Holding Civic Tech accountable for Civic Learning
“Slacktivist”

or

“Actualizing Citizen”

Bennett 2008
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*
Civic Tech is where we participate

The Civic Power Sector

Digital Media and Learning
University of California, Irvine
6 October 2016

Erhardt Graeff
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external political efficacy

internal political efficacy
Civic Tech should support internal political efficacy
Civic Tech should support internal political efficacy

Civic Tech should support civic learning
Civic Learning

- **Knowledge**
  developed by linking together authentic practices / problem-solving over time

- **Abilities**
  developed by working and reflecting on harder and harder problems

- **Dispositions**
  developed by engaging with values and diverse communities of practice

*Merrifield 2001*
Civic Learning

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*Merrifield 2001*
Civic Learning

- **Knowledge** developed by linking together authentic practices / problem-solving over time

- **Abilities** developed by working and reflecting on harder and harder problems

- **Dispositions** → **Internal Political Efficacy** developed by engaging with values and diverse communities of practice

_Merrifield 2001_
Civic Tech Designs for Civic Learning

ex. Action Path

notification ➔ action ➔ following
Civic Tech Designs for Civic Learning

ex. Action Path

notification → action → following
Did it change how you viewed the city?

"Fundamentally... There are zones—pockets of problems and personalities."

"Surprised at how much had been reported and was still open... It opened my eyes to what was going on... Although, I don't see how my comment matters."

"Someone else caring about this issue makes you care about it."
Did it change how you viewed the city?

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"Someone else caring about this issue makes you care about it."
Measuring Civic Learning (traditional survey for internal political efficacy)

• “I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics” Y/N

• “I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country” Y/N

• “I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people” Y/N

• “I think that I am as well-informed about politics and government as most people” Y/N

Niemi, Craig, and Mattei 1991
Measuring Civic Learning (computational approaches)

- Online Experiments
- Educational Data Mining
- Epistemic Network Analysis
- ...

Shaffer, et al. 2009
To hold civic tech accountable, we need **scalable, evaluative frameworks for civic learning.**

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