

# investigating facebook activism

Lonneke van der Velden, PhD candidate, University of Amsterdam

# what is facebook activism?

**Slacktivism:** “The internet has made “activism” as easy and non-committal as clicking a mouse button” (Nationalpost.com)

**Anti-Facebook:** “Facebook, stop invading my privacy”, Web 2.0 suicide machine, privacy enhancing scripts (New media studies)

**Social networking:** “Facebook and other technologies are just tools to reach out to them [the *real* social networks, lvdv].” (Advocates for Science & Technology for the People)

# survey **Digiactive.org**

## **“Facebook isn’t designed for activism”**

“The services may be free, but they have not been designed to suit your needs as an activist organizer. This means you will find that the site's functionality does not always match what you need. You will have to stretch what is there in order to be effective.” Dan Schulz, Digiactive.org (2008)

# research question.

What kind of activism does Facebook enable?

Which issues do well on Facebook?

What kind of language or practices do they exhibit?

What kind of action is advocated?

# locate activism

## Stance language

Facebook-specific ways of phrasing? Instead of issue terms.

Investigate 'stance' keywords in page and group titles:

Google Scraper: `intitle:support site:facebook.com/group`

“anti ” OR “anti-” | against | stop | protest | opposition |  
oppose | resistance | resist | halt | refuse | “object to” |  
objection | “pro ” OR “pro-” | support | help

## Facebook groups restitutive or supportive 09-07-10

Method: Queried stop, no, anti, support, demand, etc

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Map generated by tools.digitalmethods.net

anti OR anti- (376000) against (192000)  
stop (249000) protest (10500) opposition (738) oppose (1580) resistance (3280) resist (903) halt (840) refuse (4820) object to (142) objection (147)

pro OR pro- (52300) support (263000) help (348000) demand (5310) request (5640)  
apologise OR apologize (1310) say no (19400) yes to (3080) away with (1200)

# zoom in

Research material:

Google scraper results for the top 100 groups for “anti”, “pro”, “stop”, and “support” in the title.

Query the top 35 for member count with “of \* members”, to see which groups are the biggest.

Note: remove artifacts!

# copy paste decoding

## Question

To what or to whom is the group directed?

*Actor position*

What kind of category does the group submit itself to?

*Facebook behaviour*

What kind of category can we assign to the group?

*Infra-language*

What kind of engagement or action format does the group suggest?

*Issue language*

## Data

Title/ info keywords following anti, pro, etc

The group's category in response to Facebook's settings

Intuitively composed, based on keywords (what is the group 'about')

The group's explanation of how to 'stop', 'support'

result #	query	article title		How	What	category	Facebook category	Membership	article url
416	stop site:facebook.com/group	Stop Bell From Throttling DSL Resellers   Facebook		vote / poll	Bell throttling DSL sellers	Net neutrality	Internet & Technology - Gener	1376	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=9221549245
417	stop site:facebook.com/group	Stop Blaming Capitalism, for Socialism's Failures   Facebook		Spread the word / awareness	Blaming Capitalism, for Socialism's Failures	Socialism / Capitalism	Common Interest - Politics	8382	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=41491064600
418	stop site:facebook.com/group	Stop LIVE animal skinning in China - sign the petition   Facebook		Visit site / watch video / Petition	LIVE animal skinning in China	Animal rights	Common Interest - Pets & Animals	1212055	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=7927234437
419	stop site:facebook.com/group	STOP the Russian aggression against Georgia   Facebook		Spread the word / awareness	STOP the Russian aggression against Georgia	Geopolitics	Common Interest - Politics	19954	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2211810378
420	stop site:facebook.com/group	Stop the War on Fun!   Facebook		Email / donate	War on Fun	Nightlife	Common Interest - Beliefs & Causes	5,758	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=84852310115
421	stop site:facebook.com/group	STOP RACISM!   Facebook		Join group / show that you care	racism	racism	Organizations - General	32934	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2314548670
422	stop site:facebook.com/group	Stop TB   Facebook		Join group / invite friends / donate	TB	health	Common Interest - Beliefs & Causes	332	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall&gid=505129
423	stop site:facebook.com/group	Stop Clause 152!   Facebook		write letter / email / invite friends / link to this group	Clause 152	health	Common Interest - Politics	5088	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=54487688497
424	stop site:facebook.com/group	Stop UK Advertising Standards Authority creating an Israel Boycott		write / call (phone)	UK Advertising Standards Authority creating an Israel Boycott	Israel / Palestine	Common Interest - Current Events	7281	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=1054453761646
425	stop site:facebook.com/group	Stop Conversion Therapy Taskforce (SCOTT)   Facebook		learn	Conversion Therapy Taskforce (SCOTT)	LGBT rights	Organizations - Political Organizations	4173	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2842135658046
426	stop site:facebook.com/group	STOP! HR2749 & S510 "Food Safety" Bills   Facebook		learn	HR2749 & S510 "Food Safety" Bills	Food safety	Organizations - Non-Profit Organizations	758	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=206156755366
427	stop site:facebook.com/group	Stop The Thyroid Madness   Facebook		Join / Post on Discussion page or Wall	Thyroid Madness	Health	Common Interest - Health & Wellness	4087	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=35794027415
428	stop site:facebook.com/group	STOP TB   Facebook		learn - awareness	TB	Health	Common Interest - Self-help		http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=65ad37e2e05d2
429	stop site:facebook.com/group	STOP The Missionaries of Charity   Facebook		learn - awareness	Missionaries of Charity	Fraud	Organizations - Advocacy Organizations	2535	http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=326098194662

## Facebook Activism: Stop-Groups

Method: Facebook groups sized by members

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Facebook, so STOP CHANGING IT!!! | Facebook (1618)  
Animal skinning in China - sign the petition | Facebook (1212055)

Stop Hillary Clinton: (722587)

LETS STOP DOLPHIN MASSACRE! 1 000 000 PEOPLE NEEDED, PLEASE INVITE ... (678525)

Stop Barack Obama (310607) Petition: Facebook, stop invading my privacy! | Facebook (72669) STOP RACISM! | Facebook (32934) STOP the Russian aggression against Georgia | Facebook (19954)

The Stop Community Food Centre | Facebook (9125) Stop Blaming Capitalism, for Socialism's Failures | Facebook (8382) Stop UK Advertising Standards Authority creating an Israel Boycott (7281)

Stop Islamisation Of Europe - SIOE | Facebook (7174) STOP BITING EVERY TUESDAY @ Lo-Fi | Facebook (6663) STOP THE WAR COALITION | Facebook (5615) Stop Clause 152! | Facebook (5088)

Stop BC Education Cuts! | Facebook (4766) Stop Conversion Therapy Taskforce (4173) Stop The Thyroid Madness | Facebook (4087) Stop the Great HSBC Graduate Rip-Off!!! | Facebook (3944)

Stop Child Executions | Facebook (3347) Stop The Tar Sands - end our addiction to oil | Facebook (2792) STOP TB | Facebook (2535) Sussex Stop the Cuts | Facebook (2417)

Stop the Australian Vaccination Network | Facebook (1992) Stop the Throttlers | Facebook (1953) Stop Bell From Throttling DSL Resellers | Facebook (1376) Stop Airport Strip Searches | Facebook (1243)

STOP FIRESTONE | Facebook (838) STOP! HR2749 & S510 Food Safety Bills | Facebook (758) Stop TB | Facebook (332) Stop Med1web / Tourist Directory | Facebook (83) Stop the War on Fun! | Facebook

Common Interest - Politics (6)

Common Interest - Beliefs and Causes (5)

Organizations - Advocacy Organizations (4)

Common Interest - Current Events (3) Organizations - Political Organizations (3)

Organizations - Community Organizations (2) Organizations - General (2) Common Interest - Health and Wellness (2)

Common Interest - Pets and Animals (2) Organizations - Non-Profit Organizations (1) Student Groups - Political Groups (1) Internet and Technology - General (1)

Common Interest - Self-help (1) Business - Consumer Groups (1) Internet and Technology - News (1)

## Facebook Activism: Anti-Issues

Method: Facebook infra-issues sized by number of groups

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Map generated by tools.digitalmethods.net

Fascism (3)

Facebook (3)

Racism (3)

Slavery (2) Law (2) Personalities (2) Gender politics (2) Pornography (1) Atheism (1) Art (1)

Women's rights (1) product (1) Right-wing press (1) Conspiracy (1) Capitalism (1) Conscription (1) Copyright (1) Reproductive rights (1) Greenwashing (1) Israel (1) Industrial action (1) Design (1)

## Facebook Activism: Support-Issues

Method: Facebook infra-issues sized by number of groups

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Map generated by tools.digitalmethods.net

Reinstatements (7)  
health (6)

Human Rights (3) Parliamentary Politics (2) Self-determination (2) Environment (2) Open Acces Knowledge (2)

Religious Life (2) Natural Disaster (2) Health policy (2) War (2) Discrimination (2) Arts&Culture (2) Real Environmentalism (1) Geopolitics (1) Solidarity (1)

# action formats

What do groups want (users) to do? 'How' to stop/support?

*join, sign, pray, raise awareness, extend network, etc.*

Collated into overlapping action formats

Emerging issue language from the actors' own words.

## Facebook Activism: Stop Action Formats

Method: Facebook Action Formats sized by number of groups

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Map generated by tools.digitalmethods.net

join (12) learn (10) petition (9) awareness (9)

mailinglist (6) leave Facebook (6) invite friends (4) show support (3) email (3)

discuss (2) volunteer (2) donate / buy (2) sign up (2) vote (1) show disgust and opposition (1) visit site (1) official complaints (1)

online volunteering (1) network spread (1) call for action (1) community meetings & discussions (1) letter writing (1) link to this group (1) solidarity (0)

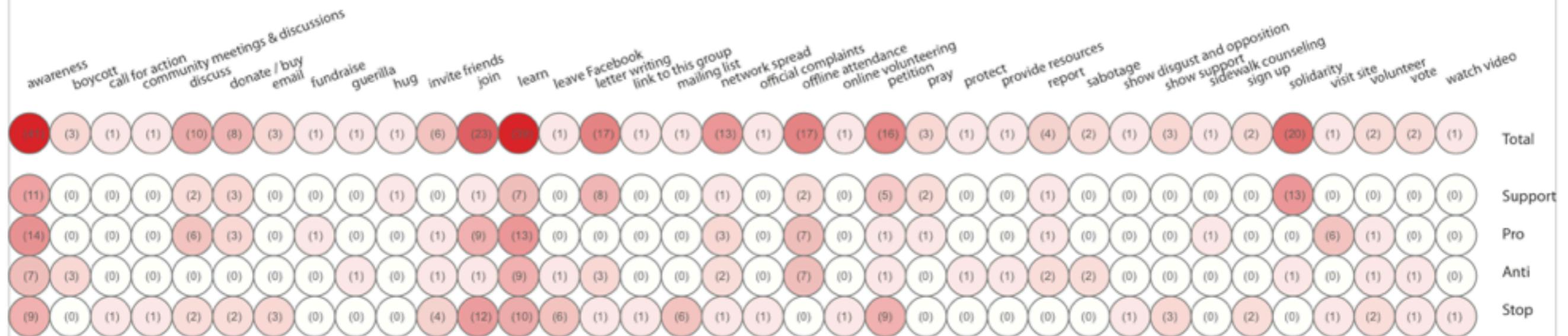
fundraise (0) boycott (0) watch video (0) sidewalk counselling (0) hug (0) protect (0) pray (0) provide resources (0) report (0) offline attendance (0) sabotage (0) guerilla (0)

# Facebook Activism: Formats of Action

Method: Facebook Action Formats sized by number of groups

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# calls for action

Overall, tending towards lightweight engagement and network spread features of Facebook (learn, join, awareness)

Anti: more action oriented, position of protest

Pro: awareness, spreading

Stop: joining & petitions – specific protests, short term, explicit need for names on paper

Support: solidarity, letter writing

# stretching facebook?

First step towards a different analysis: don't apply a predefined notion of activism to your objects or compare object with predefined "users' needs".

Instead: let's stay close to the objects' definitions and it's own language: what *do* they call for?

Further research: Bigger samples, interlinking other issue arena's within Facebook, associations with sites external to facebook (ie. "pro-life" –site:facebook.com)

Discussion: Streching Facebook?

Sign Up

## Slacktivism is on Facebook

Sign up for Facebook to connect with Slacktivism.



## Slacktivism Like

Info

Related Posts

Wikipedia

Our goal is to make this Community Page the best collection of shared knowledge on this topic. If you have a passion for **Slacktivism**, [sign up](#) and we'll let you know when we're ready for your help. You can also get us started by suggesting the [Official Facebook Page](#).

### 38 People Like This



Cissina  
Graff



Alice  
Dixon



Derek  
Scarlino



Patricia  
Coulter



Michael  
Bries



Robin  
White

### Description

From [Wikipedia](#), the free encyclopedia

**Slacktivism** (sometimes **slactivism**) is a [portmanteau](#) formed out of the words *slacker* and *activism*. The word is considered a pejorative term that describes "feel-good" measures, in support of an issue or social cause, that have little or no practical effect other than to make the person doing it feel satisfaction. The acts also tend to require little personal effort from the slacktivist.

Examples of activities labeled as "slacktivist" include signing [internet petitions](#), the wearing of [wristbands](#) ("awareness bracelets") with political messages, putting a [ribbon magnet](#) on a vehicle, joining a [Facebook](#) group, posting issue-oriented [YouTube](#) videos, altering one's personal data or [avatar](#) on [social network services](#), or taking part in short-term boycotts such as [Buy Nothing Day](#) or [Earth Hour](#).

# investigating Facebook activism

**Thank you.**

**Research:** Clare Lee, Esther Weltevrede, Lonneke van der Velden

**E-mail:** [L.C.vanderVelden@uva.nl](mailto:L.C.vanderVelden@uva.nl)

**Wiki:** <http://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/TrainingProgramProjectFacebook>