

Advances heard  
about the march from  
friends and



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Advances in technology have created new ways to communicate with others at all times. Millions of people carry smartphones that allow them to access apps and internet in the palm of their hands. According to Pew Research Center the vast majority – 95% – of Americans have a cell phone of some kind. The article then goes on to explain that 77% of Americans have a smartphone (PewResearchCenter). Smartphones give us up-to-date news alerts, so we are never left wondering who won the election, who is getting accused of sexual assault, and who is under investigation.

Apps like Facebook have become a political outlet for many. They are used to learn about candidates, organize rallies/protests, and find feedback from like-minded people. Candidates themselves are also using social media to campaign and give live updates of their thoughts. Due to the new ability to reach people from all over the world in a short amount of time, social media has become a significant tool for arranging protests and connecting with other political organizations who share the same views. Social media has grown, developed, and progresses rapidly within its social movements. For example, on January 21st, 2017 we saw millions of women marching through their local cities in protest of not only women's rights but basic human rights.

The movement empowered women, giving many a voice and power they never knew they had. What was once just an idea on Facebook, spread like wildfire throughout the internet. According to a study from researchers at the University of Maryland, almost 70% of people who attended the D. C. march heard about it through Facebook (Dow, 2017). Meanwhile, 61% heard about the march from friends and family (Dow, 2017). Thousands of people shared the event with friends and family, posting pictures of signs, clothing, and

accessories that they gathered specifically for the protest. Through social media and word of mouth the word of this protest was spread within minutes and eventually made it even further within days as many more people joined and it grew vastly, and being that social media sites played more of a prominent role in the growth of this movement makes it that much more incredible because all these people had to do was push the share button to take their stand and have their voices heard.

Through new advances in technology we are able to build a stronger foundation that will unite a real change, by spreading these powerful messages in hope. In a study called Politics and Young Adults: The Effects of Facebook on Candidate Evaluation, researchers looked at how young voters use social media to evaluate political candidates. The study used U. S. politicians running for the seat of governor in the 2011 Mississippi election as their main focus (Douglas, 2014).

Ultimately, the study ended up with two groups. One of which had used social media to acquire information on the candidates and the other group used more traditional path, non social media environments. The results of this experiment showed that the knowledge the participants gained through Facebook influenced their opinions on the candidates (Douglas, 2014).

Another interesting results were that people who used Facebook to discover political information felt a new sense of community that influenced who they voted for, and for many it was how they eventually made their decision when they voted. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are popular ways for people to keep in touch. But their advancements are

currently beyond that because you can share many things like funny pictures, and they are also extremely helpful in being a voice for the people to be broadcasted throughout cities, states, and countries at a quick rate of speed. According to Anne Kraun in her research in Media Culture and Society, “ protest movements have successfully adopted media technologies to promote their causes and mobilize large numbers of supporters. Especially social media that are considered as low-cost and time saving alternatives have played particularly important roles in recent mobilizations”. Simply posting on social media with a hashtag you can create a whole new meaning for a word that can be accessed by the world, and once it is created and posted you can click on that word and it is brought to a whole collection of other posts and information about the same cause.

For example, putting the hashtag #HAPPY, #WOMEN, or #MEN people are able to connect with one another just by sharing the same hashtag because they are clickable and the sharing is endless and very public which can be a downside to some people. Hashtags have taken a prominent role in the start of movements, and in the case of movement these posts being public what they want because this is how these organizations share their movement, and make them powerful. Being that this is at the click of a button it is made possible for anyone to have just as long as they have smartphones, laptops, or tablets of any kind. Two of the biggest and most widely known social media movements of 2017 were the “ Black Lives Matter” movement and the “ Me Too” campaign.

The “ Black Lives Matter” movement came to the awareness of all from the outrage and protest surrounding the innocent deaths of black citizens at the <https://assignbuster.com/advances-heard-about-the-march-from-friends-and/>

hands of law enforcement. Many different sayings have been formed from the movement and became strong staples relating to the movement, such as “ I can’t breathe”, “ hands up”, and ultimately the most widely used title is, “ Black Lives Matter”. This particular movement is to bring to light the dangers and problems that exist due to racism still being a prominent part of our society in the United States today.

Social media has played a key role in the upbringing for the “ Black Lives Matter” social movement, by allowing people from all over the country and even the world to share their support, gain more knowledge on the situation, and try to bring about change to the way people of color are treated by law enforcement. According the Carney from All Lives Matter: but so does Race, “ The theory of the public sphere provides a useful framework to understand the discourse surrounding BLM on social media, as discourse and specific rhetoric used in the public sphere allow insight into the social and political tensions and forces at play just beneath the surface during and following these events” (Carney, 2). Not everyone watches the news at 5 p. m., but a vast majority of American Individuals do have access to the Internet and social media at all times of the day, and are able to stay up to date with the most recent social media movements and concerns within the present day.

For this reason many people can sit on their couch and still claim their active role in a movement, and for this reason it’s becoming a convenient way to being a part of an organization for most individuals without having to do physically do much or encounter harm. Just by clicking on a #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on social media, a user will be able to access a variety of posts and information with just one simple click, but also by

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posting a #BlackLivesMatter hashtag with your picture on any type of social media site you are able to prominently promote the movement. Which is how this movement became so vastly spread throughout our nation so quickly, and within the click of a button.

The second most known social movement that began on social media is the “Me Too” campaign, which was started by actress Alyssa Milano on Twitter. Her tweet read “ If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘ me too’ as a reply to this tweet” (Twitter, @Alyssa\_Milano). What initially began as a way for women and men to get their voices heard and their stories out, but soon became a widespread campaign outing a handful of rich and powerful men in Hollywood, by including big time producer Harvey Weinstein, co-host of “ Today” Matt Lauer, comedian Louis C. K., Netflix original “ House of Cards” actor Kevin Spacey, and numerous other men.

This campaign has been a way for hundreds and thousands of women and men alike to find their voice and share their stories of their own sexual assault. The outcome of this simple hashtag, #MeToo, has brought about immediate change to some of the accused sexual harassers. Netflix immediately fired Kevin Spacey (“ House of Cards”) and Danny Masterson (“ The Ranch”) from their TV series’ following these accusations, showing that this hashtag is promptly bringing about change and hopefully reform. With this simple hashtag man men and women are feeling more comfortable to be able to come out about being assaulted because they are seeing that they are not alone. With the amount of victims coming out about such a dark subject internally this movement will continue to grow by the day, and hopefully put an end to not only powerful and rich men that use their power

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to consume an individual, but also for the mediocre harasser to be shut down early all because people are not afraid to speak out now about being that victim. Within these movement we are able to see the power behind them that brings them to light, and that power is the people that push and encourage them.

Without the people that want change by sharing and posting hashtags these social media movements would be simply nothing. Keeping in mind that anyone is able to access and start a movement is simply empowering in itself, and that you have options in which social media site you want to chose. Social media access like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have become the tool that Americans needed to speak out and is becoming a way of life for many because they are able to protest and connecting with other organizations and individuals who share the same interests and views all around the world in a short amount of time if not in almost an instant. This can be almost dangerous or effective since there are so many underlying factors in our very diverse society, but as Americans this could be the influence towards change that we needed after all this time.