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Worldwide Digital Media Challenge Kicks Off  
Youth to Dialogue on Democracy through video

Toronto – TakingITGlobal has joined a group of partners in launching The Democracy Video Challenge – a global digital media competition that asks young people to reflect on the issue of democracy. Along with democracy and youth organizations, the film and entertainment industry, academia and the U.S. government, TakingITGlobal's young members will be asked to create videos to complete the statement "Democracy is..."

"Young people are full of energy, passion and creativity when it comes to digital media – and when they focus on what democracy means, there's no doubt that their efforts will inject a new perspective into what is an already sophisticated dialogue about democracy," says Jennifer Corriero, co-Founder and Executive Director of TakingITGlobal. "The ideas and opinions of young digital enthusiasts around the world will be a valuable contribution to the Democracy Video Challenge, as they reflect on democracy and its implications, and help construct a pathway towards a brighter future."

Through TakingITGlobal's Youth Media Exchange project ([www.ymex.org](http://www.ymex.org)), youth around the world will continue the dialogue about what democracy means to them. As an online social network where youth use digital media to share information on major global issues, [ymex.org](http://www.ymex.org) is the ideal platform for video creators to further expose their work as well as connect with their viewers and get critical discussions going on the topic of democracy. During the Democracy Video Challenge there will also be parallel contests on [ymex.org](http://www.ymex.org) asking youth to reflect on the submitted videos using other forms of digital media such as blogs. There will also be an "Issues" page committed to democracy which links to a Discussion Board Forum on democracy.

"It's true that video is a medium that speaks volumes on its own, but another important element to creating, sharing, and disseminating digital media that addresses crucial issues like democracy is the conversation about that media," says Natalie Rodic, [ymex.org](http://www.ymex.org) Project Coordinator. "Moving forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is crucial for young people to enhance their ability to discuss what impact the media has on their lives, on their own understanding of global issues. Both TakingITGlobal and [ymex.org](http://www.ymex.org) provide the space for this to happen."

The contest which is accepting submissions until January 31, 2008, is open to young people from around the world and seven winners will be selected through a panel of independent judges as well as online voting. Six will come from the following regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Near East and North Africa, South and Central Asia, and the Western Hemisphere, and the seventh winner will be an anonymous video entry.

The winners will participate in screenings of their videos in Hollywood, New York, and Washington, D.C., hosted by the Directors Guild of America and the Motion Picture Association of America. In New York and Hollywood, the winners will spend time on TV/film sets, and will meet with directors, film technicians, professional talent agents, and new media experts. They will also receive tickets to the Universal Studios theme park in Los Angeles. In Washington, D.C., the winners will meet with democracy advocates, the media, and U.S. government officials.

Democracy Video Challenge Partners include: the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Youth Foundation (IYF), the Directors Guild of America (DGA), the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), NBC Universal, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, TakingITGlobal, USC's School of Cinematic Arts, and the U.S. Department of State.



### **About TakingITGlobal**

TakingITGlobal is an international organization - led by youth and empowered by technology. TakingITGlobal connects youth around the world to find inspiration, information and get involved in improving their local and global communities. Headquartered in Toronto, Canada, with a growing worldwide presence, the organization's flagship program TakingITGlobal.org, serves as the most popular online community for young people interested in connecting across cultures and making a difference, with hundreds of thousands of visitors each month.

TakingITGlobal works with global partners – from UN agencies, to major companies, and especially youth organizations – to build the capacity of youth for development, artistic and media expression, make education more engaging, and involve young people in global decision-making.

### **About Youth Media Exchange ([www.ymex.org](http://www.ymex.org))**

Ymex.org is a new online space for youth to exchange digital media on global issues that they have created or that exists elsewhere on the web. Ymex.org was created especially for young people from all over the world with the goal of increasing intercultural dialogue and collaboration, as well as improving digital media literacies for the 21st century in fun and spontaneous ways. The media pieces featured on ymex.org are all submitted by members, are mostly youth-created, and address a wide range of global and social issues. All aspects of ymex.org are fully participatory, generated by the community's contributions, and are designed to enable peer-to-peer learning and collaboration. This website offers a unique way for youth activists and media producers (or those aspiring to be!) to interact and showcase their passion for social change and global issues.

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