discuss problems and proposals; 4) publicise a proposal and/or problem by email; 5) create a profile to follow particular topics and places of interest. Despite its short time in existence, the site already has already yielded some results. For example, a discussion about the city of Jundiaí, which pointed out that there was no public hearing to discuss the municipality's Master Plan, led City Hall officials to schedule a public audience in 2010.

CIPER Chile

Centro de Investigación e Información Periodística (CIPER, Centre of Journalistic Investigation and Information) is an online journalism research and information centre focused on reporting and investigative journalism. All reports are published exclusively online, and CIPER relies on social networks to disseminate their content. CIPER's journalists often base their reporting on information sourced through online platforms. Many of its stories are replicated by traditional media.

Congresso Aberto

Congresso Aberto (Open Congress) tracks, visualises and analyses official data from Brazil's Congress. The objective is to provide official data in a more accessible way in order to promote greater transparency in Brazil's Congress. It also includes academic research and basic statistics about the behaviour of politicians, such as their voting records. The founders have had problems sustaining the site's content because they cannot easily access data, which is not centralised on the congressional website. Cesar Zucco, one of the founders of the initiative, says, 'We have to search the information from all the government's sites. We hope that when Brazil has a freedom of information law, we can more easily access the data that we need. Our idea is that the basic activities of the site will be automated, and that nobody will need to update it. Our effort would be in favour of increasing the amount of information and to improve our analysis of it in Congresso Aberto.'

Congreso Visible

The University of the Andes is the leading academic institution in Colombia. Its project Congreso Visible was started in 1998 by a group of academics and students concerned with the deteriorating performance of Congress and its members. It began with a public campaign called 'Visible Candidates', which provided information about the profiles and curricula vitae of candidates before the 1998 congressional elections. Once the Congress was elected, Candidatos Visibles became Congreso Visible, an initiative to provide citizens with timely, accurate information from a non-partisan source. More than a decade after its creation, it has evolved into a watchdog of all activities related to the Congress, and its work is recognised nationally and internationally as a leading model of parliamentary accountability and transparency to help inform voters. It provides information about members of Congress, political parties and legislative activities. It includes nearly 2,000 profiles of members of Congress and aspiring candidates, 5,614 legislative documents and almost 1,133 voting records.

Cuidemos el Voto

Mexico officially transitioned to democracy in 2000, when the long-ruling PRI party lost to the PAN's Vicente Fox. The role of Mexican NGOs, as well as the independent electoral commission, was essential to this transition. Ten years later, civil society continues to play an essential role in Mexico's political landscape. But how clean are Mexican elections today? In advance of the 2009 contest, Oscar Salazar and Andres Lajous set out to answer this question, partnering with local CSOs and university students to implement and publicise an Ushahidi-based election monitoring project. Cuidemos el Voto split reports into two categories: those from the public at large, which required administrative approval to be published, and those from official election monitors, which where published immediately. After monitoring the presidential elections, Cuidemos el Voto established follow-ups of the project for each state to monitor local elections as well.

Dinero y Política

Dinero y Política, an initiative of the Argentinean Poder Ciudadano Foundation (Citizen Power Foundation), consists of an interactive database and wiki that aggregate political finance data in real time from 23 different provincial databases and track 713 recognised political parties (414 of which participate as members of 97 different coalitions). Political parties must disclose the origins and destinations of their funds, including a list of private donors, on an annual basis. The information must be published in a national newspaper and on a website. Ten days before an election, political groups must present a report outlining their public and private donations and details of their campaign expenses to the Electoral Body.[10] When they do so, each province uploads a PDF document of the information on its individual website. Before Dinero y Política, it would have been necessary to download 23 different documents and hand-check each one to understand the relationship between money and politics. The existing system did not allow for comparisons, data sorting or any type of analysis. Now, however, what formerly would have taken over a week to analyse can be done immediately. Dinero y Política has developed new modes of visualising numbers and categories to provide more effective tools to analyse the financial panorama of politics in Argentina. Its platform has made this information accessible for the average citizen, who can quickly visualise and understand which corporations fund which candidates.

Eleitor 2010

Eleitor 2010 is an Ushahidi-based project set up to monitor Brazil's October 2010 presidential elections. Though the elections prompted a number of online initiatives, including Google's Eleições Brasil 2010 website, aimed at collecting all of these initiatives in a single place, Eleitor 2010 was the first and only project in Brazil to monitor elections via crowd-sourcing.

Excelências

Excelências (Excellences) is a website created in 2006 by the NGO Transparência Brasil (Transparency Brazil), which has been fighting corruption in the Brazilian government since 2000. It publishes news and reports about corruption, and offers a database with public information about 2,368 parliamentarians in the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies, 27 state legislatures and 26 municipal legislatures, with the objective of promoting transparency. It provides data on donations, absences in the assemblies, spending of parliamentary funds, bills, lawsuits and other matters. Additionally, the website offers reports on the budgets and the costs of Brazilian legislatures. It is used especially by journalists, who use data in their reporting to criticise parliamentarians or request information about legislative houses. In 2006 the project won the Esso Journalism Award for the best contribution to the press.

Guatemala Visible

Organised crime and clandestine groups in Guatemala historically exert vast influence over some of the most important governmental institutions: the courts, the general prosecutor's office, the Government Accountability Office and the Office of the Public Defender. Inspired by Carlos Castresana, the Spanish prosecutor appointed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to head the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), and following the model of Elección Visible in Colombia, a group of young entrepreneurs founded Guatemala Visible, an informative platform aggregating updates on the selection processes of the courts, the General Prosecutor, the Accountant General, the Public Defender and the Guatemalan Ombudsman. Guatemala Visible aims to increase the accountability of key officials by encouraging more public oversight of the nomination and selection processes, providing a centralised source of information on the process and broadcasting nominating committee sessions online.

Quien Paga Manda

Quien Paga Manda focuses on consumer rights and customer service. It allows users to report good and bad experiences with businesses in Costa Rica. It also serves as a bridge between customers and businesses, many of which try to address complaints quickly, and a source for news and information related to customer rights. Quien Paga Manda was founded by Hazel Feigenblatt, Media Projects Director at Global Integrity and an award-winning investigative journalist and former Washington correspondent.[11]

Reclamos

Reclamos collects consumer complaints in order to promote transparency in the public and private sectors. The project analyses the complaints it receives in order to publish consumer satisfaction rankings for Chilean companies and government agencies. Reclamos also distributes these complaints to the traditional media.

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[10] Electoral National Chamber in Argentina, http://www.pjn.gov.ar/.

[11] Disclosure: Hazel Feigenblatt is also the editorial advisor for the Technology for Transparency Network and a co-author of this report.

Vota Inteligente

Vota Inteligente aims to use technology provide Chilean citizens with more information about their elected officials. Vota Inteligente 'scrapes' data from the websites of Chile's Senate and House of Deputies in order to more effectively gather and present information about representatives, political parties and legislative bills. There is also a section called 'Informed Citizen', which provides contextualisation and analysis of the large flow of information that is added to the website every week. The website's archive presents access to all collected data and documents. It includes a glossary, source list, document library, multimedia library and collection of legal and legislative documents. Vota Inteligente depends on Facebook and Twitter to sustain interaction with its users. The team has also started a 'webinar' series where invited guests use streaming video to present a particular topic to anyone who shows interest.

Vote na Web

Vote na Web promotes transparency in Brazil's Congress by translating legislative bills in a simple and objective way. Besides simply monitoring bills, users can interact with the political landscape by symbolically voting for or against each bill. The result of their votes is displayed in simple and easy to understand graphics. Users can compare their votes amongst themselves, and also with those of politicians. Project coordinator Priscila Marcenes says, 'Only people who are already politicised can use government data as it is currently shown: visually unattractive, and in a very complicated and bureaucratic language. We created the site to work with data to promote a form of transparency that is accessible to all citizens without exclusion.' The project leaders struggle to keep up with the time-consuming task of translating bills into a simple and accessible language, and also to simply keep up with the volume of legislation that appears weekly in Congress.[12]

Middle East and North Africa

Ishki

In Jordan, like in most societies, conversations among friends and family frequently turn into complaint circles with long lists of frustrations directed at local and national governments, unresponsive banks, damaged roads and corrupt officials. In September 2008 four Jordanian technologists developed Ishki.com to serve as a complaint brokerage that collects and organises complaints from local citizens about the public and private sector. Their goal was to eventually expand the mission of the project so that the complaints would lead to conversations, solutions and finally to better policies and greater responsiveness by companies and government officials. The project was active for about a year, but co-founder Waheed Al-Barghouthi says that it had a difficult time attracting new users and no complaints have been submitted to the site since the third quarter of 2009. Al-Barghouthi blames the site's inactivity on the fact that its founders did not invest time or energy in spreading awareness about the project. He also wonders if some potential users might feel hesitant about attaching their names to public complaints about powerful institutions and individuals.

Our Budget

In Israel, Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai and his Tel Aviv 1 party have essentially ruled the city without any major opposition for the past 12 years. Slowly, however, that is beginning to change, thanks to a new political movement called City for All. The local movement was founded just two over years ago, in early 2008. It had no affiliations with national-level political parties and was more or less a loose coalition of good governance and environmental sustainability activists from the left, right and centre. Two of those early activists were Noam Hoffstater and Alon Padan. They say that in order for the opposition movement to better understand the policies of the ruling party, they needed more information about how the ruling party was spending its money. And although the municipal government did publish its annual budget – as was required by law – it did so in PDF format, which does not enable citizens (or computer programs) to easily analyse the data. Hoffstater and Padan created Our Budget to put the budget into a spreadsheet format and to analyse it using a computer program so that Tel Aviv residents had a clearer idea of how their government was spending taxpayers' money.

Sharek961

Sharek961 is an Ushahidi-based election monitoring project focused on Lebanon's 2010 elections. Preparation for the project began just three weeks before the election – two weeks of which were spent on implementing the platform, leaving only one week to publicise its efforts. The project received only 200 reports. Despite this short time frame, the project's founders were able to translate the Ushahidi platform into Arabic, enabling those who did not speak English both to report and receive news in their native language. The project also raised interest in other countries in the Middle East; the founders were contacted by non-profit organisations in Jordan, Egypt and Iraq interested in using the localised platform they developed.

South Asia

Association for Democratic Reforms

Started in 1999 by a group of professors from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) is a non-political, non-partisan initiative focused on improving governance and strengthening democracy in India via electoral and political reforms. ADR operates MyNeta.info, a platform that provides information about electoral candidates to the public. Citizens can access the platform online, via text message or by calling a hotline. ADR undertook a countrywide SMS and helpline campaign during Lok Sabha (lower house of the national parliament) elections in 2009.

Accountability Initiative

Accountability Initiative is an Indian organisation focused on two main aspects: research and creating innovative tools to promote transparency and accountability, mainly regarding government expenditure in public delivery systems. The organisation collects data from government websites, where it is often presented in an unclear way, and reorganises it into a searchable, sortable database. An 'Expenditure Track' tool pulls data from 15–20 key government websites and converts it into clear fact sheets. The website is the main tool for disseminating information and placing it in the public domain and, as of October 2010, it was working on the development of a crowd-sourcing platform to enable field researchers to engage in real-time data entry. The website also has a blog where people can engage in accountability issues and connect with Facebook to generate discussion and debate. Accountability Initiative also maintains a 'document library' (an information clearing-house that pulls together both government and NGO reports, creating an easily searchable database) and publishes its own research in 'Briefs', which non-academic and non-specialist audiences can access. These initiatives are attempting to start a sustained discussion on the issue of accountability among real stakeholders.

Centre for Monitoring Election Violence

The Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) is Sri Lanka's leading organisation in reporting election-related violence and voting irregularities. The organisation's approach has been to gather information from ground zero, cross-verify and 'name and shame' candidates and political parties involved in any kind of malpractice, including violence, by publishing detailed information to help voters make informed decisions. CMEV works around the clock during election times, constantly verifying and publishing reports as they are submitted by CMEV election monitors. It uses a combination of maps, audio podcasts and blog posts to stimulate debate and inspire pubic interest, while archiving information for further use in research and review.

CGNet Swara

CGNet Swara gives voice to the tribal population of Chhattisgarh, India by providing them a voice-based portal where they can report local issues using a landline or mobile phone. The reported content is reviewed by moderators and appropriate submissions are published for playback on the audio channel. Subscribers are alerted via SMS that new content is ready. To listen to the content, listeners send a missed call to the system - which then calls back and leads the caller through a simple interactive voice response system, allowing them to listen to the latest news/stories. The audio content can also be found on the CGNet Swara website for web browsers.

Jagoree

Jagoree is a non-partisan platform that aims to enable the youth of Dhaka, Bangladesh, to engage with and participate in the political process through informed analysis, advocacy and activism. Jagoree uses online technology such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs, both in English and Bangla. It is also working on two new online initiatives. The first is the Jagorometer, which aims to track the promises made by the Awami League government in its election manifesto (titled

'Charter for Change') prior to the 2008 general elections. The data for Jagorometer is largely based on the Jagoree core team's analysis of articles in major Bangla and English newspapers. The second initiative is the Digital Bangladesh Tracker, which aims to monitor the country's progress toward achieving the vision of a Digital Bangladesh.

Kiirti

Kiirti is a platform where any individual or CSO can make a complaint or raise an issue by telephone or by using the website. That issue is then tracked, categorised, mapped and forwarded on to authorities. The issues can range from cleanliness to environment to sexual harassment. Kiirti enables aggregation of a number of issues in a single place so that they can be tracked and collaborated upon by anyone interested. It uses the Ushahidi platform to aggregate and visualise submitted reports. It also maps and aggregates partner organisations that deal with civic complaints at the local level throughout India. It is a way to aggregate and integrate data from across platforms onto a single map that users can filter by location and topic.

Mumbai Votes

Mumbai Votes is an attempt to measure the performance of Indian politicians against their promises. The project's website provides a page for each political party that includes its self-published manifestos and tracks the number of elected representatives, stated party manifestos, and any alliances with other parties. The site also includes a profile for each elected official that contains a political biography, voting records, related videos and articles and a system of red, orange and green flags to indicate poor, mediocre and satisfactory performance.

Praja

Praja, an Indian organisation that describes itself as a 'social networking site for people interested in local urban civic issues', collects citizen input on what civic issues matter the most to them, encourages participants to help develop solutions to these issues and brings these issues to the attention of government authorities. Praja's website tracks discussions, proposals, specific tasks and events related to specific issues – one recent example was a campaign for a commuter railway service in Bangalore. Specific problems and their proposed solutions are then reported to the relevant government authorities, and offline communication with these authorities is posted online so that citizens can see what progress is being made. The organisation is also spearheading an open data project in Karnataka State. The project is still in the pilot phase, but the goal is to define and collect government datasets, make them available in open formats and encourage citizen development of applications using this data.

Vote BD

Vote BD is a web-based platform from SHUJAN (Shushashoner Janya Nagorik, or Citizens for Good Governance) that tracks, compiles and disseminates information about politicians and electoral candidates in Bangladesh. The website was the first in Bangladesh to make voter registration records accessible to citizens so that they could check the presence/absence of their names and any errors in the listing. This enabled citizens to take necessary steps to ensure that their names and correct details were entered in the list, thereby making them eligible to cast their vote in the various elections.

Southeast Asia

ALTSEAN Burma

ALTSEAN Burma is a network of human rights and social justice organisations, journalists, academics and activists. The organisation's 2010 Election Watch initiative presents a list of seven 'key indicators for free and fair elections.' Each indicator has several sub-sections (for example, the 'election campaigns' indicator has the sub-section 'misuse of state funds and resources'). Each sub-section has a related list of developments that ALTSEAN has collected from existing media reports. ALTSEAN makes a body of information that is otherwise scattered across multiple sources available on a single website.

Blogwatch

According to a 2009 study by Yahoo and Nielsen, 42% of the Philippines' estimated 20 million internet users read blogs as a primary source of news – a higher percentage than both print newspapers and television.[12] Aware of their increasing influence, a group of bloggers initiated Blogwatch to cover under-reported stories that traditional media do not cover. The Blogwatch team believed that mass media, which have often been criticised during past elections for their superficial coverage, have a great responsibility to produce accurate reports on the political and technical aspect of the May 2010 elections in order to keep both the process and political parties held accountable. 'The better the calibre of media coverage, the more credible the election results will be,' said Blogwatch project editor Noemi Lardizabal-Dado. Though it proved challenging and time-consuming to make appointments with political candidates in order to interview and host discussions, Blogwatch persevered to bring nearly all candidates (seven out of nine candidates were interviewed) to a platform of civic discussion. This did not take place in traditional media.

Penang Watch

Acknowledging the inefficiency of the traditional methods of lodging complaints through letters, telephone calls or personal contact where the complaint might not reach the right person, residents of Penang, Malaysia started Penang Watch to make sure that local complaints are effectively dealt with. Penang Watch encourages residents to submit their complaints through its online channel. The submitted complaints are first forwarded to the appropriate authorities; if no response is given, Penang Watch sends a reminder. In cases where the complaint is unresolved due to lack of accountability, a 'name and shame' approach is employed to push for complaint settlement.

Pera Natin 'to!

Pera Natin 'to! (It's Our Money!) is an initiative of the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project. The project encourages Filipino citizens to use text, photos and videos to report occasions when they are asked for bribes. The goal is to 'put under the public spotlight important issues such as control and management of the nation's public wealth – and keep them there'. The project engages in investigative reporting based on these crowd-sourced submissions.

Sithi

Sithi, which means 'rights' in Khmer, is the first Cambodian human rights portal that aims to create a single map-based database of reports of human rights violations with contributions from human rights activists, organisations and ordinary citizens from across the country. Registered users can submit reports under a variety of sub-categories including judicial fairness, land tenure and freedom of expression. The project was initiated by the Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR) with the aim of raising awareness about human rights abuses through collaborative advocacy. The site also aims to incorporate relevant laws, including the constitution, land law and human rights conventions, and to build a directory of NGOs, donor agencies and media.

VoteReportPH

VoteReportPH, a project of the Filipino Computer Professionals' Union, came about to inform and educate Filipino voters, mobilise them to advocate for meaningful reforms to ensure more transparency and report any voting irregularities on election day. VoteReportPH uses Ushahidi to enable voters to report electoral fraud and irregularities via text message, e-mail, Twitter and an online form. The site has received nearly 700 reports.

Former Soviet Union

Democrator.ru

Democrator.ru seeks to empower citizens' ability to enact change by helping to discuss, vote for and send petitions and inquiries to government bodies. Democrator.ru works by allowing citizens to post an initiative (a petition, plea or an official inquiry). Others comment on it, propose amendments and finally vote. The final petition is reviewed by a team of lawyers, then sent to the appropriate government authority. Democrator.ru publishes the entire contents of its correspondence with government authorities. Government responses are monitored, and the project publicly identifies the most and least responsive authorities. The range of issues varies widely – two examples are a petition to build a bridge over a railroad and a petition to stop construction of a road through a forest near Moscow.

Golos

On the eve of Russia's 2004 presidential elections, election observation organisation Golos ('Voice') created a hotline to provide information about the elections and to collect reports of electoral fraud. The hotline allowed citizens to call in for information and to report anything suspicious. After its initial success during the 2004 elections, Golos decided to extend the project by uploading information submitted via the calls to a website, the URL of which matched the hotline number (http://www.88003333350.ru/). In 2009 and 2010, the hotline collected reports on eight different local, regional and national elections; nearly 2,000 reports have been submitted so far. Golos also operates a 'Fact Bank' that documents recorded, proven cases of electoral fraud. The bank includes court documents and audio and video recordings.

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[12] 'Yahoo-Nielsen Net Index 2009 Philippines,' http://tonyocruz.com/?p=2073.

Save.kg

Save.kg is a website that used Ushahidi to monitor electoral problems during the Kyrgyz Republic's constitutional referendum in June 2010, which took place following massive ethnic conflict (the 'Osh riots') in the southern part of the country that ended up with the overthrow of the government. The website worked with electoral observers located at polling stations throughout the country, who made reports and reviewed those submitted by ordinary citizens, which would be marked as verified if approved by the observers. Save.kg received over 400 reports during the referendum, but it concluded that there was no reason to think that the referendum was unfair. Save.kg initially hoped to use Ushahidi to monitor the riots, but by the time the platform was ready the riots had ended. Its organisers hope also to use it in the future to monitor civic issues.

TakTakTak.ru

TakTakTak.ru was created by a group of Siberian journalists and a small web development company as an online meeting place for parties interested in social change. The creators intend their project to help people self-educate and to create what they describe as a 'crowd-sourced citizen survival guide'. Taktaktak.ru, an accidental name for the project, offers everyone a platform to submit a story, a claim or a problem. Most importantly, users offer solutions (called 'algorithms') to overcome most typical issues. 'The medium of direct engagement' – as Viktor Ukechev, one of the project's founders, calls it – is supposed to fill the gap between journalists, citizens and civil society activists to provide a new format for the relationship with government: the control of society over the authorities, something unimaginable in Russia for centuries.

Sub-saharan Africa

African Elections Project

The African Elections Project is a country-specific tool for election coverage and the provision of election information. Election portals for each country aggregate election-related news articles, blog posts, photographs, events and editorials. The project first operated in 2008 in Ghana, followed later by Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea in 2009. By March 2010, it had launched in ten countries, including Malawi, Namibia, Botswana, Niger, Guinea, Mozambique, Mauritania and Togo. The project focuses on technology training for senior editors, journalists and reporters. The organisers are also developing an election guide for journalists and CSOs and a mobile application to encourage citizens to engage in election monitoring.

Amatora mu Mahoro

Amatora mu Mahoro (Peaceful Elections) used Ushahidi to monitor the country's 2010 elections (ongoing between May and September 2010), the first since the end of Burundi's civil war. Instead of opening the platform to the public, as with the better-known instances of Ushahidi in Kenya, Amatora mu Mahoro limited participation to a smaller group of 430 trained election monitors stationed throughout the country. Rather than publishing monitors' reports immediately, the project's staff called the monitors to ask for more information about each report before posting it to the website. Approximately 1,500 reports were submitted.

Budget Tracking Tool

The Budget Tracking Tool is a system that enables Kenyan citizens to examine the national development budget in detail, holding their elected officials accountable for the development projects they have promised. The project focuses specifically on the Constituencies Development Fund, through which members of parliament allocate money for various projects. Organiser Philip Thigo explains, 'That money is supposed to be spent in a democratic manner, meaning that the constituents or the communities have to be consulted.' The Budget Tracking Tool provides information on how much money has been allocated and for which projects, allowing Kenyans to see whether members of parliament are following through on their promises.

Bungeni Parliamentary and Legislative Information System

The Africa i-Parliament Action Plan is an Africa-wide project of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs implemented to empower African parliaments to better fulfill their democratic functions by supporting their efforts to become open, participatory, knowledge-based and learning organisations. In fulfilling this mandate the project focuses on three initiatives, one of which is the Bungeni Parliamentary and Legislative Information System. This project, which is not yet operational, aims help with the drafting, managing, consolidating and publishing of legislative documents.

Maji Matone

Access to clean water is a major challenge in Tanzania, where rural waterpoints frequently break down and are not repaired quickly. The government has recently shown an interest in improving the situation, increasing funding to support rural water access by 400% since 2006. This increase was prompted in part by surveys conducted by WaterAid, an international NGO focused on access to clean water. WaterAid developed a mapping tool to collect information about rural waterpoints in different African countries. In Tanzania, the government has pledged to create a National Rural Water Supply Infrastructure Monitoring System, based on this tool, to monitor citizens' access to water. This system will include the development of a simple, mobile phone-based application to be used by district water engineers, who are responsible for repairing broken rural waterpoints. The engineers will use the application to report on the status of these waterpoints, helping with monitoring efforts. Daraja, a CSO based in southern Tanzania, has decided to 'piggyback' on this government project, making the communication of information about rural waterpoints a two-way street. Daraja is currently running a three-year programme called Maji Matone (Raising the Water Pressure). The programme has three components: making information about Tanzania's rural water supply available to citizens; allowing citizens to send text messages to a central number to report breakdowns in the water supply, then forwarding that information to relevant authorities and the media; and partnering with the media to bring more attention to these breakdowns, in order to put pressure on the government to respond.

Mars Group Kenya

Mars Group Kenya is a leadership, governance, accountability and media watchdog organisation and the owner of www.marsgroupkenya.org, one of Kenya's largest governance information web portals. Mars Group is an internet-based organisation with offices in Nairobi, monitoring and tracking Kenyan public institutions and offices, including the government, media and civil society. Its mission is to create the largest digital database of governance information in Kenya for archiving and indexing. The system has over two terabytes of governance information on its websites, has about 8,000 registered subscribers and has achieved over 20 million hits since its launch. Mars Group was critical in raising awareness about an unjustified increase in remuneration in Kenya's ninth parliament in 2007, which was confirmed by an independent parliamentary investigation. It is also an important part of the Kenyan civil society initiative that has been helping expose extra-judicial assassinations by the Kenyan police since 2007.

Mzalendo

Mzalendo, which means 'patriot' in Kiswahili, began at the end of 2005 with the mission to 'keep an eye on the Kenyan Parliament'. Co-founder Ory Okolloh explains that the idea for the project came about after the website for Kenya's parliament was shut down following protests by some MPs who were embarrassed about their CVs being published online. The initial goal of Mzalendo was to provide the basic information that otherwise would have been available on Kenya's official parliamentary website. The parliamentary website is now back online – and now includes an electoral map, expanded profiles for each MP that include bills raised and questions asked in Parliament, and profiles for each of Kenya's political parties – but Okolloh feels that the project still has an important role to play in using online tools to hold Kenyan MPs more accountable. Mzalendo's founders hope that by the 2012 general election the organisation will have enough content to produce voter 'cheat sheets' that rank incumbents by their participation and performance in parliament.

Sudan Vote Monitor

Sudan held its first multi-party elections in over two decades on 11–13 April 2010. The run-up to the elections was rocky: the elections, originally scheduled to be held in March and April 2009, were been delayed multiple times, and most opposition parties boycotted them, fearing possible vote rigging. In addition to testing the country's democratic process, the election also served as an indicator of how peacefully a referendum on independence for Southern Sudan, scheduled for January 2011, might run. Sudan Vote Monitor used Ushahidi to build a system where Sudanese citizens could report anomalies – violence, voter harassment, vote tampering, illegal campaigning – as well as what went well in the elections.

Uchaguzi

Uchaguzi is a follow-up project to the first instance of Ushahidi. Ushahidi was developed and launched during the 2007–2008 post-election violence in Kenya. The goal of Uchaguzi was to monitor Kenya's 2010 constitutional referendum. Months prior to the elections, Ushahidi's organisers began talking to potential partners in the Uchaguzi project, including the Social Development Network (SODNET) and the Constitution and Reform Education Consortium (CRECO). CRECO trained 500 official election monitors, and Ushahidi trained them on how to report incidents to the Uchaguzi platform via text message. CRECO also had a partnership with the Interim Independent Election Commission (IIEC): when electoral issues were reported to Ushahidi either by the official CRECO monitors or by members of the public, these issues were reported to the IIEC. Uchaguzi received over 1,500 reports during the referendum, some of which were forwarded to the IIEC for action. One example was that of a photo sent by monitors to Uchaguzi. Significant campaigning had been done using the colour associations of green for 'yes' and red for 'no.' The photo was of a poster hung at two polling stations in which these colours were reversed. The error was reported to the authorities and the IIEC removed the posters.

Ujima

The Ujima Project, is a centralised online repository of datasets including USAID and DFID spending, information on lobbyists hired by foreign governments and organisations to influence US foreign policy, data from the African Development Bank, information on health spending by the Global Fund, and information on weapons sales. This data is usually easily available in the developed world, but people in the developing world may have a harder time accessing it. The Ujima Project's goal is to make this information available to citizens, particularly journalists, in Africa. Users can browse through the data, sorting and searching by country, year, amount and other variables. Some of the datasets are accompanied by interactive graphics, for example one that lets users compare total USAID disbursements to different African countries. The Ujima Project recently released an application that lets iPhone users browse its data.

Annex II. Commonly used tools

Data visualisation and navigation

Data visualisation and navigation tools are among the most popular technological tools we encountered in our research. From producing simple charts to generating graphs on the fly, these tools are used to analyse data, including government statistics (often buried in spreadsheets, tables or text), budgetary information, aid allocations, and citizen-submitted reports and to help make it available in an easily searchable interactive way.

In Chile, CIPER uses data visualisation as a story-telling tool, with a map of where and how different types of robberies – including those 'for intimidation' and those accompanied by violence – take place in Santiago.[13] Argentinean initiative Dinero y Política offers interactive visualisations that reveal which organisations and individuals have donated to a specific candidate's campaign. Dinero y Política uses the free data visualisation software Many Eyes to power its interactive platform and aggregates real time official data by synchronising its databases with the servers of official electoral authorities.

Some data navigation tools rely little, if at all, on visualisation techniques such as graphs and charts. In Kenya, the Budget Tracking Tool allows citizens to submit a text message containing their geographic district and receive a reply containing the amount of money earmarked for various development projects in that district. Citizens can also visit the project's website to see a map and a district-by-district breakdown of allocated funds, but the information is accessible via text message even to those who lack internet access. In Russia, Golos offers a searchable database of documented cases of electoral fraud. Users can browse by election, year or region to find descriptions of the cases as well as official court documents.

A number of projects are creating mashups of data and maps, helping people make sense of data in a geographic context. Vote na Web in Brazil uses color-coded maps and bar charts to show users how the official votes on legislative bills match up against the votes of citizens who have visited the website, helping users gauge how public opinion is or is not reflected in the choices of legislators. Ushahidi-based projects, including Sudan Vote Monitor, Cuidemos el Voto in Mexico, Eleitor 2010 in Brazil, Vote Report PH in the Philippines, and Amatora mu Mahoro in Burundi, plotted reports they received from citizens and election monitors on maps and timelines to provide a picture of elections happening in those countries. In Sri Lanka, the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence provided similar maps, using an independently developed platform based on Google Maps instead of Ushahidi.

Data collection

A vast amount of data is produced today by governments, researchers and others. While open data initiatives are slowly beginning to make headway in the developed world,[14] in many developing countries governments are unwilling or lack the capacity to put data online in easily accessible formats. Ethan Zuckerman, a senior researcher at the Berkman Center for internet and Society, pointed out that in some countries, data may not even exist:

My simplest example for this would be years ago, talking with the government in Senegal and trying to plan an intervention based on electronic property records… what we ended up discovering is that before we built an electronic property records system we actually have to build a property records system. It wasn't clear that that data existed in paper form and that to build the sort of government data transparency system we needed, in many cases we would have to do the basic data collection.[15]

In addition to taking non-searchable datasets and publishing them in searchable formats, technology for transparency and accountability initiatives can help supplement the data that does exist by facilitating the collection of information from citizens. In some cases, this information may support mainstream efforts. In Tanzania, researchers from the Research on Expectations in Agricultural Production project are using mobile phone surveys to help collect economic data from rural households.[16] Also in Tanzania, Maji Matone is connecting District Water Engineers, responsible for repairing waterpoints that break down, with citizens who can report breakdowns via text message. In Kibera, Kenya, a team of activists is using handheld GPS systems and open source software to build a map of a community that has been highly serviced by development agencies but of which no extensive map previously existed.[17]

In other cases, data provided by citizens using online and

[13] CIPER Chile, 'Mapa del robo: Dónde y cómo se roba en Santiago [Robbery Map: Where and how robberies take place in Santiago]'. http://ciperchile.cl/wp-content/uploads/multimedia/multimedia_delincuencia/portada_delincuencia.html

[14] Geoff Livingston, 'How Open Data Applications are Improving Government,' *Mashable*, May 28, 2010, http://mashable.com/2010/05/28/open-data-government/.

[15] Ethan Zuckerman, as quoted in Becky Hogge, 'Open Data Study,' Transparency and Accountability Initiative, May 2010, http://www.soros.org/initiatives/information/focus/communication/articles_publications/publications/open-data-study-20100519/open-data-study-100519.pdf.

[16] Brian Dillon, 'Using Mobile Phones to Conduct Research in Developing Countries,' Cornell University, February 2010, http://www.edi-africa.com/docs/Dillon_MobilePhoneSurveys.pdf.

[17] Rebekah Heacock, 'Map Kibera,' Technology for Transparency Network, http://transparency.globalvoicesonline.org/project/map-kibera.

mobile tools may fill an information gap, either by moving more quickly than governments are able to move – as has been the case with the recent earthquake in Haiti[18] – or by providing a grassroots perspective that governments are unable or unwilling to collect, for example through civil society-driven election monitoring efforts.

In Chile, Reclamos uses a simple web-based form to enable citizens to submit a complaint against public and private sector actors and recommend improvements on their services and products. Ijanaagraha in India and Penang Watch in Malaysia also use web forms, through which citizens who want to lodge a complaint about a civic issue can enter text, upload pictures, and categorise their particular grievances (Penang Watch lets citizens mark their complaints as 'Worst of the Week'; citizens can also submit issues that have been 'Successfully Resolved').

Mobile phones are prominent in data collection efforts. As explained, one of the most common examples is Ushahidi, a platform that, depending on its configuration in a specific instance, can receive citizen reports via text messaging. Organisers who want to use Ushahidi to collect text message reports must set up a specific phone number or arrange for a short code – a number, usually three to eight digits long, set up exclusively to receive SMS (text) and MMS (picture) messages (for example, the short code for Twitter in the United States is 40404).

Depending on the particular arrangement with a mobile service provider, these short codes can be free to use. In some cases, however, establishing these codes can be difficult, either due to technical problems or political or financial resistance from phone companies. The founders of Sudan Vote Monitor described obtaining a short code to receive reports during the 2010 elections as their 'only serious challenge,' while the founders of Eleitor 2010 in Brazil decided to forgo establishing a short code due to the costs involved.

Other platforms are offering secured channels for informants to leak or make available to the public sensitive information. One example is Transparency Libya, a website similar to Wikileaks. The project publishes files on political, judiciary, managerial, and financial corruption along with issues related to abuse of power, sexual harassment by government officials and, in one case, documentation of Colonel Gaddafi spending time with scantily clad women during Ramadan. Anyone can submit information to the site, provided they support their claims with documents or other evidence. The organisation's staff assess each uploaded document before publishing to weed out obviously false information.

Online and mobile technology can enable data collection either through open crowd-sourcing (i.e. putting out an open call for information to a large group of people), from trained volunteers or workers (often called 'bounded crowd-sourcing') or from a combination of both.[19] Open crowd-sourcing can drive large numbers of reports, as anyone who hears about the project can contribute. This is the method

used by Pera Natin 'to!, an initiative of the Philippine Public Transparency Reporting Project. The project encourages Filipino citizens to use text, photos and videos to report occasions when they are asked for bribes. The goal is to 'put under the public spotlight important issues such as control and management of the nation's public wealth – and keep them there'.[20] One month after its launch, the project's organisers described the myriad responses as follows:

You have sent us a variety of photos – some showing private use of government vehicles (those with red license plates) and others showing bridges advertising the names of public officials. Parties supporting one election candidate in Mindanao have publicly threatened to report to us other candidates they claim are abusing public projects. We have received requests from a government employee to investigate every public project awarded in excess of PhP 1 million (a huge endeavor) and other requests to investigate the wealth of officials who live in a specific tower block in Makati. We have been asked to investigate the wealth of a mayor in Ilocos Norte and public projects in Davao del Sur. We have received reports and requests to look into alleged over-taxation in Muntinlupa as well as detailed allegations against a senior police officer with regard to overseas contracts surrounding electronic surveillance systems.[21]

While the amount of data that can be collected through open crowdsourcing is impressive, the description above highlights some of the problems with this method: reports can be hard to verify, and the openness of the platform may invite biased or even false or ill intentioned reports. Bounded crowdsourcing may help control these issues. The Amatora mu Mahoro (Peaceful Elections) project in Burundi is an example of this.

Amatora mu Mahoro used Ushahidi to monitor the country's 2010 elections (held between May and September 2010), the first since the end of Burundi's civil war. Instead of opening the platform to the public, as with the better-known instances of Ushahidi in Kenya, Amatora mu Mahoro limited participation to a smaller group of 430 trained election monitors stationed throughout the country. Rather than publishing monitors' reports immediately, the project's staff called the monitors to ask for more information about each report before posting it to the website.

Nearly half of the projects we studied engage in some form of data collection from citizens. These initiatives include online forms to submit reports on bribes or updates on elections, text-to-report systems on mobile phones, and online surveys or polls to get citizens' opinions on a particular issue.

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[18] Patrick Meier, 'Ushahidi and the Unprecedented Role of SMS in Disaster Response,' *Wired: Haiti Rewired*, February 23, 2010, http://haitirewired.wired.com/profiles/blogs/ushahidi-amp-the-unprecedented.

[19] Patrick Meier, 'Crisis Information and The End of Crowdsourcing,' *iRevolution*, December 17, 2009, https://irevolution.wordpress.com/2009/12/17/end-of-crowdsourcing-2/.

[20] Pera Natin 'to!, 'About the Project,'

http://www.transparencyreporting.net/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=46andItemid=61.

[21] Pera Natin 'to!, 'What you have been telling, sending and reporting to us so far,' April 20, 2010, http://www.transparencyreporting.net/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=78%3Awhat-you-have-been-telling-sending-and-reporting-to-us-so-farandcatid=25andItemid=61.

Connecting and engaging citizens via social media networks

While none of the projects we encountered used existing social media networks such as Facebook or Twitter as the main focus of their work, many used these networks to reach out to citizens and to keep followers apprised of updates in their work. Using these tools allows technology for transparency and accountability projects to connect with citizens who are already part of the online sphere but who may not have the time or inclination to visit a separate, dedicated project website.

The use of these tools varies widely across projects. While CIPER Chile is active on Twitter with more than 16,000 followers, Reclamos – which hosts more user-generated content than any other Chilean website – does not even have a Twitter account. Guatemala Visible has fewer than 500 followers on Twitter but nearly 8,000 on its Facebook profile. As the project's website is closed to comments, Facebook gives citizens a place to discuss the project's updates. In Brazil, Eleitor 2010 has fewer than 100 friends on Orkut, one of the country's most active social networks. In an interview with the TTN, the project's founders said that they were hoping to build an application to allow Brazilians to report election anomalies via Orkut but could not find a developer.

In Russia, where LiveJournal is among the most popular online communities, Golos reaches out to citizens via two LiveJournal accounts that post regular updates (more than 3,000 entries thus far). InMedia HK provides single-click 'share' buttons so that visitors can post its content on their social media profile pages (for example, their Facebook walls) when they see something they like. Congreso Visible has existed for more than a decade and is one of the best-established technology for transparency projects in Colombia, but its Twitter and Facebook accounts reach barely 1,000 followers.

Going mobile

Worldwide, three times as many people have access to mobile phones as to the internet.[22] In developing countries – whose populations make up 64 percent of the world's mobile phone users – the ratio is as high as five to one. Mobile phone use is growing more quickly in these countries than anywhere else in the world.

Using mobile phones – both smart phones such as the iPhone or the Android and text-and-talk-only 'dumb' phones – tends to be significantly cheaper than obtaining internet access in the developing world, and phones can be used even in places without electricity. Charging stations using car batteries or solar cells are commonplace; in 2009 two Kenyan students invented a way to charge mobile phones using a bicycle.[23]

Tools that operate exclusively on the internet ignore a huge group of potential users, but mobile platforms and applications exist that can help organisations reach this group. While mobile internet use via smart phones is steadily growing in the developing world, even the simplest text-and-talk-only phone can let citizens report problems and obtain information. With SMS text messaging, mobile phone users can communicate with websites and online databases. Some websites even allow users to fully participate via SMS: Twitter has established mobile phone short codes for more than 30 countries – including Nigeria, Haiti and Indonesia – that let users send and receive updates without needing to visit the website.[24]

The growing popularity of mobile phones in the developing world has prompted their use in a number of fields, ranging from health to agriculture. Farmers in Uganda are using mobile phones to track a crop disease that affects banana plantations;[25] mobile phones are connecting patients in rural India with specialists in urban centers to screen for cancer and other illnesses.[26]

Ushahidi, described above, is being used by a number of the projects we studied to collect citizen reports on elections via text messages. In Tanzania, Maji Matone enables citizens to report problems with rural waterpoints to the district water engineers responsible for fixing these problems. Both of these projects rely on SMS text messaging, but the voice aspect of mobile phones can also be used as a technology for transparency tool. In Chhattisgarh, India, CGNet Swara allows citizen reporters to call in and record a short news update. After moderators vet and publish the story, they alert subscribers via text message that a new report is available. Subscribers then call in to listen to the three most recent news stories.

Approximately one third of the projects we encountered use mobile phones in some way, most commonly by allowing citizens to submit or receive information via text message. CGNet Swara is the only voice-based mobile phone project we documented; the Ujima Project in East Africa recently released an application that lets iPhone users browse its data.[27]

Very few of the projects we documented report back to citizens via text or voice systems about the information they have collected. Aside from CGNet Swara, only the Budget Tracking Tool in Kenya and the African Elections Project allow citizens to access, rather than only report, information via non-internet-connected phones.

22 International Telecommunication Union, 'Measuring the Information Society: The ICT Development Index,' 2009, http://www.itu.int/net/pressoffice/backgrounders/general/pdf/5.pdf

23 'Pedal power for Kenya's mobiles,' *BBC News*, July 24, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8166196.stm

24 Twitter, 'Sending Twitter updates by text message,' http://support.twitter.com/entries/14226-how-to-find-your-twitter-short-long-code.less

25 Sarah Arnquist, 'In Rural Africa, a Fertile Market for Mobile Phones,' *New York Times*, October 5, 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/06/science/06uganda.html

26 Mohini Bhavsar, 'Sana Mobile: Connecting Big-City Care to Patients in Remote Villages,' September 17, 2010, http://mobileactive.org/case-studies/sana-mobile

27 'Ujima Project 1,' Mobile.Butterscotch, http://mobile.butterscotch.com/preview/801277/Ujima-Project

Traditional media

While mobile phone and internet use is growing through the world, in many of the countries in which the projects we documented operate, traditional media – both print and broadcast – are far more accessible to local populations. Eleitor 2010, Guatemala Visible, ALTSEAN Burma and Maji Matone are all in contact with local radio stations to help ensure that the information they collect and/or distribute online and via mobile phones is available to those who many not have access to the same technology. Daraja founder Ben Taylor described Maji Matone as follows:

We...achieve offline change by combining the use of relatively new media technology (mobile phones) with the older technology of radio, creating a way of collecting information from citizens across a wide area and concentrating that flow of information into radio broadcasts that pressure local government to take action. SMS technology is a simple way of collecting information from citizens on waterpoint breakdowns in rural areas, and radio is a simple way of converting that information into political pressure.

Many of the complaint-focused projects we documented, including Reclamos, Penang Watch, and Ishki, forward lists of unanswered complaints and responsible government agencies or corporations to the traditional media to increase publicity of these issues.

In order to help bridge the gap between the technology-savvy Kenyans driving Ushahidi and those who may be interested in participating but have never heard of the platform, the team behind Uchaguzi advertised the referendum monitoring project on the front page of the *Daily Nation*, one of Kenya's most popular newspapers.[28]

The ad, which explained how to report electoral offences via SMS text messaging and the Uchaguzi website, put the project in front of Kenyans who may never have otherwise heard of Ushahidi or Uchaguzi – Kenyans who have mobile phones and may want to contribute, but lack internet access.

Excelências, a project that works to make information about the Brazilian parliament available online (including donations to various politicians, the number of absences each politician has during assemblies and the legislative budget), has cultivated a relationship with the Brazilian press in order to maximise its audience. In an interview with the TTN, Fabiano Angelico, the project's coordinator, described the relationship as follows:

The media uses the information we provided in the project Excelências a lot. We were awarded a prize in 2006 by the most prestigious journalism group, Prêmio Esso-Excelências won 'best contribution to the press.' We have a strong alliance with the media.

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28 Ushahidi Twitter account, "Uchaguzi.co.ke ad shows up on the front page of the Nation," http://twitpic.com/2adqqk via https://twitter.com/#!/ushahidi/status/19999085747

Annex III. Team members

The Technology for Transparency Network

The Technology for Transparency Network is a project of Rising Voices, an organisation that aims to help bring new voices from new communities and speaking new languages to the global conversation by providing resources and funding to local groups reaching out to underrepresented communities. Rising Voices is an initiative of Global Voices, an international community of bloggers who report on blogs and citizen media from around the world.[29]

The goal of TTN is to explore the use of online and mobile technology outside of North America and Western Europe to increase transparency and accountability in both the public and private sectors. We are supported by the Transparency and Accountability Initiative, a donor collaborative that includes the Open Society Institute and the Omidyar Network.

TTN conducted two phases of research in 2010. In the first phase (February-May), eight researchers interviewed and documented 37 of the most innovative technology for transparency and accountability projects in Central and Eastern Europe, China, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and South Asia. The results of this phase were presented at the May 2010 Global Voices Citizen Media Summit in Santiago, Chile and published on the Network's website.[30]

In the second phase (June-December), eleven researchers conducted an additional round of case studies, expanding TTN's geographical focus to include the Middle East and North Africa and the former Soviet Union.

Co-directors

Renata Avila is the country lead of Creative Commons Guatemala. She has a law degree and a Master in Intellectual Property Law from Turin University. She is interested in the improvement of societies through access to knowledge, sharing of difference and acceptance of plural visions. She has worked with the Rigoberta Menchu Tum Foundation, Harvard University and the Public Voice. She co-founded the Fritz-Machlup Research Center for the Study of internet in Guatemala City and contributes as its affiliate researcher. She is a contributing writer at Global Voices and the OpenNet Initiative. Renata's interests include free culture, open education, privacy, freedom and human rights in the digital environment. She actively promotes the involvement of girls and women in technology. Renata served as a researcher during the first phase of the TTN.

Twitter: @avilarenata.

Rebekah Heacock is a Project Coordinator at the Berkman Center for internet and Society. She previously lived and worked in Uganda, where she co-developed and directed a series of conferences on post-conflict development for American and African college students, and in Kansas, where she was a web producer for a local newspaper. She has a BA in Russian literature from the University of Kansas and a Master of International Affairs from the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. Rebekah also covers the Ugandan blogosphere for Global Voices and served as a researcher during the first phase of the TTN.

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Editorial advisor

Hazel Feigenblatt is Media Projects Director at Global Integrity and an award-winning investigative journalist and former Washington correspondent. Her reporting of government procurement and banking practices has been recognised on three occasions with the top journalism award in Costa Rica, where she worked for the leading daily newspaper *La Nacion*. She has a Master's degree in Public Affairs Reporting from the University of Maryland, a Master's degree in Political Science and a B.A. in Communication, both from the University of Costa Rica, and was a 2002-2003 Humphrey Fellow. She is a blogger at Costa Rica's main financial publication El Financiero and has a website about consumer education and complaints.

Twitter: @HazelFeigenblat and @quienpagamanda.

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[29] Rising Voices, http://rising.globalvoicesonline.org/. Global Voices, http://globalvoicesonline.org/

[30] Renata Avila, *et al.*, 'Technology for Transparency: The role of technology and citizen media in promoting transparency, accountability and civic participation,' ed. David Sasaki, May 27, 2010, http://globalvoicesonline.org/2010/05/27/report-technology-for-transparency/

Researchers

Sopheap Chak is a graduate student of peace studies at the International University of Japan. Meanwhile, she is also running the Cambodian Youth Network for Change, which mobilises young activists around the country. She is a contributing author at Global Voice Online and UPI Asia Online. She was previously advocacy officer of the Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR) where she helped lead the 'Black Box Campaign' to fight against police corruption in Cambodia. In 2006 CCHR activists - including president Kem Sokha - were arrested. That is when Sopheap began working on projects to fight corruption and foster free expression.

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Victor Kaonga is a Malawian radio journalist who has worked at Trans World Radio since 1999. He holds a bachelor of social science degree from the University of Malawi and an MA in Global Journalism from Örebro University in Sweden. He teaches broadcast media at the Malawi Institute of Journalism and is interested in researching the impact of information and communication technologies on local communities in a globalised world. Victor is a contributing writer at Global Voices Online. He is based in Malawi's capital Lilongwe with his wife and four children.

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Sylwia Presley is a blogger, photographer and activist currently working in word-of-mouth marketing, but soon moving to social media marketing for the non-profit sector. Originally from Poland, she studied communication and linguistics in her homeland and in Budapest. Since 2006 she has been based in the UK. She is studying marketing at Oxford College of Marketing and is an advocate of social media for change. She is a contributing writer at Global Voices Online, and the editor of Global Voices in Polish. She has organised numerous events including Oxford Twestival Global and Local in 2009 and Barcamp Transparency UK in Oxford, which she hopes will be replicated in other European countries. Sylwia served as a reviewer during the first phase of the TTN.

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Anas Qtiesh is a Syrian blogger, translator, and tech enthusiast currently based in Boston. He is the editor of the Arabic version of Global Voices Online and the Outreach Coordinator for the Arabic Speaking Region at Internews. He's active in the fields of freedom of speech online and the right to access to information. He has contributed to several projects at the Berkman Center for internet and Society at the Harvard Law School such as the OpenNet Initiative and Herdict Web. Anas is also passionate about providing quality web content in Arabic.

Lova Rakotomalala was raised in Madagascar and has a strong interest in international development and digital media as a tool to promote social change and transparency in the developing world. Lova has just completed his Master in Public Policy at the Woodrow Wilson School of International Affairs and Public Policy at Princeton University to further that specific interest. He previously worked as a biomedical researcher for a laboratory that focuses on designing low-cost mobile diagnostic tools for resource limited settings. He is also part of the core team of Foko, an NGO driven to promote the online exposure of social grassroots projects based in Madagascar.

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Aparna Ray is an independent qualitative research consultant by profession who is keenly interested in people, cultures, communities and social media/software. She writes both in English and Bangla, (the latter being her mother tongue), and covers the Bangla blog world on Global Voices. She writes limericks on news and current affairs that can be found at newsmericks.com. Aparna served as a reviewer during the first phase of the TTN.

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Manuella Maia Ribeiro is a recent graduate of Public Policy Management from the University of São Paulo, Brazil. Since 2007 she has been researching how governments can promote transparency, accountability and participation through the use of information and communication technologies. From September 2008 until December 2009 she participated in research on citizen participation in local governance throughout Latin America.

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Claudio Ruiz is the president of the NGO Derechos Digitales and a Chilean Creative Commons public leader. He graduated in law from the University of Chile, where he specialised in fundamental rights and new technologies regulation. Has been a professor of Theory of the Constitution and Fundamental Rights at Andrés Bello National University and is currently a professor of Digital Journalism at the Mayor University in Santiago, Chile. Claudio is a consultant on free software and intellectual property regulation for the Inter-American Development Bank, for the National Council of Domain Names and IP Numbers, and for the National Committee for the Digital Strategy of Chile.

Alexey Sidorenko was born in Moscow and graduated from Moscow State University. He is currently writing his PhD thesis there while simultaneously writing his MA thesis at Warsaw University, Poland. Alexey worked at the Carnegie Moscow Center from 2005-2008 in the 'Society and Regions' program. Since May 2010 he has worked as an editor of the Global Voices RuNet Echo project.

Namita Singh is a researcher and consultant focused on participatory media. She studied mass media and mass communication at Delhi University and has a Master of Arts in Social Work from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai. She is currently consulting Video Volunteers and the Global Fund for Children, and writing a toolkit on Girls' Media in India based on an innovative Youth Media project that was undertaken with 30 girls in 2 different locations in India.

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About the authors

Renata Avila is the country lead of Creative Commons Guatemala. She has a law degree and a Master in Intellectual Property Law from Turin University. She is interested in the improvement of societies through access to knowledge, sharing of difference and acceptance of plural visions. She has worked with the Rigoberta Menchu Tum Foundation, Harvard University and the Public Voice. She co-founded the Fritz-Machlup Research Center for the Study of internet in Guatemala City and contributes as its affiliate researcher. She is a contributing writer at Global Voices and the OpenNet Initiative. Renata's interests include free culture, open education, privacy, freedom and human rights in the digital environment. She actively promotes the involvement of girls and women in technology. Renata served as a researcher during the first phase of the TTN.

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Nathaniel Heller is the Managing Director at Global Integrity. He has split time between social entrepreneurship, investigative reporting and traditional public service since 1999, when he joined the Center for Public Integrity and began, along with Marianne Camerer and Charles Lewis, to develop the Integrity Indicators and conceptual model for what would become Global Integrity. At the Center, Heller reported on public service and government accountability; his work was covered by the Associated Press, The Washington Post, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, USA Today, Chicago Tribune, Moscow Times, The Guardian (London), and Newsweek. His reporting on the human rights impact of post-9/11 U.S. military training abroad won awards from both Investigative Reporters and Editors and the Society for Professional Journalists. In 2002 he joined the State Department, focusing on European security and transatlantic relations. He later served as a foreign policy fellow to the late Senator Edward Kennedy in 2004. In 2005, Heller returned to stand up Global Integrity as an independent international organization and has led the group since.

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