What is Commotion?

GENERAL INFO AND OBJECTIVES

The New America Foundation's Open Technology Initiative (OTI) is improving and integrating communications tools for emergency communications, democratic organizing, civil society, and free speech in the 21st century. This international development effort is known as Commotion (developer page: http://tech.chambana.net/projects/commotion), an open source "device-as-infrastructure" communication platform integrating users' existing cell phones, Wi-Fi enabled computers, and other wireless-capable devices to create community- and metro-scale, peer-to-peer communications networks.

The key difference between Commotion and other circumvention techs. Circumvention technologies have focused on developing applications that run over existing communication infrastructures and thus fundamentally depend upon networks that can be monitored or shut down completely by authoritarian governments. But what if could build an alternative, decentralized, communications infrastructure -- one that could not be centrally controlled or surveiled?

Commotion integrates existing open-source technologies -- including open cellular networking, wireless mesh, mobile applications, encryption, and anonymizing technologies to create network infrastructures designed for distributed and secure communications.

What are the Commotion project's objectives?

- Prevent hostile governments from surveilling, disrupting, or shutting down communications.

- Enhance security among democratic activists by enabling direct peer-to-peer communications.

- Ensure emergency communications when existing infrastructure is down or overloaded.

- Implement open source and open tech solutions that facilitate continued adaptation, enhancement, and implementation of these technologies by developers around the globe.