Social Change through Microactivism

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Slacktivism (Morozov 2012) or Microactivism (Marichal 2013)

- **Slacktivism**: the positive feeling associated with affiliating with a movement”.. Without engaging political power (Morozov 2012)

- **Microactivism**: small scale efforts at community building as *microactivism* (Marichal 2013)
  - Includes sharing links or commenting on posts
  - Provides space for academics/scholars to serve public intellectual role
How to be an Effective Microactivist

• Creative autonomy:
  • Internet allows mass communication of the self (Castells 2009)

• We are all potential microactivists, but how effective are we?

• Today, I’ll share five strategies…
Strategy #1
Connect to Communities of Interest
Advocacy groups online play a significant role in how users translate personal identity into collective action (Fenton and Barassi 2011).

- Rise of Issue Generalists (Karpf 2013)
- Advocacy groups provide Information, community and action (Lovejoy & Saxton 2012)

Figure 1. A pyramid model of social media-based advocacy.
Strategy #2
Learn to Speak in Memes
Memes: simple messages packaged to become “viral” (e.g. Khalid Said, Neda, we are the 99, KONY 2012)

Mattoni (2012) precarious populations mobilize through “spectacle”

Effective at getting people to “step up to action” (fundraising and mobilization)
When Memes Work

- All memes are **heuristical devices**
- **Good memes** attach to well established pre-existing frames

* Wendy Davis’ sneakers – attach to “filibuster” frame

**WATCH LIVE:** Texas senator dons pink tennis shoes for 13-hour filibuster to block bill that could eliminate 90% of the state’s abortion clinics

From ASSOCIATED PRESS
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* Adorable care act?

**WAIT!**
**BEING CUTE — isn’t a**
**PRE-EXISTING CONDITION ANYMORE?**

Thanks, Adorable Care Act!
Strategy #3
Speaking Beyond Memes: Engaging Voices
Exchange, reciprocity, and mutual understanding.

• denotes a “communicative give and take”, where the process is open and negotiated between an organization and its publics”

Advocacy is *fact* based; fundraising is *appeal* based (Weberling 2012)

Example:

Used multiple platforms (Tumblr, YouTube, Instagram) to build community through stories (Ciszek 2013)
Strategy # 4

Social Networking as Scaffolding: Strengthening Ties to Opinion Leaders
Advocacy Amplification

Internet flattens out organizational networks

Groups have:
- key publics
- intervening publics
- influentials

Wilson (2000)

Cizsek’s (2013) advocacy

Figure 1. The Advocacy Amplification Model

Figure 1. This model demonstrates the amplification of messages by publics on behalf of an advocacy organization. The arrows represent the interconnection and overlap between the publics and the organization.
Celebrity Poking

- Public Counsel: @oprah in tribute video to Elie Wiesel: “you survived horror without hating”

Hashtags

- #prolife, #abortion, #womenshealth, #lgbt, #prop8
Strategy #5
It Takes More than a Hammer: Maximizing Social Media Tools
Serve Different Purposes

Information
Websites
Blogs
Reddit
Tumblr
Community
YouTube
Instagram
Action
Facebook
Twitter/Google+