ECO-MEDIA

Lesson 1
Introduction to Digital Activism

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- Introduction to digital activism

- Historical overview and evolution of digital activism

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Introduction

"Do it! What are you waiting on? Do it! Stand up for what you believe in. The world needs your voice. Whoever you are, you have something to say. Say it."

Kerry Washington, American actress, director, and activist

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."

Peggy Klaus, author

Objectives of the lesson

- To introduce the concept of digital activism.

- To explore the theories and history of digital activism.

- To examine case studies of successful digital activism campaigns to understand their impact and effectiveness.

- To discuss the challenges and future trends in digital activism.

Learning outcomes

- Understand the concept of digital activism.

- Identify key theories of digital activism.

- Assess the impact and effectiveness of digital activism campaigns through case studies.

- Discuss and analyze the challenges and future trends in the field of digital activism.
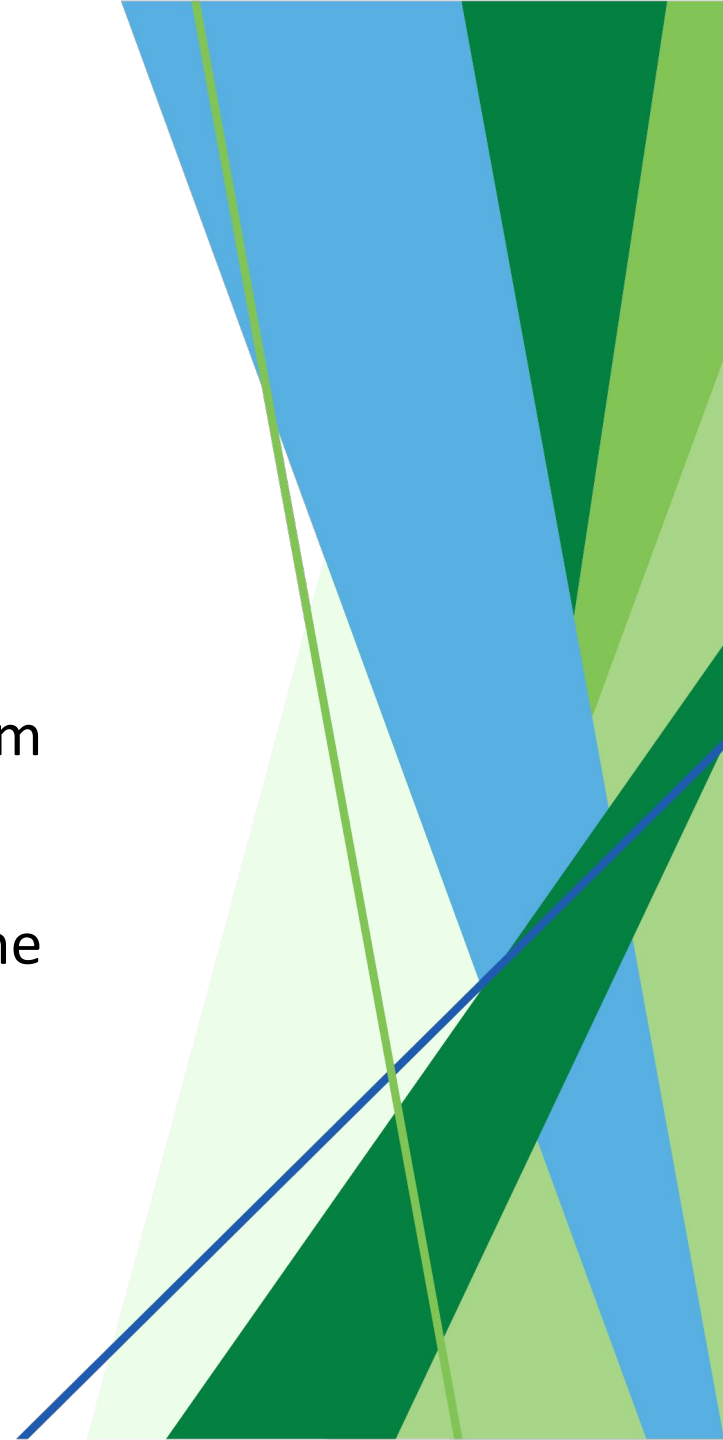
Targeted skills

- Communication skills

- Critical thinking skills

- Self-reflection skills

- Digital literacy

Introduction to digital activism

"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept"
Angela Davis, American political activist & academic

What is digital activism?

Digital activism or Online activism or internet activism or Cyberactivism

refers to the use of digital tools, technologies, and online platforms to promote social and political change

Can you give an example of digital activism?

Digital activism Vs traditional activism

Digital activism

- Relies on digital tools, technology and online platforms
- Utilizes social media, websites, etc.
- Rapid dissemination of information in global reach
- Opportunities for online communities
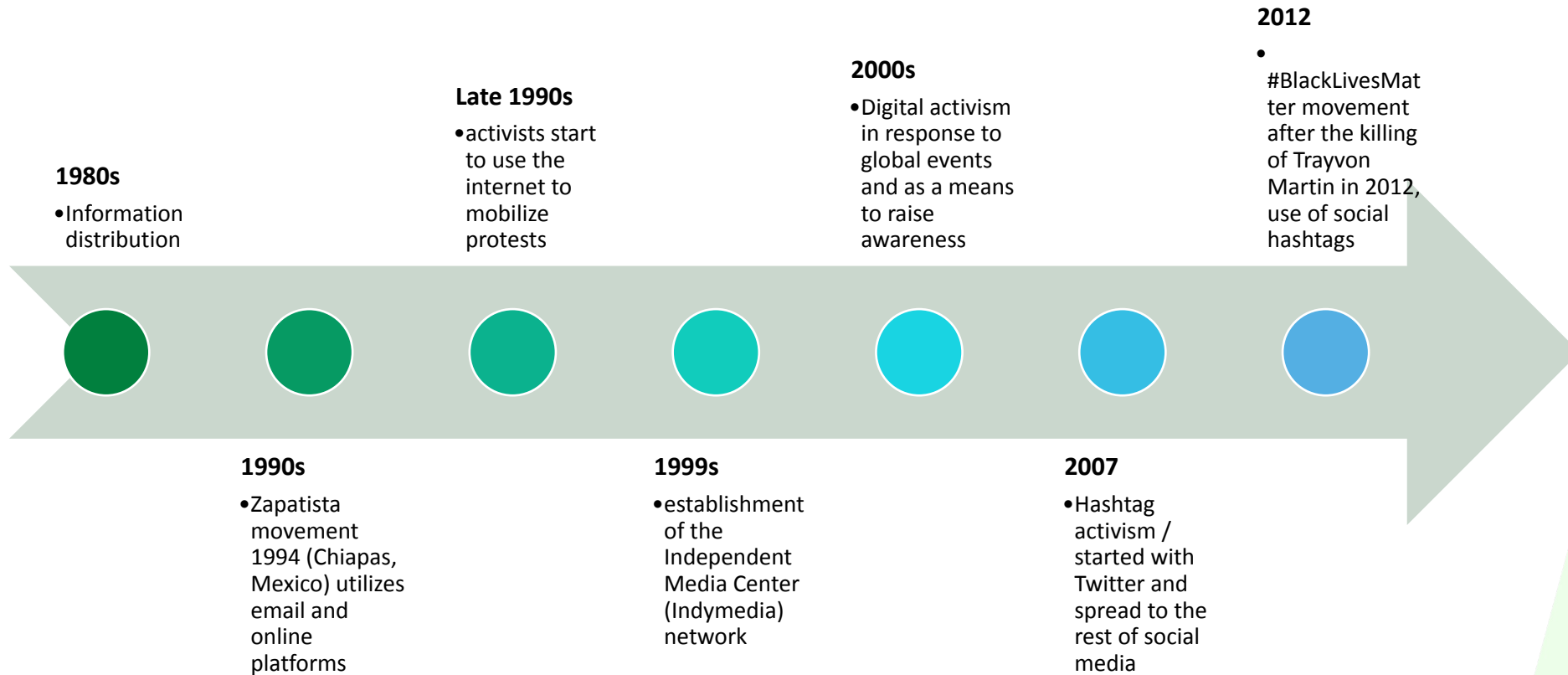- Overcomes geographical boundaries

Traditional activism

- Relies on in-person interactions and physical gatherings
- Involves activities like protests
- Relies on traditional media, such as newspapers, television, and radio
- Requires physical presence and face-to-face communication

The digital activism equation

Historical overview of digital activism

1980s
- Information distribution

1990s
- Zapatista movement 1994 (Chiapas, Mexico) utilizes email and online platforms

Late 1990s
- activists start to use the internet to mobilize protests

1999s
- establishment of the Independent Media Center (Indymedia) network

2000s
- Digital activism in response to global events and as a means to raise awareness

2007
- Hashtag activism / started with Twitter and spread to the rest of social media

2012
- #BlackLivesMatter movement after the killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012, use of social hashtags

Benefits of digital activism

Powerful tool

Wide Reach / no geographical barriers

Low cost compared to traditional activism

Real-time engagement

Increased participation

Stronger voice to people from different backgrounds and perspectives

Increased access to information

Data analytics

Types of digital activism

Social media activism
Use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok to raise awareness and mobilize support, through posts, videos, and hashtags.

Online petitions
Creating and signing digital petitions on platforms like Change.org to demonstrate public support and demand action from governments, organizations, or corporations.

Digital Advocacy
Engaging in online advocacy efforts by sending emails, making phone calls, or utilizing digital platforms to reach policymakers, government officials, and decision-makers.

Hacktivism
Cyber-attacks to expose targets that are perceived as oppressive or unjust.

Online Awareness Campaigns
Creating and promoting online campaigns, including sharing informative videos, infographics, blog posts, articles, or organizing virtual events to raise awareness about specific issues.

Digital Storytelling
Using digital platforms to share personal stories, experiences, or testimonials that humanize and raise awareness about specific issues or marginalized communities.

Examples of successful digital activism
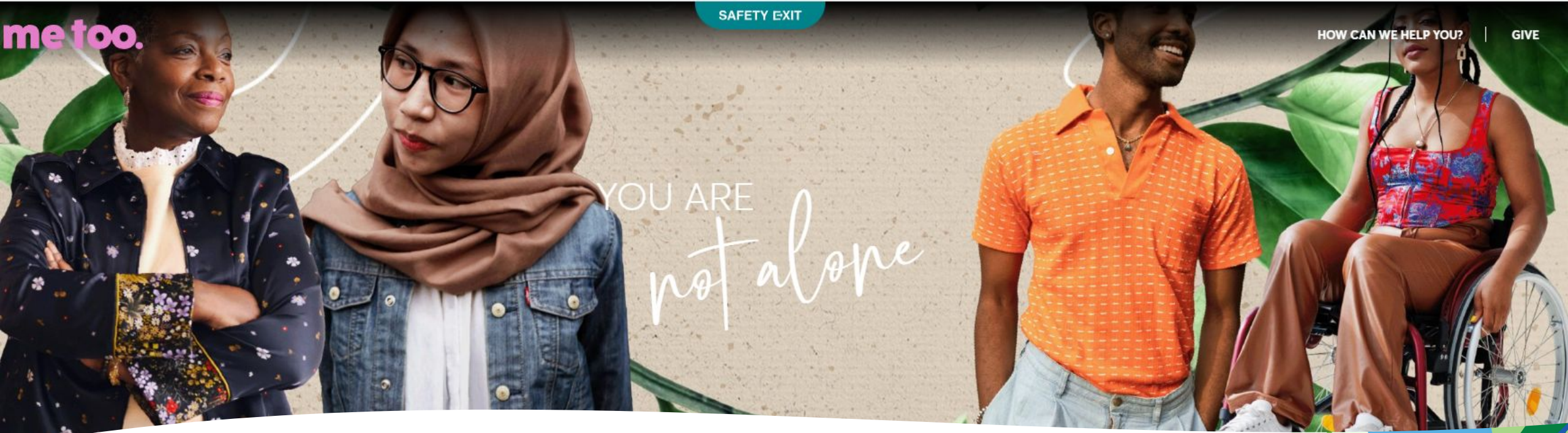
#MeToo

- The #MeToo movement, initially started by activist Tarana Burke and popularized on social media by actress Alyssa Milano, empowered survivors of sexual harassment and assault to share their experiences.

112 #ChibokGirls
Are Still Missing

"We cannot claim to have defeated Boko Haram without rescuing the #ChibokGirls and all other innocent persons held hostage." - President Buhari, 2015.

#BringBackOur Girls

- In 2014, the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls went viral on social media following the kidnapping of over 200 schoolgirls by the militant group Boko Haram in Nigeria. The campaign drew global attention to the incident, sparked international outrage, and put pressure on the Nigerian government to take action to rescue the girls.

ACTIONS ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY

We call on the European Commission to strengthen EU action on climate emergency.
We need 1 million signatures!

#FridaysForFuture

- Started by activist Greta Thunberg, the #FridaysForFuture movement uses social media and online platforms to mobilize young people around the world to demand action on climate change. Students and activists skip school or work on Fridays to participate in climate strikes, and they share their actions and demands through social media, bringing attention to the urgent need for climate action.

Examples of unsuccessful digital activism

#DeleteUber

- In 2017, the #DeleteUber campaign was launched in response to perceived exploitation during a taxi strike against President Trump's travel ban. The campaign urged users to delete the Uber app and switch to alternative ride-sharing services. Although the hashtag trended on social media and received widespread attention, Uber's user base remained largely unaffected, and the campaign did not significantly impact the company's operations.

#McDstories

- In 2012, McDonald's launched the hashtag #McDstories to encourage customers to share positive experiences and stories about their interactions with the brand. However, the campaign quickly backfired as users hijacked the hashtag to share negative stories, complaints, and criticisms of the fast-food chain.

Key takeaways about digital activism

Key takeaways
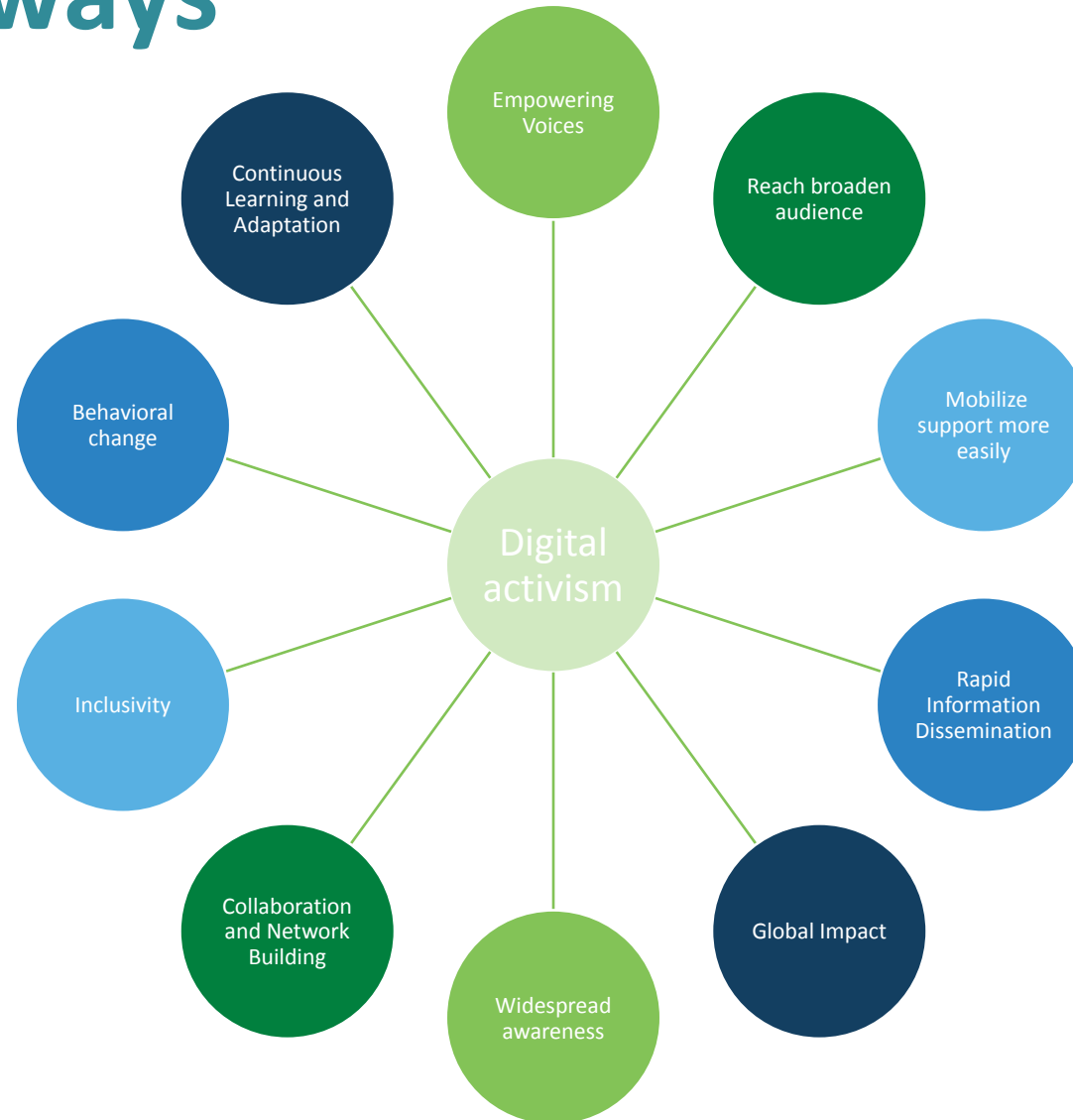
Let's exercise through reflection!

- Reflect on key learnings, insights, successful and unsuccessful examples provided.
    - What were the most impactful moments or concepts that stood out to you during the lesson?
    - How has your understanding of digital activism evolved or deepened?
    - Did any examples or case studies resonate with you? Why?

 Think about the social issues you are most passionate about or interested in. Brainstorm and outline specific actions you can take to contribute to your chosen social issues through digital activism.

Conclusions

- Digital platforms have transformed activism by enabling global reach and connectivity.

- Activists can overcome geographical boundaries, share information instantly, and engage with diverse audiences on a global scale.

- Digital activism provides a platform for marginalized individuals and communities to have their voices heard.

- Successful digital activism campaigns have demonstrated their capacity to drive real-world impact, influence public opinion, promote policy changes, mobilize resources, and facilitate tangible actions, making a significant difference in the world.

- Digital activism encourages collaboration among activists, organizations, and supporters.

- The digital activism landscape is ever-evolving, with new platforms, technologies, and challenges emerging constantly.

References and additional resources

References

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Additional resources

- Online Activism: What's The Point? Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhOJ3YH4JW4

- Digital Activism: Using Technology to Empower Change. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRkjwSkUEEo

- Does Online Activism Have Any Power? Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_n3WOuwt9M

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ECO-MEDIA

FIND US
ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

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