

Celebrating the right to articulate

The right of expression and speech is one of the most fundamental of human rights which has been curbed by many a countries and civilizations, though with the world moving forward through the World Wide Web people are finding alternative spaces and ways to articulate, reach out and express, cutting through the distances and boundaries resulting in a connected, albeit virtual, global village of sorts. The distances are breaking down, not just as those arenas are penetrated, but more importantly as the number of conversations multiply and find their way into public media and wider circulation.

Convergence of Media-online

The convergence of media and wider participation in communication through the Internet is creating a global information revolution permeating through the world and bypassing efforts of nearly all governments of the region to control the print and broadcast media. This information features more of everything: media, especially transnational media, information, and erosion of boundaries to communication sometimes erected by state monopolies. It erodes attempts to limit public discourse to the promotion of acceptable views. The real change due to convergence of various media and the growth of the online media is not the emergence of alternative voices in public media, but probably their sheer variety.

The Internet is a global phenomenon, but with a distinct regional profile. Part of the reason for its growth is that the technology is readily available and largely off-the-shelf, with the costs low. Generally for 'end' users, the cost of equipment and connections, limited infrastructure, and the overwhelming English language medium have kept the Internet beyond reach. But now with more and more usage of language interfaces the Internet penetration rates are going up.

Technologies from cassette recording to satellite TV to the Internet have accelerated communication, bypassed gatekeepers, reduced the social distance between sender and receiver, segmented markets, and given voice and place to special, even to passing, interests.

An alternate universe- Blogosphere

Technology has brought into the public arena conventions and practices of face-to-face communication that mass communications had relegated to a 'privat' realm, expanding the reach and what is in public. *Blogs* represent such a space wherein the public sphere is enriched by people and communities by more conversations and more ways of recognising themselves and their lives in public discourse. Thinking of 'spaces', it represents a great innovation that came out of nowhere. Blogging is so popular in the world because of the innovation that's there.

Blog hopping - Voices Online

Blogging has become a global phenomenon with the number of blogs doubling after every 3 months worldwide. It is not only a publishing medium but also a vibrant form of personal expression.

Here's a peek into some virtual organisations which support the innovation:

Global Voices Online is a non-profit global citizens' media project, sponsored by and launched from the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at the Harvard Law School. A growing number of bloggers around the world are emerging as 'bridge bloggers': people who are talking about their country or region to a global audience. *Global Voices* is the guide to the most interesting conversations, information, and ideas appearing around the world on various forms of participatory media such as blogs, podcasts, photo sharing sites, and videoblogs.

A global team of regional blogger-editors is works to find, aggregate and track these conversations. Each day they link to 5-10 of the most interesting blog posts from their regions in the 'daily roundups' section. A larger group of contributing bloggers is posting daily features in the left-hand Weblog section, shedding light on what blogging communities in their countries have been talking about recently.

At a time when the international English-language media ignores many things that are important to large numbers of the world's citizens, *Global Voices* aims to redress some of the inequities in

Sometimes I wonder about my life. I lead a small life. Well, not small, but valuable. And sometimes I wonder, do I do it because I like it, or because I haven't been brave? I don't really want an answer. I just want to send this cosmic question out into the void...
Kathleen Kelly- You've Got Mail

