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SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISM FOR ACTIVISTS: A GUIDEBOOK

AUDRE SMIKLE
AUDRESMIKLE.COM

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goal of guidebook:

The goal of this guidebook is to provide resources and information on how activists can utilize social media as an important tool. This guidebook is particularly geared towards Black activists and organizations that are dedicated to protecting and defending all Black lives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Through my experience in building volunteer programs, creating educational projects and initiatives, training volunteers, and securing grants, I have become a leader dedicated to improving the lives of people in need and solving day-to-day organizational issues. My passion for making the world more equitable through education, content creation, and activism permeates every aspect of my life. As a collaborator, I encourage empathetic dialogue while asking tough questions. Using multimedia platforms, I help institutions create a strong brand ensuring their connection and visibility in the community.

WHAT IS BLACK ACTIVISM?

- Black people have resisted racial oppression since before the founding of the US, however many people only think about the most documented part of Black oppression: the Civil Rights movement.
- Black activists have used the media (news, tv, photography, etc) illustrating the racial oppression and violence. Examples are :
 - In 1955 Jet Magazine publishes photos of the open casket funeral of Emmett Till galvanizing the nation
 - The Birmingham Campaign
 - The Selma to Montgomery March
 - March of Washington
 - Sanitation workers and "I am a man" campaign.

MEDIA SHAPES THE CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVE(S).



BLACK LIVES MATTER

- the Black Lives Matter movement started in 2013 after the murder of Trayvon Martin and evolved after the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson in 2014
- The Black Lives Matter movement is a decentralized social movement that highlights racism, racial inequality, and police brutality.
- The movement was started by queer Black women who rooted their work in Black Feminism
- Black women are also victims of police violence but have often been left out of the narrative.
- Black Feminism as an important lens to view BLM. Four tenants of Black Feminism:
 - intersectionality,
 - scholar-activism
 - solidarity building
 - transnational



FREE WRITE

H o w h a s t h e m e d i a s h a p e d
y o u r u n d e r s t a n d i n g t h e
B L A C K L I V E S M A T T E R
m o v e m e n t ?

S o c i a l m e d i a a r e :

“web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content” (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

C O M M O N S O C I A L M E D I A S I T E S

- F A C E B O O K
- I N S T A G R A M
- T W I T T E R
- T I K T O K
- L I N K E D I N
- Y O U T U B E
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INSTAGRAM VS. TWITTER



BLM Twitter	BLM Instagram
text based	visual based
Sharing ideas, opinions, hashtags	sharing polished graphic images to game the algorithm and increase engagement
three times more likely to be younger than 50.	40% of adults use social media, 71% of Us adults between the ages of 18-29 use Instagram
"first wave" BLM movement 2013-2019	"second wave" BLM movement 2020-present



WHY ACTIVISTS USE SOCIAL MEDIA

- social media enhances participation opportunities and broadens mobilization
- Activists can boost protests and create fundraising campaigns
- Activists connect and create large and sustainable interpersonal networks or coalitions including with other social movements
- Activists use social media to mobilize and obtain internal and external resources
- social media allows activists to control the narrative and relate it to their everyday lives.



According to the Pew Research Center, the majority of Americans do believe these sites are very or somewhat important for accomplishing a range of political goals, such as getting politicians to pay attention to issues

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Do you think social media is
necessary for organizing?

SOCIAL MEDIA AND BLM

- Importance of centering and amplifying Black voices
- Allows activists to share vital information about protests
- Allows activists to organize donations and create mutual aid funds
- Allows activists and everyday civilians to document police violence

Social media allows activists to discuss, plan, act together to mobilize people from different geopolitical locations

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**



The background is a collage of various protest-related images. At the top, a blue circular sign with the word 'FREEDOM' repeated in different colors is being held by a hand. Below it, a pink sign features a portrait of Breonna Taylor and the text 'Breonna Taylor'. To the right, a portrait of George Floyd is visible. At the bottom, a sign partially shows the text 'FLOYD IS THE C' and 'AND WE DEMAND JUSTI'. Other signs include 'WORTHY' and 'er Name'.

social media activism requires activism

including:
a deep
understanding
the vision
and
the history

posting pretty graphics or a black square is not activism and distracts from activists on the ground

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS AND TRICKS

- utilize the features of the platform such as stories or tagging people to reach more people
- Use images or graphics depicting people. Some activists even have an image "for the algorithm" followed by information about mutual aid or protests
- positive framing has been said to be more effective than making demands or using negative frameworks
- Use iconography and symbols
- Create eye catching images or graphics
- Be concise and clear
- Be transparent and honest - especially for organizations fundraising
- Engage in dialogue with followers, other organizations, and important community members
- Organize in person events and activities rooted in your work and share those on social media

REMEMBER: SOCIAL MEDIA IS A TOOL TO BE USED TO MOBILIZE AND ENGAGE AND ACTIVISM MUST BE AT THE CENTER OF YOUR WORK.

FREE WRITE

How do you plan on using social media for activism?