

## References

For References and Bibliography  
see **hand-out!**

All **URLs** from this lecture  
are available at:

<http://del.icio.us/ueluk/MS3305Cyberactivism>

## What is this lecture about?

**Cyberactivism &**  
Countercultural Web-Practices

**'countercultural'**

politically informed activities that  
challenge mainstream culture and its  
established norms, values and  
institutions

## What is this lecture about?

### **Cyberactivism & Countercultural Web-Practices**

#### **'cyberactivism'**

politically motivated movement relying on the Internet to achieve their goals (Vegh 2003):

- awareness / advocacy
- organization / mobilization
- action / reaction

## Fields of countercultural practices

- **Blogs - Indymedia** - Grassroot Journalism/Activism
- Cultural Politics - **Tactical Media** - **Culture Jamming** - .net-art - digital art - design
- **Hacking - Hacktivism** - Open/Free Software - P2P - Piracy
- Gaming

## Does cyberactivism work?

**NO** (not really ...)  
'Cyberactivism is  
problematic'  
(Lebkowski 1999)

**YES** (definitely!)  
Use of Internet  
technologies for  
political goals is  
something  
revolutionary!  
(Kahn & Kellner,  
2004)

## Blogs

Often ridiculed for their triviality and narcissistic navel-gazing; Blogs are an easy-to-use and effective means of cyberactivism.

## Grassroot activism

Websites and Media archives from independent (non-governmental) organisations and media practitioners.

Examples: [indymedia.org](http://indymedia.org), [witness.org](http://witness.org), [aggp.org](http://aggp.org) (Peoples' Global Action), and many more

## Tactical Media

A practice bridging artists and political activists, designed to invite discourse about cultural politics.

## Culture Jamming

A subversive and ironic engagement with consumerism, corporatism, global capitalism and mass media.

Examples: Subvertising, Billboard Banditry, Re-Branding, Identity Theft  
(Naomi Klein: No Logo!)



## Hacktivism

A policy of hacking, phreaking, or creating technology to achieve a political or social goal. (metac0m 2003)

## Hacking Cultures

(according to Levy 1984 / Jordan & Taylor 2004)

1 **Original** Hackers (1950s/1960s) tinkering with large mainframe computers

2 **Hardware** hackers (from 1970s), played key role in the personal computing revolution

3 **Software** hackers -changing / creating programmes

4 **Hacker/Cracker**: (from the mid 1980s) persons who illicitly breaks into other people's computer systems

5 **Microserfs** - renegades to large corporations like Microsoft (coined by D. Coupland)

6 **Open Source** - creating the best possible software

7 **Hactivists**: mid 1990s, hacking activity with an overt political stance

## Anti Globalisation Movement (according to agp.org, see Jordan & Taylor 2004)

- **rejection of WTO** and other neo-liberal globalisation efforts
- **rejection** of all forms of **domination** and discrimination
- **confrontation** instead of lobbying
- non-violent **disobedience**
- local / decentral / **autonomous**

## Hacktivism

**Critical Arts Ensemble's** (CAE 1994)  
laid out the ideological grid for mass (h)activism.

They call for **Electronic Disturbance**  
and **Electronic Civil Disobedience** (1994)  
CAE see hackers in league with activists,  
allowing the targeting of the destructive  
weapons of cyberspace:

"A small but co-ordinated group of hackers could  
introduce electronic viruses, worms, and bombs  
into the data banks and programmes, and  
networks of authority."

### **Cult of the Dead Cow** (CDC):

"FloodNet is both ineffective due to the  
upstream cache and pure evil, since it  
represents an abuse of the network. Even if the  
load was take down a server (ignoring the free  
speech implications for a moment, free speech  
you want for yourself but deny to those with  
whom you disagree), you would not only impact  
communications with the target site, but also to  
those around it. FloodNet is \*unacceptable\*  
network abuse. As bad as spam, if not worse."  
(quoted in Jordan & Taylor 2004)

**Mass Action**  
Hacktivism

Mass virtual direct actions, which use cyberspatial technologies of limited potential in order to re-embody virtual actions

**Digitally correct**  
Hacktivism

defend and extend the peculiar powers cyberspace creates

Develop tools to subvert governmental and corporate control

“These streams interact and conflict. They should not be taken as entirely separate but as trends or currents within the whole Hacktivist movement.”  
(Jordan & Taylor 2004)