



**New Media: The Press Freedom Dimension  
Challenges and Opportunities of New Media for Press Freedom  
15 & 16 February, 2007  
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris**

**Introductory remarks by Mary Lou Fulton, moderator for the panel  
"Bloggers as Journalists/Local News and New Media/Citizen Media"**

Good afternoon. It's a pleasure and a privilege to be part of this conference and serve as moderator for this important panel.

Before introducing our panelists, I would like to tell you a story about how I came to discover the Internet. I'm sure many of you have your own stories about this topic, about the moment in which you came to understand the incredible power and potential of the Internet.

My story took place thirteen years ago when I was in graduate school. I was an intern at a research institution in California, and the goal of my summer project was to recommend new ways that education research could be made available to parents, teachers and other non-academics.

I began by thinking of creating newsletter, or perhaps a magazine, but those ideas seemed limited. So I asked a colleague for advice, and he said, "What about a listserv?" I was not much of a computer person at this point in my life, having just started to use e-mail the year before, so he had to explain that a listserv was e-mail group focused on a specific topic. Anyone could join these groups, which were free and existed to enable communication and collaboration among the participants.

I thought this sounded like a great idea, so I posted a note to several listservs announcing the availability of this education research. All you needed to do was send me an e-mail if you were interested. And I went home.

The next day, I returned to the office and opened my e-mail. There were more than 800 responses from around the world -- from Iceland, from Bolivia, from the UK and from the U.S and many other places. I was overwhelmed, not only because I had to answer 800 e-mails, but because I couldn't believe that all of these people from all over the world were connected to each other. And now, by

simply posting a short note, I was connected to them. From that moment forward, I knew that some way, some how, I had to get involved with this Internet thing.

Looking back, I'm grateful for this experience because it taught me that the core of the Internet is about human connections. I have always loved this quote from Internet strategist Clay Shirky, who said: "Prior to the Internet, the last technology that had any real effect on the way people sat down and talked together was the table."

The human motivation hasn't changed, but many other things have. Publishing tools are much easier to use. New devices such as digital cameras and mobile phones make it simple to create and publish content. It's easier to share content, which is really what drives all the activity on video site YouTube, and access to the Internet itself is now more widely available than ever.

The result: 50 million web logs on the search engine Technorati, with a new blog born every half-second. Citizen journalists whose first-person accounts are now part of many major stories and who many times out-perform local media in covering their own communities. One hundred million videos served every day on You Tube.

This unprecedented activity is changing the world. It's changing journalism, politics, entertainment, education and most any topic you can imagine. Our panelists today are pioneers in this field who will be sharing their perspectives, starting with Dr. Oh Yeon-ho, founder of Oh My News in Korea.