

Internet activists push for greater democracy

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(AP) -- The Internet can be a powerful medium for politicians to get their message across but it is also a vital means for civilians to have a say in what politicians do, participants in a political conference say.

Andrew Rasiej, founder of the Personal Democracy Forum series, said tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube help people organize "in order to have an impact on the political process and to petition governments to be more responsive to their everyday needs."

Saturday's conference comes at a time when more and more people are using the [Internet](#) to have their say. Examples include simultaneous global protests on climate change, democracy activists using [Twitter](#) in Iran and a French campaign against legislation that threatened to cut people's [Internet connection](#) for downloading copyright-protected material.

Tom Steinberg, director of Britain's mySociety.org, said technology can succeed in more mundane matters, too.

He cited his FixMyStreet site, where people pressure local authorities to address complaints such as potholes and broken pipes - petitions he said might otherwise get lost in the bureaucracy.

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