

WEXNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS
SCHOOL PROGRAMS RESOURCES



FORBIDDEN VOICES

HOW TO START A REVOLUTION WITH A LAPTOP

Starring

Yoani Sánchez (Cuba)

- Yoani on Twitter: [@yoanifromcuba](#)
- Yoani's Blog: [Generación Y](#)

Farnaz Seifi (Iran)

- Farnaz' Blog: (shut down)

Zeng Jinyan (China)

- Zeng's Blog: [了了园| 曾金燕的](#)
- Zeng on Twitter: [@zengjinyan](#)

Crew

Written & Directed by: Barbara Miller

Producer: Philip Delaquis

Camera: Peter Indergand scs

Editing: Andreas Winterstein

Music: Marcel Vaid

Sound Design/Mix: Roman Bergamin

Production Company: Das Kollektiv

GmbH Zurich, Switzerland

Official Website:

<http://www.forbiddenvoices.net>

Synopsis

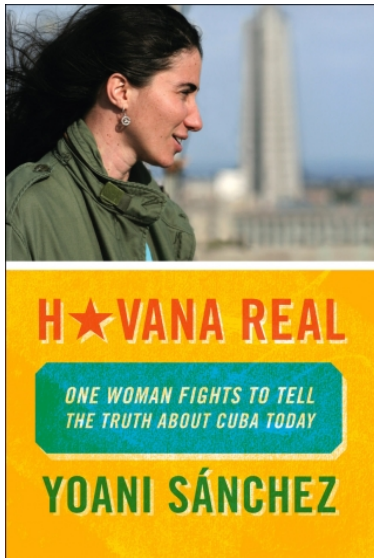
Their voices are suppressed, prohibited and censored. But world-famous bloggers Yoani Sánchez, Zeng Jinyan and Farnaz Seifi are unafraid of their dictatorial regimes. These fearless women represent a new, networked generation of modern rebels. In Cuba, China and Iran their blogs shake the foundations of the state information monopoly, putting them at great risk. This film accompanies these brave young cyberfeminists on perilous journeys. Eyewitness reports and clandestine footage show Sánchez's brutal beating by Cuban police for criticizing her country's regime; Chinese human rights activist Jinyan under house arrest for four years; and Iranian journalist and women's advocate Seifi forced into exile, where she blogs under a pseudonym. Tracing each woman's use of social media to denounce and combat violations of human rights and free speech in her home country, FORBIDDEN VOICES attests to the Internet's potential for building international awareness and political pressure.

Related Links

- Read Yoani Sanchez's bio and her posts on [Huffington Post](#).
- An [article on bbc.com](#) about Yoani Sanchez and the launch of her newspaper.
- Yoani Sanchez delivers the 13th annual Gus Hart Lecture, "Cuba Uncensored," to The Chicago Council on Global Affairs. [Click here to watch it.](#) VIDEO
- A link to Yoani Sanchez's online newspaper <http://www.14ymedio.com> (The newspaper is in Spanish, but you can also use Google translate to read the newspaper in English)
- A bio of Zeng Jinyan on [Time.com](#) and an interview with her on [China Digital Times](#).
- Article about the documentary Forbidden Voices and the three bloggers on [CNN.com](#)
- Coverage of the documentary by Deutsche Welle. [Click here to watch](#) VIDEO

Recommended Books

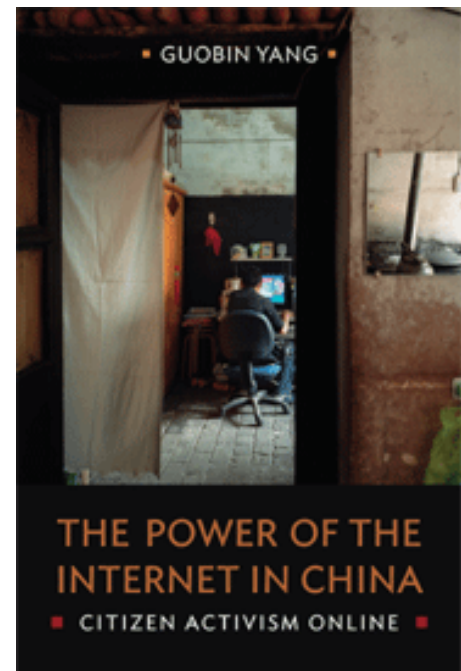
[Havana Real](#)



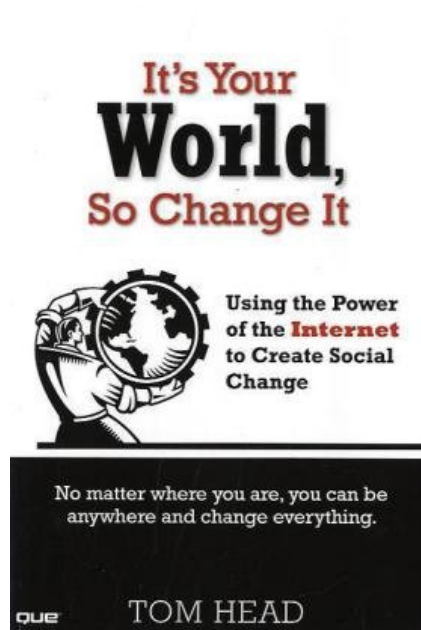
Yoani Sánchez is an unusual dissident: no street protests, no attacks on big politicians, no calls for revolution. Rather, she produces a simple diary about what it means to live under the Castro regime: the chronic hunger and the difficulty of shopping; the art of repairing ancient appliances; and the struggles of living under a propaganda machine that pushes deep into public and private life. For these simple acts of truth-telling her life is one of constant threat. But she continues on, refusing to be silenced—a living response to all who have ceased to believe in a future for Cuba.

The Power of the Internet in China

Since the mid-1990s, the Internet has revolutionized popular expression in China, enabling users to organize, protest, and influence public opinion in unprecedented ways. Guobin Yang's pioneering study maps an innovative range of contentious forms and practices linked to Chinese cyberspace, delineating a nuanced and dynamic image of the Chinese Internet as an arena for creativity, community, conflict, and control. Like many other contemporary protest forms in China and the world, Yang argues, Chinese online activism derives its methods and vitality from multiple and intersecting forces, and state efforts to constrain it have only led to more creative acts of subversion. Transnationalism and the tradition of protest in China's incipient civil society provide cultural and social resources to online activism. Even Internet businesses have encouraged contentious activities, generating an unusual synergy between commerce and activism. Yang's book weaves these strands together to create a vivid story of immense social change, indicating a new era of informational politics.



It's Your World, So Change It



There's been plenty of hype about the "netroots," and online activism on both the right and left. But most of it's been celebratory, not practical. This is a practical, start to finish guide to promoting any cause and participating in any social movement on the social Web. Long-time activist and online community expert Tom Head covers everything you need to know about e-activism, including: " Using the Web to find activism jobs and volunteer opportunities " Using Google Alerts, RSS feeds, and other tools to stay informed " Building cause-related web sites - even if you have practically no money or web experience " Engaging effectively on social networking sites " Promoting causes, events, or organizations without spamming "Getting more attention and links for a cause " Keeping allies informed via email, blogs, text messaging, and Twitter " Organizing local activists using global media, and using online activism to support on-the-ground work " Blogging to promote a cause: when it works, and when it's not worth it " Avoiding the common mistakes e-activists make

TED Talks

https://www.ted.com/talks/mena_trott_tours_her_blog_world: The founding mother of the blog revolution, Movable Type's Mena Trott, talks about the early days of blogging, when she realized that giving regular people the power to share our lives online is the key to building a friendlier, more connected world.

http://www.ted.com/talks/tavi_gevinson_a_teen_just_trying_to_figure_it_out: Fifteen-year-old Tavi Gevinson had a hard time finding strong female, teenage role models — so she built a space where they could find each other. At TEDxTeen, she illustrates how the conversations on sites like Rookie, her wildly popular web magazine for and by teen girls, are putting a new, unapologetically uncertain and richly complex face on modern feminism.

https://www.ted.com/talks/sasa_vucinic_invests_in_free_press: A free press — papers, magazines, radio, TV, blogs — is the backbone of any true democracy (and a vital watchdog on business). Sasa Vucinic, a journalist from Belgrade, talks about his new fund, which supports media by selling "free press bonds."

http://www.ted.com/talks/edward_snowden_here_s_how_we_take_back_the_internet: Appearing by telepresence robot, Edward Snowden speaks at TED2014 about surveillance and Internet freedom. The right to data privacy, he suggests, is not a partisan issue, but requires a fundamental rethink of the role of the internet in our lives — and the laws that protect it. "Your rights matter," he says, "because you never know when you're going to need them." Chris Anderson interviews, with special guest Tim Berners-Lee.

http://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_how_cellphones_twitter_facebook_can_make_history?language=en: While news from Iran streams to the world, Clay Shirky shows how Facebook, Twitter and TXTs help citizens in repressive regimes to report on real news, bypassing censors (however briefly). The end of top-down control of news is changing the nature of politics.

http://www.ted.com/talks/erik_hersman_on_reporting_crisis_via_texting: At TEDU 2009, Erik Hersman presents the remarkable story of Ushahidi, a GoogleMap mashup that allowed Kenyans to report and track violence via cell phone texts following the 2008 elections, and has evolved to continue saving lives in other countries.

http://www.ted.com/talks/wael_ghonim_inside_the_egyptian_revolution: Wael Ghonim is the Google executive who helped jumpstart Egypt's democratic revolution ... with a Facebook page memorializing a victim of the regime's violence. Speaking at TEDxCairo, he tells the inside story of the past two months, when everyday Egyptians showed that "the power of the people is stronger than the people in power."

Online Activism: What Research says?

Despite the increasing popularity, the effectiveness of online activism in creating social change remains debatable. This section provides a collection of interesting articles, essays and research studies about the phenomenon of online activism.

- [Activism vs. Slacktivism](#)

The growing popularity of social networking sites as tools for online activism has led social scientists to question the effectiveness of online activism. This article explores both sides of the debate.

- [Collective Action on the Web: A Cross Cultural Study](#)

This cross-cultural research study found that participants from United States as well as Latin America believed that online activism translates into offline activism and that social networking websites play a crucial role in contemporary activism.

- [Social Media Activism in South Korea](#)

This research article provides an empirical account of how an online community has employed social media to mobilize people for a political goal in South Korea.

- [Online Media and Political Participation](#)

Interviews with participants from Malaysia demonstrated that online media are an important alternative news source owing to the control of political information in more traditional media. This study showed that people's online media use led to higher levels of political participation among Malaysian voters.

- [Arab Women Social Media and the Arab Spring](#)

This essay analyzes Arab women's use of online social networking sites for activism and social change. The authors explain how Arab feminists' online discourse function within the local as well as global contexts.

Related Themes to Explore

While the film talks about the freedom of press and political crisis in three different countries, here are two examples of broader topics that you could explore in the classroom:

Freedom of Press around the World

Countries around the world have different rules and regulations regarding press freedom in print, broadcast as well as online media.

Questions to think about:

- What are the socio-cultural factors that shape the rules regarding freedom of speech or freedom of press?
- Compare and contrast one country with the United States. What are the similarities and differences between the two in terms of laws regarding freedom of speech?
- Which are some of the most and least free countries around the world?

Relevant Resources:

- [Global Journalist](#) reports on the state of press freedom around the world, covers developments in international journalism and serves international journalists.
- An interactive [Press Freedom Map](#) provides quick snapshots about the level of press freedom (print, broadcast and online) in countries around the world.
- [PBS Lesson Plan](#): First Lady Michelle Obama is in China and spoke to professors and students about the importance of free speech to the strength of a country's voice. Meanwhile in Turkey, the Prime Minister's attempt to "wipe out" Twitter has fallen short as Turkish citizens have found ways around the government's censorship. Use this PBS NewsHour video and support materials to inform students about the global news surrounding freedom of speech and as a springboard for a larger discussion on the topic. March 24, 2014. (**Video & handouts provided on your flash drive**)

First Amendment & Freedom of Speech in the United States

While it is important to understand the status of press freedom around the world, this film can be used to compare other countries to the United States. This film can provide the opportunity to teach your students about the value of and the responsibility that comes with free speech and the first amendment in the United States.

Questions to think about:

- What does freedom of speech mean to you? How would your life be affected if freedom of speech was taken away from you?
- Freedom of speech is valuable. However, at times it can be misused. Can you think of examples where freedom of speech is misused?

Relevant Resources:

- [1 for All](#) is a national nonpartisan program designed to build understanding and support for First Amendment freedoms. 1 for All provides [teaching materials](#) to the nation's schools, supports educational events on America's campuses and reminds the public that the First Amendment serves everyone, regardless of faith, race, gender or political leanings. PBS Lesson Plan

Blogs as Tools for Teaching & Learning

While blogs can be a powerful platform for activism, we know that blogs are also a powerful tool for enhancing teaching and learning. Considering that blogging is an integral aspect of the PAGES experience, this section provides interesting theoretical concepts and practical guidelines that can help you to think about how you could use blogs in the classroom.

[HOT \(Higher Order Thinking\) Blogging](#)

A growing body of research contends that the reading comprehension skills required for online reading are significantly different from the traditional reading comprehensions skills. This article describes HOT (Higher Order Thinking) blogging approach that combines techniques of traditional reading comprehension and the new higher order thinking skills often required during online reading comprehension. The article describes four recursive steps involved in the HOT blogging framework that teachers can use in their English classes.



[Blogs to Support Teaching and Learning](#)

In this article the researcher explores the popular ways in which teachers use blogs in their classrooms. The study used teacher reflection, student interviews, questionnaires and observation of blog activities in order to investigate how blogs can supplement classroom teaching and enhance the overall learning experience.

Some Cool Blogs

[Visualizing Palestine](#)

Visualizing Palestine is the intersection of communication, social sciences, technology, design and urban studies for social justice. Visualizing Palestine uses creative visuals to describe a factual rights-based narrative of Palestine/Israel.

[Very Short List](#)

Very Short List is a delightful e-mail that shares cultural gems from a different curator every day.

[It Gets Better Project](#)

It Gets Better Project's mission is to communicate to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth around the world that it gets better, and to create and inspire the changes needed to make it better for them.

[Humans of New York](#)

This blog provides a worldwide audience with daily glimpses into the lives of strangers in New York City. It has also become a #1 NYT bestselling book. It's been quite a ride so far. Feel free to follow along.

[The Modern Nomad](#)

A blog about living life without a fixed address. Through travel, this blogger explores what makes life exciting, meaningful and authentic.

[Nowness](#)

This is a curated destination for the culturally curious, a point of reference for leaders in media and style, and a creative community committed to discovering, crafting and showcasing exceptional work, in collaboration with exceptional artists.