

Bloggers fight Burma black out

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2007/09/28/bloggers-fight-burma-black-out/

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The mainstream media cannot operate in Burma, but the internet and citizen journalism is helping to keep the flow of information going. The coverage may not secure political change but it means we can't use the excuse that we don't know what is happening.

The BBC's [Burma Service](#) is great of course, but the BBC's international user generated hub comes in to its own on stories like this producing a fantastic [log](#) of eye-witness accounts like this:

A group of more than 50 soldiers and riot police just passed in front of our office. They are planning something but I do not know what. About 14:00 I saw a group of protesters – about 30 people – being arrested and prepared to be taken somewhere else by soldiers with green scarfs. They were also forced to squat with their hands behind their heads like prisoners. Myat, Rangoon

Burma And of course we can see countless of pictures sent out via digital cameras and phones. The international blog network [Global Voices](#) has an interesting range of views from across the region. These raise some perspectives that would not have occurred to me. Some suggest it is wrong for Buddhist monks to be involved in politics, another raises the possibility of CIA involvement. The Chinese bloggers are interesting considering that regime's vital part to play in how this ends. [Rule Of Lords](#), for example, has vast amounts of picture and information. Like a lot of Chinese bloggers it is backing the 'Saffron Revolution' and it is using it as a stick to beat the Beijing government with, as well.

But it is clear that information is drying up, even in cyberspace according to Burma blogger [Nyein Chan Yar](#):

The Junta try to prevent more videos, photographs and information about their violent crackdown getting out. I got a news from my friends that last night some militray guys searched office computers from Traders and Sakura Tower building. Most of the downtown movement photos were took from office rooms of those high buildings. GSM phone lines and some land lines were also cut out and very difficult to contact even in local. GSM short message sending service is not working also. Burma is blacked out now!

Meanwhile, 'conventional' journalists such as the anonymous reporter for [Channel 4 News](#) in Rangoon still produce isolated reports. I can't wait until 7pm to see if he has managed to get another stunning eyewitness account out again today. This combination of citizens and professional journalists working together is a great example of Networked Journalism in action (the subject of a POLIS symposium, policy report and my book early in 2008).

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