

IO4 – OAER2

Understanding and working with the Essential Tools & Skills of Creative Digital Techniques for Online/Cyber Activism





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Introduction: Online youth activism

The online youth activism has two main components: the youth and social media. Social media serves as both a tool for mobilisation and an opportunity for expression, placing young people at the forefront (Belotti et al., 2022).

Digital or online activism is the term describing the use of social media and online communication platforms to spread knowledge and advocate for social and political change through civic involvement. The key to social media is communication and content dissemination, conditions that make them ideal as platforms for digital activism. Hence, social media has arisen as a new and beneficial resource for people engaged in social issues, especially for youth. Social media are critical for their political goals since they boost the opportunity to involve young people and students, who learn about contemporary political concerns through their online and offline networks (Belotti et al., 2022). As a result, social media serves as a catalyst for active participation and spread of information.

The use of social media platforms increased civic engagement, political action, and global activism (Caroll, 2018), especially among youth. It is a hybrid system spanning online and offline activities as it is shaped by the needs and visions of young people, which includes digital activism and political struggles (Belotti et al., 2022). Online activism follows the logic of connective action: it is a new form of collective engagement that brings together multiple actors informally on the basis of ad-hoc content disseminated on social media; connective action differs from the conventional idea of collective action as it overcomes geographical barriers by allowing individuals across the globe to unite in support of a common cause (Leong *et al.*, 2019)

The concept of civic engagement encompasses commitment - understood as a series of activities - that are of value to the community, society, and citizenship of individuals (Caroll, 2018). Such engagement can be both active and passive as there are different levels of involvement. It is precisely this difference that distinguishes a digital user from a digital activist: liking a post is the most passive form of digital activism – termed slacktivism – whereas actively joining a campaign is the most active form. An intermediate form is clicktivism: this concept encompasses all social activities that exploit humour and satire through posts and memes as support for civic engagement (Pelter, 2020). To engage in activism, UNICEF Ireland (2020) has defined key steps for successful online digital activism:



**Make a Pledge to become
an online activist**

Step 1. Acquire knowledge

Step 2. Share information and raise awareness

Step 3. Join a group or build a movement

**Step 4. Organise and take part in actions:
petitions, online campaigning, storytelling**

Source: UNICEF Ireland <https://www.unicef.ie/our-work/schools/global-issues/digital-activism/#activity6>

The current work is a toolkit with theories, case studies, tips and exercises to become a digital activist. The toolkit is divided into six modules which cover the selection of the appropriate social media platform, the tips to have an effective communication, the creation of content in line with the value of your activism, the creation of a social media identity which is in line with your value-based activism, the creation of a community and, finally, the balance between the online and offline activities. Any module is elaborated in the following way: the first part is a brief theoretical introduction followed by a case study to show an example, instead the second part is an exercise to become familiar with the topic and to practise what was learned in the theoretical section.

Module 1. Social Media

Communication technologies – such as social media platforms – have transformed the techniques of information transfer and communication (Caroll, 2018), allowing people to connect more easily, overcoming the barriers of time and distance. In this regard, social media platforms are evolving into places where young people feel confident speaking up and starting initiatives, movements and campaigns, such as to be defined as a civic engagement space (Friel, 2021; Woods, 2022).

The availability of online information has a two-fold value for young people, who often use online platforms to be informed and get up-to-date material and use the same online platforms to engage in debates on both local and global issues in order to denounce injustices but also raise awareness and find support in the public opinion (Friel, 2021). Indeed, social media platforms have increased the opportunities to become involved in activism (Caroll, 2018) since they are key to sharing content in all areas, including civic affairs. The ability to quickly and widely disseminate content on social media leads young people to exploit these platforms providing innovative responses to social, political and environmental challenges, through sharing content, discussing and raising funds on civic challenges and social injustices.

Since they are moving toward a hybrid between entertainment and information – in particular engaging users through more dynamic contents and more visuals than ever – social media has enhanced political literacy and civic engagement creating an online public space which partially replaces the Greek concept of Agora – the offline concept of public spaces addressed to social interactions. The main power of social media is to give voice to those who, in offline conditions, would not have resonance. The Internet is a fundamentally free space where:

Those who feel isolated or marginalised because of their identity or other challenges can find resources, information, and people they can relate to, forming connections and solidarity that can grow into political action (Friel, 2021).

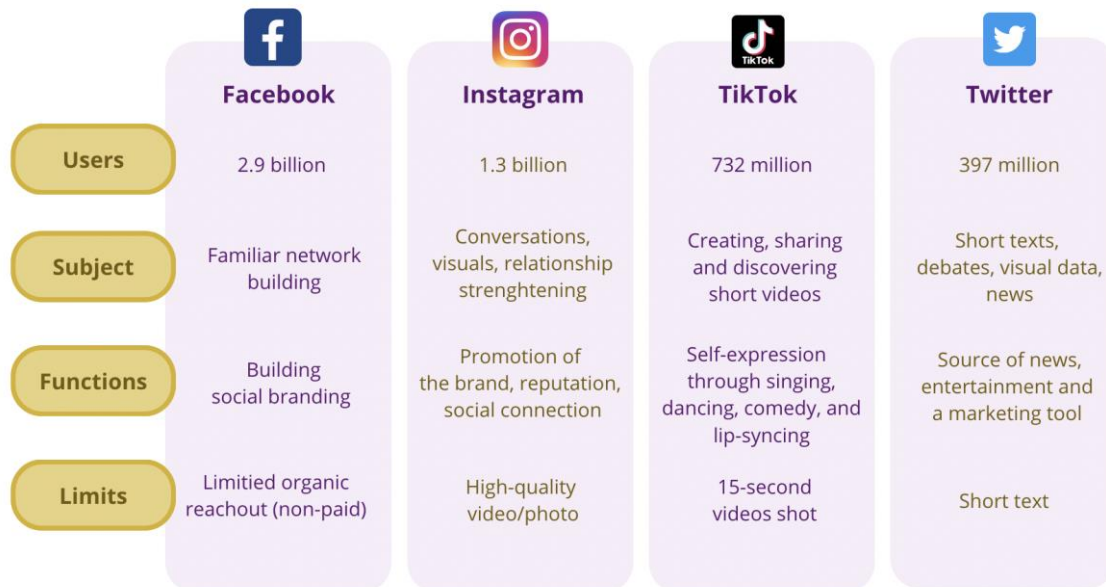
Hence social media enables youth to speak with a louder voice, creating a community that supports your same challenge “through personal connection and self-motivated sharing” (Leong *et al.*, 2019, p. 191). The strength of these communities lies in expansion, in the number of people who can be involved. In this sense, it is necessary to have a large number of supporters to set significant social and political changes in motion.

Which social media can we use?

The selection of social media platforms is the starting point of digital activism activities. To do that, we have to assess the main goal of our activities and the strategy we want to pursue. According to the prefixed goal and strategy, we can select the most suitable social

media as they are differently populated and they have key ways that can engage a target better than another one. Among the most widely used social media platforms we can list Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, Go Fund Me, Change.gov.

Overview of most used social media platforms in 2022



Sources: Author's elaboration.

Given this compact snapshot, we have to assess how our identity and activity might change and which strategy we should adopt – if we are on Facebook, we have to be more dynamic and interactive, on Instagram more focused on interactive stories and visual posts, while on TikTok is more about the achievement of youth audience through short-lasting videos.

It is possible to use more than one social media, however, it is necessary to reflect on which of them is most appropriate for the different target groups one wishes to reach. For example, if you are reaching out to a demographic that is younger, it may be convenient to use Instagram or Tik Tok, but then it depends on *how* you want to transfer your values and whether they are suitable. In fact, if you find text-rich posts more meaningful, then Facebook is also a good way to start with etc. In addition to the platforms chosen, the bottom line is consistency of purpose and identity across all platforms.

Given the theoretical overview, let's move to a more practical one. In the following scheme, you can find a set of questions that you can use as a starter list to become a digital activist; if you are already a digital activist you can use them as a guide for a self-assessment. In the following questions, the cornerstones of digital activism are mentioned: representation, purpose, correct information, target group selection and community building.

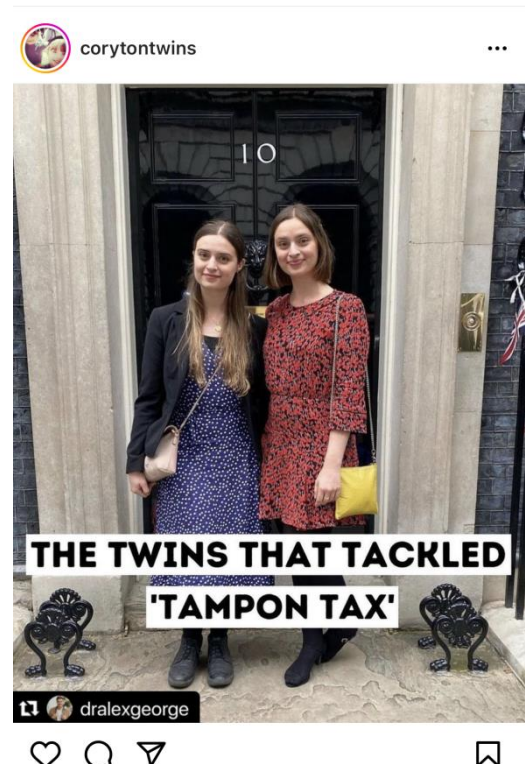
**Don't know where to start?
Try answering these key questions!**

- Who and what do I represent?
- What is my purpose on social media? What drives you? What are your motivating factors?
- Do I base my opinions on well-informed sources?
- What is the profile of my audience (age, sex, background, ethnicity)?
- What does my community want to communicate?
- How do you collaborate with other groups – akin to your challenge – through social media?

Case study: #EndTamponTax

Thanks to the use of social media, young people have been able to establish for themselves a prominent space to express their political views, going beyond traditional civic spaces (Pelter, 2020). In support of this argument, we can cite the successful campaign 'Stop Taxing Periods' carried out in 2014 by Laura Coryton in the UK via change.org. The main goal of the campaign supported by the hashtag #EndTampoxTax was the eradication of the controversial tampon tax.

The case of the Stop Taxing Period is an example of online discourse turned into real action: the campaign started with an online petition on change.org that gathered 317,659 supporters and in the meantime it evolved into an offline campaign which mobilised young people, leading to policy change. As a result, the campaign compelled government action by purely popular pressure, exercised through protests, demonstrations, and viral social media. Thanks to the support of Paula Sherriff MP, in March 2016 Chancellor George Osborne pledged in his budget to exempt menstrual products from sales tax (Coryton, n.d.).



Stop taxing periods. Period. #EndTamponTax



Movement: [Women's Rights](#)

 [Laura Coryton](#) started this petition to Boris Johnson MP (Leader of the Conservative Party) and [3 others](#)

Victory

This petition made change with 317,659 supporters!

 [George Osborne: Stop taxing periods. Period.](#)

[Share on Facebook](#)

[Send an email to friends](#)

[Tweet to your followers](#)

[Copy link](#)

The battle led by Laura Coryton will end on 1 January 2021, when the UK will eliminate the 5% tax on menstrual products such as tampons, pads and menstrual cups. The success of this campaign is linked to the perseverance of the activist and her community.

The campaign topic has been consistent across her social profiles from 2014 to the present. The narrative of her posts on social media is carefully designed and addressed to the topic of menstrual products and related taxes. Among the various tags we can find people who have contributed to the support of the cause (e.g. PM Paula Sherriff in the picture on the right). Finally we can find updates on the progress made over the years.



What can we learn from this case study?

Key takeaways from the #EndTamponTax

-  Use of social media to gather broad consensus
-  Defining your identity on social media and the focus of your activism
-  Be consistent in the campaign (eg. use of the hashtag #endtampontax since 2014)
-  Using online platforms to organise offline activities (e.g. protests).

Want to learn more about this topic? Find additional sources here:

A Guide to Activism in the Digital Age: <https://online.maryville.edu/blog/a-guide-to-social-media-activism/>

The Second Act of Social-Media Activism. Has the Internet become better at mediating change?: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-second-act-of-social-media-activism>

The Promise of Digital Activism—and its Dangers: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/promise-digital-activism-and-its-dangers>

Learning Activity: Ideas of non-formal education in your youth community

Name of the activity	How social are you?
Topic Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social media audience ● Social media habits
Learning Outcomes and Competences that can be acquired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Raise awareness on the different social networks ● Support participants to analyse the way they use social media
Duration	1.5 hours
Kind of Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non-formal education ● Interactive discussion
Required Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whiteboard/flipcharts ● Post-its ● Projector (optional) ● Felt pens/ pens
Learning Setting and Activity Description	<p>The facilitator starts the discussion by sharing the general topic of the day: “Social media targets and habits”. Different general can be said, like the amount of time spent by (young) people online, and which sort of new social problems have been arisen, as well as how many opportunities have been created (e.g. mention some global movements, and refer to the #EndTamponTax campaign).</p> <p>As the first activity, a human bingo game can be run(check the following example).</p> <p>The trainer tells participants how a bingo works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fill out all the boxes with the names corresponding to the description provided - To do so, participants have to ask each other about that description. E.g. “Do you wear shoes when you go to sleep?”, if the interviewee says yes, you write her/his name in the box. - The winner is the person who fills all the box before anyone else, and has to scream “Bingo!”.

	<p>After the activity, the trainer says that has to verify the truthfulness of the answers provided. In this way, the facilitator debriefs each box and links it to the general topic of the workshop.</p> <p>Once the winner is confirmed, the facilitator continues the presentation with some of the major concepts provided. Improvisation can also be foreseen.</p> <p>To do so, we advice to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use post-its to ignite debate among participants and to map thoughts - Use flipcharts to encourage group discussions or mindmapping
Activity Evaluation/ Reflection	<p>The facilitator debriefs while checking the human bingo boxes, and asks questions to the group to reflect on certain behaviours, characteristics of the social media, etc.</p>

Annex 1

Who follows more than 2 active influencers	Who spends more than 3 hours in the social media	Knows at least three conspiracy theories	5.Knows someone which has a shared a chain letter
_____	_____	_____	_____
Regularly follows three satire pages	Has chatted with a false persona	Likes to create entertaining stories	Has shared articles without checking the source
_____	_____	_____	_____



Is active on social media about social themes _____	Mainly reads news from social media _____	Has ever signed _____	edits photos on Instagram before publishing them _____
Is active on social media with a community page _____	Posts regularly on social media _____	Is aware of different targets _____	Has participated on an online competition _____

Module 2. Effective communication

To effectively communicate on social media, it is important to take into account the goal of your activity and the target audience. Indeed the messages that an activist transmit have to be coherent with the cause to build trust among the audience; given the trust and the credibility, the strategic use of words and images can inspire people.

In this module we divide communication into three phases: content production by the activist, contact with followers and social listening. Production and listening are unidirectional communication processes, respectively from the activist to the community and from the community to the activist; contact, on the other hand, involves a multi-directional exchange

Content production

Communication has a key role on social media. As in offline communication, it requires a code of conduct to be respected, usually defined as netiquette combining the concepts of social networks and etiquette (Hartney, 2022; Smith, 2022). To have effective communication, it is important to define the audience that you want to reach. This step is crucial to define the conversational writing style you have to apply, using more technical or casual language as appropriate. Taking good grammar and correct spelling for granted, good online communication should balance the writing style, using language that is appealing, familiar and at the same time accessible. It is crucial to limit the use of technical terms where possible: even the most technical content should be accessible by including definitions or the full form of an acronym when it is first used; in terms of length, it is critical to try to make the text easy to read by breaking it up with subtitles, bullet points, and lists to facilitate reading and capture attention (Smith, 2022).

Interaction with followers

Be authentic Be genuine

Simply guide users to the knowledge of your reality, without drawing excessive expectations.

Do not copy (make sure your content is original and respect copyrights!).

Keep your authentic style, the same one that allowed you to make yourself known to customers.

Involve your peers

Tag people, other activists and organisations that support your cause: those who participate in a campaign/event are its first ambassadors.

People are the most tangible portrait of digital activism and must contribute to the image of their cause.

If the cause is perceived as good by followers/community, they will not hesitate to share any event or manifestation on their private profiles.



Your community and followers are your priority. It is critical to make time to check your emails, direct messages, and social media comments on a regular basis, and to respond to messages within a few days (Hartney, 2022): the private messages of your social pages must be constantly monitored, as well as the comments under the posts and the emails you receive in order to respond promptly and not late. In addition, you should define the limits of the information you can share on social media. For example, in some cases it is better to continue interacting privately (e.g. with highly critical people or strongly interested people), but at the same time you must be available for discussion in public, for example, to answer general questions, or to simply interact.

Followers/Community management must have an empathic and genuine approach. In general, you need to have a tone of voice that is compatible and coherent with the image of your activism.

Do not make excessive promotion

Being present on social media does not mean selling products, but informing about your activities, events, and progress, implementing a line where storytelling, emotions and promotion meet. Don't post for every product or for every meeting you have unless it really supports your public image.

Avoid excessive automation

Schedule posts, but don't automate everything. You must maintain a human approach with people, keep up with the main online and offline events (for example, if you use Instagram you can ask via the Q&A in stories if they are more interested in knowing about a topic or another, or when they will be available for a live)

Social Listening

An effective communication strategy involves also the listening aspect. Social listening is monitoring what people are saying about your activities, events or campaign, and how they are talking to each other. In this way, we can use social listening to get a more holistic view of how people are responding to your content beyond what is revealed in follower counts and engagement rates. We can also use social listening to get important information about the people who are having these discussions.

In social media, it is important that you talk with your followers and not at them. Thank them if you come across a positive comment, and alternatively, you might want to respond in a purposeful way to users who are not really satisfied with your activities. Facing criticism and being able to manage that strongly maintains a good reputation. Hence, social listening can dig information out of the people following you, as well as strengthen your online reputation and make people more engaged.



Don't know how to effectively communicate online?
Try taking into account those suggestions!

- Follow the netiquette: be polite and avoid offence
- Adapt your writing style to your audience but use simple and understandable language
- Communicate with an authentic and genuine style
- Your followers are your priority: Provide thorough responses to your followers
- Inform your supporters about activities, events and progress
- Listen your followers/community

Case study: Vanessa Nakate

Vanessa Nakate is a climate activist from Uganda. She was the First Fridays For Future climate activist in Uganda and founder of the Rise up Climate Movement, which aims to amplify the voices of activists from Africa. Her work includes raising awareness to the danger of climate change, the causes and the impacts. She spearheaded the campaign to save [Congo's rainforest](#), which is facing massive deforestation. This campaign later spread to other countries from Africa to Europe. She is working on a project that involves installation of solar and institutional stoves in schools (United Nation, 2020).

Vanessa Nakate's post on Twitter (picture on the right) shows the concept of involving your peers. With the text "Congratulations Greta" and the repost of Greta Thunberg's tweet, the Ugandan climate activist is supporting the work of another young climate activist, showing support and collaboration to promote the same cause.



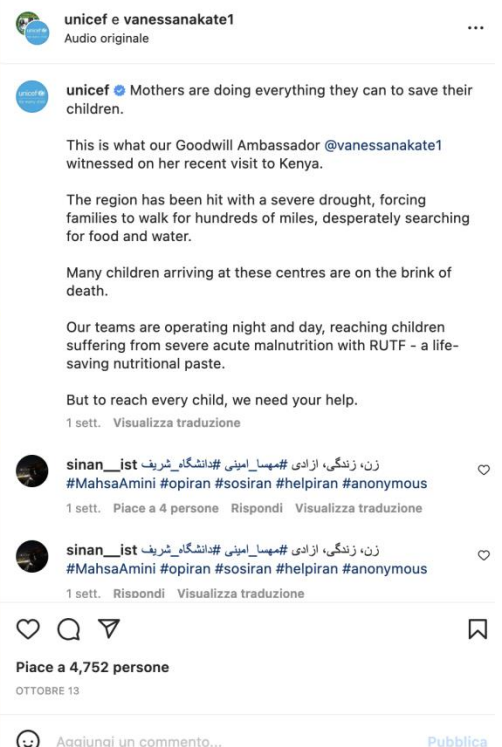
In this Twitter post, Vanessa Nakate is updating her followers and UNICEF’s followers on their joint work. The picture represents a witness of her work, a proof of her commitment.



The same concept is applied for Instagram. In this case, she used a video. Being a video in the field, it gives an idea on how the work is: on the back of the camera her witness frames a daily life moment. Hence, this post is an example of how to update your community or followers, engaging them in your activities.

At this link you can access the full video:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/CjqwUKsAfJU/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link



What can we learn from this case study?

Key takeaways from Vanessa Nakate

-  Shows your commitment and inspire people through your work
-  Support people that faight for your same cause
-  Informing on your activities

Want to learn more about this topic? Find additional sources here:

How to communicate with your followers on Social Media Today:
<https://www.epidemicsound.com/blog/6-tips-on-how-to-communicate-with-your-followers-authentically-on-social-media-today/>

5 Strategies To Engage Followers And Stay At The Top Of User Feeds:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2020/03/30/15-strategies-to-engage-followers-and-stay-at-the-top-of-user-feeds/?sh=63f2ec7725a6>

Learning activity: Social Media

Name of the activity	Who is a social media manager?
Topic Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social media manager ● Community management
Learning Outcomes and Competences that can be acquired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn how to interact within a community ● Define the rules of a page ● Learn how to create authentic messages
Duration	1.5 hours
Kind of Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non-formal education ● Interactive discussion
Required Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whiteboard/flipcharts ● Post-its ● Projector (optional) ● Felt pens/ pens
Learning Setting and Activity Description	<p>The trainer individually provides the different roles to the learners: Community Manager, Hater, Fan and Follower (check the annex below). Depending on the size of the group, it is possible to give a bigger number of roles. Then, he/she asks participants to imagine how someone with their roles would act on social media.</p> <p>After that, the Community Managers represent on a flipchart the profile of their associations (they can create the project they want). And they need to include some posts about their activities on the walls' profiles. Differently, the social media users (haters, fans, and followers) also create their own profiles based on their roles.</p> <p>Once they finish, all participants put their flipcharts on the wall. Then, they have 20 minutes to interact with the others' profiles based on their roles. Learners have post-its to like, dislike, comment, share, etc. (they can be creative to develop them).</p>



Activity Evaluation/ Reflection	Once the 20 minutes are over, participants sit together and discuss what happened in the exercise: “What happened with the companies’ posts?”, “Was there any tool/project that had a greater impact? Why?”
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Annex 1

COMMUNITY MANAGER

You are in charge of the social media profile of the company. You are going to open it and launch a set of publications about your products/services. You need to catch the attention of all people and try to get as much interactions as possible (likes, shares, comments, etc.). Think about the message and get a great impact! The more interactions you have, the better! Be also aware on what interactions you have! Is having your message a good response? What users say? Stay alert and react on that too! Good luck!

HATER

You use your profile to give to influencers, celebrities, and companies what they deserve: Honesty, although it hurts in most of the occasions! But hey! Aren't they rich and popular? Yes! Do they make lot of profit from social media? Yes! Do many business and businessmen get rich unfairly? Yes! So, this is what they deserve! Otherwise, choose another job or business! Spread this feeling on social media, so you can make other people open their eyes!

FAN

You love social media! You think it is an interesting tool to get to know new interesting people and products! You discover news posts from new companies. You agree on their values, you like their products and services and you love their corporate image. You think they sell innovative and great products/services. We all can benefit from them! You need to like their posts and tell everyone out loud! Your task is to spread positive message about their products and services, so everyone can benefit from what they sell!

FOLLOWER

You want to keep a distant approach to new companies and posts. You don't know well very well. You prefer to observe what people say about it. You want to check others' likes, comments, etc. to get your own conclusions. Your task is to check what other says about news companies and posts, and get your own conclusions; so you can also interact accordingly.

Module 3. Content creation

Your social media journey starts from your objective: in this regard you have to align the content creation to your broader objective. As a digital activist, you certainly have objectives, and if you look at those, you need to ask how social media may help you achieve those, and why it is important for you. Do you want to make people know about your cause? Or maybe you want them to support you? Or to donate? These are all questions that are crucial to really understand how social media can be functional to your project objectives and which directions social media might take in terms of presence and posts to make. Given your priorities, you have to ask – how are social media platforms going to help me? In this regard, the creation of content is another critical aspect for digital activism.

To maximise your benefits when using social media, the following are the main objectives you can generally pursue (look at the scheme on the right)







As suggested by Hailley Griffis' (2022) guide, it is advisable to favour simplicity, focusing on two or three objectives in line with the priorities of the moment. These objectives are modifiable over time, as they vary according to the needs of the cause.

WHAT OBJECTIVES CAN I ACHIEVE MORE EASILY IF I USE STRATEGIC CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

- Increase awareness of the cause
- Increase the visibility of your account
- Generate new contacts
- Increase subscriptions or donations
- Create a community around your activity
- Increase involvement of other activists or partners
- Increase media mentions
- Increase customer service satisfaction on social media
- Increase positive conversations about your company or business.

Step 1: Selection of social media platform

The first step to create content on social media is the selection of the social media platform. As we mentioned in the module 1, any social media has its own peculiarities. The choice of a social media platform is not simply a technical matter, but concerns the production of specific content: for example, having Instagram and Facebook does not mean 'copying' a piece of content twice (using the same photo and the same quote), but adapting it to the target audience and platform. The main trends in social media content production can be outlined as follows:

-  • Mixed networks: Facebook, Twitter
-  • Video-based networks: Snapchat, Tik Tok, YouTube, Vimeo, Vine
-  • Business-oriented networks: LinkedIn
-  • Image-based networks: Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest
-  • Location-based networks: Yelp, Foursquare
-  • Information-based networks: Reddit

Step 2. Content creation

The concept of content creation involves creating written, visual, graphic, and video content for social media platforms. In the case of digital activism, content determines the connection with followers and the community. Indeed, an activism campaign is successful if the public is informed about the cause and their solutions.

Create informative or educational content:

Even if your followers are aware about your cause, it does not mean that they are fully informed. To this end, the first step is to fill the knowledge gaps of the public by providing educational material and informing them about the cause in a simple and direct way (Woods, 2022). But how to make educational or informative content appealing?

1. Turn written material into audiovisual content: **Create a video!** Video content is the most popular form of online content, as it produces more engagement than images and links: instead of reading an article, users would rather watch a video (Lua, 2021; Stanciu, 2022). Videos can include tips, how-to guides, announcements on events, updates and so on.
2. **Go live!** Create regular online events in the form of live broadcasts in which you speak in person about the cause of your activism. It is also very important to show the support of the community, so involve experts in the field by creating a kind of online interview.



Share data and results

To prove the reliability and verifiability of your work you need to prove it with data. So use eye-catching **infographics** in which you show data to support your work.

Engage your followers

Poll your followers: Follower engagement plays a key role as their participation is the basis of your activism. To involve your followers, you can first create surveys in which you ask them about their interests, their availability, their help and so on.

As part of the content creation strategy, posts that **call for action** are also included: these posts prompt the audience to become an active part of the cause through actions such as signing a petition, making a donation, contacting a representative or participating in a protest (Woods, 2022).

Finally, you can give them relevance by sharing their posts, or their comments when they are particularly remarkable.

**Don't know how to create social media content?
Try taking into account those suggestions!**

- Avoid posting the same status updates on all social media you use
- Adapt the content to the selected social media
- Pay attention to your insights
- Be visually appealing
- Use hashtags and mention other users
- Create a video!
- Go live!
- Use eye-catching infographics sharing results and data
- Poll your followers
- Call your followers for action

Case study: Jon Kareaga, environmental activist

Jon Kareaga is a young environmental activist and co-founder of the sustainable fashion label BASK. From the Basque country in Spain, he has travelled extensively, documenting his journeys and lessons to inspire others. With a big following on Instagram, his images and words have helped others to be more aware of the impact of what they wear. Through his images and videos he wants to raise awareness about the destructive system in which we live and begin to make changes in everyday habits in order to respect everything that surrounds us: people, animals and the planet (Wilson, 2022).



Its activities are aimed at raising awareness of sustainability among young people. Let us now take a look at a series of posts that have greenwashing as their theme. On the one hand, we have a tweet and on the other, we have an Instagram post.

The tweet is a simple, short sentence, supported by a meme that gives emphasis to the sentence: Every time people say to me: "It's so cool that climate change is being discussed so much" #COP26". GREEN WASHING

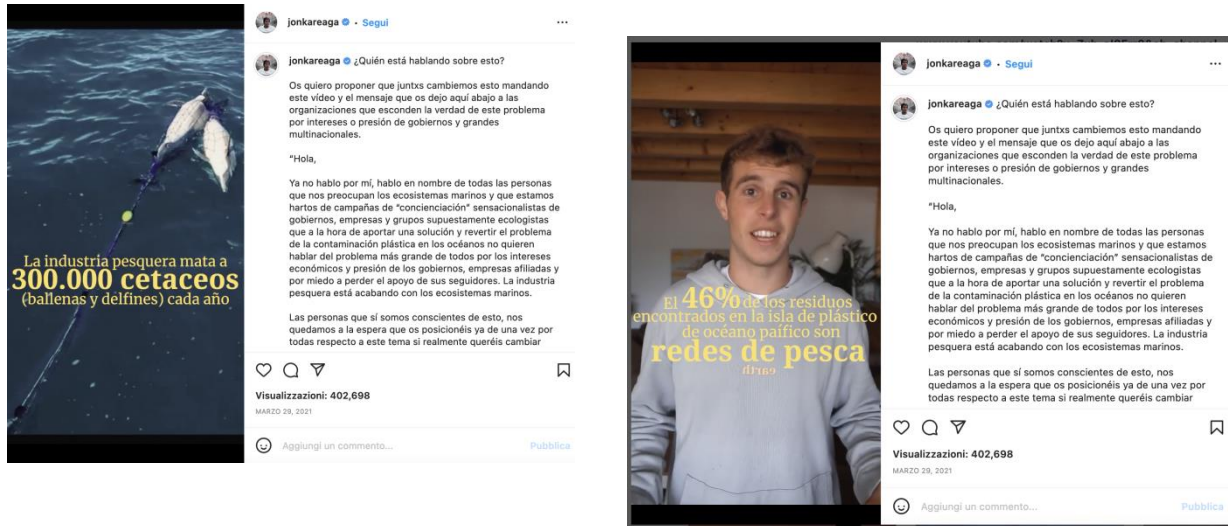


The post on Instagram, on the other hand, is a video of about 6 minutes in which the same theme is explored. The purpose of the video is informative/educational.

The caption of the post introduces the topic saying "Today, on World Environment Day, we do not need to be lied to anymore: the climate crisis is real and we need real solutions. What most companies are doing is humiliating and distorting the word sustainability, making the path to a more sustainable and fair planet more difficult. [...] Don't be fooled, guys! What do you think?". The final part of the caption is incisive: it addresses young people, hence its target audience, and actively involves them, asking for their opinion.



On Instagram, Jon Kareaga makes many informative/educational videos using data to support his arguments as the following frames demonstrate



What can we learn from this case study?

Key takeaways from Jon Kareaga

-  Adapt your content to the selected social media platform
-  Engage your audience
-  Use data to support your statements
-  Take care of your image, with constant publications consistent with the theme of your activism

Want to learn more about this topic? Find additional sources here

An example of content which combines the interaction with the community with the educational format. To see the video click on the following link:



https://www.tiktok.com/@unwomen/video/7039859371412573487?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc&web_id=7156947370574890502

How to Discover and Create Content That Your Audience Craves (and Grow Your Following): <https://buffer.com/resources/discover-content-ideas/>

How To Save Time Planning and Creating Social Media Content: <https://buffer.com/resources/how-to-save-time-planning-social-media-content/>

To know more about Jon Kareaga: <https://atlasofthefuture.org/%E2%9A%A1-activism-as-therapy/>

Learning activity: Content Creation

Name of the activity	For whom is your message for?
Topic Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Awareness on the different target groups● Engagement of different targets
Learning Outcomes and Competences that can be acquired	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Produce an effective message
Duration	1.5 hours
Kind of Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Non-formal education● Interactive discussion
Required Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Whiteboard/flipcharts● Post-its● Projector (optional)● Felt pens/ pens
Learning Setting and Activity Description	<p>The trainer introduces news taken from the daily newspaper or any press platform.</p> <p>Then, assign per each group a specific target, e.g. LGBTQI+ community group, generic adult group, environmental activists etc. Indeed, this depends on the specific news selected by the trainer.</p> <p>After that, the facilitator asks each group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To characterise the main interests, age, descriptions,



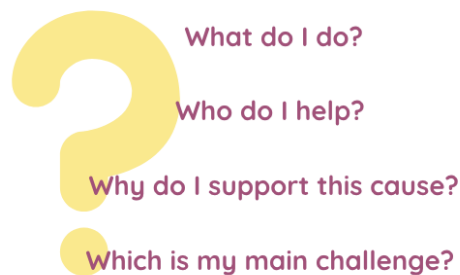
	<p>expectations etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To readapt the message according to the characteristics/language of the group on any format (video, photos, A3 etc.) <p>Once the group work is done, the facilitator asks each group to present the message and what they have produced.</p>
Activity Evaluation/ Reflection	<p>Once the 15 minutes are over, participants sit together and discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why has the message changed?- Why do you think the target was more involved with the message you have created?- In general, what do you think that happens with social media management?

Module 4. The creation of a social media identity

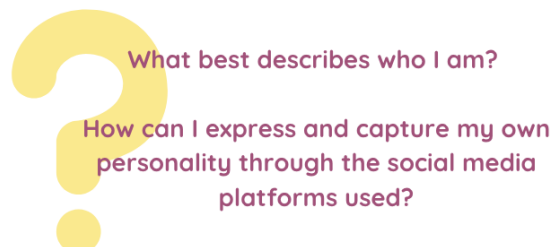
Being a digital activist implies having a presence on social media. This presence, however, cannot be compared to that of a generic user. The account of an activist must be distinctive in that it must be recognisable and must communicate at a glance the spirit, ethics and values of activism, which can be shared with other users. Being a digital activist present on social media means showing up with active and consistent intentions. Moreover creating one's own identity on social channels is very significant; it is a fundamental step in the creation of a community as social search and the dissemination of posts is determined by an algorithm influenced by interests, interactions and personal networks (Lüders, Dinkelberg & Quayle, 2022). For this reason, it is crucial to create an identity that is consistent in time and subject matter.

How to create a social media identity?

Creating the social identity of a digital activist is a bit like creating the social identity of a brand. So first of all you need to define your position on social media. You can answer these questions:



The second step is to define a social identity. The way you interact must be authentic and unique, as it must reflect your personality. Being a digital activist, the values of your actions pass through your image. It is therefore important to define your distinctive traits in terms of personality and communication: choose a tone to use (serious, joking, assertive), choose emoji or a hashtag that can become a recognisable sign for your followers, and choose a template to use.



The creation of a precise identity on social channels determines the creation of community: mechanisms such as the use of hashtags, sharing information, liking content, and following the same account favour the connection of people who do not know each other on the basis of shared values (Lüders et al., 2022).

Last, but not least, is consistency in terms of communication and constant use of the chosen social platforms. To be consistent, you need to plan actions by scheduling topics, posts, videos, lives and time to communicate with your followers each week.



Case study: HugoDécrypte

Hugo Travers, commonly known as HugoDécrypte, is a Franco-British web video creator. He gained popularity through his YouTube videos but he is now active also on TikTok and Instagram. Hugo is a medium more than he is an influencer. He has extensively covered the entire presidential campaign, for instance, demonstrating his keen interest in political matters. A nice way to obtain knowledge through a young person who writes for young people is through his HugoDécrypte account. Through summaries, never voicing an opinion, and with complete objectivity. Young people look to him as an essential provider of daily-news.



hugodecrypte ✓

hugodecrypte

Segui

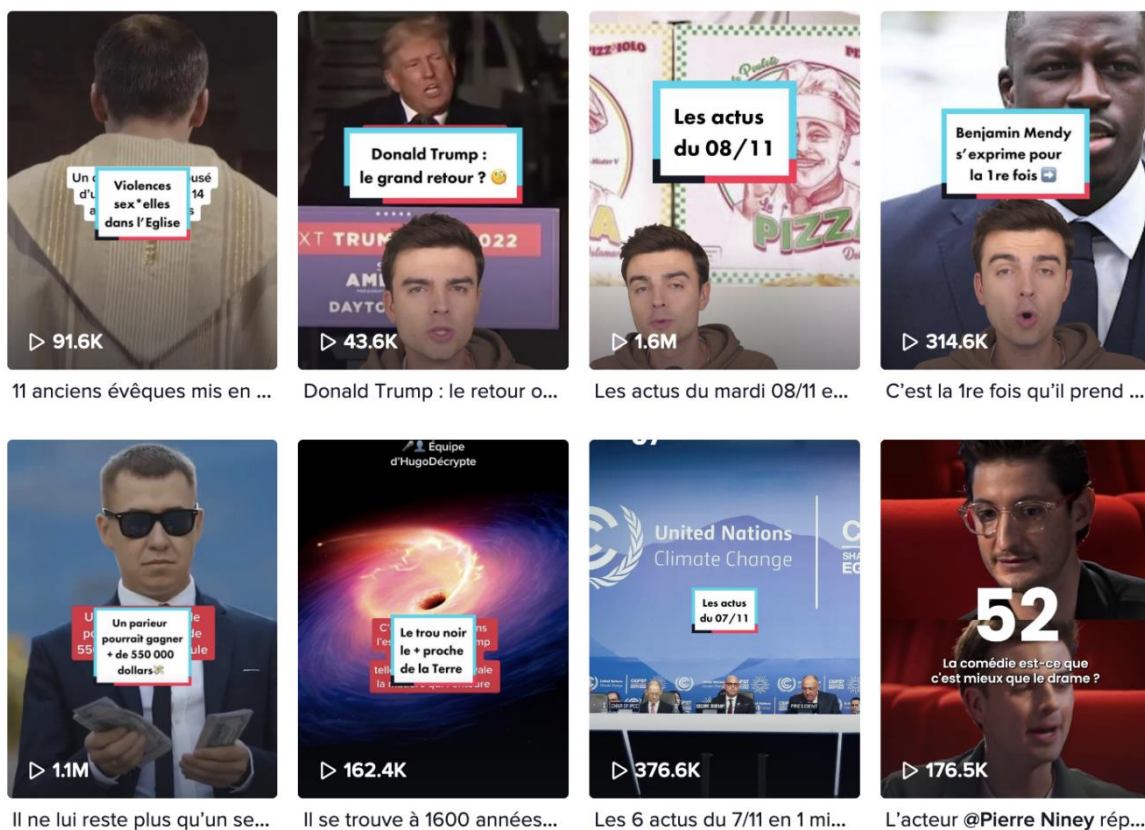
44 Seguiti **3.3M** Follower **177.5M** Mi piace

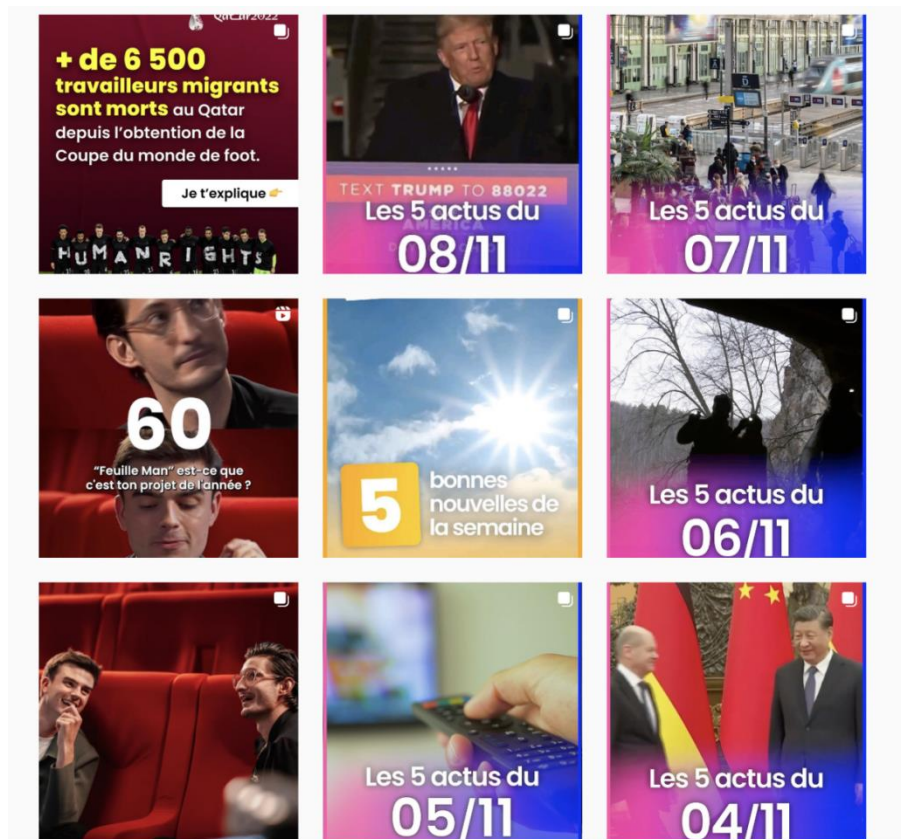
Je te donne un résumé rapide et facile de l'actu 🧠
Abonne-toi !

🔗 youtu.be/fmsoym8l-3o



As we can see from the Instagram and TikTok feeds, the French influencer's profile is updated daily with the news of the day. At first glance, you can see that the publications are constant over the days as well as you can immediately identify your digital activism based on the dissemination of political information. Your activity can be linked to the pool of digital activists who have tried to counter youth misinformation on political content and have made this content available to their peers in the social platforms of daily use. The content published on tik tok and Instagram tend to be the same but the style changes, following the canons of the two social media. We, therefore, find the post format with written news on Instagram and the video format on TikTok.





What can we learn from this case study?

Key takeaways from HugoDécrypte

-  Be consistent in content creation and posting
-  Adapt content creation to the platform but do not shift your focus
-  Use language appropriate to your target audience
-  The publication of your content is associated with your image so try to be consistent and impressive

Want to learn more about this topic? Find additional sources here

How to Become an Influencer: 7 Easy Steps to Becoming a Social Media Influencer Today
<https://influencermarketinghub.com/how-to-become-an-influencer/>

How To Become An Influencer in 10 Steps <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-become-influencer>

How haters helped the rise of Greta Thunberg's popularity
<https://www.digitmagazine.com/articles/how-haters-helped-rise-greta-thunbergs-popularity>

Learning activity: Social media identity

Name of the activity	What's your social media reputation?
Topic Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awareness on the page identity ● Content media strategy
Learning Outcomes and Competences that can be acquired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Produce an effective social media calendar ● Make sure to carefully manage the identity of a project
Duration	1.5 hours
Kind of Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non-formal education ● Interactive discussion ● Self-assessment grid
Required Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whiteboard/flipcharts ● Post-its ● Projector (optional) ● Felt pens/ pens
Learning Setting and Activity Description	<p>This can be an individual or a group exercise. The trainer introduces a self-assessment tool (annex 1) to all the participants or groups.</p> <p>The facilitator asks to select a page/a project/a movement etc in which participants are active.</p> <p>Based on what they have chosen, participants analyse the online reputation through annex 1.</p>



Activity Evaluation/ Reflection	<p>Once the 15 minutes are over, participants sit together and discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can you assume from your reputation? - Do people talk about you? Why/Why not? - What do you think based on the conversations? - Do people react? Why/why not?
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Annex 1

Name of the page			
Social media		followers	following
Facebook			
Twitter			
LinkedIn			
Pinterest			
Instagram			
Snapchat			



TikTok			
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	1 = lack of presence or insufficient features 2 = sufficient features 3 = on the average 4 = great features 5 = excellent elements	Notes
WEB-PAGE		
The webpage is neat & trustworthy		
The webpage is easy to navigate		
I didn't have to wait much when I click		
The webpage has an e-commerce		
The webpage is updated with fresh news/photos		
The FAQ section is clear		



The webpage uses https:// protocol		
Media and contents are attractive		
When I search for it online the webpage goes before the social media		
In case of e-commerce, it is easy to book & retrieve information about booking		
They feature partners they work with		
SOCIAL MEDIA		
Social media are well-kept with updated information		
The calendar & the themes on social media seem clear		
From the social, it is easy to explore the mood of the company		
The comments and the reactions are lively		



REVIEWS		
They feature articles/reviews on specialised magazines		
They have Google My Business which is up-to-date with photos		
They have positive reviews on Google My Business		
They answer to negative reviews on Google My Business		
They have reviews on social media		

Module 5. Creation of a community

Change is the result of a collective effort. Your activism is a first step towards change, which needs the support of a like-minded community to be implemented: initiatives and events, in order to be effective, require followers and supporters who share his beliefs and contribute to their dissemination. Hence, an online community therefore brings together people who interact in a virtual environment and are bound by common values, beliefs and interests with which community members identify, creating a sense of belonging to the group. In this regard, the community establishes links between your followers, allowing them to discuss topics related to your activism, share insights, raise awareness, collaborate on projects, share tips and related news. Each member of the community is an active participant, able to positively influence other members.

What are the keywords of an online community?

1. Sense of belonging
2. Identification
3. Ability to influence
4. Integration
5. Active participation
6. Emotional connection

Find your why. Underlying the creation of a community are shared values, which must be respected when choosing goals to pursue. Although a community can have many goals, it is ideal to focus on a select few that represent value for you as an activist and for your community and that can be linked to particular actions and outcomes.

Select your target audience. The creation of online content must take into account the characteristics of the community which represents a social media target audience. Normally, data such as age, income level, education, interests, job title, location etc. are all elements that help you to really imagine what the characteristics of the ideal target group are. Developing your social media target audience is an important step in creating successful social media content, as well, events and campaigns. Plus, you can focus your efforts on the right social media platforms and posts. Social media is an important place to engage with your target audience and learn more about them. Finally, “Social media has the potential to temporarily unite large numbers of people to jointly advocate for a certain cause” (Lüders et al., 2022). In this regard, the community has a key role in promoting your activities and you should take into account their opinions. So, after a period of trial, try to listen first, analysing the highlights of your activities to define the following publications.

Choose a platform. Regarding online community building, Facebook or LinkedIn are the most suitable social media platforms, but they can also work with other social media that are more attractive to young people. The aim is to create an online space where people can feel integrated, free to express themselves and where they can communicate with each other. In addition, social media are also a channel to amplify the message to outsiders, thus expanding the community.

Select stakeholders. Stakeholder research aims to support community actions to achieve concrete results. If we consider the action of an environmental activist, we can deduce on our own that it is complicated to achieve results without the support of institutions. Therefore, it is necessary to look for stakeholders who share the same values and challenges in order to achieve results.

Engage your community. The outcomes you will get will be greater the more engaged your community is. So ask questions and participate in conversations. It is important that you join and answer and that you are visible within the community, that you are therefore an active member and not just a leader: “answering questions from the public, crowdsourcing ideas and responding directly to comments are all great ways to engage a social community” (Woods, 2022).

Analyse your results. Monitor the results of your activities regularly. Social media have an analytics (insight) section that can show the tendencies of followers. Having an idea of what your followers like will help you plan the creation of possible content and events. By analysing the data you can ask yourself a series of questions such as: What kinds of content do followers share? What kinds of material appear to be most appealing? Do followers use hashtags frequently? How frequently do users normally post?



Case study: YES Young European Society

Young European Society (YES) is an example of an online community composed mainly of young people who live in the EU and share European values. The EU is the key word, which underpins their activities. On their Instagram page, they describe themselves with three words: Youth, Europe, Future.



A thematic coherence can be deduced from their activities on social media, as shown by the Instagram feed on the side. The aim of their action is to create more awareness about the EU as a political institution.



As well as spreading the EU's work opportunities for young people. They regularly post the traineeship opportunities proposed by the European institutions, providing a brief description, the expiry date of the call and the link to the main page. By proposing apprenticeship opportunities, we can deduce the target audience of YES: young people ranging from 18 to 30 years old.

As far as community engagement is concerned, YES uses events and Q&As. In the posts below, we find an example of advertising a live broadcast in which the audience can interact, asking the host via the role of the live moderator, and an example of Q&A done in Instagram stories to ask about the satisfaction rating of an event.



What can we learn from this case study?

Key takeaways from Young European Society

-  Have a clear goal and a clear target in mind
-  Be coherent with your values
-  Engage your audience with online and offline events

Want to learn more about this topic? Find additional sources here

How Boston While Black went from hashtag to a five-figure membership business in six months: <https://www.mightynetworks.com/case-studies/boston-while-black>

Learning activity: Creation of a community

Name of the activity	What's your newsletter?
Topic Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness on the identity development via the creation of a specific media • Content media strategy follow-up
Learning Outcomes and Competences that can be acquired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce an effective media tool • Branding awareness and value transfer
Duration	1.5 hours
Kind of Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-formal education • Interactive discussion • Self-assessment grid
Required Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboard/flipcharts • Post-its • Projector (optional) • Felt pens/ pens
Learning Setting and Activity Description	<p>This can be an individual or a group exercise. The aim is the development of a specific newsletter that can be used to channel some of the values of your project.</p> <p>In introduction, the facilitator must present quickly the basic of newsletter edition and how to use a specific software for the creation (Advice to use mail chimp-https://mailchimp.com/en/help/create-a-sample-newsletter-for-potential-subscribers/ / other software available). The facilitator has also to show the features of a users list, and the tag functions.</p> <p>Then each learner (or each group) will have one hour to</p>



	<p>design, write, feature and present a newsletter.</p> <p>At the end, each group must shows the newsletter, why and for what they would produce it, which colours, which call to action etc.</p> <p>Each group will have to give constructive feedback, and give suggestions.</p>
Activity Evaluation/ Reflection	<p>Once the activity is over, participants sit together and discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Would you open the newsletter?- What do you expect from a newsletter?- Are you subscribed to a newsletter? Why/why not?



Module 6. Social mobilisation

Social media is a hybrid environment where the private and public spheres overlap fluidly, being a component of every citizen's daily life (Caroll, 2018). Interaction on social media is based on an offline-online continuum: hashtags, mentions, and direct messages are the basis of online communication and sharing that characterises modern civic engagement and supports both online and offline actions in favour of the social cause (Pelter, 2020; Friel, 2021). The possibility of acting contemporarily online and offline leads activists to work on this double dimension. Online and offline activism are in fact complementary. Online activities help to reach a wider audience, people outside the community or in a different geographical area. Moreover, online activism can be seen as a preparatory phase of an offline event. As defined by Soler-i-Martí et al (2022): “Indeed, one could consider online activism as a preparatory and mobilising force, and offline activism as the core strength and staying power of the movement and as fuelling further online participation, building on post-protest momentum and maintaining it alive online” (p.106).

Due to the powerful ability of online activism to reach a community of young people, online activism can drive social movements. In this regard, “studies show that young people who engage in digital participatory politics are much more likely to engage in ‘real’ offline political participation such as voting” (Pelter, 2020). Social media have thus become critically important for the emergence of new social movements as social media is a neutral space where even those who usually do not have voices, such as minorities, can have voices. This is an opportunity for the emergence of new movements but also for a revival of old movements that had slumbered. Social media are thus a channel for social movements that gather support before offline events and maintain interest following offline events.



Case study: Flavia Carlini

Flavia Carlini is an Italian activist working on rights, politics and gender equality. Her approach to activism reflects the complementarity of online and offline activities. Among the various issues she has worked on is the protection of Iranian women's rights.

Flavia Carlini also joined the social movement that gained resonance after Mahsa Amini's death. As the Italian activist's Instagram feed shows, her actions unfold in both online and offline dimensions. The first post on the arcoment is an informative video, to raise awareness of the issue among followers, contextualising the event politically and socially. The second post are photos testimotizing the offline activism: in this post the activist urges followers to participate in person in the protest. The caption of this post reads:

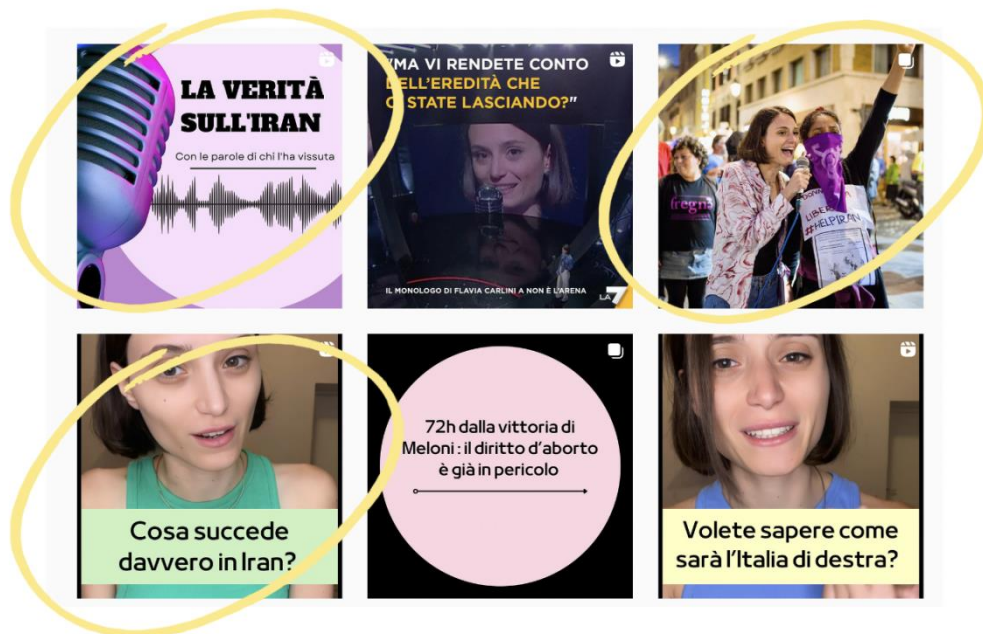
I invite you to be the megaphone of those voices that have been silenced for 44 years. I invite you to protest what has been happening in Iran for years. I invite you not to turn away as we have done for decades. I invite you to protest, together, for those rights that should be global.

□ *for those of you who are in Rome, meet me tomorrow at 10 a.m. at the demonstration that will start from Piazza della Repubblica (if you want to come with me find a poll in the stories).*

For all other people who are not in Rome, in the second slide of the post you will find info on other demonstrations.

In Iran they are asking us to "be our voice." Being there seems to me the least we can do.

The offline event is followed by another online activity, in which the activist is promoting the release of a podcast episode on the same topic, called “La verità sull’Iran” (The truth about Iran).



What can we learn from this case study?

Key takeaways from Flavia Carlini

-  Use social media platforms to raise awareness
-  Invite your followers to participate to on the ground actions
-  After an offline event, ride the wave and keep raising awareness among your followers

Want to learn more about this topic? Find additional sources here

The interdependency of online and offline activism: A case study of Fridays For Future-Barcelona in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown
https://repositori.upf.edu/bitstream/handle/10230/47240/soler_hipertext_inter.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

<https://theconversation.com/leading-an-online-social-movement-requires-offline-work-132618>

Online and offline engagement in new social movements: two sides of the same coin.
<https://medium.com/@laviniafaccioli/online-and-offline-engagement-in-new-social-movements-two-sides-of-the-same-coin-f706c815709e>

<https://mashable.com/article/activism-on-social-media>

Learning activity: Social mobilisation

Name of the activity	What's your deal?
Topic Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awareness on the mobilisation process ● Strategies to engage target groups
Learning Outcomes and Competences that can be acquired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Produce an effective mobilisation strategy ● Reflect on your values
Duration	1.5 hours
Kind of Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non-formal education ● Interactive discussion ● Self-assessment grid
Required Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whiteboard/flipcharts ● Post-its ● Projector (optional) ● Felt pens/ pens
Learning Setting and Activity Description	<p>The facilitator introduces the following scenario (either reads it or distributes it on papers). Divide the participants in groups.</p> <p>You have just started/launched a beauty nonprofit company of natural cosmetics as a process of empowering marginalised groups - The Rough Diamond is the name. Your core values are sustainability, free chemicals and social inclusion. Taking care of nature and of personal expression are your core beliefs! The variety of your products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural expression cream - The touch of your body cleaning cream <p>Your profits are all donated for gender educational projects in Peru to support the local production of natural products for the personal hygiene of the families.</p> <p>In this moment, you want to launch the 1st campaign on social media; so either Facebook, Instagram or TikTok users</p>

	<p>can get to know your products. In order to have more impact, you need to define your potential target group, and your strategy.</p> <p>Give to each participant Annex 1.</p> <p>They need to reflect and describe their ideal audience.</p> <p>Once they are done, you can discuss it with the groups.</p> <p>After that, the real point is to transfer into a creative and structure frame your messages.</p> <p>In this way, the facilitator gives Annex 2, in which participants have to concretely imagine and reflect on the sort of topics and themes part of their messages for a specific audience persona.</p> <p>The facilitator asks the participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Justify the choice of the social media - Justify the different topics and the strategy of storytelling - Define the storytelling overview of their project. <p>Once finished (give at least 30 minutes), the educator invites each group to show what their work has been about.</p>
<p>Activity Evaluation/ Reflection</p>	<p>Once all the groups have completed their presentations, participants sit together and discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do we need to shape a certain message? O you think that it is ‘less true’ or that we are ‘manipulating’ the public? - Do you think storytelling is an important tool or not? - How do you think marketing works? How can it be more ethical?



Annex 1

PERSONA PROFILE		
PERSONAL DATA	INTERESTS	CIRCUMSTANCES
Age:		Occupation:
Gender:	User of:	Job title:
Ethnicity:	<i>write the name(s) of the social media</i>	Annual income:
Marital status:		Level of education:
Age of children:	Favourite Book:	Languages: <i>write the language(s) the avatar knows</i>
Location:	<i>title and gender</i>	Hobbies:
	Favourite movie:	
	<i>title and gender</i>	
	Favourite TV serie:	
	<i>title and gender</i>	
	Following (influencer):	



Annex 2

WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA	WHICH TOPICS
	WHEN
	HOW



FOR A MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS		
TOPIC	WHEN	HOW YOU DEVELOP IT

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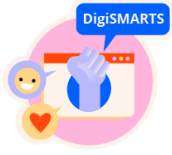
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