



New Media Ambassadors in the Making

Alex Gekker, Ethan Chernofsky, Adam Grunewald, Danielle Brown and Ido Tzang

A notorious South American character known as Wilson the Criminal visits the beaches of Tel Aviv looking for excitement; a young man sporting a handlebar mustache sings a rap song about eating falafel; a reporter uncovers the Israeli Russian sub-culture.

These are just a few of the outstanding creations by 20 Raphael Recanati International School students who received a crash course in New Media studies this past spring as the first fellows of the **Asper Institute for New Media Diplomacy**.

The **Asper Foundation**, headed by **Leonard and Gail Asper**, two of the three Asper siblings, children to **Babs and the late Izzy Asper**, has been a pillar of strength in the establishment of this unique program dedicated to understanding and implementing fields of new media, persuasive communication and journalism, and learning about the latest developments in communication technologies.

LEARNING THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY

For three intensive months, the fellows were trained in the fields of new media, the latest communication and journalism skills, and were exposed to the most up to date innovations in communication technologies. They

things from around the world. The team created a series of video clips about cool stuff in Israel, including an annual body painting festival and a hairdresser who made the Guinness Book of Records for using eight scissors at once to cut hair.

Get Your Love Today, a humorous clip created by **Danielle Brown, Nir Evenhaim, Adam Grunewald** and **Ethan Chernofsky**, promotes Israel as a place where love can easily be found, regardless of one's sexual preferences. In the video, an attractive young woman in desperate need of a restroom runs in and out of restaurants banging on bathroom doors, only to discover that each one is already occupied by a couple 'getting their love' today!

WILSON TAKES THE PRIZE

The winning team's Spanish-language project stars Wilson the Criminal, a well-known South American character. The lascivious Wilson entices his viewers to follow his adventures in Israel as he cavorts on Tel Aviv's beach, visits the annual food festival and dances in the gay love parade, showing off a few sides of Israel that South American audiences normally don't get to see.

"THE LATE ISRAEL ASPER (IZZY), FOUNDER OF THE ASPER INSTITUTE FOR NEW MEDIA DIPLOMACY AT IDC WAS A DEDICATED ZIONIST AND AN UNABASHED VOCAL SUPPORTER OF ISRAEL EVEN WHEN UNFASHIONABLE - I KNOW THAT HE WOULD BE RAISING A LE HAIM AT THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THESE YOUNG DEDICATED STUDENTS FULFILLING HIS PROUD LEGACY" - Jonathan Davis Vice President, IDC Herzliya



The late Israel Asper - founder and chairman of CanWest Global Communications, one of Canada's leading media empires

learned about Israel, improved their debating skills to represent Israel's case in the world, and were trained to create, produce and promote content about Israeli life through new media channels.

Divided into teams, each faced the challenge to create a series of video clips that would promote Israeli advocacy online. Each team member chose one of three specific roles: Content Creator - responsible for the project's concept and a monthly filming schedule; Content Producer - responsible for the idea's development, production, filming and editing; and Media Buzz - responsible for distribution and marketing.

The final projects, each in a different language, were judged by a panel composed of the Asper program coordinators; Metacafe, one of the world's largest video sites; Pelephone, one of Israel's largest cellular providers and sponsors of the Fellows program; and StandWithUs, an international education organization that advocates on behalf of Israel, and which provided the contest's grand prize.

One project has already reached a staggering 55,000 people.

Cool Israel, www.coolisrael.com, the brainchild of **Jonathan Grimberg** and **Jacobo Montvelisky**, was inspired by the international trend 'Cool Hunting,' in which people throughout the net discuss 'cool' and unique

"This group won," says **Shirin Ezekiel**, former Asper coordinator, "because their idea is what we try to portray in new media. You can't do one good video clip - you need a story that keeps people coming back."

"THE ASPER INSTITUTE IS ALL ABOUT LEARNING IN DEPTH ABOUT ISRAEL, IMPROVING DEBATING SKILLS TO REPRESENT ISRAEL'S CASE AROUND THE WORLD, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY TRAINING THE STUDENTS TO CREATE, PRODUCE AND PROMOTE CONTENT ABOUT ISRAELI LIFE THROUGH NEW MEDIA CHANNELS - WE NEED TO GET ISRAEL'S MESSAGE OUT THERE IN THE MOST INNOVATIVE FORMS AVAILABLE TODAY, IT IS OUR SECRET WEAPON"

Prof. Uriel Reichman, Founder and President, IDC Herzliya



Dean of the Sammy Ofer School of Communications, Dr. Noam Lemelshtrich-Latar in his MIT graduation gown

The three winning team members, **Simon Zebede**, **Diego Grodzicki** and **Alexis Einhorn**, received summer internships in New York at the StandWithUs offices. As part of their internship they continued creating new Wilson episodes and spoke to Latin American audiences about their project.

Upon completion of the course, all fellows received graduation certificates signed by the Asper Family and the Dean of the Sammy Ofer School of Communications, Dr. **Noam Lemelshtrich-Latar**. Most importantly, students won the satisfaction of knowing they have made a significant contribution to Israeli advocacy.

ASPER INSTITUTE EXPLORES NEW MEDIA

The Asper Institute focuses on the study and use of new media technologies in telling Israel's story to the world and presenting Israel from different, and perhaps unexpected, angles. Use of new media can also help reach new and more varied audiences than can be reached by the traditional media. In addition to the fellows program, the institute offers a series of workshops throughout the year, for missions from abroad.

"We have many groups that come to receive intense training on how to use new media tools in their advocacy work," says Ezekiel. "We had many groups from Brazil, the US, Australia and Canada; birthright groups, young leaderships missions from UJC and all the AIPAC young leadership missions."

Lecturers from the School of Communications and the International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT) at IDC facilitate the various

workshops. Guests may choose from a plethora of fascinating subjects, including On-Camera Media Training, Viral Marketing and Enhancing Persuasion Skills to name just a few. Participants in the different courses meet Israeli artists working in various forms of media, receive briefings on current regional developments and practice being interviewed on camera.

The institute is also involved in the School of Communications' annual conference. Last year they organized the extremely successful 'Blogference,' which brought to Israel leading bloggers from around the world, and resulted in very positive stories about Israel being published throughout the internet and read by millions. This year's conference on "Cross Borders Communications" brought leading academic researchers from around the world to discuss the usage of new technologies to create communications between conflicting groups.

NEW MEDIA, NEW LOVE

Students at Asper are falling in love with new media. And the Asper faculty members are just falling in love.

Ezekiel and fellow program coordinator **Tsahi Hayat** met through their work at the Asper Institute, fell in love and were recently married. The two have relocated to Canada, where Ezekiel is the new director of Israel Affairs for the Hillel of Greater Toronto, and Hayat begins his doctoral studies at Toronto University.

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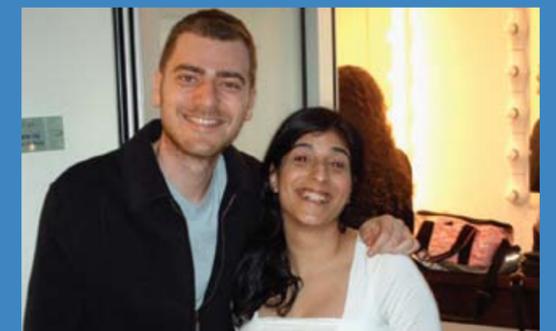
Dean of the Sammy Ofer School of Communications, Dr. Noam Lemelshtrich-Latar



A notorious South American character known as 'Wilson el Criminal' became a brand in the exploration of Israel



Asper fellows, from left: Mordy Greenspan, Ethan Chernofsky, Daniel Haven, Pascal Cohen and Adam Grunewald



Shirin Ezekiel and fellow program coordinator Tsahi Hayat met through their work at the Asper Institute, fell in love and were recently married

For Ezekiel, leaving wasn't easy, and her time at the institute has left an indelible mark:

"It changed my career path," she says. "I'm really focused on new media. I think the world is shifting into new media tools – a lot of advocacy problems are appearing over the net and there is a lot to be done."

But the most rewarding part of Ezekiel's work was seeing the effect it had on the students:

"I see what happens to them," she says. "They say: 'I am on the internet all day, and I never realized I could make a difference.' And even though they get no academic credit they dedicate so much time and energy to make the projects successful – just because they love Israel. I could see the next ambassadors for Israel!"

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--- Shirin Ezekiel

This year's fellowship program will run a full year, funded by the Asper Institute, and directed by **Dovev Goldstein**. The project will focus on Israeli innovation and the culture and people behind it.

"We've done a very interesting branding process," says Goldstein, a lecturer at the school and the founder of a company that specializes in building multi-media content platforms. "We researched the needs and expectations of our target audience, and we came up with a brand identity called 'No Camels.' The name comes from understanding that people tend to perceive Israel as a country with oriental tents, tanks, bombs and cement only - and don't know about the beautiful things in Israel like its unique culture, it's heterogeneity and the creative, innovative spirit so vivid here."

The brand's motto is 'cracking the code of thinking outside the box,' and in that spirit project participants will interview Israel's innovators, focusing on the passion that motivates them to disrupt the current status quo in various markets. These video articles will appear on the project's website: www.nocamels.com. ★

- by Joy Pincus



The brainchild of Jonathan Grimberg and Jacobo Montvelisky was inspired by the international trend 'Cool Hunting,' in which people throughout the net discuss 'cool' and unique things from around the world