GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY WATCH (GISWatch) 2009 is the third in a series of yearly reports critically covering the state of the information society from the perspectives of civil society organisations across the world.

GISWatch has three interrelated goals:

• Surveying the state of the field of information and communications technology (ICT) policy at the local and global levels
• Encouraging critical debate
• Strengthening networking and advocacy for a just, inclusive information society.

Each year the report focuses on a particular theme. GISWatch 2009 focuses on access to online information and knowledge – advancing human rights and democracy. It includes several thematic reports dealing with key issues in the field, as well as an institutional overview and a reflection on indicators that track access to information and knowledge. There is also an innovative section on visual mapping of global rights and political crises.

In addition, 48 country reports analyse the status of access to online information and knowledge in countries as diverse as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mexico, Switzerland and Kazakhstan, while six regional overviews offer a bird’s eye perspective on regional trends.

GISWatch is a joint initiative of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (Hivos).