

CS 6474/CS 4803 Social Computing: Activism, Social Movements

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It started with a retiree. Now the Women's March could be the biggest inauguration demonstration.



Janaye Ingram, center, with Ianta Summers and Ted Jackson at 3rd Street and

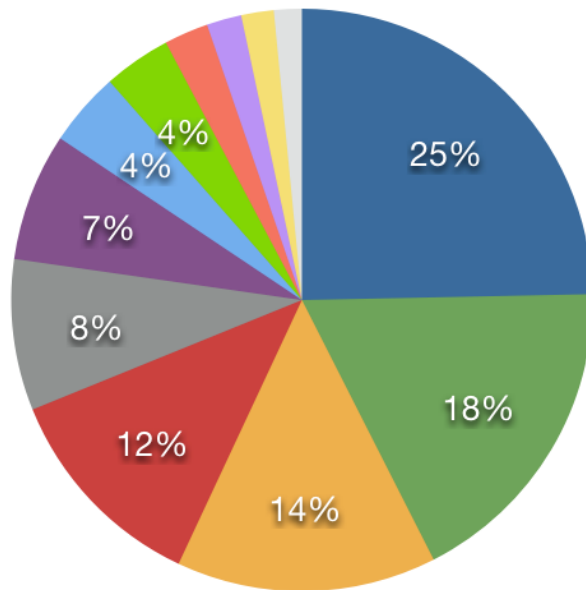


The Revolutions Were Tweeted: Information Flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions

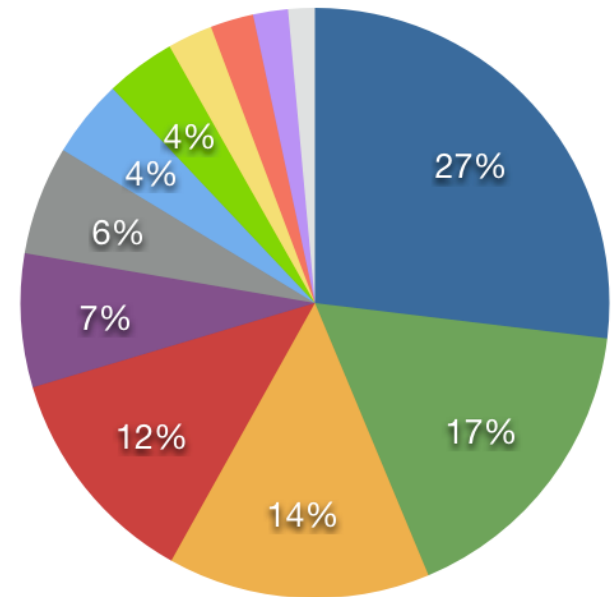
Summary

- Analysis of Twitter information flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings
 - Tunisian demonstrations from January 12–19, 2011
 - Egyptian demonstrations from January 24–29, 2011
- Identify “key actor types,” e.g., MSM organizations, individual journalists, influential regional and global actors, and other participants who actively posted to Twitter on these two revolutions
- Study contagion of information by each actor type
- Examine relationship between traditional news media and social media in the two revolutions

Actor Type Distribution (Tunisia)

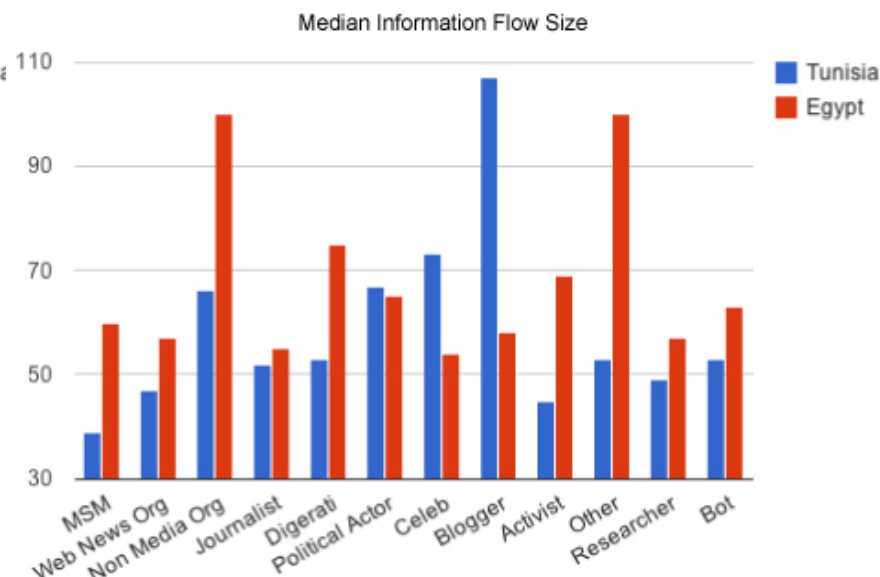
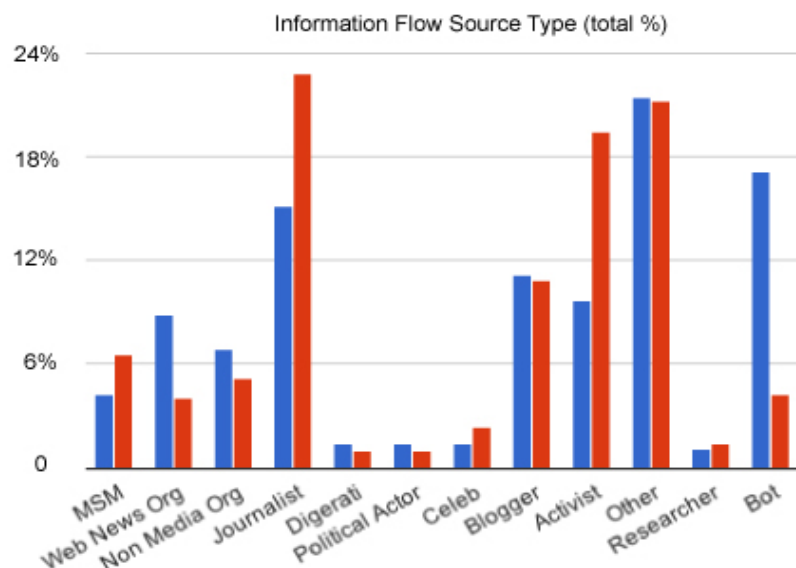


Actor Type Distribution (Egypt)



- Other (24.7%, 26.9%)
- Blogger (17.8%, 16.7%)
- Journalist (14.5%, 14.4%)
- Activist (11.9%, 12.3%)
- Bot (8.4%, 6%)
- MSM (7.1%, 7.3%)
- Non Media Org (4.1%, 4.3%)
- Web News Org (3.7%, 3.8%)
- Researcher (2.5%, 2.4%)
- Celeb (1.9%, 1.9%)
- Digerati (1.8%, 2.5%)
- Political Actor (1.6%, 1.5%)

	Median Tweets/Day	Median # of Followers
Organizations	15.98	4004
Individuals (excluding Others)	11.45	2340
Others	9.35	340



Sub-flows (Tunisia)	Count
Activist → Activist	49
Journalist → Other	48
Journalist → Blogger	41
Activist → Blogger	38
Other → Blogger	37
Journalist → Activist	34
Blogger → Blogger	31
Blogger → Other	31
Journalist → Journalist	30
Activist → Journalist	29

Sub-flows (Egypt)	Count
Journalist → Activist	111
Journalist → Other	109
Journalist → Blogger	102
Activist → Other	102
Activist → Activist	100
Other → Other	97
Activist → Blogger	85
Blogger → Blogger	78
Journalist → Journalist	70
Blogger → Activist	69

Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square

Summary

- The paper presents a survey study of Tahrir Square protests.
- It shows that Facebook provided new sources of information the regime could not easily control
- Social media was crucial in shaping how citizens made individual decisions about participating in protests, the logistics of protest, and the likelihood of success

Both papers focus on social movements in an authoritarian regime. People concerned about persecution may not tweet or use Facebook. Are there specific measures social media platforms can adopt to allow them to participate?

What risk do bots pose to social movements?

Tufekci and Wilson surveyed people's Facebook use during the Tahrir Square protests. What are the strengths and limitations of snowball sampling?

Class Exercise I

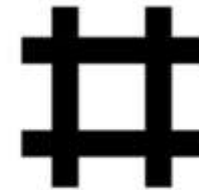
Discuss how social media platforms have been disrupting activism and social movements in contrast to traditional activism.

"Because of social media we reach people in the smallest corners of America. We are plucking at a cord that has not been plucked forever. There is a network and a hashtag to gather around. It is powerful to be in alignment with our own people"

- Cullors-Brignac, one of the cofounders of the BLM movement, to the CNN

#SocialMovements on Twitter

- Community
- Awareness
- Organization



REVOLUCIÓN
SE ESCRIBE
CON HASHTAG

#spanishrevolution

Twitter and Social Accountability

- Reactionary and in real time
- Personal causes/passions championed
- Better Engaged & Aware of Issues



That's Old News!

How **social media** is replacing traditional journalism as a news source

The Truth About News Sources



over
50%

of people have learned about breaking news via social media rather than official news sources.



46%

of people get their news online at least **3X a week**



As of 2012, online news revenue has surpassed print newspaper revenue.

8 News Stories that Broke via Social Media

Egyptian Uprising

Facebook

Hudson River Plane Crash



Twitter

Announcement of the royal wedding



Twitter

Newt Gingrich running for U.S. president



Twitter

Protesters killed in Bahrain



YouTube

Hilary Clinton won't be in a 2nd term Obama cabinet



Twitter

Whitney Houston's death



Twitter

Osama bin Laden raid and death

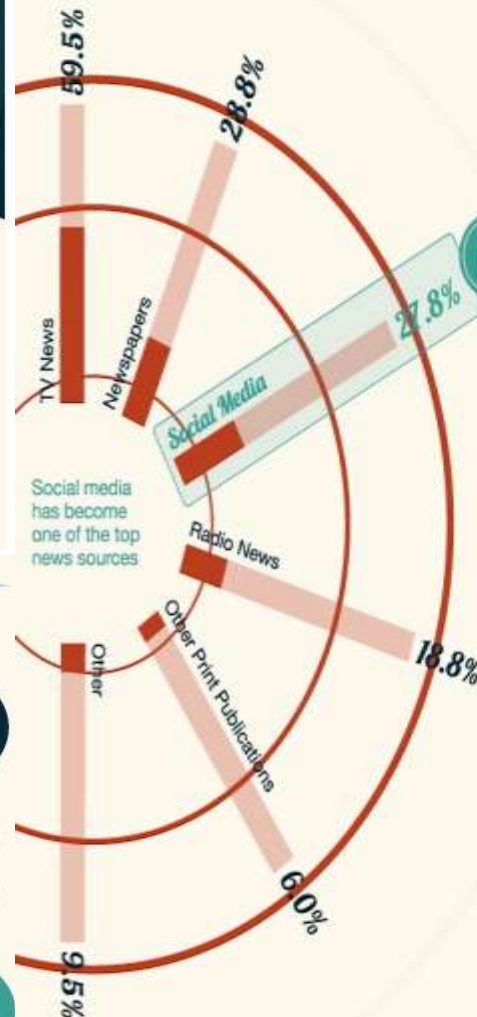


Twitter

The 1st person to tweet about the Osama bin Laden raid was a neighbor who, while complaining about the noise next door on Twitter, unknowingly tweeted about one of the biggest news stories of the decade.



Where do People Get Their News Overall?



Social media makes a strong showing as an online news source.

Facebook

59.5%

Twitter

19.9%

YouTube

12.7%

Google+

11.6%

Other

42.8%

Since 2009, traffic to news sites from social media platforms has increased

57%

9%

of adults who get news on a digital device use Facebook or Twitter to get that news *very often*

<http://mashable.com/2012/04/18/social-media-and-the-news/>

Championing a Cause

- Tweeting awareness to a worthy cause through
- Online petitions



Engagement & Advocacy

- Political or Social Cause Engagement/Awareness
- 2012 Pew Study Social Media's Influence on Politics
- 2011 Ogilvy Georgetown Study of Dynamics of Cause Engagement
- MacArthur Foundation and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning study of youth and participatory politics





A screenshot of a TED talk video. The main stage shows Zeynep Tufekci speaking at a podium. The background features large red 'TED' letters. Two inset windows show close-ups of the speaker. The video player interface includes a play button, a progress bar, and a timestamp of 15:58. On the right side, there are interactive buttons for Share, Add to list, Like, and Rate.

Zeynep Tufekci at TEDGlobal 2014

Online social change: easy to organize, hard to win

ZEYNEP TUFEKCI

15:58

Share
Add to list
Like
Rate

https://www.ted.com/talks/zeynep_tufekci_how_the_internet_has_made_social_change_easy_to_organize_hard_to_win#t-4052

Why social media is reinventing activism



- 'Feel good clicking rather than make a change' – Kessler
- 'Slacktivism': The act of participating in obviously pointless activities as an expedient alternative to actually expending effort to fix a problem'

Example of poor activism - Kessler

- Red Cross: 208,500 'likes' on FB
- Online donations accounted for 3.6% (private donations)



More loose Ties lead to more activists

- “ You’re not going to get everyone who liked your Facebook page to volunteer their summer, building schools and helping out, but its still all part of that journey.” – Craig Kioldburger
- “Social media opens the megaphone so much wider... when you finally look at that spectrum, we’ve got more people who are finally making a journey.” – Craig Kioldburger

Stages in Social Movements

- **Preliminary stage** - people begin to become aware of a threatening problem.
- **Coalescence stage** - people begin to organize and start making the threat known to the public.
- **Institutionalization stage** - organizational structure develops.

Class Exercise II

What can social media platforms do to support *real* activism, beyond “slacktivism”?

*"[...] Then I saw Brown's body
laying out there, and I said, Damn, they did it
again! [...] I'm not just going to tweet about it
from the comfort of my bed. So I went down
there."*

- Johnetta Elzie, BLM protestor

The Role of Social Media in Mobilizing Political Protest

Evidence from the Tunisian Revolution

Anita Breuer



The Dynamics of Protest Recruitment through an Online Network

Sandra González-Bailón¹, Javier Borge-Holthoefer², Alejandro Rivero² & Yamir Moreno^{2,3}

SUBJECT AREAS:

PHYSICS

APPLIED PHYSICS

STATISTICAL PHYSICS,
THERMODYNAMICS AND
NONLINEAR DYNAMICS

MATHEMATICS

¹Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, 1 St. Giles OX1 3JS, Oxford, UK, ²Institute for Biocomputation and Physics of Complex Systems, University of Zaragoza, Campus Rio Ebro 50018, Zaragoza, Spain, ³Department of Theoretical Physics, Faculty of Sciences, University of Zaragoza, Zaragoza 50009, Spain.

The recent wave of mobilizations in the Arab world and across Western countries has generated much discussion on how digital media is connected to the diffusion of protests. We examine that connection using data from the surge of mobilizations that took place in Spain in May 2011. We study recruitment patterns in the Twitter network and find evidence of social influence and complex contagion. We identify the network position of early participants (i.e. the leaders of the recruitment process) and of the users who acted as seeds of message cascades (i.e. the spreaders of information). We find that early participants cannot be characterized by a typical topological position but spreaders tend to be more central in the network. These findings shed light on the connection between online networks, social contagion, and collective dynamics, and offer an empirical test to the recruitment mechanisms theorized in formal models of collective action.

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Class Exercise III

a) What are the strengths of being able to use social media to mobilize and recruit for protests?

b) What are the limitations?