

# **CS 6474/CS 4803 Social Computing: Bridging the Offline and the Online - Activism and Social Movements**

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Week 7 | February 19, 2025

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

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





*"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



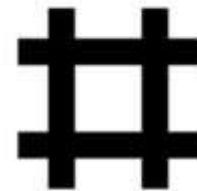
# Arab Spring – A background



Twitter's transformation -- once the domain of "a bunch of bored hipsters who had an irresistible urge to share their breakfast plans," turned into "an engine of political revolution." (Morozov 2011)

# #SocialMovements on Twitter

- Community
- Awareness
- Organization



REVOLUCIÓN  
SE ESCRIBE  
CON HASHTAG

#spanishrevolution



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[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Literature Review](#)[We Are All Khaled Said](#)

## How the Facebook Arabic Page “We Are All Khaled Said” Helped Promote the Egyptian Revolution

[Kara Alaimo](#)

First Published October 8, 2015 | Research Article |



<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115604854>

[Article information](#) ▾

113



## Abstract

This study analyzes how the owner of the Facebook Arabic page “We Are All Khaled Said” both catalyzed and took advantage of opportunities in the Egyptian political climate in order to help promote the country’s 2011 revolution. Using a content analysis of posts on the Facebook page before and throughout the Egyptian revolution, the case study finds that the owner of the page, Wael Ghonim, served as a long-term trainer or coach, educating his online followers about the abuses of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak’s regime and helping them gradually become more comfortable with political activism, so that when a triggering event—the Tunisian revolution—occurred, he was able to move his followers into the streets to protest. Two other particularly successful tactics were utilized by Ghonim: He capitalized on a powerful personal story—that of a young man brutally killed by the police—in order to elicit emotion and help others identify with the cause, and he used lofty rhetoric to convince his followers that their actions could actually make a



# Scaling Social Movements Through Social Media: The Case of Black Lives Matter

Social Media + Society  
October-December 2018: 1–14  
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DOI: 10.1177/2056305118807911  
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Marcia Mundt, Karen Ross , and Charla M Burnett

## Abstract

In this article, we explore the potential role of social media in helping movements expand and/or strengthen themselves internally, processes we refer to as *scaling up*. Drawing on a case study of Black Lives Matter (BLM) that includes both analysis of public social media accounts and interviews with BLM groups, we highlight possibilities created by social media for building connections, mobilizing participants and tangible resources, coalition building, and amplifying alternative narratives. We also discuss challenges and risks associated with using social media as a platform for scaling up. Our analysis suggests that while benefits of social media use outweigh its risks, careful management of online media platforms is necessary to mitigate concrete, physical risks that social media can create for activists.

# The Role of Social Media in Mobilizing Political Protest

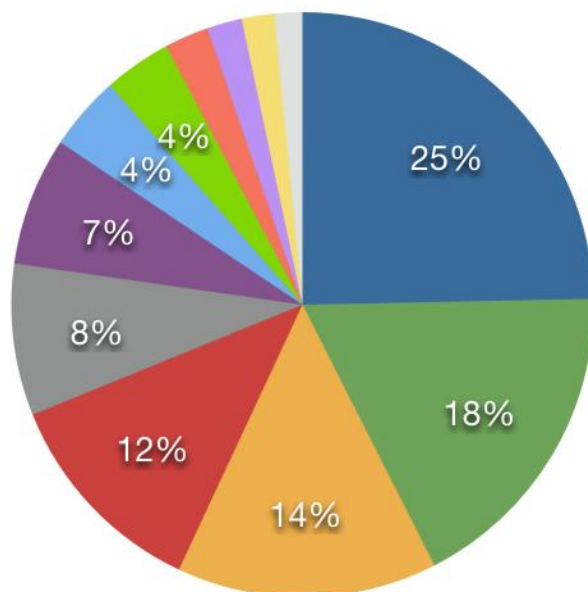
Evidence from the Tunisian Revolution

*Anita Breuer*

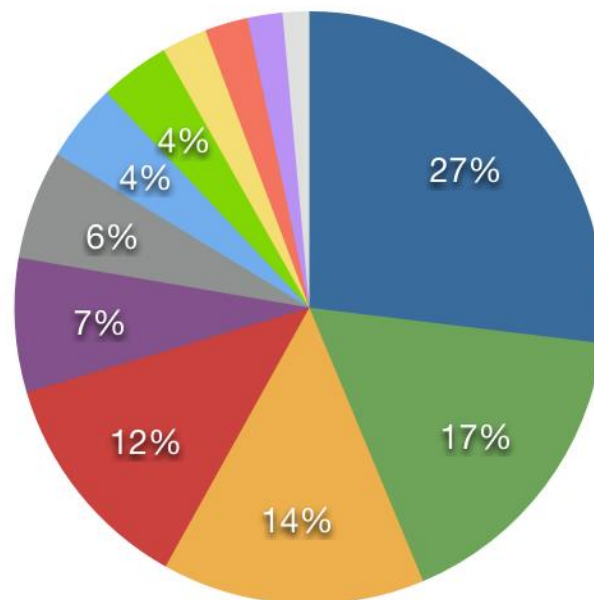
# The Revolutions Were Tweeted: Information Flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions



### 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
<b>Organizations</b>	15.98	4004
<b>Individuals (excluding Others)</b>	11.45	2340
<b>Others</b>	9.35	340

# Everyone's an Influencer: Quantifying Influence on Twitter

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper we investigate the attributes and relative influence of 1.6M Twitter users by tracking 74 million diffusion events that took place on the Twitter follower graph over a two month interval in 2009. Unsurprisingly, we find that the largest cascades tend to be generated by users who have been influential in the past and who have a large number of followers. We also find that URLs that were rated more interesting and/or elicited more positive feelings by workers on Mechanical Turk were more likely to spread. In spite of these intuitive results, however, we find that predictions of which particular user or URL will generate large cascades are relatively unreliable. We conclude, therefore, that word-of-mouth diffusion can only be harnessed reliably by targeting large numbers of potential influencers, thereby capturing average effects. Finally, we consider a family of hypothetical marketing strategies, defined by the relative cost of identifying versus compensating potential “influencers.” We find that although under some circumstances, the most influential users are also the most cost-effective, under a wide range of plausible assumptions the most cost-effective performance can be realized using “ordinary influencers”—individuals who exert average or even less-than-average influence.

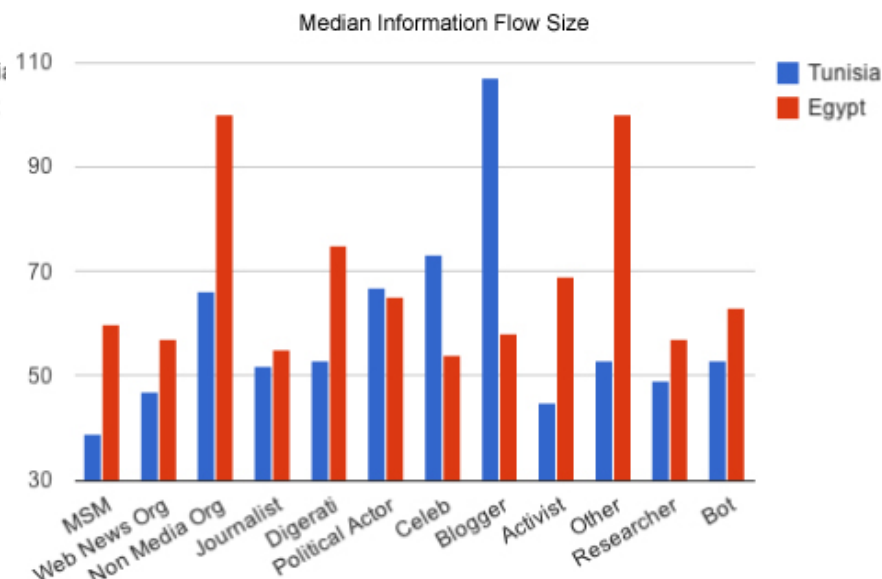
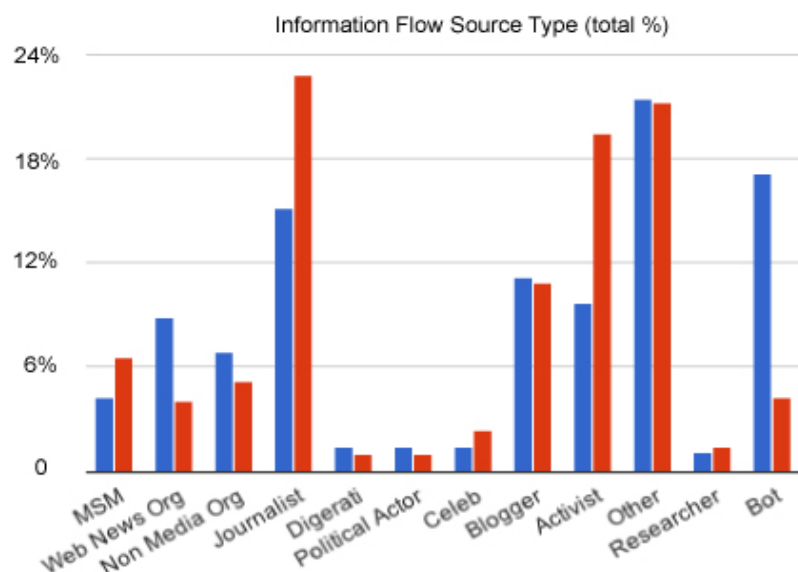
## Keywords

Communication networks, Twitter, diffusion, influence, word of mouth marketing.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Word-of-mouth diffusion has long been regarded as an important mechanism by which information can reach large populations, possibly influencing public opinion [14], adoption of innovations [26], new product market share [4], or brand awareness [15]. In recent years, interest among researchers and marketers alike has increasingly focused on whether or not diffusion can be maximized by seeding a piece of information or a new product with certain special individuals, often called “influentials” [34, 15] or simply “influencers,” who exhibit some combination of desirable attributes—whether personal attributes like credibility, expertise, or enthusiasm, or network attributes such as connectivity or centrality—that allows them to influence a disproportionately large number of others [10], possibly indirectly via a cascade of influence [31, 16].

Although appealing, the claim that word-of-mouth diffusion is driven disproportionately by a small number of key influencers necessarily makes certain assumptions about the underlying influence process that are not based directly on



Sub-flows (Tunisia)	Count	Sub-flows (Egypt)	Count
Activist → Activist	49	Journalist → Activist	111
Journalist → Other	48	Journalist → Other	109
Journalist → Blogger	41	Journalist → Blogger	102
Activist → Blogger	38	Activist → Other	102
Other → Blogger	37	Activist → Activist	100
Journalist → Activist	34	Other → Other	97
Blogger → Blogger	31	Activist → Blogger	85
Blogger → Other	31	Blogger → Blogger	78
Journalist → Journalist	30	Journalist → Journalist	70
Activist → Journalist	29	Blogger → Activist	69



# What is Twitter, a Social Network or a News Media?

Haewoon Kwak, Changhyun Lee, Hosung Park, and Sue Moon

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## ABSTRACT

Twitter, a microblogging service less than three years old, commands more than 41 million users as of July 2009 and is growing fast. Twitter users tweet about any topic within the 140-character limit and follow others to receive their tweets. The goal of this paper is to study the topological characteristics of Twitter and its power as a new medium of information sharing.

We have crawled the entire Twitter site and obtained 41.7 million user profiles, 1.47 billion social relations, 4,262 trending topics, and 106 million tweets. In its follower-following topology analysis we have found a non-power-law follower distribution, a short effective diameter, and low reciprocity, which all mark a deviation from known characteristics of human social networks [28]. In order to identify influentials on Twitter, we have ranked users by the number of followers and by PageRank and found two rankings to be similar. Ranking by retweets differs from the previous two rankings, indicating a gap in influence inferred from the number of followers and that from the popularity of one's tweets. We have analyzed the

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Twitter, a microblogging service, has emerged as a new medium in spotlight through recent happenings, such as an American student jailed in Egypt and the US Airways plane crash on the Hudson river. Twitter users follow others or are followed. Unlike on most online social networking sites, such as Facebook or MySpace, the relationship of following and being followed requires no reciprocation. A user can follow any other user, and the user being followed need not follow back. Being a follower on Twitter means that the user receives all the messages (called *tweets*) from those the user follows. Common practice of responding to a tweet has evolved into well-defined markup culture: RT stands for retweet, '@' followed by a user identifier address the user, and '#' followed by a word represents a hashtag. This well-defined markup vocabulary combined with a strict limit of 140 characters per posting conveniences users with brevity in expression. The *retweet* mechanism empowers users to spread information of their choice beyond the reach of the original tweet's followers.



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## ARTICLES

# Social media, social movements and the diffusion of ideas in the Arab uprisings

Halim Rane &amp; Sumra Salem

Pages 97-111 | Received 27 Sep 2011, Accepted 05 Jan 2012, Published online: 05 Apr 2012

 Download citation <https://doi.org/10.1080/13216597.2012.662168>

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## In this article

Abstract

INTRODUCTION

## Abstract

This article studies the 2011 Arab uprisings as social movements for political reform and regime change. Social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, are perceived to be playing a central role in these events, which have even been described as 'Facebook' and 'Twitter revolutions'. Using diffusion theory, this

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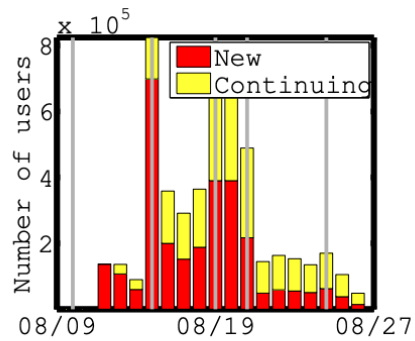
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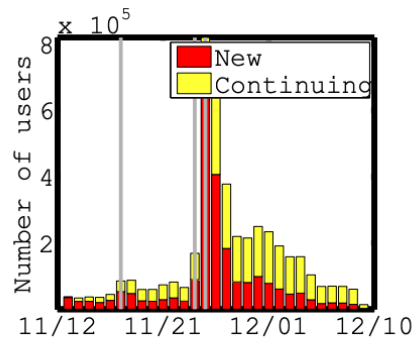
Social media played important facilitation roles in terms of inter- and intra-group communication , but mainstream media remained relevant

# Social Media Participation in an Activist Movement for Racial Equality

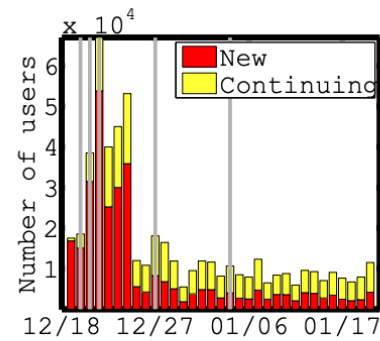




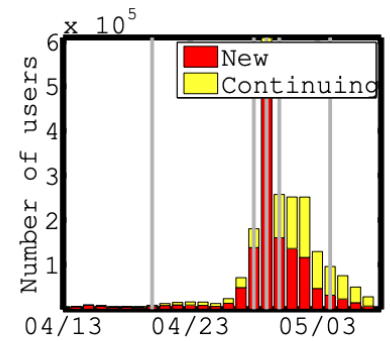
(a) Ferguson I



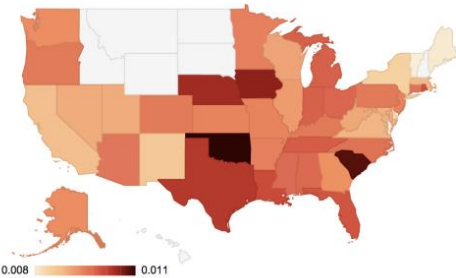
(b) Ferguson II



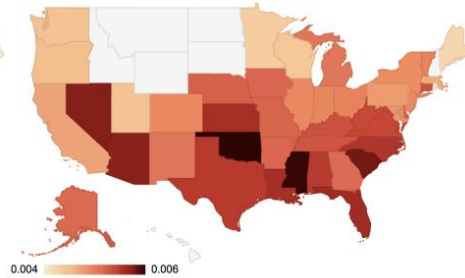
(c) NYC



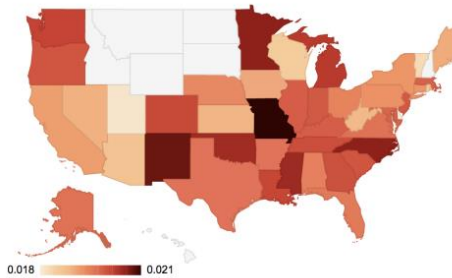
(d) Baltimore



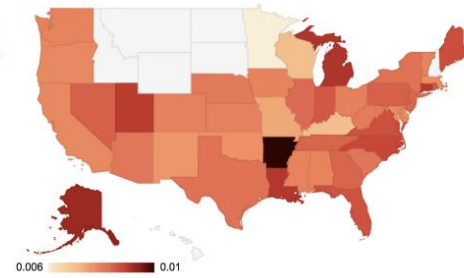
(a) "death"



(b) 1st person singular



(c) NA



(d) PA

	RMSE	MAPE	SMAPE	Correct @ (%) ≤ 20% (%)
Constant model	9496.5	84.63	34.59	42
Next day MA	8379.2	70.68	26.35	48
Activity, Engagement	7155.4	57.26	20.40	59
Affective Attributes	5775.6	36.05	8.34	74
Cognition, Perception	6100.4	38.04	9.64	71
Social Orientation	6532.5	54.15	15.39	62
Interpers. Awareness	6311.3	42.57	10.43	69
Psychological Dist.	6519.9	49.74	12.56	65
All	5528.1	32.62	6.37	81

Performance metrics of predicting daily PV. Here (1) RMSE is root mean squared error; (2) MAPE is median absolute percentage error; (3) SMAPE is symmetric mean absolute percentage error; and (4) Correct @  $\leq 20\%$  is the percent of PV estimates within 20% of the true values.

Bridging the offline and the online



# The Dynamics of Protest Recruitment through an Online Network

Sandra González-Bailón<sup>1</sup>, Javier Borge-Holthoefer<sup>2</sup>, Alejandro Rivero<sup>2</sup> & Yamir Moreno<sup>2,3</sup>

SUBJECT AREAS:

PHYSICS

APPLIED PHYSICS

STATISTICAL PHYSICS,  
THERMODYNAMICS AND  
NONLINEAR DYNAMICS

MATHEMATICS

<sup>1</sup>Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, 1 St. Giles OX1 3JS, Oxford, UK, <sup>2</sup>Institute for Biocomputation and Physics of Complex Systems, University of Zaragoza, Campus Rio Ebro 50018, Zaragoza, Spain, <sup>3</sup>Department 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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15 December 2011





**ae** **american ethnologist**  
JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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## Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation

Jeffrey S. Juris

First published: 08 May 2012 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01362.x> | Cited by: 383

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores the links between social media and public space within the #Occupy Everywhere movements. Whereas listservs and websites helped give rise to a widespread logic of networking within the movements for global justice of the 1990s–2000s, I argue that social media have contributed to an emerging logic of aggregation in the more recent #Occupy movements—one that involves the assembling of masses of individuals from diverse backgrounds within physical spaces. However, the recent shift toward more decentralized forms of organizing and networking may help to ensure the sustainability of the #Occupy movements in a posteviction phase. *[social movements, globalization,*



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### Metrics

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Social media helped the assembling of masses of individuals from diverse backgrounds within physical spaces.

# Twitter for Sparking a Movement, Reddit for Sharing the Moment: #metoo through the Lens of Social Media

Lydia Manikonda, Ghazaleh Beigi, Huan Liu, and Subbarao Kambhampati

{lmanikon, gbeigi, huan.liu, rao}@asu.edu  
Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, USA

**Abstract.** Social media platforms are revolutionizing the way users communicate by increasing the exposure to highly stigmatized issues in the society. Sexual abuse is one such issue that recently took over social media via attaching the hashtag #metoo to the shared posts. Individuals with different backgrounds and ethnicities began sharing their unfortunate personal experiences of being assaulted. Through comparative analysis of the tweets via #meToo on Twitter versus the posts shared on the #meToo subreddit, this paper makes an initial attempt to assess public reactions and emotions. Though nearly equal ratios of negative and positive posts are shared on both platforms, Reddit posts are focused on the sexual assaults within families and workplaces while Twitter posts are on showing empathy and encouraging others to continue the #metoo movement. The data collected in this research and preliminary analysis demonstrate that users use various ways to share their experience, exchange ideas and encourage each other, and social media is suitable for groundswells such as #metoo movement.

# Contrasting online and offline social movements

# Parallels with historical social movements

Physical assemblages; traditional media/tech; weak ties

*"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

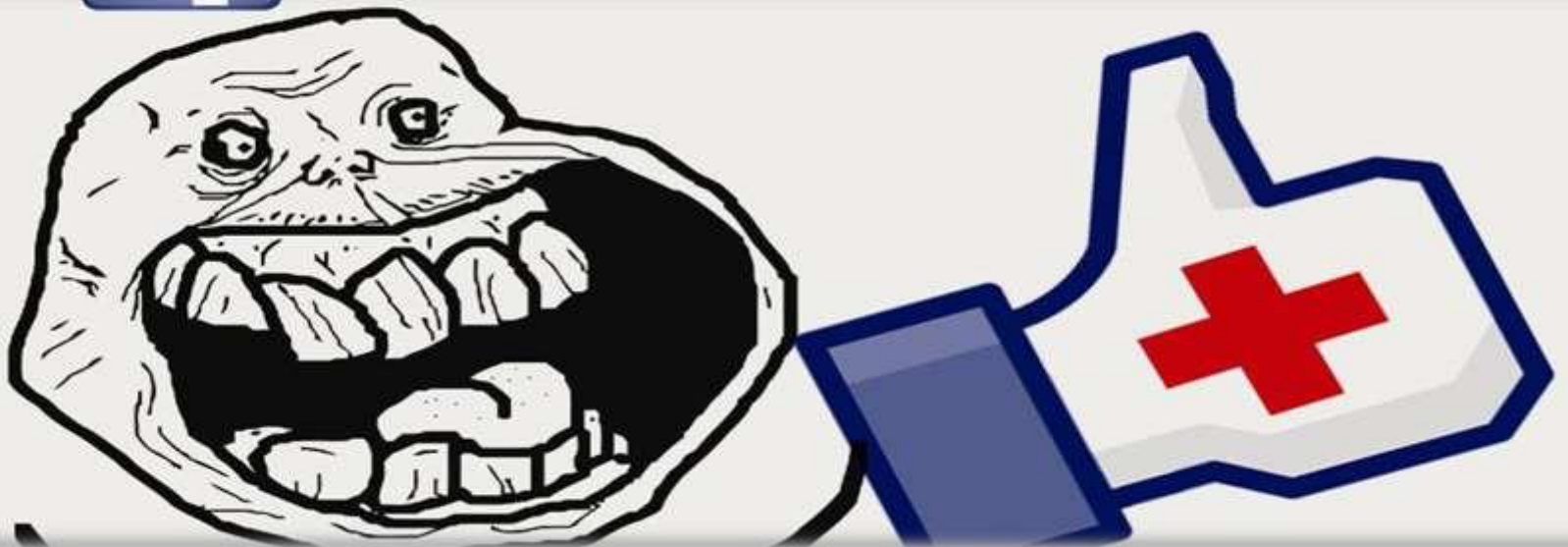


# More loose Ties lead to more activists

- “ 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

# Example of poor activism - Kessler

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



# Example of poor activism - Kessler



- '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'

"Packed with evidence on how social media has  
changed social movements."—*Financial Times*

**ZEYNEP  
TUFEKCI**

---

**TWITTER  
AND  
TEAR GAS**

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**THE POWER  
AND FRAGILITY  
OF NETWORKED  
PROTEST**

One of the *Washington Post's* 50  
notable works of nonfiction in 2017





The image shows a video player interface for a TED talk. The main video area displays Zeynep Tufekci on a stage with a large red 'TED' logo in the background. Two inset windows show close-up views of the speaker. On the right side, there is a vertical toolbar with icons for sharing, adding to a list, liking, and rating. At the bottom, there is a progress bar, a play button, and a timestamp of 15:58.

Zeynep Tufekci at TEDGlobal 2014

**Online social change: easy to organize, hard to win**

**ZEYNEP TUFEKCI**

15:58

[https://www.ted.com/talks/zeynep\\_tufekci\\_how\\_the\\_internet\\_has\\_made\\_social\\_change\\_easy\\_to\\_organize\\_hard\\_to\\_win#t-4052](https://www.ted.com/talks/zeynep_tufekci_how_the_internet_has_made_social_change_easy_to_organize_hard_to_win#t-4052)



# Class Exercise

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

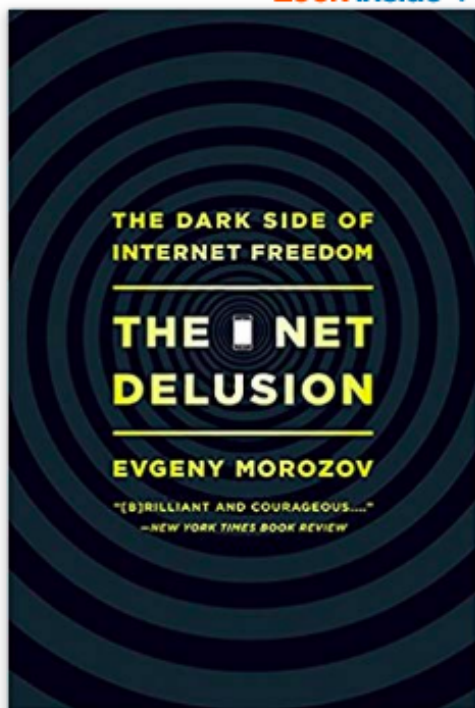
*"[...] Then I saw Brown's body  
laying out there, and I said, Damn, they did it  
again! [...] I'm not just going to tweet about it  
from the comfort of my bed. So I went down  
there."*

- Johnetta Elzie, BLM protestor

But, “What if the liberating potential of the Internet also contains the seeds of depoliticization and thus dedemocratization?” (Morozov 2011)

*Can social media be abolishing freedom instead?*

Look inside ↓



## The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom

Paperback – February 28, 2012

by [Evgeny Morozov](#) (Author)

★★★★☆ 42 ratings

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### Updated with a new Afterword

"The revolution will be Twittered!" declared journalist Andrew Sullivan after protests erupted in Iran. But as journalist and social commentator Evgeny Morozov argues in *The Net Delusion*, the Internet is a tool that both revolutionaries and authoritarian governments can use. For all of the talk in the West about the power of the Internet to democratize societies, regimes in Iran and China are as stable and repressive as ever. Social media sites have been used there to entrench dictators and threaten dissidents, making it harder—not easier

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# Threats to freedom



# A few concluding thoughts

## Opening Closed Regimes

What Was the Role of Social Media During the Arab Spring?

Philip N. Howard, University of Washington

Aiden Duffy, University of Washington

Deen Freelon, American University

Muzammil Hussain, University of Washington

Will Mari, University of Washington

Marwa Mazaid, University of Washington