



## WORKING PARTY ON INFORMATION - CLUB OF VENICE JOINT SEMINAR

### "The impact of social media on journalism"

7 October 2011 (morning)  
Council premises, Justus Lipsius building (press room)  
Rue de la Loi 175, 1048 Brussels

The growing importance of social media has affected both journalists and public communicators in EU institutions and Member States. How do we address this evolution? During the seminar, we aim to **compare best practices** and seek a **better understanding of the new conditions** under which journalists and public communicators work.

The seminar will also **explore ways of improving interaction** between journalists and public communicators in the new reality of their work environment.

By bringing public communicators from EU Member States and journalists together, the seminar will also offer a **networking opportunity**, fostering increased cooperation among participants beyond the event.

The first session will look at the impact of social media on traditional media and especially on the working methods of journalists. During the second part, we will examine how public institutions could adapt their way of working to provide better service to the press corps.

#### I. The impact of social media on journalists and traditional media

Social media have a strong impact on journalists and traditional media organisations. "Social sharing" encourages the horizontal distribution of news. It also disrupts the news industry by imposing changes in editorial and business models.

*"Journalism is no longer the exclusive preserve of journalists. Social-media technologies allow a far wider range of people to take part in gathering, filtering and distributing news. News now emerges from an ecosystem in which journalists, sources, readers and viewers exchange information. The "people" stopped being the "audience" (of mass-media) once they got the tools of production (camera-phones...) and the "horizontal media" (Facebook, Twitter, blogs) allowing them to distribute the news they produce. Social sharing functionalities now steer readers directly to the stories that are most popular among their social circle." (Tom Standage <sup>1</sup>)*

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Standage is a British journalist (digital editor) for *The Economist* who also writes on the history of science and technology, drawing parallels between modern and historical technologies (see <http://tomstandage.wordpress.com>)

The first part of the seminar will look at the impact of social media on journalism. **How can journalists keep up** with this increased number of sources and **correctly assess/curate them? How can they connect with a large audience on social networks** – crowdsourcing questions for interviews, responding to questions from the audience, giving readers a behind-the-scenes look into their reporting, posting teasers to their articles, polling their audience, getting into a one-on-one dialogue with the readers...

Researchers and journalists will give their own accounts on how to tame (and profit from) the "wild, wild west of social media" <sup>2</sup>.

## II. How could the institutions provide better service to journalists covering EU affairs?

Social media have an impact not only on traditional media and journalists, but also on public organisations and public communicators. Public institutions communicate more and more over those new platforms – if only most frequently in a “one-way” mode – in an attempt to reach out to more citizens. Social media have also transformed public perception analysis and media monitoring.

*"Web 2.0 e-ruptions threaten to sweep away old business models, management methods and bureaucratic cultures. (...) Web 2.0 will continue to be regarded [by organizations] in the same way that many contemplate heaven: everybody wants to get there, but nobody wants to die first." (Matthew Fraser, Soumitra Dutta <sup>3</sup>)*

In the second part of the seminar, participants will **discuss how public communicators could provide better service to journalists** in their function of mediators between institutions and various audiences.

Starting with concrete examples of how institutions use social media and how social media are affecting their work and relations with journalists, this session will hear experienced journalists' views on how public communication in the new environment can continue to serve their work and function, both in Brussels and in the capitals.

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<sup>2</sup> Joan Curtis & Barbara Giamanco - Joan Curtis is communications coach, Barbara Giamanco is an experienced sales strategist and consultant. Together they wrote "The New Handshake: Sales Meets Social Media" (Praeger, 2010)

<sup>3</sup> Matthew William Fraser is a British-Canadian journalist, academic, and author known for his writing about the media industries. Soumitra Dutta, PhD., is the Roland Berger Chaired Professor of Business and Technology at INSEAD. Together they wrote "Throwing sheep in the Boardroom" (John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2008 - see <http://www.throwingsheep.com>)