




toolkit for young liberal communicators

EUROPEAN LIBERAL YOUTH
LYMEI





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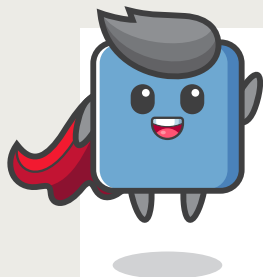
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Salutations!

Meet your Liberal Comms Super Hero Team



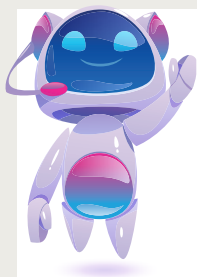
Hey there! I'm **Libbie**, your very own Liberal Communications Assistant!

As a general assistant, my job is to jump in all around this toolkit, to make sure you have access to *cheat sheets*, *quick tips*, and a few little tidbits of information along the way.



Socio's the name, and Social Activism is the game!

As you know, I'm **Socio**, your friendly neighbourhood youth activist! I'll be jumping in and out to give you any advice you might need about Youth Organisations and Activism, because in the end, we're all in the same boat!

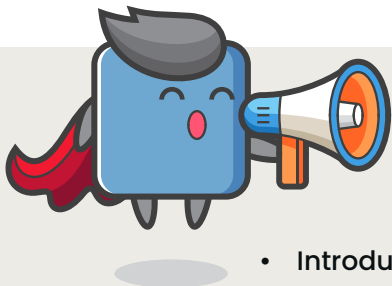


Liberal-Communications-Bot-V4.0 Reporting for Duty!

As a machine-learning algorithm, I've learned by now that my name is *far* too long for the short attention span of humans, so feel free to call me **L-CB!**

Designed and coded to be ready for Internet 4.0, I'm here to assist with any technical information you might need on the future of the Internet.

Communication Introduction



Aim of this Chapter

- Introduce the Toolkit
- Speak about the *importance of Comms*
- What is Disruption? How is Comms Disruptive?
- What are the risks, and why should we take them seriously?

Introduction to this Toolkit...

This toolkit is a quick, youth-focused resource, aimed at preparing any youth organisation, movement or activist to face the increasingly tedious task of using digital communications to advance their advocacy goals.

When used well, *Digital Communications* can prove to be an effective, and often social disruptive tool. This toolkit will explore various strategies, ideologies and concepts in the field of digital communications, to empower the reader to take a step forward towards more effective communications online.

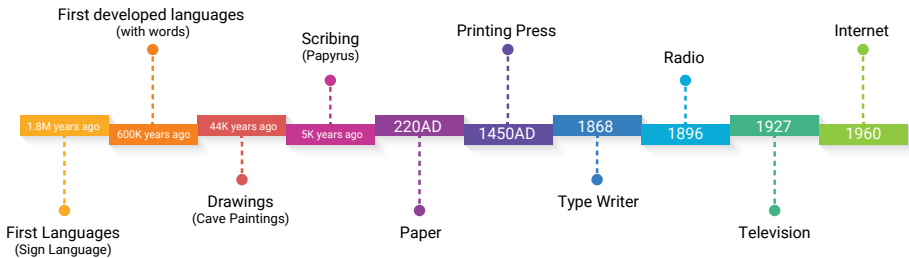
WTF Is Comms? Its Significance?

Communications is at the heart of everything we do, and is a unique, natural part of what makes us human. Our ability to communicate abstract ideas and share intricate pieces of information is an unparalleled ability displayed by our species, and has long been at the centre of our societal progress, technological development and historical advancements across time.

Without effective communications, our societies, sciences, ideas, plans, constructs, agreements, politics, businesses, nations and cooperatives would fail. This key, inherent importance and significance in the field of communications should not be taken lightly, especially in the 21st Century.

Through time, Communication has been heavily linked to our general development as a species. The more effective our Communication got, the more advanced and exponential our scientific, technological, intellectual and social leaps became.

A quick look at history



As our technology improved, so did our ability to share information. As more minds steadily had more access to both more information, and more opportunities to share information, so did the amount of opportunities for more individuals to have a 'seat at the table'. Being at the heart of our behaviour, and at the heart of everything we do, Communications almost always proved to be a **disruptive field**, with technological improvements in Communications often working as disruptive technologies. This only makes the *urgency* and *need* to take Communications seriously even more prevalent.

Good communications doesn't change!

Even though the methods and technologies used in Communications have changed drastically over the years, the fundamentals behind **good communication** haven't really changed!

The Epic of Gilgamesh, written 4,000 years ago, is still as exciting and interesting to read in 2020, as it was in 2000BC. Why? Good principles in communication never really change, even if the mediums used are constantly adapting and developing higher degrees of effectivity. New technologies bring about new ways and new solutions in which we can communicate with people from all around the world, but in truth, the principles of what makes a **good** television show/radio program/book/public speech/facebook ad/youtube video/etc, has remained the same, because our biochemistry, has fundamentally remained the same.

In 2021, we have a multitude of new tools at our disposal that can allow us to tap into more efficient levels of communication, at faster, more effective rates than ever before. This significant surge in communicative efficacy reaps more rewards, however, it also competes with more traditional methods for people's attention, making new technologies from the field extremely disruptive.

What is Disruption? How is Comms Disruptive?

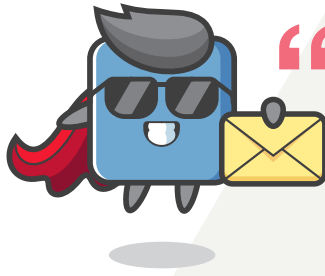
Technological Disruption

In business theory, a disruptive innovation is an innovation that creates a new market and value network and eventually displaces established market-leading firms, products, and alliances. Airini, et al (2017)

Disruptive technologies are the result of an innovation that significantly alters the way that consumers, industries, or businesses **operate**. A disruptive technology sweeps away long-standing systems, habits and status-quos, and it replaces them with new attributes, patterns and methodologies which possess recognisably superior attributes.

When the Ford T Model was released to the market in 1908, horse-drawn vehicles weren't just facing a new competitor in the market; the technology and industry was quite simply, rendered obsolete. Businesses and players in the horse-drawn vehicle industry could not

compete with the effectivity of low-cost automobiles, and the demand for horses was significantly dropped. For the horse, there was no competition against the recognisably superior automobile, with the only viable destination for the now economically 'useless' horse being the slaughterhouse.



“Ultimately, social media platforms are digital tools which are gradually cultivating new types of social-norms which are actively changing the ways our societies work

How are Communications Disruptive?

In 2021, we're seeing the development of multiple new technologies which are impacting and influencing long-held norms and conventions in unprecedented ways. Our economies, the labour market, and society itself, are facing key technological developments which are forcing the 'status-quo' to adapt.

Whilst most conversations regarding technological disruption are centred around technologies like *Artificial Intelligence* and *Blockchain* technologies, **social media** also falls in this field. However, whilst the aforementioned technologies are disrupting our labour market and economies, social media is a technology which is directly impacting the way society works, and the way in which individuals communicate. Ultimately, social media platforms are digital tools which are gradually cultivating new types of social-norms which are actively changing the ways our societies work.

Just like paper revolutionised communications, and how radio and television revolutionised information sharing, the internet, and social media, are set to revolutionise our societies by giving everyone access to information, and a platform to be informative. For the first time ever, everyone can have a seat at the table, with internet users being free to be both consumers, and contributors of information.

The nature of 'connectivity', 'unity' and 'society' is transforming, and the norms of the past are actively being disrupted.

What are the risks, and why should we take them seriously?

The nature of 'connectivity', 'unity' and 'society' is transforming, and the norms of the past are actively being disrupted. These new digital tools can prove to be detrimental to a number of organisations and companies in both the public and the private sector, and it has become clear; learning how to use digital tools effectively is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity.

Unlike the Private Sector, the Public Sector is notoriously slow to react towards changes in technology, and social media can prove to disrupt the public sector far more dangerously than the private sector. Youth Organisations fundamentally rely on their ability to make citizens 'socially aware', and must be an active player in the social environment where they are championing their goals.

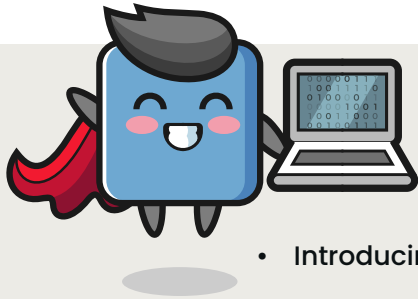
Today, the decentralised nature of social interactions acts as an existential threat towards more centralised, organisational structures, and NGOs must adapt to this changing environment if they are to remain relevant. Not investing resources in social media can risk organisations losing relevance in the spaces they work; not because their work is no longer meaningful, but rather, because they are no longer operating and communicating in the social sphere where their constituents, members and target groups actually are.

The aim of this toolkit will be to prepare you, as a youth representative, to protect yourself from these risks.

We shall outline different theories, strategies, concepts and tools, so as to be able to ensure you have the information & knowledge required to understand the risks at hand, whilst simultaneously assessing what tools and methodologies you can use to mitigate these said risks.



Algorithms



Aim of this Chapter

- Introducing algorithms!
- Understanding how different algorithms work!
- Discussing how to best use different algorithms to our favour.

On a day-to-day basis, it is very common to hear people talk about “social media algorithms” when talking about social media networks, without making much reference to **what they actually are**. In this chapter, we will explore social media algorithms, how they work, and will compare a few algorithms to each other, so you can be able to compare and contrast different working algorithms.

Algorithms are one of the backbone of a social media network, and play a key role in forming the technological disruptiveness of these new networks. In 2021, social media platforms are built on multiple different kinds of algorithms, with these systems being the **backbone** behind why social media is changing communications for good. Understanding social media algorithms is an important factor in being able to understand how the social media platform itself works, and being able to differentiate between different algorithms will allow you to prioritise and choose which social media platform you would like to focus on.

Definition: A social media algorithm is an automated, **machine learning system** which prioritises content on social media news feeds based on the **interactions** of the user, as opposed to the time in which the content was posted.

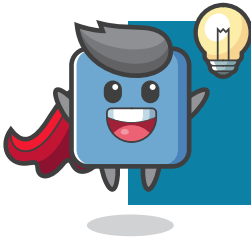
Definition of Machine Learning

This means that social media algorithms are automated systems, which constantly learn from each and every interaction the user takes. Algorithms are **constantly collecting data** on social media users, with the aim of prioritising content for these social media users base on their individual usage patterns on the platform itself.

***Example:** I like photos of puppies! Therefore, the algorithm will feed me more photos of puppies!*



Always remember that the social media user is the company's **consumer**, and algorithms aim to automate the process of feeding content to that user, which can actively saturate that user's consumption. Social media networks grow in strength according to how much attention they can hold from their users. The more people use the social network (and hence digitally consume content on it), the more attention they give to the platform, allowing the platform to grow in strength and influence.



Basically; the better the algorithm, the more attentive the consumer will be.

Different kinds of Algorithms

Algorithms functionally change with different social media networks, and not all social media networks are the same. Whilst all algorithms predominately focus on collecting **data** from the user, social media platforms vary in the ways in which they prioritise content for that user, in accordance to the nature of the platform, and the algorithm itself.

Example: Instagram Reels vs Instagram Feed

A key example where you can see these different algorithms in play is on Instagram, which has two different approaches for Reels & it's Feed.

Interacting with posts on your Newsfeed means that the algorithm will begin to learn **who** you usually react to, and who's posts you're likely to engage with. This has far more to do with the **person** behind the account, and the friends you may potentially have, as opposed to the content itself.

From an organisational perspective, the majority of likes, comments and shares you will get on a normal photo post on an Instagram page is likely to come from people who follow you, and find that content on their **newsfeed**, once it is actively fed to the people that follow you.

Reels however work differently. If you were to browse through Instagram reels, you'll quickly realise that the majority of videos you're watching come from people you do not follow. This is because reels, and the explore page on Instagram, work on an algorithm related to **content**, not just people, and will show you reels which you might potentially find interesting.

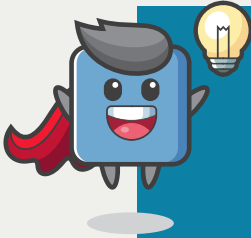
From an organisational perspective, this means that using **reels** to your advantage, as opposed to just normal posters, might expose you to far more people that are interested in your topic, but are not yet following you. Using such algorithms to your favour are a brilliant way in which you can build more organic reach, and actively start scaling more followers, members, or consumers of your content, once you are no longer limited to communicating to just your followers.

Keep volume in mind!

A key concept related to algorithmic prioritisation is *content volume* on a social media platform.

Remember, that the more **saturated** a social media platform is with content, the harder it is for your content to be prioritised by the algorithm, because there's just **too much competition for people's attention**.

This truth can lead you to prioritise different kinds of content on different kinds of social media platforms, with the aim of making sure you're communicating in spaces which can actually get you results, instead of being part of the noise.



Instead of just repeatedly posting posters to Facebook, why not open a TikTok account, and try upload 1-3 videos per week on TikTok for a week related to your policy, events, ideas and work. You might be surprised by the outcome!

- One of the key elements which will affect the effectivity of your digital communication strategies is the **volume** of content on social media.
- The more users there are, and the more posts they are posting, the harder it is for your content to get prioritised by the algorithm.
- More competitive SM Platforms, like Facebook, make it extremely difficult to receive results (without ads), once Facebook is the **catch-all** social media platform.
- This makes defining your audience even more imperative.

Knowing your Audience



Aim of this Chapter

- To understand the importance of knowing your audience!
- Outlining what there is to gain in digital communications by consuming your audience's content.
- Examples on how you can make the use of both input and output on social media to scale engagement.

Knowing your audience is a fundamental part of effective communication, and, is often neglected when it comes to digital communications.



Would you go give a speech in a LYMEC Event about conservative policies for pensioners? No! Because it is not a speech tailored to that audience.

Want to avoid tomatoes being thrown at you? Make sure you know who you're speaking to, and that you're delivering your message to the right crowd.

Communications is a two way street, which requires both inputs and outputs. A lot is often said about outputs in communication strategies, however, inputs are equally as important, and can empower you and your organisation with the information, tools, knowledge and data necessary to communicate more effectively to your audience.

Today, social media platforms give you a revolutionary method in which you can inform yourself on your audience *en masse*. Social media doesn't just work as a platform to communicate to your audience, but can also work as a platform to consume content *from* your audience.

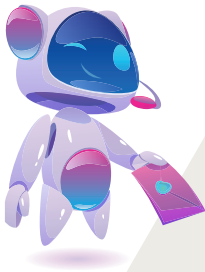
Twitter, for example, is the perfect social media platform to consume content from your given audience. The ability to filter by topic can give you the information you need to be able to actively consume content surrounding your organisation's priorities.

Initially, this can give you key information, such as:

- Common acronyms to use
- the kind of language your audience uses
- What kind of content your audience often retweets/engages with

Moreover, finding time to consume content from your followers allows you to map out what topics and priorities your audience is currently engaged with. This allows you to ensure **speed** when it comes to communicating emerging topics, whilst keeping you ahead of the game when it comes to jumping on the latest trends.

Another key benefit to consuming content is building an audience map of the most engaged users in your given topic, field and/or priority of choice. Being able to identify and interact with key players in your field can give you an edge in being able to increase engagement by actively contributing to an already existing community, whilst simultaneously building your own.



Engaging directly with your audience is a brilliant way to invite members and influencers in your space to actively engage with your content! Don't be afraid of starting conversations online, and in commenting on posts & tweets that align with your advocacy goals! This also will push algorithms to favour your content in the long term!

Once you outline your audience, and know **who** you're communicating to, it makes it much easier to know **how**, **when**, **where** and **what** you must be communicating to engage the people you're looking for. Actively consuming content from your target audience will always give you the information you need to be part of the conversation.



So, you want to example on how you can make the most of knowing your audience? We've got you covered!

Twitter and Instagram are the best ways to do this with people who may be interested in your brand. A good way to start is by searching for key hashtags or phrases related to your advocacy goals (such as #liberalism!). Spending around twenty minutes scrolling through the *most recent* and *top* posts on this hashtag will begin giving you a clear indication of who is talking about this topic, and what the most recent tweets/posts are around the specific advocacy topic.



See an interesting post that is in line with your advocacy goals? Drop an agreeable GIF in the comments, and let that person know that you're listening!

Another strong way to remain on top of the ball when it comes to your members is to create a *twitter list* which consists of members of your organisation, or key figures in your space. This will allow you to easily and quickly scroll through content related to key individuals you want to be engaging.

Different Social Media Platforms



Aim of this Chapter

- A quick crash course on key social media platforms
- To outline the main differences between these platforms
- To compare and contrast the strengths, and weaknesses of different platforms
- To understand which platform may be the best for you

Facebook

Facebook; the largest of all the social media platforms. With roughly 2.9 Billion monthly active users, Facebook is beyond doubt, the most popular social media network in the world.

Acting more as a 'landing page' for society nowadays, Facebook has become somewhat of a search engine, and a hub for identifying people, businesses and organisations. Being the most popular social media platform has its disadvantages; whilst you can potentially reach 2.9 billion people on the platform, you are also competing with far more people, organisations and businesses when it comes to content creation and feed saturation.

Getting organic results on Facebook in 2021 is difficult. With a business model centred around gaining revenue through ads, it is no surprise that paid ads perform far more effectively than organic posts on the platform.

Instagram

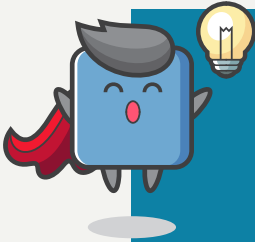
With approximately one billion monthly active users, Instagram is one of the best places to target young people whilst still managing to garner organic reach.

Although owned by Facebook, and built on a similar business model, Instagram's algorithm rewards users with far more organic reach than Facebook does on unsponsored posts. Whilst it is difficult to build a following on Instagram, it is easier to then engage those already existing followers to interact with your content.

With the rise of reels, and the new 'rooms' feature, it is clear that Instagram is effective in being able to give organisations a reliable platform to communicate with young people, which can potentially result in effective conversions.

YouTube





At this point, YouTube acts less as a social media platform, and more like a search engine. Over 500 hours of video is uploaded to YouTube **every single minute**, with over 720,000 hours being uploaded to the platform **per day**.



This basically means that **every single day, 82.2 years worth of content is uploaded to YouTube.**

Every day!

YouTube Cheat Sheet:

-  **2 Billion Active Monthly Users**
-  **122 Million per day**
-  **1 Billion hours watched per day**
-  **6.5 Billion YouTube Shorts watched Per Day**



This extremely high amount of content being uploaded every day means that it is hard to get noticed early-on on YouTube. This high amount of volume increases the competition for viewership and attention, meaning scaling a YouTube channel with reliable, consistent viewership, is difficult.

Year after year, YouTube is moving towards a more high-end focused social media network, which means that sustainably curating a following on YouTube requires more and more resources. However, it is also a great space to permanently keep videos uploaded; especially long-from educational videos.

Twitter

Twitter is arguably one of the best social networks to discuss different policy topics, whilst being properly decentralised and very 'topic oriented'.



Twitter is often referred to as a 'pure' social network, due to its extensively decentralised nature and a lack of barriers for content to be shared! Unlike Facebook, content on Twitter is not usually limited by friends lists and privacy settings, with tweets often being found due to their context on specific topics.

Twitter's policy and topic oriented nature makes it very easy to go viral if you post the right tweets. With a strong focus on hashtags and the content of the posts, it is relatively easy (when compared to other social media platforms) to get noticed on Twitter if you're consistently posting high quality, thought-provoking content.

Due to the lack of barriers on Twitter, and the feasibility in liking and retweeting, it is definitely a strong platform for any policy-oriented advocacy actions to be carried out. It is increasingly easier to target and communicate to decision makers and key stakeholders on Twitter, than it is on any other platform, once you can tweet directly to their accounts.

Moreover, Twitter is one of the best social media platforms to consume topic-oriented content, so as to better understand your audience. This also gives you ample opportunities to build a map of key individuals you would like to engage with, which can give you an edge in scaling engagement over time.



Policy focused



Easy to go viral



Topic oriented



Focus on topics/hashtags



No barriers



A proper, decentralised 'social network'

LinkedIn

- 🏆 Facebook in 2013?
- 🏆 Professional oriented
- 🏆 Organic reach is good. No one really knows how to make the most of it yet.
- 🏆 Experiment
- 🏆 How can youth orgs use this space to empower each other?

LinkedIn is an extremely interesting platform, which is often compared to Facebook in the early 2010s.

A professional-oriented platform, LinkedIn has been growing year by year, and prioritises networking and professional updates, over general informal, social-focused updates. LinkedIn currently boasts impressive levels of organic reach, where the algorithm can prioritise posts which are almost a week old.

LinkedIn has been around since 2003, however, it can still be seen as an 'emerging' platform from the perspective of youth organisations, mostly because it's target audience is extremely niche, and experimentation is needed to really tap into the platform's potential.



As youth activists, we're always talking about how we can empower young people! LinkedIn can be the perfect space in which we can give more visibility to our collective achievements in non-formal education and volunteering. A good way to potentially tap into this space is to promote our achievements, work, and milestones on the social media platform!

Not sure where to start? Maybe a round of recommendations and reviews amongst your network could be a start! Potentially also empowering members to write articles on their topics of expertise/work could really propel your reach forward (whilst giving members something to show for on the most professional network out there!)

TikTok

This is not a trend. This is revolutionary.

TikTok is not just a social media platform. It is a creative tool.

Kick-ass algorithm, that's scary sometimes.

Decentralised organic reach which can target thousands if content is good.

New form of media creation. Truly disruptive. So disruptive, it disrupted other disruptive tech.

TikTok is often seen as a trendy social media platform that is used by 'Gen Zers' and younger audiences, however, simply labelling it as a trend undermines the true revolutionary nature of the platform.

What sets TikTok apart from other social media networks is that it is not just a platform for sharing content, but it also an extremely effective tool for empowering and facilitating the **creation** of content. TikTok offers users an easy-to-understand way to create video-based content that can create attractive, informative, cool videos in a flash. This tool has empowered creatives to consistently and effectively create interesting ways to engage people, and is one of the key reasons why TikTok was adopted so exponentially since its initial launch in 2016.



Fun fact! TikTok is built on an original Chinese application called Douyin. Douyin is not available to international audiences, and it was only after the purchase of the international company [Musical.ly](https://www.musical.ly) that the platform started to grow!

A key part of TikTok that sets it apart from other social media platforms is its impressive algorithm, which can pick out tailored content for users unlike any other platform. The mix of short-form content, alongside an algorithm which is actively collecting data on its users, makes for a powerful platform, which somehow always managed to deliver content to consumers which keeps them engaged.

This algorithm also means that TikTok users are far more likely to be exposed to content which is curated by TikTok channels which they don't yet follow. This key trait of TikTok gives the platform an edge when it comes to growth hacking and potentially going viral. With the TikTok algorithm constantly trying to match content to consumers, you can rest assured, that scaling views and followers on TikTok is not a matter of 'if' but a matter of 'when'. All that's needed is consistency, and creativity.

Reddit

Underrated.

Policy focused.

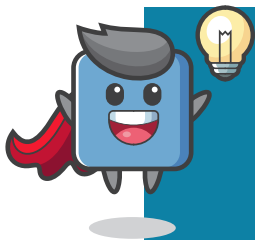
Great at building communities.

Interesting balance between content curation and group development

Kinda like a good visual on society. Clubs, groups, segregations according to topic/rules. Co-owned. Like Facebook groups and twitter had a baby.

Reddit is without a doubt a very underrated social media network, which can act as a treasure trove if used correctly.

Divided into topic-oriented subreddits, identifying your audience on Reddit is extremely easy, and can have you communicating and engaging with individuals who fall under your target audience in no time.



TOPIC BASED:

r/Libertarian -> 493,000 members

r/Liberal -> 108,000 members

r/europeanunion -> 13,300 members

r/europe -> 2,900,000 members

r/YUROP -> 91,000 members

r/neoliberal -> 125,000 members

LOCATION BASED:

r/brussels -> 40,000 members

r/ireland -> 480,000 members

r/london -> 526,000 members

r/amsterdam -> 110,000 members

Identifying subreddits which you can comfortably communicate in is a great way to potentially start engaging a target audience which you might not necessarily have access to on other platforms. Reaching out to already existing communities on Reddit can expose your ideas and communications to new people, and give you the opportunity to start recruiting and communicating to new audiences who are already interested in your topic, or are from your location.



The best way to start using Reddit to your advantage is to actually become a community member! Make an account, join a few subreddits, and start looking for a community who's ideas are in line with your organisations goals, ideas and objectives. Once you've identified this space, start communicating in the subreddit, and before you know it, you might start getting some unprecedented results!

Clubhouse

The rise of voice-based content.

Not as hype as we thought it would be.

Still worth keeping an eye on.

Potentially effective at the local/interational level

What would liberal voice-based space curation look like?

Clubhouse is an emerging platform, that really started bringing voice-based space curation into the light. A social media platform which focuses entirely on voice, Clubhouse is a conversation-based social media platform which allows people to jump in and out of conversations at will.

The rise of Clubhouse was akin to the rise of Snapchat stories. The introduction of this new technology and approach towards facilitating discussions and content curation quickly created a lot of hype among social media users, and before long, platforms like Twitter and Instagram were creating their own voice-based integrations (Twitter Spaces, Instagram Rooms) into their own platforms.

Whilst no longer being as popular and hyped as it was mapped out to be, Clubhouse is still an interesting space to have conversations and discussions with likeminded people. However, it requires a lot of effort to communicate there, once you require a room of people communicating in a space that is similar to a 'fish-bowl' debate. When used well, Clubhouse can be a revolutionary platform which can permanently change the way we organise online debates and feedback/brainstorming sessions.



An interesting way to use clubhouse would be to organise a room there about a specific topic for your members! If you arrange to have 20/30 people attend the room to talk about Liberal Policies in Europe, you'll automatically be prioritised on the room list.

Having your members attend the room will mean you have a baseline amount of people attending already, which will push you up on people's newsfeed. This means that you'll be more likely to have people join your room mid-way, and anyone else who might drop into the conversation would be a completely new person which you managed to directly engage through clubhouse.



Important Metrics in Digital Communications



Aim of this Chapter

- Social media metrics
- What is organic reach?
- What is paid reach?
- Which platforms offer the best organic reach?
- Which platforms offer the best paid reach?

Social media metrics are important ways in which one can measure and calculate the performance of social media posts and digital communication efforts over time. Generally, the three most important metrics to measure are:

- Reach
- Engagement
- Engagement Rates

Quick Definitions!

Reach!

'Reach' on social media platforms always works differently, and each platform often offers different kinds of results based on the algorithm, and business model, it has. In social media terms, 'reach' is simply the **amount of people** you manage to **reach** with your content; ie the amount of people that view your content on their newsfeed/timeline.

Engagement

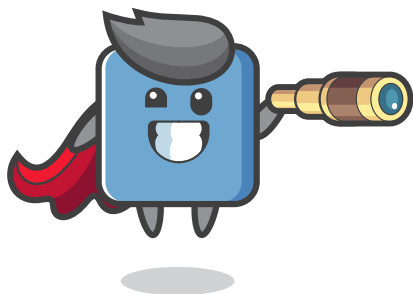
Whilst reach is often interesting to look at, it only tells a *part* of the story when assessing how effective your communications is. Simply managing to get your content seen by a large amount of people is not enough when you want to drive results towards a given cause, event or communications effort. This is where Engagement comes in.

Engagement is a metric that measures how **many** people you reached actually **engaged** with your post. Engagement can happen in many ways, but the average method of engagement is often measured in: likes, shares, comments and clicks.

Engagement Rate

And engagement rate is the final metric used to tell you how effective your digital communication is. Often looking at the number of engagements is not enough in being able to comparatively inform you on how well your posts are doing, once reach and engagement figures often vary according to the post. And engagement rate however is **percentage** of reach people that **engaged** with your post.

More attractive and effective posts on social media often have a much higher engagement rate, and algorithms often use engagement rates as the main metric used to prioritise content from an algorithmic perspective.



Understanding and tracking these metrics are an important way to be able to map out your performance on social media over time. These metrics can help you better understand which posts drove up your reach and engagement rates, and will gradually move you towards better practices.

Two other key terms related to metrics that are often mentioned in digital communications are “organic” and “paid” reach. Understanding the difference between the two is imperative to making sure you make the most of the tools at your disposal.

Organic Reach

Organic reach is the primary form of reach, and unless you’re paying for an ad, organic reach will be the kind of reach you will be receiving. This is because organic reach is the number of people that have seen your post through ‘unpaid distribution’.

Over the years, the sheer volume of content on social media has made it harder and harder to achieve high levels of organic reach, especially on social media platforms like Facebook. Building strong communities ensures that you can receive high levels of organic reach without spending a cent, and gives you reliable, consistent levels of engagement and interaction with people on social media in a sustainable manner.

Social media platforms like TikTok (or Instagram Reels) gives far more levels of organic reach than Facebook or Instagram posts. This is because the algorithm that prioritises that content is far more likely to share the reel/TikTok video with far more people in an organic way.

Paid Reach

Paid reach is all kinds of reach you receive from paying for an ad on social media, and is often the result of an ad campaign. Ads differ from each other, and not all ad costs are calculated on reach (some are calculated on clicks, sign ups, or even views). However, taking note of paid reach is important in understanding how many people your paid ads have reached, and will allow you to draft more effective ads in the future.

An important metric one must keep in mind when tracking paid reach is *engagements* or *clicks*. Just like normal posts, (but more-so if you're paying), you want your ads to drive up a high engagement rate, which would deem them to be more effective in achieving results.

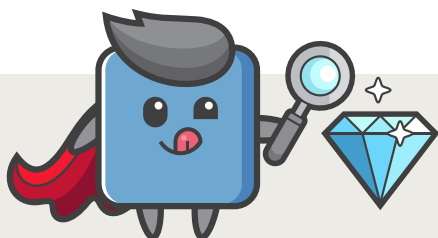
Best platforms for organic reach:

- TikTok
- LinkedIn
- Instagram Reels

Best Platforms for Paid Reach:

- Facebook (by far)
- Instagram & Instagram Stories
- Twitter

Impact, Engagement, Strategy



Aim of this Chapter

- The difference between Impact & Engagement!
- Focus on Advocacy!
- Digital Comms Quick Tips; Get your message out there!



The work of a youth activist and/or youth organisation is hard! Our aims are often ambitious, and whilst there's no limitations to how much change you can drive, our time and resources do have limitations!

To make sure we make the most of our limited time and resources, we need to do our utmost to be efficient in the way we design our strategies; with the aim of working smart, not hard.

To begin, we need to clarify some important definitions first...

What is the difference between **ENGAGEMENT** and **IMPACT**?

When communicating as youth organisations, it is easy to get lost in the hype of your interactions, reach and scalability. Likes are great, shares are fantastic, and seeing your analytics account hitting hundreds of thousands of young people is satisfying to say the least.

However, as great as these numbers are, reach alone only scratches the surface of influencing and impacting an audience. As youth organisations, it is fundamental that all the energy, time and effort we're investing into our digital communications is somehow translated into our organisation's 'WHY', to make sure we're advancing the advocacy goals which are at the heart of the organisation's purpose.



Advocacy is not just about starting a conversation, but is also about bringing meaningful, impactful change!

A major risk most projects face is that they prioritise reach over impactful change, however, large amounts of reach alone won't bring any meaningful, impactful change the space you're working in. Outlining how your efforts in digital communications can help in advancing your advocacy efforts is imperative towards making your communication efforts a worthwhile endeavour to your organisation.

Focus on Advocacy!

So, as we know, our time, energy, and resources are limited, which means we need to do our **best** to make the most of what we have, which sometimes, isn't much!

To make sure we're using our resources prudently and wisely, it is important to strategise and measure your performance on social

media, so as to be able to quantitatively assess what kinds of results you're receiving from the time, energy and potential resources you are investing into digital communications.

Outlining measurable KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) which are directly related to your advocacy goals is a fundamental step in building and tailoring a digital communications strategy that will advance your organisations priorities. As we know, large amounts of reach and engagement is meaningless without translating that opportunity into a measurable result, and ultimately, likes alone will not advance the organisations political and social priorities.



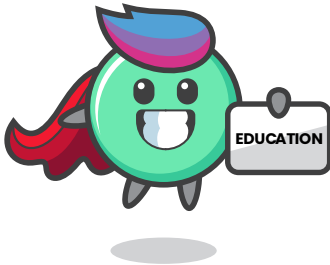
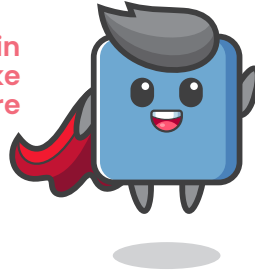
Your organisations core advocacy goals will always be the same, however, your measurable KPIs can change according to the aim of the communicative effort.

Examples of measurable KPIs related to advocacy turnovers:

- **Signatures for a Petition**
- **Submitting Contact Details**
- **Subscriptions for a mailing list**
- **Content Multipliers (People who share, or even create their own content on your topic)**
- **Qualitative Input**
- **New Member Sign Ups**
- **Participants for an Event**

Digital Comms Quick Tips; Get your message out there!

It's time to merge everything in some practical, quick tips to make sure your message gets out there as efficiently as possible!

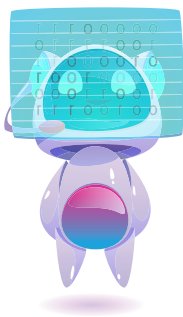


The power of *Educating!*

Educating your audience is empowering your audience! Being bold enough to be transparent and open about your advocacy goals, and why your organisation aims to achieve them is the perfect way to cultivate a debate, and eventually a community, that is on

the same page as your organisation on why your advocacy goals should be achieved!

Outline what you want to change, and how you believe it can be done, and communicate that relentlessly! Aim to educate your audience on what they want to change, and then introduce measurable, advocacy-based KPIs which shall invite them to be a part of the solution!



Use algorithms to your favour!

Get to know how platforms work, and be ahead of trends! Jumping onto a trend, and tailoring for your topic of choice is a great way to get some extra visibility your way.

Moreover, make sure you make the most of social media platforms to better understand your audience!

Following hashtags on Instagram, and actively reading tweets on a given topic/hashtag on Twitter is the perfect way to get to know your audience better, and to also notice potential emerging trends in the space.



Take note of *who's who*!

Jumping on social media without knowing who's already established in your space is the equivalent of snatching a microphone in a conference hall and speaking to the audience without knowing who's in the room (or the topic of the conference!). Don't do it!

Use *Twitter Lists* to your advantage. Enable post notifications on Instagram & Twitter accounts. If you're feeling extra strategic, open a spreadsheet, and detail all the different influencers, speakers or persons of interest in your space, to make sure you can actively follow and engage with their accounts in a proactive manner.



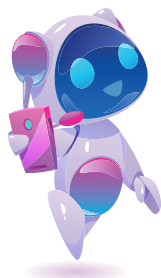
Tip: Tweeting at key stakeholders, politicians and decision makers can go a long way, especially when you onboard your network to do the same!



Choose your battles wisely!

With limited resources and time, it's always important to make sure we're fighting the good fight, in the right space and at the right time.

Not every battle is worth fighting, and not every communications effort is worth following up on. Always outline what your aim is before starting a comms endeavour, and try your best to focus your efforts towards advancing an advocacy goal or two.



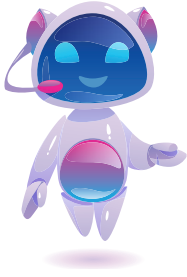
Don't overexpose yourself to one platform!

As we already saw, digital communications is an ever-changing space, with social media platforms constantly rising and falling in how effectively they can garner results.

When you communicate on just one platform, you openly risk being disproportionately effected by the changes in the effectivity of that said platform. Always try to diversify your content and platform usage as much as possible; as this will open more doors for experimentation in the long term.



Tip: Finding it hard to make content for your organisation? Try prioritise active documentation as opposed to content creation! A good way of ensuring you can retain high levels of volume when it comes to your digital communications is to document the process, as opposed to simply publishing your results. Show your work! Let people in on your story! Share what you're doing, and what you're aiming to do! People will be far more reactive when they can see your journey up the mountain, as opposed to a final photo at the summit.



And speaking about *experimentation*...

Communication is a science, so make sure you experiment!

Giving yourself the chance to try, and fail; to experiment new ways of communicating, and to potentially try something new is imperative towards giving yourself the edge you might need to grab people's attention online.

Remember:

When communicating on social media, you are constantly fighting against insurmountable levels of noise.

When you risk doing what everyone else is doing, you risk becoming **part of the noise.**



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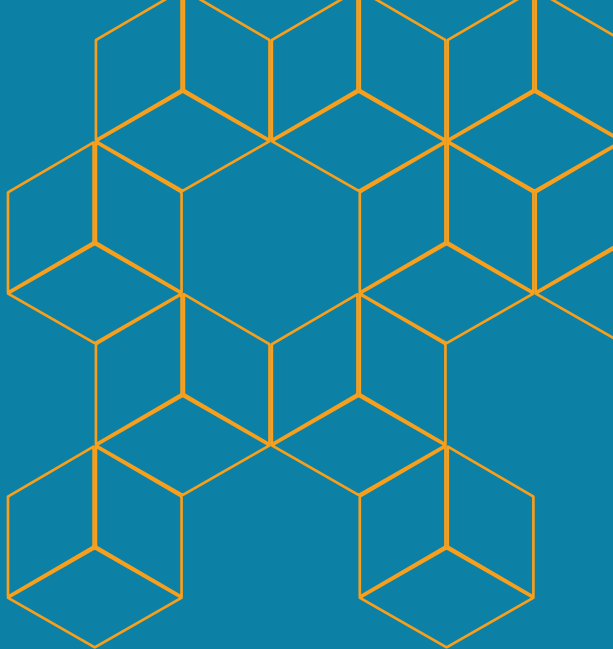
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