

# BLOGGING FOR REFORM

## Yoani Sánchez

*Banned as a journalist in her native Cuba, Yoani Sánchez has covertly published reports about lack of access to everything from food to free speech, via her blog, Generación Y. She won the Ortega and Gasset journalism award in Spain, but was forbidden to travel to the ceremony.*

**Q:** How — and why — are you blogging even with some of the world's tightest restrictions on communication?

**A:** Only top officials and foreigners have an Internet connection here. The rest of us pay steep prices for a connection in a hotel — more than five Euros per hour — or gain access through someone's [public] office or at the universities. But computers are tightly controlled — many Web sites are blocked and time online is restricted. I write my posts at home, save them in a memory flash and then log in at a hotel to e-mail them. Friends abroad upload them to the blog. I am forced to work this way because my Web site has been blocked inside Cuban territory since early last year.

Conditions in Cuba make it very hard to have a schedule. As we speak, my power has been out for hours, so my day has changed completely — I can't write. Normally, I use the morning to organize, to stand in line for groceries and prepare lunch for my son. In the afternoon, I make a living as a Spanish professor and tourist guide. In the evenings, I write what happened during that day.

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I have many motivations to blog, but mostly a deep disappointment that the future we were promised as kids — a dream to which my parents gave their best years — was a lie. I stopped waiting for the government to bring change, and I used what I had at hand: my knowledge of language and computers. Blogs and access to the Internet are taking the information monopoly from the hands of the government. The fact that we can now communicate any event taking place in Cuba modifies their grip on information.

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My dream is achievable: an inclusive Cuba, one in which all of us fit, notwithstanding social origins or ideological preferences. You can't solve the economic problems if people aren't freely allowed to express themselves.  
— as told to José Simián

