

The role of social medias influence in activism and revolution on the world stage...

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



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Undoubtedly, the way people relate the world over has definitely changed with the introduction of social media and social networks, like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, among many others. Sharing information has been enhanced and people familiarize themselves to information unknown to them in the past without having as many communication obstacles as before. Events that happen globally are instantly known and people can monitor the developments any minute of the day with just a click. With that profound power given to all people without exception, both good and evil can be forwarded and influence public opinion and stances on specific matters. Again, like any other power, it depends on how one uses it, to characterize the overall influence of social media as beneficial to activism or not.

In a debate under the title “ Has social media successfully reinvented social activism?» that took place in June, 2012 initiated by Oxford Union, a prestigious debating society that has been bringing esteemed speakers to Oxford University for the last 189 years, opinions were controversial (Kersten). The debate started with a clean cut acceptance that social media that “ social media has changed how political and social activism is done. It clearly and obviously has.” (Kersten). Given that information via the social media spreads virally and with increasing speed, it is no wonder why the widely known Kony2012 video campaign was crowned with such as success and dramatically increased awareness on the matter the creators of the video had in mind. Activists around the world were intrigued by Kony2012 video as it was created to seek justice for all those people Kony, an African militia leader that had performed outrageous acts during war, had harmed. The exact same social activism was raised after the tsunami on Japan, where

word of mouth communication played an important role in engaging people on their social networks and immediately offered their financial and emotional support to those in need and their families.

Revolution and activism has changed in more ways than one. The Senate report on Terrorism and the Internet that was released in 2008, mentions that “ In our age, Al-Qaeda and other radical Islamic terrorist organizations have come to realize that the Internet is just as important as the Kalashnikov, the rocket, or the roadside charge” (Militant Islam Monitor. org).

Of course, average citizens too can also use the power of social media to organize and coordinate sectarian activities and even though in Facebook and other social networks hate-based groups are not permitted, the sites can provide information to those that want to cause harm in any way.

Finally, Pamela Rudledge, Director of the Media Psychology Research Center and media psychology teacher at Fielding Graduate University and UCLA Extension, states that the psychological impact of communication has been altered via social media technologies and “ moves people towards social action” (Rutledge). People feel involved in a situation, event, or incident that they probably would not even know about unless they used social media, which creates engagement and cultivates a sense that people’s actions can make a difference.

Social media and social networks provide people with a great power that can be either used to engage people for the common good or towards malicious acts. Many fund-raising campaigns have been very successful due to public engagement and participation, resulting from viral spread of information; however, the same applies to terrorists and people that want to do harm.

One thing is for sure: social networks influence activism and revolution the world over, in one way or another. Indicatively, Ben Rattray states that “ If the Internet didn’t exist, Barack Obama would not be president of the United States” (Kessler par. 12), which portrays the significant influence of social media and how they can contribute to change the world.

Works Cited

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