

# Berkman Center - Media Giraffe Profile

## Berkman Center

John G. Palfrey Jr. - Executive Director / Founder

"Below excerpted from from the Boston Globe ideas forum, 2004:

"We have not yet transformed our democracy through the Internet, but I think it is entirely possible." The executive director of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School says the Internet is to political communication today what the printing press was to the American Revolution in the 1700s. But there's also a disturbing difference. Whereas revolutionary pamphleteers used the power of printing to expand their civic engagement, the modern generation isn't "quite getting it right." Blaming apathy and isolation for declining civic and electoral participation, John Palfrey says the Internet can help by improving access to information that lets people make informed political judgments and by acting as a fundraising and recruiting tool. Palfrey, who keeps a Web log, or "blog," on which he posts political and other ideas, also touts the Web's potential to democratize communication. He depicts blogging as a modern form of pamphleteering and cites "the power of technology to move us from being consumers of information to creators of information." He adds, "This time the revolution will be blogged." "

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## About

UPDATES:

Palfrey helps organize anti-malware initiative(Jan. 25, 2006)

John G. Palfrey Jr. is director of the Berkman Center on Internet and Society at Harvard Law School.

Working with \$200,000 in seed investment from a venture fund he helped found, Palfrey co-founded Cambridge, Mass.-based TopTenSources.com. In a downloadable MP3 interview conducted Jan. 6, 2006, he discusses the site, which uses about a dozen editors to continuously evaluate and link to what they regard as the 10 most useful website in a series of topical areas -- using RSS feeds to automatically update their daily contents. (CLICK ON FIRST AUDIO LINK ABOVE TO LISTEN (22 minutes, 10megs)

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[http://www.law.harvard.edu/ils/people/faculty/faculty\\_bios/palfrey\\_john\\_g.php](http://www.law.harvard.edu/ils/people/faculty/faculty_bios/palfrey_john_g.php)

AND FROM: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/faculty/directory/facdir.php?id=486>

AND FROM: <http://islandia.law.yale.edu/isp/GlobalFlow/speakers.html>

John Palfrey is clinical professor of law and executive director of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School and an investor in the Internet startup TopTenSources.com. Palfrey joined the

Berkman Center in 2002 after working as an intellectual property attorney at the Boston law firm of Ropes & Gray and as an Environmental Protection Agency special assistant in the Clinton administration. He researches and teaches about Internet law and policy, spam, blogging and digital media.

He is a principal on a project called the OpenNet Initiative that studies the way in which states around the world block their citizens from accessing parts of the Internet. He also studies the related field of Internet governance, which considers who makes the law on the Internet, an inherently global public resource. It involves international government organizations, international quasi-governmental organizations, states of all sizes, civil society, and others.

At Ropes & Gray, he worked on intellectual property, Internet law, and private equity transactions. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Charles River Watershed Association. While attending Harvard Law School, John was a Teaching Fellow in Internet Law and served as an editor of the Harvard Environmental Law Review.

His research interests include the Internet and democracy, intellectual property, and technology law as it relates to commercial transactions. Recent work includes "Public Participation in ICANN" (along with co-authors Noah Eisenkraft, Clifford Chen, and Sam Hwang) and a working paper entitled "The End of the Experiment: How ICANN's Foray into Global Internet Democracy Failed." He is a member of the research team of the Digital Media Project, which studies intellectual-property regimes in various countries.

John graduated from Harvard College, the University of Cambridge, and Harvard Law School. His awards include the Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholar to the University of Cambridge and the U.S. EPA Gold Medal (highest national award). John is admitted to the New York and Massachusetts bars.

In 2004 and 2005, Palfrey taught a course at HLS called "Cyberlaw and the Global Economy," which examines cross-border transactions that have a substantial Internet-related component. He studied at the University of Cambridge, where he received an M.Phil.

Palfrey describes himself as a Red Sox fan.

#### SELECTED LINKS:

November, 2005, talk at Bridgewater State College

Selected written works

Nov. 2005 -- Interviewed by Canadian journalist Diane Francis

Interviewed Dec. 21, 2003 by CNN about spam

Interviewed by Brooke Gladstone of NPR's On the Media about Internet governance. May 20, 2005

Link to a discussion about whether Microsoft aids Chinese censorship

PDF version of April 14, 2005 address to the U.S. China Commission regarding Chinese censorship -- also (Falun Gong website version) and

the Open Net Initiative report on China censorship

May 24, 2005, NPR interview on legal protections for employees who blog on the job

PDF file: Reprint of Boston.COM co-written column about citizenship. July 5, 2004

## Links

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