EMERGING INSIGHTS

07

MEDIA

Trust and Open Data

Global Issues

We are living in an era where the emergence of "fake news" means the boundaries between fact and fiction are fuzzy. Meanwhile, the global media industry is massively transforming and a decline in traditional print media is making way for myriad online platforms. With an array of options we can now be updated to the minute with the latest breaking headline, but easy access to information is also coupled with the rise of malicious actors sowing seeds of disinformation.

This year we have seen new regulations to enable citizens to take back how their information is used and a growing awareness of how social media platforms may play a greater role in disintegrating fake news.[39] According to the Edelman Barometer, there was a 22 percentage point drop in trust of media between 2017 and 2018 worldwide and 7 in 10 people worry about the use of "fake news" as a weapon. In 22 out of 28 market surveys, media is the least trusted institution.[40] The crisis in media today is that its role in informing and fostering civically engaged communities and the ability to hold the powerful accountable, is being called into question.[41]

The Headlines

U.S. Media Among Most Polarized In The World
Forbes 7/27/17

Media must look to itself to restore trust
The Detroit News 8/15/18

Press freedom advocates released after detention in Tanzania
Al Jazeera 11/9/18

Pope Francis Condemns Spread Of Fake News As Evil
Huffington Post 1/24/18

39. Kroft, S. (2018). The law that lets Europeans take back their data from big tech companies. Retrieved from https://www.cbsnews.com/news/gdpr-the-law-that-lets-europe-take-back-their-data-from-big-tech-companies-60-minutes/; Brooks, A. (2018). Facing Backlash Again: Facebook Up Against Political Pressure Over Data, Disinformation. Retrieved from https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2018/11/28/facebook-elections-lawmakers-politicians-russia-regulations

40. Edelman, R. (2018). Edelman Trust Barometer: Global Report. Retrieved from https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer

41. Parthasarathy, L and M. Gordon (2018) The Bottom Up Media Revolution: How Social Entrepreneurs Around the World are Building Trust Between Communities. Michigan Ross: Center for Social Impact, 1.

New Ideas

Ashoka Fellows are working to rebuild trust in the media and champion truth by ensuring journalists have the resources and tools that enable rigorous, fact-based, and reliable journalism. A common theme across the Fellows from this year has been in supporting and developing data sources that are open, transparent, and easily accessible for journalists to be able to serve societal interests.

Data collaborations for change

It is evident that growth in better journalism and media will necessarily involve more cross-border connections. The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project was founded by Paul Radu in Romania in 2005

Bolstering good journalism

In Brazil, **Natalia Viana** is producing investigative journalism in the field of human rights and helping to promote independent journalism in a landscape where disinformation has threatened public trust. Agência Pública seizes the opportunity to do rigorous journalism and produce an essential service to society that focuses on objectivity — using in-depth interviews, exhaustive checking of facts, and powerful text. As has been the common theme with this year's Fellows, she values open data and provides all materials under a common license. Ultimately, this ensures that large, commercial media houses are able to access investigative reports and her organization is able to influence public discourse. Casa
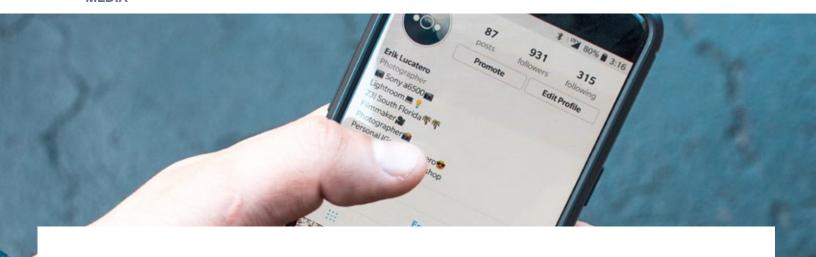

with a goal to create an investigative journalism outlet focused on mass corruption through the specialized local skills and talents of journalists. The OCCRP pieces together local paper trails and links them through technology to unmask corruption and crime on a much larger scale than a local journalist would be able to unearth. Paul is growing an open global "intelligence" agency. His global network of investigative journalists, scientists, programmers and civic hackers builds necessary technology, do-it-yourself toolkits, and provides free access to data, encouraging and enabling everyone to have the data they need to hold public and corporate officials accountable.

Since 2009, reporting done with the assistance of the OCCRP has led to $5.735 billion in assets frozen or seized by governments, 84 criminal investigations and government inquiries launched, 81 calls for action by civil, public or international bodies, 147 arrest warrants issued with 7 subjects on the run, 20 major sackings, including a President, Prime Minister and CEOs of major international corporations, and over 1,400 company closures, indictments and court decisions. Going forward, Paul is working to mainstream these tools and practices to law enforcement institutions so that they can work faster by distilling cross-border organized crime patterns. Paul is modeling how an active citizenry can majorly affect create in the political, business, or criminal worlds.

Pública, an arm of Agência Pública, supports independent journalism by offering a micro-stipend program to independent journalists, incubating new journalistic organizations, supporting experimental storytelling approaches, and offering public conversations with professional journalists on current issues. Like Paul, Natalia is expanding her influence through collaborative models with international foundations, connecting with other investigative journalists across Latin America.

In Spain, **Gonzalo Fanjul** is focused on encouraging a more informed public debate and influencing media outlets and policymakers worldwide to cover social issues in a new way. Currently focused on migration, his organization, PorCausa, brings together solid research, creative narrative, and a powerful network of more than 170 journalists in Spain and the world. Their goal is to influence how people are informed about social issues, to fight destructive myths, and to make public and private sectors accountable for their decisions. They have formal partnerships with national and international media networks like The Guardian, El País, Univision, and The Center for Global Development and key part of their strategy is to support journalists as they work by providing toolkits, subject matter guides, and other data sources. PorCausa builds a modular network, supporting the work of journalists, researchers, think tanks, NGOs, and universities and supports content creation in all forms. This strategy has enabled PorCausa to reach an audience of nearly 50 million worldwide.

Spotlight on:

The Power of Open Data

In the Czech Republic, **Radek Hábl's** work around indebtedness shows another example of how open data can influence public policy and bolster trust. Over-indebtedness affects 10% of the population. By collecting and synthesizing information on the debt problem into a Repossession Map, he was able to visualize the root causes for this widespread problem. With his first Repossessions Map Radek was able to shatter stereotypes about why people are in debt. Previous assumptions gave weight to personal shortcomings, but Radek was able to unveil predatory loan systems with high interest rates, privatization of debt collection, and strict conditions in bankruptcy. His in-depth investigations into debt provide the media, politicians and local authorities with stronger evidence and are enabling a shift in public perception to push for legislative changes.

The Opportunity:

Citizen-led journalism

How can we protect media's role in enabling an active and engaged citizenry?

Our newest media Fellows join Ashoka Fellows who have been working to activate citizenship (594 Fellows work in civic participation) and human rights (600 all-time Fellow elections). The media's influence in our changing world is critical and is one of the key drivers of active citizen engagement with governments and communities. Many successful social entrepreneurs are masters of creating roles for citizens who own a piece of the solution. Our study this year, "The Bottom Up Media Revolution," prepared in partnership with the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan, saw the following types of innovations as necessary given the current situation:

1. **Improving the infrastructure in which the media operates** (i.e. solving for hub and spoke models that limit how information is shared)

2. **Strengthening quality of journalism** (i.e. trainings for investigative journalism; diversity and inclusion)

3. **Ensuring media is a tool for civic engagement** (i.e. citizen journalism)

4. **Bolstering economics of media** (i.e. building in new market models)

5. **Increasing media literacy** (i.e. helping the public gain trust)[42]

It is clear more citizen-led, open source, and data driven journalism initiatives can provide us with blueprints for effective civic action.

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42. Read the study at https://www.ashoka.org/en-US/file/bottom-media-revolution

About Ashoka

Ashoka believes the most powerful force for change in the world is a new idea in the hands of the right person. With this conviction, we pioneered the field of social entrepreneurship 38 years ago. Ever since, we've bet on the optimists and the adventurous among us who see the world not as it is but as it should be. Year after year, they forge new pathways to get us there, growing unexpected ideas into transformative social progress.

Leading social entrepreneurs are not heroes working in isolation. Their success depends on creating roles for ordinary people — parents, refugees, computer scientists, farmers, and young people — to play an important part in the solution. With each new leading social entrepreneur we nurture, therefore, Ashoka is creating a different kind of future: one where each of us looks inside ourselves and sees a changemaker.

ASHOKA

Methods

Ashoka's approach to supporting tomorrow's social innovations

After 38 years of electing the world's leading systems changing social entrepreneurs, Ashoka knows how to find new ideas. For this analysis of our 2018 Fellows we tapped into the resources of our Ashoka process to mine the reports, interview notes, reflections, and writings of our teams across the globe who are expert innovation spotters and who have deeply examined the work of potential Fellows. The learnings, patterns, and insights we cull during the rich Fellow selection process provided the baseline data for this report.

Partner with us

We are always looking for new partners to help us find and support Ashoka Fellows around the world to advance systemic change in new and growing fields. please contact Maria Clara Pinheiro mpinheiro@ashoka.org for more information on how you or your organization can help us continue to grow the largest global network of social entrepreneurs.

Donate to Ashoka's
Global Venture Fund

Global Venture Fund is a pool of philanthropic funds dedicated to finding and electing new Ashoka Fellows. The Fund prioritizes supporting the search and selection of social entrepreneurs in emerging or underrepresented areas of innovation, and under-resourced geographies. Please visit ashoka.org/donate and indicate Global Venture Fund in your donation.

Recommend a candidate

Do you know a systems-changing social entrepreneur who could benefit from the financial and network support of the Ashoka Fellowship? Nominate them at ashoka.org/engage/recommend/fellow.

Everyone a Changemaker

ASHOKA

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