

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

THE INTERNET – GOOD FOR POLITICS AT ELECTION TIME?

London, UK – 8 April 2010. How will online journalism affect this year's UK General Election? For good or bad, it is likely the internet will carry more breaking news, more openly partisan comment and more character attacks than ever before. The bloggers will be busy and their stories, true or not so true, will spread like wildfire.

... OR A DISTORTING AND TRIVIALISING FORCE?

We have also had the arrival, since the last election, of online TV and radio channels, some of them run by newspapers, INCLUDING News International's, which run to heavy political agendas without any regulation or legal requirements on fairness or balance.

Will all this be good for the fair conduct of the election, and so for the democratic process, or not? Where will it leave the strictly regulated public broadcasting sector?

This will be the issue at the **2010 World Press Freedom Day debate** organised by the UK National Commission for UNESCO, which will debate the proposition...

'Unregulated political comment online helps the democratic process'

Speakers include:

Sir Robert Worcester – MORI/Ipsos Group; University of Kent

Sunny Hundal – Liberal Conspiracy blog

Caroline Thomson – Chief Operating Officer, BBC

Steve Barnett – University of Westminster

Paul Bradshaw – Birmingham City University

Nicholas Jones – Author, ex-BBC

Friday 9 April, 10 am to 12 noon

Frontline Club, 13 Norfolk Place, Paddington, London W2 1QJ

Follow this event on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/PressFreeUK>. Can't make it to the Frontline Club on 9 April? Watch the debate live online at www.ustream.tv/channel/frontline-club. You can also contribute to the debate via Twitter as it's happening. Just be sure to use the tag #WPFdebate in all your remarks. They'll be displayed in real time at the debate, so expect responses from the speaker panel.

For further details visit

http://www.unesco.org.uk/events/world_press_freedom_day_2010_debate

Organised by the UK National Commission for UNESCO (www.unesco.org.uk) and the Press Freedom Network, with the support of the Frontline Club and the BBC College of Journalism.

ENDS

For further information, photos, or to arrange an interview, please contact Ian White at the UK National Commission for UNESCO on +44 (0) 20 77 66 34 92 or iwhite@unesco.org.uk.

Notes to Editors

- ***The UK National Commission for UNESCO*** is the focal point in the UK for UNESCO-related policies and activities. As an independent body, the UK National Commission brings together a network of nearly 250 experts from across the UK in the fields of education, culture, sciences and communication. Working closely in partnership with HM Government and UK civil society, the UK National Commission aims to provide expert advice to Government on UNESCO related matters, develop UK input into UNESCO policy-making and programme implementation, promote reforms within UNESCO, and encourage support in the UK for UNESCO's ideals and work.