Patrick Meier

Do ‘Liberation Technologies’ Change the Balance of Power Between Repressive Regimes and Civil Society?

October 4, 2011, Cabot 206 – 6:00 p.m.
Refreshments will be served.

Does access to new media and information technology change the balance of power between repressive regimes and civil resistance movements? We all saw what happened in Egypt, Tunisia, Iran, etc. New technologies played a major role in these events and are likely to continue having a tremendous impact in these countries and beyond. Social networking tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and have clearly changed the way individuals in non-permissive environments communicate with each other and the outside world. As one Egyptian blogger recently noted, “We use Facebook to schedule our protests, Twitter to coordinate and YouTube to tell the world.” At the same time, repressive regimes are increasingly censoring and monitoring information flows and shutting down popular communication tools in times of threat, thus imposing information blockades.

Patrick’s research focuses on Egypt and the Sudan, and includes 38 authoritarian states in his econometric analysis. He asks the simple question: Who is winning this cyber-game of cat-and-mouse? Why? And is this likely to change in the near future?

Patrick Meier is Director of Crisis Mapping at Ushahidi, co-founder of the International Network of Crisis Mappers and previously co-directed Harvard University’s Program on Crisis Mapping and Early Warning. He is a recognized thought leader on the application of new technologies for crisis early warning, humanitarian response, human rights and civil resistance. He has consulted for major international organizations including the UN, OSCE, OECD and the World Bank on numerous projects in Africa, Asia and Europe over the past 10 years. Patrick is an accomplished speaker having presented at numerous international conferences including the Skoll World Forum, PopTech, Where 2.0 and several TEDx’s.

He is also a distinguished scholar, completing his PhD at The Fletcher School during which time he was a Doctoral Fellow at Stanford University. Patrick has an MA from Columbia University and is an accomplished author with more than a dozen publications to his name in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters. He blogs at iRevolution.net and tweets at @patrickmeier.

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