

Contemporary internet topics: how social media has reinvented social activism

[Business](#), [Branding](#)



How Social Media Has Reinvented Social Activism Name: Course: Date: How Social Media Has Reinvented Social Activism I. Introduction The purpose of the paper is to provide a framework, and terminology to use when referring to digital activism and to provide an understanding of the fundamental difference between traditional activism both as it existed for decades and as it has now transformed itself into a sharper and focused tool with the use of digital technology. The world of communication has been experiencing what could be described as a digital revolution as technology evolves (Sivitanides, 2011).

Social media are defined as an interconnection of web-based platforms via which people interact. They can also be defined as a co-creation and modification of user generated content. The new technology based products and tools in social media are responsible for the redefinition of social media activism. Over the past decade, there has been a drastic increase in the use of digital based technologies such as computers, smartphones, touchpads and other internet enabled digital products for causes such as social and political activism (Sivitanides, 2011).. II. Digital Activism Defined Activism is defined as the practice associated with meticulous actions and involvement with the aim of achieving political and social goals.

This is usually achieved by traditional means of demonstrations. Hence, digital activism is a modern means of airing grievances for the achievement of goals especially political and social. This form of activism is preferred in the modern society because of the speed, reliability, effectiveness in reaching larger numbers of people and the associated low costs given the

scale of effectiveness (Sivitanides, 2011). Hence, given the high numbers of people to access the internet digital activism is preferred by most social activists around the world (Sivitanides, 2011). III. The Digital Activism Environment The digital activism environment is defined as both the technology-based platforms or digital technology used in an activism lobby group and to the socio-economic and political perspectives of the technology used for activism purposes. Additionally, digital infrastructure is defined as the interconnection of networks, codes, digital applications and digital devices that constitute physical infrastructure of digital activism. On the other hand, digital activism is significantly determined by issues in an environment.

Such issues include the socio-economic and political stratifications of a given community or environment. Hence, the social, economical and political aspects are part of the digital activism. However, the technological aspect of digital activism is the focus of the issue at hand. This is because its aims at providing elaborate effects on activism by the technological advancements around the world (Pickerill, 2003). IV. Technological Infrastructure

Infrastructure used in digital activism focuses on the presence of digital networks or an interconnection of technology based devices, which use codes for conveyance of information. Interconnectivity is essential as it enables multiple connections for people across an area.

Hence, individuals in a network, interconnected, are able to exchange ideas, information and coordinate actions as they relate to the activism functions to result in an effective and efficient political movement. The materials used in

the formation of networks and facilitating functionality of the networks vary from one region or country to another. Additionally other elements such as economical, social and political factors also determine the outcomes of activism activities. This is an evidenced of the variability of activism activities and subsequent outcomes of the activism activities. Modern cable infrastructure is used facilitating activism activities. Such takes the form of fiber optic cables, which are fast but expensive in comparison to other forms of transmission that were slow and cheap. Hence, economic and political factors come into play in the presence and development of adequate and appropriate technology infrastructure that could be used for activism purposes.

Economies come into play in the rich countries where they have diverse technology infrastructure and capabilities. Economic factors also come into play in that, organizations in the internet market make internet access costs higher depending on the market of operation such as an oligopoly, perfect competition or monopoly. Monopolies tend to have higher priced internet costs as they lack competing forces to bring down the prices of internet access. Perfectly competitive markets have lower costs given the need by organizations to gain control of the market with lower costs. On the other hand, oligopolies tend to have higher prices as competition in the data market is relatively low leading to subsequent increase in prices.

Political factors come into play in that countries, which have adequate will power to facilitate development of infrastructure, tend to have good technology infrastructure in place for growth. On the other hand, politically

unstable countries or the presence of political unwillingness to enhance development usually leads to the presence of inadequate and outdated technology infrastructure. Hence, individuals in wealthier countries, usually have the ability to use and participate in digital activism due to the presence of reliable and adequate technology infrastructure in place for such activities in comparison to their counterparts in poorer countries, who have inadequate technology infrastructure (Joyce, 2010).

This is determined by the costs of establishing such infrastructure. Materials differentiate the digital networks used whereas the codes act as unification paths for the materials thus enabling communication of information between various parties. Content created by a party and subsequently uploaded into the internet takes the form of codes, which are subsequently available to individuals around the world irrespective of the location, provided if they have an internet connection. On the other hand, applications are also used social and political activism activities in that they enable users to modify the content, which may not have been the initial purpose of creation of the network. For instance applications such as Facebook, which is widely used around the world, may be used as an activism tool. Commercial applications, which are widely used by the population around the world, are preferred because of the efficiency and effectiveness of using such social media platforms.

Committed activists social sites are also avenues that enable activists coordinate their activities. However, commercial applications are preferred because of their widespread use by the population. Additionally there are

constant changes in technology and more changes in digital media such as social sites. Social sites are usually used with relation to their popularity created through what is described as 'media hype'. This hype is susceptible to fading or decline. Hence, social media are the appropriate platform for activism because of the use of such social platforms by the majority of the world population (Hands, 2011).

Essentially the effectiveness of these social sites is usually the drier of preference as they are able to reach out to wider parts of the population. Economic power of rich or wealthier countries around the world enables such countries to engage in coordinated and effective social activism campaigns. This is all attributable to the ability of the respective populations of such countries to engage in activities due to the ability to make the purchase of technological or digital products and services. This because of the presence of disposable incomes possessed by people in rich countries (Sivitanides, 2011).

Economic conditions determine the ability of people to make sales and purchases due to availability of products and relevant infrastructure. Economic power limits the ability of people to engage in effective activism activities. Social norms and beliefs also limit the engagement of people in social activism activities.

This is because of the presence of different views and expectations of people's actions in a society, which may be related, or contrary to the beliefs of a respective community. Such social issues may also include

socioeconomic statuses, gender, cultural beliefs, education levels and ethnicity. Political factors also determine the presence of social activism in a country. This is because of the different views of society about social activism activities.

In some democracies, social activism is viewed as an express means of expressing ideas about the existent political issues such as laws and regulations (Sivitanides, 2011). On the other hand, governments, which could be defined as repressive with the presence of regressive laws and regulations, could limit the presence and ability of effective social activism activities. Laws limit the access and engagement of social activism because of the view that it is a threat to the government and sovereignty of the country.

V. Value of Digital Activism

The value of digital activism is usually misunderstood and misinterpreted. Digital activism value has been attributed to digital technology advancements.

Digital activism is responsible for the growth of digital activism in that people on a greater scale are able to initiate and engage in digital activism activities with ease. Digital activism debates take on three essential perspectives. They are pessimist, optimist and persistent who take adamant positions and views of digital, social activism and effects on the society. Pessimists assume moral neutrality in terms of the effects of the digital, social activism. On the other hand, optimists assume that digital activism has essentially improved the effectiveness of the activities of activism.

This is because of the ability to reach a greater part of the population with the use of networks. Persistents, on the other hand, assume both positions of the optimists and the pessimists (Dartnell, 2006). This is because they consider both negative and positive aspects attributable to social activism activities and effects, as well.

VI. The Digital Activism Debate

Optimist Perspective

The optimist perspective of digital, social activism is actualized in various perspectives. The initial perspective is that digital activism enables the population to oppose traditional hierarchical power structures or to take action outside of such hierarchical structures (De, Shaw, & Stammers, 2005).

Pessimist Perspective

Pessimists of digital technology fear of the presence of controls and regulation of social activism by governments because of the rapid growth of technology. Digital technology provides new methods, which are used to control, provide surveillance and persecute people by repressive governments and regimes.

Control could also be actualized using people such as hackers and software to disable sites, which could pose threats to the existent repressive governments. Infrastructure of a country in terms of interconnectivity is regulated by a government to enable the government take record of activities of its citizens by surveillance. Hence excellent of high quality infrastructure in a country poses an advantage to the government in terms of ensuring strict surveillance and monitoring of activities of the government.

Persistent Perspective

This comprises of individuals who are not pleased by digital activism activities. This group believes that social activism has change in terms of its degree and love of involvement by the population.

In essence, this group believes that social activism has changed because of the increased ability of people to mobilize and coordinate social activism activities. They view that social activism is not confined to digital aspects. It eventually exists into the real world where it is actualized in the form of petitions by lobbyists and protests by social activists. This is because government and related institutions exist in the form of bureaucratic structures, which are challengeable in manners such as through courts and petitions.

VII. Digital Activism in the Corporate World Digital activism enables both large and small initiatives as well as groups of individuals to engage in such activities with ease and effectiveness. Small groups benefit from digital activism as well large groups or corporations because of the low costs of initiating such activities with the use of digital media and products (De, Shaw, & Stammers, 2005).

Digital platforms enable consolidation of efforts and activities by organizations and people through coordination across vast geographical settings such as national and international boundaries. The corporate world has experienced its share of the effects of digital activism actualized against corporations by employees and the society. Anti brand consumer activism: There is what is considered as attacks on capitalism, which is usually against large corporations judged for their role in social injustices. Global brands and large corporations are facing an ever-increasing opposition, as people find new avenues provided by digital activism to engage in social activism activities that relate to environmental issues and human rights in

organizations. Geography does not play a role as social activism against brands is actualized in a large scale not limited to a territory (De, Shaw, & Stammers, 2005). Anti-branding demonstrations and campaigns have gained momentum, as they are the new means of consumer engagement in activism against products considered as inadequate insufficient. Advantages and Disadvantages for Corporations Consumer activism campaigns are usually considered as opportunities to gauge the level of popularity and brand image in the society of an organization and its products and services.

The market place power is usually possessed by consumers who usually have the ability to access the internet to unite with like-minded consumers in social media platforms. Hence, consumers of anti-brand activists usually have the ability to reduce the brand power of an organization with effectiveness because of access to the large numbers of like consumers. VIII.

Conclusion Today we are living amidst a revolution in our communications environment.

However, like all other revolutions, it is individual acts, some continuations of existing orders, others discontinuous and innovative, that when combined create change. Thus, in this digital world, where individuals have more capacity to learn, communicate, and collaborate than ever before, the ability of these individual acts of digital activism have more potential than ever before to create a real change. The world is in the midst of a revolution in terms of the modes usable for communication and the channels, as well.