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MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Advancing Freedom of Expression

Using digital innovation to foster Article 19 in the Global South

I. The Debate

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Erik Albrecht

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Executive Summary

Digital technologies have created numerous new opportunities of how to exert the basic human rights of freedom of expression and access to information. At the same time, new possibilities of how to limit or violate these very rights have arisen. Digital technologies have also demolished the gates journalists used to keep. The public domain is no longer only dominated and shaped by traditional media institutions. Today, individuals, various actors of civil society, as well as experts can communicate opinions and information to a broad public.

This constitutes a game-changer in the way media development organizations (MDOs) have to work to foster the rights inscribed in Article 19 of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." This study is an attempt to learn from projects using digital technologies for future engagement of MDOs.

It is grounded on an analysis of the current literature as well as on semi-structured interviews with the founders of 16 initiatives, based in the Global South, which use digital technology to foster freedom of expression (see table 1) and access to information. In addition, a focus-group of 14 digital innovators working in the Global South came together for four-day's of media dialogue or workshop to discuss the possibilities and pitfalls of using technology to foster Article 19.

This study defines four functions the media were supposed to accomplish in the pre-digital age and analyzes to what extent projects, other than traditional media outlets, can fulfill them using digital technologies. The four functions are:

1. creating a public sphere,
2. supporting participation and inclusion,
3. providing access to information, and
4. holding those in power accountable.

As a result the study highlights the strengths of digital technologies in providing access to information and creating a public sphere. On the other hand, they are still weak at cultivating inclusiveness of society because they often find it hard to actually bridge gaps and reach out to disadvantaged groups as planned. The fourth aspect, holding to account, might turn out to set the limits for MDO's engagement in the future. It is the question of holding to account that the initiatives differ the most in their approaches to foster Article 19. While some aim to publish information on the activities of those in power as a means of holding them to account, others use information gathered with the help of digital technologies for their classical lobbying activities.

With the broadened range of possible partners in strengthening Article 19, it becomes increasingly difficult for MDOs to decide which partners are worth supporting and which are not. The notion of innovation can help them assess how valuable a project's contribution to its country's media environment is. Most valuable to media development work is Bruns' (2014) approach distinguishing, on the one hand, between innovation push and innovation pull, and on the other hand, between innovation in media technologies and innovation in media practices.

Most projects studied here are examples of innovation pushes that introduce new technologies and/or new media practices into a country's media environment from the outside. As for the relationship between innovation in media technology and innovation in media practices, in all cases described, the creation of innovative media practices is paramount. It is these practices (that is how the new projects are used) that lead towards the project objectives and the realization of freedom of expression.

DW Akademie's activities aim to support or create sustainable structures that ensure freedom of expression in the long term. Digital technologies have the potential to alter the very concept of sustainability in the Global South. In the past, sustainability often meant good stable relations with advertisers or other types of financers, as ratings were poorly measured and could only partly be used for marketing purposes. Digital technologies facilitate the easy production of user ratings, thus strengthening the position of media outlets. At the same time, this heightens the importance of the relationship with the audience. Sustainability nowadays has to include the notion of a sustainable relationship with the audience that can be much more intense, direct, and productive. At the same time, financial viability remains an open question. However, most of the initiatives show a desire to become less dependent on donor organizations and diversify their income streams. Methods being explored include soliciting individual and corporate donations, starting crowdfunding campaigns, holding fundraising events, and the sale of services such as consulting and training.

In conclusion, the study shows how broad the range of new actors is. There are digital projects of traditional media outlets, on the one hand, and new initiatives using digital technologies, on the other. However, digital technologies have also created a third group of potential partners within civil society for MDOs that contribute substantially to supporting Article 19 without this being their ultimate goal.

Digital technologies have altered the relationship between content and technology. Often the content (that is a new way of furthering Article 19) is in the technology, for example, it might be the development of software that helps a disadvantaged group to raise its voice in the public sphere. Therefore, MDOs have to develop the skill to not only speak to NGO founders but also to technologists and assess the technological potential of projects.

Table 1 provides a brief overview of the 16 projects involved in this study and highlights the key areas of media development that they are engaged with. It also illustrates the variety and breadth of techniques and digital technologies being adopted to address differing issues.

Project	Short Description	Key Words
	263 Chat (Zimbabwe): Independent media organization seeking to stimulate discussion on issues affecting Zimbabwe using social media	Access to Information; Crowdsourcing, Independent Journalism; Community Empowerment; Twitter; WhatsApp; YouTube; Mobile Phones
	Africa Check (South Africa): Nonprofit fact-checking site checking claims and statements made by politicians and other public figures	Access to Information; Open Data; Fact Checking; Transparency
	African SkyCAM (Kenya): Project investigating the use of drones for journalism and storytelling in Africa	Access to Information; Visualization; Storytelling; Environment; Community Empowerment; Transparency; Drones
	CGNet Swara (India): Nonprofit providing local news in audio form to rural communities in central India	Access to Information; Holding to Account; Supporting Participation & Inclusion; Audio News; Citizen Journalism; Corruption; Transparency; Mobile Phones
	Extra's WhatsApp (Brazil): Popular Rio daily paper encouraging the general public to send tips, photos and videos via WhatsApp	Access to Information; Supporting Participation & Inclusion; Crowdsourcing; Social Media; Mobile Phones
	Follow the Money (Nigeria): Advocacy organization tracking aid funding promised by the Nigerian government using data journalism	Access to Information; Holding to Account; Database; Monitoring; Storytelling; Fact Checking; Corruption; Community Empowerment; Social Media
	HarassMap (Egypt): Advocacy organization which collates and maps reports of sexual harassment in Egypt	Access to Information; Holding to Account; Creating a Public Sphere; Crowdsourcing; Mapping; Transparency; Social Media, Mobile Phones; Ushahidi
	InfoAmazonia (Brazil): Online environmental site providing richly detailed maps, data and news from the Amazon basin.	Access to Information; Open Data; Visualization; Mapping; Storytelling; Environment; Transparency; Online database

Project	Short Description	Key Words
	**Mera Swasthya Meri Aawaz (India):** Women's rights organization which collates reports of illegal fees charged by maternity hospitals in northern India	Access to Information; Holding to Account; Supporting Participation & Inclusion; Crowdsourcing; Monitoring; Mapping; Corruption; Healthcare; Mobile Phones
	**Open Development Cambodia (Cambodia):** Open data website and information hub aggregating data, maps, legislation and research publications on Cambodian development issues	Access to Information; Open Data; Database; Mapping; Environment; Community Empowerment; Transparency; Online Database
	**Our Health (South Africa):** Citizen journalism health reporting project on people's experiences of using South Africa's new national health insurance scheme.	Access to Information; Supporting Participation & Inclusion; Monitoring; Citizen Journalism; Healthcare; Tablet Computers
	**Plaza Publica (Argentina):** Online investigative reporting site Publishes analysis and in-depth investigative and data-driven journalism reports	Access to Information; Creating a Public Sphere; Independent Journalism; Blogs; Corruption; Community Empowerment; Transparency; Online Database
	**Poderopedia (Chile):** Database of influential people and organizations with visualizations of the connections between the rich and powerful in Chile	Access to Information; Crowdsourcing; Open Data; Database; Visualization; Transparency; Online Database
	**Rutas del Conflicto (Colombia):** Online database of massacres perpetuated during Colombia's civil war	Access to Information; Supporting Participation & Inclusion; Crowdsourcing; Database; Transparency; Mobile Phones; Online Database
	**Trac FM (Uganda & Somalia):** Software platform used for SMS opinion polling during radio broadcasts	Access to Information; Creating a Public Sphere; Supporting Participation & Inclusion; Crowdsourcing; Visualization; Mapping; Mobile Phones
	**VozData (Guatemala):** Data digitization project of La Nación newspaper that converts scanned PDF documents into an usable dataset	Access to Information; Crowdsourcing, Open Data; Database; Visualization; Corruption; Transparency; Social Media; Online Database

I. Digital technologies and Article 19 – The debate

1. The rise of digital technologies – A challenge to media development organizations

Freedom of expression and access to information are basic human rights that have been guaranteed by Article 19 of the „Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (United Nations) and the "International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights" (United Nations 1966) for over 65 years. In recent decades, the rise of digital technologies has granted numerous new opportunities of how to exert these rights. At the same time, dangers of how to limit or violate them have emerged.

In 2013, 60 percent of the world population, or 4.3 billion people, had access to the Internet through mobile devices. By 2030, the European Internet Foundation (2014) predicts the number of users to double. Taking into account population growth, this would mean that 75 per cent of the world population will be connected. While mobile phone ownership booms in the Global South, there is a growing interest in using digital technologies in media development as a means of fostering freedom of expression and information.

In fact, digital revolutions are quietly taking place all over the world. From enabling illiterate communities in central India to report messages to a voice-activated mobile phone news platform, to enabling community journalists to monitor health clinics in rural South Africa, or smallholder farmers in Kenya to receive information via SMS about dairy farming – there are many examples of how digital technologies are extending people's rights to freedom of expression and information.

The public domain is dominated by a broad array of civil society actors. Digital technologies have long demolished the gates journalists used to keep. Earlier journalism once controlled which information, which points of view, and which groups of society were able to enter public discourse. Now, social networks, blogs, or websites create new channels of communication for everyone and with everyone, thus offering new opportunities for social participation. Journalists have lost their pivotal role and have turned from gatekeepers into gatewatchers curating the massive amounts of information that enter public debate through wide open gates. Hence, media systems composed of a comparably small number of traditional media outlets have undergone a metamorphosis into dynamic media ecosystems with an endless number of actors. This constitutes a game changer in the struggle for freedom of expression and access to information.

Of course, these developments are far from new. Nevertheless, the media – and media development organizations – are still struggling to find sustainable answers to them. For decades, media development organizations (MDOs) used to focus their work either on traditional or on community media. The former were the most important institutions able to offer a large share of the population the possibility to exert these basic human rights. The latter often offered the chance to target disadvantaged groups, for example, rural communities. Today, individuals, various actors of civil society, as well as experts can communicate opinions and information to a broad public. Thus, NGOs advocating certain civil rights can provide information about their work on their own website directly to the people and bypass the traditional media in the process. During the Maidan protests in Ukraine, for example, sites curated by activists were indispensable sources of information. Of course, their information contained a certain bias, but so did most major media outlets reporting in favor of the government. In Egypt, Facebook and Twitter played an important role in the Arab Spring.[1]

However, if freedom of expression and access to information is no longer solely nurtured by journalists it will no longer be sufficient to only support media outlets. MDOs have to think broader and engage with new actors. Some of those actors might come directly from civil society, others might be experts. Some might create partnerships with traditional media organizations in order to spread their information to broader audiences. Others might work independently. In all these cases, digital technologies pose new challenges to the work of MDOs. They have the potential to change it fundamentally starting from the very definition of media itself. DW Akademie has reacted to this by including non-professional actors in its media definition:

"The media are a system of social and technical structures which enable people to obtain and disseminate information relevant to them and exchange with each other. Of particular importance are professional and non-professional actors who check, edit, and evaluate content of public interest and make it publicly accessible."

Digital technologies in the sphere of media and communication comprise **technologies** itself such as the Internet, SMS, mobile phones, or digital devices as well as **tools** such as social media, software, smartphone applications, and **methods** such as blended learning, gamification, or crowd sourcing.

[1] *For example, on the role of Facebook and Twitter in the Arab Spring in Egypt see the research conducted by DW Akademie's Eira Martens (DW Akademie on Media 2012).*

In its media development strategy, DW Akademie defines four strategic areas of action for the media sector which it considers central for its work to promote freedom of expression and access to information: political and legal framework, qualification, professionalism and economic sustainability of the media sector, and social participation. Change in the digital age is considered to be an overarching dimension affecting all four areas (DW Akademie 2014, 28). Since traditional media institutions are no longer the only influential actors enabling the implementation of Article 19, MDOs have to broaden their field of action – and, hence, their field of competence – beyond the traditional media as well. In the future, it will get increasingly complex to determine how to foster freedom of expression the best way possible, since the number of potential partners is already multiplying markedly.

This raises a number of questions and challenges to MDOs. Which actors should be supported with regard to fostering Article 19? How can credibility and accuracy of published information be ensured in contexts very different from those of traditional journalistic institutions? Certainly, many traditional media organizations did not work according to professional standards and ethics, but at least MDOs had a functioning model they could promote of how journalism should be practiced. To our knowledge such a model does not currently exist in the vast field beyond traditional media. What kind of emerging challenges do the use of new technologies and this new type of media pose to the media literacy of the population? And how can these needs be best addressed?

This study is an attempt to learn from best-practice projects using digital technologies for future engagement of MDOs strengthening Article 19. It aims at presenting an overview of the possibilities and pitfalls of the use of digital technology in the Global South to support access to information and freedom of expression. In addition, it endeavors to provide insight to MDOs on how to determine the potential of partners in the digital age.

Breaking the boundaries of traditional media

As traditional media institutions lose the central gatekeeping function they possessed in the old media system the importance of media institutions has significantly declined and is expected to decline further (Anderson, Bell, and Shirky 2014). Current developments of the professional media sector in the Global North show two major trends. On the one hand, traditional media institutions find themselves increasingly under pressure since their old sources of revenue, such as advertising, are drying up and new sources are hard to unlock. This puts their traditional business model under threat and, consequently, their journalistic quality. On the other hand, information can flow much more freely within society thanks to new channels of distribution created by digital technologies, and as new projects using digital technologies enter the media environment.

In some countries of the Global South, print and media markets in general are actually booming.[2] Yet traditional media are often polarizing society due to their biased reporting. At the same time, digital technologies have broadened the traditional gaps within society. Divides between rich and poor, urban and rural, majority and minorities, men and women are deepened by the different degree of access to digital technologies of these groups. "The Asia Pacific, Latin America and Middle East and Africa regions will all move from being mainly GSM/EDGE-only subscriptions markets in 2014 to become mainly WCDMA/HSPA and LTE subscriptions markets by 2020," writes the Ericsson mobility report (2014, 9/16).[3] At the same time, it admits, i.e., for the case of India that, "[t]here are, however, still large rural areas that remain uncovered." In addition to the gap in access, there is a large gap in media and information literacy (MIL) in the Global South which has the effect that different groups of society profit to different extents from the use of digital technologies in order to exert their rights inscribed in Article 19. Finally, many governments try to control access to information on the Internet by actively blocking websites.

Since the start of the commercial Internet and the appearance of many new digital technologies, journalism has changed tremendously. Digital technologies have created numerous new possibilities of aggregating, processing, distributing, and consuming information (Anderson, Bell, and Shirky 2014).

By 2013, over six billion people owned mobile phones that gave them access to networks (although not necessarily the Internet). This "makes it difficult not to speculate about the possible implications of this compelling statistic for the future of journalism," Franklin (2014, 473) quotes Westlund (2013). "The trend has accelerated in the last several years, with the explosion of social media and its increasing use to accomplish basic journalism: documenting events and disseminating information to the public," writes Simon (2014).

Gathering, processing, publishing information, and providing a forum for public debate – in the past, the core of any definition of professional journalism – is not limited to journalists anymore. "An increasing amount of firsthand reporting is done by citizens [...] but this does not mean that all professional journalists will, can or should be replaced", argue Anderson, Bell and Shirky (2014, 4) in the TOW center report on "post-industrial journalism." "Instead it means that their roles will change, overlapping with the individuals (and crowds and machines) whose presence characterizes the new news environment." (Anderson, Bell, and Shirky 2014, 4) As "journalism will be defined by practices not employment," (Picard 2014, 494) MDOs have to adjust the range of partners they work with to these new realities.

This means that the sources available to journalists as well as to citizens are multiplying due to digital technologies. This has changed the face of the media already. "(...) professionals should be liberated to focus on explanation, contextualization, sense-making, and, yes reporting about what they see and hear." (Van der Haak, Michael Parks, and Manuel Castells 2012) Journalists have to concentrate on their core competencies, Anderson, Bell and Shirky (2014, 27) argue. "It also allows news organizations, traditional and new, to swing more of their resources to the kind of investigative and interpretive work that only humans, not algorithms, can do." (Anderson, Bell, and Shirky 2014; see also Kramp and Weichert 2012) At the same time, the role of media institutions is changing. Partnerships with smaller projects will be much more frequent (Anderson, Bell, and Shirky 2014). Instead of production, distribution of content is seen to be the main task of media institutions in the digital future (Picard 2014).

Researchers are predicting a kind of "networked journalism" (Anderson, Bell, and Shirky 2014; Van der Haak, Parks, and Castells 2012) or rather networked media ecology in which professional journalists work together with citizen reporters, members or initiatives from civil society, and technologists for the unified aim: fostering Article 19. One of the challenges for MDOs will be to support local partners in their attempts to shape this change to ensure more freedom of expression and better access to information for larger shares of their countries' population.

This study will analyze many examples from the Global South. Initiatives promoting the citizens' rights of access to information on issues such as sexual harassment of women, environmental concerns, or pressing social problems could potentially find more successful ways to share information with the general public on their fields of expertise than professional journalists. Many of these new actors might have been seen as mere sources of information for journalists in the past. Now, they are publishers of information and, hence, media organizations in a broader sense.

Thus, the rise of digital technologies does not mean that journalism as practiced in traditional media institutions has lost its importance to MDOs. It is still a vital part of the media ecology. In many cases, new projects using digital technologies have yet to prove that they are able to fulfill the functions within society that were formerly attributed to journalism alone. Assessing to what extent they are able to do so is another equally important aim of this study.

2. Debating the effects of digital technologies

The opportunities and challenges for freedom of expression that arise from digital technologies have been subject to debate for quite some time. Most prominently, anti-government uprisings in countries ranging from Egypt to Iran and Moldova have been branded as "Twitter" or "Facebook" revolutions over the past ten years – regardless of whether they were successful or not and – more importantly – although the role of these social networks as decisive players in the uprisings is disputed among scholars.[4] In any case, limiting the discussion to the question whether digital technologies are valuable to topple undemocratic regimes seems to be of little practical use for media development work that is interested in the sustainable long-term development of media systems.

DW Akademie believes that the core aim of media development lies in empowering people so they are able to exercise their basic human rights of freedom of expression and access to information. Both are regarded to be empowering rights that give citizens important information concerning other human rights and enable them to live a self-determined life as a full member of society (DW Akademie 2014, 28). The value of using digital technologies, therefore, has to be determined under the prism of this paradigm. Practitioners, academics, and Internet-thinkers have been arguing for years about the potential benefits the Internet actually holds for the implementation of Article 19.

Empirical research on this topic is still rather limited. "Attempts to outline their effects on political action are too often reduced to dueling anecdotes", writes Shirky (2011, 29). Nevertheless, some studies on this topic that go beyond "dueling anecdotes" do exist. This chapter will summarize their findings and give a short overview of the debate on the benefits and dangers of new technologies. The focus is on whether digital technologies used in innovative ways can be a game changer in helping foster the rights guaranteed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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[2] *In India, the total number of paid newspaper copies increased by 10 million to 48.29 million from 2006 to 2012 (Kohli-Khandekar 2013), (Keen, Andrew. 2015a).*

[3] *Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM)/Enhanced Data Rates for GSM Evolution (EDGE) has been an important standard for mobile phone networks since the 1990s. In comparison, the more recent standards Wideband Code Division Multiple Access (WCDMA)/High Speed Packet Access (HSPA) as well as Long Term Evolution (LTE) can provide much higher data rates and thus high speed surfing.*

[4] *For example, on the role of Facebook and Twitter in the Arab Spring in Egypt see the research conducted by DW Akademie's Eira Martens (http://onmedia.dw-akademie.de/english/?p=6491).*

As a matter of fact, this debate often focuses to a much greater extent on the question whether digital technologies have the power to "democratize" countries than whether they can help ensure freedom of expression and access to information. Although the strategic goal of media development in DW Akademie's understanding is not to "democratize" but to help implement basic human rights this debate can still provide important insight on how digital technologies influence communication and debate within a society and, hence, how they can be used to nurture Article 19.

One study on "The Democratic Effects of the Internet" was carried out by Groshek (2009). Analyzing macro-level data of 152 countries from 1994 to 2003, Groshek concludes that "the Internet may be a potent democratizing agent" (Groshek 2009, 25) since high Internet diffusion according to his findings correlates strongly with democratic achievements. However, he warns "it would (...) be rather imprudent to suggest a totalizing concept of the Internet as a democratic silver bullet." (Groshek 2009, 25) It is how digital technologies are used that determines their effect.

In addition, he concedes many authoritarian regimes limit access to the Internet. Hence, "the full potential of the Internet as a democratic tool cannot expect to be realized as was consistently shown in this study." (Groshek 2009, 25) Therefore, he assumes rather an indirect effect of the Internet on the implementation of Article 19, arguing that digital technologies might advance economic growth. Thus, "gradual liberalization of the public sphere" could be unwillingly introduced through the back door (Groshek 2009, 26).

Changing the way we communicate

Generally, the debate circles around the question of who will profit more from digital technologies long-term: civil society that has been empowered by digital technologies to communicate without gatekeepers or governments that have been offered more efficient means of control over citizens.

On one side of the debate, Castells sees the whole communication system being transformed by digital technologies. "The information-based mass-media monopoly controlled by business and governments is over." (Castells 2011, 99) Castells expects deep effects on the political process. He predicts more grass roots democracy due to Web 2.0 technologies. "Democracy in the age of the Internet is not the democracy of parties. It is the democracy of citizens, by citizens and for citizens." (Castells 2011, 102) Furthermore, he sees the possibilities of censoring information vastly diminished by digital technologies.

Shirky (2011), as well, expects civil society to be empowered by digital technologies. He predicts that horizontal communication via social media might eventually be able to create a "shared awareness" within larger parts of civil society. This, he argues, can lead to the collective demand that social issues are tackled by the authorities and, in some cases, to democratic reforms. "Access to information is far less important, politically, than access to conversation". (Shirky 2011, 35) "Communicative freedom is good for political freedom." Thus, he considers digital technologies to be a "long-term tool that can strengthen civil society and the public sphere." (Shirky 2011, 32)

For media development, Shirky's analysis holds the message that digital technologies do have the potential to enhance communication within society which can be used to foster freedom of expression and access to information eventually.

On the other side of the debate, Morozov (2011) remains skeptical of these arguments. In his view, Facebook and Twitter offer at least as many possibilities for authoritarian regimes to crack down on dissent than for civil society to express itself. "The idea that the Internet favors the oppressed rather than the oppressor is marred by what I call cyber-utopianism: a naive belief in the emancipatory nature of online communication that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside," writes Morozov (2011, xiii). Many authoritarian governments are able to block websites with content they do not want their population to read and even social networks as a whole.

"It's silly to think that only a particular sort of activist will benefit from a technology," adds Lanier (2013, 199). The discursive power Russian Internet trolls gained over public opinion in the Ukraine crisis can certainly serve as evidence of this argument. Furthermore, Lanier names the use of digital technologies for censorship in authoritarian countries as well as by secret services in the West as potential dangers to freedom of expression and access to information.

In addition, social media and even email communication makes it much easier for autocratic states to spy on whole networks within civil society or the opposition, Morozov (2011, 27) argues. "From the perspective of authoritarian governments, the costs of exploiting Western follies have significantly decreased as well. Compromising the security of just one digital activist can mean compromising the security – names, faces, email addresses – of everyone that individual knows." Digital technologies, thus, Morozov (2013, xiv) adds, might "make dissent not just impossible but possibly even unthinkable."

Thanks to the former NSA contractor and whistleblower Edward Snowden, the extent to which secret services in Western countries control the Internet and violate the right of privacy of their citizens became clear to the general public (Greenwald 2014). For MDOs, the question of government control over digital technologies might have very concrete implications for the implementation of certain projects as media development organizations should be guided by the principle of "Do No Harm" in their work.

Many scholars are also skeptical about whether communication with the help of digital technologies as used nowadays is able to strengthen freedom of expression and access to information efficiently. Picard warns that new structures of power might create new inequalities while digital technologies are undermining old power structures within society. On the positive side, social media are providing a pluralism of views where for example a state broadcaster might have had a monopoly in the past. Concurrently digital technologies "are creating new mechanisms of power and a new class of elites influencing content." (Picard 2014, 494) In the same line of argument, Lanier (2013, 199) warns, "In our digital revolution, we might depose an old sort of dysfunctional center of power only to erect a new one that is equally dysfunctional." The only difference could be that the new media owners are not millionaires but billionaires, warns Keen (Keen 2015b).

Lanier (2012) is especially skeptical as to the effects of Web 2.0 social media for fostering Article 19. In his view, the standardization of forms of disseminating information poses a huge danger to genuine discourse. In addition, the Internet – and social networks – is used for entertainment to a much greater extent than for political and societal participation, Morozov argues (2011).

At the same time, digital technologies do offer many ways to circumvent government censorship. Be it Gezi-Park in Istanbul or Bolotnaya-Square in Moscow, important protests were largely covered by bloggers and activists using social media. They were often the main source of information while the big traditional media institutions downplayed the protests in favor of the government (Simon 2014). In this regard, the broadened media ecology could turn out to be a push factor in media innovation as it can make it harder for governmental-allied media outlets to black out certain issues.

The question of how advantages and disadvantages of digital technologies with regard to freedom of expression counterbalance each other is far from being an academic one in the context of media development. Should the optimists be right, who expect digital technologies to give a boost to the implementation of freedom of expression and access to information, the role of MDOs would decrease substantially within the coming decade as the penetration of digital technologies improves in the Global South. All that would be left to do, would be to support the right projects that strengthen these changes. On the other hand, should the equation "digital technologies = strengthening of Article 19" not prove to be self-evident, MDOs will have to engage much more seriously in media development offering support to initiatives and frameworks related to digital safety and moderate societal processes in order to help shape a media ecosystem that can actually cultivate the rights inscribed in Article 19. In reality, however, this is not a question of black and white. The use of digital technologies will always produce opportunities and dangers at the same time. The challenge – to societies as a whole but also to MDOs – is to find ways to make use of the opportunities while reducing the risks.

Providing freedom of expression and access to information – the role of digital technologies

The UN International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights calls the basic human rights of freedom of expression and access to information "the foundation stone for every free and democratic society." They are considered to enable rights that should help citizens to live a self-determined life. "The freedoms of opinion and expression form a basis for the full enjoyment of a wide range of other human rights." (United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 2011) The EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline name "freedom of association and assembly, freedom of thought, religion or belief, the right to education, the right to take part in cultural life, the right to vote and all other political rights related to participation in public affairs" as the most prominent among them (Council of the European Union 2014).

In its work, DW Akademie implements a human rights approach aimed at fostering these rights anchored in Article 19. This article emphasizes not only the rights of citizens but also the obligations of the state to "respect, protect, and guarantee" (United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 2011) these rights. Furthermore, Article 19 ascribes the media – traditional or new, professional or not – an "essential" role in ensuring these rights as they contribute substantially to the formation of opinions. "Without freedom of expression and freedom of the media, an informed, active and engaged citizenry is impossible." (Council of the European Union 2014) Thus, Article 19 comprises not only freedom of expression and the right to access to information but also freedom of the media. Additionally, as a fourth relevant dimension is the right to privacy (Article 17 of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

Far from searching for a final answer, this study examines to which extent innovative projects using digital technologies have the potential to further freedom of expression and access to information.

For the purpose of this analysis, the broad notion of freedom of expression and access to information can be divided into several **functions of the media** that can be derived from Article 19. These functions do not result normatively from Article 19, nor are they a prerequisite that media has to achieve to be protected by Article 19. However, the following functions have to be fulfilled by a media environment as a whole in order to foster freedom of expression and access to information for the citizenry:

Firstly, freedom of expression requires a public sphere in which opinions can actually be expressed. Article 19 differentiates between the freedom to hold opinions and the freedom to express these opinions. This includes "the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds" and "every form of idea and opinion capable of transmission to others, political discourse, commentary on one's own and on public affairs." (United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 2011) The "forum" in which information and ideas are sought, imparted and received is the public sphere. By **creating a public sphere** the media can make sure that the people's voice can actually be heard. With regard to the human rights approach, information regarding the actions and decision-making processes of governments are of special importance.

Secondly, it is equally important that – within this public sphere – every voice has an opportunity to be heard. This is especially vital with regard to minorities and disadvantaged groups. The media, therefore, have the function of **supporting participation and inclusion** and thus to make sure all groups of society can engage in public discourse.

Thirdly, access to information itself is a basic human right inscribed in Article 19. This right includes the right of access to information held by public bodies, and the rights of citizens to have access to a broad array of information. The General Comment 34 to Article 19 ascribes a prominent role to "independent and diverse media" as a means to "protect the rights of media users, including members of ethnic and linguistic minorities, to receive a wide range of information and ideas." (United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 2011) Therefore, the media should have access to information on public affairs. **Providing access to information**, thereby, has to be a third function the media have to fulfill in order to guarantee Article 19.

Forthly, the General Comment 34 declares freedom of expression to be a "necessary condition for the realization of the principles of transparency and accountability." **Holding those in power accountable** through the publication of information is thus a fourth function of the media.

Therein, four functions can be defined which the media need to fulfill in order to support freedom of expression and access to information.[5]

1. creating a public sphere
2. supporting participation and inclusion
3. providing access to information, and
4. holding those in power accountable.

Even in an ideal media environment, media outlets will not address all functions simultaneously. A call-in radio show, for example, will support participation and inclusion but, in many cases, it will not hold those in power accountable. On the other hand, an investigative program might not support inclusion substantially but be strong at holding accountability.

Traditional media organizations have long lost their position as the most important partners to support these functions within civil society. The broadened notion of media in the digital age suggests that nowadays other actors can fulfill these functions and thus contribute decisively to the implementation of the basic human rights of freedom of expression and access to information within society. In fact, this is the very reason why digital technologies have the potential to strengthen civil society in exerting its rights of freedom of expression and access to information. At the same time, this is far from being an automatic outcome as governments also gain new means of control, censorship, and surveillance as discussed above. Nevertheless, quality journalism retains a vital role in fostering Article 19.

In the following sections, the debate on how digital technologies reshape these four core responsibilities of the media is summarized. And in doing so relevant foci of the assessments presented below will be identified.

Creating a public sphere

Digital technologies are certainly altering the understanding of the public sphere. "The spread of mobile phones and internet connectivity will reshape (...) civic life, changing the ways members of the public interact with one another," argued Shirky (2009). By now, changes are taking place. With terms like "shit storm," "trolling," but also "liquid democracy" and "user generated content," a number of new expressions have entered our language that show to what extent the public sphere has evolved due to digital technologies. Hence, they alter the very terms on which a society can conduct a debate. Jarvis (2012, 16) sees the public sphere substantially enlarged by social media – a development which he considers to be an important prerequisite for an open and free society.

Digital technologies help bridge the traditional divide between publishing and communication within the media landscape. Social media content can be at the same time peer-to-peer communication between two users and published content for a bigger audience. Castells (2011, 99) coined the term "mass self-communication" to describe this phenomenon. Messages can easily reach large audiences through social networking even if they are "produced, received, selected and combined by individuals or collectives that interrelate together as well as with databases in the network as a whole" (Castells 2011, 99).

Audiences can engage in the production of media content. They can gather information, process and analyze, as well as

publish it. As a result of how user generated content changed the relationship between "the media" on the one side of the traditional divide and "the audience" on the other side, Jay Rosen of New York University prefers to speak of "The People Formerly Known as the Audience" instead (Anderson, Bell, and Shirky 2014, 16). Consequently, blogging has increased tremendously in the digital age, blurring further the boundaries between journalism and "The People Formerly Known as the Audience."

But the question to what extent, digital technologies actually help to empower people to act in the public sphere is heavily contested. "'The People Formerly Known as the Audience' are still the audience," Keen (2015, 178) objects saying that they are simply angrier and worse informed than ever. Lanier (2012, 118) doubts that the blogosphere is able to fulfill the functions which were fulfilled by strong journalistic institutions before in the United States. He puts forward the discussion about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq during the Bush administration as proof of his argument. In his view, the press did not assume its watchdog function at that time, as it was hit economically by decreasing ad revenues due to the rise of the Internet. At the same time, bloggers from both sides of the political divide basically neutralized each other's arguments, thus failing to replace the traditional press as a watchdog.

As the boundary between publishing and communication has become blurred in the digital age, it has become much easier for new actors to enter public debate, in the process bypassing mass media and its traditional gatekeeper function (Castells 2011). This might bring topics to the attention of society that had previously been ignored by the mass media. Media projects beyond the traditional media, bloggers, and mere users can thus enrich public debate with their views, comments, and with new information. Online platforms in Latin America like Plaza Pública in Guatemala (s. below) investigate topics that are not reported by mainstream media and has, in fact, become one of the influential media outlets in Guatemala. In Egypt, HarassMap puts the topic of sexual violence against women on the agenda of national public debate. Those projects also have the potential to counterbalance polarized views published by traditional media that might be biased towards the government's or their owners' position.

However, Internet-critic Morozov is skeptical of the quality of the discussion online: "To equate blogging with samizdat and bloggers with dissidents is to close one's eyes to what's going on in the extremely diverse world of new media across the globe. Many bloggers are actually more extreme in their positions than the government itself" (Morozov 2011, 46). Not every post necessarily advances a public discussion. The phenomenon of "trolls" has been discussed extensively in connection with the conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

In addition, there is a fear of an atomization of society. More and more users are following public debate through social networks the danger of staying within one's "filter bubble" (Pariser 2011), as a result a lack of exposure to arguments on the opposite side of the debate grows. While in the past the media was responsible for providing a holistic world view (a task it did not necessarily fulfill – in fact, in many countries many traditional media outlets were part of the problem rather than the solution to the implementation of freedom of expression and access to information) with the rise of digital technologies this responsibility is increasingly transferred to citizens (Zuckerman 2014).

There is no doubt that today citizens have many more opportunities to raise their voices. The question remains though whether those voices actually have a chance to enter the public sphere and to be heard. Being published is only the first step as a study by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) shows for political activists. Analyzing the implementation of programs aimed at strengthening citizens' participation, the study sees large opportunities provided by digital technologies for fostering freedom of expression. However, it concedes that the "quality of political participation varies." Many activists "were no better able to engage in meaningful policy discussions or influence decisions than before." (NDI 2013; 13)

For MDOs, digital technologies broaden the possibility to enhance public debate as one dimension of the rights guaranteed by Article 19 substantially. They are no longer dependent on the willingness of traditional media organizations to collaborate towards that goal. In fact, distinguishing between journalists, on the one hand, and activists, bloggers, NGOs, citizen journalists, Twitter users, etc., on the other hand, is not sensible in the digital age. With regard to media development and the function of creating a public sphere and encouraging debate, the only question is how a project contributes to this goal. Projects working in this direction are of particular relevance as partners – or as learning opportunities for MDOs. **The case studies of this research will be analyzed with regard to whether and how digital technologies can contribute to creating a public sphere.**

Supporting participation and inclusion

Enhancing inclusiveness of society is a central aim of development work. Supporting participation and inclusion is the second core function that has to be provided if all citizens are to exert their rights of freedom of expression and access to information. However, the mere fact that digital technologies make it possible for a much larger share of the population to publish opinions and talk about their concerns does not mean those people are actually participating in an inclusive

[5] *See also Lublinski, Deselaers, and Berner (2013).*

debate within society. As mentioned above, it is equally important that their voices are actually heard. Therefore, this second function is closely related to creating a public sphere for all parts of society. In the pre-digital age, traditional media in the service of the public were the main partners MDOs supported in order to strengthen this function. However, in reality, many traditional media outlets act as mouthpieces of their proprietors. Various groups in society do not find their issues addressed by them. Thus, the question how digital technologies can help support integration is important for MDOs (Lublinski, Wakili, and Berner 2014).

Traditional media institutions are criticized for having an "institutional bias." Even if they strive for impartiality, they tend to align their "beats" with the main institutions of the state: parliament, government, the police, the court system, health care. Thus, what happens inside these institutions has a much better chance to be reported than equally important issues happening on the outside, argues Picard (2014). Especially in countries with authoritarian regimes, many media outlets tend to focus their reporting on government activities. Analyzing the media environments of its focal countries, DW Akademie found that especially disadvantaged groups and minorities often do not find their issues represented in mainstream media. In other cases, issues relevant for a large share of society were not addressed.

Taking the digital divide in the Global South into account, there is also a question of which groups of society actually receive more opportunities to participate as a result of digital technologies. The traditional divides in the Global South (rural-urban, rich-poor, men-women) are even more acute with regard to participation in public debate through digital technologies. "The internet is not keeping everyone informed, nor will it. It is, in fact, magnifying problems of information inequality, misinformation, polarization and disengagement," writes the BBC (Harding 2015) in its report „The Future of News".

Digital technologies used by journalists, citizen journalists, bloggers, and members of minorities or disadvantaged groups can help foster participation and inclusion. Thereby, digital technologies can help support integration. Once again, the field of action for MDOs has broadened decisively as has the number of potential partners in the Global South.

However, the NDI study's findings seem to indicate that it is to a much lesser extent the technology itself that will determine how inclusive the public debate of the future will be than the question how citizens use this technology (NDI 2013). The "Just-Add-Internet hypothesis" (Shirky 2009) that digital technologies will solve the flaw of mass-communication is certainly not valid. New innovative approaches have to find ways to engage different groups of society in public debate if they are to be worthy of support by MDOs. **One important aspect of this research will therefore be whether and how digital technologies can be used in different projects to support inclusiveness and participation.**

Access to information

According to Article 19, everyone has the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Digital technologies offer many opportunities to increase access to various kinds of information for large parts of society. In this respect, they can strengthen access itself as well as the amount of available information. This may include making government data publicly accessible, distributing journalistic content through Web 2.0 services, or issuing flood warnings via SMS. For example, relatively little was known about was happening in Iran until bloggers started blogging about it. Jarvis (2012) sums up how much more information is available to citizens compared to pre-Internet times.

However, the lack of access to these technologies due to digital gaps within society can create new barriers and inequalities. Additionally, digital technologies can even prevent people from accessing information. Around the world, governments are censoring information on the Internet. Some Internet-thinkers see equally the danger of "filter bubbles." Web 2.0 algorithms might limit access to information to a certain spectrum of information (Zuckerman 2014). Subsequently, citizens may have easier access to information as such. At the same time, they might be deprived of the contextualization needed to make this information relevant to them.

Furthermore, the digital world is ever more shaped by Silicon Valley's big corporations, even if there are alternative platforms like VKontakte in Russia or Baidu in China. Often information is only reached if it is published on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or Google. Social scientists found that in several developing countries, people using Facebook regularly stated that they never enter the Internet – a phenomenon amplified by so-called "Facebook plans" offered by mobile phone operators, in which the use of Facebook is included in the plan while other Internet services cost extra. "And what does it mean if masses of first-time adopters come online not via the open web, but the closed, proprietary network where they must play by Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's rules?", asks Mirani (2015) in Quartz magazine and writes: "This is more than a matter of semantics. The expectations and behaviors of the next billion people to come online will have profound effects on how the internet evolves. If the majority of the world's online population spends time on Facebook, then policymakers, businesses, startups, developers, nonprofits, publishers, and anyone else interested in communicating with them will also, if they are to be effective, go to Facebook. That means they, too, must then play by the rules of one company. And that has implications for us all."

"Once a critical mass of conversation is on Facebook, then it's hard to get conversation going elsewhere," writes Lanier (2013, 207). "What might have started out as a choice is no longer a choice after a network effect causes a phase change. After that point we effectively have less choice. It's no longer commerce, but soft blackmail."

This might imply that projects that do not use Facebook or other major platforms will find it much more difficult to find an audience. It also shows that media and information literacy is a major field of action for MDOs in providing free access to information to a larger share of society.

Google's Project Loon and Facebook's internet.org are working on connecting even remote areas to the World Wide Web. At the same time, they are trying to monopolize the access. In its "Future State 2030" report, KPMG predicts that by 2030 half of the world's population will have access to the Internet, compared to 34 percent in 2012. In total numbers, in 2000, 360 million people used the Internet worldwide. In 2012, a further two billion people had joined them online so overall 2.4 billion had access. As with mobile phones, the penetration rate is already at 75 per cent and is expected to rise further (KPMG 2013, 23/26). But with billions of people expected to go online within the coming decades, it is not self-evident that better access to digital technologies will actually mean free access to information. This raises serious questions of Internet policy that MDOs have to address in the strategic area of political frameworks.

As with other functions, the rise of digital technologies creates many new partners for MDOs which have the potential to provide access to information to larger shares of society. However, access to information also implies the right to request important information from the government. Traditional media organizations can demand information from authorities with the power of their media institutions. Of course, they were often unsuccessful in doing so. Nevertheless, it might be even more difficult to exert this right for non-professional media, even if they constitute an important part of the new media ecology. On the other hand, digital technologies offer new ways of gathering information and of making it available to the public.

To conclude, providing access to information is a vital function that was previously mainly fulfilled by traditional media outlets. If new projects beyond traditional journalism can use digital technologies in order to provide access to relevant information to a larger share of society, they become important partners for MDOs trying to foster the implementation of Article 19. **One important aspect of this research will therefore be whether and how digital technologies are used in different projects to provide access to relevant information to a larger share of society.**

Accountability

The General Comment sees freedom of expression and access to information to be a "necessary condition for the realization of the principles of transparency and accountability." (United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 2011) Holding those in power to account for what they are doing in office has become one of the central functions of traditional media as a fourth estate. Ideally, this can help to improve governance in a society. Thus, the media help to ensure "the enjoyment of other covenant rights" as well (United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 2011). By supporting local actors in strengthening the right of access to information, MDOs are also helping build up tools to demand more accountability.

With the rise of digital technologies, this function is no longer limited to traditional media. Digital technologies can make large sets of government data available online. They can also channel public protest against corruption or other forms of bad governance. Digital technologies handed the means to limit governments over to the public, Jarvis (2012, 17) argues. Like Jarvis, Castells (2011, 102) considers social networks to be a powerful tool for more accountability that makes transparency an "imperative virtue": "The most immediate effect of this explosion of horizontal networks of communication in the domain of politics is that governments and politicians have to be very careful about what they do." Picard (2014, 493) still attributes a leading role for public opinion to traditional media institutions but concedes: "Holding to account – assigning responsibility and making others accountable for their conduct – is now a function shared with experts, non-governmental organizations, and individuals using the range of digital and social media."

At the same time, digital technologies have created new ways to criticize and control governments. Whistleblowers find access to large audiences through websites like Wikileaks. Investigative journalists can cooperate internationally in analyzing data.

In a reshaped media environment, new ways have to be found to hold governments accountable by means other than traditional media. Making public data available will not be enough in order to control those in power effectively. The argument made above that voices have not only to be raised but actually heard also applies here (NDI 2013). **One important aspect of this research will therefore be whether and how digital technologies are used in different projects to hold those in power accountable.**

This study aims at providing further insight to the opportunities and challenges projects using digital technologies offer to the implementation of Article 19. The number of potential partners for MDOs has multiplied substantially with the rise of digital technologies. So has their variety. This makes it even more crucial to determine how supporting a project will actually encourage Article 19. With traditional media, these processes are much better understood than with projects using digital technologies. But both the former and the latter are only worth MDOs' support if they fulfill functions that create more freedom of expression and better access to information. Assessing how projects address these functions is therefore a vital step in the planning process of media development interventions. This can be an important justification for the support of non-traditional media. This explorative study analyzes case studies with regard to their effect on the four functions. As mentioned above, not all functions have to be equally important in a project. This leads us to our first research question:

RQ 1: What are the opportunities, challenges, and pitfalls for freedom of speech in innovative projects using digital technologies?

3. Media innovation in the digital age

In recent years, the term innovation has suffered inflationary use. Often, innovation has been falsely considered equal with the use of digital technologies. Adding a digital component to a project was sometimes regarded as the decisive factor that makes a project "innovative." However, in a converging media ecology, the dichotomy between analogue and digital technologies is no longer sensible (if it ever was). Duly, whether a project uses analogue or digital technologies indicates nothing about its innovativeness.

Innovation means the introduction of new elements to a product or a production process that provides an added value. If MDOs take the human rights approach seriously, this "added value" has to contribute to the strengthening of the population's human rights inscribed in Article 19. Furthermore, we define the term "new" with regard to a country's media ecology as this is the framework in which the population, in most cases, has to realize its rights.

It is self-evident that, according to this definition, media innovation can occur in both analogue and digital projects. Even in a project making strong use of digital technologies, innovation can be analogue. For example, the fact that important digital data is printed out on paper and presented to the rural population in villages as in the case of a data journalism workshop in Cambodia (James 2014) can, thus, constitute the innovative part of a data journalism project. In this case, the rural population gains access to information on the Internet it did not have before through this analogue way of distribution.
Still, the information has been collated with the help of digital technologies.

Furthermore, we define innovation as adding valuable elements that are new to the respective media ecology. Thereby, a new project can be merely a copy of an existing project – and not be innovative at all – in one country, while bringing an important element of innovation to another media ecology. In doing so, we take an open approach to conceptualizing innovation. With innovation we do not necessarily mean game-changing inventions like Web 2.0 or the smart phone. Distributing digitally gathered data on paper as mentioned above is a valuable enough innovation if it strengthens the human rights of freedom of expression and access to information of certain groups within society substantially. In this case, analogue innovation makes it possible for digital technologies to nurture not only the human rights of the part of the population that is media-savvy and online, but also for disadvantaged groups like the rural population.

At the same time, innovation can help foster freedom of speech and access to information indirectly by strengthening media organizations as well as NGOs institutionally. Finding a new pay model can help a media outlet to become financially more sustainable. Thus, it might help raise its quality of reporting or make it less prone to editorial interference by the government or business interests.

However, there is still rather little knowledge in scholarship on how media innovation works. Although innovation processes in businesses are not a new topic, in media innovation it is still poorly understood. This is partly because it often happens "under the radar" meaning it is not registered by standard tools of measurement for innovation activities within an economy (i.e., the research and development budgets of media outlets are relatively small and do not necessary reflect the innovativeness of an outlet) (Bleyen, Lindmark, Ranaivoson, and Ballon 2014).

With the broadened range of possible partners in cultivating Article 19 through the use of digital technologies, it becomes increasingly difficult for MDOs to decide which projects are worth supporting and which are not. As a rule, MDOs engage in countries whose media ecologies do not enable the population to exert its rights inscribed in Article 19 to its full extent. Supporting change requires innovations in the way the media system works. Be it with the use of digital technologies or without. It is therefore crucial for MDOs to understand how to support innovation from within or from outside of the media system in order to foster change that is deemed necessary in the context of the human rights approach.

One crucial point determining potential partners is, therefore, in which way projects are trying out new ways to enable the exertion of freedom of expression and access to information that did not exist in their country's media ecology before. While this applied to the pre-digital age as well, the rise of digital technologies makes it more difficult for MDOs to determine how innovative potential partners are in their approaches. The value of digital technologies to freedom of expression and access to information is much less understood. At the same time, MDOs have to develop new capacities to understand the technological component of projects better. The research conducted in this study can therefore offer valuable insight on how to assess potential projects or initiatives.

This chapter will discuss several models of media innovation proposed by scholars in order to develop a framework for the analysis of the case studies this research project conducted. The aim is to gain a better understanding of innovation connected to the use of digital technologies which can help MDOs determine a project´s innovative potential for strengthening Article 19.

Classical process and product innovation

Generally, innovation research distinguishes between process and product innovation. Based on this approach, Bleyen, Lindmark, Ranaivoson, and Ballon (2014) define five categories of media innovation. Innovation in business model (1) and in production & distribution (2) traditionally belongs to process innovation. Innovation in the inner form (new genres, new styles etc.) (3) and in the core (new topics, themes, messages) (4) is part of classical product innovation. On top, Bleyen, Lindmark, Ranaivoson, and Ballon add a fifth category of innovation of "consumption & media" (5), which is both a part of product and process innovation.

However, this approach mainly focuses on innovation within media organizations and can help MDOs *structure their supportive roles*. As Bleyen, Lindmark, Ranaivoson, and Ballon admit, "innovations coming from the user side are not entirely covered" (2014, 35). Hence, innovation coming from civil society in the light of a broadened understanding of "the media" might go beyond this typology.

Bruns (2014) distinguishes between "innovation push" and "innovation pull." In the first case, new projects often from outside of the traditional media community push other media organizations to incorporate new technologies or practices into their products. A platform like Wikileaks inspired various media organizations to open channels on their web pages through which whistleblowers can easily contact their newsrooms. In the second case, top-down innovation is supposed to pull other media outlets behind. In the context of media development, the reform of a state broadcaster into a public service broadcaster could be such a pull innovation as it is often hoped to set new standards of reporting for the industry even beyond the broadcaster itself (see Lublinski, Wakili, and Berner 2014). As this study focuses on projects outside of the traditional media landscape most constitute examples of possible innovation push.

Agents of media innovation

Another approach to media innovation that appears more suited to media development has been undertaken by Westlund and Lewis (2014). They argue that innovation is shaped by four interlinked factors: actors, actants, audiences, and activities. According to this "Agents of media innovations" approach, the first three factors shape the fourth – the activities of a media company. "Actors" include not only journalists and other people producing content, but also businesspeople and – with the sharply rising importance with regard to digital technologies – technologists. Furthermore, technology itself may shape media innovation. Westlund and Lewis use the term "actants" for social networks, devices, but also content management systems (CMS) that might shape media innovation or e.g., in the case of CMS that could also set limits to what is possible. Last but not least, there is the "audience" which can be an important factor in media innovation as it managed to break out of the passive role it was confined to by traditional media.

Based on this argument it becomes clear how broad MDOs have to act if they want to support innovation in the sense of Article 19 successfully. Technology plays a much more decisive role than in the past where it was mainly treated in terms of the technical quality of a product, be it a newspaper or a TV program. Working with audiences is crucial. Advocating new legal frameworks is also gaining importance. It has to shape the use of digital technologies actively in a way that opens up new opportunities of freedom of expression for all groups of society.

For MDOs that attempt to focus their interventions to make them as efficient as possible, this raises the question of how actors, actants, and audiences interact to foster Article 19. In Kyrgyzstan, the Kloop Foundation focuses on actors training school children to provide better quality information to the public, while, in Kenya, drones were used to highlight social issues thus innovating on the side of the actants.[6]

[6] *The Kenyan government banned the use of drones in 2015. For more details see (Olewe 2015).*

Co-creation perspective on innovation – new challenges for media development

Bruns (2014) widens the perspective on innovation to a societal level. According to him, innovation in the media is interdependent with innovation within society. In "Media Innovations, User Innovations, Societal Innovations," he argues for a holistic perspective on media innovation, "which considers the contemporary media ecology as a crucial constitutive element of societal structures and seeks to trace the repercussions of innovations across both media and society – media innovations are inextricably interlinked with societal innovations (even if, at times, they may not be considered to be improvements to the status quo)." (Bruns 2014, 13pp.) Thereupon, successful media innovation is often impossible without innovation on the side of the users. Bruns speaks of "user co-creation of media" or "produsage" (Bruns 2014, 18).

As a result of the increasing mediatization of society, it is often difficult to determine whether media innovation was initiated by the media itself or by society, Bruns argues. "Under these conditions, then, research into media innovations increasingly becomes research into societal change itself" (Bruns 2014, 18).

Translated to media development work, this might imply that fostering change in order to strengthen the rights guaranteed by Article 19 necessitates working more and more with society itself as opposed to the strong focus on media organizations in the past. The fact that projects are shaped to a much greater extent by users also means that the audience is actually able to change the focus of a project. Thus, in Russia, the blogging network Livejournal became one of the most important forums of discussion for the liberal opposition while it technically constitutes merely a network of personal online diaries in other countries.

For MDOs, this constitutes *concurrently* an old truth and a new challenge. It is an old truth that a country's media system is shaped by the political and social realities of the country and that media assistance should be oriented towards the needs and rights of citizens. At the same time, new challenges arise as the growth of digital technologies expands the boundaries of MDO's activities much further into society itself. This may suggest approaches like fostering digital media and information literacy (MIL) as well as supporting projects born out of civil society rather than out of the media community.[7]

Thus, research into these questions can prove extremely valuable for MDOs. Bruns' approach suggests a close interdependency between new ideas of media initiatives (media innovation), the informational demands of society (societal innovation), and the way people make use of new projects (user innovation). This could imply that projects end up serving other equally important purposes than initially planned. The following research question can help gain a better understanding of this interdependency which MDOs can use to determine which projects are worth supporting:

> **RQ2: What lessons can be learnt from the projects' evolution and possible changes of focus over time?**

Shaping media ecologies: innovation in media practices

Rather than product and process innovation, Bruns (2014) distinguishes between innovation in media technologies and innovation in media practices. This distinction is central to the question of how to use digital technologies to cultivate Article 19. Bruns argues that, at this stage of digitization, both evolve increasingly independently from each other. In his view, innovation in media practices will shape the media ecology of the future much more than new technologies: "Under these circumstances of comparative technological abundance, then it is innovation in media practices – in how such technologies are actually used – which becomes the central bottleneck, the central factor in determining the shape of the contemporary media ecology." (Bruns 2014, 23) Accordingly, the question raised by Bruns offers very important insight into which kinds of innovation are sensible for MDOs to support in order to foster the rights guaranteed by Article 19.

> **RQ3: Which role does innovation in media technologies and in media practices play in fostering freedom of expression and access to information?**

Revisiting media sustainability

One ambition of MDOs focusing their work on strengthening Article 19 is the support or creation of sustainable structures that help advance freedom of expression and the media sector – beyond the financial and time constraints of a single project. A study commissioned by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation points to the importance of finding sustainable business models for journalistic innovations in particular. "Sustainability in terms of innovation is an alien concept for most executive boards in news companies – the need to reinvent the journalistic profession is not recognized." (Kramp and Weichert 2012, 17) The authors consider mixed sources of funding vital for success. Experimenting with new ways of financing is a very pressing issue, they argue. Media outlets might learn new ways to tackle this question from industries such as online gaming, e-commerce, or search engine marketing that have found their own approaches to monetarize web content (Kramp and Weichert 2012).

Financial sustainability can also improve the quality of a project advancing Article 19 and thus strengthen the population's basic human rights of freedom of expression and access to information indirectly. At the same time, digital technologies

have the potential to alter the very concept of sustainability. With audience ratings often being poorly measured in the Global South, sustainability meant in many cases good stable relations with advertisers or other type of financers in the past. Online, it includes the notion of a sustainable relationship with the audience that can be much more intense, direct, and productive (Bruns: produsage). Media viability is not just about financial resources, but also about having the technical resources to continue to serve your goal or mission. Ultimately, it is about the ability to provide an approach of high quality with regard to fostering Article 19.

RQ4: How do these projects survive and what are their requirements and approaches to sustainability?

Analyzing media innovation in the digital age

This study analyzes innovation in the context of media development in an explorative way. Since the authors reviewed projects from different countries they cannot reliably assess their degree of innovation with regard to their respective media ecology. However, it can be evaluated in which areas the projects see themselves, their potential for innovation, and whether they – according to their own ambitions and standards – implemented it successfully. **The central question according to our definition of media innovation will be whether the projects developed new approaches that helped foster Article 19 (RQ5).** Thus, the following research questions will be discussed in order to generate practicable insight for media development organizations.

RQ 1: What are the opportunities, challenges, and pitfalls for freedom of speech in innovative projects using digital technologies?

RQ2: What lessons can be learnt from the projects' evolution and possible changes of focus over time?

RQ3: Which role does innovation in media technologies and in media practices play in fostering freedom of expression and access to information?

RQ4: How do digital innovation projects survive and what are their requirements and approaches to sustainability?

RQ5: How can the different aspects of Article 19 be strengthened through the use of digital technologies in media projects?

[7] *Reineck/Lublinski (2015).*

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