

## *The Internet and Democracy*

The Eisenhower Fellows of Italy organized their second event to commemorate EF Day on November 19, 2010, entitled “Is the Internet Changing People's Engagement in Democracy?”. In collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Rome and the Center for American Studies, they brought together an impressive group of panelists to engage in a conversation about movements in democracy that have been fueled by the internet, and the potential it holds for future political development. The Italian Fellows enjoyed the company of more than 150 attendees, with more than 400 more watching a live internet feed of the event through the websites of five university partners. 20 Italian bloggers were also in attendance.



*From Left to Right: Camilla Sebastiani, '09; Sam Graham-Felson; Beppe Severgnini; Giovanni Guasina*

The panel of experts included Eisenhower Fellow, Camilla Sebastiani, '09, Sam Graham-Felson, the chief blogger for the Obama campaign for U.S. President, Beppe Severgnini, an Italian journalist and author, and Giovanni Guasina, Director of the Information Resource Center at the U.S. Embassy in Rome. The event was highly publicized through cooperation with its partners and generated a great deal of excitement around the topic, with a variety of Italian newspapers and magazines covering the event.



Sam Graham-Felson meets with a group of Italian bloggers prior to the general meeting.

It is particularly interesting to note the timeliness of the topic, with the program taking place in November, 2010, just a few months prior to several internet-driven demonstrations of democracy in the Middle East. This event once again demonstrated that Eisenhower Fellows are at the forefront of global issues recognizing and discussing topics of key relevance in today's world. Bringing

together over 500 people to participate in the conversation was an inspiring example of the ongoing impact that Fellows have as leaders in their communities. The conversations can be viewed at: <http://vimeo.com/channels/175951>

**Leaders bettering the world around them.**