



Toolbox VI: Doing your part: Monitor, defend and promote freedom of expression

Why should we do our part? Apathy, which is the state of being indifferent or simply not caring about what goes on around you, is a dangerous thing. Everyone has a part and every contribution helps. Many changes in the world were sparked by efforts of individuals.

Key Lessons:

- Start Publishing
- Start Monitoring
- Start Celebrating
- Start Networking

Everything that is really great and inspiring is created by the individual who can labor in freedom.

Albert Einstein
(1879-1955)
Physicist,
1921 Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics

What can we do?

There is actually plenty we can do. There are various activities we can do to help monitor, defend, and promote freedom of expression. They can be done on a small scale community level or on a national level. Some require a little technological know-how, some do not. Most of the activities require getting to know the people involved in the promotion and protection of freedom of expression. Most importantly, they require being aware and being sensitive to what is happening around us.

How to get started?

Find out what kind of resources are at your disposal, the kinds of resources you could access differ from person-to-person, from community-to-community, and from country-to-country, but you have resources. Experiment with what you have, find out the limitations and build on your strengths.

1. Put Your Thoughts Down: Publish your own newsletter

The invention of the printing press was a significant development in the history of freedom of expression. The very notion of press freedom would not exist without the invention of the printing press machine in the first place. Prior to mass-printing, ideas and knowledge could only be shared verbally or through painstakingly hand-copied manuscripts.

Even after the printing technology became more widely available, the authorities attempted to control the flow of information by issuing printing licenses. In other words, only certain materials could be printed by certain people who were able to obtain a printing licence. The right to print and to distribute information is at the heart of the fight for freedom of expression. You can be part of this long tradition by publishing your own newsletter, simple pamphlet, or brochure to be distributed.

Find a niche. You may wish to consider specializing in certain topics that interest you and your group. Perhaps you are more interested in promoting access of information about the environment, or perhaps the level of doping in sports, or the development of educational facilities in your city. The topic you choose could be varied but the underlying philosophy is unchanging, that is, you can exercise the right to publish



your thoughts.

Remember:
It is okay to experiment. There is no right or wrong way of producing your publication. Every environment presents its own challenges and opportunities. Find out what works best for you and your team.

Share:
It helps to share your ideas and innovations, as well as your frustrations in the process of producing your own publication. Share with others around the world.

Checklist for Setting Up a Monitoring Blog:

Resources	Comment
Do you have Internet access (read the section on setting up a Monitoring Blog)?	
Will this be a multi-platform project, using not just this blog but social-networking sites, micro-blogging, video-sharing site, etc?	
Do you have access to a computer, typewriter, or some kind of word-processor?	
Do you have access to printing equipment and supplies?	
Do you have someone to help you with the writing and editing?	
How many people are willing to work on the project?	
How will you divide the responsibilities? Do you want to follow the standard journalistic format with an editor-in-chief, followed by editors, and journalists, or a more horizontal model? There is no right or wrong with any one type, both styles have been employed successfully in different parts of the world.	

What is your specialty or interest? Will the content be about health issues, politics, or youth activities, or a mix?

2. Monitor Freedom of Expression in Your Country

Setting up a freedom of expression monitoring blog

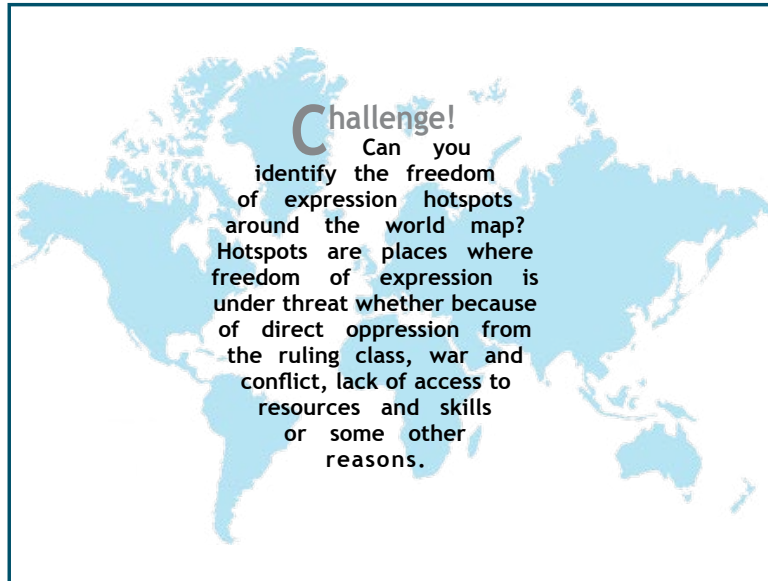
If you have access to the Internet, try to create a blog which monitors the development of freedom of expression in your country. A blog is the shortened form of the words, “web” and “log” (weblog) which allows the user to upload text, photos, and videos to their own blog site through the Internet. Unlike traditional media, the user (or blogger) has a high control over the content that appears on his or her blog. The blogger is in fact the writer, the editor, and the owner of the publication. A blog is usually available free-of-charge on blog hosting sites such as www.Blogger.com, www.Wordpress.com or any other blog hosting sites you are familiar with or have access to.

Why should we monitor freedom of expression?

Documenting one’s surrounding is as old as humankind. Cave paintings are a form of documenting the surroundings. By keeping a record of what has been happening in your life, you contribute to the better understanding of this particular time in history. The monitoring of freedom of expression, be it through a pen-and-paper diary or an electronic blog provides all of us with another perspective of the issue which can be extremely helpful in promotion of freedom of expression.

What to Monitor:

- Incidences of freedom of expression being suppressed. For example, the closing down of TV and radio stations, newspapers, or the arrests of street protestors or people who expressed certain views.
- The enactment of media-related laws.
- The establishment of new local agencies or organizations related to freedom of expression.
- Freedom of expression events, conferences, activities which took place in your country,



Questions to Ask Yourself: A Basic Checklist:

- What was the information/event/issue/etc?
- Who said it/ who was involved?
- When was it said/ when did it happen?
- How was the information obtained/ what is the source? (you have to decide if it is alright to reveal the source)
- What triggered the issue/ How did it happen/ How was it resolved (if there was a resolution)?

You can find out about these developments by reading the newspapers, searching the Internet, listening to the radio, watching the news on television, or by the word of mouth. Remember to note down where you obtain the information. Write down the name of the websites, radio, TV station or the name of the newspaper. This is a part of the practice of good reporting.

We also suggest that you include details such as the date of the event, location, maybe a map

of the place, the number of people participating, who was involved in the incident, the reason the incident happened, etc. You could also add your own assessment of the incident such as the significance of the incident to you and your peers.

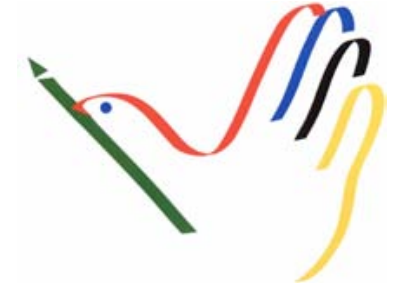
Remember:
One of the strengths of local reporting or citizen journalism is the first-person account of a particular incident. Being physically close to the incident gives power to the reporting. Include the tangibles (facts such as how many people, where did the incident take place, when, who, etc) and also the intangibles (what was the atmosphere like, how did it make you feel, etc).

Freedom of the press is not just important to democracy, it is democracy

Walter Cronkite
(1916-2009)
American broadcast journalist

Did You Know?
Many important incidents where freedom of expression was suppressed became known to the entire world through local reporting by individuals using nothing more than blogs or SMS (short messaging system) through mobile phones.

importance of press freedom which is a cornerstone of freedom of expression. Indeed, more and more individuals, schools, and organizations are celebrating and becoming aware of the significance of the World Press Freedom Day. Use this event as an occasion to start advocacy work with your peers and within your community!



World Press Freedom Day Symbol

What can you do?

Start your own World Press Freedom Day celebration at your school!

Plan Ahead:

- WPFDF always takes place on 3 May of each year. UNESCO always has a main global event and a theme for the year's celebration.
- Find out what is the year's WPFDF theme and develop a list of activities related to the theme.
- Contact your teacher or your school administration to express your desire to plan an event/ activity in conjunction with WPFDF.
- You could also contact one of the 53 UNESCO offices³⁷ around the world for more ideas and support.
- Or you could contact an organization that is working on freedom of expression as listed in the previous section for guidance.

You could also monitor the state of freedom of expression in your neighbouring country, your surrounding region, all the entire world if you so choose to. Perhaps you could monitor the development of freedom of expression over a longer period. There are organizations such as Freedom House (since 1941), the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ; since 1981), Reporters without Borders (since 1985), and the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX; since 1981) which have been monitoring the global state of freedom of expression for decades!

3. Celebrate World Press Freedom Day!

The United Nations General Assembly declared 3 May to be World Press Freedom Day (WPFDF) in 1993 and UNESCO has taken the lead in celebrating the event every year on 3 May³⁶. In addition, UNESCO created the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Press Freedom Prize in 1997, to honour the work of an individual or an organization defending or promoting freedom of expression anywhere in the world, especially if this action puts the individual's life at risk. Every year hundreds of events take place around the world to commemorate and to create awareness about the



The German newspaper association, BDZV, runs a contest for 18- to 27-year-olds to create a freedom of expression ad. This one is by Eva Hasel, winner in 2011.



This poster emerged from a World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers workshop for 200 Colombian teachers.



Jordan's Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists featured skits during its 2011 World Press Freedom Day celebration..

Did You Know?

There are many agencies and organizations that monitor, defend, and promote freedom of expression. They offer support and advice in matters related to freedom of expression. You can often subscribe to their publications, join their workshops or even apply for internships. Is there one in your country?

4. Start networking

Do you know if independent media outlets exist in your neighbourhood, town, city or country? Independent media outlets could be a regular newsletter, community radio, TV, blogs, online podcast or video-cast, etc. They could be working on any number of issues from promotion of press freedom to promotion of a traditional art form. Linking up with them helps you familiarize with the work of the direct stakeholders in press freedom.

How to get started?

- Identify as many as you can of the independent media outlets working in your country. List them down, including the contact information and the type of messages there are trying to spread.
- Once you have identified the outlets, try to get in touch with them, create for yourself a network of independent media outlets in your area. Make a collection of their publications available in your school library.
- Create a contact list, put the list online or in your newsletter, and initiate a gathering, a workshop, or a seminar with them!

Freedom of Expression Agencies and Organizations around the World

[* this is not an exhaustive list, indeed there are many more organizations out there working on similar issues]

Accuracy in Media (http://www.aim.org)	First Amendment Center (http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org)	OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (http://www.osce.org/fom)
Adil Soz (http://www.adilsoz.kz)	Fraser Institute (http://www.fraserinstitute.org)	PEN Canada for Freedom of expression (http://www.pencanada.ca)
Afrobarometer (http://www.afrobarometer.org)	Freedom House (http://www.freedomhouse.org)	Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (http://www.journalism.org)
Arab Archives Institute (http://www.alarcheef.com)	Freedom of Expression Institute (http://www.fxj.org.za)	Privacy International (http://www.privacyinternational.org)
Arab Barometer (http://arabbarometer.org)	Frontline (http://frontlinedefenders.org)	Project Censored (http://www.projectcensored.org)
Article 19 (http://www.article19.org)	Global Journalist (http://www.globaljournalist.org)	Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press (http://www.rcfp.org)
Asian Barometer (http://www.asianbarometer.org)	Global Voices (http://globalvoicesonline.org)	Reporters without Borders (http://www.rsf.org)
Association of Independent Electronic Media (http://www.anem.org)	Greek Helsinki Monitor (http://cm.greekhelsinki.gr)	SOJRA (http://www.sojra.org)
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (http://www.cihrs.org)	Honest Reporting (http://www.honestreporting.com)	Southeast Asian Press Alliance (http://www.seapabkk.org)
Canadian Committee for World Press Freedom (http://www.cwpcf-clpm.ca)	Index of Economic Freedom (http://www.heritage.org/Index)	The Alliance of Independent Journalists (http://ajiindonesia.org)
Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (http://www.cjfe.org)	Index on Censorship for Free Expression (http://www.indexoncensorship.org)	The Freedom Forum (http://www.freedomforum.org)
Cartoonists Rights Network International (http://cartoonistrights.com)	Information Warfare Monitor (http://www.infowar-monitor.net)	The International Free Press Soc. (http://www.internationalfreepress-society.org)
Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists (http://www.cdfj.org)	Institute for Press and Society (http://www.ipys.org)	The Media Diversity Institute (http://www.media-diversity.org)
Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations (http://www.cjes.ru)	International Federation of Journalists (http://www.ifj.org)	The Media Institute of Southern Africa (http://www.misa.org)
Center for Social Communication (http://cencos.org)	International Freedom of Expression Exchange, IFEX (http://www.ifex.org)	The Open Rights Group (http://www.openrightsgroup.org)
Committee to Protect Bloggers (http://committeetoprotectbloggers.org)	International Pen (http://www.internationalpen.org.uk)	The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press (http://www.rcfp.org)
Committee to Protect Journalists (http://www.cpj.org)	International Press Institute (http://www.freemedia.at)	Transparency International (http://www.transparency.org)
Common Dreams (http://www.commondreams.org)	International Research and Exchanges Board (http://www.irex.org)	West African Journalists Association (http://www.ujaowaja.org)
Doha Centre for Media Freedom (http://www.dohacentre.org)	Journaliste en danger (http://www.jed-afrique.org/en)	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters AMARC (http://www.amarc.org)
Economic Freedom Network Asia (http://www.efnasia.org)	Latinobarómetro (http://www.latinobarometro.org)	World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (http://www.wan-ifra.org)
Economic Intelligence Unit (http://www.eiu.com/)	Media 21 (http://www.media21geneva.org/)	World Audit Publisher (http://www.worldaudit.org/publisher.htm)
Fédération Professionnelle des Journalistes du Québec (http://www.fpqj.org)	New Europe Barometer (http://www.abdn.ac.uk)	World Press Freedom Committee (http://www.wpfc.org)
Electronic Frontier Foundation (http://www EFF.org)	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (http://www.ohchr.org)	

Identify your sources of information

To know what you can express, sometimes it is necessary to know where your information comes from as well. Knowing your information and where they are from will help you make better judgment. Where are you getting your information from? Also, where are your parents or friends getting their information?

Who's Your Source?

- Family
- Friends
- Teachers
- The Internet
- Books and Magazines
- Newspapers
- Television
- Movies
- Music
- Radio
- Advertisements in the streets
- Theatres, plays, other performances
- Your own observations and your thoughts?

Information permeates our everyday life in increasing amount. There are terms that describe this increase of the quantity of information such

as “information overload”, “information super-highway”, or staying connected everyway anytime”. All these mean that we have more information than we can process.

Tracing your “Information Tree”

One of the ways you could visualize your sources of information is by creating an “information tree”. Imagine the information you have or know are the leaves on a tree. The leaves (or information) come from the branches, and the branches grew from the trunk and the trunk from the roots of the tree. Similarly, information must have come from somewhere. Use an “information tree” to trace the information you have been receiving. How did you get your information? Was it from a friend? How did he or she get that information? Was it from his or her parents or from another friend? But where did the parent get their information? Was it from the newspapers? But where did the newspapers get there information? Was it from their own reporters who were on the scene, from government officials, from public data published? What is the “root” of the information? You will decide how far back you wish to trace the information.

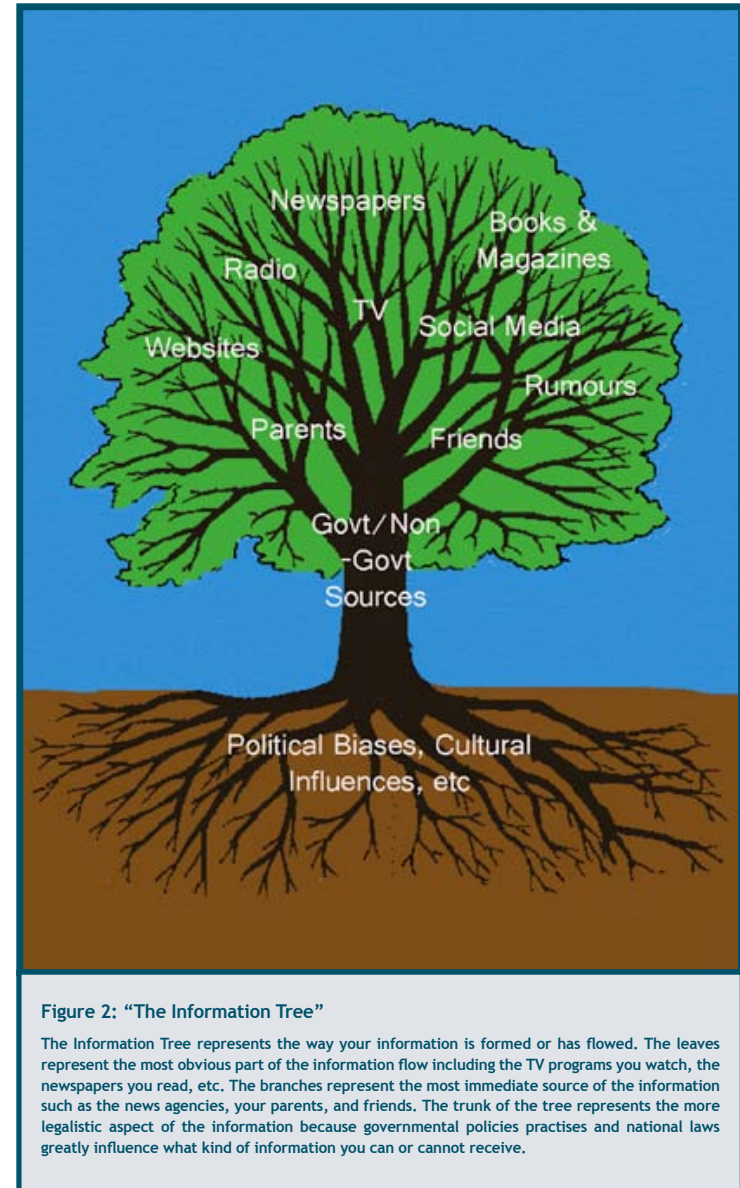


Figure 2: “The Information Tree”

The Information Tree represents the way your information is formed or has flowed. The leaves represent the most obvious part of the information flow including the TV programs you watch, the newspapers you read, etc. The branches represent the most immediate source of the information such as the news agencies, your parents, and friends. The trunk of the tree represents the more legalistic aspect of the information because governmental policies practises and national laws greatly influence what kind of information you can or cannot receive.

What is your plan of action? What will you do to monitor, defend, or promote freedom of expression?

Monitoring...

Defending...

Promoting...

Toolbox VI Activity

What can you do?

Monitor the state of freedom of expression in your country

Celebrate World Press Freedom Day each year

Start networking with local organizations

Learn to identify your sources of information

Trace your "Information Tree"

Toolbox VI Summary

Apathy is a dangerous thing.

Everyone has a part and every contribution helps.