TRAINING MANUAL TO ENHANCE MEDIA FREEDOM THROUGH AN ENABLING MEDIA REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT IN LIBERIA

PC 1
A PROJECT SUPPORTED BY THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN MONROVIA AND IMPLEMENTED BY CENTER FOR MEDIA STUDIES AND PEACEBUILDING (CEMESP)
**Contextual Background**

The instructional manual for media capacity development in boosting freedom of expression anchored on responsibility is a product of well-thought-out conversation and commitment of the British Council as funder to reinforce the Liberian Media Development project by courtesy of Internews-USAID. Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding is implementing the capacity building objectives set out. Media reforms have been underway in Liberia since 2008. Looking back from then to now can reveal considerable progress in the midst of the challenges that are still there to resolve. Key progress areas worth highlighting include the passage of the FOI Act in 2010. It has been a monumental feat leading to the establishment if the Independent Information Commission, charged with the task of ensuring that the said law will have its desired effect in promoting transparency and accountability. Where it is proven fact the law is not media oriented for the exclusive use of journalists. FOI is ought to be a tool at the disposal of the broader citizenry, but it has turned to be a source of content development for media driven by the need for data to uncover corruption. This is an ideal that has not been the reality. For evidence shows that journalists requests for information from various ministries, agencies and departments have not been responded to. Even where complaints have been filed about those defaulting institutions, there is hardly any redress action from either the IIC or the judiciary. The general picture is not difficult to grasp in relation to the FOI: that application of the law is constrained in spite of the works that have gone into creating the environment for institutions to come to speed with their disclosure obligation and with assigned Public Information Officers now deployed to aid the process.

The Liberia Media Development project that has been spear-headed by Internews has been valuable to the media reform process. The stakeholder approach that USAID funded effort has brought to bear in the passage of the Kamara Abdullai Kamara Press Freedom Act stems from the Declaration of Table Mountain that former President Sirleaf set into motion in 2012. It is remarkable that new government of President Weah has demonstrated astute state manliness in expunging aspects of the penal code that had kept speech offences. Outstanding bills at the legislature of immense public interest include the public service broadcaster awaiting enactment to make the Liberia Broadcasting System more accessible by all regardless of political leaning. There is also the Community Radio Sustainability bill to be enacted in ensuring that the greater segments of the population in the counties that rely on community radio can better benefit from that channel of communication.

The experimentation with a National Media Council as a regulatory framework to replace the precursor but ineffective Grievance and Ethics Committee has not been very much up to the task. One can look back at the recent unfortunate incident involving pro-government Freedom Radio and the opposition Root FM radio warfare that the Media Council under the auspices of the Press Union of Liberia could not manage, leading to state closure of the Root FM. It shows the country is still groping in the dark to find a regulatory model that can command obedience from all stakeholders.

The country’s citizen journalism frenzy at the level of social media Facebook has become something of mixed blessing. The access that the space provides for political, social and economic
debates and conversation is just unprecedented. But this comes with price of coping with vitriolic and profane contents capable of stirring dissension. The problem is the country is yet to come out with legislations to govern the cyberspace in the face of the tidal wave of hacking, privacy protection and other crimes.

**Introduction**

The manual has been divided into four modules starting with it a general guide on how to proceed with the delivery of the modules on media reforms and FOI law application for investigative and evidence based reporting, the need for an effective regulatory mechanism and insight into cyber security in the face of vibrant social media frenzy that has gripped the country and stirring concerns from many sectors.

No training is exhaustive to warrant its exclusive usage in driving a training need. This thought must be applied in this case- so that the trainers need to be resourceful to generate relevant materials that can add value to what has been put together. Creating an enabling environment for media freedom based on an effective regulatory mechanism is the objective that this training package seeks to contribute to in Liberia. Media rights and responsibilities are interlinked. This consideration is key in the conversation for a strengthened media that can protect the fragile democratic space in Liberia. Media stakeholders are not in disagreement on the issue: that ethical comportment of journalists can inspire confidence in the work they do. With codes of practice developed there have to be accompanying mechanisms to seek redress outside of state regulation. It is hoped that the issues that are covered in this manual will provide insights that can inspire further stakeholders’ convergence around the need to chart a workable and effective media regulatory mechanism to reinforce the existing media council.

Grated that the state has been magnanimous to remove criminal charges for speech related offences, journalists have the moral obligation to adhere to the code of practice that the Press Union of Liberia and other actors have formulated over the years. This is a yearning that has turned out to be dicey. For understanding the dynamics of ethical compliance requires a reflection on media ownership and funding patterns as well as the disturbing poor reward system for journalists. The truth is many of the politicians are manipulating the press to pursue self-serving intentions that go against objectivity, accuracy and fairness. It is because most journalists are not well paid against the dictate of collective bargaining agreement long proposed albeit ignored that journalists works leaves much to be desired. The public trust that comes with media believability cannot be taken for granted. It is in this regard that the little gains that have been recorded in media reforms have to be harnessed in engagements that will seek to internalize values in ethical underpinnings, improved media contents that will lead to better appreciation of the role of media in a fragile democracy.

It is in this vein that this training manual with support from the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Monrovia has been developed around key themes that are invaluable to deepening journalistic practice and enhancing newsroom effectiveness. This instructional guide is for journalists, aspiring journalist and civil society actors to be grounded on the issues that are evolving in media
development based on best practice and adaptive professional requirements to inspire well-articulated contents on issues of public interest in both traditional and new media spaces.

Module 1
Facilitator’s Guide and Setting the Stage

Time Alotted: 2hrs

The point must be noted that training is not teaching. Training is expansion or consolidation of technical skills to put knowledge into practice. The manual is thus designed for a workshop not a classroom situation. It makes the assumption that the training recipients have some level of understanding and experience that will be harnessed beyond the content provided. In effect, the participants (both trainers and trainees) are the main resource and their experiences are the main training material.

With that background it is expected that that the trainers will use their professional tact and expertise create an engaging and action oriented delivery and presentation pattern. This means they have to shed off all air of superiority and know-it-all approach in the ensuing sessions.

The facilitator therefore ought to be sensitive to appropriate language, timing, setting, materials needed, examples and content of each module.

The techniques required must range from mini lectures, brainstorming, discussion, scenario setting, and breakout group sessions.

Objectives of the training

This training manual is designed to among other things fulfil the following objectives:

- Review media laws and reform processes that have taken place and are underway
- Develop skills in utilizing FOI Law for evidence based reporting
- Compare and contrast media regulatory best practices to shape thoughts in formulating an ideal model for the Liberian context
- Provide insight on cybercrimes and effective online content development and sharing
Materials Needed

- Flip chart and marker
- Flip chart stand
- Power Point Projector
- Laptop
- Notebook and pens
- Handout of concepts to be shared among trainees after each session
- Pictorials and visual images to convey key messages
- Training Expectation and Ground Rules

Training Expectation and Ground rules

This aspect of the package affords the trainer to set the stage. This must affect the seating space that is arranged to allow ease of movement of the facilitator and participants to write without strains. Where flip chart is used it must be placed in vantage position for participants to see what is written or displayed.

After the trainer has familiarized him/herself with what is required for effective facilitation of the training package, the next line of action is the setting of stage. The seating arrangement must have been put in place in form that will ensure ease for the trainees to write and see what are displayed on walls or on flip chart clearly and the ease of movement of the trainer to stimulate the needed energy and participation of all.

Then the moment of self-introduction follows. It might take several forms such as with an opening formalities where the lead trainer succinctly explains the overview of the training after introducing himself by name and professional experience. The trainees might preferably be inspired by the facilitator to start the process of engagement. One person speaks to the other person, gets his or her personal details-name, assignment area and interest in life generally recorded in notebooks. They mutually introduce each other

Recap

This session serves as a refresher of the previous day. It must be observed at the start of each day. It is proposed that at the beginning of the training participants are asked to form a circle with pens and notebook. The facilitator will have a small object like Teddy Bear in hand. He/she gives it to one of the participants in the circle, the participants with the Teddy bear is asked to state what she-he understood most the previous day. Afterwards the participant with the Teddy bear makes a point and passes the object in the circle to everyone in the circle to say what the understood best and least. The process continues in that order until everybody has something to say. The facilitator then do a summary of all points and makes the connection between the previous day and the next day session.
Module Two
Insight into Digital Security

Time Allotted 2hrs

Module Objectives
At the end of the training participants will be in position to:
- Understand the concept of digital rights and security issues
- Brainstorm and bring out contextual digital security issues in
- Adopt safety tips in dealing with cyber security threats in effectively using social media and personal online channels of communication

Content
- Definition of digital security
- Legal frameworks for data protection in Liberia
- Best practice safety tips for digital security

Methodology
- Short lectures
- Case studies
- Small group and plenary discussion
- Role plays

Learning Resources and materials needed
- Digital security expert
- Relevant handouts
- Laptops and power point projector
- Flip chart and marker
Introduction

Journalists in Liberia, as it exists everywhere, are supposed to be conscious about the threats that abound in the digital space. The high traffic on social media and use of personal emails have created security concerns from various underground forces in hackers and malware attackers. In this circumstance, protecting your digital profile, your data, and the data of your sources should always be an important part of your safety plans. Digital attacks can have real-life consequences for you and the people you work with, and a failure to safeguard yourself against attack could mean that you are putting yourself, your sources, and your colleagues at risk. But Digital Security doesn’t have to be difficult. Even taking small, simple steps can make a huge difference to your safety in the digital space.

Session One

Definition of digital security

Time Allotted 30 Minutes

For starters, the trainer to do the following

Step 1: pose a question to participants to state or explain what they know about digital security.

Step 2: list their inputs on the flip chart and discuss it

Step 3: present the best practice definition to add value to the contributions from the plenary

Best Practice Definition: Cyber security or information technology security are the techniques of protecting computers, networks, programs, and data from unauthorized access or attacks that are aimed for exploitation. In other words, Digital Security is the protection of one’s digital personality, as it represents the physical identity on the network you are operating on or the internet service in use. Digital Security includes the tools which one uses to secure his/her identity, assets, and technology in the online and mobile world. Simply put, let’s think of digital personality as the human body. We have a duty to protect our body from harm which we could say is digital security. There are a number of methods

CASE STUDY

Blamo Boro is a journalist who uses social media platforms to meet new people. On Facebook he has about 2000 friends; on Twitter he has 5000 followers and a generous amount of Instagram followers. He puts up his email address and telephone numbers on all these platforms. He receives an email from one of his Twitter followers about a new case he might be interested in with a link attached to view more details. Unknown to him, it was a scam in form of phishing, where they would have access to all his login information and bank details which he had stored on his email draft folder. This was how Blamo Boro was ripped off of about 1000 USD. The journalist is not alone in this predicament. Many internet users have found themselves in his shoes simply because they took their digital security for granted. This example stresses the need to secure yourself online.
Areas to take note of are:

1. Application security
2. Information security
3. Disaster recovery
4. Network security

Application security encompasses measures or counter-measures that are taken during the development life-cycle to protect applications from threats that can come through flaws in the application design, development, deployment, upgrade or maintenance. Some basic techniques used for application security are:

a) Input parameter validation,

b) User/Role Authentication & Authorization,

c) Session management, parameter manipulation & exception management,

d) Auditing and logging

Information security protects information from unauthorized access to avoid identity theft and to protect privacy. Major techniques used to cover this are:

a) Identification, authentication & authorization of user,

b) Cryptography

Disaster recovery planning is a process that includes performing risk assessment, establishing priorities, developing recovery strategies in case of a disaster. Any business should have a concrete plan for disaster recovery to resume normal business operations as quickly as possible after a disaster

Network security includes activities to protect the usability, reliability, integrity and safety of the network. Effective network security targets a variety of threats and stops them from entering or spreading on the network. Network security components include:

a) Anti-virus and anti-spyware,

b) Firewall, to block unauthorized access to your network,

c) Intrusion prevention systems (IPS), to identify fast-spreading threats, such as zero-day or zero-hour attacks,

d) Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), to provide secure remote access.
Other Digital Security Tool Consider

The most important Digital Security tool available to everyone is actually free and we all have access to that tool. You may be wondering what this tool is. Well, it being concerned and aware of the fact that the information we share through digital mediums could be used against us. Hence, we should be careful about what we share digitally and be extra cautious when receiving information which we suspect might be fraudulent. There are quite a number of digital security tools available to users and these are identified below:

Tools for anonymous navigation online

If you intend to navigate the internet without giving off your location, you could install a software called Tor on your computer, which allows you to hide your location and it keeps whatever you are doing on the internet private. Not only is it very easy to install, Tor is also free. Another software which is also free is AnonymoX and it is available to Firefox and Google Chrome web browsers as add-ons.

Tools for telephone encryption

Silent Phone for phone calls is perfect if you want to protect your telephone conversations. It is free, and it works on the Android OS and iOS devices. There is also Signal which was created by a firm called the “Guardian Project”. It is available on almost all devices and operating systems. Signal encrypts your voice and video conversations and it is a better alternative to using Skype.

Tools to encrypt instant messaging

If you are someone who shares important information via instant messaging, you should use Cyph which encrypts messages for both Mac and Windows users. ChatSecure is another great tool which works perfectly on iOS and Android platforms.

Module 1 Session Two:

Legal frameworks for digital rights

Introduction

Digital rights are basically human rights in the internet era. The rights to online privacy and freedom of expression, for example, are really extensions of the equal and inalienable rights laid out in the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to the UN, disconnecting people from the internet violates these rights and goes against international law. British Prime Minister David Cameron recently pledged to give all UK homes and businesses
access to fast broadband by 2020, adding that access to the internet “shouldn’t be a luxury, it should be a right”.

The Internet is the most disruptive communication technology of our time, revolutionizing the free flow of information between individuals by offering anyone with an Internet connection the ability to gather and share information and ideas. Yet the technologies that make this possible can also be used to limit access to information through content blocking and full-scale Internet shutdowns, or stifle expression through surveillance on a scale previously unimaginable.

In recent years, States have adopted myriad laws to regulate content online, increasingly putting pressure on private actors to censor content which they deem illegal or simply “harmful.” Much of the world’s online content is now regulated by the community standards and algorithms of a handful of Internet companies, whose operations and processes lack transparency. Internet users’ right to free expression is easily subject to abuse in this regulatory environment, the complexity of which is compounded by the fact that the Internet is a public space built on decentralized private infrastructure. Though often described as neutral or apolitical, standard-setting bodies and infrastructure providers wield great influence by determining what is or is not possible on the Internet.

The open flow of information has been key to the Internet’s transformative effect in modern society. In order to safeguard its benefits, the right to free expression must be defended when addressing issues of content and defining the technical management of the Internet’s architecture.

Note to The Trainer: Allow one of the participant to volunteer read the introductory note for general discussion to flow around it. Pose the questions on local laws that safeguard online content development and sharing.

Breakout session

Instruction: Allow the participants to go into groups and come out with laws from the constitution and other statutory instruments in Liberia that guarantee digital rights. The exercise must not be for more than 25 minutes. All groups’ presentations must be placed on poster sheets and displayed on walls.

Key references to consider in wrapping up the session:

- Section 15 c of the Liberian constitution
- Liberia Post and Telecommunications Act
- Liberia ICT Policy
- Liberia telecommunications Act
- Liberia open Government Partnership National Action Plan
Module Two
Model Media Regulatory Framework

Time Allotted: 2hrs

Module Objectives
At the end of the module participants will be in position to:

- Reflect on the media reform process in Liberia to include laws passed and those still pending
- Evaluate the performance of the National Media Council as an experiment in media self-regulation in Liberia to make suggestions for amends
- Discuss regulatory models in selected countries around the world to come out with hybrid recommendation for Liberia

Methodology

- Short lectures
- Case studies
- Small group and plenary discussion

INTRODUCTION
Liberia’s Constitution guarantees freedoms of speech and the press, and the government largely respects these rights. The country also has a right to information law. Even though Liberia was one of the first to sign the Table Mountain Declaration which calls for the abolition of prison terms for speech offenses, the country’s media landscape has been plagued with a flurry of criminal libel and civil libel suits that often result in excessively prohibitive judgments. Journalists and media houses have been at the receiving end of crippling fines, closure or long custodial sentences for publishing information deemed uncomfortable. Aside the prohibitive judgment, the press freedom atmosphere in the country became more depressing in early of 2018 when President George Weah and some senior members of his government were reported to be physically and verbally attacking some journalists and media outlets.
Fortunately, libel was decriminalized on February 28, 2019, when the President signed into law a bill to amend sections 11:11, 11.12 and 11.14 of the criminal code which prescribed prison terms for a range of speech offenses. This was welcome news to the media fraternity in the country and in the region, especially, the MFWA and its partner organization, CEMESP, which had urged the President to prioritize the passage of the bill that his predecessor had put before the legislature. While the repeal of the repressive law is seen as a major relief to the media in the country, hefty compensations sought and imposed in civil cases persist and this often poses severe financial difficulties to journalists and their media outlets, a situation that encourages self-censorship in the media. (Source: Media Foundation for West Africa)

It also important that the Press Union of Liberia with support from the Liberia Media Development project that USAID Internews have been involved launched the National Media Council and the Revised code of ethics. This was a self-regulatory effort to cede such function from the state. Liberia has pending media bill yet to be enacted. These include the Public Service Broadcaster bill and the Community Radio Sustainability bill. There is growing debate on the need to have a new regulatory mechanism or to retain what is operating under the auspices of the PUL.

Note to the trainer: Allow one volunteer from participants to read the introductory note for general discussion around it.

Break out session

Note to trainer: Allow participants to go into groups with the task of evaluating the existing National Media Council in its formation and execution of mandate. The participants return with presentations that are discussed in the plenary. The next group work will look at the models from four countries including Britain, China, Australia, The Gulf to compare and contrast and formulate a wish list drawing on the various elements in improving on what is operating in Liberia. There is a best practice guideline as takeaway on media regulations as proposed by Albany Associates that has a global experience on the subject matter and has been involved in the Liberian Media Reforms initiated by Internews USAID.

What the best practice literature states

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression in a recent report stated that “the framework of international human rights law remains relevant today and equally applicable to new communication technologies such as the Internet.” Cutting off users from the Internet, regardless of the justification provided, is considered a violation of article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

In their Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and the Internet, the respective Representatives of the UN, OSCE, OAS and ACHPR said that “giving effect to the right to freedom of expression imposes an obligation on States to promote universal access to the Internet.”
The Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in a model law on the principles of Internet regulation from 2011, stated that the rights and freedom of citizens, including the right to use the Internet and to access information on the Internet should be assured.

Social networks and social media at the same time offer a great tool for journalists for research and as a source for stories. Twitter, Facebook or YouTube offer coverage by other journalists and normal citizens of many events, including events to which there is limited access for journalists, e.g. for safety, financial or other reason.

Since the advent of the Internet, it has been heralded as an exciting new medium – one that has revolutionized communications, led to citizen journalism, and made many types of commerce easier and cheaper. In 1996, as the Internet was just beginning to take shape on the edges of society, John Perry Barlow issued a letter to governments declaring the “independence of cyberspace”:

“Since the advent of the Internet, it has been heralded as an exciting new medium – one that has revolutionized communications, led to citizen journalism, and made many types of commerce easier and cheaper. In 1996, as the Internet was just beginning to take shape on the edges of society, John Perry Barlow issued a letter to governments declaring the “independence of cyberspace”: Cyberspace consists of transactions, relationships, and thought itself, arrayed like a standing wave in the web of our communications. Ours is a world that is both everywhere and nowhere, but it is not where bodies live... We will spread ourselves across the Planet so that no one can arrest our thoughts.

Snapshots of media regulatory models

Three regions that have fairly advanced regulatory systems in place for the Internet are the Gulf States of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and also China and Australia. While culturally they are dissimilar, their efforts to enforce a regulatory scheme provide lessons for other countries looking to do the same.

THE GULF

The UAE and Saudi Arabia use filtering software at the ISP level, called SmartFilter. The software is meant to prevent access to certain broad categories of content, such as pornography, references to drug use, gambling, religious conversion as well as tools that allow one to circumvent the filters.
The major problem with this approach is that it is a blunt instrument, over-filtering acceptable content (i.e., blocking research on the city of Essex, England because it contains the word “sex”) and under-filtering some illegal and offensive content. There is also a negative perception attached to such software as it is usually used by repressive regimes.

AUSTRALIA

Australia’s regulatory body, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), regulates Internet content via a public complaints process. The ACMA is not required to proactively search for violations, rather it operates a co-regulatory scheme, administered by the federal government, involving the public and Internet industry. Once ACMA receives a complaint, it must investigate and if the content is deemed prohibited, ACMA tells the Internet content host to remove the content. Failure to do so results in a fine for the host.

The Australian government has recently announced plans to require Australian ISPs to block access to restricted content online in order to better regulate content hosted both in the country and abroad. The current complaints system does not apply to restricted content hosted off-shore, which is a significant disadvantage as perpetrators can easily export illegal content to Australia.

Australia’s Internet Industry Association has developed its own Code of Practice, supplemented by ACMA where necessary. The Code is voluntary and self-regulatory, though ACMA can enforce compliance among Internet service providers and content host.

CHINA

China’s model of Internet regulation surpasses attempts by most countries and involves extensive government coordination and management. In order for a social media website to run, it must be registered and approved by the government. There are six media regulatory authorities within the Chinese government, including the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Public Security and Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. ICP/IP registration with the appropriate ministry is required for every single web site. Only government agencies are licensed to report news and one agency (Xinhua) has the authority to report important, breaking news. Social media is available to anyone with a mobile phone in China, but anything that is considered a threat to national stability is monitored on these networks, including rumours about top leaders, news about collective movements and riots, petitions for collective actions and pornography. These pose challenges to individuals that host social media sites, from financial constraints to political issues, making it difficult to make a business out of a social media enterprise. Whereas American companies such as Facebook and LinkedIn have produced billionaires, Chinese social media entrepreneurs are struggling to stay afloat because investors are less willing to take the risk on them.

Content is monitored based on sensitive users and words, meaning that certain online personalities are targeted, which raises issues about human rights, privacy and human security. A challenge to regulators and the government (one in the same, really) is that users have developed complex circumnavigation tools to get around firewalls. One example is that individuals can use VPNs to access Facebook, which is banned on Chinese servers. As VPNs are discovered and shut down, their audiences move to new VPNs -- a constant game of cat and mouse, but one that the sophisticated user seems always to win.
The United Kingdom: A changing regulatory model

Usually when discussing problems with regulatory frameworks for media, the target is one of the more embryonic systems, such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda or Somalia. These are all countries where Albany has worked on regulatory activities since 1997, and all are at different stages of addressing media and Internet regulation. But, recent events in the UK have illuminated certain weaknesses in both the media itself and the regulation of it. So, whilst one may discuss the UK model as a good example, it is also one where we can learn from its mistakes. Currently in the UK, a country once known as the bastion of freedom of the media and democratic independent regulation, regulation is under scrutiny. Recent events such as the UK media’s hacking of mobile phones, alleged bribing of police officers for information on celebrities and politicians, and accusations that people in government were aware of such on goings has brought about a wide-ranging and lengthy inquiry into how the media operate in the UK. Couple this with the prospect of new legislation and technological and market change, and regulation is at the center of great debate about the media. In effect, media regulation is at a crossroads, as it was twenty years ago when one part of the media, the printed press, was told to clean up its act or the government would bring in statutory regulation. It did, through a robust system of press self-regulation. It seems that the time has come again for another long hard look at how regulation can be improved, especially when the Internet is playing an ever increasing role in how we access news, information and entertainment. The British Home Secretary announced in June 2012 a draft Communications Data Bill that expands the amount of personal online data that telecom operators must store, for up to twelve months, for access by officials (with a warrant). The Home Office claimed that increased data storage, including concerning web sites visited, is necessary because of “criminal and terrorist” use of social media and online gaming sites that allow evasion of existing surveillance. The bill has met resistance among NGOs and MPs who feel it goes too far and will violate innocent civilians’ liberties. One MP said the criminals who are meant to be caught by such a bill would be able to circumnavigate data collection by using Internet cafes, proxy servers and hacking into other peoples’ wireless networks.

In Albany’s experiences of around the world advising on broadcasting, communications and press regulation, we have encountered a myriad of different views and models on how to regulate the media. There is increased discussion of models, especially now as some countries move quickly to digital technology, making current media regulatory practices obsolete virtually overnight. Albany has absorbed many perspectives whilst understanding that you cannot just take one regulatory regime model and transplant it in another country. However, Albany’s work highlights three principles that serve as basic starting points for regulators anywhere: First, the press (as opposed to the broadcast media), whether in printed form and bought in a shop or as an online publication, should not be controlled by statute.

Second, freedom of expression is a fundamental right for human needs, human rights and social and economic development and should be at the heart of any regulatory regime. Third, efforts to constrain Internet content, whilst unpalatable to supporters of freedom of speech, are often understandable given the freedom of access and availability. But, we should be ever mindful that people generally value freedom and choice, which is at the heart of the Internet. Regulators should be very careful to approach this matter in a way that preserves the openness and creativity of the Internet rather than regulates for regulation’s sake. It is also easy to understand why some
governments feel excluded from Internet policymaking and want more control over the process. Indeed, as mentioned above, the UN is wading in on the issue at the end of the year by convening a conference on Internet regulation where there are strong rumours that they will discuss international control over the Internet using the monitoring and supervisory capabilities of the International Telecommunication Union.

Albany has also witnessed more recently that the regulatory status quo may not give viewers the protections and assurances they expect in a world of superfast broadband networks, fixed and mobile devices now delivering content live, on demand and online through connected TVs. As a result there is a need for a much more coherent overall approach to digital media, covering normal linear broadcasting at one end and Internet publishing at the other. A coherent approach means not necessarily a single structure, like a regulatory authority dealing with the entire sector.

In the UK, the future of press regulation is under scrutiny at a time when newspapers are rapidly expanding the scale and scope of their digital services and this needs to be considered in this broader context. There are four straightforward principles that might help us navigate to a sensible destination for regulating the media in the digital Internet age:

Any regulatory regime must start and finish with the public interest. Public expectation and trust must override commercial, political or institutional self-interest. • Where regulation is judged necessary, it must be effective and capable of building and sustaining public trust. • The approach must work for both ‘traditional’ media such as broadcast and print, which have clear boundaries, as well as digital media whose boundaries are more fluid. • Finally, but equally important, it must help rather than hinder business to compete, invest and innovate and in doing so, strengthen an economy as a hub for digital services and creativity.

Takeaway on media regulatory framework

The first goal is the need to understand and to meet audiences’ views of what kind of regulation they want and need.

Second, this needs to be balanced with what we know about the nature of different media and the ideals that we value that might be in tension with regulation. The freedoms at the heart of the Internet are one such example

Third, there is a need for a coherent overall approach to digital media, covering linear broadcast at one end and Internet publishing at the other. Press regulation is under scrutiny around the world at a time when newspapers are rapidly expanding the scale and scope of their digital services.

A coherent approach will anticipate this world, one where the rigid boundaries defined by traditional means of delivery will be gone.

Fourth, for regulation to be both independent and effective there is a fairly clear set of criteria that must be met in whole or in large part. Of course, local context in individual countries must always


be addressed and acknowledged, but adhering to international standards will ensure that measures are neither too harsh nor too weak. And finally, we should strive toward simplicity and clarity in the overall regulatory system – an objective that will serve the public well, but also will promote a broader interest in offering a positive environment for investment, innovation and creative businesses. Above all, and whatever approach is taken, the acid test will remain the ability of the system and its individual elements to build and sustain public trust, support industry growth, keep up with technology and uphold the values of freedom of expression.

**Take Note**: Group Presentation proffering suggestions for amends to the National Media Council closes this session.

**Icebreaker**

There is need for some form of ice breaker at this point to reinvigorate the group after serious brainstorming exercise. The trainer must ask for volunteers from among the plenary or come out with something short but effective to energize the hall.

**Module Three**

**Evidence Based Reporting Using the FOI Law in traditional and new media**

**Time Allotted 2hrs**

**Module Objectives**

At the end of the module participants will be in position to:

- Learn skills in mining and using datasets for evidence based investigative reporting using the FOI Law
- Understand the gaps in FOI law implementation towards finding advocacy pathways for amends
- Use social media to inspire others in making use of the FOI law as a valuable tool in promoting freedom of expression and citizen journalism
Methodology

- Short lectures
- Case studies using the journalist FOI Tracker
- Small group and plenary discussion

Introduction

UNESCO is the UN agency mandated to promote freedom of expression and its corollary, freedom of the press. The UNESCO Constitution calls on the organization to foster the “free exchange of ideas and knowledge” and the “free flow of ideas by word and image.”

Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are thus among the guiding principles of UNESCO, and freedom of information may be deemed to be part and parcel of the Organization’s core mandate to support t

The number of freedom of information laws adopted around the world multiplied in the past two decades, so did the examples of how access to public information can help people to demand accountability and responsiveness from their governments, protect and advance their rights. Freedom of Information is about good governance, socio-economic empowerment, informed participation, openness and transparency. That is why it is so important for freedom of information to be guaranteed through a legal and regulatory framework in accordance with international standards. Equally relevant is for laws to be translated into practice through effective mechanisms, and fundamentally supported by an unwavering political will to implement them, a strong culture of openness in civic service, a widespread awareness about their benefits and their active use by society at large. The foregoing is a thought of UNESCO.

Liberia was first in West Africa to have passed the law. The country employed the approach of CSO-media joint advocacy action that culminated in the 2010 FOI Law. The country has an Independent Information Commission set up to lead the implementation of the law working with Public Information Officers appointed in Ministries, departments and agencies. The law stresses demand and supply- the people asking and those custodians of information supplying requested information. The question is has Liberia been in position to make significance use of the law? Many are of the conviction that the answer is no.

Even where it is true that the law is not media preserve but journalists in Liberia have shown considerable interest in using the law to get information in gathering and disseminating content, but the evidence shows that institutions have not been forthcoming in their disclosure obligation. The FOI Law 2010 has penalties for refusal to abide the law but the. There is weak link from the judiciary ion prosecuting cases for the country to have the first case law precedent in dealing with such an anomaly. And the IIC at this right to know day celebration continued to cry foul about budget shortfalls in executing its mandate. Other stakeholders including Carter Center Access to
Information project have made a couple of interventions to fill gaps in the FOI application process which includes training of Public Information Officers, who are supposed to be the gatekeepers positioned at various ministries, agencies and commissions to aid the public in accessing information.

**Note the trainer:** Ask one of the participants to read the introductory note provided above. Allow a free flow discussion on the material or pose questions thereof. Take note of key issues that come up from the conversations and write them on the flip chart. Thereafter proceed with a mini lecture of key concepts and perspectives from the law to make the case for FOI law utilization in enhancing the integrity of stories. Make connection between the incidences of corruption and need for evidence to dispel rumors and half-truths that affect media believability from the point of view of the public.

**What is data driven investigative journalism?**

Data Driven Journalism has been in use since 2009 as a journalistic process based on analyzing and filtering large data sets for the purpose of creating or elevating a news story.

Many data-driven stories begin with newly available resources such as open source software, open access publishing and open data, while others are products of public records requests or leaked materials.

This approach to journalism builds on older practices, most notably on computer-assisted reporting (CAR) a label used mainly in the US for decades. Other labels for partially similar approaches are "precision journalism", based on a book by Philipp Meyer, published in 1972, where he advocated the use of techniques from social sciences in researching stories.

Data-driven journalism has a wider approach. At the core the process builds on the growing availability of open data that is freely available online and analyzed with open source tools. Data-driven journalism strives to reach new levels of service for the public, helping the general public or specific groups or individuals to understand patterns and make decisions based on the findings. As such, data driven journalism might help to put journalists into a role relevant for society in a new way.

**Working as team in data driven journalism**

The case has been made for team work in data driven journalism. This is because of the obvious reason of how much group dynamics and solidarity can pay-off in trying to research the stories as evident in cases of Pro Publica, The Guardian, and Reuters. Resource and skills can be pooled together in team work. These groups offer examples on how group of journalists can start a process of digging out the stories using data sources, to get the raw material and process it in terms of getting the wheat from the chaff. So you one piece of story from the media teams cited with more than byline to it. It assures credibility and integrity.
Process of data driven journalism

It is process and nor swift rush into together story that is based on research and rich in data facts and figures to empirically prove case.

According to information architect and multimedia journalist Mirko Lorenz, data-driven journalism is primarily a workflow that consists of the following elements:

- **digging deep** into data by scraping,
- cleansing and structuring it,
- **filtering** by mining for specific information,
- **Visualizing** and **making a story**.

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The Inverted Pyramid of Data Journalism

Paul Bradshaw, OnlineJournalismBkg.com
Compiling data can take various forms. At its most simple the data might be:

1. Supplied directly to you by an organization (how long until we see ‘data releases’ alongside press releases?),
2. Filing FOI request and following up on to access the required information
3. found through using advanced search techniques to plough into the depths of government websites;
4. compiled by scraping databases hidden behind online forms or pages of results using tools like OutWit Hub and Scraperwiki;
5. by converting documents into something that can be analyzed, using tools like Document Cloud;
6. by pulling information from APIs;
7. or by collecting the data yourself through observation, surveys, online forms or crowdsourcing.

Note: This compilation stage is the most important – not only because everything else rests on that, but because it is probably the stage that is returned to the most – at each of the subsequent stages – cleaning, contextualizing, combining and communicating – it may be that you need to compile further information.

Cleaning the data:

Having data is just the beginning. Being confident in the stories hidden within it means being able to trust the quality of the data – and that means cleaning it. Cleaning typically takes two forms: removing human error; and converting the data into a format that is consistent with other data you are using.

There are simple ways to clean up data in Excel or Google Docs such as find and replace, sorting to find unusually high, low, or empty entries, and using filters so that only duplicate entries (i.e. those where a piece of data occurs more than once) are shown.

Google Refine adds a lot more power: its ‘common transforms’ function will, for example, convert all entries to lowercase, uppercase or titlecase.

Context

Like any source, data cannot always be trusted. It comes with its own histories, biases, and objectives. So like any source, you need to ask questions of it: who gathered it, when, and for what purpose? How was it gathered? (The methodology). What exactly do they mean by that?

You will also need to understand jargon, such as codes that represent categories, classifications or locations, and specialist terminology.
All the above will most likely lead you to compile further data. For example, knowing the number of crimes in a city is interesting, but only becomes meaningful when you contextualise that alongside the population, or the numbers of police, or the levels of crime 5 years ago, or perceptions of crime, or levels of unemployment, and so on. Statistical literacy is a must here.

**Combine**

Good stories can be found in a single dataset, but often you will need to combine two together. After all, given the choice between a single-source story and a multiple-source one, which would you prefer?

Taking one dataset and combining it another to provide an instant visualization of how something is distributed in space: where is teenage pregnancy so acute, which counties have the highest drug trafficking incidences?

**Communicate**

In data journalism the all-too-obvious thing to do at this point is to publish and visualize the results using your radio, Facebook pages or newspapers. Infographics and animations are very important tools to employ.

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**Module Three Session Two**

**Note to the facilitator**

This session is meant to simulate data driven journalism approach using scenarios around stories that are of public interest. Participants to go into groups come out with story ideas and how they will go about research such story. For this exercise Facebook pages are created in the group work as channel to communicate the final researched story

**Time Allotted:** 30 minutes

The final phase of the session is the action planning process to have a network of media CSOs dedicated to promoting the data driven content development and sharing- using online platforms that have been created at the workshop.

It will involve open discussion among participants that is guided by the trainer in setting up of a steering committee by way of voting for positions in the proposed network and all members making commitment to periodically meet and take decisions in applying the skills acquired to tackle prevailing accountability and social service delivery issues. The network must factor
strategy to leverage resources in working on story ideas for which resource can be mobilized using opportunities available online.

The Evaluation
Participants must evaluate the training using parameters that include:

- Relevance of training content
- Delivery competence of trainers
- Setting and logistical arrangements
- Time allotment and management
- Recommendations on what needs to be improved upon