Human Rights Education: A Digital Approach?

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Human Science/Social Transformation
Lying at the intersection of social science, computer science, and engineering, the Program on Liberation Technology seeks to understand how information technology can be used to defend human rights, improve governance, empower the poor, promote economic development, and pursue a variety of other social goods.

Source: http://liberationtechnology.stanford.edu/
Human Rights are...

Inalienable

Indivisible

Interdependent

Civil, Political, Economic, Social, Cultural
Amnesty International believes that learning about human rights is the first step toward respecting, promoting and defending the rights of all people. Teaching human rights means both conveying ideas and information concerning human rights and nurturing the values and attitudes that lead to the support of those rights.

Source: http://www.amnestyusa.org/resources/educators
Focus of Human Rights Education

People who are especially susceptible to violations of their basic human rights...

- **Disadvantaged people**: those who are unable to access resources or opportunities usually enjoyed by the majority of people in society.

- **Marginalized people**: those excluded from the mainstream of society and because of this exclusion are near or below the limit of reasonable conditions of existence.

- **Vulnerable people**: those that are susceptible to exploitation, injury or attack.

Source: Asia-Pacific Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education, 2004
Broadly defined, Human Rights Education is...

Any learning, education, training and information efforts aimed at building a universal culture of human rights

-World Programme for Human Rights Education, 2010
Human Rights Education can be...

Formal

Non-Formal

Informal
Digital Tools:
Turning education into advocacy and activism

A new category of digital ICTs serves to expand political, social, and economic freedom

Making democratic processes and institutions more democratic
Mobile technology allows for...

- access real-time information
- legal data & documentation
- "crowdsourcing"
- an inversion of the traditional approach to human rights monitoring
- more accurate coordination of resources and response in crisis situations
- surveillance becomes sous-veillance
Ushahidi, which means “testimony” in Swahili, is a platform that was initially developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the post-election fallout at the beginning of 2008.
Examples

Frontline SMS
Rapid SMS
Open Street Map
Freedom Fone
The HUB
OpenIDEO
Sahana
mPesa
Concerns and complications

- Digital divide
- Privacy & security
- Data verification
- Technology can perpetuate a power imbalance
- Breeds "slacktivism"?
- How to evaluate informal HRE?
- Cultural norms concerning the use of technology
- Gender discrepancies
- Internet access as a human right?
- Limited usability of ICT if illiterate or differently-abled
THANK YOU

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