

## Helpdesk Research Report

# Social media and conflict management in post-conflict and fragile contexts

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## Question

*What is the recent evidence of the role of social media in post-conflict and fragile contexts with regards to conflict management?*

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## 1. Overview

This rapid review identifies recent literature on the role of social media plays in conflict management in post-conflict and fragile contexts. Conflict management refers to policies relating to national reconciliation; peace-building; stronger state-citizen relations; and social cohesion and inclusion. In most of the literature, social media was grouped in with new media and information communication technologies (ICTs).

The evidence base for this area is weak despite much enthusiasm over the potential impact social media could have. Very little analysis of the impact of social media on conflict has been carried out. This is noted in a number of studies, including a systematic review (Schoemaker, 2014; Oatley, 2011; Gagliardone et al, forthcoming; Stremlau, forthcoming). A limited number of case studies are used throughout the literature.

Drawing from the available literature, some of the **roles social media has played in conflict management** include:

- In some cases social media and other new media tools have been used to help hold governments accountable, bring citizens together to protest violence, coordinate relief efforts, empower citizens, provide information to reduce tensions, and build bridges of understanding across boundaries (USIP, 2011; Kelly and Souter, 2014; Oatley, 2011; Hoffmann, 2013; Welch et al, 2013; Schoemaker, 2014; Smyth and Best, 2013; Schoemaker, 2013).

- In other cases social media and other new media tools have been used to help polarize society, thwart peace movements, promote violent agendas, and convey inaccurate information (USIP, 2011; Hoffmann, 2013; Welch et al, 2013; Schoemaker, 2013).

#### **National reconciliation:**

- The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) website has helped facilitate post-conflict reconciliation and healing through its participatory design process, emphasis on the process of the TRC's work, and use of multimedia (Best, 2013; Best et al, 2011). However, it was targeted at the diaspora as much of Liberia does not have internet access (Best, 2013; Best et al, 2011).

#### **Peacebuilding:**

- Although empirical evidence is thin, there is positive anecdotal evidence that social media can contribute to peacebuilding by improving knowledge for conflict prevention and increasing contact and understanding between opposing groups (Oatley, 2011; Gagliardone et al, forthcoming).
- Social media has been used to crowdsource information in conflict hotspots as part of various conflict prevention measures in countries like Kenya and Nigeria, especially around elections (Welch et al, 2013; Best, 2013b; Smyth and Best, 2013).
- Social media enables people to engage in their own initiatives for peace and allows for interactive dialogue (Hoffmann, 2013; Best, 2013b).
- However social media can also be used to create divides (Hoffmann, 2013; USIP, 2011).

#### **Stronger state-citizen relations:**

- Social media has opened up new opportunities for public engagement and inter-active dialogue and changed the relationship between states and citizens (Kelly and Souter, 2014; Best, 2013b; Schoemaker, 2014; Schoemaker, 2013). Social media and the sharing of videos relating to things like regime violence and electoral fraud contribute to transparency and accountability, and appear to contribute to new norms against such behaviour (Aday et al, 2012; Best, 2013b).
- Egypt and Tunisia have been used as examples of how the successful use of information and communication technologies seems to be correlated with nonviolent revolutions in particular (Aday et al, 2012). However this does not hold up in the cases of Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, or Libya (Aday et al, 2012).

#### **Social cohesion and inclusion:**

- Social media could offer a platform for people to confront each other and conduct rational discussions to form common understandings, even across socio-economic, religious and ethnic divisions (Schoemaker, 2013).

New media also has a potential role in the **monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** of peacebuilding projects by making it quicker and allowing geo-referencing, although various challenges exist (Költzow, 2013).

Some of the **challenges** identified in the literature for using social media in conflict resolution are:

- The user, rather than the technology, determines whether social media bridges divides, or creates them (USIP, 2011). On social media, individuals can publish anything they wish, information or

opinion, true or false, verified or rumour, at virtually no cost, anonymously or pseudonymously if they so prefer (Kelly and Souter, 2014).

- There is still a digital divide in most fragile and conflict-affected contexts and social media users tend to represent a small elite (USIP, 2011; Kelly and Souter, 2014; Hoffmann, 2013; Smyth and Best, 2013).
- The impact of social media is likely to depend in part on the availability of technology; the type of political system; communication restrictions; literacy rates; and power relations (USIP, 2011; Kelly and Souter, 2014; Himelfarb, 2010; Stremlau, forthcoming).

## 2. Studies on social media and conflict management

### Systematic reviews

#### ***Media and conflict: An assessment of the evidence***

Schoemaker, E. (2014). *Progress in Development Studies* 14 (2), 181–195.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1464993413517790>

This article assesses the evidence used in arguments for the role of the media in conflict and post-conflict situations. It is based on a systematic literature review focused on two broad areas in the literature: the contribution of media in war to peace transitions and the role new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) may have in liberation or oppression in developing country contexts. There are serious gaps in the evidence available, with the majority of evidence located in policy documents and ‘grey literature’.

Only a few studies in the review looked at social media or communications technology, the majority of which focused on the Arab Spring. There were also examples from the Ukraine and Afghanistan. In addition, some studies looked at the use of social media for transparency and accountability measures.

There are two main agendas upon which research and debate around the potential of social media and technology is based. The first is the potential for technology to act as a more general ‘liberating’ force through enabling activist and civil society networks to subvert autocracies and oppression. The second is the debates around the role of technology in furthering the technical functions of good governance, particularly the processes of transparency and accountability.

The literature examined suggests that **social media contributes to social change** as a networked population means greater access to information, more opportunities to engage in public speech, and an improved ability to undertake collective action. Traditional media is more of a one-way communication, while social media and mobile technologies are two way in nature and more free from state control. They can reach large numbers of people very quickly and allows marginalised individuals and communities to articulate political voice and project political ideas in ways that were previously impossible. However there is little supporting evidence found for these arguments and not much analysis of the impact of the use of social media.

## ***In Search of Evidence: Media and Governance in Fragile States***

Stremlau, S. (forthcoming). *Global Media Journal*

This forthcoming journal article examines what evidence exists on media in conflict and post-conflict situations, primarily in Africa. It is based on a systematic literature review. It finds that there is very little evidence to support some of the widespread claims about the importance of media in governance processes including areas such as reconciliation and peace building in conflict and post-conflict environments. There appears to be an approach in many of the papers reviewed for this article of “if-you-build-it-they-will-come”. This approach assumes that access to new media will encourage democratic behaviour and good governance by creating new opportunities to affect the functioning of the state and peace efforts but does not analyse the context and power relationships and the role this plays. Initial enthusiasm for new media as a tool of liberation, development, and peace making is slowly becoming tempered by the reality of politics and the context in which it operates. Understanding the role of media in the broader information and political economy context is the most pressing challenge for evidence-based policymaking.

## **National reconciliation**

### ***Cables, Commissions, and Cybercafés: ICTs in Post-Conflict Liberia***

Best, M. L. (2013). Washington: infoDev/ World Bank

[http://www.infodiv.org/infodiv-files/resource/InfodivDocuments\\_1206.pdf](http://www.infodiv.org/infodiv-files/resource/InfodivDocuments_1206.pdf)

This report examines three different issues in relation to Liberia’s access to and use of information communication technology (ICT): i) the early governance of international connectivity in Liberia; ii) Liberians who use the internet in cybercafés; and iii) the website for the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The case study of the redesigned website for the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) examines the potential of the web to support the work of truth commissions. As internet use has increased TRCs have turned to the web to help publicise their work, disseminate their findings, and (to a lesser degree) interact with their constituencies. Web-tools can provide a platform for victims to tell their story and an opportunity for all affected parties to interact and engage in healing dialog. The website of the Liberian TRC was focused initially on diaspora Liberians (especially in the United States of America) who are typically better connected to the internet. Participatory methods were an important part of the design process, bringing together the relevant user base (Liberians living in the diaspora) and the TRC commissioners and officers. The website emphasises the process of the TRC’s work (testimony, forgiveness, etc.) which helps potential users relate to the purpose of the TRC. Multimedia based imagery was a popular feature of the website.

### ***Reconciliation and the web: A case study of the design and use of Liberia’s Truth Commission website***

Best, M. (2013). Presented at the Sixth International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD2013), Cape Town, South Africa.

<http://mikeb.inta.gatech.edu/uploads/papers/reconciliation.web.pdf>

This conference paper presents the findings of a study looking at the development and use of the website of Liberia’s TRC. The Liberian experience is different to other TRCs. The design process benefited from

employing participatory methods and the emphasis of the website was different to other TRC website, focusing less on the organisational structure and more on the work. This meant visitors developed the connection between the purposes of the TRC and their own experiences during conflict. Putting multimedia materials on the website was beneficial as they were popular. As a result the website supports interaction and rich multimedia which offers a powerful environment to facilitate post-conflict reconciliation and healing.

### ***Rich digital media as a tool in post-conflict truth and reconciliation***

Best, M.L, Long, W.J., Etherton, J., & Smyth, T. (2011). *Media, War & Conflict*, 4:3, 231-249  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1750635211420628>

This article looks at how rich digital media (such as interactive systems with audio and video as well as text) have been used in Liberia to target processes of truth and reconciliation. It is based on a survey of over 100 Liberians in Monrovia, the capital city, who interacted with a rich digital media system and took pre- and post-interaction self-efficacy inventories, as well as a control group. When rich digital media has been used for processes of truth and reconciliation it has enhanced Liberians' feeling of self-efficacy – their self-assessed sense of personal competence to deal effectively with stressful situations. This is important for forgiveness and truth-telling which, in turn, is a fundamental process in reconciliation and healing.

One system used to target Liberians in their own country was called MOSES, for Mobile Story Exchange System. It consists of an interactive computer kiosk which allows users to browse through videos recorded by other Liberians and to record videos of their own. The system serves areas with no communications infrastructure and caters for people who have never used a computer before, are print illiterate, and do not generally have opportunities to engage in national dialogue.

## **Peace-building**

### ***Can You Help Me Now? Mobile Phones and Peacebuilding in Afghanistan***

Himelfarb, S. (2010). (Special Report 259). United States Institute of Peace.  
<http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR%20259%20-%20Can%20You%20Help%20Me%20Now.pdf>

This paper looks at the increased mobile phone use in Afghanistan and examines it as a case study for the use of mobile phones for social change in support of peacebuilding. Mobile money transfer (MMT) applications have proved to be powerful mechanisms for helping to reduce corruption, foster security sector reform, and promote economic development. Mobiles have also played a positive role in providing market information and strengthening local governance and civil society. There are a number of challenges to further expansion: poverty, high illiteracy rates, corruption, an untrained workforce, and lack of security.

### ***Communication for Peacebuilding: Practices, Trends and Challenges***

Oatley, N. (2011). Search for Common Ground & United States Institute of Peace  
<http://cu-csds.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/usip2011vdk.pdf>

This report outlines the current field of Communication for Peacebuilding, and identifies the key trends and challenges. This is a new field with little hard evidence to back up claims for effectiveness, although much positive anecdotal evidence. The report is based on evidence collected through a workshop of experts, interviews with key stakeholders and desk based research. Newer technologies are being used to amplify and complement the messages of more traditional forms of media. New tools for communication

open up new channels of communication and offer new opportunities for local people to become more actively engaged in conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. However they are not the answer for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Challenges in the use of communication tools include: i) the need for collaboration and improvement in the flow of information between organisations; ii) issues of credibility, trust and validity; iii) the need to ensure privacy, security and practices that are ethical; and, iv) challenges posed by environmental and cultural factors.

Social media can contribute to greater knowledge about i) changing conditions on the ground; ii) needs of communities that are enduring or have endured violence; and, iii) increase contact and understanding between opposing groups. Blogs like iRevolution and Diary of a Crisis Mapper are collectives that highlight on going initiatives in peacebuilding and communications. Platforms like Ushahidi also have corresponding blogs where individuals can learn of ongoing initiatives and be inspired by other ideas. Groundviews, a blog in Sri Lanka, supports a rich dialogue about media freedom and issues related to the conflict transformation process in Sri Lanka. Social media provides a platform for individuals to connect across boundaries and to discuss issues that they might not otherwise have an opportunity to voice.

### ***Conceptualizing ‘Communication for Peace’***

Hoffmann, J. (2013). (UNPEACE Open Knowledge Network Occasional Working Papers No. 1). University for Peace.

<http://www.upeace.org/OKN/working%20papers/Conceptualizing%20Communication%20for%20Peace%20OKN.pdf>

This paper examines the assumptions that communication has a similar potential to contribute to conflict transformation and peacebuilding as it does to conflict formation and escalation. The evidence for what is tentatively termed ‘Communication for Peace’ (C4P) is fragmented.

Social media has been hailed as having the potential to have a ‘revolutionary’ impact. There were expectations that it would help overthrow oppressive governments; bring more transparency to international politics; reactivate young people to reinvent political participation; and generally contribute to a more peaceful world. These expectations have been toned down recently. It is clear however, that new technologies are challenging the established conventions around working on communication and providing new fields of application. However, two-thirds of the world are still offline.

New technologies have made it possible for the individuals who are normally targeted for peacebuilding initiatives to engage in their own initiatives for peace on social media. They do this independently of outside interventions using platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to bridge divides between polarised groups, for example. There are Facebook groups dedicated to peace and Facebook campaigns, such as the one started by an Israeli couple which provided template posters with the text “Iranians, we will never bomb your country. We [heart symbol] You” in order to combat what they felt was fear mongering within their own society.

However, new technology also enhances the efficiency of witch hunts, hate speech and incitement. There are also risks as a result of new technology that vital information on individuals and groups can be assembled and used by repressive actors to track opponents.

### ***The Impact of New Media on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management***

United States Institute of Peace (USIP). (2011). (Study Series on Peace and Conflict).

Washington: United States Institute of Peace

[http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2011-2012\\_study-guide\\_final\\_full.pdf](http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2011-2012_study-guide_final_full.pdf)

This study guide provides a brief summary of the key issues surrounding the topic of new media and peacebuilding and conflict management. The impact of the changes in communication technology are likely to depend, in part, on the availability of the technology and the type of political system and communications restrictions. Despite the tremendous growth of mobile phone coverage there is still a significant digital divide. There are some who emphasize how new media tools have been used to hold governments accountable, bring citizens together to protest violence, coordinate relief efforts, empower citizens, and build bridges of understanding across boundaries. Others question whether new media really impacts political reform and point to its role in polarizing society, thwarting peace movements, promoting violent agendas, conveying inaccurate information, and perhaps providing totalitarians with an unprecedented tool for controlling their citizens. **New media can both bridge divides, or create them, depending on who uses them.**

### ***In Search of Local Knowledge on ICTs in Africa***

Gagliardone, I., Kalemera, A., Kogen, L., Nalwoga, L., Strelau, N., & Wairagala, W.

(forthcoming). *International Journal of Communication*

This forthcoming journal article reviews and compares literature on the role of ICTs in statebuilding and peacebuilding in Africa, with a particular focus on Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia. The article examines whether claims of the transformative power of ICTs are backed by evidence and whether local knowledge is taken into consideration by ICT-based initiatives. Empirical evidence on the successful use of ICTs to promote peacebuilding and statebuilding is thin. The literature examined is found to exhibit a simplistic assumption that ICTs will drive democratic development without sufficient consideration of how ICTs are actually used by the public.

The evidence on the role of ICTs in peacebuilding efforts is sparse. Future work in this area would benefit from looking at how ICT users are taking advantage of ICTs to facilitate post-conflict peacebuilding, healing, and justice. The majority of the documents surveyed supported the potential of ICTs to promote peace but tended to mainly provide descriptions of how the technologies were or might be used, with little evidence of actual impact. Some examples of peacebuilding efforts using ICTs include Uchaguzi, a system put in place just before the 2010 referendum in Kenya to avert a potential crisis. It was designed to collect reports of violence around Kenya and map them online. Similar crowdsourcing projects were used into monitor elections in Uganda and Ethiopia. One evaluation observed that while the 2013 elections in Kenya were largely peaceful, much of the “violence” (in terms of hate-speech) shifted to the online space, particularly Facebook and Twitter.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation of Peacebuilding: The Role of New Media***

Költzow, S. (2013). (Paper No. 9). Geneva Peacebuilding Platform.

<http://www.reach-initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/PP-09-Peacebuilding-and-ME-Koeltzow-final-September-2013.pdf>

This paper looks at the use of social media, ICTs and mobile phones in peacebuilding. In recent years many organisations have come to believe new media has a high potential for peacebuilding despite the lack of hard evidence of its usefulness. SMS is used more widely in much of the developing world than internet-

based tools such as Facebook, YouTube or Twitter. The paper focuses on the potential of new media to improve peacebuilding through supporting monitoring and evaluation and the key challenges, opportunities and lessons for its use.

New media is not the solution to the systemic and structural challenges of M&E for peacebuilding. However, it can be used as a tool to help the process through digital surveys and direct reporting. The benefits of using new media for M&E of peacebuilding projects are that it helps gain time which means decisions based on evidence can be made more quickly. Peacebuilding organisations have been criticised in the past for taking too long to conduct evaluations. Other benefits are that it saves money, improves data accuracy, reaches more beneficiaries, and allows for geo-referencing. A number of challenges to using new media for M&E also exist, which include: lack of media literacy; poor infrastructure and connectivity; political and cultural obstacles to use, especially in relation to gender and literacy levels; unsuitable hardware; 'elite capture'; data verification; information overload; assessment fatigue; and security concerns.

### ***Peacebuilding in a Networked World***

Best, M. (2013b). *Communications of the ACM*, 56:4, 30-32

<http://cacm.acm.org/magazines/2013/4/162500-peacebuilding-in-a-networked-world/abstract>

This article examines how computing and communication technologies are used for peacebuilding in fragile and conflict affected countries. Access to mobile phones and social media is expanding in these countries. While traditional media and peacebuilding was more about transmitting a carefully crafted donor message, social media demonstrates the importance of interactive dialogue in peacebuilding efforts.

Social media can support political developments and democratic reforms, including elections. Software developed by Georgia Tech for election and conflict monitoring, which can aggregate and analyse multiple social media streams including Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and more, was used during the 2011 Nigerian elections. This monitored and flagged up ballot and election irregularities and the outbreak of violence which occurred. This helped identify and initiate responses to the electoral irregularities and conflict. This article concludes that these social media tools helped return the country to peace. Much more work is needed to address the challenges and possibilities of information and communication technologies and peacebuilding.

## **Stronger state-citizen relations**

### ***Conceptualising the Web for Post-Conflict Governance Building in Fragile States***

Welch, J.R., Halford, S., & Weal, M. (2013). *Peacebuilding*, 1-13. (Submitted)

[http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/363004/1/Web-post-conflict-JWelch\\_submission.pdf](http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/363004/1/Web-post-conflict-JWelch_submission.pdf)

This paper examines how the web is used in contexts of post-conflict governance building in fragile states using various different case studies. Recent pilot projects conducted by international organisations and others in the related areas of conflict prevention and governance building in developing countries provide evidence of the importance of the web in post-conflict settings and the urgent need for a deeper, more critical understanding of these uses. The web can be conceptualised in six different ways: i) the web of (big) data; ii) the web as a management tool; iii) an information sharing tool; iv) an alternative space; v) an agent of social change; and vi) as empowerment. The web has the potential to both help and hinder post-conflict governance.

Social media has an important role to play in information sharing, social change and empowerment. It has been used to crowdsource information in potential conflict hotspots as part of various conflict prevention measures. There are some worries about the sensitivity of security related information and the potential negative consequences if people intentionally provide misinformation.

### ***New media and conflict after the Arab Spring***

Aday, S., Farrell, H., Lynch, M., Sides, J., & Freelon, D. (2012). (Blogs and Bullets II). United States Institute of Peace

<http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW80.pdf>

This report analyses the role of social media in the Arab Spring and its aftermath using a dataset from bit.ly. It seems that new media which used bit.ly linkages did not play a significant role in the collective action which swept the Arab world in 2011. This does not necessarily mean that social media is unimportant. It acted as a megaphone to distribute information outside of the countries involved.

There is some argument, using the examples of Egypt and Tunisia, that the successful use of information and communication technologies seems to be correlated with nonviolent revolutions in particular. However, the report finds that this does not hold up with the course of events and outbreaks of violence in Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, or Libya.

The sharing of videos of regime violence has led to a new transparency which has contributed to an increasingly robust new norm against a certain degree of regime violence. The effects though are not obvious: condemnation has not stopped the killing in Syria, expectations of intervention may actually encourage protestors to turn to violence, and double standards or failure to enforce sanctions could easily undermine the emergent norm.

It is important to determine how much social media content about regime violence affects the decisions of government officials, nongovernmental organizations, and others who may put external pressure on a repressive regime.

### ***Tweet to Trust: Social Media and Elections in West Africa***

Smyth, T.N., & Best, M.L. (2013). Presented at the Sixth International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD2013), Cape Town, South Africa.

<http://mikeb.inta.gatech.edu/uploads/papers/tweet.trust.pdf>

This conference paper presents the findings of a qualitative dual case study of social media use during general elections in Nigeria and Liberia in 2011. There are suggestions that social media helps to overcome previous scarcity of information during the electoral process, playing a watch-dog role and leading to increased transparency and reduced tensions around the credibility of election results. Social media based monitoring shows encouraging signs of robustness concerning information quality and mobility. Given sufficient civil-society coordination, social media may be an effective tool for electoral scrutiny and can help build public trust in the electoral process. However, currently social media is not used by the vast majority of average Nigerians or Liberians which makes making general statements about social media's impact on West African elections difficult, although the potential to build wider public trust is there.

## Social cohesion and inclusion

### ***Media and fragile states: Conference report***

Schoemaker, E. (2013). (WP1278). Wilton Park.

<https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP1278-Report.pdf>

This conference report presents the discussion of donors, policy makers, academics, and experts from fragile states as well as from the media freedom and development communities, in relation to the media in fragile states. It maps the changes in media and communication and how they have impacted on access to, and control of, information in fragile states. It seeks to explore whether these increase or reduce fragility. There are big differences of opinion about the media freedom and freedom of expression in fragile states. Some fear it will exacerbate the dangers of conflict, while others feel it is important for ensuring the accountability of the state and democratic, developmental and social benefits. More discussion and focus on what can be done is required.

Debates which take place on social media could be a way for people to confront each other and conduct rational discussions to form common understandings, even across socio-economic, religious and ethnic divisions. Social media and mobile technology have opened up the public sphere in fragile states through new media environments. Control of access to information is made harder as a result. However, there are also concerns about the way states use social media to monitor and target opposition. Social media poses some challenges for the financial sustainability of media in fragile states. Donors and media practitioners need to engage with social media based initiatives.

## Post-conflict reconstruction

### ***The Role of Information and Communication Technologies in PostConflict Reconstruction***

Kelly, T., & Souter, D. (2014). Washington, D.C.: The World Bank

<http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/978-1-4648-0074-0>

This report looks at the relationship between information and communication technologies and post conflict reconstruction, especially at how ICTs can be used by governments and donors to support the transition from violence to stability. It draws on five case studies from Afghanistan, Liberia, Timor-Leste, Rwanda and Tunisia. However, many of the contexts discussed in the report pre-date the development of mass market mobile telephones and social media. Each country has its own underlying communications environments which impact on the role of ICTs and post conflict reconstruction. ICT strategies for reconstruction need to be rooted in specific national contexts and integrated with other stabilization and reconstruction initiatives.

The report looks at how ICTs can contribute to stabilization, infrastructure reconciliation, public engagement and development. The restoration of telecommunications itself plays a part in building public confidence that a country is returning to normality. Mobile telephones can restore the bonds that make society work by helping make people feel safer and rebuild social relationships. The communications sector can also help the economic sector recover. ICTs can also help provide information and monitoring to provide early warning of potential trouble. Social media and ICTs have made it much easier for people to express and share their views in public, opening up new opportunities for public engagement. This complicates the management of the relationship between stabilization and liberalisation. Social media and

ICTs enable individuals to publish anything they wish, information or opinion, true or false, verified or rumour, at virtually no cost, anonymously or pseudonymously if they so prefer. They extend the ability of individuals and groups to organize activities which may be supportive or hostile to reconstruction and peacebuilding. While they extend participation, however, these innovations do not necessarily increase its representativeness as its users tend to be drawn from a limited group. ICTs can also enhance transparency and accountability. It is important not to neglect traditional media which remains an important source of information for many.

### 3. Additional information

#### Key websites

- idealware – Building Peace through Information and Communications Technologies:  
<http://www.idealware.org/articles/building-peace-through-information-and-communications-technologies>
- United States Institute of Peace – Media, Technology and Peacebuilding: The power of media to build peace  
<http://www.buildingpeace.org/think-global-conflict/issues/media-technology-and-peacebuilding>

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