

Social Justice Bloggers: Activists or Slacktivists?



Presenter: Jessica Hartl Majcher, B.A.
Maren W. Froemming, Viridiana Jimenez, Catherine H. Stein
Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio

Background

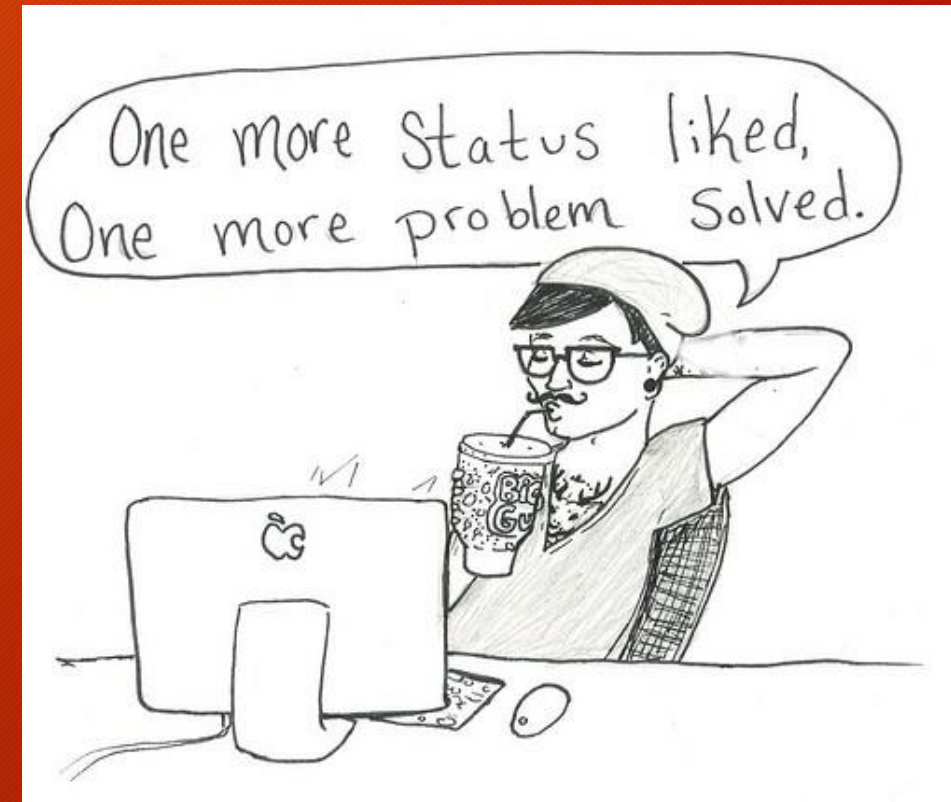
- Raising consciousness to promote positive social change
- Social media and digital activism



Activists or slacktivists?



VS.



Tumblr



- Social Justice Warriors
- Microblog
- Hashtag caching system



Objectives

- Qualitative study to understand the perspectives of social justice bloggers on Tumblr



Method

- Identify participants from Tumblr posts between March 16-28, 2016
- Hashtags:
 - Black Lives Matter
 - Feminism
 - Racism
 - Social Justice
 - Social Justice Warrior

Survey

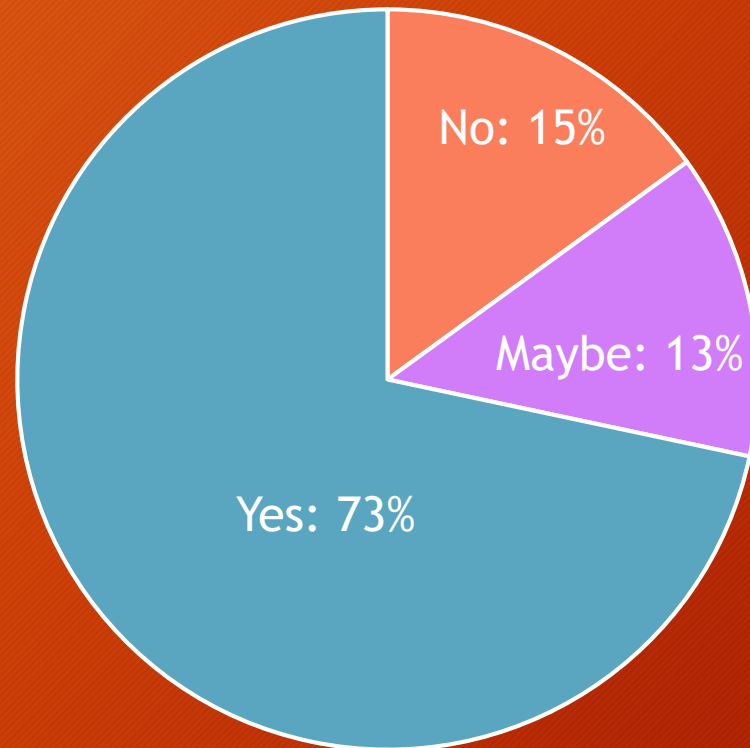
- Online survey with open-ended questions
- Do you consider blogging to be a form of activism? Why or why not?

Sample

- 60 participants were mostly
 - White (60%)
 - Female (66.7%)
 - Young Adults ($M=26.8$)
 - From the U.S. (71.7%)

Results

Do you consider blogging to be a form of activism?



Results

Is blogging a form of activism?

- No (15%)
 - Blogging is not “active” (10%)
 - Blogging is simply a form of self expression (5%)

Results

Is blogging a form of activism?

- Maybe (13%)
 - Blogging is insufficient by itself, but can lead to other forms of activism (10%)

Results

- Is blogging a form of activism?
 - Yes (73%) Blogging...
 - ...is a form of consciousness raising (30%)
 - ...is a first step to activism (26.7%)
 - ...is a grassroots movement (21.7%)
 - ...is a tool for activism (16.7%)
 - ...promotes change (15%)

Consciousness Raising (30%)

- “It comes back to the idea of awareness - sharing this information enables people to engage with these ideas, and from there, they can take tangible, real-world action upon them.”

First Step to Activism (26.7%)

- “Blogging is one way of putting thoughts out into the world [and] something powerful can get a lot of support. But, blogging can't be the only way someone participates in activism. There needs to be more force and ... outdoor activism for issues to get noticed and talked about.”

Grassroots Movement (21.7%)

- “To me it's comparable to distributing pamphlets and talking with people offline. It also helps in the formation of decentralized action which can have a broader geographical reach.”

Tool for Activism (16.7%)

- “Many protests [...] use social media and blogs as a basis for organizing and spreading their messages that are otherwise often bastardized by media reports.”

Promotes Change (15%)

- “The goal of traditional activism = spreading a message to make a change. The goal of virtual activism = spreading a message to make a change. That's exactly the same thing!”

Discussion

- “Any activity intended to educate and/or engage with social justice is activism. What we call activism today is, and must be, radically different from how activism was described 50 -and even 10 -years ago...”

Discussion

- “...Technology is shaping pretty much our entire lives - and of course activism and social justice are impacted by technology.”
- Our challenge as community psychologists is to try to systematically understand the ways that technology shapes social activism and social justice at local, national, and global levels.



Thank you!

jhartlm@bgsu.edu