

# ASIA AND THE COMMONS

## OPENDEMOCRACY

openDemocracy is an independent online magazine offering global perspectives on current issues, fostering democratic debate. pertaining to their regions.

www.opendemocracy.net



Licence: Default Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives licence

Media: Text, Image

Location: Global, headquartered in London with an office in New York

## OVERVIEW

openDemocracy (oD) offers an independent voice on global news and current affairs via a leading online magazine. Promoting ‘free thinking for the world,’ the site exists to ‘publish clarifying debates to help stimulate your mind, challenge your perceptions and then invite and encourage you to take part’ in a range of prominent issues surrounding human rights and democracy ([www.britishcouncil.org/zerocarboncity-debate.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/zerocarboncity-debate.htm)). oD bridges geographical boundaries, as well as those of class, gender and sexuality, ensuring that marginalised views and voices have presence. Since its establishment in 2001, oD has hosted contributions by citizens of both the North and South, together with leading thinkers and prominent public figures such as Kofi Annan, Salman Rushdie, Richard Stallman and Siva Vaidyanathan.

Published by openDemocracy Limited, part of the openDemocracy Foundation for the Advancement of Global Education, oD is headquartered in London, UK, and maintains an office in New York. Debates and articles from across the oD website which discuss or are relevant to Asia and the Pacific can be found at [www.opendemocracy.net/taxonomy/term/81](http://www.opendemocracy.net/taxonomy/term/81). Images used on the site are published on Flickr at [www.flickr.com/groups/opendemocracygroup](http://www.flickr.com/groups/opendemocracygroup).

## LICENCE USAGE

On 14 June, 2005, openDemocracy announced a partnership with Creative Commons to 'bring works by the world's leading scholars and writers into the global commons' (<http://creativecommons.org/press-releases/entry/5476>).

With the commitment to release the work of 150 oD authors under a default Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives licence, openDemocracy was the first major online publisher to adopt the CC framework on a large scale. In October

2005, Creative

Commons'

Senior

Counsel

Mia Garlick

discussed

the implications

of this decision with

oD's co-managing editor, Solana Larsen, on the Creative Commons blog

(<http://creativecommons.org/weblog/entry/7034>), who declares that oD's

commitment is 'to getting ideas out in circulation.' Meeting with 'genuine

enthusiasm' by its contributing authors, oD's agreement with Creative

Commons has allowed the public to republish most of the articles on the

openDemocracy.net site for non-commercial ends.



*"Democracy, like culture itself, must be a collaborative project."*

– Siva Vaidhyanathan

'Practically, the use of [Creative Commons] licences grant participating openDemocracy authors... more control over how their works will echo through the world of digital text. They will encourage free republication and dissemination of their articles in non-commercial media across the globe.' Siva Vaidhyanathan, [http://www.opendemocracy.net/media-copyrightlaw/creativecommons\\_2596.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/media-copyrightlaw/creativecommons_2596.jsp)

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Describing oD's trajectory from closed to open, Solana Larsen celebrates the decision to make the magazine's archive accessible to all, confident that people will "read republished articles and be drawn to the source by curiosity."

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“Editorially, openDemocracy has paid a great deal of attention to the legal struggles that led to the development of the Creative Commons, and interviewed both Richard Stallman and Eric Raymond when Napster was still a big story. Intellectually, it was a piece of cake to see that the Creative Commons offers a constructive and democratic solution to a really huge problem. Practically, it was harder to walk boldly into unknown territory.”

Solana Larsen in interview with Mia Garlick, <http://creativecommons.org/weblog/entry/7034>.

Welcoming the collaboration between Creative Commons and openDemocracy in 2005, Siva Vaidhyanathan sees the move as ‘making a profound statement about the importance of openness and the dangers of a culture of excessive ownership.’

‘The fact that openDemocracy’s articles get picked up and re-posted on other sites, or made available out of context through Google News, not only gets them to more people, it directs some of those readers back to the site... The link back to openDemocracy, through attribution and through a literal hyperlink, is a kind of advertising, a kind of invitation, a kind of enticement.’

([www.sivacracy.net/archives/004344.html](http://www.sivacracy.net/archives/004344.html))

