The Future of Investigative Journalism: Global, Networked and Collaborative

Ellen Hume and Susan Abbott

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Note: This report is extracted from our recent evaluation of the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) for the Adessium Foundation. Ellen Hume would like to thank especially David Kaplan, Susan Abbott, Anya Schiffrin, Ethan Zuckerman, James Hamilton, Tom Rosenstiel, Bruce Shapiro, Marina Guevara Walker and Brant Houston for their insights.
1. Overview: The Investigative Media Landscape

The internet and DIY communication tools have weakened the commercial mainstream media, and authoritarian political actors in many once-promising democratic regions are compromising public media independence. Fewer journalists were murdered in 2016 than the previous year, but the number of attacks on journalists around the world is “unprecedented,” according to the Index on Censorship.¹ Even the United States, once considered the gold standard for press freedom, has a president who maligns the mainstream news media as “enemies of the people.”

An unexpectedly bright spot in this media landscape is the growth of local and cross-border investigative journalism, including the emergence of scores of local nonprofit investigative journalism organizations, often populated by veterans seeking honest work after their old organizations have imploded or been captured by political partisans. These journalism “special forces,” who struggle to maintain their independence, are working in dangerous environments, with few stable resources to support them.

Despite the dangers and uncertainties, it is an exciting time to be an investigative journalist, thanks to new collaborations and digital tools. These nonprofits are inventing a potent form of massive, cross-border investigative reporting, supported by philanthropy. They are discovering that they are more secure and powerful in their watchdog work when they work together across borders. Despite this so-called “post-fact” era of “fake news” and propaganda spread virally on the internet, these investigative journalists are having a powerful watchdog impact on public life with projects like the Panama Papers. They are developing new digital tools to cast a spotlight on corruption and injustice, with an international impact never before dreamed possible.

Global Investigative Journalism Network Executive Director David E. Kaplan’s definitive 2013 survey for the Center for International Media Assistance, Global Investigative Journalism: Strategies for Support (CIMA, January 14, 2013) concluded that just 2% of the nearly $500 million spent on international media assistance annually went to investigative journalism. He was concerned that donors might be so interested in exciting new digital and data tools that they might fail to support systematic investigative reporting, which also requires a human element, to dig out secrets using forensic techniques, and provide meaning and context.

Kaplan’s 2013 report, together with a follow up analysis Kaplan co-authored in March 2016 with Drew Sullivan of OCCRP, are credited with helping to build the case for investigative journalism as a return on foreign aid investment.² Their argument was advanced further by Stanford

¹ https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/nov/28/index-censorship-journalists-under-unprecedented-attack-russia-turkey-ukraine
University scholar James Hamilton’s 2016 study, Democracy’s Detectives: The Economics of Investigative Journalism. Hamilton concluded that for each dollar invested in an investigative story in the USA, there can be over $100 benefits to society.\(^3\) Thanks in part to this kind of research, and widely published international exposés such as the Panama Papers, investigative journalism has attracted increasing support. It has even reached Hollywood: the movie “Spotlight,” about the Boston Globe’s investigation of the Catholic Church sex abuse scandal, won the top Oscar in 2016. Ironically, the movie’s $20 million budget was about ten times greater than the reporters had for their initial Spotlight investigation.\(^4\)

The US State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor in 2016 allocated $3 to $5 million to the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and Transparency International over the next three years for a project aimed at advancing investigative anti-corruption journalism with training and other support. Another example of increased USG donor interest is USAID’s recent five-year $6 million media development project in Moldova, which had a major focus on investigative journalism and anti-corruption activities. This growing USG support for investigative journalism is not without controversy. GIJN, ICIJ and other prominent investigative journalism organizations decline taking any US government money in order to ensure their credibility as independent operations. “Yes, we are worried about the much bigger need than money that is available. But USG is stepping in and disrupting the market. I’m not happy with that,” said one GIJN member.

The biggest source of media development money has been USAID, followed by George Soros’s Open Society Foundations (OSF), and the US State Department.\(^5\) What the US government will do with this under President Donald Trump and a Republican budget-cutting Congress is uncertain, and this political shift is likely to reduce USG media development funding after the current fiscal year ends in September, 2017. This could slow down the heated growth of nonprofit organizations in the media development sector.\(^6\)


\(^4\) James Hamilton, Democracy’s Detectives, ibid, p. 83

\(^5\) Kaplan interview with Hume, ibid

Global massive electronic leaks are the new normal. Investigative journalists may start with leaked material but must then check it out, to discover the context and meaning of the data before they can publish a fair expose. The *Panama Papers* were the biggest leak in history, leading to the largest international investigative journalism project of all time. It consisted of 11.5 million documents, or 2.6 terabytes of information, sent by encrypted emails to one reporter, Bastian Obermayer, of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper in Munich, Germany. The data included one Panama law firm’s records of 214,000 offshore companies, including the names of the real owners, passport scans, bank statements and email chains.\(^7\)

When the emails first started coming to Obermayer in Munich in April 2015, he realized very quickly that he couldn’t parse all these documents alone. He turned to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) in Washington, D.C., which had previously done big cross-border projects. ICIJ was the natural place for Obermayer to turn. It is a Washington, D.C.-based group of about 200 elite reporters, starting from a core of Nieman and Knight fellows and Pulitzer Prize winners, who selectively invite new colleagues. The new recruits are trained to work together on projects selected by the ICIJ leadership.

At the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) conference in Lillehammer in October, ICIJ leaders met on the side to figure out how to proceed with this new *Panama Papers* project. ICIJ and GIJN are closely related; ICIJ’s deputy director is the treasurer of GIJN’s board and GIJN executive director David Kaplan used to run ICIJ. GIJN is a global support network of investigative journalism nonprofits, training and enabling far-flung journalists to meet at face-to-face conferences.

The *Panama Papers* investigation involved more than 400 journalists in 70 countries, all working secretly on the data for an agreed upon-publication date of April 3, 2016.

This networked, horizontal, collaborative model of investigative journalism required that journalists from far away countries, who may not know each other, establish a working trust relationship. They also needed expertise not easily gotten at home. ICIJ developed a private version of Facebook—iHub—for all the data to be posted for the participating reporters. A version of the Tinder dating app was invented to allow reporters to decide whom to partner with on any given piece of the investigation.

ICIJ’s *Panama Papers* team has exposed the offshore holdings of people in 200 countries, including 12 current and former world leaders. Some, like Vladimir Putin in Russia and Nawaz Sharif in Pakistan have survived the embarrassing revelations. But Icelandic Prime Minister Sigmundur Davio Gunnlaugsson had to resign, as did Spain’s minister of industry. Many prosecutions were initiated, and five EU countries agreed to share tax and law enforcement data in the wake of the revelations. The *Panama Papers* database is still being explored, and reporters look forward to new data dumps for future cross-border investigations.

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\(^7\) *The Panama Papers*, Bastian Obermayer and Fredrich Obermeier, (OneWorld Publications, June 30, 2016)
USG and private donors interviewed for this report were reluctant to predict how long their donor interest in investigative journalism would last. But they said the popularity of investigative journalism projects is still on the upswing, and will continue well beyond 2017, attracting more private as well as public support for the sector.

One challenge for funders is the measurement of impact for their grants. A growing body of scholarship, including Hamilton's, advances models showing that every dollar of money spent on investigative journalism returns multiple dollars in public goods.⁸

The growth of the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) in the past five years illustrates a trend towards international collaboration, resource sharing and advocacy. Media, communication and tech platforms in general are both part of the problem and part of the solution to such issues as cross-border corruption and xenophobia.

What is Investigative Journalism?

While all good journalism should be fact-checked and contextualized, investigative journalists are the “special forces” of the profession. They are deployed to go more deeply and systematically into an issue than their beat colleagues do. GIJN Executive Director David Kaplan estimates that there no more than a few thousand professional investigative journalists in the world. He emphasizes that these are not “leak reporters” who simply pass on information leaked to them by WikiLeaks or someone else. (Leaks are often the raw material, but only beginning, of the investigative journalist’s work.) Nor are they the broadcasters of viral social media posts, however legitimate those might be. Instead, according to Kaplan, they are doing “systematic, in-depth, original research and reporting, often involving the unearthing of secrets.”

Their work usually depends on the heavy use of public records, computer-assisted data crunching, and a focus on social justice and accountability. Investigative journalism relies heavily on primary sources. It involves the forming and testing of a hypothesis, and rigorous fact-checking. Such journalism therefore requires data skills and other specialized training. However the data alone do not tell the story, so investigative reporters also must piece together the human threads, figuring out the story’s context, proportionality and meaning. Investigative journalism is often dangerous and hard to fund, because it exposes wrongdoing by powerful elites. It is time consuming, expensive, and its independence must be unimpeachable.

“Corruption can be an authoritarian government’s greatest political vulnerability,” US Assistant Secretary of State Tom Malinowski testified in Congress. “Such governments can sometimes manufacture excuses for shooting demonstrators, arresting a critic, or censoring a newspaper, but no cultural, patriotic, or national security argument can justify stealing.”

David Kaplan observed that Investigative journalists can have a deterrent effect, as scarecrows, as well as a watchdog effect, uncovering crimes whose facticity cannot be denied.

Until a few years ago, there were essentially three models of investigative journalism. These included 1) reporters at established news organizations, like the Boston Globe’s Spotlight team; 2) small independently funded strike teams who work with primarily mainstream media to get the word out, like ProPublica’s work with The New York Times; and 3) independent nonprofit organizations that publish on their own. And now there is a fourth model: powerful, coordinated networks of these journalists, like the Washington-based International Center for Investigative Journalism and the Organized Crime and Corruption reporting Project (OCCRP) in Sarajevo. The Global Investigative Journalism Network) supports all four types of investigative journalists, but it is having particular impact with the third and fourth models, in which nonprofit organizations work both independently and in cross-border networks, creating exposes like the Panama Papers that can be important “locally,” i.e., both locally and globally.

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9 Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, June 30, 2016.
2. The umbrella support network: GIJN

The Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) has grown to a capacity-building support network of 145 nonprofit investigative journalism organizations in 62 countries. It works to raise the standards and funding for investigative journalism worldwide, with an emphasis on the developing world. GIJN trains and connects hundreds of journalists at each of its annual conferences, enabling reporters to meet foreign counterparts face to face, and establishing trust for future cross-border projects. Individual investigative journalists are welcome at all of its conferences, but GIJN limits its membership to non-profit investigative journalism organizations or their equivalents, and vets each potential group before it is allowed to join. Being a part of GIJN is considered a sign of legitimacy among investigative journalism organizations. There are no membership fees.

Although GIJN is a US-registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit with an American executive director and chairman of the board, it is an example of the new virtual network organization that has no geographic base. GIJN is a dispersed international organization without any single national identity or headquarters. Its six staff come from five different countries. Executive Director Kaplan is in Washington; Deputy Director Gabriela Manuli, who is a native of Argentina, and two other support staff, are in Budapest. GIJN's main activity is convening face-to-face networking and training conferences for investigative journalists. The rest of the year, GIJN exists only virtually, offering a digital Help Desk and online resources that include hundreds of free tip sheets and other training materials on its website, and a daily global news briefing on muckrakers through social media in multiple languages.
GIJN began in Copenhagen 15 years ago, as a loose-knit support system to host global investigative journalism training conferences. At their second gathering in 2003, the group signed an organizing statement that they would offer conferences to help form and sustain investigative and data journalism organizations, support and promote best practices, help ensure access to public documents and data, and provide resources and networking services for investigative journalists worldwide. Since that first group of 35 nonprofit organizations from 22 countries signed the founding document, GIJN has hosted a popular global training conference in a different country every two years. It also has convened two regional conferences-- in Manila in 2014 and Nepal in 2016-- because unlike other parts of the world, Asia does not have a regional network doing this.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{By the Numbers:} \\
\textit{GIJN in 2016 (increase over 2015)}

- Membership: 145 groups in 62 countries – up 23% 
- Web Traffic Growth: 10-fold increase, to 13,500 page views/day 
- Web Traffic from Developing/Transitioning Countries: 91% 
- Social Media Growth: up 49% 
- Chinese Social Media Growth: up 78% 
- Requests for Assistance: 3100 requests from 100 countries since 2012 
- Web Traffic Reach: 90 countries/day 
- Global Conference Social Media (2015): 8,000 tweets, 40 million impressions. 
- Asia Conference Social Media (2016): 6,000 tweets, 70 million impressions. 
- Online Publishing: Over 350 stories by 96 authors from 29 countries. 
- Media Coverage: 144 stories in 13 languages citing GIJN 
- Mailing List Growth: up 33%, to over 5,000 
- Resource Pages: nearly doubled, with over 100 videos and 100 tip sheets.

--compiled by David Kaplan, January 2017

“They (GIJN) are doing well, better than expected,” observed one GIJN board member. “Contextual factors are allowing this to happen. There is a need for cross-border collaborative journalism. Individuals are finding a way to do that in a world where there are fewer resources, and increasing dangers.” GIJN co-founder Nils Mulvad concluded: “I never imagined it would

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devlop into what it is today. This ended up being the most important thing I've contributed to in my career. We didn’t know it at the time. It’s just what happened.”

As the popularity of investigative journalism increases, GIJN is growing very rapidly in every category: membership, conference participation, fundraising, communications, digital presence, and global reach. While there were 300 participants in Manila in 2014, the number grew to about 370 participants from 50 countries in Kathmandu two years later, attending over 60 workshops and panels during the three-day meeting. The global meetings, alternating every other year with regional ones, are about twice as large, with 1,350 gathering in Rio de Janeiro in 2013, for example, and 950 at Lillehammer in 2015.

GIJN’s “vanity metrics” show rapid growth in website visitors, Facebook and Twitter followers, further evidence that the world of networked investigative journalism is exploding. By October, 2016 the combined number of month-to-month GIJN followers on social media, for example, rose to 100,584, an over 40% increase.

12 The Rio conference combined three events.
13 This phrase is used by social media analysts, referring to categories like registered users, downloads, and raw pageviews. In the business world these numbers are easily manipulated, and do not necessarily correlate to the numbers that really matter: active users, engagement, the cost of getting new customers, and ultimately revenues and profits. The latter are more “actionable metrics.” (From: TechCrunch @ Don’t Be Fooled By Vanity Metrics | TechCrunch, https://techcrunch.com/2011/07/30/vanity-metrics/) To be sure, the last two categories are not applicable to GIJN and other nonprofits, but engagement is the factor that everyone looks for.
14 Kaplan email to Hume, Oct. 21, 2016
3. Impact

Bruce Shapiro, who runs the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma at Columbia University, says GIJN and its member organizations are “creating a real global culture of investigative journalism that leverages resources, knowledge, and trust.”

Speaking at GIJN’s September 2016 conference in Kathmandu, Leon Willems, director of Free Press Unlimited, asserted that the journalism profession is “dying” because it is confined to national publication and dogmas, with a “myopic focus on income generation for large mainstream media operations.” In contrast, the “grassroots enthusiasm” seen among the independent and nonprofit journalists at GIJN conferences reflects the core mission of journalism, he said.

ICIJ’s 400-reporter *Panama Papers* project shows what can be done with large cross-border collaborative investigations. But they are just one of the nonprofits doing this work. As a global umbrella organization, GIJN demonstrates how individual nonprofit organizations like ICIJ can be combined into regional, local and global networks, bolstering the individual journalists’ security and impact.

In Ukraine, for example, there now are multiple investigative journalism nonprofits. The reporters who reported on President Yanukovych’s corruption were trained by GIJN. When the Crimea Center for Investigative Reporting was invaded by Russian paramilitaries during the 2014 annexation, Director Oleg Khomenok was able to get journalism support organizations to ensure that that the Center’s servers were backed up and the reporters were able to leave Crimea safely without being arrested. [http://gijn.org/2014/03/02/masked-gunmen-seize-crimean-investigative-journalism-center/](http://gijn.org/2014/03/02/masked-gunmen-seize-crimean-investigative-journalism-center/) Now working from Kiev, these journalists are safe even though their offices and families’ apartments back home were searched and criminal charges of “extremism” were launched against them.

The collaborative culture is vital. The mantra of these independent journalists, as they form networks across old geographic and cultural barriers, is “If you kill one of us, you’ll have 40, if you kill 40, you’ll get 400 of us.”

Brant Houston, who co-founded GIJN and has led both the Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) and the Investigative News Network (INN) in the USA, pointed out that in addition to creating partnerships, these network connections sometimes allow people to get someone else to do stories that they can’t do in their own country.

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15 Bruce Shapiro interview with Hume November 2016 and Kaplan email to Hume January 2017
16 Leon Willems interview with Hume, Sept. 24, 2016
17 Oleg Khomenok interview with Hume, Nov. 17, 2016
There are a growing number of local and regional sub-networks, such as the Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ) the African Centers for Investigative Reporting (ANCIR) and CONNECTAS in Colombia. The Brussels-based European Fund for Investigative Journalism, Journalismfund.eu, also aims to train and build a network of investigative journalists, but it is limited to Europe. They give grants for investigative projects in Europe, supported by the Adessium Foundation, Pascal Decroos Fund, OSF and other philanthropies. They raise funds also by teaching courses in Belgium and Holland. Their DataHarvest annual conference attracts 300 Europeans but very few people from outside Europe. 18

4. Major Players: A Comparison

The selective comparison in the following page, created by Susan Abbott, illustrates some of the most recognizable organizations working in this media development landscape. An exhaustive census of organizations is beyond the scope of this report. 19 The groups selected here are networked non-profit or public interest organizations that specialize in supporting or producing investigative news. By and large they address the needs of journalists and media outlets, and also advocate the interests of those involved in investigative media by holding conferences, workshops, providing professional training online, making tip sheets and other forms of practical knowledge-sharing. Many produce investigative journalism projects and some give grants for investigative projects.

Those studied include: GIJN, OCCRP, REVEAL, IRE, Dart, ICJ, journalismfund.eu, INN, and CIJ UK. Analyzing what was presented on the public record, and conducting stakeholder interviews, we focused on the following variables: 1) does the organization have a pay wall 2) what is its staff size 3) what is its annual budget 4) who are its major donors 5) does the organization take money from government sources 6) do they offer tip sheets and other journalism based resources 7) do they produce journalism content and/or give grants 8) what does their social media and digital presence look like?

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18 Ides DeBruyne interview with Hume, October, 2016
The highlights from this review indicate that investigative media groups often share the same funders, including Adessium, OSF, Ford, MacArthur, and Knight, which are commonly listed amongst these organizations as key supporters. That said, some of the non-profits have more income diversity with a wider range of donors, and developed other ways people can contribute to the mission and vision of these non-profit media support organizations, with endowment funds, individual donor giving strategies, arrangements with Amazon Smile, and possibilities for matching funds.

Few of the organizations take government money, with the exception of OCCRP and journalismfund.eu.²⁰ An interesting budgetary aspect that many of the organizations profiled had in common is that of office space. Many of the organizations forgo independent headquarters, and instead are co-located in university departments – Dart at Columbia, the Investigative Journalism Centre at Goldsmiths in London, and IRE at the University of Missouri. The university partnership not only saves these organizations money, but it also allows them to tap into the university’s networks, students, facilities and technology.

²⁰ As an exception, several GIJN conferences have been supported in part by the Norwegian government. Kaplan explained that USG money is so prominent in media development, and controversial in some countries, that this is the litmus test for “taking government money” at GIJN. Norway’s government does not play the same role as the US and therefore is not considered a compromise to GIJN’s independence, he said. GIJN strives to be non-national and global, rather than “American” like ICFJ, IRE, INN and some peer organizations.
In terms of staff size, most of the organizations profiled have relatively small numbers, joined by advisory boards and formal boards/trustees. REVEAL has the largest staff (number is around 70, based on listings provided by their website) but this is because their staff includes the actual reporters doing journalism. Next to GIJN, Dart appears to have the smallest staff, but they also have formal partnerships with a robust and very active international network, with involved faculty, students and advisers representing centers from all over the world. This helps augment the staff work.

The organizations varied in their types of staff. All had a management or core leadership range of staffers, most have a more journalistic or editorial bent to their staff profiles, i.e. regional editors or journalists. Few listed dedicated fundraising or development staff, and few offered insight about other core types of staff that you might expect from non-profit NGOs, such as research officers/M&E professionals, a robust communications team or IT teams.

Most do not have a pay wall to access their work. The content generators, like OCCRP, give away their content. IRE—which is a predominantly American organization—does have a pay wall, although the membership rates are modest and tiered, based on student, academic, associate, professional or retiree levels. IRE also outlines on its website what prospective members get in exchange for joining and paying the fee: tip sheets, databases, listservs, IRE journal, and premium reporting tools.

Of course, not all the media support nonprofits listed below are associations or membership organizations, which is important to keep in mind. All these organizations are part of the GIJN network.

The social media footprint of the compared organizations was quite different from market-oriented companies that attempt to turn visitors into paying customers for the company’s products. GIJN and its peer organizations use social media not to build brand loyalty but rather to broadcast out to their followers what they are doing, when they are hosting things and to highlight or bring attention to free news and information relevant to their mission. Their platforms are not frequently used for interactivity such as debating, having conversations or deliberating about matters related to their missions and organizational mandates. This may be a special feature of the investigative journalism world, where secrecy and security often are critical, but we think it is an opportunity that GIJN could explore more fully.
In terms of social media models, the peer groups’ platforms are designed to impart awareness and deliver up-to-date news about what the organizations are doing or issues/concerns that they want their followers to know about. ICIJ stands out as the leader in the media support organizations reviewed for number of followers on Twitter and number of likes on Facebook. However this is to be expected, since their numbers include the entire *Panama Papers* project rollout and aftermath.

GIJN and OCCRP are next in the list, appearing to have comparable numbers of social media followers on Twitter and Facebook. Both are substantially more popular than the rest. These numbers are based on different factors, however, since GIJN is a global network and OCCRP so far is a regional one in the Balkans,21 and while GIJN does not produce or promote content on social media, journalism content is OCCRP’s primary focus.

What also stands out is that some organizations were quite selective with what social media they feature and use – some just use Twitter, Facebook and have an email listserv. Others, like GIJN, use a plethora of platforms – Twitter, Facebook, G+, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest or Instagram. What’s clear is that across the board, all organizations regularly and frequently post to Facebook and Twitter. Of those that use YouTube, most do not frequently update it – some have not posted in weeks, months or years. G+ was not a popular platform for any organization, and most had very few subscribers.

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21 OCCRP plans to branch out more globally under its new US State Department grant.
## Comparative Charts

**GIJN:** Giin is a Maryland-registered 501 (c) (3) with senior staff in USA and Hungary, a global network of 145 non-profit investigative journalism organizations, with annual conferences and digital resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Size:</th>
<th>Budget:</th>
<th>Main Donors:</th>
<th>Tipsheets/ Training Online:</th>
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<tr>
<td>5.5 2016</td>
<td>$545,000 USD 2016</td>
<td>Adessium; OSF, Ford, Oak, Logan foundations</td>
<td>Y/N but plan to start online webinars in 2017</td>
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<td>9.5 planned 2017</td>
<td>$964,000 USD 2017</td>
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<td><strong>Take $$$ from US Gov’t:</strong> N</td>
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### Journalism projects & making grants: N, N – primary activities are conferences, Help Desk and tip sheets.

### Social Media & Web based Footprint:

- **63,698 Followers**
- **15,600 Followers**
- **1,055 Members** (content last updated 2 months ago – but really great “who’s who” list of members)

#### OccRP:

OccRP is a registered name of the Journalism Development Network, a Maryland-based charitable organization (501(c)(3)). Based in Sarajevo, it is a non-profit dedicated to reporting on organized crime and corruption. It has 24 regional partners working in 30 countries from Asia to Europe.

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<tr>
<td>7 admin+ editorial staff</td>
<td>2015 $2.2 million 2016 $2.5 million 2017 est. $3.8 million</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development (USAID); the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ); the United States Department of State; the Swiss Confederation; the Open Society Foundations (OSF); Google Ideas and the Knight Foundation.</td>
<td>Y/Y</td>
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### Journalism projects & making grants: Y – investigative reporting platform, and transnational investigative reporting and promote technology-based approaches, also with new State Dept grant, OccRP will offer: “A global investigative platform for data, information, collaborative tools and services will be developed under the project to connect journalists across four continents to facilitate muckraking. Local investigative centers with compelling ideas will also receive targeted funding and extensive mentoring opportunities.”

### Social Media & Web based Footprint

- **52,786 Likes**
- **14,300 Followers**
- **291 Followers**
- **468 Subscribers, 28,109 views** – content is infrequently updated/ last update 1 month ago, content most often updated around time of GIJN Conferences.

- **2,010 subscribers/ 404,368 views**
- **335 Followers** (content last updated 5 weeks ago)

**Note:** The above figures were accessed on 12/14/2016.

22 Drew Sullivan email to Hume Jan. 8, 2017
23 These figures seem inflated compared to what we found on the web. OCCRP Editor Drew Sullivan nevertheless said OCCRP’s website gets 3.9 million viewers a year, its combined websites get 6 million viewers, and partner websites bring the total to 17.1 million. – Sullivan email to Hume Jan. 8, 2017. An independent analysis could resolve this discrepancy but is beyond the scope of this report.
### REVEAL News, from the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR), [https://www.revealnews.org/](https://www.revealnews.org/)

| Staff Size: 70 | **Budget:** $13+ million USD in grants and contributions  
(based on 2015 US tax return, found online) | **Main Donors:**  
Foundations: Gates, Carnegie Corp of NY, Ethics and Excellence of Journalism, Knight, MacArthur OSF, Dodge Foundation Mott Foundation | **Tipsheets/ Training Online (Y/N):** Y, Esp in the areas of measurement, analysis and strategy.  
**Paywall:** N |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| **Take $$$ from US Gov't:** N  
(website lists excellent policy) | | | |

**Journalism projects & making grants:** Y – primary mission is to do investigative journalism and storytelling – REVEAL is a media platform.

**Social Media & Web based Footprint**  
[https://www.revealnews.org](https://www.revealnews.org) website also has a Weekly Reveal Newsletter sign-up

Reveal also makes use of:
- RSS and AudioRSS
- StoryWorks
- iTunes

### IRE – Investigative Reporters and Editors

| Staff Size: 13 | **Budget:** IRE has an annual budget of about $2.2 million, which includes professional training programs, online training tools, a resource center and data library. | **Main Donors:**  
Foundations: Lumina, Knight, OSF Ethics & Excellence in Journalism McCormick, Rockefeller Bros, Bloomberg, Scripps Howard.  
IRE also gets funding from Amazon Smile and an Endowment Fund. | **Tipsheets/ Training Online:** Y  
– Members can browse more 4,000 tipsheets from IRE’s national conferences and Watchdog Workshops.  
**Paywall:** Y – various levels of Membership – very reasonable rates, too. |
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**Journalism projects & making grants:** N – Inspired creation of GIJN as a global network to promote excellence in investigative journalism – Membership/ fee-based requirement. IRE provides members access to thousands of reporting tip sheets and other materials through its resource center and hosts conferences and specialized training throughout the country. Programs of IRE include the National Institute for Computer Assisted Reporting and DocumentCloud.

**Social Media & Web based Footprint**

- 11,169 likes
- 19,000 Followers
- RE Blog: online/ free
- IRE Journal: only available to paying members
- Radio Podcast: updated frequently/ recently, and available for free – journalism stories
### Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, a Project of Columbia Journalism School

| **Staff** | 8 -- 1 full-time ED (Bruce Shapiro) and has 7 other staff, either located at Columbia or co-located at other universities and partner organizations around the world, plus different regional advisory groups. |
| **Budget** | Currently $1 million/year in core funding from the Kenneth B. Dart Foundation on a four-year commitment, plus approx. $300,000 in additional project funding from U.S. and overseas foundations. |
| **Main Donors** | **Foundations:*** Primary: Kenneth B. Dart Foundation (personal charitable vehicle for Kenneth Dart, former president/CEO of Dart Container Corp)

Current project funding:
- Ford
- Joyce
- Jacobs (Switzerland)
- Bernard van Leer (Netherlands)
- UNICEF. |
| **Take $$ from US Gov’t:** | N |
| **Tipsheets/Training Online (Y/N):** | Y |
| **Paywall:** | N |

**Journalism projects & making grants:** N – The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma is a resource center and global network of journalists, journalism educators and health professionals dedicated to improving media coverage of trauma, conflict and tragedy. The Dart Center runs several flagship programs annually including the Ochberg Fellowships and Dart Awards for Excellence in Coverage of Trauma. In addition, they offer a variety of specialized multi-day reporting institutes, newsroom trainings, symposia and other events on an ongoing basis around the world.

**Social Media & Web based Footprint**

- 6,703 people like
- 5,015 Followers
- Newsletter: sign-up on website
- Cool Website Feature: Dropdown menu to access site in more than 100 different languages

### International Consortium of Investigative Journalists – ICIJ.org

| **Staff Size:** | 13 |
| **Budget:** | $1,558,891 – figure taken from Annual Report. |
| **Take $$ from US Gov’t:** | N |
| **Main Donors:** | **Foundations:** Adessium Foundation; Open Society Foundations (OSF); The Sigrid Rausing Trust; the Fritt Ord Foundation; the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting;
The Ford Foundation; The David and Lucile Packard Foundation; Pew Charitable Trusts;
Waterloo Foundation.

Australian philanthropist and businessman Graeme Wood; Individual donors. |
| **Tipsheets/Training Online (Y/N):** | Y, though limited in comparison to GIJN. |
| **Paywall:** | N |

**Journalism projects & making grants:** Y – does journalism – The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists is a global network of more than 190 investigative journalists in more than 65 countries who collaborate on in-depth investigative stories. ICIJ offers: computer-assisted reporting specialists, public records experts, fact-checkers and lawyers, ICIJ reporters and editors provide real-time resources and state-of-the-art tools and techniques to journalists around the world.

**Social Media & Web based Footprint**

- 102,815 Likes
- 96,8000 Followers
- YouTube channel: 14,754 subscribers (last update 3 months ago)
**journalismfund.eu** (formerly known as Fonds Pascal Decroos voor Bijzondere Journalistiek vzw) is an independent non-profit organisation established with the purpose of promoting quality cross-border and in-depth journalism in Europe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Staff</strong></th>
<th>6 key staff, plus board and advisory board.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong></td>
<td>2016 — €1,004,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take $ss from US Gov’t</strong></td>
<td>N but supported by Flemish government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Donors</strong></td>
<td>Foundations: Adessium; OSF; Flemish government; Hans Bockler-Stiftung.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tipsheets/Training Online (Y/N)</strong></td>
<td>N (not really in the same way as GIJN). Offer postgrad courses at universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paywall</strong></td>
<td>Y, charge fees for courses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Journalism projects & making grants**: Y – they give grants and support cross-border investigative journalism. They support journalists who have good ideas for in-depth and cross-border research; grants to journalists that enable them to work on a project over a longer period of time. They also offer networking opportunities like its annual DataHarvest Conference, where investigative journalists, data specialists and coders get together to exchange skills and work on stories together.

**Social Media & Web based Footprint**
- 2,778 Likes
- 2,944 Followers

- 52 Subscribers (content last updated 5 years ago)
- Email Listserv: (sign up on website)

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**CIJ (The Centre for Investigative Journalism, UK)**: TCIJ has charity status in the UK, and also 501 (c) (3) status in the US in NY.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Staff Size</strong></th>
<th>5, plus advisory board.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong></td>
<td>Unclear from website – not listed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take $ss from US Gov’t</strong></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Donors</strong></td>
<td>Reva and David Logan Foundation; David and Elaine Potter Foundation; Lorna Sullivan Foundation; Goldsmiths University (provides office space and facilities, plus partnership with the media department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tipsheets/Training Online (Y/N)</strong></td>
<td>Y – extensive courses and resources online – nicely curated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paywall</strong></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Journalism projects & making grants**: N – Main focus is on training and education. Its star program is an annual summer school, which is held at Goldsmiths, University of London. Since its inception the school has attracted over 1000 journalists from 35 countries including Iraq, China, Russia, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico and Serbia. They list GIJN as a main partner.

**Social Media & Web based Footprint**
- 20,797 Likes
- 11,500 Followers

- TCIJ Newsletter sign-up
INN – Institute for Non-Profit News – serves North America non-profit newsrooms

**Staff:** 8, plus Board

**Budget:** Around $1.5 million – based on review of 2015 annual report

**Take $$ from US Gov’t:** N – does not appear to take $$ from govt – good policy listed on donor transparency

**Main Donors:** Craigslist charitable fund; Democracy Fund; Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation; Knight, MacArthur, McCormick, and OSF Foundations; Rockefeller Bros Fund

**Tipsheets/ Training Online (Y/N):** Y, but behind a paywall

**Paywall:** Y, but Orgs may submit a waiver request based on financial hardship

**Journalism projects & making grants:** Y -- $1 million in Innovation Fund grants offered – in partnership with Knight Foundation. INN is not a journalism content producing organization rather they offer a range of services, including fiscal sponsorship

**Social Media & Web based Footprint**

- Facebook: 3,797 likes
- Twitter: 11,900 Followers
- YouTube: 27 Subscribers
  (last updated 2 years ago)

Fund for Investigative Journalism (founded 1969)

**Staff Size:** Based on a review of the website, the Fund is run by an executive director, Sandy Bergo, and a board and an advisory council

**Budget:** Small budget – less than $300,000 a year

**Take $$ from US Gov’t:** N

**Main Donors:** The Reva and David Logan Foundation; Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation; Ottaway Foundation; Blaustein Foundation; Green Park Foundation

**Tipsheets/ Training Online (Y/N):** Y – extensive courses and resources online – nicely curated

**Paywall:** N

**Journalism projects & making grants:** Y – Issues grants 3 times per year – Grants average $5,000 and cover out-of-pocket expenses such as travel, document collection, and equipment rental. The Fund also considers requests for small stipends.

**Social Media & Web based Footprint**

- Facebook: 2,365 likes
- Twitter: 1,132 Followers
Managing a virtual organization

Virtual networks like the Global Investigative Journalism Network and Global Voices require a new form of horizontal, dispersed nonprofit management. Neither GIJN nor Global Voices has a headquarters office. Such an office would bring people together, giving them a sense of identity and cohesion. But the headquarters could be seen as tethering the organization to one country, wherever this office might be.

Global Voices co-founder Ethan Zuckerman offered this cautionary advice, based on his own dispersed global enterprise: “If you are a virtual organization, you have to decide not to have a headquarters,” he concluded. “As soon as you have something that looks like a home office, everything that happens in the home office is more important than everything that happens elsewhere.”

He added, however, that the virtual network does need a face-to-face element. His management team piggybacks on conferences they jointly attend, stealing time to meet together during off-hours. GIJN’s conferences also meet this criterion.

Some factors to consider:

- Funders appreciate such a group’s low-overhead, modest overhead budget.
- If it has no US headquarters, an organization does not become overwhelmed by its American leadership, but rather remains visibly non-national. A US headquarters could incentivize adding more Americans to the staff.
- Unless two or more staff need to meet frequently face to face in order to get their work done, a fulltime office does not seem necessary.
- If some staff cannot work effectively without supervision, an office makes sense as long as some senior staff are also working there.
- If they don’t need a fulltime office, the executive director and any other local staff might consider using shared office space at a university, as other similar NGOs do, or renting shared space at WeWork or another cooperative office setting. This is less costly than renting an independent office, but more practical than meeting donors and constituents in a coffee shop.

As part of a self-assessment exercise, an investigative journalism nonprofit should focus on donor interest over the long-term. Having frank, clear commitments from donors about how they perceive their commitment, and their ability to offer significant grants, is one place to start. The organization’s development director/ consultant can also assess the landscape to put together a roadmap for how to diversify its funding.

Sustainability is about leadership as well as money. Since so many of the nonprofit investigative journalism organizations are new, local startups, they may be vulnerable to the “founder’s syndrome,” in which a charismatic founder fails to spread decision-making and responsibility so that the organization can continue with a new generation of leaders.

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24 Ethan Zuckerman interview with Hume, Nov. 30, 2016
5. Founder’s Syndrome

In thinking about “Founder Transition” cases – both in terms of success and “cause for concern,” we offer three examples: Global Voices Online, a global network of bloggers; Internews, an international media development NGO; and Sunlight Foundation, a US-based organization focused on transparency and accountability. Global Voices represents a successful transition. Like GIJN, it has a minimal administrative headquarters and a lean dispersed staff. It consists of a global network of volunteers and unpaid bloggers who contribute regularly to the Global Voices roundup of news, information, and internet/communications advocacy issues. The founders, Ethan Zuckerman and Rebecca MacKinnon, crafted a transition strategy that allowed them to stay involved, help advise the organization, but make room for new management, editorial leadership, and day-to-day running of financial and other major decisions. They showed that Global Voices was bigger than the personalities of the founders, that it had a proof of concept that could be implemented successfully by others who followed.

Another example of a transition story, one that had a more difficult path but ultimately became successful, is Internews. Initially set up by three founders, the organization ended up under the leadership of one major leader – David Hoffman. In the early 2000s, the leadership transition began. It was a very hard and rocky transition in some ways, as the leadership was built so much around both Hoffman’s personality and specific leadership style. The board and other senior staff were eventually able to transition to current President Jeanne Bourgault, but the transition was not without difficulties – in part because of the ways the founder wanted to stay involved and attached to the organization. Another challenge was that the organization as a whole was really both a collective of mini-Internewses--because it had developed regional organizations--as well as “one Internews.” This presented conflicts with fundraising, management, and leadership on the ground. Like Global Voices, the vision and mission of the organization have survived, and the board has been helpful in maintaining what is now considered a successful transition. The cautionary tale is that at some point when a founder decides to retire or move on, he or she really needs to have a transition plan, and hand things over to the new director. The other lesson learned was about management and the identity of the organization – as Internews grew around the world it has been challenging to balance the interests of the US operations with the counterparts in other countries and regions.

A final example of founder’s syndrome is the most dramatic case, the Sunlight Foundation. When its founder decided to move on, the board launched a major recruitment effort to find a replacement. Initial efforts were not met with enthusiasm or support, and Sunlight decided to shut down – not a good outcome for an organization that had generated much buzz and success in its support of access to information, and transparency efforts in the US. Fortunately, the organization recently re-emerged, with new support from its board and a new executive director. The lesson learned with Sunlight is to ensure that a) a transition plan is in place and that there is agreement from the board and key donors about the qualities and expectations that are needed in a future leader, and b) that the mission and vision of the organization are not just tied to one personality or leadership vision – there needs to be an openness that can be embraced and trust placed in future leaders and agendas for an organization.
An organization suffering from founder’s syndrome typically presents many of the following symptoms:

a) The organization is strongly identified with the person or personality of the founder.

b) The founder makes all decisions, big and small, without a formal process or input from others. Decisions are made in crisis mode, with little forward planning. Staff meetings are held generally to rally the troops, get status reports, and assign tasks. There is little meaningful strategic development, or shared executive agreement on objectives with limited or a complete lack of professional development. Typically, there is little organizational infrastructure in place, and what is there is not used effectively. There is no succession plan.

c) Key staff and board members are typically selected by the founder and are often friends and colleagues of the founder. Their role is to support the founder, rather than to lead the mission. Staff may be chosen due to their personal loyalty to the founder rather than skills, organizational fit, or experience. Board members may be under-qualified, under-informed or intimidated and will typically be unable to answer basic questions without checking first.

d) Professionally trained and talented recruits, often recruited to resolve difficulties in the organization, find that they are not able to contribute in an effective and professional way.

e) The founder responds to increasingly challenging issues by accentuating the above, leading to further difficulties. Anyone who challenges this cycle will be treated as a disruptive influence and will be ignored, ridiculed or removed. The working environment will be increasingly difficult with decreasing public trust. The organization becomes increasingly reactive, rather than proactive. Alternatively, the founder or the board may recognize the issue and take effective action to move beyond it as outlined below.

Here are nine ways to avoid or overcome founder’s syndrome:

1. Create checks and balances. In your bylaws and other early policies, prohibit nepotism and have a board of both insiders and outsiders.

2. Ensure that your board is advised by outside counsel on CEO compensation and evaluation.

3. Be open to changing roles. As the organization grows, the founder may need to move out of operations and hire a chief operating officer and other senior team members, for example.

4. Bring in new people. As you grow, you will need new talents and fresh perspectives from your staff and your board.

5. Have an exit strategy. As hard as it is, a founder shouldn’t necessarily plan to be there forever. From the start, envision how leadership will transition and how the founder


might be involved in the organization in the future — i.e., founder, president emeritus.

6. Establish succession planning for staff and a development program for the board. With this in place, it will minimize the perception of anyone being indispensable to the organization.

7. Have an accountability partner, group or coach outside the organization to provide honest feedback to the founder.

8. Have the founder continue to improve his or her skills so he or she evolves as the organization does, through formal education (a master's degree in nonprofits or an MBA, for example), coaching, engaging in a network of nonprofit CEOS, and/or site visits to other organizations.

9. Increase planning, and establish systems as your organization grows. Conduct strategic planning involving key constituencies, and don't allow any one person to control the process to a specific outcome.
6. Analysts Biographies

Ellen Hume, Project Lead
International Media Development Advisers

Ellen Hume is a veteran journalist, teacher, and media developer based from 2009 to 2016 in Budapest, Hungary. Now located in Boston, MA, she continues as a non-resident research fellow at the Center for Media, Data, and Society at Central European University, and an adviser to Direkt 36, a Hungarian investigative journalism news collaborative. She is a founding member of the International Media Development Advisers group, and formerly served as a consultant and board member of Internews. Hume authored the first comprehensive analysis of American media development abroad, "Media Missionaries" for the Knight Foundation in 2004. Among her more recent work is her study of why independent journalism didn’t fare better in post-Communist countries, published as a 2010 report for the Center for International Media Assistance, “Caught in the Middle: Central and Eastern European Journalism at a Crossroads”.

Before moving to Budapest in 2009, Hume was the Research Director at the Center for Future Civic Media at the MIT Media Lab. Previously, she served for five years as executive director, visiting lecturer, and senior fellow at Harvard University's Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy. Hume was executive director of PBS’s Democracy Project and was a White House and political correspondent for the Wall Street Journal, local and national reporter for the Los Angeles Times, and regular commentator on PBS’s Washington Week in Review and CNN's Reliable Sources programs. An international journalism trainer and lecturer since 1993, Hume has conducted journalism and press freedom workshops in the Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Hungary, Mauritius, Poland, Russia, Seychelles and other countries. She has taught courses at Central European University, Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Northwestern University and the University of Massachusetts. She has lectured widely around the world and written prize-winning monographs on journalism and civic culture. Hume has a B.A. from Harvard and honorary doctorate degrees from Kenyon College and Daniel Webster College.
Susan Abbott, Comparative Organizational Capacity Analysis

International Media Development Advisers

Susan Abbott is an independent consultant who specializes in working with non-profit organizations, universities, and donors in the areas of media development, civil society assistance, and digital rights. Abbott provides consulting services in the areas of facilitating workshops and training programs, grant writing, monitoring and evaluation, and organizational capacity building. As a grant writer and M&E consultant, Abbott has experience with USAID, US Department of State, and a variety of private foundation donors. She has worked with a variety of NGOs on developing M&E tracking systems, increasing institutional capacity around M&E, and on designing M&E frameworks. In addition, Abbott works with NGOs, especially small to medium size NGOs, on developing a fundraising strategy, finding partners for large grant applications, and developing concept papers and ideas into fully funded projects.

Abbott has recently consulted for Access Now, Albany Associates, the Center for International Media Assistance, Fondation Hirondelle, International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc., Media Legal Defence Initiative, and Thomson Foundation. Abbott has work experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Jordan, Mozambique, Serbia, Sudan, and Somalia as well on a number of global/ international advocacy and network projects. She is particularly interested in conflict and post-conflict media development environments as well as in supporting projects that seek to develop local, and regional advocacy strategies related to promoting freedom of expression and access to information. Prior to becoming an independent consultant, Abbott, a founding member of the International Media Development Advisers network, worked for the Center for Global Communication Studies, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, Internews, and IREX.
People interviewed for this report (partial list)27

1. Rajneesh Bhandari, Nepali freelance journalist
2. Henriette S. Boerma, Adessium Foundation, monitoring and evaluations specialist
3. Merel Borger, Adessium Foundation, program manager
4. Patrick Butler, International Center for Journalists, vice president for programs
5. Mar Cabra, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, data and research unit head
6. Ying Chan, Media and Journalism Studies Centre, University of Hong Kong, founding director
7. Sheila Coronel, Columbia University Stabile Center for Investigative Journalism, director
8. Alex Covington, US State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, program officer
9. Ides DeBruyne, journalismfund.edu, managing director
10. Kunda Dixit, Nepal Investigative Journalism Center, founding director
11. Bridget T. Gallagher, Gallagher Group, GIJN fundraising consultant
12. Caroline Giraud, Global Forum for Media Development, programs and policy manager
13. Mark Horvit, Investigative Reporters and Editors, executive director
14. Brant Houston, Institute for Nonprofit News, founding board chair emeritus; GIJN board chair
15. David Kaplan, GIJN executive director
16. Oleg Khomenok, Internews senior advisor, Ukraine; GIJN board member
17. Algirdas Lipstas, Open Society Foundations (OSF) Program on Independent Journalism, deputy director
19. Gabriela Manuli, GIJN deputy director
20. Nils Mulvad, Kaas & Mulvad Research; Danish International Center for Analytical Reporting, co-founder

27 Ellen Hume conducted all of the interviews. More than a dozen other individuals were consulted less formally for this project.
21. Syed Nazakat, Centre for Investigative Journalism, New Delhi, founder; GIJN board member

22. Mark Nelson, Center for International Media Assistance, director

23. Bopha Phorn, Voice of America, Cambodian investigative journalist


25. Bruce Shapiro, Dart Center, Columbia University, executive director; GIJN board secretary

26. Pieter Stemerding, Adessium Foundation, managing director

27. Torben Stephan, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Media Programme Asia director

28. Andrew Sullivan, Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, editor

29. Mago Torres, GIJN research director

30. Marina Walker Guevara, International Center for Investigative Journalism, deputy director; GIJN board treasurer

31. Leon Willems, Free Press Unlimited, director; and Global Forum for Media Development, chairman (outgoing)

32. Wendy Zhou, University of Hong Kong, GIJN former China editor

33. Ethan Zuckerman, MIT Center for Civic Media, director; and *Global Voices Online* co-founder
Definitions

**ARIJ** Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (Jordan)

**CIJ** Center for Investigative Journalism (UK)

**CIMA** Center for International Media Assistance (US)

**DRL** US State Department of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (US)

**FIJ** Fund for Investigative Journalism (US)

**GFMD** Global Forum for Media Development

**GIJN** Global Investigative Journalism Network

**ICFJ** International Center for Journalists (US)

**ICIJ** International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

**INN** Investigative News Network (US)

**IRE** Investigative Reporters and Editors (US)

**NGO** Nongovernmental organization

**OCCRP** Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (Bosnia-Herzegovina)

**SKUP** Foundation for a Critical and Investigative Press (Norway)

**USAID** US Agency for International Development

**USG** United States government