

Global Digital Activism Data Set 2.0 Initial Findings Fact Sheet

Below are the initial findings of the Global Digital Activism Data Set 2.0, a study of 426 digital activism campaigns from 100 countries, undertaken by the Digital Activism Research Project at the University of Washington.

- **US provides infrastructure for global digital activism:** 91% of campaigns in the study used at least one application created by a US firm.
- **Facebook and Twitter are most popular activist tools:** 47% of campaigns in the study used Facebook and 46% used Twitter. The next-highest application, YouTube, had 32% global prevalence.
- **E-petition “market” still fragmented:** Change.org, the most popular platform, was used by 6.5% of campaigns in the study, which represents 26% of the global e-petition “market.” It is followed by Avaaz, which was used by 2.5% of campaigns.
- **No “killer app” for digital activism success:** Of the tools in the study with acceptable levels of reliability (forums, e-petitions, social networks, microblogs, digital video, digital maps, and SMS) none had a statistically significant relationship with campaign success.
- **Digital activism not only digital:** Nearly half of all campaigns in the study (48%) used offline tactics like marches, rallies, and hunger strikes, as well as online tactics.
- **Digital tactics not less effective:** Campaigns that used digital and offline tactics were *not* more likely to succeed than exclusively digital campaigns. Of campaigns that used only digital tactics, 55% achieved some level of success, while the same was true of 48% of campaign that used both online and offline tactics.
- **Digital activism is nonviolent** – While a text message can be used to start a violent riot or peaceful flash mob, in practice digital campaigns are overwhelmingly nonviolent. In only 3.5% of campaigns did supporters or initiators cause physical injury to people.
- **Internet is global, but digital campaigns are national:** Though the internet is an international network, international campaigns (those in which campaign initiators and campaign targets were from different countries) were relatively rare. In 88% of campaigns in which target and initiator country were identifiable, both parties were located within the same country. This may be because the highest level of political authority is still the nation-state.
- **Most digital campaigns target governments:** Though anti-corporate campaigns are gaining increasing attention, 78% of the campaigns in the study targeted government entities.
- **Political context influences digital tool selection:** E-petitions, which operate on the assumption of government responsiveness to popular statements on public issues, are most popular in Northern Europe and North America, regions where democratic government is prevalent.