

# ASIA AND THE COMMONS

## GLOBAL VOICES ONLINE

The Global Voices Online project presents writings from an international team of bloggers who monitor online conversations in their regions.

[www.globalvoicesonline.org](http://www.globalvoicesonline.org)

**Licence:** Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Licence (generic)

**Media:** Text, Podcasts

**Location:** Operation is global, divided into six regions: Middle East/North Africa; Sub-Saharan Africa; East Asia; South Asia; the Americas; Eastern Europe, Russia, Caucasus and Central Asia

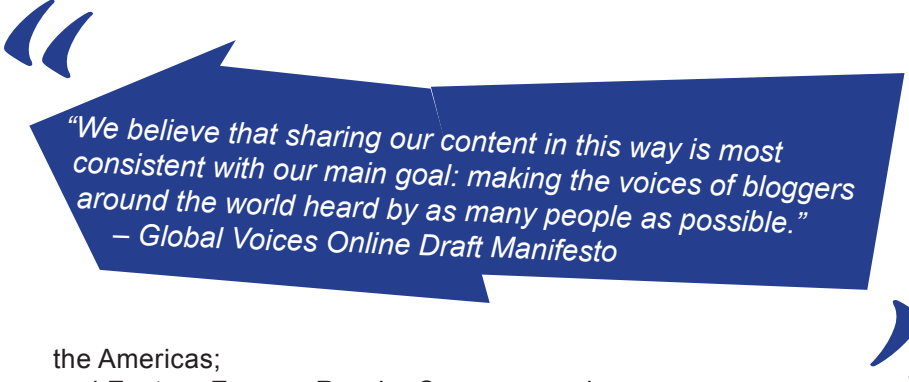
The screenshot shows the Global Voices Online website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About, FAQ, For Bloggers, For Media, Contact, and Sponsors. Below this is a search bar and a menu for 'World Regions' with a dropdown arrow. The main content area features a featured story titled 'Israel: President Bush Visits Israel' with a sub-headline 'Maya Norton - 14:38, January 9th, 2008 - Middle East & North Africa'. Below this is another story titled 'Caribbean: Obama in Iowa' with a sub-headline 'Janine Mendes - Franco - 00:17, January 9th, 2008 - Americas'. To the right of the stories is a map of the world with a green dot in the Middle East region. Below the map is a 'Links' section with several links to related content. At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a section titled 'Americas: End of the Year Traditions' with a sub-headline 'Wendee De Leon Douglas - 14:45'. The website has a clean, professional layout with a blue and white color scheme.

## OVERVIEW

Global Voices Online is an award-winning non-profit project founded in 2004 by the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard Law School. The project's goal has been to redress the inequities in media attention by leveraging the power of 'citizens' media'. This is achieved by aggregating online materials, such as wikis, weblogs, podcasts, tags, and online chats, thereby drawing attention to the conversations – the 'global voices' – which have hitherto gone unheard. The project works to develop tools, to establish institutions, and to foster relationships in parts of the world where opinion is rarely sought.

“We believe in the power of direct connection. The bond between individuals from different worlds is personal, political and powerful. We believe conversation across boundaries is essential to a future that is free, fair, prosperous and sustainable - for all citizens of this planet.”  
(*Global Voices Online Draft Manifesto*, [www.globalvoicesonline.org/wiki/article/Global\\_Voices\\_Draft\\_Manifesto](http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/wiki/article/Global_Voices_Draft_Manifesto))

Launched by Berkman Fellows Rebecca MacKinnon and Ethan Zuckerman, the Global Voices project draws on an international team of bloggers who monitor online conversations pertaining to, and occurring in their regions. Operationally, the organisation works through six regional editors: from the Middle East and North Africa; Sub-Saharan Africa; South Asia; East Asia;



*“We believe that sharing our content in this way is most consistent with our main goal: making the voices of bloggers around the world heard by as many people as possible.”*  
– Global Voices Online Draft Manifesto

the Americas;  
and Eastern Europe, Russia, Caucasus and Central Asia. Feeds are summarised and distilled on a daily basis, and key bloggers are interviewed to provide diverse and geographically dispersed perspectives. Materials are translated into Bangla, Spanish, Farsi, French, Portuguese, Chinese (simplified and traditional), and will soon be available in German, Hindi, Japanese, Arabic, and Malagasy.

Seeking representative samples of Internet reportage, Global Voices approaches prominent regional members in the blogosphere as emerging leaders in their local communities to contribute to the site. In the words of founder Ethan Zuckerman, this is ‘someone who is already a good blogger, already has a readership, already has an understanding of the communities they’re dealing with.’ Global Voices encourages direct contact with the contributors to the site, particularly from news organisations interested in the stories provided.

‘This is a small planet in need of some big ideas. The more people there are in the conversation, the more likely we are to find them.’

[www.worldchanging.com/archives/001769.html](http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/001769.html)

Global Voices was winner of the 2006 Knight-Batten Grand Prize for Innovations in Journalism, and the 2005 Deutsche Welle award for Best Journalistic Blog in English.

Global Voices provides significant topical resources for the Asian region. The site’s reach extends from the Middle East and North Africa through Central Asia and the Caucasus to South Asia and Oceania. In her year in review published on 4 January 2008, Solana Larsen, co-managing editor of Global

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Voices and editor of openDemocracy.net, presents the Asian blogosphere's perspective on the most significant regional moments in 2007 ([www.globalvoicesonline.org/2008/01/04/global-voices-a-review-of-2007-and-big-plans-for-2008](http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/2008/01/04/global-voices-a-review-of-2007-and-big-plans-for-2008)).

Hong Kong's Oiwan Lam considers the most pertinent news from the country, falling into the categories of freedom of speech, cyber-activism, history, humour, internet & telecoms, and media ([www.globalvoicesonline.org/2007/12/31/hong-kong-top-ten-in-blogosphere-2007](http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/2007/12/31/hong-kong-top-ten-in-blogosphere-2007)). Presented both in Chinese and English, Oiwan's entry speaks of bloggers witnessing the 10 year anniversary of reunification with mainland China in April 2007, and the recognition of the book *Our Blog City*, despite accusations of plagiarism from other blogging sites ([http://daimones.blogspot.com/2007/07/blog-post\\_31.html](http://daimones.blogspot.com/2007/07/blog-post_31.html)).

In the Middle East, Amira Al Hussaini presents a perspective from the United Arab Emirates (<http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/2008/01/03/arabeyes-have-a-spectacular-new-year>), as offered by 'The Big Pharaoh' at [www.bigpharaoh.com/2008/01/01/reflections-on-2007-and-hopes-for-2008](http://www.bigpharaoh.com/2008/01/01/reflections-on-2007-and-hopes-for-2008), which comments on the political stalemate in Lebanon, the ongoing incursions in Iraq, and the US presidential elections. Amira's summary also embraces Egypt, Syrian, Jordan, Libya, and Lebanon. Syrian citizen journalist Yazan Badran ([www.globalvoicesonline.org/2008/01/03/syria-bloggers-new-year](http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/2008/01/03/syria-bloggers-new-year)) welcomes the new year by referencing the work of the 'Syrian in London' (<http://sy-in-london.blogspot.com>), who discusses a civilian life lived between London and Damascus.



## LICENCE USAGE

The Global Voices site is published under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 licence. The site's attribution policy ([www.globalvoicesonline.org/about/global-voices-attribution-policy](http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/about/global-voices-attribution-policy)) outlines that whilst the site both authorises and encourages people to re-use its content, it is also important that contributors to the site receive appropriate credit. The Creative Commons licence used therefore requires that authorship of all content must be attributed in the manner specified; namely, that:

- ❖ A link from the text back to the original post on Global Voices is used;
- ❖ The text 'Global Voices' is linked to its URL: <http://globalvoicesonline.org>, or that the following hyperlinked badge is used:



## MOTIVATIONS

'We believe that sharing our content in this way is most consistent with our main goal: making the voices of bloggers around the world heard by as many people as possible.' - Global Voices Online Draft Manifesto ([/www.globalvoicesonline.org/wiki/article/Global\\_Voices\\_Draft\\_Manifesto](http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/wiki/article/Global_Voices_Draft_Manifesto))

The philosophy underlying Global Voices' decision to use the Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 generic licence for all materials has been to 'make it easy for... content to be re-published on other websites, commercial and non-commercial, so long as those sites credit [Global Voices] as the original source.'

Contributors to Global Voices seek to 'respect, assist, teach, learn from, and listen to one another.' Whilst they 'continue to work and speak as individuals,' they also seek to 'identify and promote [their] shared interests and goals,' thus supporting the ideals of civil society ([www.globalvoicesonline.org/wiki/article/Global\\_Voices\\_Draft\\_Manifesto](http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/wiki/article/Global_Voices_Draft_Manifesto)).