

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN A GREATER GOOD

by

JOSHUA ADAMS

A THESIS

Presented to the School of Journalism and Communication
and the Robert D. Clark Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts

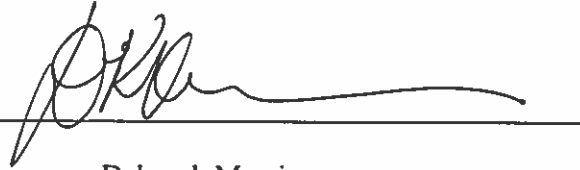
June 2015

An Abstract of the Thesis of

**Joshua Adams for the degree of Bachelor of Arts
in the School of Journalism and Communication to be taken June 2015**

Title: The Role of Social Media in a Greater Good

Approved: _____



Deborah Morrison

The goal of this research project is to explore how social media can and is being used to promote a greater good in society. This paper showcases those that are using social media for good, and what they are doing right in their quest to engage people of all walks of life to fight for their cause. This will be shown through the examination and evaluation of seven various social media movements as case studies. The case studies shown in this project demonstrate how to use social media to promote the concept of a greater good, the definition of "greater good" being based solely on the opinion of the individual, which people can explore and come to their own conclusions.

This study shows that there are many ways that social media is being used to garner attention for the greater good. Through highlighting cases of social media usage that have been proven to be extremely effective, and examining concepts, methods and ideas within the social media spread of issues that are meant to undergird what makes these cases strong, this study illustrates the good that social media can do.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professors Morrison, Shoenberger and Balbuena for helping me and giving me the guidance to fully examine the topic of the spread of positive change in social media and the ethics behind this spread that I think need to be discussed. I sincerely appreciate your efforts in guiding me through this tough, yet fulfilling, process. I am so honored and privileged to get the opportunity to work with such an esteemed group of faculty. I would like to also thank the faculty at the University of Oregon who were not specifically on my committee but helped me through this strenuous project.

I would like to also thank the family and friends who encouraged me to get through this process, as well as those who reminded me that this task, even though it may have seemed impossible at the time, was not impossible at all.

The creators of this template (CHC Librarian Miriam Rigby & CHC Academic & Thesis Coordinator Miriam Jordan) would like to thank Reed College for providing their Thesis Template for the inspiration of many elements of this template.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
What is Social Media?	2
Defining “The Greater Good” and the Ethical Dilemma	7
Virality in Terms of “Greater Good”	9
Case Studies	11
Methodology:	11
Selection of Movements	11
Layout of Case Studies	12
Studies	13
Case Study 1: Shooting of Neda Agha-Soltan in 2009 Iranian conflict	13
Case Study 2: Washington Redskins' "Change the Mascot" Campaign	15
Case Study 3: Actress Amandla Stenberg discussing cultural appropriation in Hollywood "Don't Cash Crop My Cornrows"	18
Case Study 4: Ricky Gervais tweeting picture of woman with dead giraffe	20
Case Study 5: KONY 2012	23
Case Study 6: The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge	26
Case Study 7: #YesAllWomen	28
Discussion	31
Bibliography	35

Introduction

It is difficult for anyone, whether an individual, an organization or a business, to use the power behind the current invention of social media to catch the attention of a user, due to the constant push of content from everywhere. With live feeds of content coming through our screen, people only have so much time to keep up. People and groups that want to make big positive changes do not hold the same power to reach an audience because of this push of other content getting in the way¹. They do not have the appeal of having something that the user wants or needs in his life instantaneously, all they have is something the user has to think about and they need have the power of persuasion to convince the user to help make a change. These messages are all getting lost in the clutter that is the social media sphere, not being heard within the mass quantities of the Internet². The research question being investigated in this project is, "Can social media be used to ignite discussion in topics that help create a 'greater good' in society?" The conundrum presented inspired this topic of research, and will be explored further and answered in the remainder of this project.

¹ Deitchman, Alyssa. "Wait, What? On Social Network Use and Attention."

² Bennett, Shea. "Social Media Business Statistics, Facts, Figures & Trends 2014 [INFOGRAPHIC]."

What is Social Media?

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, social media are defined as "forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content."³ Over the last ten years alone, the concept of social media has grown from a small-scale trend that developed in the first days of the Internet to a worldwide fascination that doesn't seem to be losing traction anytime soon. From its beginnings in small scale chatrooms and forums hosted through a variety of platforms on the internet, social media grew from something only the tech-savvy were connected to into something that people of all ages can easily access. Since Facebook first launched in 2004, the social networking site has grown exponentially, from handfuls of students to over one billion monthly active users.⁴ Other social networking sites have followed suit, with Google+ with over one billion registered users, Twitter having over 500 million registered users, and Instagram with 150 million registered users.⁵ Many different types of blogs are popping up, allowing both businesses to share their information to the world and individuals to keep public diaries of the happenings in their day-to-day lives. Virtual worlds, created through games such as "World of Warcraft" and "Second Life," allow users to interact with one another while gaining entertainment from the game that everyone is trying to play. Collaborative projects on the Internet, such as Wikipedia, are giving users more space to cooperate and create different projects. YouTube has allowed millions of users

³ "Social Media | Definition of Social Media."

⁴ "Company Info | Facebook Newsroom."

⁵ Morrison, Kimberlee. "The Growth of Social Media: From Passing Trend to International Obsession [Infographic] - SocialTimes."

to share video content to one another through the Internet.⁶ All of these different aspects of social media have grown extensively, and there's no telling what could happen with social media in the near future.

What makes social media different from other forms of media is how items on it are spread. In the past, various types of media are distributed from a corporate level. The push of these older types of media is regulated and spread in a controlled fashion solely by people who were authorized to spread these messages. Social media, however, does not spread in the same way. The most viral pieces of content are shaped by unauthorized acts of sharing, with an emphasis on grassroots idealism and not as much top-down as it is bottom-up.⁷ This native spread of content gives individuals the opportunity to get messages out that they care about, as opposed to having messages fed to them from a corporate level.

Although one exciting feature of social media is its unique form of spreadability, another aspect is organizations' growing usage of the varied platforms to interact with individual users. One of the key pieces to an organization's success is consumer engagement. According to Dave Evans, Vice President of Social Strategy at Lithium Technologies, there are four levels of customer engagement: consumption, curation, creation and collaboration.⁸ For internal purposes, consumption may be defined as downloading, watching, reading or listening to any content. Curation is the sorting, filtering, rating, reviewing or commenting on content. Creation is known as the development of content that is downloaded onto social media. Collaboration is where

⁶ Kaplan, Andreas M., and Michael Haenlein. "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media.

⁷ Jenkins, Henry, and Sam Ford. *Spreadable Media Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*

⁸ Evans, Dave. *Social Media Marketing an Hour a Day*.

consumers can create either with the initial creator and/or with one another to create amazing content. For all organizations, collaboration on content should be kept in mind as a goal when it comes to engagement through social media. There are plenty of ways that consumers can collaborate on social media. People are able to develop ideas on projects through social media, which is known as ideation. People may also contribute to support forums and do-it-yourself platforms to help others reduce support costs on items. People also just contribute general knowledge to the Internet in order to assist others in any knowledge they may seek. This may also be done via game-like activities that encourage people to share information through involving them in the game. Crowdsourcing and crowdfunding are requests for communities to provide either work or funds to finance or help certain activities. Each form of collaboration requires consumers to input effort, time or money to help the organization achieve a goal of some form.

Social media, and the Internet in general, are adding to a concept that others refer to as a participatory culture in modern day. A participatory culture is defined as a neologism in reference of, but opposite to a Consumer culture.⁹ In other words, a participatory culture is a culture in which people do not act as consumers only, but also as contributors or producers to society, mainly through media. This development of a participatory culture also has its effect as to what is placed onto the Internet. The ideas behind the participatory culture that we live in today inspire individuals to share their viewpoints, and the easiest place to do this is on the Internet. With all of the people now connected all around the world through social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter,

⁹ Willis, Paul (2003). *Foot Soldiers of Modernity*

people can push messages out to astounding masses of people. The reach that messages have with the Internet goes far and beyond the reach that most anyone could have in days before the Internet's existence.¹⁰ Having access to the Internet also gives people a reason and means to stay connected to what is happening with everyone from their close friends and family to leaders all across the world. The Internet also gives people an easy way to interact with one another instantaneously, which never could have happened with any other form of media that existed prior.

People engage with social media for a variety of reasons. In one study, approximately two thirds of social media users stated that a primary reason they use social media is to stay in touch with current friends and family members.¹¹ Fourteen percent of users say that connecting around a shared hobby or interest is one of the key reasons they use social media, and nine percent claim that making new friends through social media is the reason they log on. Five percent of users state that reading comments by public figures is the main reason that they use social media.¹² When examining these interpretations, it can be inferred that it must be difficult for organizations and businesses of any form to grab the attention of a social media user, due to the amount of content being pushed to every Internet user daily. Although some organizations utilize social media to achieve a greater connection with their consumers, non-profit and other wellness organizations do not have the same resources for social media as businesses. All messages, including those behind wellness groups and people promoting healthier

¹⁰ O'Reilly, Tim. (2005-09-30). What Is Web 2.0?

¹¹ Smith, Aaron. "Why Americans Use Social Media."

¹² Smith, Aaron. "Why Americans Use Social Media."

lifestyles, are getting lost in the clutter¹³. These people are trying to support the causes that matter most to them, yet they are not able to have their voices equally heard.

Because of this, the research question being explored is, "Can social media be used to ignite discussion in topics that help create a 'greater good' in society?" and this question will be explored throughout the remainder of this project.

¹³ Bennett, Shea. "Social Media Business Statistics, Facts, Figures & Trends 2014 [INFOGRAPHIC]."

Defining “The Greater Good” and the Ethical Dilemma

A majority of the information that people are fed by the media is negative.¹⁴

News outlets are broadcasting and posting stories on death, destruction and despair.

You can't avoid seeing a story about some form of devastation occurring in going onto any major news-aggregating website. The media only accentuates what is happening in the world around us. Displaced persons are lining the streets, people's belongings are getting stolen by those who are less deserving and innocents are getting murdered all around the world.

With all of this inclusion of negativity in the media, it is hard for individuals to realize in this age that a lot of good can happen in this world if one mind is put to the task. The human race, and even individuals within the human race, has a potential to do amazing things: fight crime, stop diseases, and get this world closer to a place of potential utopia. For simplicity of explanation, these opinions and actions stemming from the minds of the individuals who create them are going to be collected into one term: "the greater good." By defining this term as vaguely as possible, it is open to interpretation by readers to be used however they see fit.

However, with this being said, there is an ethical issue behind the usage of this term, and the variety of ideas it implies. This term of "greater good" does not take blatant wrongs into consideration. In theory, this term could be used to justify actions such as segregation and genocide.¹⁵ Arguably, anyone could classify their actions as going toward this "greater good," no matter how morally unacceptable they are. The

¹⁴ Stafford, Tom. "Psychology: Why Bad News Dominates the Headlines."

¹⁵ Bivins, Thomas H. *Mixed Media Moral Distinctions in Advertising, Public Relations, and Journalism*.

encouragement urged here is for any reader to take this into consideration in regards to their own actions in the past, present and future and take notice of their space in the moral spectrum of good versus bad.

In essence, there are countless issues happening across the world in all aspects of life that affect countless people daily and need more attention, but don't necessarily have the funding or power to attract the attention of the "average Joe." Social media is an essentially free platform that gives individuals the voice to speak out on issues and causes that matter to them and gain attention from their posts. It is the key to unlocking the attention of others in the fast-paced, interconnected society that we live in today. Social media's growth in popularity is giving people the power to connect with one another. This potential for connection has the potential to make this greater good for anyone a reality.

Virality in Terms of “Greater Good”

With all of this discussion about social media and the potential to utilize it for a greater impact in society, a clear distinction needs to be made. Although there are plenty of different ways to classify social media that goes viral, it should be noticed that there are two distinct groupings of social media that deserve a spotlight: those that are uncontroversial in a grander societal sense by nature, and those that do invoke some form of controversy over some pre-existing public issue.

The former category includes the posts that populate Facebook to distract us from the every day. A current, notable example is known as "The Dress." The Dress is a viral photo and meme that gained popularity in February 2015. It originated from a washed-out photograph of a dress posted on the social networking service Tumblr, and a dispute over whether the dress pictured was blue and black, or white and gold.¹⁶ In the first week after the surfacing of the image alone, more than 10 million tweets mentioned the dress. Celebrities, politicians, government agencies and social media platforms of well-known brands weighed in on what color The Dress actually was, increasing the hype surrounding the photo.¹⁷ Social media posts that go viral and are similar to "The Dress" cause controversy in that they are a distraction from the mundane. The Dress was cited by CNN commentator Mel Robbins as a phenomenon that we are more likely to pay attention to due to its positivity bias, incorporating "awe, laughter and amusement" in the form of a light-hearted debate.¹⁸ It can also be noted that this group of posts does not have a distinct tie to a call to action. There is no greater goal in this

¹⁶ Moss, Caroline. "A man has tattooed the color-changing dress on his leg".

¹⁷ Jim Dalrymple II. "Politicians, Police, And Brands Have Weighed in On "The Dress"".

¹⁸ Robbins, Mel. "Why blue/black/white/gold dress went viral".

form of social media, other than to spread it around, cause debate and get more people seeing it. These types of posts, although valuable to the world of social media as a whole, are not the types of posts that need to be shared to cause a "greater good" for anyone.

The type of posts that should be discussed in the concept of promoting a "greater good" for individuals are not like the lighter, sharing-focused posts, similar to The Dress, but rather posts that elicit some form of call to action. Whether that's a share to promote a cause or issue, or a creation of new content to post and share your opinion on that cause or issue, these posts are less about amusement and more about spreading knowledge on important societal issues and increasing this spread of knowledge. These are the posts that are worth discussing for imposing the effort to create a "greater good" to society, and these are the style of posts and campaigns that will be discussed in the following section: Case Studies.

Case Studies

In order to answer the posed question of whether social media has to spread messages of goodwill in this day and age, listed below are a variety of case studies exploring the use of social media in campaigns that have "gone viral," meaning that they have spread quickly and widely among Internet users via social networking sites, email and other internet outlets.¹⁹ The variety of projects in this paper depict that social media has the potential to be used for promoting and pushing content that would not reach intended audiences otherwise.

Methodology:

Selection of Movements

The following cases were systematically chosen based on a set of criteria.²⁰ The first criterion is the virality of the content. Content for this project in particular needs to have spread to the point that a lot of people know about it, and are talking about it. For the study of this project, the concept of virality was quantified by the amount and variety of news articles written by reputable sources on the piece at hand, and those with the most content produced based on the initial content were selected. Having multiple sources per movement spreads the knowledge behind the movement even further, and will give readers varying insights into each movement. The second criterion has to do with that concept of "greater good." The greater good, for purposes of this study, relates to the perceived view of the person making their opinion heard through social media. Therefore, movements have been selected based on an expressed desire of

¹⁹ Nahon, Karine, and Jeff Hemsley. *Going Viral*.

²⁰ "Case Studies – How Many? How to Select?"

the content creator to make some form of significant change in something that they don't agree with in the world, and that they believe could be made better through their change. The third criterion has to do with obtaining a variety of movements from different aspects of life and the world. This project isn't solely about fighting prejudice, or spreading knowledge on specific diseases, or about motivating people to take power. Therefore, each case study has been selected in order to achieve a broad range of topics that people are discussing using social media to enact change. Through looking at social media movements with these lenses of focus in place, selecting the movements that compose this paper is made that much easier. Although it must be noted that it would be impossible to cover every topic in the existence of humanity, the viral content selected covers enough strokes that in total it would be able to cover a variety of general issues regarding health, politics, and racism, among others.

Layout of Case Studies

In order to intensively research each of these vastly different social media movements and place them all in the same framework of thinking, the following sections will describe a summary of the issue at hand, a description of how and why social media was used, the outcome and results of the movement, and emotional responses elicited by the viral content and issue. This method of interpretative analysis on the movements will provide a narrative for explaining the passion behind why people use social media to promote their causes, as well as the steps that they take to make their content go viral.

Studies

Case Study 1: Shooting of Neda Agha-Soltan in 2009 Iranian conflict

On June 20, 2009, Neda Agha-Soltan and her music teacher were en route to participate in the protests against the outcome of the 2009 Iranian presidential election in Tehran.²¹ A member of the Basij, the pro-government Iranian militia, shot her in the chest after stepping out of her car to escape the heat and survey the protests going on around her. A video of Agha-Soltan's shooting was recorded and found its way out of Iran, where it was uploaded to the websites of various media organizations, Facebook and YouTube. It was supposedly posted in the Netherlands by an Iranian asylum seeker. The asylum seeker received the video via Facebook through a friend in Tehran who was at the scene and recorded the video with his cell phone. The friend asked the seeker to post the video to the Internet so knowledge would be spread to the outside world about what was happening in Tehran, so the seeker did.²² The dramatic 40-second tape spread virally, quickly gaining the attention of international media and viewers. The incident was not originally reported by the state-controlled Iranian media, but was instead first reported on by international media. The video was shown on CNN and other news networks. Discussions about the incident on Twitter, using a hashtag of #neda, became one of the "trending topics" by the end of the date of the shooting. In Tehran, Neda posters were carried in demonstrations. In Los Angeles, Iranian-American women took

²¹ Daragahi, Borzou. "Family, friends mourn 'Neda,' Iranian woman who died on video".

²² Langendonck, Gert Van. Iconic Iran video was posted in the Netherlands.

to the streets with signs saying: "I am Neda." Agha-Soltan became an instant symbol of the antigovernment movement that was happening in Iran.²³

The George Polk Awards, one of the most important annual journalism prizes, honored the anonymous videographer of the death of Neda Agha-Soltan in 2010. "This award celebrates the fact that, in today's world, a brave bystander with a cellphone camera can use video-sharing and social networking sites to deliver news," said the New York Times' John Darnton, the curator of the Polk Awards. Calling the video an iconic image of the Iranian resistance, Darnton and the George Polk Awards claim that the video does indeed have major news value in this day and age.²⁴

Due to this video, and the numerous forms of outrage posted internationally over it, the Iranian government received massive diplomatic pressure from other governments and condemnation from media around the world to put an end to the post-election violence.²⁵ United States President Barack Obama was quoted after seeing the video as stating, "It's heartbreaking, and I think anyone who sees it knows there's something fundamentally unjust about it."²⁶ Even with the pressure from viewers, the media, and other nations, Iran continues its reign of terror against its own populace today. With the world's highest per capita execution rate, the regime has undertaken a systematic approach in regards to execution and torture against dissidents and anyone who dares stand up.²⁷ However, Agha-Soltan's death internationalized the Iranian

²³ Fathi, Nazila. "In a Death Seen Around the World, a Symbol of Iranian Protests."

²⁴ Bunz, Mercedes. "Anonymous Video of Neda Agha-Soltan's Death Wins Polk Award."

²⁵ Mayfield, Thomas D., III. A Commander's Strategy for Social Media.

²⁶ "Who Was Neda? Slain Woman an Unlikely Martyr."

²⁷ Panah, Hamid. "The Legacy of Neda Agha Soltan."

protest movement, and gained an outpouring of sympathy of viewers from across the globe.

In the recording of this video, the anonymous individual who recorded it wanted to do something huge. He wanted to show the world about the injustices that were happening in the Iranian community, and he wanted to cast light on the bloodshed that was occurring and not getting reported regularly. In doing this, he wanted some form of resolution to come. He wanted to create a greater good for himself and everyone else around him, and sharing this video through the Internet was a way that he could do just that.

Case Study 2: Washington Redskins' "Change the Mascot" Campaign

Many sports teams' names within the United States allude to Native Americans with a variety of endearment. However, Native American individuals, tribes and organizations have been questioning the usage of these names for decades. Even though 115 professional organizations have drafted resolutions or policies stating that the use of Native American names and symbols by non-native sports teams is a harmful form of ethnic stereotyping that promotes misunderstanding and prejudice, these Native American names are still prevalently used.²⁸ The "Braves" and the "Indians" are two teams in American Major League Baseball (MLB), and the "Chiefs" and the "Redskins" are two teams in the American National Football League (NFL). The term "Redskins" throughout the history of Europeans cohabitating North American land with Native Americans has been used as a racial slur, with Europeans referring to Native Americans

²⁸ Steinfeldt, Jesse, Lisa Thomas, and Mattie White. "Legislative Efforts to Eliminate Native-themed Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos: Slow but Steady Progress Post-APA Resolution."

as “dirty redskins.”²⁹ The Redskins franchise, based in Washington D.C. metropolitan area, receives the most public attention due to the name itself being defined as derogatory, as well as because the distinction of this team representing the nation's capital.

There has been controversy behind the name of the Washington D.C. NFL franchise since at least 1971, if not earlier. Local newspapers have published articles on the controversy since that time, all in response to Native American individuals or organizations asking for the name to be changed.³⁰ However, in 2013, a national campaign, referred to as “Change the Mascot,” was created by the Oneida Indian Nation to end the use of the term “redskins” as the mascot and name of the NFL team in Washington, D.C. This campaign was initiated in 2013 with a symposium on the topic at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the Native American in Washington D.C. The campaign then sponsored a series of radio advertisements, video postings on YouTube and calls to action on Twitter, Google+ and Facebook to get people all over the nation aware of their cause and getting them thinking about the connotations associated with the term “redskins.”³¹ Their efforts have generated buzz throughout social media, and are gaining traction in calling upon the NFL and NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell to bring an end to the usage of this controversial term.³² In 2013, a group of 61 religious leaders in Washington D.C. sent a letter to Goodell and team owner Dan Snyder stating their moral obligation to join the Change the Mascot movement due to the offensive and

²⁹ Shin, Anny. "Redskins Name Change Demanded at Smithsonian Forum."

³⁰ Steinberg, Dan. "The Great Redskins Name Debate of ... 1972?"

³¹ Brady, Erik. "Indian Tribe Launches Radio Ads against Redskins' Name."

³² "Change The Mascot - Launched By The Oneida Indian Nation."

inappropriate nature of the name.³³ In February 2014, Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., sent a letter telling Goodell that the league is on "the wrong side of history," stating that the term "redskins" has been determined to be a slur by every civil rights organization and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.³⁴

Even with this external pressure on the NFL and on the Washington Redskins Franchise, there is an amount of resistance. On October 30, 2013, a meeting between the Oneida Indian Nation and NFL Representatives occurred, the goal being to discuss the Redskins' name. According to Oneida spokesman Joel Barkin, the NFL Representatives defended the use of the name in question, stating that Snyder had no intention of changing the name of the team. Barkin was quoted as saying, "We are very disappointed. This is the beginning of a process. It's clear that they don't see how this is not a unifying term. They don't have a complete appreciation for the breadth of opposition of Native Americans to this mascot and name."³⁵ Even from this backlash of the NFL and the Redskins franchise, the Change the Mascot campaign is gaining traction and getting noticed. Most recently, the campaign has released a new ad that has the tagline "Take it away and it's still Washington football." The ad was funded using Kickstarter and was released ahead of Super Bowl XLIX, and funded Facebook promotion of the ad, hoping to generate a larger social media buzz.³⁶ The controversy has been covered in popular media, such as the Colbert Report and The Daily Show,

³³ Vargas, Theresa. "Faith Leaders Urge Redskins Owner Dan Snyder and NFL to Change Team's Name."

³⁴ "Lawmakers Send Letter to Roger Goodell about Redskins Name."

³⁵ Van Natta, Don. "Oneida, NFL Meet about 'Redskins'"

³⁶ Bryan, Alix. "Oneida Release Ad about Redskins Mascot: 'Take It Away and It's Still Washington Football'"

even having been parodied in an episode of South Park.³⁷ More and more people are becoming aware of the struggle behind this name, with popular culture's coverage of the debacle and the responses posted on social media, and it is only a matter of time to see what will happen next.

The Oneida Indian Nation saw something very wrong with the way that the Washington NFL franchise was being run. A name followed this team that was practically derogatory, and this name had some effects towards people that embraced their Native American culture. They defined the problem, created an ideal solution, and pushed it as hard as they could. They created a buzz that led to others becoming aware of the struggle, and pressuring the people who can make a change into doing just that. Even though it is just the name of a sports team, it would lead to a world to derogatory terms were not thrown around colloquially in the names of sports teams, which in itself would lead to a greater good for Native Americans and those adversely offended by the use of the term "Redskins."

Case Study 3: Actress Amandla Stenberg discussing cultural appropriation in Hollywood "Don't Cash Crop My Cornrows"

Amandla Stenberg is an American actress, best known for her role as Rue in 2012's *The Hunger Games*.³⁸ The actress has recently decided to use her fame to start discussion on an issue that she sees as important. In January 2015, the sixteen-year-old and a classmate created a video for a history class where she asks the question: "What

³⁷ Burke, Timothy. "South Park Trashes The Washington Redskins; Watch The Highlights."

³⁸ Phillips, Jevon. "'Hunger Games' Star on 'Colombiana' and Life on the Set."

would America be like if we loved black people as much as black culture?"³⁹ She starts off her film discussing the subject of hair, discussing the style of cornrows and black artists who made the style popular, such as Beyoncé, Alicia Keys, and R. Kelly.⁴⁰ She then goes on to make the claim that some celebrities have adopted aspects of black culture into their style in order to gain more attention for being edgy. She cites specific artists who have appropriated fashion, slang and hairstyles that have long been used by black artists, including Miley Cyrus, Macklemore, and Taylor Swift. She gives the term "appropriation" a definition, stating that it occurs when "a style leads to racist generalizations or stereotypes where it originated, but is deemed as high fashion, cool, or funny when the privileged take it for themselves." She goes on to state that even though privileged people are appropriating her culture, they are not discussing the serious issues in black culture, including the recent shootings of Michael Brown, Eric Garner and Tamir Rice.⁴¹ She posted the video on her Tumblr account in January 2015, which clocks in at around four-and-a-half minutes, but began to pick up steam in April, eventually going viral.

The video, which Stenberg posted on her Tumblr blog three months ago, received almost 59,000 notes apart from being relentlessly shared thousands of times over other social media platforms like YouTube and Twitter.⁴² Due to the virality of this video, people started discussing some of the issues behind the topics discussed in Stenberg's video. The Hollywood Reporter's Ryan Gajewski wrote an article on the

³⁹ Workneh, Lilly. "16-year-old Amandla Stenberg Schools Everyone On Cultural Appropriation In This Powerful Video."

⁴⁰ *Amandla Stenberg: Don't Cash Crop On My Cornrows.*

⁴¹ Frazier, Charise. "'Hunger Games' Star Amandla Stenberg: 'Don't Cash Crop My Cornrows'"

⁴² Malara, Marilyn. "'Hunger Games' Actress Talks Cultural Appropriation in Viral Video."

video, claiming that the actress is trying to "criticize" artists, particularly Taylor Swift, for their "'rampant' appropriation of black culture."⁴³ However, in response, she made the following post on her Twitter account: "This is not a petty criticism of Taylor Swift, who [sic], btw [sic], I love, this is about creating a dialogue between races."

Through her video, Stenberg has created a consistent buzz on the issue at hand, with countless news outlets posting stories on the video, and individuals sharing their opinions on the video, as well. The video has both its supporters and its critics, but regardless, the video is achieving her goal of creating a dialogue for what she sees as being a very important issue.

Through something as straightforward as critiquing a class on black culture and how white people appropriate it, Stenberg had a much larger impact on racial debate than she likely intended. However, there were some very real sentiments behind the feelings expressed in her video. A lack of appropriation of her culture by white people could lend itself to her being able to freely express herself without fear of judgment. Not having others appropriate her culture would lend itself not only for her, but also for her community as a black woman. She posted this video to give her opinion on what a greater good would mean for her, and the society surrounding her took notice and started talking.

Case Study 4: Ricky Gervais tweeting picture of woman with dead giraffe

Ricky Gervais is an English comedian and actor who has starred in TV shows and films such as *The Office* and *Extras*, and is famous for doing stand-up comedy.

⁴³ Gajewski, Ryan. "'Hunger Games' Star Criticizes Taylor Swift, Madonna for 'Rampant' Appropriation of Black Culture."

However, Gervais does what he can to bring attention to the things that matter most to him, mainly through supporting animal rights. He was named PETA's Person Of The Year in 2013 for his opposition to animal testing and criticism of hunting and has stated that he will leave his fortune to animal charities.⁴⁴ Most recently, Gervais is taking his efforts and standing up for giraffes, by publicly shaming the people who hunt them.⁴⁵ He took to Twitter, writing the following message: "What must've happened to you in your life to make you want to kill a beautiful animal & then lie next to it smiling?" With that message, he posted a photo of TV personality and hunter Rebecca Francis lying next to a giraffe that she shot. This message was retweeted over 49,000 times, being shared all across the world.⁴⁶

Francis, who grew up in Utah, was the winner of the reality television series *Extreme Huntress*. She learned how to hunt from an early age and has killed wild animals including a brown bear, moose, antelopes, zebra, wildebeest and a lynx. She shoots her prey with various types of weaponry, and has posted numerous snaps of her kill on her personal Facebook page.⁴⁷

Since Gervais' message was posted, Francis said she's received thousands of death threats from his loyal fans. She was quoted as saying, "Ricky Gervais used his power and influence to set off a firestorm against women in the hunting industry."⁴⁸

However, there are two sides to the "firestorm" at hand. Francis also has the backing of other hunters and people who agree with the reasons of why she shot the giraffe,

⁴⁴ D'Estries, Michael. "Ricky Gervais To Leave Fortune To Animal Charities."

⁴⁵ Sola, Katie. "Ricky Gervais Takes A Shot At Giraffe Hunters, Sets Off 'Firestorm' On Twitter."

⁴⁶ Gervais, Ricky (rickygervais). "What must've happened to you in your life to make you want to kill a beautiful animal & then lie next to it smiling?"

⁴⁷ Barnett, Helen. "Female Hunter Sent DEATH THREATS after Posing with Dead Giraffe."

⁴⁸ Sola, Katie. "Ricky Gervais Takes A Shot At Giraffe Hunters, Sets Off 'Firestorm' On Twitter."

claiming that she was asked to do it by villagers so the old bull giraffe could be preserved for food.⁴⁹

Regardless of the outcome of posting the tweet in question, Gervais' post brought on a discussion about the act of hunting animals for sport. It sparked the debate of the moral question of whether this act of sport was right to do, as well as the question regarding Francis' intention in both shooting the giraffe and posing for the picture with the giraffe. The opinions that people hold in all of these questions are varied, but nonetheless, the topic was brought front and center with Gervais' celebrity pushing the message out to his fans. Fans of Gervais had to ask themselves where they stood in this moral debate, and that's probably all that Gervais himself wanted in doing this.

Although it was just a tweet by a comedian, there were some very real sentiments behind the tweet that Gervais made of Rebecca Francis. Being the animal activist that he is, it can be assumed that he does not like seeing animals senselessly hurt or killed. For him, a greater good in this world would likely mean a place where people did not kill animals solely for sport. In posting this tweet, he did his part in making his dream a reality through sparking a conversation, and through making people decide where they stood in the debate of whether or not it is okay to kill endangered animals for sport. Although the question comes into play of whether or not Gervais intended for this debate to happen, the answer does not necessarily matter. The fact that debate was sparked, regardless of the content creator's desire, created buzz on the topic that emphasized focus on the topic. He took the steps, with his celebrity status, to start a

⁴⁹ Selby, Jenn. "Rebecca Francis, the Giraffe Hunter Lambasted by Ricky Gervais, Says She Does Not Regret Killing Animal 'for One Second'"

conversation on a very important topic, which has the potential, if thought out, to make the world a better place.

Case Study 5: KONY 2012

Joseph Kony is an African cult and militia leader, indicted war criminal and the International Criminal Court fugitive, who has, along with his militia, forcefully recruited child soldiers and conquered various regions in northern Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan.⁵⁰ Invisible Children Inc., an organization that prided itself on stopping the use of child soldiers and authors of the book *Invisible Children*, created a short film to promote the organization's "Stop Kony" movement to make Kony globally known in order to have him arrested by the end of 2012.⁵¹ The film advocates the restoration of social order and curtailing compelled and coerced youth military service, concluding by urging viewers to join its publicity campaign by putting up posters and helping out in their communities.⁵²

The film gained worldwide attention, gaining over 100 million views on YouTube as of February 2015.⁵³ A poll that was later conducted suggested that more than half of young adult Americans heard about Kony 2012 in the days following the video's release.⁵⁴ It was included among the top international events of 2012 by PBS and called the most viral video ever by TIME Magazine.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Myers, Julia. "A Call for Justice."

⁵¹ Molloy, Mark. "KONY 2012: Campaign Shedding Light on Uganda Conflict a Huge Online Success."

⁵² Nelson, Sara. "Kony 2012: Invisible Children Documentary Sheds Light On Uganda Conflict (VIDEO)."

⁵³ "KONY 2012." YouTube.

⁵⁴ Rainie, Lee. "The Viral Kony 2012 Video."

⁵⁵ Carbone, Nick. "Kony 2012 | Top 10 Everything: Arts & Entertainment | TIME.com."

The film sparked controversy regarding its merits, with opinions being expressed by Non-governmental organization (NGO) workers, government and international officials, journalists, and other groups and individuals.⁵⁶ Journalist Nicholas D. Kristof praised Invisible Children for the creation of the film, making the argument that rather than being "white man's burden", when "a warlord continues to kill and torture across a swath of Congo and Central African Republic ... it's a human burden." He also said that lack of understanding had long been "a leading excuse for inaction during atrocities" and that Kony remains a large threat in Uganda's neighbor countries, so the simplicity of the film "has left the American public more informed" than it would be otherwise, and that if he "were a Congolese villager", he would "welcome these uncertain efforts over the sneering scorn of do-nothing armchair cynics."⁵⁷ However, since the video's release, Invisible Children has come under criticism for attempting to oversimplify events in the region and has been accused of engaging in what is known as "slacktivism", in which one donates or takes actions that have little to no effect beyond making one feel like one contributed.⁵⁸ While the campaign promotes global activism, it has been criticized for providing a black-and-white picture rather than encouraging the viewers to learn about the situation.⁵⁹

However, even with all of the positive feedback and negative criticism on the video, some movement was made on the situation due to the video's creation. On March 23, 2012, the African Union (AU) announced its intentions to send an international

⁵⁶ "Efforts to Arrest Joseph Kony Must Respect Human Rights."

⁵⁷ Kristof, Nicholas. "Viral Video, Vicious Warlord."

⁵⁸ Bailyn, Evan. "The Difference Between Slacktivism And Activism: How 'Kony 2012' Is Narrowing The Gap."

⁵⁹ DeWaal, Alex. "Don't Elevate Kony."

brigade of 5,000 military troops "from Uganda, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Congo, countries where Kony's reign of terror has been felt over the years [...] to join the hunt for rebel leader Joseph Kony" and to "neutralize" him.⁶⁰ According to the statement, the mission commenced on March 24, 2012 and the search "will last until Kony is caught," after which the task force will be disbanded.⁶¹ In the United States, Senators Jim Inhofe and Chris Coons put forward a resolution "condemning Joseph Kony and his ruthless guerrilla group for a 26-year campaign of terror." The resolution stated that it would back "the effort of Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and the newest country, South Sudan, to stop Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army", along with an official statement of support "for the U.S. effort to help regional forces pursue commanders of the militia group."⁶²

The buzz that followed the creation of this video was astounding, and led to vast knowledge on an issue that few knew about prior. This knowledge created a push for action in terms of Joseph Kony's regime and the influx of interest led to an encouragement in the political sphere. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said the agency welcomed the "unprecedented" initiative to "end the atrocities" of Joseph Kony and urged all involved to respect human rights and minimize risk to civilians.⁶³ The ICC chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo voiced confidence that the video will "produce the arrest of Joseph

⁶⁰ Muhumuza, Rodney. "Kony 2012: African Union Ramps up Hunt for Uganda Rebel Leader in Wake of Viral Video | Toronto Star."

⁶¹ Urquhart, Conal. "Joseph Kony: African Union Brigade to Hunt down LRA Leader."

⁶² Cassata, Donna. "Senate Pushes Measure Condemning Kony."

⁶³ Alpert, Emily. "Kony Militia Steps up Attacks in Congo, Central African Republic."

Kony this year," adding: "That is the impact of the campaign."⁶⁴ Although, in actuality, Kony has still yet to be arrested, this campaign has given people the knowledge of Kony's atrocities and given the situation, keeping it fresh in everyone's mind.

Invisible Children Inc. has had a mission long before the creation of the KONY 2012 film. They have wanted to save children from having to participate in wars that they do not need to participate in, and see themselves as making the world a better place through doing this. With the KONY 2012 movement being one of their most viral tactics, they have used their power to give people knowledge on the issues so that they can do what they can to make the world a better place.

Case Study 6: The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge

Pat Quinn, of Yonkers, New York, was diagnosed with ALS, or Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease in 2013. In order to raise money and awareness about the disease, which has no cure, he launched a campaign on social media with the help of his friend, former Boston College baseball captain Pete Frates, who also has ALS.⁶⁵ This campaign became known as the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. Within 24 hours of being challenged, participants in the challenge must record a video of themselves in continuous footage. First, they are to announce their acceptance of the challenge followed by pouring ice into a bucket of water. Then, the bucket is to be lifted and poured over the participant's head. Then the participant can nominate a minimum of

⁶⁴ "Viral Video Will Ensure Kony Arrest This Year: ICC Prosecutor."

⁶⁵ Cary, Bill. "Reaction Overwhelms Ice Bucket Challenge Creator."

three other people to participate in the challenge. Whether people choose to donate, perform the challenge, or do both varies.⁶⁶

In 2014, the Ice Bucket Challenge went viral on social media, particularly in the United States, with people, celebrities, politicians and athletes posting videos of themselves online and on TV participating in the event.⁶⁷ According to The New York Times, people shared more than 1.2 million videos on Facebook between June 1 and August 13 and mentioned the phenomenon more than 2.2 million times on Twitter between July 29 and August 17.⁶⁸

With all of this mentioning, a number of criticisms have arisen relating to the campaign, accusing it of being self-congratulatory, focusing primarily on fun rather than donating money to charity, and substituting a trivial activity for more genuine involvement in charitable activities.⁶⁹ There have also been questions as to where the funds donated to the ALS Association are actually going.⁷⁰ There have also been some negative connotations associated with the focus on the stunt as opposed to the donation, oversexualization of the challenge, and a misuse of precious water for the challenge.⁷¹

However, after the Ice Bucket Challenge went viral on social media, public awareness and charitable donations to ALS charities soared. Within weeks of the challenge going viral, The New York Times reported that the ALS Association had

⁶⁶ Donguines, Arvin. "Ice Bucket Challenge Rules Explained: How Challenge Helps ALS, Lou Gehrig's Disease Charities?"

⁶⁷ "Obama Rejects ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, Will Donate To Charity Instead."

⁶⁸ Steel, Emily. "'Ice Bucket Challenge' Has Raised Millions for ALS Association."

⁶⁹ Pardes, Arielle. "Dumping a Bucket of Ice on Your Head Does Not Make You a Philanthropist | VICE | United States."

⁷⁰ Knox, Caylon. "Lance Storm Shares His Thoughts On The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge."

⁷¹ Klimas, Liz. "Someone Actually Calculated How Much Water Has Been Used for All Those 'Ice Bucket Challenges' - and It's a Lot More Than You Probably Thought."

received \$41.8 million in donations from July 29 until August 21.⁷² More than 739,000 new donors have given money to the association, which is more than double the \$19.4 million the association received during the year that ended January 31, 2013. On August 29, the ALS Association announced that their total donations since July 29 had exceeded \$100 million.⁷³

In total, even though the campaign had its criticisms, it still achieved the goal that the founder of the campaign had in mind. It raised more money for the ALS Association than ever previously thought possible. The campaign reached thousands of people, and at least made them more aware of ALS, if they did not donate to the campaign themselves. Making people aware of the disease, at least in the eyes of the founders, was the goal, and would make the world a better place because more funding is being put towards fighting this disease. Even if all the donated funds do not go directly to ALS research, this awareness makes people more privy to something that is affecting many people, with approximately 5,600 people being diagnosed with the disease each year⁷⁴. Therefore this campaign did its part in changing the viewpoint of society for the greater good.

Case Study 7: #YesAllWomen

Following a May 2014 killing spree in Isla Vista, California that left six people dead and thirteen others wounded, the killer's misogynistic tendencies and hatred of women was cited as a factor in his crimes.⁷⁵ In the wake of these killings, some Twitter

⁷² Steel, Emily. "Ice Bucket Challenge' Donations for A.L.S. Research Top \$41 Million."

⁷³ "The ALS Association Expresses Sincere Gratitude to Over Three Million Donors."

⁷⁴ "Facts You Should Know." The ALS Association.

⁷⁵ "A Killer's Manifesto Reveals Wide Reach Of Misogyny Online."

users made the argument that "not all men" are like this, or would commit such crimes through the use of the hashtag, "#NotAllMen."⁷⁶ In reaction to the hashtag "#NotAllMen", an anonymous female Twitter user then created "#YesAllWomen" to express that all women are affected by sexism and misogyny, even though not all men are sexist, and the hashtag quickly became used by women throughout social media to share their experiences of sexism and harassment over the Internet.⁷⁷

Within four days of the first use of #YesAllWomen, the hashtag had been tweeted 1.2 million times, by women sharing their stories and by men sharing their support.⁷⁸ "What men have to really understand is what we are doing is connecting the dots — the acceptance of everyday misogyny," Terry O'Neill, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), told Mashable. "The point of the hashtag is that ... it doesn't take much for a sense of entitlement translate into violence. We see that directly in rape."⁷⁹

However, some criticism still stands to the use of this hashtag. Samantha Levine, a columnist at The Daily Beast, wrote that conflating dress code restrictions and men whistling at women with the Isla Vista killings risks women who have been victims of violence not being taken seriously when they use the hashtag.⁸⁰ Journalist Emily Shire has criticized some #YesAllWomen tweets as trivial in the context of the Isla Vista killings, questioning the larger concepts that are most famously used with the

⁷⁶ Grinberg, Emanuella. "Why #YesAllWomen Took off on Twitter."

⁷⁷ Vendituoli, Monica. "#NotAllMen, but #YesAllWomen: Campus Tragedy Spurs Debate on Sexual Violence."

⁷⁸ Grinberg, Emanuella. "Why #YesAllWomen Took off on Twitter."

⁷⁹ Pachal, Pete. "How the #YesAllWomen Hashtag Began."

⁸⁰ Levine, Samantha. "Not All Sexism Is Equal."

hashtag in comparison to the origin of what the hashtag was originally meant to accomplish.⁸¹

#YesAllWomen reflected a grassroots campaign in which women shared their personal stories about harassment and discrimination, attempting to raise awareness of sexism that women experience, often from people they know.⁸² This movement has the potential to translate the inspirational stories people have been brave enough to share into positive changes in the treatment of women. Regardless or not the content being shared is actually achieving this goal, it is stimulating conversation on the topic, and bringing it to the forefront of people's minds.

The #YesAllWomen movement started conversations about some very difficult topics. However, conversing about these topics made women feel unified, and gave them strength in sharing their stories, making them feel not alone. The greater good in the eyes of these women is what gives them the strength to move on from their past experiences and move forward into a world where women are treated equally. This is a greater good for these women, and standing in solidarity helps them achieve just that.

⁸¹ Shire, Emily. "#YesAllWomen Has Jumped the Shark."

⁸² Shu, Catherine. "#YesAllWomen Shows That Misogyny Is Everyone's Problem."

Discussion

The case studies discussed throughout this research bring up a variety of ideas that lend themselves to the idea behind a "greater good." People go online constantly to share ideas and make their opinions and cases known to the world, hoping that their idea will have an impact larger than themselves. Although there are obstacles that prevent absolute changes from happening, such as conflicts, misinterpretations, and questions in motives behind actions, the case studies mentioned above have enough power to break the mold of so many Internet posts before them and have some form of impact on the issue they are trying to solve, even if it is simply through awareness.

Social media is a very powerful tool that can be used for a variety of means. The main aspect that it can be used for is connection. This connection can be between users and family, friends and even potentially the rest of the world. This connection to the world is something that has never been able to happen instantaneously with media before, and the invention of the Internet and the creation of social media and social networking have lent themselves to creating a platform where people can spread ideas to the point where they go viral. From here is the birthplace of the idea behind this writing. People can use these recently developed tools to share their messages across the world and create a "greater good." However, with how new of a medium social media is, it does not have an absolute impact on our actions. Its influence is increasing at a steady pace, however, it has yet to reach the point where it is the sole factor in deciding what we say or do with ourselves. All of the case studies above were not completely and totally resolved. There is still plenty of injustice in the Iranian government. There is still discontent in the name of the NFL's Washington franchise. There are still racial,

gendered and political injustices occurring all over the world. People are using social media to try and put a stop to these terrible acts, but social media alone isn't a solution to some of these big problems. However, it does lend itself to a sense of awareness for all of these issues. Because of the connection we all share with other people all over the world in social media, we are able to know about what's happening outside of our lives almost instantaneously. This gives us the power to see what we don't like in the world more easily, and gives us the unique ability to make an effort to change it.

The case studies listed were all very effective in bringing awareness to individuals on topics that they would not have otherwise known about. However, in the case studies regarding Ricky Gervais and Amandla Stenberg, it should be noted that the initiators of the viral content are referred to as celebrities in modern society. They had fans prior to their social activism, and will continue to have fans regardless of the situations presented in the case studies. These fans also held their part in spreading the message presented by the celebrity. Without the fame of the celebrity, there is a chance that the message would not have gotten the spread that it did. This celebrity status is something that cannot be ignored in the spread of viral content. It plays its role in this spread, more so in the Gervais and Stenberg cases than others.

The second aspect of all of the case studies mentioned has to do with the spread of the content. For each case study, there was some aspect of disagreement in the aftermath of the content's initial presentation. There was a spark of debate in each study, which in essence led to the spread of the study. This debate led to the content being spread even further, with people sharing the information to all their friends, and leading to people arguing over who is right and wrong in the issues behind the content. Even

though some of the content did not have equal backing on both sides of the argument at hand, each case study had someone stating that there was a problem with the content, that it was not right in all aspects and that it was worth talking about the discrepancies at hand. This worth of discussing the discrepancies of the content is what, in part, caused the media in question to spread as far and wide as it did. The disagreement in these studies hinders the supporters of the motion from moving forward with their agreements. However, these disagreements lend themselves to a factual basis for support. People, in argument, need to know how to defend what they are supporting, whether that's through opinion or fact. These debates, even though they do take away from the overarching goal, make the supporters that much stronger because they need to know why they are defending issues in order to defend them to the best of their abilities.

It can be seen that the reasons content spreads can be articulated as being debate on the issue behind the content along with a willingness to discuss the issue in question. These two ideas, although not directly related in themselves to a concrete change of action, increase awareness on the topics being discussed, regardless of whether or not that awareness is topical or more in-depth. There is no concrete formula for how to achieve absolute change through virality, and the content provided in this project cannot begin to make assumptions as to how one could obtain this formula. With further research and data related to these case studies to measure the effectiveness of the content used in the action of promoting in the greater good in terms of the situation at hand, a clearer connection could potentially be made. There are many different factors that lead to content being viral: the issues behind the content, the audience viewing the content, the willingness of the audience to start spreading the content, and from there

the list goes on. Regardless, social media is a tool that can be used to build awareness around an issue worldwide. In order for one to create a greater good for society, they need to start on some platform, because word of mouth can only go so far. Social media is a platform that one can use to connect with millions of others around the world almost instantaneously, and is arguably the easiest way in today's society to voice an opinion and get other people hearing about it. Whether people agree with that opinion or not is relative. Nothing can be solved with a social media post, but with social media, steps can be made in the right direction.

In total, social media has potential to do many things. You can share what happens to you in your daily life. You can talk about what happens with your friends and your family. But, you can also share your opinions on what you think should change in the grander scheme of the world. Anyone can make some form of impact through a post on social media, whether that impact is large or small. Through sharing one's opinions about what is happening in the world, and if those opinions are negative, what can be done to make them positive, the world of social media can be made a more open and honest place where people can share opinions, and debate on important topics of matter at hand. Social media has the potential to create a "greater good" in the eyes of anyone that wants to create it, with the right opinions or facts backing up what they see the "greater good" as being. Social media, unlike any other media, has the potential to spread like wildfire, and an opinion can be shared and digested across the world, instantly. Social media could have the power to change the world; it's only a matter of how you choose to use it.

Bibliography

- "A Killer's Manifesto Reveals Wide Reach Of Misogyny Online." NPR. NPR, 27 May 2014. Web. Accessed February 23, 2015.
- Alpert, Emily. "Kony Militia Steps up Attacks in Congo, Central African Republic." LA Times. 30 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed February 17, 2015.
- Amandla Stenberg: Don't Cash Crop On My Cornrows. Perf. Amandla Stenberg, Azealia Banks. YouTube, 2015. Film.
- Bailyn, Evan. "The Difference Between Slacktivism And Activism: How 'Kony 2012' Is Narrowing The Gap." The Huffington Post. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 19 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed February 17, 2015.
- Barnett, Helen. "Female Hunter Sent DEATH THREATS after Posing with Dead Giraffe." Daily Express. Northern and Shell Media Publications, April 14, 2015. Web. Accessed April 30, 2015.
- Bennett, Shea. "Social Media Business Statistics, Facts, Figures & Trends 2014 [INFOGRAPHIC]." SocialTimes. April 25, 2014. Accessed May 18, 2015.
- Bivins, Thomas H. Mixed Media Moral Distinctions in Advertising, Public Relations, and Journalism. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 2004. Print.
- Brady, Erik. "Indian Tribe Launches Radio Ads against Redskins' Name." USA Today. 5 Sept. 2013. Web. Accessed 15 Feb. 2015.
- Bryan, Alix. "Oneida Release Ad about Redskins Mascot: 'Take It Away and It's Still Washington Football'" WTVR.com. WTVR, 23 Jan. 2015. Web. Accessed 9 Mar. 2015.
- Bunz, Mercedes. "Anonymous Video of Neda Agha-Soltan's Death Wins Polk Award." The Guardian 16 Feb. 2010. Guardian News and Media Limited. Web. Accessed 7 Mar. 2015.
- Burke, Timothy. "South Park Trashes The Washington Redskins; Watch The Highlights." Deadspin. 24 Sept. 2014. Web. Accessed 17 Feb. 2015.
- Carbone, Nick. "Kony 2012 | Top 10 Everything: Arts & Entertainment | TIME.com." TIME Magazine. Entertainment Arts, 4 Dec. 2012. Web. Accessed 16 Feb. 2015.
- Cary, Bill. "Reaction Overwhelms Ice Bucket Challenge Creator." USA Today. Gannett, 19 Aug. 2014. Web. Accessed 3 Mar. 2015.

- "Case Studies – How Many? How to Select?" Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association. AVETRA, 1 Jan. 2011. Web. Accessed 1 Mar. 2015.
- Cassata, Donna. "Senate Pushes Measure Condemning Kony." Boston.com. The New York Times, 21 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 17 Feb. 2015.
- "Change The Mascot - Launched By The Oneida Indian Nation." ChangeTheMascot.org. Web. Accessed 12 Nov. 2014.
- "Company Info | Facebook Newsroom." Facebook Newsroom. Web. Accessed 18 Mar. 2015.
- Cutler, Andrew. "Methodical Failure: The Use of Case Study Method by Public Relations Researchers." *Public Relations Review* (2004): 365-75. Print.
- Daragahi, Borzou (23 June 2009). "Family, friends mourn 'Neda,' Iranian woman who died on video". Los Angeles Times.
- Deitchman, Alyssa. "Wait, What? On Social Network Use and Attention." Department of Applied Psychology | NYU Steinhardt. 2010. Accessed May 18, 2015.
- D'Estries, Michael. "Ricky Gervais To Leave Fortune To Animal Charities." Ecorazzi. 10 Mar. 2010. Web. Accessed 30 Apr. 2015.
- DeWaal, Alex. "Don't Elevate Kony." World Peace Foundation. 10 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 17 Feb. 2015.
- Donguines, Arvin. "Ice Bucket Challenge Rules Explained: How Challenge Helps ALS, Lou Gehrig's Disease Charities?" Christian Post. 28 Aug. 2014. Web. Accessed 1 Mar. 2015.
- "Efforts to Arrest Joseph Kony Must Respect Human Rights." Amnesty International. 8 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 16 Feb. 2015.
- Evans, Dave. *Social Media Marketing an Hour a Day*. Indianapolis, Ind.: Wiley, 2008. Print.
- "Facts You Should Know." The ALS Association. Accessed May 19, 2015.
- Fathi, Nazila. "In a Death Seen Around the World, a Symbol of Iranian Protests." The New York Times 22 June 2009. Web.
- Frazier, Charise. "'Hunger Games' Star Amandla Stenberg: 'Don't Cash Crop My Cornrows'" NBC News. 16 Apr. 2015. Web. Accessed 29 Apr. 2015.

- Gajewski, Ryan. "Hunger Games' Star Criticizes Taylor Swift, Madonna for "Rampant" Appropriation of Black Culture." *The Hollywood Reporter*. 16 Apr. 2015. Web. Accessed 29 Apr. 2015.
- Gervais, Ricky (rickygervais). "What must've happened to you in your life to make you want to kill a beautiful animal & then lie next to it smiling?" 13 Apr. 2015, 2:16 a.m. Tweet
- George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 2005. Print.
- Gliner, Jeffrey A., George A. Morgan, and Nancy L. Leech. *Research Methods in Applied Settings: An Integrated Approach to Design and Analysis*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000. Print.
- Grinberg, Emanuella. "Why #YesAllWomen Took off on Twitter." CNN. Cable News Network, 27 May 2014. Web. Accessed 23 Feb. 2015.
- Jenkins, Henry, and Sam Ford. *Spreadable Media Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*. New York: New York UP, 2013. Print.
- Jim Dalrymple II. "Politicians, Police, And Brands Have Weighed in On "The Dress"". *Buzzfeed.com*.
- Kaplan, Andreas M., and Michael Haenlein. "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53 (1) (2010), pp. 59–68
- Klimas, Liz. "Someone Actually Calculated How Much Water Has Been Used for All Those 'Ice Bucket Challenges' - and It's a Lot More Than You Probably Thought." *The Blaze*. TheBlaze Inc., 19 Aug. 2014. Web. Accessed 3 Mar. 2015.
- Knox, Caylon. "Lance Storm Shares His Thoughts On The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge." *Wrestling News Source*. 2 Sept. 2014. Web. Accessed 4 Mar. 2015.
- "KONY 2012." YouTube. YouTube, 5 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 16 Feb. 2015.
- Kristof, Nicholas. "Viral Video, Vicious Warlord." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 14 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 17 Feb. 2015.
- Langendonck, Gert Van (23 June 2009). Iconic Iran video was posted in the Netherlands. *NRC Handelsblad*.
- "Lawmakers Send Letter to Roger Goodell about Redskins Name." *NFL.com*. The Associated Press, 10 Feb. 2014. Web. Accessed 6 Mar. 2015

- Levine, Samantha. "Not All Sexism Is Equal." *The Daily Beast*. Newsweek/Daily Beast, 27 May 2014. Web. Accessed 25 Feb. 2015.
- Malara, Marilyn. "'Hunger Games' Actress Talks Cultural Appropriation in Viral Video." UPI. 17 Apr. 2015. Web. Accessed 3 May 2015.
- Mayfield, Thomas D., III. *A Commander's Strategy for Social Media*. NDU Press, Spring 2011.
- Molloy, Mark. "KONY 2012: Campaign Shedding Light on Uganda Conflict a Huge Online Success." *Metro.co.uk*. Associated Newspapers Limited, 7 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 16 Feb. 2015.
- Moody, Mia. "Jon and Kate Plus 8: A Case Study of Social Media and Image Repair Tactics." *Public Relations Review* (2011): 405-14. Print.
- Morrison, Kimberlee. "The Growth of Social Media: From Passing Trend to International Obsession [Infographic] - SocialTimes." *SocialTimes*. Mediabistro, 27 Jan. 2014. Web. Accessed 13 Nov. 2014.
- Moss, Caroline (2 March 2015). "A man has tattooed the color-changing dress on his leg". *Business Insider*. Business Insider Inc.
- Muhumuza, Rodney. "Kony 2012: African Union Ramps up Hunt for Uganda Rebel Leader in Wake of Viral Video | Toronto Star." *Thestar.com*. 23 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 17 Feb. 2015.
- Myers, Julia. "A Call for Justice." *The Kentucky Kernel*. 7 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 17 Feb. 2015.
- Nahon, Karine, and Jeff Hemsley. *Going Viral*. Polity, 2013. Print.
- Nelson, Sara. "Kony 2012: Invisible Children Documentary Sheds Light On Uganda Conflict (VIDEO)." *The Huffington Post UK*. AOL (UK) Limited, 3 July 2012. Web. Accessed 16 Feb. 2015.
- "Obama Rejects ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, Will Donate To Charity Instead." *CBS DC*. 13 Aug. 2014. Web. Accessed 2 Mar 2015.
- O'Reilly, Tim. (2005-09-30). *What Is Web 2.0?* O'Reilly Network, <http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html>.
- Pachal, Pete. "How the #YesAllWomen Hashtag Began." *Mashable*. 26 May 2014. Web. Accessed 24 Feb. 2015.

- Panah, Hamid. "The Legacy of Neda Agha Soltan." Organization of Iranian American Communities. OIAC, 24 Jan. 2015. Web. Accessed 3 Feb. 2015.
- Pardes, Arielle. "Dumping a Bucket of Ice on Your Head Does Not Make You a Philanthropist | VICE | United States." VICE. 13 Aug. 2014. Web. Accessed 4 Mar. 2015.
- Phillips, Jevon. "'Hunger Games' Star on 'Colombiana' and Life on the Set." LaTimes.com. 23 Sept. 2011. Web. Accessed 6 Apr. 2015.
- Rainie, Lee. "The Viral Kony 2012 Video." Pew Research Center's Internet American Life Project RSS. 14 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 16 Feb. 2015.
- Robbins, Mel (28 February 2015). "Why blue/black/white/gold dress went viral". CNN.
- Selby, Jenn. "Rebecca Francis, the Giraffe Hunter Lambasted by Ricky Gervais, Says She Does Not Regret Killing Animal 'for One Second'" The Independent. Independent Digital News and Media, 16 Apr. 2015. Web. Accessed 30 Apr. 2015.
- Shin, Annys. "Redskins Name Change Demanded at Smithsonian Forum." Washington Post. The Washington Post, 7 Feb. 2013. Web. Accessed 15 Nov. 2014.
- Shire, Emily. "#YesAllWomen Has Jumped the Shark." The Daily Beast. Newsweek/Daily Beast, 27 May 2014. Web. Accessed 25 Feb. 2015.
- Shu, Catherine. "#YesAllWomen Shows That Misogyny Is Everyone's Problem." TechCrunch. 26 May 2014. Web. Accessed 24 Feb. 2015.
- Smith, Aaron. "Why Americans Use Social Media." PewResearch Internet Project (2011): n. pag. Pew Research. Web.
- "Social Media | Definition of Social Media." Merriam-Webster. Merriam-Webster. Web. Accessed 1 Feb. 2015.
- Sola, Katie. "Ricky Gervais Takes A Shot At Giraffe Hunters, Sets Off 'Firestorm' On Twitter." The Huffington Post. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 15 Apr. 2015. Web. Accessed 30 Apr. 2015.
- Stafford, Tom. "Psychology: Why Bad News Dominates the Headlines." BBC Future. BBC, 28 July 2014. Web. Accessed 28 Feb. 2015.
- Steel, Emily. "'Ice Bucket Challenge' Donations for A.L.S. Research Top \$41 Million." The New York Times. The New York Times, 21 Aug. 2014. Web. Accessed 3 Mar. 2015.

- Steel, Emily. "'Ice Bucket Challenge' Has Raised Millions for ALS Association." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 17 Aug. 2014. Web. Accessed 2 Mar. 2015.
- Steinberg, Dan. "The Great Redskins Name Debate of ... 1972?" *The Washington Post* 3 June 2014. Web. Accessed 13 Jan. 2015.
- Steinfeldt, Jesse, Lisa Thomas, and Mattie White. "Legislative Efforts to Eliminate Native-themed Mascots, Nicknames, and Logos: Slow but Steady Progress Post-APA Resolution." *American Psychological Association*. Apa.org, 1 Aug. 2010. Web. Accessed 3 Feb. 2015.
- Takeda, Allison. "Amandla Stenberg Perfectly Schools Everyone on Cultural Appropriation: Watch." *US Weekly*. 16 Apr. 2015. Web. Accessed 28 Apr. 2015.
- "The ALS Association Expresses Sincere Gratitude to Over Three Million Donors." *The ALS Association*. 29 Aug. 2014. Web. Accessed 2 Mar. 2015.
- Urquhart, Conal. "Joseph Kony: African Union Brigade to Hunt down LRA Leader." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media Limited, 24 Mar. 2012. Web. Accessed 16 Feb. 2015.
- Van Natta, Don. "Oneida, NFL Meet about 'Redskins'" *ESPN*. ESPN Internet Ventures, 31 Oct. 2013. Web. Accessed 25 Mar. 2015.
- Vargas, Theresa. "Faith Leaders Urge Redskins Owner Dan Snyder and NFL to Change Team's Name." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 5 Dec. 2013. Web. Accessed 13 Mar. 2015.
- Vendituoli, Monica. "#NotAllMen, but #YesAllWomen: Campus Tragedy Spurs Debate on Sexual Violence." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 28 May 2014. Web. Accessed 24 Feb. 2015.
- "Viral Video Will Ensure Kony Arrest This Year: ICC Prosecutor." *Al Arabiya News*. 1 Apr. 2012. Web. Accessed 17 Feb. 2015.
- "Who Was Neda? Slain Woman an Unlikely Martyr." *CNN* 24 June 2009. Cable News Network. Web. Accessed 4 Dec. 2014.
- Willis, Paul (2003). *Foot Soldiers of Modernity: The Dialectics of Cultural Consumption and the 21st-Century School*. *Harvard Educational Review* 73(3), p. 392.
- Wimmer, Roger D., and Joseph R. Dominick. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Pub. 1987. Print.

Workneh, Lilly. "16-year-old Amandla Stenberg Schools Everyone On Cultural Appropriation In This Powerful Video." The Huffington Post. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 14 Apr. 2015. Web. Accessed 30 Apr. 2015.