



Digital Activism

A New Way of Social Movement in the Digitalization Era

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Abstract. This study explains the emergence of digital activism as a new social movement by utilizing digitalization. With the advancement of communication technology and social networks, such as smartphones, websites, and social media, social movement can be directed more efficiently. These become a new organizing tool to increase the mobilization of the participants, extend the scale of the movement, and facilitate the coordination of tactics via texting on social media. In doing the research, this study uses a qualitative method with a literature review design. Thus, the author collected numerous secondary data to be reviewed and analyzed comprehensively. The study's result shows that digital activism is more effective than traditional movement. This is because the social network created by digitalization has the ability to bridge the local and the global. The information about movements can also spread quickly so that more people can participate in them. Moreover, this study also shows that digital activism has created fundamental changes in social life with an establishment of the logic of connective action as a new form of collective engagement.

Keywords: Digital Activism · Digitalization · Social Transformation

1 Introduction

The 1990s period witnessed a huge development of digital technologies. At that time, technology became a more integrated part of people's daily life, especially in western countries [1, 2]. Many technologies have changed the way of life, starting with the appearance of email, the internet, tablets, and smartphones. The rise of Web 2.0 then has brought brings the popularity of social media usage, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram [3]. According to Leong et al., [4], social media can be defined as a web-based technology that is characterized by user-generated content, so the users can share and comment on multiple contents. Social Media. This makes people easier to build communication and interaction with each other.

The development of digitalization, including in the form of social media, has behavior-structuring effects that trigger a new way of collective behavior. As consequence, it is underpinning the digital-enabled social movements. Laaksonen and Laaksonen [5], argue that social movements can be viewed as a form of collective action and

informal networks which based on solidarity and shared beliefs between their participants. We should know that- social movements are key factors of social change in this modern world. Some of them represent joint efforts by activists or citizens to build a more just and equitable world. The participants of social movements have a desire to create positive change in society's common interests as well as in existing conditions [6].

However, because of digitalization, the pace of social change becomes more rapid in the twenty-first century. The role of digitalization in the social movement would become the rapprochement between communication and sociology in future research [7]. For social movement activists, new digital technologies can encourage mobilization, improve the scale of protest, and facilitate the coordination of protest tactics because the actions can be convened through tweeting and texting [8]. The social movements' impacts go beyond the socio-political agenda. Rather, the collective action which is protesting social injustice will allow the participants to find and build cultural meanings, either for themselves or society [9]. A large-scale movement can even strengthen the identification and collective empowerment of its participants.

One of the phenomena that emerge because of digital-enabled social movements is digital activism. According to Mutsvairo [10], activism refers to an action to effect social change. This action is usually using letters, petitions, protests, and hacktivism. Meanwhile, Joyce 2010 cited in Mutsvairo, [10], defines digital activism defines as the use of digital technologies—internet-enabled devices and mobile phones—in the campaign to bring about social and political change. Digital activism can be categorized into three, namely (1) awareness/advocacy activism, where the activists try to highlight news or information that the mainstream media have ignored or misreported; (2) organization/mobilization, where the activists use the internet ask the others to join the offline action; and (3) action/reaction, which mostly relates to destructive online action in order to cripple the target, such as hacking.

Digital activism encompasses all political and social campaigning practices that utilize digital network infrastructure. The activists are usually using social media or social networks to get volunteers and share their inspiring stories with people around the globe [11]. Digital meditation then used as an ecology foregrounds the importance of taking multiple interactions and communication between media and citizens through various dimensions of collective action [12]. A large number of digital.

2 Methods

In this article, the author uses the qualitative research method. This method emphasizes the way of people interpret their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals [13]. The qualitative method has gained more attention in social research because it provides a more detailed understanding of human emotions, attitudes, behavior, and experiences. The goal of qualitative research is to describe and analyze the world as it is understood, interpreted, and experienced by people in their everyday lives. This type of research is flexible because when investigating a particular issue, it can commence without any theory at all—it is simply because of the researcher or author's interest in that issue.

The author then uses a literature review design by reviewing or examining the published material concerning the related topic [14, 15]. Therefore, this article emphasizes the secondary data by searching relevant reference sources, such as scientific journals, books, documents, and online articles. The authors carried out several steps in this literature review. First, collecting numerous data from various sources which are related to the research topic. The author uses credible journal sources, such as Taylor & Francis, Sage Publications, Jstor, Online Willey Library, and the university website. Second, after entire data have been collected, the author then analyzes the content by reading them carefully. Some important points or findings are noted by the author. Third, developing the findings and writing them into the article.

What makes this article important is finding the effectiveness of digital technology in the social movement. By using technology, geography does not seem to matter because people from other regions or countries can be invited and mobilized via texting to join the movement. Not only that, but Besides, the author also found some case studies that are interesting because they have successfully implemented digital activism. These movements are also succeeded-successful in creating positive effects on the social life.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Digital Activism as a New Social Movement

Developments in communication technologies are instrumental for giving emergence of a networked organizational model based on the decentralized coordination between autonomous and diverse actors [16]. Activists can coordinate more easily across geographical distances and without sustained, hierarchical, and formal organizations. A new form of social movement then emerged because digital activism is quicker and more inexpensive than a traditional social movement.

Web 2.0 and the internet become important supporters of the tactical toolbox of social movements. This is because the networking functions of the internet have created a new opportunity for creating ‘five-minute activism’, such as email campaigns and online petitions [8]. While Web 2.0 makes the users a participant and content creators, there is also the emergence of Web 3.0 that enables all information to be controlled through a single platform. Web 3.0 can provide personalized data to users by gathering, merging, and associating data with each other [6].

Furthermore, digital activism can create ‘crowd-enabled connection action’ by mobilizing the activists or movement’s participants through the internet or social media in particular. This is definitely different from the traditional old social movement because digital activism is organized by crowds largely without lead or central organizational actors [17]. Their lead organization is carried out through distributing personal action frames on the Internet, which is an engagement created by a simple discourse that is shared with social networks. However, this does not mean that digital activism is a leaderless movement, but rather helps the leaders to operate invisibly and anonymously [18].

In a social movement, an essential way to gain power is to attract people to join the movement, so communication is very crucial [5, 19]. Furthermore, digital activism requires communication to create, modify, and maintain an organizational entity among

the existing collective [20]. However, digital technology has successfully reshaped the internal and external communication strategies within social movements, as well as created new communication patterns and alternative publics, making their potential reach broadened.

With the emergence of online social networks, the movements have shifted toward more decentralized forms of networking and organizing. Digital technology is even contributed during the movement's formation process. Several events such as Occupy movement or Spanish Indignados, would not have happened if the technology was not able to serve a coordinating role [21]. In 2011, many commentators, observers, and scholars discovered the existence of social media revolutions. They were bringing back some interpretations that started to spread immediately after the protests in Iran to challenge the electoral results in 2009 [22].

Those explanations are in line with Turner [23], who argues that the mobilization footprint of the Internet had truly reached its zenith in 2011. This was supported by the rise of the M15M or *Generacao a Rasca* in Portugal. Many commentators have observed that the movement's creation and mobilization are carried out through social networks and cyberspace. Two months later, the 15M then emerged in Spain which was also organized through an online platform.

Digital activism has attracted many attentions because of the emergence of these movements. This new type of social movement allows the powerless or marginalized persons to voice their grievances. By using social media, these persons can be placed at the center of a vast network [4]. People can use Twitter or Facebook to share their stories or to engage in social action for social justice goals [24]. This is because social media coverage has informed social movements and educated people who want to learn more deeply about the movements [25].

3.2 The Effectiveness of Digital Activism and Its Impact on the Social Transformation

Digital technology advancement has not changed the basic nature of social processes that underlie communication and the flow of information as well as the mechanisms that motivate people to join and support collective action. What technologies have changed is the reach and the speed of communication [3]. Thus, the activists began to use these technologies, including the Internet, as an organizing tool to make the movement more effective in achieving its goals. Before the emergence of social media, activists used websites to advance their informational dimension of mobilization. A website can confer legitimacy on the fringe and smallest of movement groups and offer an inexpensive way to distribute their messages to many targeted audiences. In doing this, they just need a web domain that could be maintained at a low price compared to the printing costs of posters, petitions, and leaflets [8].

Nowadays, digital activism can reach a global audience by using more advanced web technology and social media. The infrastructure of digital activism is relied on a digital network that allows many people to easily link to each other, exchange content or information, and coordinate the movement. This network plays an essential role in searching, finding, and relating to people who have common problems or beliefs. It helps people deepen their understanding and create a common perspective [11]. According

to Ozgul, [18], new media is a tool for increasing freedom and fostering participation. It triggers collective action by reducing communication costs and removing two old obstacles—barriers to group reaction and locality of information. This is in line with the argument from Enjolras et al. [26], that a digital network has the ability to bridge the local and the global, allowing local phenomena to spread across the whole network and produce global effects.

Furthermore, the Internet can support a process of participatory decision-making at an unprecedented scale. This facilitates mobilization processes because the activists can publish and circulate much-uncensored information quickly. They can even create independent media operations. For instance, Indymedia is an alternative news website that was created during the Battle of Seattle, where it has attracted much public attention and scholarly research [16]. The availability of information regarding the movement causes and tactics also extends the scale of the network from the local to the global. Activists in remote areas could imitate the actions organized elsewhere and join the movement by setting up their actions. Organizing the actions and movements in such distributed manner will prevent internal conflict and bring diverse actors together [16].

The Internet has the capacity to create a ‘networked individualism’ that allows activists to expand their interpersonal networks of strong and weak ties. For activists who lived in remote areas or distant geographical areas, coordinating tasks and actions on the Internet allows them to create stronger relationships that will bridge ideological divides. It then further strengthens the plural and heterogeneous character of the movements. By sharing hope and sorrow, the people have motivation and enthusiasm to join the movements. However, some early relationships with other people or strangers may still be weak. But Castells Ozgul, [18], stated that loosely affiliated people can develop strength over time using online media and digital technologies.

Due to the huge advantages offered by the Internet, digital activism can be carried out in a more effective way to bring success in achieving the goals [11, 23]. Moreover, the emergence of social media with its user-generated content feature is a crucial part of the news ecosystem. This gives a unique opportunity for the activists to control their media representation. Different from a website that only has one site to publish the content, social media has many sites in the form of their users’ accounts. Social media represents a realm for the vast and quick spread of pictures and messages related to the movement [27]. This may also have a behavior stimulation effect that gains a huge number of supporters and participants [9]. Social media then become an important tool for the creation of two key elements of social movement, namely shared identities and the organization of informal networks [28].

Digital activism has transformed the resources, processes, and outcomes of collective action in social life. The changes are not only in how various actors approach protest but also in what it means to be organized. With the development of digital technologies, social movements experience fundamental changes in the way of resolving social and political issues, allocating resources, and managing information flows. Scholars have identified various aspects of digital technologies which contribute to the emergence of new forms of organizing in social life, including the ability for people to take interdependent roles, interactive affordance, and affordance for empowerment, solidarity, and socializing [29]. These aspects are making collective action more complex than before.

Therefore, fundamental changes caused by digital technologies reflect a new logic of collective action that is different from the traditional forms of social movements, which are led by social movement organizations such as political parties and non-governmental organizations. This new logic is called the logic of connective action which becomes the basis of a new form of collective engagement [30]. Connective action is characterized by technologically organized and far more individualized sets of processes that result in action or movements without the condition of shared identity framing or the level of organizational resources required to respond effectively to gain opportunities [19]. It establishes the renewed abilities of individuals to co-produce and co-distribute information, coordinate and collaborate through individualized yet connected networks, and leverage a new action repertoire enabled by social media.

Connective action is in contrast to the familiar logic of collective action that is associated with collective identities and organizational resources (Fig. 1). In connective action, people engage with issues mostly on individual terms by searching and finding common ground in easy-to-personalize action frames that allow for different understandings of common issues to be shared extensively through digital networks [16]. This allows each individual to activate and behave as catalysts of collective action, thus supporting grassroots self-organizing.

Furthermore, the network logic of new communication technologies has increased the importance of understanding collective identities in digital activism. According to Castells [31], the network logic of communication has impacted the processes of social changes as follows: (1) create an open and free circulation of information; (2) establish horizontal connections and relations among autonomous and diverse elements; (3) improve self-managed or self-organized networking; and (4) enable collaboration and cooperation through direct democratic decision-making and decentralized coordination. These logics have adhered to the organizing norms of collective action in the contemporary world. Within the digital network, each participant can express their feeling and

	Logic of collective action	Logic of connective action
Cost-benefit gap in joint actions	A central challenge is to persuade individuals to overcome their resistance to joining collective actions in which personal participation costs may outweigh gains, particularly when people can free-ride on others' efforts	Radically reduced communication costs as a result of social media use have reduced the gap between the cost and benefit in participating in joint actions
Identity reference	Requires a common group or <i>collective identity</i> , ideological identification, and symbolic construction of a united "we"	Identity reference is derived through <i>inclusive and diverse large-scale personal expression</i>
Action frame	Advocates a <i>shared collective action frame</i> to garner support	Advocates for <i>personal action frames</i> and easy-to-personalise action themes
Identification	Requires people to make more difficult choices and requires a <i>higher level of self-change</i> in individuals	The starting point is the self-motivated sharing of <i>already internalised or personalised ideas</i> with others
Leader/Organisation	A <i>recognised leader or credible social movement organisation</i> is usually central in developing and propagating the ideology and collective action	Relatively <i>decentralised</i> to the extent that the community avoids designating leaders and official spokespersons
Role of social network	Emphasises the role of social network relationships and connections as <i>informal preconditions</i> for more centralised mobilisation (e.g., in forming and spreading action frames and forging common identifications and relations of solidarity and trust) Emphasises the <i>strength of group ties</i> between organisers and followers and among the activists	"Networks are not just precursors or building blocks of collective action: they are in themselves organizational structures that can transcend the elemental units of organizations and individuals" (p. 753) Emphasises <i>large-scale, fluid social networks</i>
Role of digital technology	Maintains that digital media may help reduce some costs in these processes but <i>do not fundamentally change the action dynamics</i>	"Participation becomes self-motivating as personally expressive content is shared with and recognized by others who, in turn, repeat these networked sharing activities. When these interpersonal networks are enabled by technology platforms of various designs that coordinate and scale the networks, the resulting actions can resemble collective action, yet without the same role played by formal organizations or transforming social identifications" (p. 752)

Fig. 1. The Difference between logic of collective action and logic of connective action.

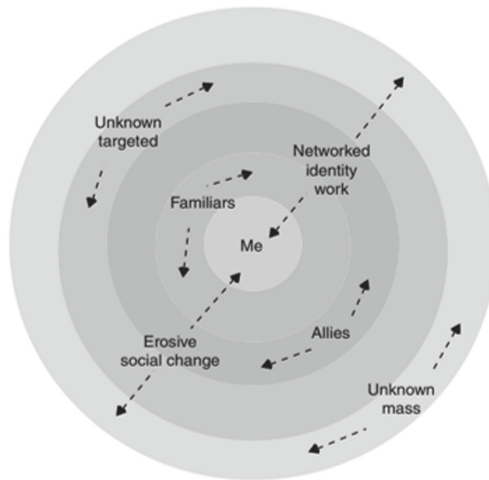


Fig. 2. Intimate citizenship 3.0 – the sharing of private stories with networked publics.

emotions about the movements, thus triggering the creation of new identities which unified them together [9].

It needs to be highlighted that sharing a private story is an important element to gain the attention and emotion of the public, thus encouraging them to join the movements. Vivienne [32], argues that six kinds of prospective social change may be driven by digital storytelling. First, in the form of social change which is stirred by the belief that each individual has a story worth sharing. It often precedes the second form of social change between intimate publics which refer as ‘familiars’, including family, friends, and acquaintances. Third, the social change that occurs because of mutual support among ‘allies’, such as members of the online community and workshop participants. These are people who are known and influenced by the stories.

Fourth, social change at the meso level happens when specific unknown audiences are targeted for their position of influence and the obligation of care that requires them to listen. This is called an ‘unknown target’ which is involving politicians, teachers, professionals, law and policymakers, and social service providers. Fifth is the most problematic social change, happening between antipathetic audiences or a mass of unknown people ‘unknown mass’. Six, erosive social change is still transmitted metaphorically from individual to others slowly and imperceptibly (Fig. 2).

3.3 Case Studies

This part is explaining four case studies of digital activisms that succeeded in achieving the goals and have impacted the social transformation. These case studies are including disability activism in the United Kingdom, the Black Lives Matter movement, The Occupy Wall Street Movement, and the Candlelight Movement.

The Disability Activism in the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom, disability activism has facilitated a crucial role in challenging oppression and discrimination.

However, there is a changing nature of disability activism in the country. Early campaigns during the 1960s were focused on the exclusion of disabled people from economic prosperity. Between the 1970s and 1990s, the campaigns aimed to secure direct payments for independent living and civil right legislation. The austerity cuts in 2010 then created a new era of oppression for disabled people. There are much hostile print media with a dominant focus on disabled people as ‘welfare cheats’ [33].

The key actor in disability activism is a new campaigning group so-called Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC). It was established by experienced disabled campaigners and academics in 2010 and represents the archetypal example of the digitized activist grouping. During the 2012 Paralympic Games in London, they use a new media ecology by gathering interest from traditional as well as new media outlets. This approach has shown that disability activism began to use Internet-based media as a key campaign tool. At that time, DPAC protested the multinational information technology firm, Atos Origin, which become a sponsor of the Games. DPAC was not happy with that because Atos’ management of the disability benefits assessment process has caused numerous deaths of people.

Digital activism driven by DPAC had successful because, during the Paralympic Games, there were 451 tweets that used hashtags suggested by DPAC, namely #GoParalympicGB, #AtosGames, and @Atos. Not only that, but DPAC also uses celebrity endorsements and personal stories in its innovative activist repertoire [34]. For instance, in March 2013, DPAC launched its online campaign to challenge the closure of the Independent Living Fund by using personal stories of disabled people who are affected by the policy. The actions carried out by DPAC have brought a positive impact on social life, such as the improvement of social justice and quality of life, particularly for disabled people [34].

The Black Lives Matter Movement. #BlackLivesMatter has become a very popular hashtag on social media. This hashtag was born in 2013, especially after the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the killing of Trayvon Martin, an African American teen. In the beginning, there are various discussions among netizens who were feeling isolated and confused by the decision. Netizens the picked up #BlackLivesMatter hashtag quickly, with the conversation about personal feelings and sharing of personal stories concerning racism. They then talk about racism in detail and discuss how to prevent future deaths of Blacks and African Americans. However, the hashtag went viral and many netizens in other countries join in the conversation. The people then began to express solidarity, sharing their stories of racism, or simply reading the tweets about that [3].

With every new incident of killing of Blacks by non-Black people, the hashtag became reinvigorated. This allowed for further discussion in social media because it was not rooted in only one event. In 2014, the first movement of Black Lives Matter occurred in Ferguson, Missouri. Over 500 people were gathered in a response to the death of Michael Brown [3]. It shows that the Black Lives Matter movement was strong enough because they came from all over the nation, and many of them were only previously communicating through social media.

Since then, a huge number of protests have happened in the United States and other countries organized through the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on Twitter. According to Wortham 2016 cited in McNutt [3], this hashtag has been tweeted more than 30

million times. The Black Lives Movement has become very strong. The US presidential candidates were even asked about the topic during town hall meetings and debates. This definitely strengthens the importance of the message behind that movement.

The Occupy Wall Street Movement. The movement was inspired by a call by the Canadian magazine *Adbusters* to Occupy Wall Street. On 17 September 2011, several activists then occupied Zuccotti Park in Downtown Manhattan [35]. They are challenging the effects of the disproportionate influence of corporate power and growing inequality within society; thus the movement has an objective to create a community of equals where each voice is as important as every other [16]. New digital technologies enable activists to produce and circulate information about the movement. These technologies also facilitated the mobilization and decision-making process as well as contributed to the fast expansion of the movement to various localities.

A Tumblr blog called ‘We are the 99 Percent’ then became a popular network for gathering, sharing, and spreading individual stories of economic struggle and deprivation. There was also 50,000-run printing of an eight-page free broadsheet called ‘The Occupy Wall Street Journal’ that succeeded in collecting money to produce six successive editions. On Reddit, there was an ‘Occupy subreddit’ as a collaborative aggregation of important news stories with over 20,000 members. In the crucial moments’ video live streaming in related channels, such as journalist Tim Pool’s Ustream and Global Revolution Livestream feed, even had more than 10,000 viewers worldwide. These activities in social networks helped establish a sense of solidarity among the movement’s participants, or among people in general [36].

The Occupy Wall Street movement operated more with a logic of aggregation. This means that the movement consists of an alternative cultural framework that is constructed by interactions within social media. The movement also produces specific patterns of political and social interactions that involve some viral information and subsequent aggregations of huge numbers of participants in reality or physical spaces (Juris, 2012 cited in Kavada, [16]). Therefore, the Occupy Wall Street Movement has demonstrated that the rapid digital circulation of texts enables people to quickly create a geographically dispersed or networked counterpublic that can shape a critique of power outside of the mainstream media’s parameters [37].

The Candlelight Movement of South Korea. Beginning on 29 October 2016, the candlelight movement was a series of nationwide movements in South Korea that aimed to demand the immediate resignation of President Park Geun-hye. The Korean people viewed the President as irresponsible and incompetent in carrying out her duties. For instance, during the Sewol ferry sank case, people claimed that President Park had shown no leadership in the rescue operations and was incapable of implementing adequate management of the accident [9]. The name Candlelight Movement was given because the people brought a lit candle in their hands while attending the evening-tonight protests. During the mass demonstrations, the use of social network sites, especially Facebook and Twitter, played a critical role in the success of mobilizing and organizing diverse groups of people. A hashtag initiated by a netizen has been incorporated into civic activities and mainstream media by being distributed or resurrected with other hashtags [38].

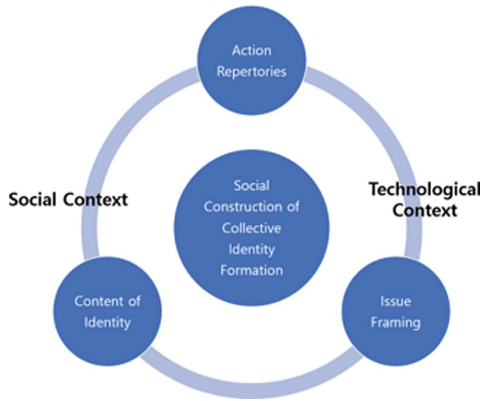


Fig. 3. Construction of collective identities in the candlelight movement.

The Candlelight Movement became a piece of evidence that contemporary social movements are organized by various groups of identities that do not share common political stances. The movement participants pursued the same goal, namely regime change, and they do not need a concrete organizational structure. Moreover, digital technologies and new communication networks provided new opportunities for groups that were previously silenced and marginalized from the dominant public sphere. Women, unemployed individuals, and sexual minorities speak together and express their thoughts via social media. It seems that within the Candlelight Movement, diverse forms of collective actions have functioned as the new realm where various subaltern groups are publicly recognized [9]. They shared, communicate, and connected to extend the scope of social and political orientations.

Based on the study's result from Chae et al., [9], within the Candlelight Movement, collective action repertoires, issue-framing, and collective identities do not occur independently of each other. In Fig. 2, we can see that those collective identities are formed through the dynamically interwoven communicative interactions that create action repertoires, identity claims, and issue-framing. The action repertoires were triggered by social and technological contexts. These two contexts provide an opportunity structure to implement collective action within the social movement process. Content of identity then could be revealed by issue framing and affect the action repertoires' choices. Both action repertoires and issue frames can be influenced by changes in the formation of collectives. This joint interrelationship, finally, represents the process of social construction in collective identities (Fig. 3).

4 Conclusion

Digitalization has transformed the way of life by bringing several advanced technologies and social networks. It has behavior-structuring effects that trigger a new collective behavior in the form of digital-enable social movements or digital activism. For the activists, certainly, the new digital technologies can enhance the mobilization of the

participants, extend the scale of the movement, and facilitate the coordination of movement's tactics or strategies via texting or tweeting. Thus, the participants can coordinate more easily across geographical distances and without sustained, hierarchical, and formal organizations.

Digital activism becomes a new social movement that is more effective than the traditional movement. The usage of a digital network can reduce communication costs as well as remove barriers to group reaction and locality of information. This network can bridge the local and the global because it allows local phenomena to spread across the globe. As consequence, the participants from remote areas can gain information about the movement quickly and even have a chance to join the movement itself.

A new technology embedded in digital activism has triggered fundamental changes that create a new form of collective engagement so-called the logic of connective action. This means that people engage with issues mostly on individual terms by finding common ground in easy-to-personalize action frames. Therefore, it allows for different understandings of those issues to be spread extensively through digital networks. So far, four digital activism cases succeeded in achieving the goals and bringing a positive impact on social life, namely the disability movement in the United Kingdom, the Black Lives Matter movement, the Occupy Wall Street movement, and the Candlelight Movement in South Korea.

Through this article, we can learn that digitalization can make social movements more effective, both during their preparations and process. Social movements often aimed to achieve positive goals, so it can definitely change the actual conditions toward a better life for every people. However, due to uncensored content spread by the activists on their website or social media, some content might contain cruel or misery images and videos. Therefore, we should carefully look at the movement's content. Some people who are not able to see those content, should avoid it and see the other contents that are easier for them.

Moreover, digital technology is often used by terrorists or extremists to spread propaganda, obtain influence, and attract new members or participants. By using the name of God or religion, people can be influenced easily because they think that their movements aimed to achieve God's goals. Thus, we should be careful, and not easily be influenced by their contents or stories on social media. We must properly choose the right movements that have the right objective to create better condition within society.

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