



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

***Opening remarks for New Media conference in Paris
Thursday, February 15***

Moderator for the panel "New Media Under Challenge"

Abi Wright
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I'd like to start by thanking the World Press Freedom Committee and UNESCO for organizing this important and timely event. My name is Abi Wright, and I am Communications Director for the Committee to Protect Journalists, an independent press freedom advocacy organization based in New York.

Today we will be discussing the challenges new media are facing in countries around the world. From my colleagues, we will learn about conditions in China, Iran, Russia and Somalia – places where online journalists are testing the boundaries of press freedom and where the challenges are readily apparent.

According to CPJ research, online journalists and editors make up the fastest growing group of journalists behind bars worldwide. The number of jailed online journalists has been growing steadily from the first case we documented in 1997 to the 49 in jail at the end of 2006. This is fast becoming the press freedom crisis of our time.

We at CPJ see governments using national security legislation to silence new media writers and journalists in countries like China, where more than half of the 31 journalists in jail are web based. And in Iran, where the government rotates bloggers in and out of jail as punishment, and in Russia where security laws have also been used against writings about sensitive issues such as the war in Chechnya.

Our first speaker is from Russia and can tell us more about what is happening there. Please welcome Anton Nossik, the Chief Blogs Officer of Russia's LiveJournal.com.