

Activism and the Intersectional Internet: Power and Resistance

*A half-day symposium hosted by the GC Digital Fellows
May 17, 2017, The Martin E. Segal Theatre, The Graduate Center, CUNY*

CALL FOR PAPERS

Deadline for submissions: Friday, April 14th, 2017

The GC Digital Fellows invite submissions for inclusion in a half-day symposium on digital activism that brings together designers, software developers, community organizers and scholars to discuss the possibilities and limitations of digital activism -- past and present -- and its relationship to offline grassroots efforts. From social media networks to e-mail to websites, the Internet and digital technologies are deployed both as a tool to organize and amplify activists' resistance efforts, as well as a site of state and corporate control and surveillance.

This symposium will foreground an intersectional approach, recognizing that structures and experiences of oppression are connected, across online and offline spaces. We welcome all perspectives.

Our keynote speaker will be distinguished scholar, activist and media-maker Dr. Sasha Costanza-Chock, Associate Professor of Civic Media at MIT. They are a Faculty Associate at the Berkman-Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, Faculty Affiliate with the MIT Open Documentary Lab and the MIT Center for Civic Media, and creator of the MIT Codesign Studio (codesign.mit.edu). Their work focuses on social movements, media justice, and community-led design. Dr. Costanza-Chock's book *Out of the Shadows, Into the Streets: Transmedia Organizing and the Immigrant Rights Movement* was published by the MIT Press in 2014. They are a board member of Allied Media Projects (alliedmedia.org), and a worker/owner at Research Action Design (RAD.cat), a worker-owned cooperative that uses community-led research, transformative media organizing, technology development, and collaborative design to build the power of grassroots social movements.

We welcome proposals that consider digital activism from a variety of perspectives, including but not limited to:

- How are people using social media networks and other forms of digital communications to facilitate or amplify activist efforts to resist formations of cis-hetero-patriarchy, settler colonialism, white supremacy, imperialism and/or capitalism? What have been some tangible successes that resulted from the engagement of these methods of mediation?
- How do the online and the offline efforts of community organizers and activists disrupt inequalities in representation and access to resources? To what extent do these activist efforts (inadvertently) cause harm or undesirable surveillance?

- How can the software developers who create and inform the making or updating of mobile communication apps, email platforms and social networks deliberately design them to address intersectional concerns across gender, race, sexuality, class, ability and other inter-linked axes of difference and oppression?
- What impact can we see from recent digital activist projects such as rogue Twitter accounts, massive data download efforts, and hacked reports, that have emerged in current neo-fascist political regimes? To what extent are the activists behind such projects learning or and building from past activist movements?

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

Graduate students of any discipline, designers, software developers, and community organizers are invited to submit paper proposals for 15 minute presentations on their research on or involvement in digital activism that is related to the aforementioned approach and questions. Groups may present collaboratively or individually.

To apply: Submit an abstract of no more than 250 words with your presentation title, full name, email, and university or institutional affiliation in a single .doc or PDF file to gc.digitalfellows@gmail.com with “Activism and the Intersectional Internet” in the subject line of the message.

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This event is sponsored by the GC Digital Initiatives and the GC Digital Fellows.