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Role of Social Media in Good Governance & Human Rights Education

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Abstract: This study examines the role of social media in promoting Human Rights Education. Human rights are generally moral rights claimed by each person and held against each person, especially against those who run social institutions. With the advent of the United Nations (UN) and the subsequent adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, the concept of human rights has curved out to be one of the most contemporary issues across the globe. Social media is defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.” “Web 2.0” refers to Internet platforms that allow for interactive contribution by users. “User generated content” is the name for all of the ways in which people may use social media. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the different aspects of social media for promoting Human Rights.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms are neutral tools that can be used to promote both good and bad causes. Of course, the conventional pro-speech argument suggests that in the free market of ideas, “bad” speech can be drowned out by “good” speech. Such a statement may appear trite and its premise cannot be proven, but the Opposite cannot be proven, either. At the very least, social media increases contribution; but greater participation does not necessarily lead to democracy and pluralism. It depends on “the values people bring to the table”. The purpose of this booklet is to provide an overview of best practices with regards to use of social media for human rights-related work.

II. TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

There are different types of social media:

Collaborative projects, virtual worlds, blogs, content communities, and social networking.

Collaborative projects involve people working together to create content.

Wikipedia is the most famous example of these. Wikipedia is an Influential source of global information, partly because a Wikipedia entry will often be among the first retrieved by an Internet search. **Online collaboration** platforms can also permit people in different locations to share and edit documents together; these can be particularly useful for persons with similar political goals to work together on strategy documents. For example, **Google Docs** were used to convey objection tactics and demands during the Egyptian uprising in early 2011. Blogs, the most rudimentary form of social media, involve the creation, by a person or group, of web-based content on any theme of the Author’s choice. Individuals may interact with a blog by commenting on its content. Originally, blogs were mainly text-based; now, many incorporate pictures and videos. Video blogs are also becoming more common. Blogs are key tools for protester activity in States that control mainstream media.

Content communities are sites where users can share content with other members of their online community. Well-known examples of these communities include Flickr, for photos, and YouTube, for video. Finally, people contribute to information on social networking sites, of which Facebook and Twitter are among the most popular. These sites are very multipurpose, enabling the sharing of text, pictures, videos, audio files, and applications. Facebook enables users to create a profile page and share information with an boundless number of virtual “friends.” These “friends” are usually known to the user in real life, but this connection is not essential. One common characteristic among social media sites is that they tend to be free and are therefore widely accessible across socioeconomic classes. Anyone can create a Facebook or Twitter account, upload a YouTube video, or write a Word Press blog without cost. Of course, right to use to social media depends upon access to the Internet, which is ubiquitous in the West but less available in the developing world. Internet access is growing rapidly, however; as of February 2011, one-third of the world’s population has Internet access. A crucial development is the advent of mobile social media. Mobile phones with Internet capabilities are becoming common, and mobile phone usage in the developing world is far more extensive than usage of personal computers. Mobile phone subscriptions are even growing exponentially in notoriously closed societies like North Korea. Smartphone’s and other phones with Internet capabilities are also becoming more common, in particular as earlier generations of phones are replaced.

III. THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The potential of using social media for human rights work is extensive. The Use of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other social media tools to spread human rights information has grown significantly, and continues to trend upward. Using social media tools has become an effective way to expand reach, foster meeting and increase access to credible human Rights based messages.

Identifying the target audience

When establishing a social media strategy it is important to identify a target audience for specific social media tools. While a human rights association might have a clear profile of the constituents it is trying to reach with social media (i.e. other civil society organizations (“CSOs”) and NGOs, human rights activists, journalists, educators and academics, students and the general public, for instance), identifying the trends and characteristics of an organization’s target audience is essential to the development of a strategy that will maximize the effectiveness of social media campaigning.

Identifying goals and objectives

Create a goals statement. This can be stated in one or two clear sentences. It is also important to have clear objectives for media making, which will be even more specific than the goals. Objectives need to be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Reliable and Time-bound.

Content and consistency

It is crucial when communicating with target audiences that an organization does so in a clear and concise manner. Consistent quality communication will demonstrate that the organization is active and working in its focus area.

Encouraging participation

Interaction and participation from outsiders can promote information sharing, education and action. Social media allows for two-way conversations that can promote involvement and quality contribution. Target audience should be given multiple avenues for sharing.

Visualization

The best way to appeal to any audience is to publish images and related videos. This type of content encourages the most engagement.

Campaigning and advocacy

Social media sites like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube enable campaigners to reach global audiences, generating interest and discussion of important issues.

Monitoring and measuring impact

As with any communication activity, it is important to evaluate and monitor social media efforts. Ongoing evaluation and monitoring is a critical component of any communications strategy and helps to define measures of success based on identified goals and objectives. Once an organization has determined its communication objectives and specific social media tactics, it can determine how best to evaluate the process, outcomes, and impact of social media efforts. There are a variety of free tools available, as well as paid services that offer more comprehensive monitoring capabilities. Examples include Hootsuite, Tweet deck and Facebook insights.

Measuring social media platform progress	
Twitter	Twitter does not, as of yet, have a public analytics site. There are however, other sites that produce statistics for follower growth, the number of tweets sent and mentions by other users. One site is TweetStats.com, which creates graphs and charts based on Twitter action for RRC Twitter accounts.
Facebook	Facebook Insights provides detailed systematic information for page administrators including audience growth, meeting and demographic statistics. These statistics indicate the types of post generating the most interest among visitors. Future posts can be adjusted to mirror tweets that received high levels of engagement.
LinkedIn	There are no specific analytical features for LinkedIn groups. The best way to observe user engagement is to monitor comments and responses to page and group postings.
YouTube	Similar to Facebook, YouTube has a powerful analytics feature called Insight that displays a huge number of statistics related to individual videos and the channel. Statistics can be broken down on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, and allow the organization to see when and where viewers are watching the videos from.
Blogs	Monitoring the number of comments on each blog entry is useful to the evaluation process. It is possible to gauge reader engagement levels and overall interest in the topic.
Flickr	Flickr provides statistics on the number of times a photo has been viewed and the number of remarks per image. Identifying performance indicators on Flickr will depend on how Flickr is used and how goals are determined. Indications of success on Flickr include; view counts for content, number of Flickr members that have prepared your organization a contact, number of photos that have been marked as a favorite, number and type of referrers, number and type of comments, tags and notes added to content, number and type of group interaction.
SlideShare	There are minimal options available to monitor and assess your organizations influence and success on SlideShare without expenses. It is necessary to internally follow views, downloads and favorites statistics. SlideShare can also be tracked through a social media dashboard.
Google+	This site is a free traffic monitoring tool build specifically to track Google+. The site provides a reduced URL for your Google+ profile page. It is possible to share this URL on blogs, websites and online profiles; it is then graphically displayed informative insights into the traffic patterns.

IV. CONCLUSION

The widespread diffusion of digital tools throughout the world has converted the communication system into an interactive horizontal network, which enables citizens and organizations to exchange information and opinions. In the human rights community in particular, the internet and mobile phones serve as cheap, accessible tools to communicate, disseminate information about human rights in general, human rights abuses, or advocacy and direct action techniques, to foster public debate, and to mobilize digital activism. It's potential for NGOs, considerably facilitating their efforts to promote and protect human rights, needs to be exploited. As social media is increasingly used by non-governmental organizations ("NGOs"), there is now a wealth of information regarding best practices for creating social media strategies and communicating across social media Platforms to achieving human rights change.

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