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# The New Censorship: Inside The Global Battle For Media Freedom (Columbia Journalism Review Books)



## Synopsis

Journalists are being imprisoned and killed in record numbers. Online surveillance is annihilating privacy, and the Internet can be brought under government control at any time. Joel Simon, the executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists, warns that we can no longer assume that our global information ecosystem is stable, protected, and robust. Journalists are increasingly vulnerable to attack by authoritarian governments, militants, criminals, and terrorists, who all seek to use technology, political pressure, and violence to set the global information agenda. Reporting from Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, Egypt, and Mexico, among other hotspots, Simon finds journalists under threat from all sides. The result is a growing crisis in information—a shortage of the news we need to make sense of our globalized world and fight human rights abuses, manage conflict, and promote accountability. Drawing on his experience defending journalists on the front lines, he calls on "global citizens," U.S. policy makers, international law advocates, and human rights groups to create a global freedom-of-expression agenda tied to trade, climate, and other major negotiations. He proposes ten key priorities, including combating the murder of journalists, ending censorship, and developing a global free-expression charter to challenge the criminal and corrupt forces that seek to manipulate the world's news.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

From his vantage point as director of the Committee to Protect Journalists, Joel Simon has worked

tirelessly to get kidnapped or imprisoned reporters freed. He's campaigned globally for justice in cases of murdered journalists. In *The New Censorship*, he warns us of new threats â “ like the insidious information management techniques of "democratators" Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Simon's prescriptions for how to counter these new challenges are wise and insightful. He offers hope to all who care about maintaining the free flow of information in a world full of would-be censors. (Ann Cooper, Columbia Journalism School) Joel Simon is a warrior for press freedom and the place of journalists in every culture and country. Here he writes with characteristic passion and insight on the importance of fighting press censorship around the world, reminding us that we have new tools but old demons remain. (Tom Brokaw, NBC News) Fascinating and comprehensive, *The New Censorship* should become a bible for anyone seeking an honest, up-to-date grasp of the global state of press freedom. Well written and lucidly argued, this is a must-read. (Jon Lee Anderson, staff writer for *The New Yorker*, author of *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*) Simon's assessment of what it means to be a journalist and his call to action at book's end are moving and practical. A must-read. (Booklist (starred review)) Simon makes a persuasive case that the global trend is toward less, not greater, freedom of the press. (New Yorker) A case for why the goal of upholding 'press freedom' needs to expand, in the digital age, to defending 'freedom of information.' (David Greenberg *The American Prospect*)

Joel Simon is the executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and has written widely on media issues. He is a regular contributor to *Slate* and the *Columbia Journalism Review*, and his articles and commentary have appeared in the *New York Review of Books*, the *New York Times*, *World Policy Journal*, and other publications. He is also the author of *Endangered Mexico: An Environment on the Edge* and lives in Brooklyn with his family.

This book puts the reader at the heart of the battle for press freedom at a time when most rules have changed or are changing. In a precise, lively and balanced assessment of the crisis Joel Simon shows how technology can be both liberating or suffocating for journalism. He describes the new and brutal actors who threaten the press at a time when an interconnected world needs journalists more than ever to shape informed responses to global pressing challenges. The author also introduces us to courageous journalists around the world who confront violence and intimidation to report on issues of public interest. And instead of bailing out by declaring that the world is too harsh or too complex he sketches a roadmap that gives a global future to journalism and press freedom.

Insightful, original and compelling reporting and analysis on the globalization of information and threats to freedom to gathering and disseminating it in the public interest, with excellent reporting on how those threats have played out in individual cases and countries. Essential reading.

A very stimulating, thought-provoking read on an under-discussed topic that threatens our democracy a little more every day. Government and corporate censorship of what used to be the free press is whittling away our First Amendment freedom no less surely than murders of journalists overseas have already done in those countries.

informative and sobering study -- very troubling how few people on earth enjoy access to free and relevant news

This book is now somewhat dated. History or current events have outstripped the book. Oh well.

Nothing defines a democracy more profoundly and more directly than a free press. Nothing labels a dictatorship more clearly than censorship. And no organization, certainly no individual has labored more diligently, more effectively than the Committee to Protect Journalists and especially its brilliant leader Joel Simon to identify and stamp out challenges to press freedom. Now Simon has given us *The New Censorship: Inside the Global Battle for Media Freedom*--the quintessential handbook of how precisely and graphically to define censorship in all its varied and pernicious forms. This is a work that sheds light into the world's darkest corners where, every day, journalists are threatened and attacked. Simon's riveting stories of courage and confrontation are deeply enriched by a blueprint for supporters of those who labor diligently in so many lands that persist in attacking journalism's best and brightest. Where was CPJ when I was beaten by the Polish secret police, threatened by Rumanian state security, expelled by the leaders of communist Czechoslovakia? Sadly, those were the years before the creation of CPJ, before Joel Simon went to battle for our interests. This must-read volume is a beacon for the future of press freedom and journalists in every medium on every continent.

This is one of the best books I read in 2014 . I have bought multiple copies for friends and I will be assigning it to my students as well. Joel Simon draws on decades of experience in journalism and in human rights to explain why dangers to journalists have increased in recent years. Some of the trends that Simon has seen: democratically elected leaders in countries like Ecuador, Venezuela

and Turkey have curtailed press freedom through both legal means and intimidation. Wars in Iraq and Syria have made journalists working in those conflict zones extremely vulnerable to being kidnapped, tortured, killed. In Latin America and many other places, the decline of the foreign correspondent means US and European media outlets hire more freelancers and local journalists. These brave men and women are often not known internationally and working without the protection afforded by a strong and well-known employer makes them susceptible to pressure and more likely to be killed by local gangsters or governments. Simon also devotes a couple of chapters to the internet and the dangers of surveillance. He is particularly critical of China and its attempts to control the internet domestically. I am not sure I agree with everything Joel Simon says (I'd need to think a bit more about some of his points) but this book is well written and should be read by anyone interested in technology, journalism and free expression.

As we are well aware since the murders of magazine staff in Paris, journalists are under increasing threat worldwide. This book recounts experiences of the author and other media persons as to the situation in a broad context. From Pakistan to Mexico and even Turkey come stories which sound extreme but are a part of life for journalists working and living in these countries - murders, abductions and mass arrests. The Arab states have seen an upswing in violence where previously a journalist was seen as a neutral, sympathetic observer. A survey in 2011 for the Freedom of The Press index states that only fifteen percent of the world's citizens live in countries with a free press. Citizen journalism is also discussed; this is reporting on the spot by means of phone tweets, vid clips and posting on social sites about events as they unfold. Repressive regimes such as in China crack down on the internet; they censor posts by their own citizens and block those from other countries. As the author is established with media outlets, he does at times display a partisanship towards mass media and against unregulated, possibly activist led citizen journalism. He may well be right. He also gives a little space to the necessity for regulation and self regulation among the established media if people are not to be libelled. Overall this will be of interest to students of journalism or world geopolitics, and will provide the information that the average person needs in order better to understand and appreciate the work of journalists.

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