Building Online Activists

Sustaining Passionate Online Supporters

These training materials have been prepared by Aspiration

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Who is Aspiration?

- An NGO in San Francisco that exists to support and advise Nonprofit and Foundation Staff
  - On how to Apply Technology
  - On their Terms to
  - Achieve Impact in their
  - Program, Mission and Social Justice Work
- http://www.aspirationtech.org
- http://blog.socialsourcecommons.org

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First Things: Logistics

▶ Please ask questions early and often. Use the chat window or raise your hand feature.

▶ We're still in "beta" webinar mode. Feedback highly welcome.

▶ Slides and audio recording available after the webinar.

▶ Sharing on Twitter? We're @aspirationtech

Agenda Overview

▶ We'll cover some BIG picture perspectives today and go over some detailed-experiences

- Caveats of Online Organizing

- Defining an Online Activist

- Reviewing Online Activist Engagement Cycles

▶ From there, we'll talk about Online Campaigning as both conversation and narrative and welcome questions (+ try to end a little early!)

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Caveats of Online Organizing

► Never forget who's left out by "e" strategies

► Trust relationships are best built in person

    – Online organizing is most effective when it leverages established social networks and communities.

► Each community, campaign, and cause is different

► Respect for local wisdom, culture, & customs need to remain intact in online engagement
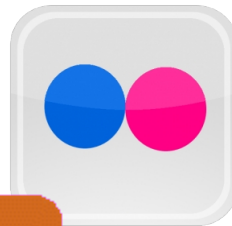
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What is an Online Activist?

- ► A supporter of your cause
- ► Responds to your requests
- ► Views you as a trusted source on an issue
- ► Promotes your issue/cause using online tools

What do Online Activists do?

▶ Read Emails

▶ Take Online Actions

▶ Tell People About You

▶ Attend Events

▶ Create Content about you or your Issue Area

▶ Organize Local Events or Meetings

Register

DONATE

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Activist Engagement Cycle

- Collect Contact Info
- Alert to Actions & Progress
- Deepen Engagement
- Maintain Care and Feeding
- Track Activity
- Rinse and Repeat

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Frames of Engagement

▶ Encourage Online Activity

- Make it the "easy choice" to get involved
- Reduce barriers on your end (less clicks, small asks, fame for getting involved, remove login, language)

▶ Provide clearly defined asks

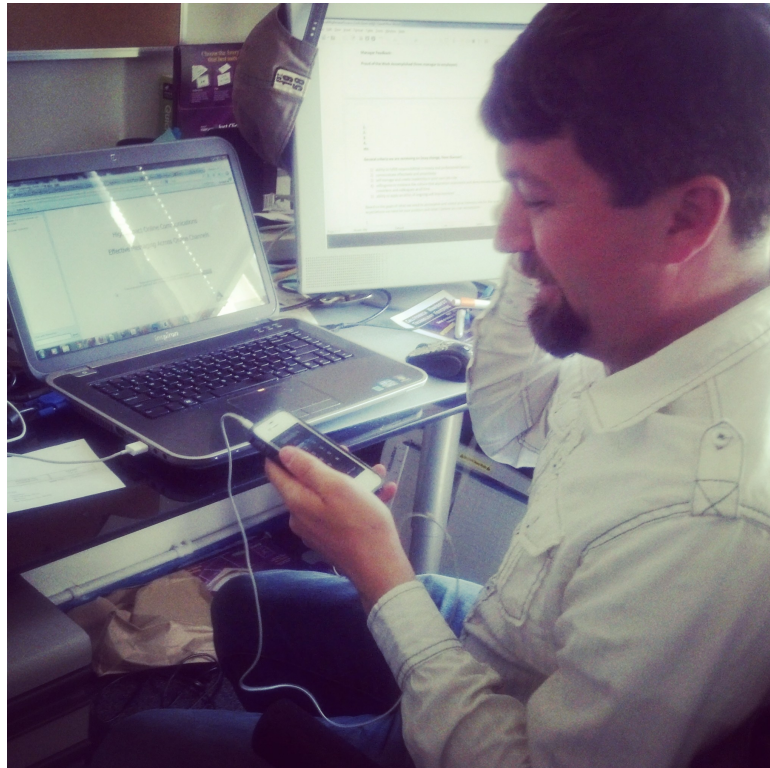- Users should take action to effect change or offline work through online tools and activities that you provide

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Online Engagement Asks

► Your role is to define ways for your different audiences to plug in

► How are you engaging strangers? fans? funders?

► Prep work is key. Define your lists of "Asks" or ways to engage ahead of time.

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Online Engagement Asks

- ▶ Contact Decision Makers/ Influencers (Letters to Congress)
- ▶ Pledge Support (Petitions, Endorsements)
- ▶ Donate Money
- ▶ Volunteer

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Online Engagement Asks

▶ Shape Campaign Decisions (Poll, Voting, Discussion Forum, Letters to the Editor)

▶ Recruit Others
  – Social Networks
  – Site Badges
  – Shout Outs
  – Blog

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Frames of Engagement

▶ Offline Activist: An on-the-ground supporter who you can count on to organize/attend local in-person events and meetings and to be leaders

▶ Engaging Offline Activists "Online"

− Provide opportunities to attend or organize real world action using online tools you provide

− Coordinate organizing or research tasks in a decentralized manner through online tools

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Offline Engagement Asks

▶ Gather Info or Research

▶ Events

  – Day of Action

  – Movie Screenings

  – House Parties

  – Flyer Days

▶ Phone Banking

▶ Local groups/chapters

  – Start/Find, Volunteer Management, Updates

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Project: Building Youth Online Activists

▶ Who: Organized group of young people in Richmond, CA

▶ What: How can activated young people use online advocacy to support their on-the-ground community efforts?

▶ Partnerships: Richmond Youth Organizing

Team; http://www.canfit.org;

http://www.rysecenter.org;

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Organizing Youth Online
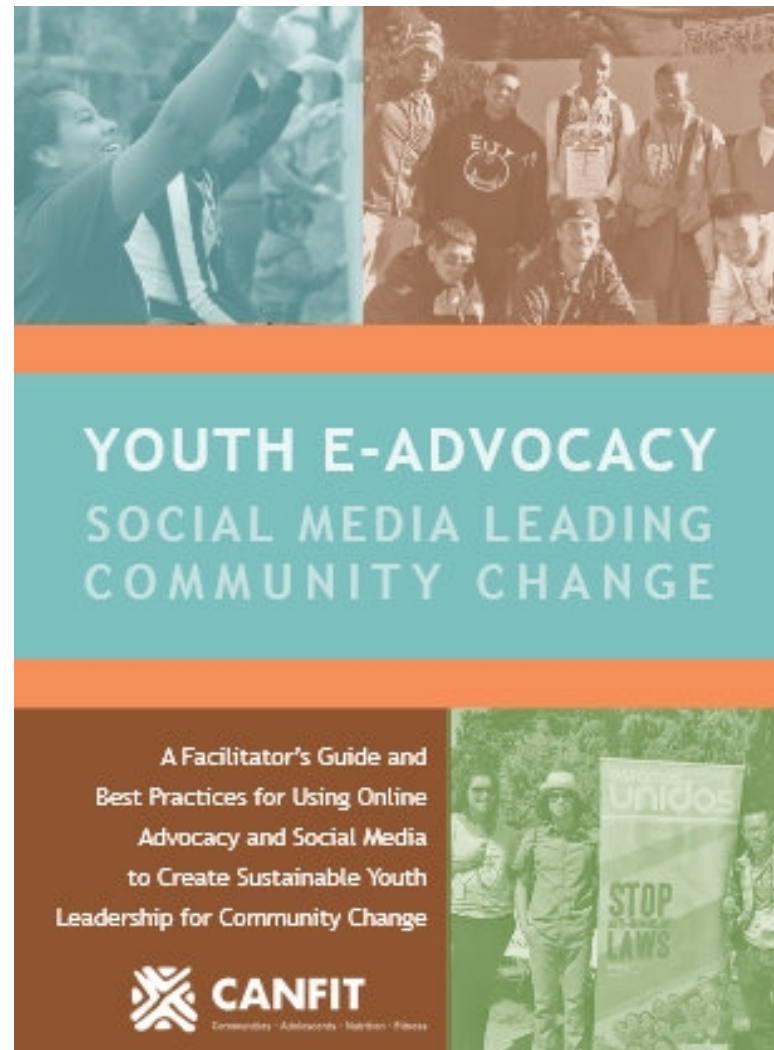
Learnings: Youth Online Activists

▶ Core principles of youth development MUST be a part of any campaign, online or offline

▶ Ah-ha moment: "*I can talk about my community work online and not just my personal life.*" "*in my voice, in my story without the usual filters.*"

▶ It still takes a lot of work to recruit people, regardless of the platform

▶ Move away from assumptions about youth and social networks, and still create a plan

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Learnings: Youth eAdvocacy Video

Online Organizing is an Ongoing Conversation

▶ Primary Goal: Establish Trust with your audiences.

   – Trust empowers mobilization.

▶ Too many orgs use online to BLAST their audiences "THE SKY IS FALLING TODAY"

▶ Review the narrative over time, not just the "Asks"

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Online Organizing is an Ongoing Conversation

▶ Arguably the most important part of online outreach is managing responses
  – Reply to Replies

▶ Pick up a phone every once in awhile

▶ Consider where your online supporters are moving in their technology choices (Cell Phones, Social Platforms)

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Care and Feeding of your Online Activists

▶ Keep the Momentum

▶ Shine a Light

- Two P's and Two F's

▶ Consistent story rather than just asks

- Target ACTIVE people with more asks
- Target ACTIVE people with offline engagements

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Summary

▶ Definitions of Online Activism vary

▶ Online activists can mirrors and bolster your offline engagement

▶ Engaging online activists is a cycle, rather than a streamline or blast

▶ A conversation and an ongoing narrative should be part of your online activist strategy

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End Of Section

►Questions?

►Comments?

Thank You!