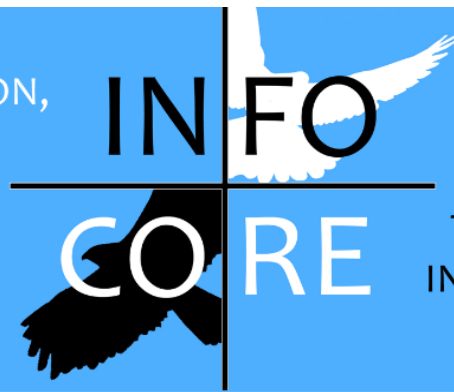


(IN)FORMING CONFLICT PREVENTION,  
RESPONSE AND RESOLUTION:



THE ROLE OF MEDIA  
IN VIOLENT CONFLICT

# INFOCORE Definitions

## “Social Media”

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### **Definition: “Social Media”**

Social media and networks are based on the technological tools and the ideological foundations of Web 2.0<sup>1</sup> and enable the production, distribution and exchange of user-generated content. They transform the global media landscape by transposing the power of information and communication to the public that had a passive role in the mass communication process.

It is important to distinguish between social media and social networks. Whereas often both terms are used interchangeably, it is important to understand that social media is a channel to disseminate, share and discuss information through social interaction with a larger and/or targeted audiences who are active online. Social media aim to transcend the limitations of traditional (offline) media and invest in interactive relationships with their users. Social networking builds on the use of online communities of people who are connected and share similar interests and activities.

The emancipatory power of social media is crucial to understand the importance of networking, collaboration and participation. These concepts, directly linked to social media are key concepts to understand the real impact and dimensions of contemporary *participatory media culture*. In the definition of Jenkins (2006), the term participatory culture contrasts with older notions of passive media consumption. Rather than talking about media producers and consumers occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other and contribute actively and prospectively equally to social media production (Jenkins & Deuze, 2008).

Participation is a key concept that addresses the main differences between the traditional (old) media and the social (new) media and focuses mainly on the empowerment of the audience/users of media towards a more active information and communication role. The changes transform the relation between the main actors in political communication, namely political actors, journalists and citizens. Social media and networks enable any user to participate in the mediation process by actively searching, sharing and commenting on available content (Bruns, 2005). The distributed, dynamic, and fluid structure of social media enables them to circumvent professional and political restrictions on news production (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013) and has given rise to new forms of journalism defined as citizen, alternative or participatory journalism (Deuze, 2009; Kelly, J., Kayaks, R. & Gold, H., 2009; Domingo, 2008; Atton & Hamilton 2008; Dimitrakopoulou, 2011; Siapera & Dimitrakopoulou, 2012), but also new forms of propaganda and misinformation (Kamilindi, 2007; Paterson et al., 2012).

In INFOCORE, social media constitute the separate WP5 using the content-analytic methodology and in interrelation to the other content-analytic WPs (6-8). WP5 assesses the interactions and the dissemination of news in social media using network/content analysis. The analysis conducted in WP5 allows the simultaneous assessment of news production and dissemination as well as contributes to the analysis of interactions of journalists, political actors, lay publics, NGOs and experts on/with social media (WP1-4).

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<sup>1</sup> Tim O'Reilly (2005) coined the term Web 2.0 to refer to a new generation of web-based services that put emphasis on social networking, collaboration and participation.

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