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Forward

This issue of the *Amateur Computerist*, Vol. 34 No. 5, is the sixth issue in a series, each containing articles that are the basis for possible chapters for a second netizen book. The articles in this issue provide some analysis and examples of the significance of the discovery by Michael Hauben of the emergence of the netizen and the development of the concept of netizen with respect to politics, policy making and the fight against corruption.

The first article, "Netizens & Communication: A New Paradigm," reviews the launch of the Netizens book and puts the concept of netizens into the context of its time. It explores the development of the concept by the media theorist Mark Poster who was interested in the relation of citizens to government in the age of globalization. Poster wonders if globalization causes that role to shift to netizens. The article also explores

the theory of social scientist Karl Deutsch who sees governing not as an act of power but of communication. In which case, netizen activity opens up a new channel of communication for the increased functioning of democracy.

The second article explores the possible effect that netizen journalism can have on policy and diplomacy. The case study is of the sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan in 2010 and the bringing of that question by the South Korean government to the UN. Netizens around the world challenged the accusation of North Korean responsibility for the sinking. Blog posts and presentations by scientists refuted the evidence of any role by North Korea. The result was that the UN Security Council did not assign quilt but sent the question back to the two Koreas to solve peacefully

The next article, "Proposed Declaration of the Rights of Netizens" asserts the components of what would constitute net access as a right not a service. It places the concept of netizen in the line of the development of democracy along with the U.S. "Declaration of Independence" (1776), the "Rights of Man and of the Citizen" (1789) and RFC 3 (1969).

The fourth article is a speech made by Michael Hauben when he graduated from Columbia University in 1995. It connects his four years at Columbia, with his increased use of Usenet and the internet and the development of the concept of netizen via research papers and active participation on Usenet and mailing lists. He concluded by crediting his four years with helping him realize that the internet and Usenet provide society with a "place where people can communicate with other people at a grassroots level to make their lives better and to attempt to make the world a better place."

The next article shows how Cameroonian sociologist Charly Gabriel Mbock understands that the netizens will make possible "the creation of a global community devoted to a more equitable sharing of world resources through efficient interactions." Mbock looks forward to a new world order based on 'netdemocracy'. Then there would be "a three-pronged system of dialogue; dialogue among the citizens of a given country, dialogue among these 'netizens' and their local or national government, and dialogue among 'netizens.' The world as a global community of 'netizens,' would then, 'at last' possess its long-awaited

engine for effective and social development in Africa."

The final article in this issue, "The Struggle Over Internet Governance and the Role of the Netizen" analyzes the debate among the multistakeholder, multilateral, and netizen models of internet governance. It is a polemic against the 2020 UN "Roadmap for Digital Cooperation" which called for multistakeholder internet governance. In this article, Ronda Hauben emphasizes instead the need to defend multilateralism and encourage netizen participation in decisions concerning the Internet. She cites an open letter signed by 400 NGOs opposing the public-private partnership which the multistakeholder model represents because that model is a form of corporate capture seriously undermining the UN's mandate as a multilateral body. The article concludes that the goal put forward by the UN at its 2003 and 2005 World Summit meetings of a "people centered, inclusive and development oriented Information Society" is a goal consistent with the multilateral and netizen models for Internet governance.

[Editor's Note: This is a slightly edited version of a talk presented on May 1, 2012 at a small celebration in honor of the 15th Anniversary of the publication of the print edition of the book *Netizens*]

Netizens & Communication: A New Paradigm

by Ronda Hauben

I. – Looking Back

Fifteen years ago on May 1, 1997, the print edition of *Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet* was published in English. Later that year, in October, a Japanese translation of the book was published. Today we are celebrating the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of this event.

In honor of this occasion I want to both look back and look forward

toward trying to assess the significance of the book and of Michael Hauben's discovery of the emergence of the netizen. I want to briefly look at what has happened in the interim of these 15 years toward trying to understand what new advance this development makes possible.

By the early 1990s, Michael recognized that the Internet was a significant new development and that it would have an impact on our world. He was curious about what that impact would be and what could help it to have a beneficial impact.

The book was compiled from a series of articles written by Michael and by me which were posted on the Net as they were written and which sometimes led to substantial comments and discussion.

The most important article in the book was clearly Michael's article, "The Net and Netizens: the Impact the Net Has on People's Lives."

Michael opened the article with the prophetic words, which appeared online first in 1993:

> Welcome to the 21st Century. You are a Netizen (a Net Citizen) and you exist as a citizen of the world thanks to the global connectivity that the Net makes possible. You consider everyone as your compatriot. You physically live in one country but you are in contact with much of the world via the global computer network. Virtually, you live next door to every other single Netizen in the world. Geographical separation is replaced by existence in the same virtual space.
>
> [*Netizens*, Chapter 1, p. 3]

Michael goes on to explain that what he is predicting is not yet the reality. In fact many people around the world were just becoming connected to the Internet during the period in which these words were written and posted on various different networks that existed at the time.

But now fifteen years after the publication of the print edition of *Netizens*, this description is very much the reality for our time and for many it is hard to remember or understand the world without the Net.

Similarly, in his articles that are collected in the *Netizens* book, Michael looked at the pioneering vision that gave birth to the Internet, he looked at the role of computer science in the building of the ARPAnet network, at the potential impact that the Net and Netizen would have on politics, on journalism, and on the revolution in ideas that the Net and

Netizen would bring about, comparing this to the advance brought about by the printing press. The last chapter of the book is an article Michael wrote early on about the need for a watchdog function over government in order to make democracy possible.

By the time the book was published in a print edition, it had been freely available online for three years. This was a period when the U.S. government was determined to change the nature of the Net from the public and scientific infrastructure that had been built with public and educational funds around the world to a commercially driven entity. While there were people online at the time promoting the privatization and commercialization of the Internet, the concept of netizen was embraced by others, by many who supported the public and collaborative nature of the Internet and who wanted this to grow and flourish.

The article "The Net and Netizens" grew out of a research project that Michael had done for a class at Columbia University in Computer Ethics. Michael was interested in the impact of the Net and so he formulated several questions and sent them out online. This was a pioneering project at the time and the results he got back helped to establish the fact that the Net was having an important impact on a number of people's lives.

Michael put together the results of his research in the article "The Net and Netizens" and posted it online. This helped the concept of netizen to spread and to be embraced around the world. The netizen, it is important to clarify, was not intended to describe every net user. Rather netizen was the word to describe those on the Net who took up to support the public and collaborative nature of the Net and to help it to grow and flourish. Netizens at the time often had the hope that their efforts online would be helpful toward creating a better world.

Describing this experience in a speech he gave in Japan and which subsequently became the preface to the *Netizens* book, Michael explained:

> In conducting research five years ago online to determine people's uses of the global computer communications network, I became aware that there was a new social institution, an electronic commons, developing. It was exciting to explore this new social institution. Others online shared this excitement. I discovered from those who wrote me that the people I

was writing about were citizens of the Net or Netizens.
[*Netizens*, Preface, p. ix]

Michael's work which is included in the book and the subsequent work he did recognized the advance made possible by the Internet and the emergence of the Netizen.

The book is not only about what is wrong with the old politics, or media, but more importantly, the implications for the emergence of new developments, of a new politics, of a new form of citizenship, and of what Michael called the "poor man's version of the mass media." He focused on what was new or emerging and recognized the promise for the future represented by what was only at the time in an early stage of development.

For example, Michael recognized that the collaborative contributions for a new media would far exceed what the old media had achieved. "As people continue to connect to Usenet and other discussion forums, the collective population will contribute back to the human community this new form of news," he wrote. [*Netizens*, Chapter 13, p. 233]

In order to consider the impact of Michael's work and of the publication of the book, both in its online form and in the print edition, I want to look at some of the implications of what has been written since about netizens.

II. – Mark Poster on the Implications of the Concept of Netizen

One interesting example is in a book on the impact of the Internet and globalization by Mark Poster, a media theorist. The book's title is *Information Please*: *Culture and Politics in the Age of Digital Machines*. The book was published in 2006. While Poster doesn't make any explicit reference to the book *Netizens* he finds the concept he has seen used online to be an important one. He offers some theoretical discussion on the use of the "netizen" concept.

Referring to the concept of citizen, Poster is interested in the relationship of the citizen to government, and in the empowering of the citizen to be able to affect the actions of one's government. He considers the "Declaration of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen" as a monument from the French Revolution of 1789. He explains that the idea of the

Rights of Man was one effort to empower people to deal with governments. But this was not adequate and the concept of the rights of the citizen, he proposes, was an important addition.

"Human rights and citizenship," he writes, "are tied together and reinforce each other in the battle against the ruling classes." [*Information Please*, p. 68] He proposes that "these rights are ensured by their inscription in constitutions that found governments and they persist in their association with those governments as the ground of political authority." [Ibid., p. 68]

But with the coming of what he calls the age of globalization, Poster wonders if the concept "citizen" can continue to signify democracy. He wonders if the concept is up to the task.

"The conditions of globalization and networked media," he writes, present a new situation "in which the human is recast and along with it the citizen." [Ibid., p. 70] "The deepening of globalization processes strips the citizen of power," he writes. "As economic processes become globalized, the nation-state loses its ability to protect its population. The citizen thereby loses her ability to elect leaders who effectively pursue her interests." [Ibid., p. 71]

In this situation, "the figure of the citizen is placed in a defensive position." [Ibid.] There is a need, however, to find instead of a defensive position, an offensive one.

Also, he is interested in the media and its role in this new paradigm. "We need to examine the role of the media in globalizing practices that construct new subjects," Poster writes. "We need especially to examine those media that cross national boundaries and to inquire if they form or may form the basis for a new set of political relations." [Ibid., p. 77]

In this context, for the new media, "the important questions, rather are these," he proposes: "Can the new media promote the construction of new political forms not tied to historical, territorial powers? What are the characteristics of new media that promote new political relations and new political subjects? How can these be furthered or enhanced by political action?" [Ibid., p. 78]

"In contrast to the citizen of the nation," he notices, the name often given to the political subject constituted on the Net is "netizen." While Poster makes it seem that the consciousness among some online of

themselves as "netizens" just appeared online spontaneously, this is not accurate.

Before Michael's work, netizen as a concept was rarely if ever referred to. The paper "The Net and Netizens" introduced and developed the concept of "netizen." This paper was widely circulated online. Gradually the use of the concept of netizen became increasingly common. Michael's work was a process of doing research online, summarizing the research, analyzing it and then putting the research back online, and of people embracing it. This was the process by which the foundation for the concept of "netizen" was established.

Considering this background, the observations that Poster makes of how the concept of "netizen" is used online represents recognition of the significant role for the netizen in the future development of the body politic. "The netizen," Poster writes, "might be the formative figure in a new kind of political relation, one that shares allegiance to the nation with allegiance to the Net and to the planetary political spaces it inaugurates." [Ibid., p. 78]

These new phenomena, Poster concludes, "will likely change the relation of forces around the globe. In such an eventuality, the figure of the netizen might serve as a critical concept in the politics of democratization." [Ibid., p. 83]

III. – The Era of the Netizen

While Poster characterizes our period as the age of globalization, I want to offer a different view. I want to propose that we are in an era demarcated by the creation of the Internet and the emergence of the netizen. A more accurate characterization of this period is as the "Era of the Netizen."

The years since the publication of the book *Netizens* have been marked by many interesting developments that have been made possible by the growth and development of the Internet and the spread of netizens around the world. I don't have the time to go into these today but I will refer to a few examples to give a flavor of the kind of developments I am referring to.

A recent article by Vinay Kamat in the Reader's Opinion section of the *Times of India* referred to something I had written. Quoting my article,

the *Times of India* article said, "Not only is the Internet a laboratory for democracy, but the scale of participation and contribution is unprecedented. Online discussion makes it possible for netizens to become active individuals and group actors in social and public affairs. The Internet makes it possible for netizens to speak out independently of institutions or officials." [See "We are looking at the Fifth Estate," by Vinay Kamat, Reader's Opinion, *Times of India*, December 16, 2011, p. 2, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/edit-page/We-are-looking-at-the-fifth-estate/articleshow/11133662.cms. The quote is taken from "The Rise of Netizen Democracy: A Case Study of Netizens' Impact on Democracy in South Korea" by Ronda Hauben, at : http://www.columbia.edu/~rh120/other/misc/korean-democracy.txt.]

Kamat points to the growing number of netizens in China and India and the large proportion of the population in South Korea who are connected to the Internet. "Will it evolve into a fifth estate?" the article asks, contrasting netizens' discussion online with the power of the 4th estate, i.e., the mainstream media.

"Will social and political discussion in social media grow into deliberation?" asks Kamat. "Will opinions expressed be merely 'rabble rousing' or will they be 'reflective' instead of 'impulsive'?"

One must recognize, the article explains, the new situation online and the fact that it is important to understand the nature of this new media and not merely look at it through the lens of the old media. What is the nature of this new media and how does it differ from the old? This is an important area for further research and discussion.

IV. – Looking for a Model

While I was in South Korea in 2008, a friend asked if there is a model for democracy that could be helpful for South Korea – like in some country perhaps in Scandinavia. Thinking about the question I realized it was more complex than it seemed on the surface.

What I realized is that it isn't that one can take a model from the period before the Internet, from before the emergence of the netizen. It is instead necessary that models for a more democratic society or nation in our times be models that include netizen participation in the society. Both South Korea and China are places where the role of netizens is important

in building more democratic structures for the society. South Korea appears to be the most advanced in grassroots efforts to create examples of netizen forms for a more participatory decision making process.[1] But China is also a place where there are significant developments because of the Internet and netizens.[2]

In China there have been a large number of issues that netizens have taken up online which have then had an impact on the mainstream media and where the online discussion has helped to bring about a change in government policy.

In looking for other models to learn from, however, I also realized that there is another relevant area of development. This is the actual process of building the Net, a prototype which is helpful to consider when seeking to understand the nature and particularity of the evolving new models for development and participation represented in the Era of the Netizen.[3]

V. – Nerves of Government

In his article comparing the impact of the Net with the important impact the printing press had on society, Michael wrote: "The Net has opened a channel for 'talking to the whole world' to an even wider set of people than did printed books." [*Netizens*, Chapter 16, p. 299]

In my presentation today I want to focus a bit on the significance of this characteristic, on the notion that the Net has opened a communication channel available to a wide set of people.

In his study of the Net and Netizen, Michael recognized the new that was emerging. In trying to understand what impact the Net was having and would have on society, he also kept in mind that the technical processes of building the Net were important.

In order to have a conceptual framework to understand what these technical processes are, I recommend the book by Karl Deutsch titled, *The Nerves of Government*.

In the preface to his book, Deutsch writes: "This book suggests that it might be preferable to look upon government somewhat less as a problem of power and somewhat more as a problem of steering; and it tries to show that steering is decisively a matter of communication." [*The Nerves of Government*, p. xxvii]

To look at the question of government not as a problem of power, or of democracy, but as one of steering, of communication, I want to propose is a fundamental paradigm shift.

What is the difference?

While power has to do with force, with the ability to exert force on something so as to affect its direction and action, democracy has to do with the participation and effect of people on the decisions made for society. Steering and communication, however, are related to the process of the transmission of a signal through a channel. The communication process is one related to whether a signal is transmitted in a manner that distorts the signal or whether it is possible to transmit the signal accurately. The communication process and the steering that it makes possible through feedback mechanisms are an underlying framework to consider in seeking to understand what Deutsch calls the "Nerves of Government."

According to Deutsch, a nation can be looked at as a self steering communication system of a certain kind and the messages that are used to steer it are transmitted by certain channels.

I want to propose that some of the important challenges of our times relate to the exposure of the distortions of the information being spread. For example, the misrepresentations by the mainstream media about what is happening in Libya and Syria.[3] The creation and dissemination of channels of communication that make possible "the essential two way flow of information" are essential for the functioning of an autonomous learning organization, which is the form Deutsch proposes for a well functioning system.

To look at this phenomenon in a more practical way, I want to offer some considerations raised in a speech given to honor a Philippine librarian, a speech given by Zosio Lee. Lee refers to the kind of information that is transmitted as essential to the well being of a society. In considering the impact of netizens and the form of information that is being transmitted, Lee asks the question, "How do we detect if we are being manipulated or deceived?" ["Truthfulness and the Information Revolution" *JPL* 31 (2011), p. 105]

The importance of this question, he explains, is that, "We would not have survived for so long if all the information we needed to make valid judgments were all false or unreliable." [Ibid.] Also, he proposes that

"information has to be processed and discussed for it to acquire full meaning and significance." [Ibid., p. 106]

"When information is free, available and truthful, we are better able to make appropriate judgments, including whether existing governments fulfill their mandate to govern for the benefit of the people," Lee writes. [Ibid., p. 108]

In his article "The Computer as a Democratizer" Michael similarly explores the need for accurate information about how government is functioning. He writes, "Without information being available to them, the people may elect candidates as bad as or worse than the incumbents. Therefore, there is a need to prevent government from censoring the information available to people." [*Netizens*, Chapter 18, p. 316]

Michael adds that, "The public needs accurate information as to how their representatives are fulfilling their role. Once these representatives have abused their power, the principles established by Paine and Mill require that the public have the ability to replace the abusers." [Ibid., p. 317]

Channels of accurate communication are critical in order to share the information needed to determine the nature of one's government.[4]

While in general I have focused on the implications of the concept of Netizen that have emerged in the decade and a half since the publication of the print edition of the book, it is also important to realize that not everyone is friendly to the concept of Netizen. An article in the online newsfeed section of *Time* magazine proposed that the word netizen should be banished from the media.

Katy Steinmetz, who does an online column for *Time* claimed, "The word has been around for almost three decades (sic) [it is less than two decades], but the likes of the *Los Angeles Times* were using it as recently as last month. Perhaps it's time to give it a rest … ."

In the same article, she proposed to banish "occupy" and "# [the hashtag]." [See "Poll: What Word Should Be Banished in 2012?" NewsFeed Time.com, *Time* magazine, January 11, 2012, http://newsfeed .time.com/2012/01/11/poll-what-word-should-be-banished-in-2012/.]

The following week she acknowledges that there is very little sentiment to ban the word netizen.[5]

VI. – Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to point to an article in a blog at the Foreign Policy Association website which has the title: "Institutions and New World 'Netizens': Act 1." The author, Oliver Barrett, reminds his readers of a quote from Mohandas Gandhi: "First They Ignore You – Then They Ridicule You – Then They Fight You – Then You Win."

Barrett asks, "Will technology fundamentally change the relationship between the nation state and citizens?" He asks if Net-connected citizens are "a threat or opportunity for government?"

In response to this question, he writes, "But I am not convinced that government officials, even in industrialized countries, are cognizant of how technological innovations like social media have forever robbed them of their positions as trusted sources of timely and legitimate information … . I dare say that netizens have started to short-circuit the politico-corporate communications wiring, raising the political and social justice consciousness of the hyper-connected citizen in a way that might not be in the interest of the governing classes."

"How will governments respond to this situation?" he asks.[6]

"I look forward to witnessing how Act 2 of Revolution 2.0 will unfold," he concludes.

Barrett focuses on the opinions of those in government. Instead I propose that the important challenge is for Netizens. Netizens need to understand the conceptual nature of the information and communication changes represented by the Era of the Netizen so they will be able to successfully meet the new challenges these represent for our society.[7]

Notes

1. In South Korea there are many interesting examples of new organizational forms or events created by netizens. For example Nosamo combined the model of an online Fan club and off line gathering of supporters who worked to get Roh Moo-hyun elected as President in South Korea in 2002. Also, OhmyNews, an online newspaper, helped to make the election of Roh Moo-hyun possible in 2002.

Science mailing lists and discussion networks contributed to by netizens helped to expose the fraudulent scientific work of a leading South Korean scientist.

In 2008 there were 106 days of candlelight demonstrations contributed to by people online and off to protest the South Korean government's adoption of a weakened set of regulations about the import of poorly inspected U.S. beef into South Korea. The debate

on June 10-11 over the form the demonstration should take involved both online and offline discussion and demonstrated the generative nature of serious communication. See for example, Ronda Hauben, "On Grassroots Journalism and Participatory Democracy," http://www.columbia.edu/~rh120 /other/netizens_draft.pdf.

2. Some examples include the anti-CNN website that was set up to counter the inaccurate press reports in the western media about the riot in Tibet, the murder case of a Chinese waitress who killed a Communist Party official in self defense, the case of the Chongqing Nail house and the online discussion about the issues involved. See for example, Ronda Hauben, "China in the Era of the Netizen," http://blogs.taz.de/netizenblog/2010/02/14 /china_in_the_era_of_the_netizen/.

3. See for example "Libya, the UN and Netizen Journalism," The *Amateur Computerist*, Vol. 21, no. 1, Winter 2012, https://www .ais.org/~jrh/acn/ACn21-1.pdf.

Jay Hauben, "On the 15th Anniversary of Netizens: Netizens Expose Distortions and Fabrications," http://www.columbia.edu/~hauben/Book_Anniversary/presentation _2.doc.

4. As Michael explains in *Netizens*: "Thomas Paine, in *The Rights of Man*, describes a fundamental principle of democracy. Paine writes, "that the right of altering the government was a national right, and not a right of the government." (*Netizens*, Chapter 18, p. 316)

5. Katy Steinmetz, "Wednesdays Words: Readers' Choice for Banished Word of 2012 and More," *Time* Newsfeed, January 18, 2012. http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/01/18 /wednesday-words-readers-choice-for-banished-word-of-2012-and-more/.

6. "Will the officials that govern the modern nation state engage their respective societies in meaningful ways, or will they continue to hide their heads in the sand? From what I've learned from history and the very erudite Mohandas Gandhi – I think I know the answer." Oliver Barrett, http://foreignpolicyblogs.com /2012/01/12/institutions-and-new-world-netizens-act-1/, (1/12/2012)

7. See for example: Ronda Hauben, "The Internet Model of Socio-Economic Development and the Emergence of the Netizen," http://blogs.taz.de/netizenblog/2010/11/02 /the_internet_model_of_socio-economic_development_and_the_emergence _of_the_netizen/.

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[Editor's Note: The following paper was prepared for a program at the UN Headquarters in New York City on May 2, 2014. It can be seen online at: http://www .columbia.edu/~hauben/ronda2014/May2.pdf.]

Netizen Journalism
The Emergence of New Forms of News that Can Improve the Policy Making Process

by Ronda Hauben

I. – Preface

In this paper I want to explore the new news that is emerging and how this new form of news is making it possible to improve the policymaking process. This new news is part of the phenomenon I refer to as netizen journalism.

In exploring this question I will discuss a case study as an example

to consider toward looking at the potential for both the present and future of journalism that this new phenomenon represents.

II. – First some background

In October of 2006, I began covering the United Nations as a journalist for the English edition of the South Korean online newspaper, *OhmyNews International*. When Ohmynews ended its English edition in 2010, I became a correspondent covering the UN for an English language blog – http://blogs.taz.de/net_izenblog at the website of the German newspaper *Die Tageszeitung*. Both *OhmyNews International* and my blog at the taz.de website are online publications.

With Michael Hauben, I am co-author of the book *Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet* (Hauben & Hauben, 1997). The book was first published online in January 1994. Then, on May 1, 1997, the print edition of the book *Netizens* was published in English and in October, a Japanese translation was published. This was the first book to recognize that along with the development of the Internet, a new form of citizenship, called netizenship has emerged. This is a form of citizenship that has developed based on the broader forms of political participation and empowerment made possible by the Net.

I want to share a brief overview of the origin, use and impact of the netizen concept and its relation to what I call netizen journalism before presenting a case study about the impact netizen journalism has had on the UN Security Council's conflict resolution process.

III. – Introduction

While now many people are interested in the impact of the Internet on society, pioneering research was done by my co-author Michael Hauben in the early 1990s when the Internet was first beginning to spread and to connect people around the world. In his research, Hauben recognized that there were people who appreciated the communication the Internet made possible and that these people worked to spread the Net and to do what they felt needed for it to help to create a better world. Taking the common network term, 'net.citizen' used online at the time, Hauben proposed that these people who worked to contribute to the Net and the

bigger world it was part of were 'netizens.'

In an article he wrote on the impact of the Net on journalism, he recognized that many people online were frustrated with the mainstream media and that the netizens would be creating a broader and more widespread media. As Hauben recognized in the early 1990s "the collective body of people assisted by (the Net) … has grown larger than any individual newspaper … ." (Hauben, M., 1997b: 233). Predicting the important impact the Net and Netizens would have on the future of journalism and the media, (Hauben 1997a: 3-4) wrote:

> A new world of connections between people – either privately from individual to individual or publicly from individuals to the collective mass of many on the Net is possible. The old model of distribution of information from the central Network Broadcasting Company is being questioned and challenged. The top-down model of information being distributed by a few for mass-consumption is no longer the only news. Netnews brings the power of the reporter to the Netizen. People now have the ability to broadcast their observations or questions around the world and have other people respond. The computer networks form a new grassroots connection that allows the excluded sections of society to have a voice. This new medium is unprecedented. Previous grassroots media have existed for much smaller sized selections of people. The model of the Net proves the old way does not have to be the only way of net-working. The Net extends the idea of networking – of making connections with strangers that prove to be advantageous to one or both parties.

This broader collective of netizens and journalists empowered by the Net are participating in generating and transmitting the news toward creating a better society. This is a basis for developing a conception of netizen journalism.

I want to look at a news event about Korea and the UN in the context of this description of the news the Net makes possible and then consider the implication of this case study for the kind of journalism that I propose netizens and the Internet are making possible.

IV. – Korea

First some background about South Korea and the Net and Netizen. In February of 2003, I was glancing at the front page summaries of the articles in an issue of the *Financial Times*. I saw a surprising headline for an article continued later in the issue. The article said that in 2002 netizens in South Korea had elected the President of the country, Roh Moo-hyun. He had just taken office on February 25, 2003. The new President promised that the Internet would be influential in the form of government he established. Also I learned that an online Korean newspaper called *OhmyNews* and South Korean netizens had been important making these developments possible. Colleagues encouraged me to get in contact with *OhmyNews* and to learn more about the netizens activities in South Korea and about *OhmyNews*.

I subsequently learned that both South Korea and China are places where the role of netizens is important in building more democratic structures for society. I began to pay attention to both of these netizen developments. South Korea, for example, has been advanced in grassroots efforts to create examples of netizen forms for a more participatory decision making processes. I wrote several research papers documenting the achievements and activities of Korean netizens (Hauben, R., 2005; 2006a; 2007a)

V. – Reporting on the UN

By October 2006 the second five year term for Kofi Annan as the Secretary General of the United Nations was soon to end. One of the main contenders to become the 8th Secretary General of the UN was the Foreign Minister of South Korea, Ban Ki-moon. By 2006, I was writing regularly as a featured columnist for *OhmyNews International*, the English language edition of *OhmyNews*. On October 9, 2006, Ban Kimoon won the Security Council nomination. This nomination was to be approved by the General Assembly on October 13. I thought this would be a historic event for South Korea. I asked the Editor of *OhmyNews International* (OMNI) if I could cover the UN for it. He agreed and I was able to get my credential in time to go to the General Assembly meeting when the General Assembly voted to accept the Security Council's nomination of Ban Ki-

moon.

I was surprised that some of the speeches welcoming Ban Ki-moon as the Secretary General elect were meaningful speeches referring to actual problems at the UN such as the need for reform of the Security Council. A significant focus of the comments to the new Secretary General from member states emphasized the importance of communication at the UN. That it was critical for the incoming Secretary General to listen to all states and to hear their views. Witnessing the vote for a new Secretary General who was from South Korea, I wondered if the Internet would be able to have any impact on the new Secretary General and on what happened at the United Nations, since the Internet had been able to make it possible for netizens in South Korea to impact politics.

The very next day, on October 14, the Security Council took up to condemn the recent nuclear test by North Korea. This had been North Korea's first nuclear test. The Security Council imposed sanctions on North Korea, not giving the North Korean Ambassador to the UN, Pak Gil Yon, a chance to respond until after the sanctions had been voted on. When the North Korean Ambassador responded, he referred among other issues, to financial sanctions that the U.S. had imposed on North Korea. No one in the Security Council asked him what he was referring to or how this affected the issues the Security Council had just acted on. (Hauben, R., 2007c)

It impressed me that just as a new Secretary General from South Korea was being chosen at the UN, at the same time sanctions were being imposed on North Korea. The Security Council acted against North Korea before hearing its views on the issue they were considering. This was in sharp contrast to the emphasis member nations put on the importance of hearing the views of all members when they welcomed Ban Ki moon to the United Nations in the meeting just one day earlier in the General Assembly.

The article I wrote for *OhmyNews International* described this situation. It explained:

> The urgent problem facing the UN at this juncture in history is not whether North Korea has developed and tested a nuclear device. It is the breakdown reflected by the lack of participation and investigation by the international community into how

a crisis will be handled once it develops, and whether the concerns and problems of those involved in the crisis will be considered as part of the process of seeking a solution. It is how the UN functions when tensions reach a point where serious attention is needed to help to understand and solve a problem. (Hauben, R., 2006b)

VI. – The Phenomenon of Netizen Journalism

In the research I have been doing and the experiences I have had exploring the potential of what I call netizen journalism, several questions have been raised:

What is this new form of news and what are its characteristics?

Is this something different from traditional journalism?

Is there some significant new aspect represented by netizen journalism?

Traditionally, the press can function as a watchdog for society by exposing the use and abuse of power. Or, the press can act to support the abuse of political power. If netizen journalism can provide a more accurate understanding of conflicts, it can help make more likely the peaceful resolution of these conflicts.

VII. – The *Cheonan* – Some Background

The *Cheonan* conflict which was brought to the UN in 2010 provides an important example of how netizen journalism has helped to make a significant contribution to a peaceful resolution of a conflict by the Security Council. The *Cheonan* incident concerns a South Korean naval ship, a Navy Corvette, which broke in two and sank on March 26, 2010. Forty-six of the crew members died in the tragedy. At the time the *Cheonan* was involved in U.S./South Korea naval exercises in an area in the West Sea/Yellow Sea between North Korea and China. The sinking of the *Cheonan* and the South Korean government's investigation have been the subject of much discussion on the Internet.

Initially, the South Korean government and the U.S. government said there was no indication that North Korea was involved. Then at a press conference on May 20, 2010, the South Korean government claimed that

a torpedo fired by a North Korean submarine exploded in the water near the *Cheonan*, causing a pressure wave that was responsible for the sinking. Many criticisms of this scenario have been raised.

First, there was no direct evidence of any North Korean submarine in the vicinity of the *Cheonan*. Nor was there any evidence that a torpedo was actually fired causing a pressure wave phenomenon. Hence the South Korean government had no actual case that could be presented in a court of law to support its claims. In fact, if this claim of a pressure wave were true, even those involved in the investigation of the incident acknowledge that "North Korea would be the first to have succeeded at using this kind of a bubble jet torpedo action in actual fighting." (Lee, Y., 2010)

VIII. – The *Cheonan* Press Conference and the Local Election

A press conference was held by the South Korean government on May 20, to announce that North Korea was responsible for the sinking of the *Cheonan*. May 20, it turns out, was also the start of the local and regional election period. Many South Koreans were suspicious that the accusation was a ploy to help the ruling party candidates win in the elections. The widespread suspicions about the government's motives led to the ruling party's losing many of the local election contests. These election results demonstrated the deep distrust among the South Korean population of the motives behind the South Korean government's accusations about North Korea's responsibility for the sinking of the *Cheonan*.

In their article, "Blogging as 'Recoding': A Case Study of the Discursive War over the Sinking of the *Cheonan*," Kim, Jeong, Khang, and Kim (2011), document that in the period between the day of the accident, March 26, 2010 and June 16, 2010 there were more than 120,000 posts by netizens about the sinking of the *Cheonan*. Though they reduced these to a sample set of 354, they found that the majority of the posts were critical of the Korean government's claims about the sinking of the *Cheonan*. Many netizens were critical of the investigation that the South Korean government conducted and sought to challenge the conclusions.

Significantly, netizens demonstrated how they were able to have an

impact on the framing of the *Cheonan* story. They also were to have an impact on how the issue was to be treated at the UN Security Council.

IX. – The *Cheonan* and Netizen Journalism

While there was a substantial response to the Korean government's claims among Korean netizens, the issue also spread internationally. Netizens who live in different countries and speak different languages took up to critique the claims of the South Korean government about the cause of the sinking of the *Cheonan*. This netizen activity appears to have acted as a catalyst affecting the actions of the UN Security Council in its treatment of the *Cheonan* dispute.

Among the responses were substantial analyses by non-governmental organizations like SPARK, PSPD, Peaceboat and others, which were posted on the Internet, either in English, in Korean, or in both languages. Some of these online posts were in the form of letters that were also sent to the members of the UN Security Council (Hauben, R., 2010a; 2010c).[1] At the time, I saw discussions and critiques of the Korean government's claims at American, Japanese and Chinese websites, in addition to conversation and postings about the *Cheonan* on South Korean websites.

One such critique included a three part analysis by the South Korean NGO People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD).[2] This analysis raised a number of questions and problems with the South Korean government's case. The PSPD document was posted widely on the Internet and also sent to the President of the United Nations Security Council for distribution to those Security Council members interested and to the South Korean Mission to the UN.

While there were many blog comments about the *Cheonan* incident in Korean, there were also some bloggers writing in English who became active in critiquing the South Korean investigation and the role of the U.S. in the conflict. One blogger, Scott Creighton who uses the pen name Willy Loman, or American Everyman, wrote a post (Creighton, 2010a) titled "The Sinking of the *Cheonan*: We are being lied to." The South Korean government had claimed that a diagram it had displayed at the press conference on May 20 was from a North Korean weapons sales brochure which offered a torpedo similar to the torpedo part it claimed to have found near where the ship sank. The torpedo was identified as the CHT-

02D. In a post he titled "A Perfect Match?," Creighton showed how there was a discrepancy between the diagram displayed by the South Korean government in the press conference, and the part of the torpedo it had on display in the glass case below the diagram (https://shadowproof.com/2010/06/15/the-sinking-of-the-cheonan-we-are-being-lied-to/). He demonstrated that the diagram did not match the part of the torpedo on display. He pointed out several discrepancies between the two. For example, one of the components of the torpedo shown was in the propeller section, but in the diagram, the component appeared in the shaft section. There were many comments in response to this post, including some from netizens in South Korea. Also the mainstream conservative media in South Korea carried accounts of this blogger's critique. Three weeks later, at a news conference, a South Korean government official acknowledged that the diagram presented by the South Korean government was not of the same torpedo as the part displayed in the glass case. Instead the diagram displayed was of the PT97W torpedo, not the CHT-02D torpedo as claimed.

In a post titled "Thanks to Valuable Input" describing the significance of having documented one of the fallacies in the South Korean government's case, (Creighton 2010b) writes:

> (I)n the end, thanks to valuable input from dozens of concerned people all across the world … . Over 100,000 viewers read that article and it was republished on dozens of sites all across the world (even translated). A South Korean MSM outlet even posted our diagram depicting the glaring discrepancies between the evidence and the drawing of the CHT-O2D torpedo, which a high-ranking military official could only refute by stating he had 40 years military experience and to his knowledge, I had none. But what I had, what we had, was literally thousands of people all across the world, scientists, military members, and just concerned investigative bloggers who were committed to the truth and who took the time to contribute to what we were doing here.
>
> '40 years military experience' took a beating from 'we the people World-Wide' and that is the way it is supposed to be.

This is just one of a number of serious questions and challenges that were raised about the South Korean government's scenario of the sinking

of the *Cheonan*.

Other influential events which helped to challenge the South Korean government's claims were a press conference in Japan held on July 9 by two academic scientists. The two scientists presented results of experiments they did which challenged the results of experiments the South Korean government used to support its case. These two scientists also wrote to the Security Council with their findings.[3]

Another significant challenge to the South Korean government report was the finding of a Russian team of four sent to South Korea to look at the data from the investigation and to do an independent evaluation of it. The team of naval experts visited South Korea from May 30 to June 7. The Russian team did not accept the South Korean government's claim that a pressure wave from a torpedo caused the *Cheonan* to sink.[4] Acquiring a leaked copy of the Russian Team's report, the *Hankyoreh* newspaper in South Korea reported that the Russian investigators determined that the ship had come in contact with the ocean floor and a propeller and shaft became entangled in a fishing net. Also the investigators thought it likely that an old underwater mine had exploded near the *Cheonan* adding to the factors that led to the ship sinking.

Such efforts along with online posts and discussions by many netizens provided a catalyst for the actions of the UN Security Council concerning the *Cheonan* incident.

When the UN Security Council took up the *Cheonan* issue in June, I learned that some of the members of the Council knew of the critiques of the South Korean government investigation which blamed North Korea for sinking the ship.

X. – The *Cheonan* and the UN Security Council

After doing poorly in the local and regional elections in South Korea, the South Korean government brought the dispute over the sinking of the *Cheonan* to the United Nations Security Council in June 2010. A Presidential Statement was agreed to a month later, in July. (Hauben, R., 2010b)

An account of what happened in the Security Council during this process is described in an important article that has appeared in several different Spanish language publications (*Guerrero*, 2010) The article

describes the experience of the Mexican Ambassador to the UN, Claude Heller in his position as president of the Security Council for the month of June 2010. (The presidency rotates each month to a different Security Council member state.)

In a letter to the Security Council dated June 4, South Korea asked the Council to take up the *Cheonan* dispute (United Nations Security Council, 2010a). Park Im-kook, then the South Korean Ambassador to the UN, requested that the Security Council consider the matter of the *Cheonan* and respond in an appropriate manner. The letter described the investigation into the sinking of the *Cheonan* carried out by South Korean government and military officials. In the letter South Korea accused North Korea of sinking the South Korean ship. How would the Mexican Ambassador as President of the Security Council during the month of June handle this dispute? This was a serious issue facing Ambassador Heller as he began his presidency in June 2010.

Ambassador Heller adopted what he referred to as a "balanced" approach to treat both governments on the Korean peninsula in a fair and objective manner. He held bilateral meetings with each member of the Security Council which led to support for a process of informal presentations by both of the Koreas to the members of the Security Council. He arranged for the South Korean Ambassador to make an informal presentation to the members of the Security Council. Ambassador Heller also invited the North Korean Ambassador to make a separate informal presentation to the members of the Security Council. Sin Son Ho was then the UN Ambassador from North Korea.

In response to the invitation from the President of the Security Council, the North Korean Ambassador to the UN sent a letter dated June 8 to the Security Council, which denied the allegation that his country was to blame (United Nations Security Council, 2010b). His letter urged the Security Council not to be the victim of deceptive claims, as had happened with Iraq in 2003. It asked the Security Council to support his government's call to be able to examine the evidence and to be involved in a new and more independent investigation of the sinking of the *Cheonan*.

In its June 8 letter to the Security Council, North Korea referred to the widespread international sentiment questioning the conclusions of the South Korean government's investigation. The North Korean Ambassador

to the UN wrote: "It would be very useful to remind ourselves of the ever-increasing international doubts and criticisms, going beyond the internal boundary of south Korea, over the 'investigation result' from the very moment of its release … ."

What Ambassador Heller called "interactive informal meetings" were held on June 14 with the South Koreans and the North Koreans in separate sessions attended by the Security Council members, who had time to ask questions and then to discuss the presentations. At a media stakeout on June 14, after the day's presentations ended, Ambassador Heller said that it was important to have received the detailed presentation by South Korea and also to know and learn the arguments of North Korea.[5] He commented that "it was very important that North Korea approached the Security Council." In response to a question about his view on the issues presented, he replied, "I am not a judge. I think we will go on with the consultations to deal in a proper manner on the issue." Ambassador Heller also explained that, "the Security Council issued a call to the parties to refrain from any act that could escalate tensions in the region, and makes an appeal to preserve peace and stability in the region."

Though at the time, it was rare for the North Korean Ambassador to the UN to hold press briefings, the North Korean UN delegation scheduled a press conference for Tuesday, June 15, the day following the interactive informal meeting. During the press conference, the North Korean Ambassador presented his government's refutation of the allegations made by South Korea.[6] Also he explained North Korea's request to be able to send an investigation team to the site where the sinking of the *Cheonan* occurred. South Korea had denied the request. During its press conference, the North Korean Ambassador said that there was widespread condemnation of the South Korean government's investigation in both South Korea and around the world. The press conference held on June 15 was a lively event. Many of the journalists who attended were impressed and requested that there be future press conferences with the North Korean Ambassador.

During his presidency of the Security Council in the month of June, Ambassador Heller held meetings with the UN ambassadors from each of the two Koreas and then with Security Council members about the *Cheonan* issue. On the last day of his presidency, on June 30, he was

asked by the media what was happening about the *Cheonan* dispute. Ambassador Heller responded that the issue of contention was over the evaluation of the South Korean government's investigation. Ambassador Heller described how he introduced what he refers to as "an innovation" into the Security Council process. As the month of June ended, the issue was not yet resolved, but the "innovation" set a basis to build on the progress that was achieved during the month of his presidency.

The "innovation" Ambassador Heller referred to was a summary he made of the positions of each of the two Koreas on the issue, taking care to present each objectively. Heller explained that this summary was not an official document, so it did not have to be approved by the other members of the Council. This summary provided the basis for further negotiations. He believed that it had a positive impact on the process of consideration in the Council, making possible the agreement that was later to be expressed in the Presidential statement on the *Cheonan* that was issued by the Security Council on July 9 (United Nations Security Council, 2010c). His goal, the Ambassador explained, was to "at all times be as objective as possible" so as to avoid increasing the conflict on the Korean peninsula. Such a goal was consistent with the Security Council's obligation under the UN Charter.

In the Security Council's Presidential Statement (PRST) on the *Cheonan*, what stands out is that the statement follows the pattern of presenting the views of each of the two Koreas and urging that the dispute be settled in a peaceful manner (United Nations Security Council, 2010c). In the PRST, the members of the Security Council did not blame North Korea. Instead they refer to the South Korean investigation and its conclusion, expressing their "deep concern" about the "findings" of the investigation. The PRST explains that "The Security Council takes note of the responses from other relevant parties, including the DPRK, which has stated that it had nothing to do with the incident." With the exception of North Korea, it is not indicated who "the other relevant parties" are. It does suggest, however, that it is likely there are some Security Council members, not just Russia and China, who did not agree with the conclusions of the South Korean investigation.

Analyzing the Presidential Statement, the Korean newspaper *Hankyoreh* noted that the statement "allows for a double interpretation and

does not blame or place consequences on North Korea."(Lee, J., 2010) Such a possibility of a "double interpretation" allows for different interpretations.

The Security Council action on the *Cheonan* incident took place in a situation where there had been a wide ranging international critique, especially in the online media, about the problems of the South Korean investigation, and of the South Korean government's failure to make public any substantial documentation of its investigation, along with its practice of harassing critics of the South Korean government claims. The Security Council action included hearing the positions of the different parties to the conflict. The result of such efforts is something that is unusual in the process of recent Security Council activity. The Security Council process in the *Cheonan* incident provided for an impartial analysis of the problem and an effort to hear from those with an interest in the issue.

The effort in the Security Council was described by the Mexican Ambassador, as upholding the principles of impartiality and respectful treatment of all members toward resolving a conflict between nations in a peaceful manner. It represents an important example of the Security Council acting in conformity with its obligations as set out in the UN Charter.

In the July 9 Presidential Statement, the Security Council urged that the parties to the dispute over the sinking of the *Cheonan* find a means to peacefully settle the dispute. The statement says:

> The Security Council calls for full adherence to the Korean Armistice Agreement and encourages the settlement of outstanding issues on the Korean peninsula by peaceful means to resume direct dialogue and negotiation through appropriate channels as early as possible, with a view to avoiding conflicts and averting escalation.

The mainstream U.S. media for the most part, chose to ignore the many critiques which have appeared. These critiques of the South Korean government's investigation of the *Cheonan* sinking have appeared mainly on the Internet, not only in Korean, but also in English, in Japanese, and in other languages. An article in the *Los Angeles Times* on July 23 noted the fact, however, that the media in the U.S. had ignored the critique of the

South Korean government investigation that was being discussed online and spread around the world (Demick & Glionna, 2010).

In this case, the netizen community in South Korea and internationally were able to provide an effective challenge to what they believed to be the misrepresentations by the South Korean government on the *Cheonan* incident.

In his article "Social Sciences and the Social Development Process in Africa," Charly Gabriel Mbock (2001) proposes that there is a need for netizens in different countries to work together across national borders to solve the problems of our times. Perhaps the response of netizens to the problems raised by the investigation of the *Cheonan* incident is but a prelude to the realization of this potential.

XI. – Conclusion

Much of the research about journalism is concerned with the elements of creating and spreading a narrative, with concepts like "framing," "agenda setting" and "news diffusion" providing a means to analyze and understand the processes that are components of the news process. For example, if the framing of a news story relies on officials of the government or of powerful corporations, the story is likely to be significantly different from where the framing focuses on the perspective of the victim of some abuse by government or corporate entities. Similarly, students or workers are likely to have a different perspective of a conflict from that of an investment banker or real estate tycoon. The broad range of online posts about the *Cheonan* incident provided a diversity of information and views that enriches the news environment. (Touri, 2009, 177)

In South Korea, there is ready access to posting on the Internet and responding to others views. (Im, et al., 2011, 606-607). In the *Cheonan* incident, netizens were active offering their critiques of the summary report the government released. (Kim, 2011, 101) A blogger with a background in reading blueprints made his views known about the illegitimacy of the claims by the South Korean government that the part of the torpedo they produced and the diagram they presented to demonstrate the torpedo's North Korean origins were from the same torpedo. (Creighton, 2010a)

With academic scientists evaluating the South Korean government's scientific claims and finding them faulty, (Lee & Suh, 2010; Cyranoski, 2010) with NGO's studying the investigation claims and writing analyses which they then send to the UN Security Council members by e-mail, these are the signs that there is an important process at play.

What had formerly been a process with static components is being transformed into a process where the components are now dynamic and changing. (Im et al: 608-609)

Traditionally the news event is framed by the journalist and his or her editor. That narrative is then spread by the news channels of that media. The narrative was traditionally static. When the Internet and the netizens are part of the news process, this is no longer the case. (Zhou and Moy, 2007:82-83; Im et al.: 608-609) And the growing power and capability of communication processes and of how the news is reported and disseminated (diffused) has an effect on how policy is created and how it is implemented. (Gilboa, 202: 736-7,743; Touri, 2009: 174)

Those responsible for making policy can be influenced by the news, by distortions spread as the news or by a more accurate framing of the news which the net and netizens at times can make possible.

If it is clear that there are conflicting narratives at the roots of a conflict, the effort to determine the accurate narrative can help lead to a resolution or at least a calming of the conflict.

The widespread discussion of diverse views of the *Cheonan* conflict helped to support the effort by Ambassador Heller to realize that he wasn't to act as a judge, but he would try to determine an understanding of the conflict, of the issues that were in contention. The widespread public discussion in this situation helped to clarify the issues and what was in contention, and hence led to a policy at the Security Council of hearing all sides of the issue, much as the member states of the UN had urged Ban Ki-moon to do when he was being welcomed to the UN.

In this case study of the *Cheonan* incident, my earlier question of whether it was possible for South Korean netizens to have an impact on what happened at the UN was answered in the affirmative. And the South Korean netizens were supported by other netizens from around the world. This is an important example of the UN, of the Security Council, functioning in a way to help to calm a conflict. And the widespread public

discussion online of the conflict was, I argue, a helpful support for this process.

Notes:

1. About letters to UN Security Council, records at the UN show that the practice of sending such correspondence to the Security Council dates back to 1946. This is the date when the symbol S/NC/ was introduced as the symbol for "Communications received from private individuals and non-governmental bodies relating to matters of which the Security Council is seized." The Security Council has the practice of periodically publishing a list of the documents it receives, the name and organization of the sender, and the date they are received. The Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council states that the list is to be circulated to all representatives on the Security Council. A copy of any communication on the list is to be given to any nation on the Security Council that requests it. There are over 450 such lists indicated in the UN records. As each list can contain several or a large number of documents the Security Council has received, the number of such documents is likely to be in the thousands. Under Rule 39 of the Council procedures, the Security Council may invite any person it deems competent for the purpose to supply it with information on a given subject. Thus the two procedures in the Security Council's provisional rules give it the basis to find assistance on issues it is considering from others outside the Council and to consider the contribution as part of its deliberation.

2. PSPD Report that was sent to Security Council was posted online in three parts:
http://www.peoplepower21.org/Peace/584228,
http://www.peoplepower21.org/Peace/584287,
http://www.peoplepower21.org/Peace/584296.

3. The press conference was held on July 9 at the Tokyo Foreign Correspondents Club. The program was titled "Lee and Suh: Inconsistencies in the *Cheonan* Report," http://www.japantimes. co.jp/news/2010/07/10/news/scholars-doubt-cheonan-finding/ #.WX973SmQwdc. See also, (Cyranoski, 2010), (Lee, S., & Suh, J. J. 2010).

4. The Russian team proposed a different theory for how the *Cheonan* sank. They had observed that the ship's propeller had become entangled in a fishing net and subsequently that a possible cause of the sinking could have been that the ship had hit the antennae of a mine which then exploded. "Russian Navy Team's Analysis of the *Cheonan* Incident," (*Hankyoreh*, 2010b). The Russian Experts document is titled "Data from the Russian Naval Expert Group's Investigation into the Cause of the South Korean Naval Vessel *Cheonan's* Sinking." See also "Russia's *Cheonan* Investigation Suspects that Sinking *Cheonan* Ship was Caused by a Mine," (*Hankyoreh*, 2010a).

5. Media Stakeout: Informal comments to the Media by the President of the Security Council and the Permanent Representative of Mexico, H. E. Mr. Claude Heller on the *Cheonan* incident (the sinking of the ship from the Republic of Korea) and on Kyrgyzstan.

6. Video of North Korean Ambassador Press Conference: https://www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary/asset/U100/U100615b/.

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[Editor's Note: The following declaration was written as a New Years message, January 1993 by Michael Hauben. It appears just after page 344 in the 1997 publication o*f Netizens: on the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet* and online at: https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php /fm/article/view/614/535.]

Proposed Declaration of the Rights of Netizens

We Netizens have begun to put together a Declaration of the Rights of Netizens and are requesting from other Netizens contributions, ideas, and suggestions of what rights should be included. Following are some beginning ideas.

The Declaration of the Rights of Netizens

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In recognition that the net represents a revolution in human communications that was built by a cooperative non-commercial process, the following Declaration of the Rights of the Netizen is presented for Netizen comment.

As Netizens are those who take responsibility and care for the Net, the following are proposed to be their rights:

• Universal access at no or low cost.
• Freedom of Electronic Expression to promote the exchange of knowledge without fear of reprisal.
• Uncensored Expression.
• Access to Broad Distribution.
• Universal and Equal access to knowledge and information.
• Consideration of one's ideas on their merits.
• No limitation of access to read, to post and to otherwise contribute.
• Equal quality of connection.
• Equal time of connection.
• No Official Spokesperson.
• Uphold the public grassroots purpose and participation.
• Volunteer Contribution – no personal profit from the contribution freely given by others.
 Protection of the public purpose from those who would use it for their private and money making purposes.

The Net is not a Service. It is a Right. It is only valuable when it is collective and universal. Volunteer effort protects the intellectual and technological common-wealth that is being created.

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF THE NET and NETIZENS.

Inspiration from: RFC 3 (1969), Thomas Paine, Declaration of Independence (1776), Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), NSF Acceptable Use Policy, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and the current cry for democracy worldwide.

[Editor's Note: The following was presented on May 21, 1995 at a party celebrating the graduation of Michael Hauben and some of his classmates

Graduation Presentation
May 21, 1995

by Michael Hauben

My graduation did not end at the May 1995 Columbia University Commencement ceremonies. I did receive my Diploma on May 17, but my graduation was not completed until May 19. On that Friday, I was interviewed about the internet by a Japanese camera crew for a television documentary to be shown on TV Tokyo. In speaking with these people the result of my four years both here at Columbia and connected to the outside world was revealed.

During the interview I described Netizens and the world-wide community which the internet and Usenet News make possible. Netizens are people who use the various computer communications networks and feel they are citizens of this net. People desire to communicate with others around the world. In order to communicate, to share information and to have a discussion, it is necessary to share a common space and to accept differences. People who connect to the internet willingly help others and work collectively to have a place which allows their personal speech and which allows the speech of others. It is in this spirit of an open forum that we are holding this party today. The internet and other communications networks are about people and are about people communicating with each other. It is this understanding and experience which I shared with the interviewers. The internet is not about computers and isolated experiences, it is a very social human experience.

I entered Columbia asking the question "Why are people, so complacent in this country?" I asked this question on my application essay in 1990 considering that people in Eastern Europe and China were fighting their governments for a better life and a better world, while here at home little seemed to be happening to combat the worsening times.

In thinking about this question, I chose the joint Philosophy/Economics major as my prospective major. My introduction to the

Columbia bureaucracy came about when upon visiting campus, I discovered this major had been turned upside down, and was now based in the Economics Department rather than the Philosophy Department and was renamed Economics and Philosophy. The emphasis was: similarly shifted from classical philosophy to contemporary economics.

In arriving at Columbia and setting up my computer account, I connected to the world by using Usenet Newsgroups. My Unix account, hauben@columbia.edu, gave me access to Usenet Newsgroups which are public discussion forums that are circulated around the world. It was in discussions on these newsgroups that I developed my academic study. I was fascinated by the internet and Usenet News and wanted to find out more about this network which connected people from around the world.

It was on the internet and Usenet where I posed questions and conducted research into what other people found valuable about being online and how it was important in their lives.

In researching these questions during different history and literature classes, along with several independent studies, I became an active participant of the Usenet Newsgroups and mailing lists. I submitted questions and thought pieces to these forums, and people around the world responded with their opinions and thoughts. I became interested in the Net itself, and I posed questions about it online. Many people online found they shared this interest, and they connected to me and contributed their understandings of the value of the Net to their lives. Many of these private electronic mail messages and public Usenet responses were extremely thoughtful. I also raised questions about how it was possible for such a medium to develop where people were helpful to total strangers. In starting to research the history of the internet and Usenet News, students and professors who were part of that history sent me personal accounts and supporting documentation.

My papers and research about the internet and Usenet have been guided and helped by many real people around the world. When I finished my papers, I contributed back to the Net by making them publicly available and asking for comments and criticism. In addition to various responses of that sort, I also received much encouragement and support. People wrote thanking me for making my writings available. Also, I received various requests from professors and others to reprint and make

my writings available to classes and other more public forums. This support was of course in addition to help and encouragement from my parents. All of this support came outside of Columbia. There were two professors in the Computer Science Department, namely Professor Unger and Professor Greenleaf, and there was Professor Garton from the Music Department who were helpful, but there was very little help from the university or computer science department as a whole. My connection to the outside world and online community is what has both made my research possible, and provided feedback that this research was important and valuable to others. I have mainly enjoyed the time I have spent at Columbia because of the feedback I received from other people saying they appreciated my effort, and that my writings have been useful for more than just a grade.

Identification of this value to society came slowly but surely. People sent various e-mail messages, and this was helpful, but did not feel to be lasting. These past two years have been marked by various events which have helped to solidify my understanding of the value. The word Netizen started to appear both online and in print. Papers I wrote were published in three journals. Ronda and I gave several presentations in New York City and Michigan from the book we put together. A radio station in California interviewed me last semester. And currently Ronda and I are negotiating with a publisher to publish our online book in a printed form. Lastly, professors from the Global Communications Institute in Japan have been communicating with me about my participating at a conference in Japan later this year. The interview on Friday was the culminating event which identified that this work has been recognized as important.

After four years, I feel I have answered the question with which I entered Columbia. The internet and Usenet News provides a place where people can communicate with other people at a grassroots level to make their lives better and to attempt to make the world a better place. By connecting to others with similar interests, questions and problems, along with people with different understandings, it is now possible to try and do something about the world, and to gain some power in how one lives his or her life.

All in all, while Columbia has been a difficult place to live for the last four years, it has been an honor to be able to contribute to the world

some understanding of how to make a better future.

[Editor's Note: In 2001, the OECD published *Social Science and Innovation*, a workshop proceedings examining the contribution of the social sciences to improving understanding of social and technological innovation processes. Below is a brief review of its Chapter 15, "Social Sciences and the Social Development Process in Africa" by Charly Gabriel Mbock and its view of the value of netizens.]

Netizens Providing Hope for Future Development

by Ronda Hauben

In his article "Social Science and the Social Development Process in Africa" Charly Gabriel Mbock, critiques the structural adjustment model of development that has pauperized Africa. He describes how loans were made by western countries which benefited a small segment of African society and the western nations that made the loans. These left a debt of not only the loan but also continuing interest payments which the people of Africa have to pay back despite the fact they never benefited from the loans themselves.[1]

In place of the "structural adjustment program" that brought the people of Africa so much trouble, Mbock proposes a "democratic adjustment program."[2]

"No one can stop the globalization process," Mbock writes, "But perhaps a world of global netizens could help to mitigate the consequences of the global economy."[3]

Will the situation improve," Mbock asks, "if the future brings 'netizenship' to Africans?"
He writes:[4]

> Michael and Ronda Hauben are of the opinion that the Net and
> the new communications technologies will encourage people
> to shifting from citizenry to netizenry, away from 'geograph-

ical national definition of social membership to the new non-geographically based social membership (*Netizens*, Hauben and Hauben, 1997, pp. x-xi.)

"The dream of worldwide 'netizenry,' Mbock writes, "is the creation of a global community devoted to a more equitable sharing of world resources through efficient interactions."

Quoting from *Netizens*, he writes:

A Netizen (Net citizen) exists as a citizen of the world thanks to the global connectivity that the Net makes possible. You consider everyone your compatriot. You physically live in one country but you are in contact with much of the world via the global computer network. Virtually you live next door to every other single Netizen in the world. Geography and time are no longer boundaries (...) A new, more democratic world is becoming possible as a new grassroots connection that allows excluded sections of society to have a voice. (Mbock referring to Hauben and Hauben, 1997, pp. 3-5)

"If such a global community were to become reality, then community ways would prevail over market values," writes Mbock. "As an efficient and democratic breakthrough, technological innovation would lead to deep-seated social transformations resulting in global change … ." (p. 165)

"The hypothesis of a new world order," he proposes, "is an opportunity for catch-up of countries in Africa to create "a forum through which people influence their governments, allowing for the discussion and debate of issues in a mode that facilitates mass participation." (Hauben and Hauben, 1997, p. 56)

"The outcome would be netdemocracy," Mbock writes, "with a three-pronged system of dialogue; dialogue among the citizens of a given country, dialogue among these citizens and their local or national government, and dialogue among 'netizens.' The world as a global community of 'netizens,' would then, 'at last' possess its long-awaited engine for effective and social development in Africa." (p. 165)

"To Sean Connell," Mbock writes, referring to a quote from Connell in Netizens, "the Net is a highway to real democracy, "a means to create vocal, active, communities that transcend race, geography and wealth," a

mechanism through which everybody can contribute to the governing of his or her country" (Hauben and Hauben, 1997, p. 249).

Mbock argues that:

(A)s a new paradigm shift from citizenship to genuine 'netizenship' is the worldwide innovation that social scientists should herald, and not only for Africa. This implies looking beyond national citizen passports, to negotiate global, 'netizen' ones.[5]

Notes

1. Charly Gabriel Mbock, "Social Science and the Social Development Process in Africa," in *Social Science and Innovation*, OECD, 2001, p. 161. The whole book can be read for free at: https://www.google.com/books/edition/Social_Sciences_and_Innovation/LncFo1_SDxcC. Chapter 15 is on pages 157 to 169.
2. Ibid., p. 160.
3. Ibid., p. 165.
4. Ibid., p. 166.
5. Ibid.

[Editor's Note: The following article analyzes the debate between multistakeholder, multilateral, and netizen models of internet governance, emphasizing the need to defend multilateralism and encourage netizen participation in decisions of Internet governance. An earlier version of this article was published in German in *Telepolis* at: https://www.heise.de/tp/features/Die-UNO-und-das-Ringen-um-das-Internet-5032944.html. This English version is online at: https://botpopuli.net/struggle-internet-governance-role-un/.]

The Struggle Over Internet Governance and the Role of the UN

by Ronda Hauben

In June 2020, the UN Secretary General António Guterres issued a

"Roadmap for Digital Cooperation" to provide a new mechanism for the governance of the Internet. (See also UN document A/74/821[1])

This document comes out of a contentious struggle in the UN over which sectors of society will have the power to influence decisions about the present and future management of the Internet. Yet, the Secretary General's Roadmap neither referred to this background, nor mentioned any of the alternative models or visions for how the Internet is to be managed or how decisions are to be made about its future. Instead the document presented a vague proposal bestowing the power to influence the future of the Internet upon already powerful entities. The vague model being promoted by the UN Secretary General's Roadmap is referred to as a "multistakeholder" model for Internet governance.

Not only has the Secretary General suggested empowering multistakeholderism, which has been subjected to serious criticism and opposition, but this activity to influence the future of the Internet is being carried out in a camouflaged manner. The Roadmap ignores the criticism of multistakeholderism while hiding the alternative perspectives which reflect a process more in-line with the democratic and participatory origin of the Internet and the original vision for its development.

There has been an ongoing struggle over Internet governance at the United Nations for at least 15 years. Some pivotal events in this struggle include the two World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS) held by the UN in 2003 in Geneva and in 2005 in Tunis, along with the 2015 controversy surrounding the 10 year review of the progress toward the 2003 WSIS and 2005 WSIS goal to develop "a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society."[2]

On one side of the controversy has been the desire of many UN Member States to have a shared form of governance in which all states are able to participate on an equal footing. This is known as a multilateral form of governance. Multilateralism is a founding principle of the UN inscribed in the UN Charter.

"Multilateralism" was the form of Internet governance favored by the developing countries represented by the G77 + China at the 2015 UN discussions to review the progress made in the 10 years since the 2005 WSIS. The Statement[3] by the Chair of the Group of 77 explained that "it is important to build a united, equal, open, transparent, fair and balanced

platform which recognizes all governments on equal voice."

The Secretary General's Roadmap replaces a form of governance committed to the people-centered view put forward by the UN at WSIS events with multistakeholderism, a corporate-empowering governance model.

Briefly, the Roadmap proposed by the UN Secretary General promises to connect people around the world to the Internet and monitor the problems stemming from AI and other areas that may accompany Internet development.

In its essence, however, the Roadmap proposes creating a new means for governing the Internet. The proposed governance mechanism will be one that gives power to multistakeholders to decide the present and future of the Internet. This is referred to as multistakeholder governance.

Who are the "multistakeholders" and what is their "stake" in the decisions they are to help determine?

In an article about whether multistakeholderism could be a means of democratizing the decision-making processes about the Internet, Michael Gurstein, a Canadian Internet activist, explained why multistakeholderism is not a democratic form of governance. (See Democracy or Multistakeholderism: Competing Models of Governance.[4]) It is a form, Gurstein wrote, "where governance is by and for those with a 'stake' in the governance decision thus shifting the basis of governance from one based on people and (at least indirectly) citizenship or participation in the broad community of the governed to one based on 'stakes …'." That is, multistakeholderism empowers those with a narrow interest in a particular course of action, not those with the ability to contribute to determining the public interest.

Moreover, as an Internet pioneer from China, Madame Hu Qiheng explains, the public interest needs to be protected with respect to Internet development. She writes (page 1) that "The Internet is a resplendent achievement of human civilization in the 20th century. And that government has to play the essential role in Internet governance … creating a favorable environment boosting Internet growth while protecting the public interest."

However, protecting the public interest is all but gone from the Secretary General's Roadmap.

The Roadmap erases the long controversy around the appropriateness of multilateral versus multistakeholder forms of Internet governance from the historical record instead of clarifying the different perspectives. The Roadmap also pretends that every member of the UN agrees that the so called multistakeholders should have a say in the Internet's future development.

Despite many criticisms of a multistakeholder form of governance, in July 2018 the UN Secretary General appointed Melinda Gates and Jack Ma as co-chairs of what was claimed to be a high-level panel "to consider models ... to advance the debate surrounding governance in the digital sphere." Instead of advancing the public debate by summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of previous discussion at the UN over different models for Internet governance, they created a vague document stating a preference for "a multistakeholder 'systems' approach that is ... a fit-for-purpose for the fast-changing digital age." (See Executive Summary Report of the UN Secretary General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation Recommendation 5B.[5])

Similarly, the UN published a document called the *Recommendation 5A/B: Options for the Future of Global Digital Cooperation*[6] (here after *Options Report*), which calls for the creation of a leadership group "... which would feature multistakeholder representation (including business leaders and academia) ... (who) would bring outcomes from their leadership group to decision leaders." (*Options Report*, p. 12.)

The *Options Report* also calls for the improvement of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) design to strengthen corporate identity under the supervision of the IGF Secretariat. (*Options Report*, p. 15.) The IGF was created in 2005 at the close of the WSIS in Tunis as a discussion and consultative body. The *Options Report* proposes adding to the IGF a leadership group with the participation of the UN Secretary General and the UN's host country's Head of State or Government. (*Options Report*, p. 3.)

One might ask why the UN Secretary General, who is the administrative head in an organization built on multilateralism, is erasing the public record about the important issues raised in the debate between multilateralism and multistakeholderism as forms of governance to be supported by the UN for Internet development.

In order to understand this enigma, it is helpful to consider a

document signed on behalf of the UN Secretary General in June 2019 — agreeing to a partnership agreement between the UN and the World Economic Forum (WEF).[7]

An open letter signed by 400 NGOs opposing this partnership and asking the UN to withdraw from it was sent to the UN Secretary General.

The NGOs letter argued that:

This public-private partnership will permanently associate the UN with transnational corporations, some of whose core essential activities have caused or worsened the social and environmental crises that the planet faces. This is a form of corporate capture … . The WEF agreement with the UN … seriously undermine[s] the mandate of the UN as well as the independence, impartiality and effectiveness of this multi-lateral body.

Disregarding the arguments made by the NGOs and the position on the question taken by the G77+ China, the Secretary General has launched the elaborate Roadmap for Digital Cooperation as one of the six areas in the UN-WEF partnership agreement.

In the debate at the UN over the future of Internet governance in the past, there has been a third model which has also been left out of the Roadmap. This model emphasizes the need for netizens to have a role in Internet governance. The netizen model[8] differs in part with those who argue for governments to have the central role in decisions affecting their citizens. The netizen model sees a role for citizens and netizens to participate in determining what the decisions will be. This model points to the capacity of the Internet to support participatory democracy. As one of the participants in an online portal created by the UN leading up to the 2005 WSIS wrote:

This online forum constitutes an important part of mobilizing efforts for the pursued effective outcome. But in view of the wide-ranging aspects that Internet Governance covers, I believe it is duly important to make it clearer the inclusion of online contributions into the decision-making process.

During 2020, when the UN celebrated its 75th founding anniversary, many voices argued that it is more urgent than ever to support and strengthen multilateralism. This was especially the sentiment voiced by

many of the 193 UN Member States during the September 21, 2020 virtual session in celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Charter.[9]

The goal of a "people centered, inclusive and development oriented Information Society" is a goal consistent with the multilateral and netizen models for Internet governance. This was the goal put forward by the UN at their 2003 and 2005 World Summit meetings. Yet the goal was ignored by the high level panel for digital cooperation in putting forward their recommendations and it was ignored in the creation of the Secretary General's Roadmap. Hence, it is a violation of obligations for UN Secretary General António Guterres to promote a multistakeholder model of Internet governance rather than defending multilateralism and encouraging citizen and netizen participation in the decisions related to continuing and future Internet development.

Notes

1. https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/74/821.

2. https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html.

3. https://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=151215c.

4. https://gurstein.wordpress.com/2014/10/19/democracy-or-multi-stakeholderism-competing-models-of-governance/.

5. "5B: We support a multi-stakeholder 'systems' approach for cooperation and regulation that is adaptive, agile, inclusive and fit for purpose for the fast-changing digital age" at: https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/HLP%20on%20Digital%20Cooperation%20Report%20Executive%20Summary%20-%20ENG.pdf.

6. https://www.global-cooperation.digital/GCD/Redaktion/EN/Downloads/options-for-the-future-of-global-digital-cooperation.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2.

7. https://www.weforum.org/press/2019/06/world-economic-forum-and-un-sign-strategic-partnership-framework/.

8. https://www.ininet.org/netizen-participation-in-internet-governance1-izumi-aizu-deput.html.

9. https://www.itu.int/osg/spu/forum/intgov04/contributions/izumi-contribution.pdf, see also https://www.un.org/en/un75/commemoration.