

InformationToday

October 2009
Vol. 26 | Issue 9

The Newspaper for Users and Producers of Digital Information Services | www.infotoday.com

News Briefs

CrossRef Leads Initiative to Archive Discontinued Articles

3

Springer Expands Chinese Library of Science

3

CAS Registry Reaches a Milestone

3

Information Today, Inc. Acquires Search Engine Meeting

4

Innodata Isogen Signs Ebook Contract

4

NewsMakers

29

A Political Revolution Goes Viral ... Not So Fast

by MICHAEL BAUMANN

It's the enduring image of the summer in international politics, the mob of Iranian students taking to the streets in support of candidate Mir-Houssein Mousavi, crying out against the alleged election fraud committed by incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The video of a young woman's death, circulated widely on Twitter and YouTube, swept through the Western imagination. Indeed, it seemed as though Neda Agha-Soltan would be the silent martyr of the Iranian election protests, much the way "Tank Man" was to Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Seemingly overnight, the Western media were consumed with talk of a "Twitter Revolution," spreading hope that the internet (and social

networking in particular) would bring democracy to autocratic states the world over.

But the protests eventually died down, and with them the emerging groupthink about the world's first internet revolution. So after having had a few months to reflect on it, what difference did social networking actually make in promoting democracy in Iran?

None at all, says Evgeny Morozov, a Belarusian journalist and Fellow at the Open Society Institute. According to Morozov, the impact of Twitter as an organizational tool or rallying cry for Iranian revolutionaries has been grossly overstated.

"Most people are accessing the internet in Iran to download pornography," Morozov says. "They're not going to download some complaint from Amnesty International."



Will the Real Tehran Twitterers Please Stand Up?

Iran is not the first place where the internet has supposedly churned up a previously dormant sea of pop-

ulist revolutionaries; the internet came to the forefront in the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, and again earlier this year in Moldova.

(continued on page 52)

Barnes v. Yahoo!: Much Ado About Third-Party Content

by DAVID MIRCHIN

Almost everyone has experienced a bad breakup, and perhaps a few are even guilty (or have been a victim) of less-than-decent ways of getting back at a former significant other.

However, it is less likely that you have been subjected to any guerilla tactics due to the 9th Circuit Court's recent opinion in *Barnes v. Yahoo!, Inc.* It's a case that should concern those dealing with disgruntled ex-

significant others, but more importantly, it also concerns those in the business of providing internet services that allow for contributions from third parties or any kind of user-generated content.

The importance of the *Barnes* case is that websites may no longer be able to dismiss claims easily with respect to defamatory content on their site. The bottom line is that

(continued on page 24)

INTERVIEW With Stefan Weitz

Putting the Bling Into Bing

by BARBARA QUINT

In setting up my interview with Stefan Weitz, a director on the Microsoft Search team developing Bing, I forwarded him a copy of the UpFront With Barbara Quint column ("You Say You Want A Decision Support Engine?") in the September 2009 *IT* that found Bing somewhat wanting.

Of the two searches covered in the column, one involved a food poisoning scare with Nestlé's refrigerated Toll House cookie dough; the second involved finding a restaurant

(continued on page 22)



Check out the highlights from the latest conferences beginning on page 32.

Inside

A Political Revolution Goes Viral ... Not So Fast

(continued from page 1)

The Orange Revolution, though hailed as the first time that revolutionaries took to the web en masse, actually spoke more to the power of the internet as a tool for the dissemination of information than as a tool for organization.

"I don't think the internet played a major role in Ukraine at all," Morozov says. "It certainly helped keep the dis-

cussion going, but ... I don't think it was instrumental in getting people out into the streets. The actual political impact, I would say, was actually minor."

The same is true of Iran, a country that Reporters Without Borders lists among 12 "Enemies of the Internet," countries that "have all transformed their Internet into an Intranet in order to prevent their population from accessing 'undesirable' online information."

There were fewer than 20,000 Twitter users in Iran before the protests started,

says Morozov. And while that number increased exponentially during the protests, the spike is most likely the result of a concerted effort of foreign supporters to change their Twitter locations to Tehran, Iran, to mask the real Iranian Twitter users who were feeding information to the outside world.

Patrick Meier, author of the iRevolution blog and a Ph.D. candidate at Tufts University, doesn't think there were more than "a few dozen" active Twitter users before the protests started.

"It's absolutely true that the first information of what's taken place in Iran came out through Twitter," Meier says. "I think where people start leaning on shakier ground is with the mobilization."

With so few users in-country (and statistically, more than a few would be pro-Ahmadinejad anyway), Twitter would probably not have been a convenient mass-organization tool for Mousavi supporters.

A 'Neon Sign in the Middle of Times Square'

One of the romantic images of the American Revolution is Paul Revere getting the news of the imminent British attack on Lexington by way of lanterns in a church bell tower. Likewise, the folklore of the French Resistance in World War II includes maps of Nazi positions hidden in wine bottles. So did Iranian dissidents pass notes on Facebook instead of hiding them in cartons of cigarettes or on the backs of labels?

In truth, the Iranian security forces probably could have shut down Facebook and Twitter within Iran's borders, if they had chosen to do so.



Meier proposes that not only does the idea of using Twitter or Facebook not make sense given the demographics of internet users in Iran, it can also be dangerous to protesters or dissidents. "It's like putting a huge poster or neon sign in the middle of Times Square and telling all the protesters that we're going to meet at 7 p.m. to carry on the anti-government protests," Meier says.

Rather than looking at Twitter, Facebook, or other social networking tools as a potential vehicle for organizing political revolution in authoritarian countries, Morozov says the capability of resistance movements to reach foreign supporters and get their message out to the world has increased. Instead of mobilizing the previously unreachable factory worker in Kiev, Ukraine, or Tehran, Twitter was reaching a group that Meier calls "well-meaning outsiders."

"In terms of getting the word out, it was pretty amazing," Meier says. "Iran elections' is still one of the most popular hash tags on Twitter."

Why Didn't Iran Shut the Internet Down?

In spite of the good intentions of foreign supporters, the effects of their actions may

Find the

Best Web sites

ON THE Internet

The CyberSkeptic's Guide to Internet Research



The **CyberSkeptic's Guide to Internet Research** newsletter explores and evaluates free and low-cost Web sites and search engines to help you maximize your research time and keep you well versed on all the best sites.

A must-read for every online researcher, the **CSG** newsletter provides concise and practical information and expresses reasoned opinions. Geared toward business, technical, medical, legal, and international research, as well as new and competitive intelligence, no other newsletter comes close to providing you with as much useful information as **CSG** does.

Reserve your FREE copy today

► For a **FREE TRIAL ISSUE** of **CSG** simply call **(800) 300-9868** or send an e-mail to **custserv@infotoday.com**. ◀

If you like it, pay just \$144.95 for nine more issues (10 issues total) when the bill arrives. That's a savings of \$50 off the basic U.S. subscription price of \$194.95. If you are not pleased with your FREE copy, return the bill marked "Cancel" and have no further obligation.



Information Today, Inc. 143 Old Marlton Pike • Medford, NJ 08055

www.infotoday.com

(continued on page 54)

InformationToday

Vice President, Content Richard T. Kaser

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief Barbara Brynko
bbrynko@infotoday.com

Editorial Services Manager Deborah Poulson

Copy Editor Cindy Martine

Assistant Editors Michael Baumann,
John Carr, Kurt Schiller

Proofreader Celeste Peterson-Sloss

News Bureau Chief Paula J. Hane
phane@infotoday.com
(972) 403-0604

Contributors Jim Ashling, Jamie Babbitt, Steven M. Cohen,
Bill Greenwood, Paula J. Hane, Donald T. Hawkins, Nancy Herther,
Shirley Duglin Kennedy, Marji McClure, David Mirchin, Marydee
Ojala, Lauree Padgett, Robin Peek, George H. Pike, Barbara Quint,
Gib Robbie

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Vice President, Graphics & Production M. Heide Dengler

Senior Graphic Designer Lisa M. Conroy

Production Assistant Elizabeth Federici

Ad Trafficking Coordinator Michael Hardwick

ADVERTISING SALES

Advertising Director
(U.S. and International Sales) Michael V. Zarrello
mzarrello@infotoday.com
(609) 654-4888

Classified Sales Chuck Fiorello
cfiorello@infotoday.com

MARKETING

Vice President,
Marketing & Business Development Thomas Hogan Jr.

Circulation Manager Janeen Welsh
jwelsh@infotoday.com

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

President and CEO Thomas H. Hogan

Chairman of the Board Roger R. Bilboul

Vice President & CAO John Yersak

Main and Editorial Offices (609) 654-6266
Fax: (609) 654-4309

Website www.infotoday.com

Information Today is published monthly (combined issue July/August) and is copyrighted © 2009 by Information Today, Inc., 143 Old Marlton Pike, Medford, New Jersey 08055. Registered in U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (ISSN: 8755-6286).

Subscriptions from U.S.: \$84.95; Canada and Mexico: \$112 U.S. funds; outside North America: \$122 U.S. funds; order from Information Today, Inc. at above address.

Information Today is available in full-text format for online searching through the information services of DataStar, Dialog, EBSCO, Factiva, Gale, H.W. Wilson, LexisNexis, ProQuest, STN, and Westlaw. Full-text and full-page versions of articles are now available through ITI InfoCentral. Individuals can go to www.iti-info.com. *Information Today* is abstracted in the Internet and Personal Computing Abstracts (IPCA) database, which is available through Dialog (File #233) and in OCLC's FirstSearch and EPIC services. It is also available in the Information Science & Technology Abstracts (ISTA) database, which is available through Dialog (File #202) and SilverPlatter Information. Microfilm, microfiche, and article and issue photocopies are available from ProQuest (formerly UMI), Ann Arbor, Michigan, (800) 521-0600.

Authorization to photocopy items herein is granted by Information Today, Inc., provided that the base fee of \$3.50 per copy, plus 50¢ per page is paid directly to Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400 or at www.copyright.com. For those organizations participating in the Transactional Reporting Service, the fee code is 8755-6286/88 \$2.50 + 50¢ pp. For reprints contact David Panara at (609) 654-6266, ext. 146.

A Political Revolution Goes Viral ... Not So Fast

(continued from page 52)

have ultimately had a negative impact on the success of the election protests. "There were a lot of narrative consequences," says Morozov. "I'm pretty sure the intelligence services of Iran were following very closely what was happening on Twitter."

If that is true, then the devices that the Western press thought had replaced candles in windows and maps on wine labels would have proved to betray their users to the authorities.

"There's a reason why Twitter and Facebook weren't completely shut down," Meier says. "That's because the regime found them useful. It was a way for them to get information without having to really look for it."

In truth, the Iranian security forces probably could have shut down Facebook and Twitter within Iran's borders, if they had chosen to do so. Instead, it is likely that they deliberately allowed the tweets and Facebook messages to get through as a means of identifying malcontents.

"By overlaying the revolutionary impact of Twitter, we have put some people in danger by making Twitter look more dangerous than it actually is," Morozov says. "The simple fact of having a list of American government people in your list of Facebook friends is already, in many countries, proof that you're a spy."

Morozov says the preferred way to shut down websites is with denial-of-service (DoS) attacks, a much-discussed part of Russia's attack on Georgia last summer. DoS attacks are simple, effective, cheap, and anonymous, so much so that Morozov believes the attacks themselves were carried out by Russian civilians without encouragement or support from Moscow.

Essentially, DoS attacks operate by forcing a target website to refresh over and over until it crashes, unable to support the incoming traffic. Morozov, by searching the Russian blogosphere, was able to find out how to launch DoS attacks and set up a successful test within minutes.

"You can go and buy the capability to do it on eBay sometimes," Morozov says. "While we squarely pointed the finger at the Russian government, I could do it while I was sitting in a café in Berlin with a laptop."

The DoS attacks on Georgian government websites themselves were predated by attacks by Russian hackers on the websites of the Estonian Reform Party during spring 2007. While state-sponsored cyberwarfare is a reality—according to Morozov, Russia is training Burma in it—the fact that an ordinary citizen has the power to shut down a major website means that the Iranian police or military could have done so easily if either had wanted to employ such tactics.

The fact that Twitter was still accessible in Iran throughout the conflict lends credence to the theory that the Iranian establishment was getting more in useful intelligence from the internet than it was losing in bad PR.

Could a Twitter Revolution Happen?

Ultimately, all of the protests, tweets, and YouTube videos did not lead to any substantive political revolution. There were no new elections and no regime change. However, what Twitter did was to generate

However, what Twitter did was to generate media coverage, though not all of it may have been good for the promotion of democracy in Iran.



Useful Links

Patrick Meier's iRevolution Blog
<http://irevolution.wordpress.com>

Evgeny Morozov's blog at Foreign Policy magazine
<http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com>

Morozov's Slate article "An Army of Ones and Zeroes: How I Became a Soldier in the Georgia-Russia Cyberwar"
www.slate.com/id/2197514

Reporters Without Borders
www.rsf.org

media coverage, though not all of it may have been good for the promotion of democracy in Iran.

"It certainly made an impact in how the events were covered in the West," Morozov says. "It probably stole from the protesters, because instead of discussing what was happening, a quarter of American media coverage was devoted to what so-and-so said on Twitter."

Meier sees the American reaction as indicative of an American fascination with the power of the web. "One thing that I've seen [is that] every time there's a reference to the information revolution, it becomes synonymous with the internet," Meier says. The reason for the discrepancy between the perceived impact of social networking on the Iranian elections and what actually happened is most likely a misunderstanding of what role computers play in a modern political revolution.

While it may sometimes seem as if everything worth doing in a liberal democracy can be done online, that simply is not the case in Iran. "The weapon of choice for digital activists in developing countries is still the mobile phone," Meier says.

So for citizens of authoritarian nations in other parts of the world, regime change fueled by internet organization is still a long way off.

"I don't see that happening," Meier says. "At the end of the day, I think it's still about having people on the street." Or as Morozov put it, "We used to have revolutions even before Twitter was around."

Michael Baumann is an assistant editor at Information Today, Inc. and works on several publications. Send your comments about this article to itletters@infotoday.com.

**CHECK THE
INFORMATION TODAY, INC.
WEBSITE
(WWW.INFOFOTODAY.COM)
FOR THE LATEST
INDUSTRY NEWSBREAKS.**

Copyright of Information Today is the property of Information Today Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.