



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Finding case studies on the impact of social media

On March 15, 2013, the award-winning graphic novel, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, was pulled from library shelves and ordered removed from classrooms by the Chicago Public Schools. A student journalist found Satrapi's literary agent, who immediately found the author. Satrapi, who now lives in Paris, responded – as did the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom and many outraged local, national and global citizens. In summary: Students used social media to put the word out about Chicago's policy, and [the book was returned to library shelves.](#)

Ironically, the book was written partly in reaction to the censorship of artistic expression in Iran under the fundamentalist Islamic regime that took over power of the country after the 1979 Revolution.

Below are three levels of activity for students:

Flashlight: How can you verify that the above story is true? Can you find news reports or statements from the parties involved online? Do they verify the story or conflict with the story? How can a researcher resolve conflicts if sources say different things in a case study?

Spotlight: Research a similar case of censorship that was overturned. Start by looking over [the Global Journalist.](#) Explore the role of social media in the case.

Searchlight: [The use of social media is exploding. Is censorship also increasing?](#) How would a researcher look into that? Find two or three examples of groups that monitor Internet freedom. Do those measurements include social media?

Extra credit: How many universities offer a college degree with a specialty in social media? [Here's a master's degree specialization from the University of Florida.](#) Of the 500 journalism and mass communication programs and schools in the United States, how many others can you find?