TECH3022-17 Advanced Social Media Production
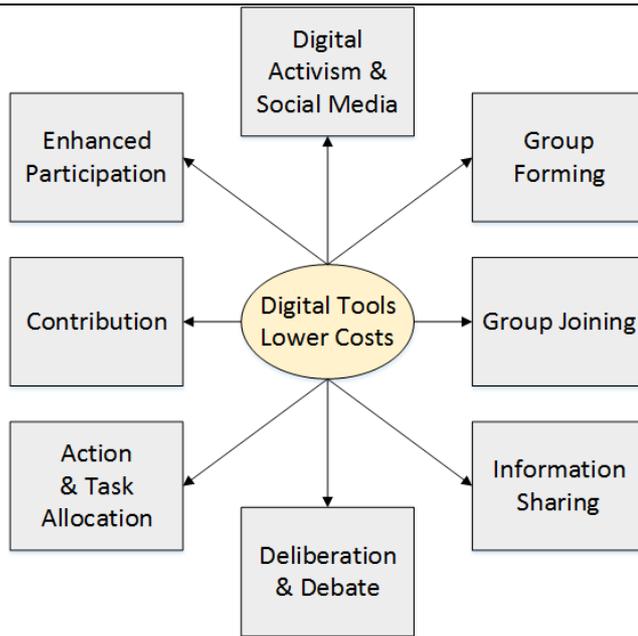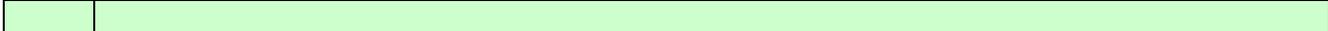
Lecture Eighteen: Digital Activism

001	**Communities of Practice:** Alternative media practices that enable people to create their own media, either in the form of DIY media or communities of practice, are said to have the potential to trans-form the way that we think about everyday life, and the way that we organise our practices of everyday living. How is 'reflexivity' able to "connect the self with the lifeworld" (Atton, 2002, p. 154)? **CHAOS IN LONDON UK - Protests & Clashes Over Corruption, Injustice & Capitalism** https://youtu.be/o5N1kGVohLY
002	**Mass Media:** "The mass-media monopoly has also brought with it an increase in media literacy, giving audiences more tools for semiotic and active engagement with media" (Waltz, 2005, p. viii). "The counter-hegemonic strategies and practices of engaged media producers" (Waltz, 2005, p. ix). **Manufacturing Consent:** The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda (Herman & Chomsky, 1995) https://chomsky.info/consent01/
003	**Digital Activism in Authoritarian Countries:** Faris and Meier suggest that social media has the potential to resist repressive social regimes by challenging the hierarchical organisational structures by which they are organised. (Faris & Meier, 2013). According to Faris & Meier this is a process of adapting and changing technologies that may force authoritarian states to become more democratic.
004	**Social Change:** The desire for social change, according to Faris & Meier, is often represented in "dissent, protests, or direct action" and represents a "collective action problem" for states and organisations that are repressive and authoritarian. The desire for a more democratic social order is part of a process of participation in which people are able to voice their opinions and dissent form the mainstream views, while retaining a sense of the public good.
005	**Affordances of Social Media:** Faris & Meier suggest that: "Digital tools have the capability of lowering the costs of group-formation, group-joining, and information-sharing to nearly nothing. Social media networks also make it easier for members of such groups to agree upon ideas and courses of action, and dividing the labour accordingly. By lowering the cost of contribution, they make it more likely that individuals will participate in one of the many ways afforded by the technologies themselves."

Digital Activism & Social Media

Enhanced Participation

Group Forming

Contribution

Digital Tools Lower Costs

Group Joining

Action & Task Allocation

Information Sharing

Deliberation & Debate

"I would like to challenge you to make the media you want to see, communicate the realities of your life as you're living it, and reach out to others by doing so, rather than playing the part of passive consumers or even of 'active participants' in mediated interactions scripted by others" (Waltz, 2005, p. ix).
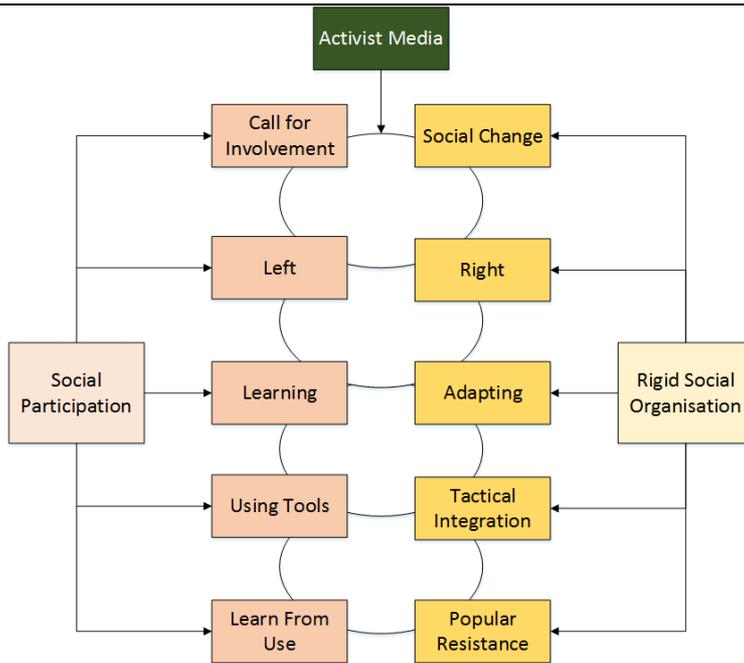
What's going on in Venezuela? - Truthloader
https://youtu.be/IJ_d7YPxU7o

006	**Alternative Media** "Michael Albert argues that to be 'alternative', alternative media can't just be a product that differs from the norm in content, or that caters to a somewhat non-mainstream audience with otherwise typical content. 'Being alternative as an institution must have to do with how the institution is organised and works,' he says in an article" (Waltz, 2005, p. 3). Mobile technologies have the potential effect, according to Faris & Meier, to streamline the "tactical organisation of dissent." **In Karnataka's sugar bowl, bitter protests by farmers over prices** https://youtu.be/QKnX2jGh9kc
007	**Protest Media** So instead of printing fliers and leaflets it becomes possible to use blogs, social media and shared multimedia content to make "calls for action." The internet makes it possible for people to organise and hold meetings without having to be in the same social space, therefore broadening the drive for social participation. **Poland scraps proposed media restrictions in wake of street protests** Plan to stop journalists mingling with lawmakers in the halls of parliament and film sessions had prompted large protests. Poland's president says he has received a pledge from leaders of the populist ruling party that they won't introduce restrictions on media access in parliament, a plan that had sparked days of bitter protests. It appeared to be a victory for the political opposition and the civic activists who have staged protests since Friday. It is the second time that the ruling populist Law and Justice party has stepped back from disputed measures due to street protests. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/20/poland-scraps-proposed-media-restrictions-in-wake-of-street-protests

	Poland drops controversial media proposals after protests Polish President Andrzej Duda yesterday (19 December) announced that the governing conservatives have scrapped controversial proposals to restrict media access in parliament that had fuelled opposition outcry and street demonstrations. But while the governing Law and Justice party (PiS) appeared to offer a compromise on the media rules, a row over a budget vote deemed "illegal" by the opposition intensified. The PiS "has abandoned its (media) proposal which triggered the row we saw in parliament… Everything has been reset," Duda said in an interview with Poland's TVP public broadcaster. https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/poland-drops-controversial-media-proposals-after-protests/ **Anti-Trump activists to set up permanent protest location in DC** A group of anti-Donald Trump activists are planning to open a permanent Washington location near both the White House and Capitol Hill to organize protests against the president-elect. The group, which has dubbed its meeting location "District 13" in reference to the "Hunger Games" series, told The Guardian it hopes to open a meeting house as a home base for protests by Inauguration Day. http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/311316-anti-trump-activists-to-set-up-permanent-protest-location-in-dc
008	As Faris & Meier point out, "the instantaneity of communications conducted electronically, as well as the ability to conduct many-to-many communications, means that many more people can be reached in a much shorter period of time – making it possible to adjust plans on the go." This means that more people who would like to take part in efforts to bring about social change, but who are restrained by cost or geographical proximity, are able to take part in efforts to participate.
009	This is not a one-way process, however, because while social media can make dissent easier to voice, it also means that states and organisations can clamp-down on dissent by tracking people who post and voice their concerns on social media. However, as Faris & Meier argue: "While the state may still arrest individual writers or block websites, with digital activism it is harder to shut down pathways of dissent – in other words you can arrest a blogger or disrupt a social media web site, but chances are that someone is still writing and distributing information about something the state would like to squash.
010	Digital media tools, in the hands of ordinary citizens, also make it possible for citizens to document and challenge rights abuses by the state, by capturing images and videos of transgressions." Fundamentally, however, the challenge that comes from social and online media is in the 'de-hierarchalisation' of the social and civic structures that maintain small elites of technocratic and bureaucratic control. **Japan: Ronald McDonald kicks off global fast food strike in Tokyo** https://youtu.be/flTEiujM10M
011	**Activist Media** "Activist media, as the term implies, encourages readers to get actively involved in social change. They may espouse any political philosophy, from far left to far right – indeed, a broad definition of 'activist' would include media that advocate absolutely mainstream actions, such as voting for the politician of your choice or volunteering for charity" (Waltz, 2005, p. 3).

According to Faris & Meier "learning and adaptation are key to surviving rapidly changing environments," so embracing the "new possibilities afforded by digital technologies are an important part of the equation."

Therefore knowing how and when to use these tools, how to integrate them tactically and how to learn from their use are "important factors that will determine the future of the cat-and-mouse game between regressive regimes and popular resistance movements."

Digital activism explores new avenues for participation and challenges the more rigid forms of social organisation.

If Fast Food Commercials Were Honest
https://youtu.be/-q78QXpSL2M

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012	"Like all forms of communication, alternative media and activist media respond to the social situations they are produced in, including economic changes and overt or covert repression. At all times they provide a counter-narrative to that put forward by mainstream media, but that narrative can be expressed in many different ways, depending on the era" (Waltz, 2005, p. 4).
013	"Rather than deterring people from activism, the internet has drawn people to it" (Hill, 2013, p. 13). "Activism is as diverse as the people who take part in it" (Hill, 2013, p. 15). "The core principle with which I have approached the book is not a belief about the internet but a conviction about power: liberation comes from below and never from above" (Hill, 2013, p. 15). **The 12 Commandments of Activism** "As an activist your best friend is THE TRUTH. Never abandon your best friend and your best friend will never abandon you. The universe is built on truth, and as long as you speak and stand on truth you have the support of immutable universal laws that reign supreme over all other laws." http://hurt2healingmag.com/the-12-commandments-of-activism/
014	"Against these forms of power is the power from below – counterpower. Idea counterpower can be used by those who reject dominant values and spread different ideas through word of mouth, the media – or the internet. Physical counterpower is seen when people literally get in the way of the powerful" (Hill, 2013, p. 27).

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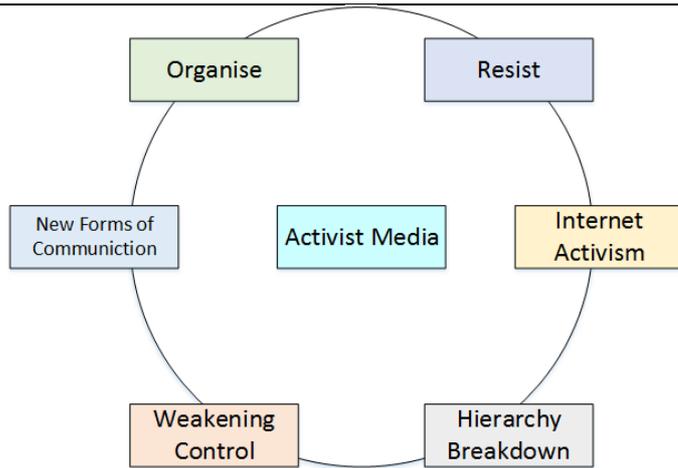
"The internet is relevant to all three types. It can be used to organise economic and physical resistance as well as to spread alternative ideas" (Hill, 2013, p. 28).

"The internet does not create resistance, but it can both encourage it and affect the form that it takes" (Hill, 2013, p. 28).

"When resistance happens in new ways, elites can be taken by surprise. When communication takes new forms, control over communication can be weakened or broken" (Hill, 2013, p. 28).

"Social media breaks down the control and the hierarchy between the mainstream media and the population" (Hill, 2013, p. 53).

Action On Sugar
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9BJWur_hGvo_WS1TxSP2Kg

Change4Life - Sugar Boy
https://youtu.be/Mcw8GBxeF1o

| 016 | **Spreadable Media:**
Henry Jenkins *et al* argue that spreadability is an emerging concept that helps to explain the way that media circulates online and gives rise to new affordances in the sharing of media artefacts.

How you would factor-in media spreadability to your social media campaign?

Jenkins argues that "While stickiness may provide the prevailing logic for the creation of online business models, any content or destination that has gained relevance with audiences online has done so through processes of Spreadability" (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013, p. 7).

In this sense the traditional forms of mass media, with their established channels of delivery are regarded as retaining some value as they remain the dominant way of getting content out to many people across a broad area.

This mass media model was dominated, according to Jenkins, by the 'stickiness' model, in which content was expected to make an impression on the life world of the consumer, and promote a sense of engagement and loyalty to the product, but there was little expectation that the user would actively engage in the re-dissemination of the content.

As Jenkins argues "mass media channels are still valuable resources for getting information out and sharing content of great common interest because they have such widespread reach" (Jenkins et al., 2013). |
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	Therefore, and despite some radical changes in the infrastructure that supports communication "stickiness still matters... Any creator – whether media company, fan, academic, or activist – produces material in the hope of attracting audience interest" (Jenkins et al., 2013).
017	In the spreadable media model, however, Jenkins raises questions about what happens when "many people make active decisions to put content in motion by passing along an image, song, or video clip to friends and family members or to larger social networks?" (Jenkins et al., 2013). In the pre-networked media environment, i.e. the broadcast environment, media would circulate at a planned and control pace, determined largely by the broadcasting companies and the major advertisers. Now, so the argument goes media circulates at an "exponentially greater speed and scope, thanks to the affordances of online social tools" (Jenkins et al., 2013).
018	The consequence of which suggests, according to Jenkins, that we are now part of a networked culture where "citizens count on each other to pass along compelling bits of news, information, and entertainment, often many time over the course of a given day" (Jenkins et al., 2013). As Jenkins argues "In this networked culture, we cannot identify a single cause for why people spread material. People make a series of socially embedded decisions when they choose to spread any media text: Is the content worth engaging with? Is it worth sharing with others?
019	Might it be of interest to specific people? What is the best platform to spread it through? Should it be circulated with a particular message attached? Even if no additional commentary is appended, however, just receiving a story or a vide from someone else imbues a range of new potential meanings in the text" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 13)
020	**Spreadable Media** Iterative Tasks Fluid Roles — Lack of Hierarchy — Shared Content Network Sociability — Granular Problem Solving — Hive Colaboration **Technical Affordances** Crucially, according to Jenkins, this culture of spreadability is "Built on technical affordances that encourage iterative approaches to tasks, fluid roles and a lack of hierarchy, shared rather than owned material, and granular approaches to problem solving, network society encourages collaboration on projects by a 'hive' community. This community creates through an 'on-going, perpetually unfinished, iterative and evolutionary process of gradual development of the informational resources shared by the community'" (Jenkins et al., 2013).

	The Daily Show - The Snacks of Life https://youtu.be/jCG_i9lnBFc
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