



# Youth Digital Activism



47th Symposium on International Relations - Social Media: Global  
Impact on Political Engagement, Youth & Privacy  
New Haven, CT, 8 April 2016

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# Participatory Politics

“interactive, peer-based acts through which individuals and groups seek to exert both voice and influence on issues of public concern”

*Cohen & Kahne 2013*

participatory politics



New Media and Youth Political Action

Cathy J. Cohen  
University of Chicago

Joseph Kahne  
Mills College

Benjamin Bowyer, Mills College

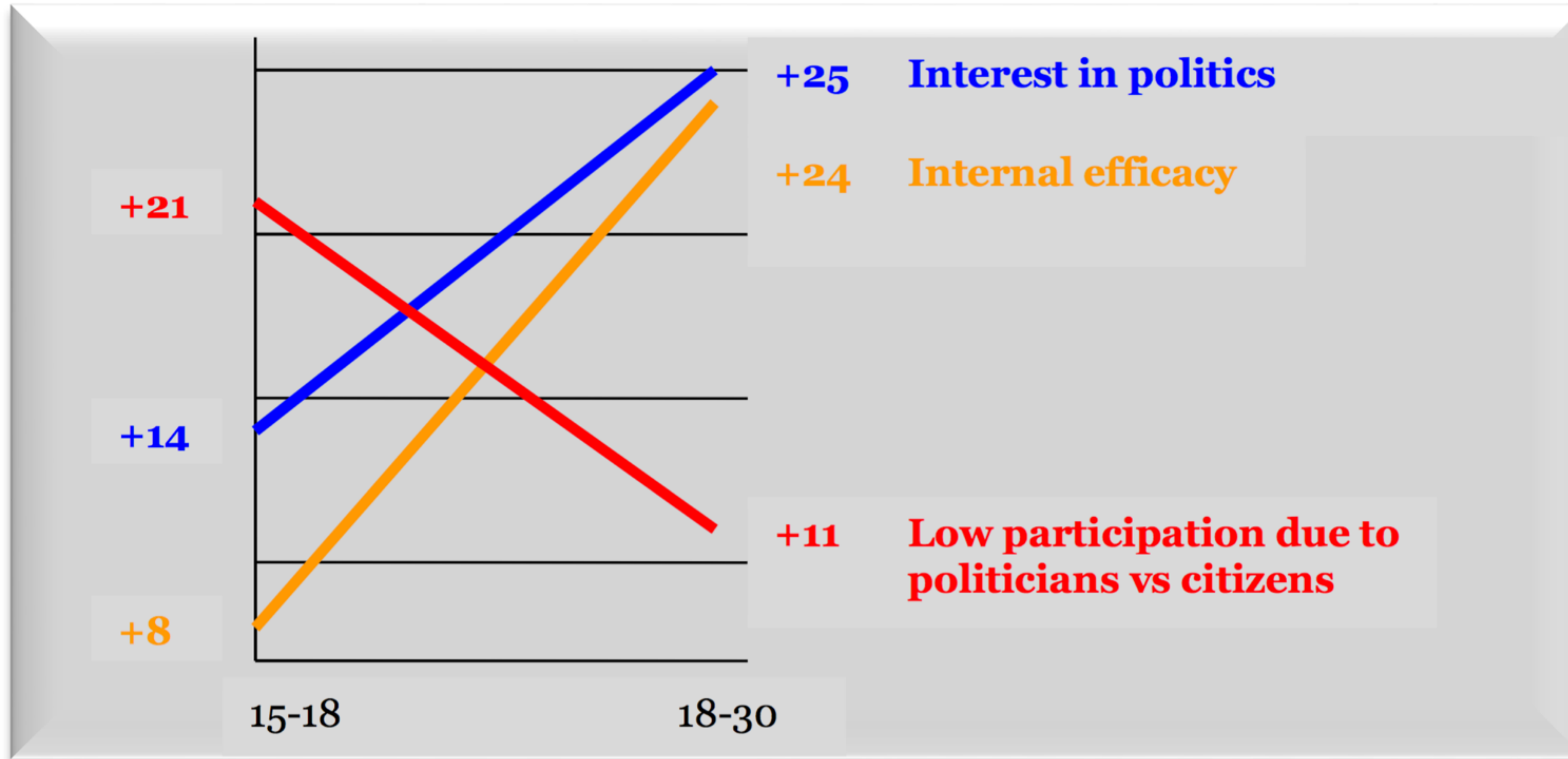
Ellen Middaugh, Mills College

Jon Rogowski, University of Chicago

June, 2012



**Figure 3.2:** Differences in levels of interest in politics, efficacy, and perceived responsibilities of political cynicism between pre-voting and post-voting young citizens<sup>6</sup>



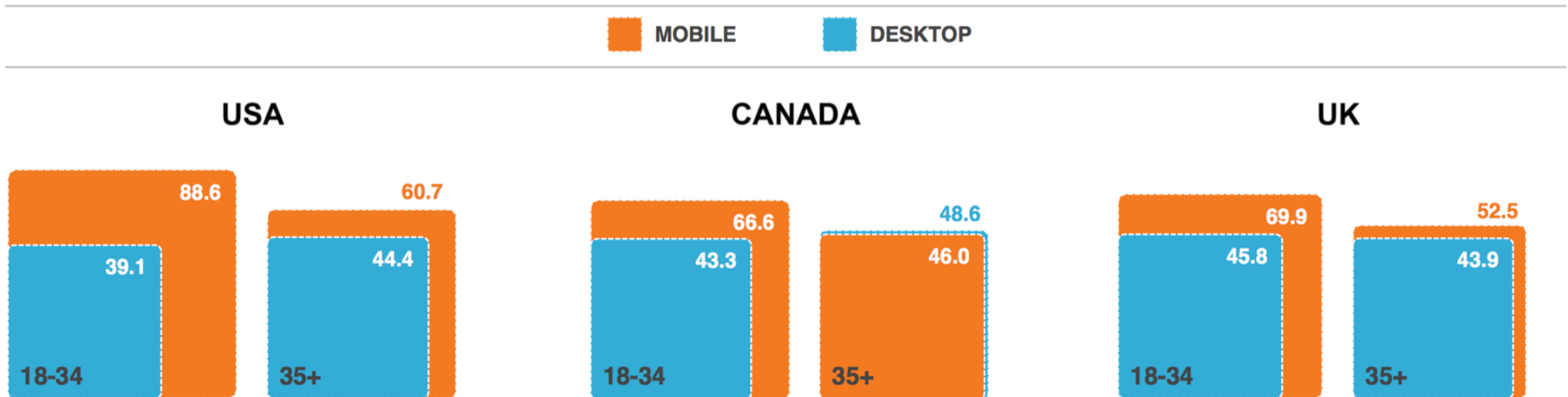
**Source:** EACEA/EC 'Youth Participation in Democratic Life' Survey in 7 countries, 2011-2012





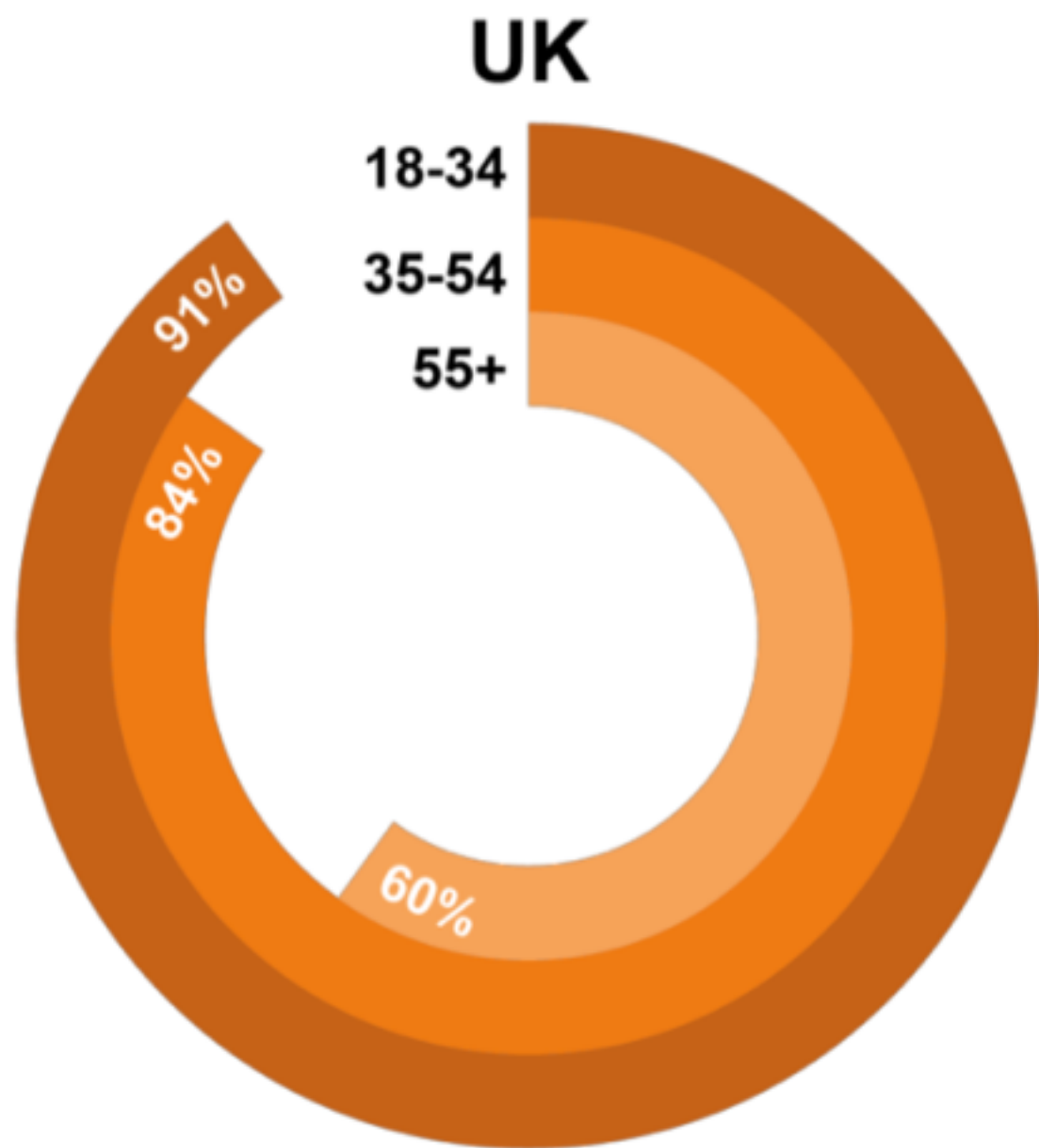
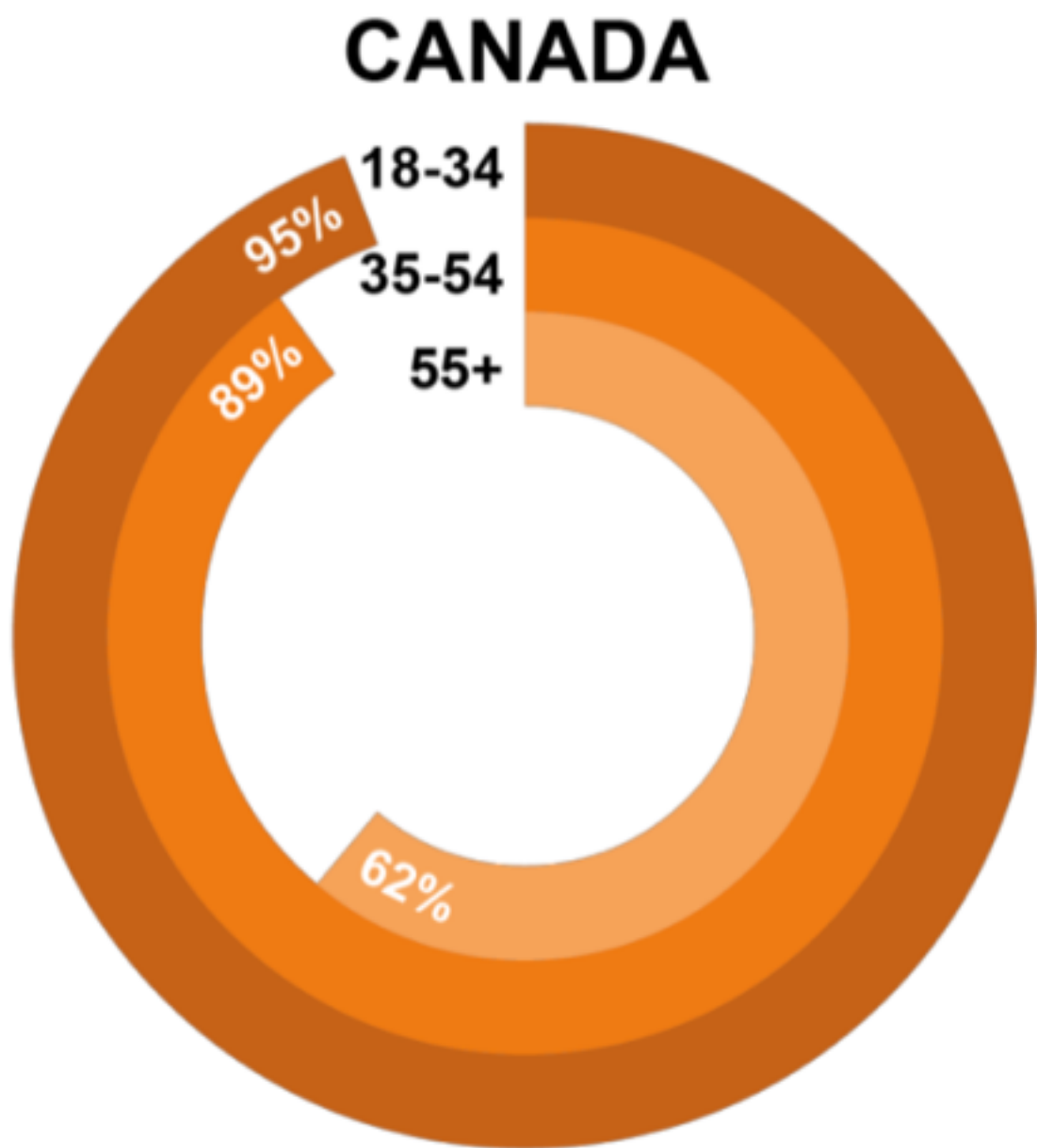
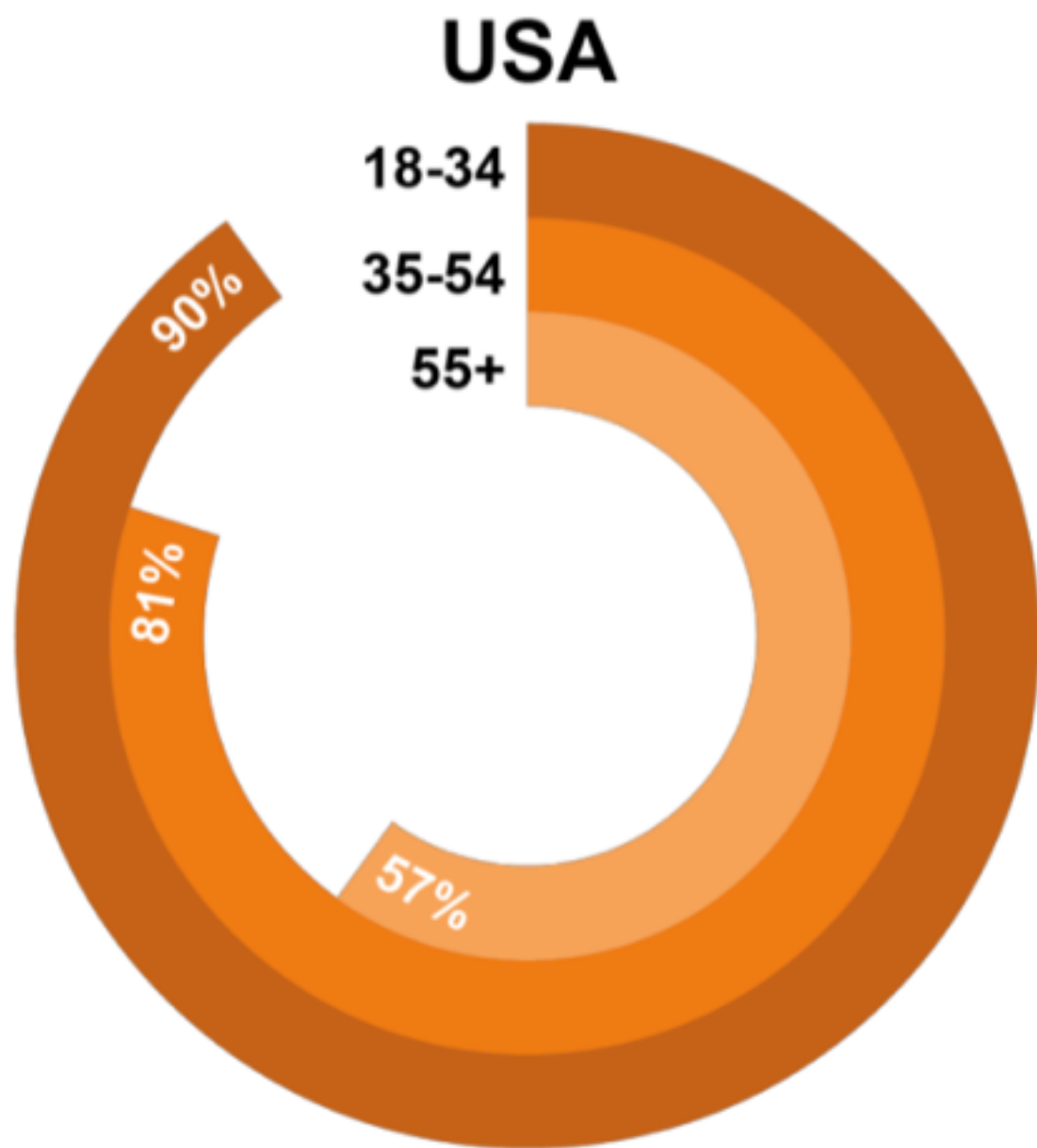
# Total Digital Media Hours Spent per Visitor by Market

Source: comScore MMX Multi-Platform, US, Canada, UK, March 2015



# Smartphone Penetration of Mobile Phone Owners by Market

Source: comScore MobiLens, US, Canada, UK, 3 Mo. Avg. Ending March 2015\*



# 5 Genres of Youth Digital Activism

1. Networked Social Movements
2. Issue-oriented Activism
3. Participatory Politics through Participatory Culture
4. Civic Hacking
5. Hacktivism





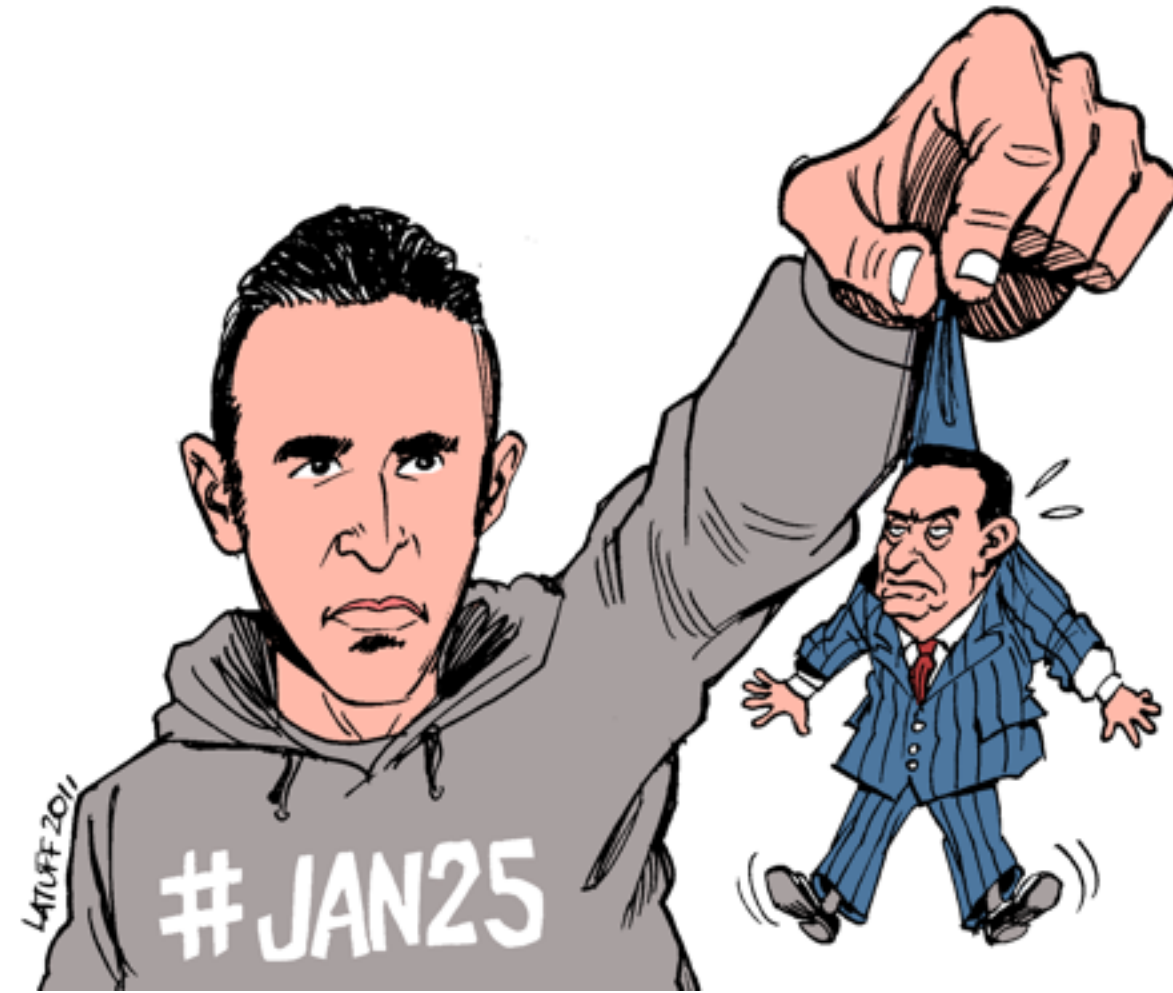
# 1. Networked Social Movements: Arab Spring



Daily news and **alerts** about Tunisia

**نوا** *nawa*

• **twitter** • **blog** • **youtube** • **facebook** •





## 2. Issue-oriented Activism: Kony 2012





## 2. Issue-oriented Activism: Red Equal Sign





### 3. Fan Activism: Harry Potter Alliance

*Participatory Politics through Participatory Culture*



In 20 Countries





### 3. Political Memes: Anti-Terrorism Memes

*Participatory Politics through Participatory Culture*



#isiskaraoke





### 3. Political Memes: Myanmar Memes

*Participatory Politics through Participatory Culture*



Photo shared by Thihan Oo on Myanmar Meme Facebook group.  
Top text: (you) will lead politics for the nation? Bottom text: Tell me more about how only (your) relatives get well off and the whole country fell into poverty in the past 50 years.




## 4. Civic Hacking: TXTmob





# 4. Civic Hacking: Help Map



## КАРТА ПОМОЩИ пострадавшим от пожаров

СМС: 4440 (префикс FIRE) Twitter: #pozhar Телефон: +7 (926) 246 09 12 Skype: ryndaorg  
E-mail: russian.fires@gmail.com

искать проблемы

**Отправь сообщение**

Представляем наш новый проект "Виртуальная рында: Атлас помощи в чрезвычайных ситуациях!"  
"Виртуальная рында" стала универсальным инструментом, где вы можете оставлять сообщения не только о помощи при пожарах, но и по другим тематикам, где нужна помощь или где вы можете помочь.  
Обратите, пожалуйста, внимание, что мы не занимаемся сбором денежных средств.  
Присоединяйтесь! Помощь нужна и в "мирное время"!

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Map Satellite

+

Barents Sea Kara Sea

ПРОБЛЕМНЫЕ СЛУЧАИ [+]

ВСЕ КАТЕГОРИИ

ПОЖАРЫ

БЛОКИРОВАННЫЕ ДОРОГИ

ХОЧУ ПОМОЧЬ

ЦЕНТРЫ ПОМОЩИ / КООРДИНАТОРЫ

НУЖНА ПОМОЩЬ

МЕСТА РАЗМЕЩЕНИЯ ЛЮДЕЙ

ОТЧЁТЫ О ПОМОЩИ

ВОЛОНТЕРЫ "КАРТЫ"



## 5. Hacktivism: Wikileaks & Anonymous



2010/11 Ops netted arrests in 6 countries





# Challenges for Digital Activism

1. Unclear Impact and Slacker Activism
2. Unprotected Civil Rights and an Unfree Internet
3. Digital Divides
4. Technologies and Communities that Oppress





# Unclear Impact and Slacker Activism

NET EFFECT

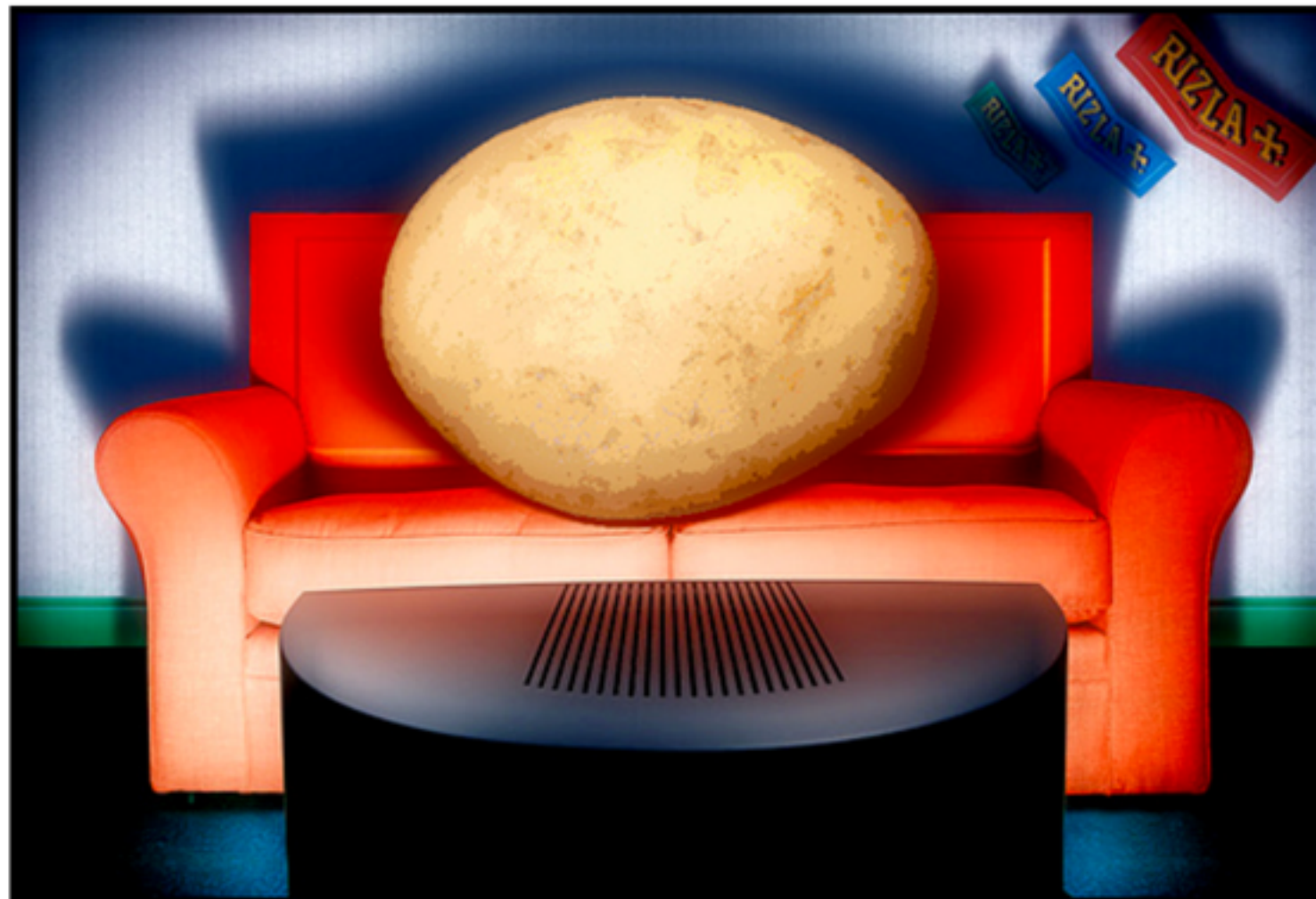
## The brave new world of slacktivism

BY EVGENY MOROZOV

MAY 19, 2009



The brave new world of slacktivism



SHARE +

1057 SHARES

Slacktivism is “feel-good online activism that has zero political or social impact”

“Are the publicity gains gained through this greater reliance on new media worth the organizational losses that traditional activists entities are likely to suffer...?”

*Morozov 2009*





# Unprotected Civil Rights and an Unfree Internet

“police and security forces arrested dissidents identified through photos and videos posted on the social media that many imagined had empowered them.”

“In late June 2009 the Iranian government was intentionally permitting Internet traffic to and from [...] Facebook and Twitter so that it could use a sophisticated practice [...] to collect information about users.”

*Kadivar 2015*



*RSF* counts **170**  
netizens imprisoned  
worldwide in 2015.





# Digital Divides



**The Participation Gap:** The unequal access to the opportunities, experiences, skills, and knowledge that will prepare youth for full participation in the world of tomorrow.

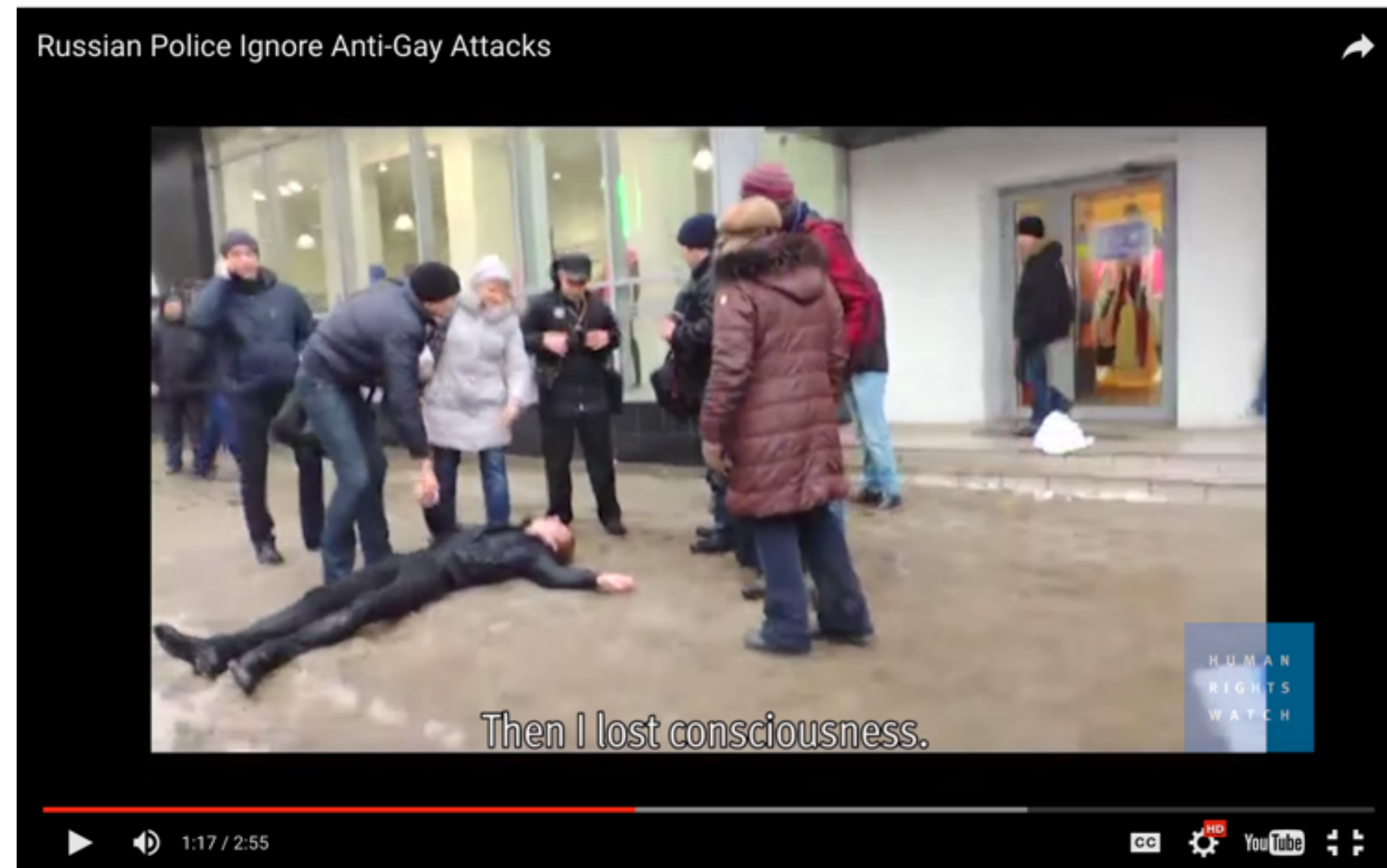
*Jenkins et al. 2006*

**60% of the world, mostly women & girls, are still excluded from the web** *World Wide Web Foundation 2015*





# Technologies and Communities that Oppress



*The Atlantic*

## The Kremlin's Troll Army

Moscow is financing legions of pro-Russia Internet commenters. But how much do they matter?





# Technologies and Communities that Oppress



## Twitter Mischief Plagues Mexico's Election

Using software bots to repeat messages, supporters of the presidential candidates are pioneering underhanded Web tactics.

by Mike Orcutt June 21, 2012



“Bernie Bros’ is the shorthand for Sanders supporters who swarm Democrats who support Hillary Clinton, particularly women, online.”

*McMorris-Santoro 2016*





# How to Support Youth Digital Activism

- 1. Support the growth of a free and open internet**
- 2. Teach digital and civic skills together**
- 3. Fund digital activism impact studies**
- 4. Take the lead and take responsibility: musts for youth and governments**





