

eBay founder pledges US\$100m for global journalism

WASHINGTON - eBay founder Pierre Omidyar's philanthropic foundation pledged Wednesday to donate \$100 million over three years to support "independent media and investigative journalism" worldwide, while tackling "misinformation and hate speech".



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Among the first to benefit from the Omidyar Network initiative will be the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, which last year broke the "Panama Papers" corruption story, getting \$4.5 million to expand its investigative reporting.

"Across the world, we see a worrying resurgence of authoritarian politics that is undermining progress towards a more open and inclusive society," said Omidyar Network managing partner Matt Bannick in a statement.

"A lack of government responsiveness and a growing distrust in institutions, especially the media, are eroding trust. Increasingly, facts are being devalued, misinformation spread, accountability ignored, and channels that give citizens a voice withdrawn. These trends cannot become the norm, and we must protect the principles of openness, participation, and accountability. These are the foundations of a healthy democratic society."

The pledge adds to the efforts of the network, which has previously funded independent media and fact-checking organizations.

Omidyar said in a tweet about the initiative: "The fight against misinformation, authoritarian lies, and online abuse is a fight we can win."

Omidyar himself has pledged to invest \$250 million in his online news operations, which include the investigative new site The Intercept.

Other groups to benefit from the latest pledge include the Anti-Defamation League, which combats anti-Semitism, and the Latin American Alliance for Civic Technology (ALTEC), a project launched this year by Omidyar Network and others to support the technology platforms to promote civic engagement, government accountability, and transparency in Latin America.

Omidyar, a French-born Iranian-American, in 2013 launched First Look Media, which includes The Intercept and supports efforts to develop new technology platforms for media.

Source: AFP

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