

# Strategising Online Activism: A Toolkit

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عنوانيڻ ڏيڻ لاءِ مسام قوانيڻ  
Women Living Under Muslim Laws  
النساء في ظل قوانيڻ المسلمين  
Femmes sous lois musulmanes



# 1 . Introduction

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*Solidaritas Perempuan -Indonesia .*

This toolkit was inspired by the workshops held in Asia and Africa for the partners and members of the Violence is not our Culture (VNC) campaign.

While this toolkit has been designed primarily for the local partners and activists of the VNC campaign, this can be a resource, too, for human rights activists who are keen to develop their online activism and want to know where and how to to start.

Through this toolkit we hope that campaigners will acquire the following skills:

- An understanding of why and how information and communications technologies (ICTs) can be appropriated by women's rights and human rights groups in their advocacy skills through their use of online tools, including networking and mobile tools for advocacy and campaigning
- The ability to develop an advocacy/communication strategy
- Knowing what social networking is and the various spaces and tools they could use in their online activism
- An understanding of online privacy and security issues relevant to building their online activism.

We are very grateful to the following for their invaluable support in making this project a reality:

- The MDG3 Fund/Women Reclaiming and Re-defining Culture (WRRC) programme
- Our partners for their stories, images and work that have inspired this project
- Colleagues in the Association for Progressive Communications Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP) and Violence is not our Culture (VNC) Programme.

## 1.1. A feminist approach to online activism

This toolkit is informed by the feminist standpoint on information and communications technologies (ICTs) and draws its inspiration from gender-sensitive practices and approaches introduced by women's groups at the forefront of this critique. Essentially, these approaches involve:

- An analysis of women's and men's different roles in society, specifically the multiple "burdens" of women's experience in society and their access (or non-access) to resources to support their multiple roles and "burdens".
- An understanding of these gender-based roles and their impact on how women and men experience technologies – their access to information and communications technology and how this access translates into how much "voice" and therefore "power" they have in society.
- Taking a clear stand to address the gender inequality in society, including the field of ICT through women's empowerment.

The initial idea for developing this approach came from the Feminist Tech Exchange (FTX),<sup>1</sup> a feminist training initiative from the Association for Progressive Communications Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP).<sup>2</sup> In 2008, the APC WNSP held the first global FTX in Cape Town, South Africa. There, feminist technology trainers and activists working on women's rights and gender equality were brought together to exchange technological skills and women's and gender rights issues. The initial ideas<sup>3</sup> for this approach were outlined in that event.

### 1.1.1 . How do prescribed gender roles in society impact on women's access to and relationship with ICT?

Gender-based roles are socially and culturally defined values and beliefs about how women and men should behave and what roles they have prescribed within society. Women and men are socialised differently. They are raised based on their sex and gender. From a young age we are taught skills and behaviour based on social and cultural ideals of what women and men should be.



*Workshop on strategic e-campaigning hosted by BAOBAB in Lagos, Nigeria, 7-9 June 2010*

Gender-based roles are also reflected in ICT. There are more men working in technology and taking leadership roles as software developers, executives and managers. The women working in technology are generally in positions relating to communications and customer care.

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<sup>1</sup>[ftx.apcwomen.org](http://ftx.apcwomen.org)

<sup>2</sup>[www.apcwomen.org](http://www.apcwomen.org)

<sup>3</sup>[ftx.apcwomen.org/feminist\\_practice\\_of\\_tech](http://ftx.apcwomen.org/feminist_practice_of_tech)

Beyond numbers and statistics, this also has an impact on women's and men's relationships with technologies. Since women are not socialised to interact with technology, many do not feel comfortable with technology:

*"In our society, boys and men are expected to learn about machines, tools and how things work. In addition, they absorb, ideally, a 'technological world view' that grew up along with industrial society. Such a world view emphasises objectivity, rationality, control over nature and distance from human emotions. Conversely, girls and women are not expected to know much about technical matters. Instead, they are to be good at interpersonal relationships and to focus on people and emotion. These differences have consequences in two different areas: first, technology itself can be seen as a 'language'. Second, men's control over technology and their adherence to a technological world view have consequences for language and verbal communication and create a situation where women are 'silenced'." – Margaret Brenston, *Worlds Apart: Women, Men and Technology*<sup>4</sup>*

Given that many women are over-burdened with their multiple roles, they simply do not have the time to play around with technology. If a particular type of technology is not useful in any of women's roles in society then they will not have the time and motivation to learn that particular technology:

*"The body of literature in gender analysis points to three common roles: reproductive, productive and community management. Reproductive roles include childbearing/rearing responsibilities and domestic roles usually performed by women who are required to reproduce and maintain the labour force. Although these roles are actually work, they are however differentiated from what is understood as 'productive' because performing these roles is not recognised as 'work'. As such, work in this category is unpaid. These tasks are not reflected in any country's GDP or GNP. Productive roles comprise work done by both women and men that generate income (in cash and/or in kind) and have an exchange value. Community roles are those undertaken primarily by women at the community level as an extension of their reproductive roles to maintain scarce resources of collective consumption such as water, health care and education. (Of course, there are other participants in a community that engage in this type of work like senior men and women, the infirmed or those who have disabilities, underemployed and unemployed members of the community)."*

From the Gender Evaluation Methodology<sup>5</sup>

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#### **OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Upholding women's empowerment and agency are foremost in our consideration.

Women must be able to use different kinds of technology to advocate and work towards their own empowerment.

Women must have an understanding of ICTs in order to make informed and strategic choices in their use.

Women's realities and contexts must always be considered. The use of ICTs for women's priorities, needs and roles. When possible, women's lived realities of how ICTs have been used effectively will be highlighted.

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But over time, women have developed a more purposive relationship with technology. They see different types of technologies as tools that they need to use to support their work.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.medialit.org/reading-room/worlds-apart-women-men-and-technology](http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/worlds-apart-women-men-and-technology)

<sup>5</sup> [dev.genderevaluation.net/gemworks/gender-analysis](http://dev.genderevaluation.net/gemworks/gender-analysis)

Arab Techies<sup>6</sup> organises regular events among technologists within Egypt. Despite the high number of women technologists in Egypt, their participation in these events is scarce:

*"The first thing we start discussing was why women techies don't participate in technical communities although they are active in other communities. Here are some answers to that:*

- *Women switch off their technical side after office hours.*
- *Male geeks are not very friendly to women's participation in technical communities.*
- *Women prefer to participate in activities which have clear benefits. For example, they would prefer working with children to lurking in technical forums and mailing lists."*

From "Arab Women Techies"<sup>7</sup> at the Arab Techies website

This has an impact on how we build technological skills for women. Skill building must be framed in women's contexts and how learning technology can support the roles that they already play within society.

We also have to ensure that technological interventions do not add unnecessary burdens to women.

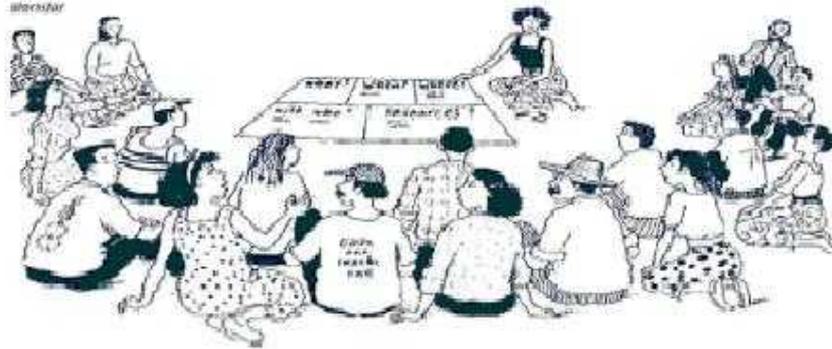
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<sup>6</sup> [www.arabtechies.net](http://www.arabtechies.net)

<sup>7</sup> [www.arabtechies.net/node/84](http://www.arabtechies.net/node/84)

## 2 . Strategising and planning your online activism

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Women's rights organisations and networks are now using tools for communication and campaigning. However, in many cases, the use of online tools is not linked to the overall aims and objectives of their organisation, especially the change that they intend to see happening in their communities. Often the change and how they will reach that point – meaning the strategy – are not even clearly defined.

*"What is a campaign strategy? A campaign can be seen as an organised, purposeful effort to create change, and it should be guided by thoughtful planning. Before taking action, successful campaigners learn as much as possible about:*

- *The existing situation*
- *Who is affected by the campaign issue both positively and negatively*
- *What changes could improve the situation*
- *What resources, tactics and tools are available to implement a campaign that will address the issue.*

*Campaigners use this knowledge to create their strategy, which guides them in planning, implementing, marketing, monitoring, improving and evaluating their campaign."*

From [www.informationactivism.org/basic1](http://www.informationactivism.org/basic1) created by Namita Singh and Ali Gharavi in collaboration with Tactical Tech.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> [www.tacticaltech.org](http://www.tacticaltech.org)

## 2.1. Planning your online campaign



All campaigning is about communicating and all communication is about influencing (and being influenced by) other people. While campaigning in yesterday's society may have been a one-way activity, successful campaigning today almost always includes a two-way communication process. In building a strategy, four very basic questions need to be asked:

1. What do you want to change?
2. Who has the power to make that change?
3. What can convince them to make the change?
4. What should you do to convince them?

Your online campaigning should be treated as any typical campaign. For a campaign to succeed, you need a campaign communication plan with the following necessary elements:

- Clearly define what you want to achieve
- Know who your audiences are. Who do you want to influence? Why? How much power do they have to help you achieve the change that you want to happen?
- Be very clear in your message
- Be very creative and innovative when you choose the channels and tools to communicate your message.

A communication plan in a campaign is important because it will:

- Guide how you will implement your campaign
- Make it easier for you to track your campaign performance
- Make it easier for you to make changes to your campaign
- Give you a picture of the different ways or tools to communicate your campaign.

## 2.1.1 . The campaign communication template



*Strategic E-Campaigning Workshop, Bali, Indonesia*

To start planning your online campaign, we recommend using a communication template. This will help you answer some important questions about your campaign. This will also guide you to design your online campaign.

Here are some basic elements of a campaign communication template:

### 1. Clearly define what you want to achieve by having a clear set of goals and objectives

The campaign goal is the “big” change that you want to achieve over a relatively longer period of time and usually described in very ambitious language. A campaign may have one or several goals depending on the scale and magnitude of your campaign. If you have more than one goal make sure that they are related.

Many organisations nowadays are already very familiar with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) objectives. In this example, the objective is very specific about what it wants to achieve (village and religious leaders will sign a covenant), measurable (x number of village and religious leaders), achievable and realistic (if based on an assessment by the group), and time-bound (“in one year’s time”).

### 2. Knowing who your audiences are

Campaign audiences can be categorised either as “**decision makers**” or “**opinion or influence formers**”.

**Decision makers** are people who have the formal mandate and power to enact the change that you want to achieve. These could be elected officials or appointed officials in the government or non-state actors such as religious or community leaders (in situations where the state has relegated certain functions to regulate and implement laws according to customs or religion), or leaders of an armed rebel group in situations where formal government functions no longer exist.

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#### An example of a campaign goal is:

*“End violence against women and girls in the name of ‘culture’ in country x or in the province of xxxx.”*

A campaign goal is usually broken down into smaller parts that can be shorter-term campaigns or actions or activities to achieve your short-termed objectives.

#### An example of a shorter-termed campaign objective under the goal above could be:

*“In one year’s time, X number of village and religious leaders in xxxx will sign a covenant that they will not condone the misinterpretation of religious text to justify cruel punishment against women and girls.”*

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### Opinion or influence

**formers** are individuals or groups who may have no formal authority or power but are nonetheless influential. These could be your allies or your adversaries – people or institutions who are opposed to your agenda because it conflicts with their interests. Your campaign plan has to reflect who are the decision makers and the opinion/influence formers you want to reach, and who you aim to reach first and later. In order to reach a particular decision maker you may have to work through an influential person or institution first. Or you may have to reach both the decision makers and the influential but adversarial groups around them at the same time. It is very important to note that those who will benefit from your campaign, e.g. the women in the communities, can also become a very influential campaign voice. Always include in your campaign plan how to build their capacities and enable them to become an important part of your campaign.



*Strategic E-Campaigning Workshop hosted by BAOBAB in Lagos, Nigeria, 7-9 June 2010*

### 3. Be very clear in your message

Your campaign communication plan needs to formulate very explicitly what your **key messages** are. These messages must be distinct, clear, succinct and explicit and are directly linked to your goals and objectives. They should contain the following:

- What is the problem?
- What solution are you proposing?
- What action do you want your allies and targets to take?

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#### Recommended activity

We suggest that you organise a meeting with your organisation, group or team to discuss the details of the campaign communication template and brainstorm on these questions.

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### 4. Be very creative and innovative when you choose the channels and tools to communicate your message

When campaigners want to influence a decision maker, they have basically two options:

**Direct influence** An example of this is lobbying with authorities

**Indirect influence** Where one turns to a part of the “public” to gain support for one’s case, as in alliance building and public-opinion building.

The channels and tools to communicate your campaign agenda and objectives can take the form of real or face-to-face activities, or virtual activities, through the internet.

When you select the forms or channels to communicate your campaign it is important to consider the following questions:

- What tools/channels are accessible and available to you and your allies?
- What tools/channels will reach your priority audiences?
- What tools/channels will widen the reach of your campaign?

## 3 . Online campaigning: Creating your campaign's online identity<sup>9</sup>

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### 3.1. What is an online identity?

We are constantly faced with questions that partly reveal our “identity” – who we are.

*What is your name? Where are you from? Who are your friends? Who is your family? What is your job? What is your address? What do you do?*

On the internet, these identity markers are just as important. They allow other people online to identify you and to connect with you. Without an online identity you will not be able to interact with other people on the internet.

Your online identity is the name and character you build for yourself on the internet. It is determined by various pieces of information and content, such as:

- Your name (or the name that you use online)
- Your email address
- The images that point to you
- Your location
- Your sex/gender
- Your interests.

Creating a campaign identity is important to distinguish your campaign from others. It allows your campaign to have spaces on different social networking sites and interact with potential supporters for your cause.

To set up your online campaigning spaces, your campaign will need :

- A name
- A description
- An email account.

This section will guide you to develop the different aspects of your campaign's online identity.

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#### **Hiding your real identify can be a matter of survival**

The internet also allows for the creation of a fictitious character that you can use to connect with other people. You can define the different aspects of your personality differently on the internet. You can use a different name and invent or hide aspects of your identity including your location.

Some people frown on this but for many activists working and living in a high-risk environment, hiding one's real identity is a matter of survival.

In some cases, the internet offers anonymity so that you can interact and collaborate with other people without compromising your real identity and endangering yourself.

One example is how lesbian groups in the Arab world are using “fake” Facebook identities in order to raise awareness on sexuality rights issues and provide support for each other. If they had used their real identities online they would have put themselves at risk for claiming themselves to be lesbians.

Another example is how Burmese bloggers are using fake names in order to write about human rights violations and corruption in Burma. Doing this protects themselves and their families from strict government punishment.

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<sup>9</sup>See the section on “Online security solutions: Protect your online identity”.

## 3.2. Naming your campaign



*Strategic Campaign Framework. Workshop by VNC and APC WNSP in Bali, Indonesia.*

There are three main things to remember when you develop your campaign's name:

**The main title of your campaign** The name, as much as possible, must be based on the goals and key messages of your campaign. It must capture the imagination of the public, especially whom you want to influence with what your campaign is all about.

**Your campaign's slogan** This is the text that usually follows the title of your campaign and which further describes what the campaign is trying to achieve. This is optional.

**Short name(s) of your campaign** This is the nickname of your campaign. There can be more than one short name for your campaign. It can be the acronym of your campaign name or short words to describe your campaign name or slogan.

To determine your campaign's name think about the following considerations:

**Easy recall** Your campaign's name must be easy to remember. This can be done in different ways:

- It must make sense in a few words. Your campaign name must capture the important points about your campaign (such as the main issue, the action that you want your allies and targets to do, etc.) so that other people will know what it is about. But you have to be able to do this with just a few words. If your campaign name is too long and too descriptive you will have lost other people's attention even before they finish reading your name.
- It must strike a balance between familiarity and uniqueness. Your campaign name must be unique but at the same time it cannot be so unique that no one understands what it is.
- It must be interesting. Your campaign name should encourage other people to know more about it. So it is good practice not to give out all of your campaign information at once. But you will have to phrase your words in such a way that other people will want to know more.

**Association** Your campaign name should be something that your targets and allies can connect with. In order to be relatable to your targets and allies you will need to understand them and ensure that:

- It uses familiar words. You should not use words that your allies and targets do not understand. If possible, do not use jargon or acronyms in your campaign's name. If your targets and allies are unable to understand your campaign name then it would be hard for them to want to join your campaign.
- It evokes a feeling. Your campaign's name must be able to make people feel something.
- It is action-based. Your campaign's name must be able to say what main action you want your allies and targets to take.

**Be easy to translate** Since you are planning an online campaign your campaign has the potential to reach a global audience. In designing your campaign's name you have to use words that are easy to translate.

## 4 . Social networking and online activism

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**Social networking** can be defined as the process of building and expanding your contacts and partners through a web of connections. Social networking has been a human activity even before the internet. However, the internet has provided new opportunities to connect with other people. Specifically the internet has made it possible to connect to people beyond your immediate and local networks.



*Strategic E-Campaigning Workshop hosted by BAOBAB in Lagos, Nigeria, 7-9 June 2010*

Since the early 2000s a range of web-based services have been developed for social networking. These include photo-sharing sites like Picasa<sup>10</sup> or Flickr,<sup>11</sup> blogs like Blogspot,<sup>12</sup> LiveJournal<sup>13</sup> or WordPress,<sup>14</sup> social bookmarking sites like Delicious,<sup>15</sup> and social interaction sites like Facebook<sup>16</sup> or Myspace.<sup>17</sup>

Social networking has become one of the most popular uses of the internet. While the social networking terrain may seem vast and varied there are common elements in all of the available social networking platforms:

**People connecting with people** Social networking relies on people creating individual accounts in a specific platform (like Facebook or Flickr) and using their online identities to find “friends”, people from the individual's personal life or other users who share similar interests.

**Doing activities online** The other element of social networking is that the different platforms allow registered users to conduct a range of activities (from playing games to sharing music to sharing photos) with other people.

**Easy sharing of information** Social networking sites are developed with ease of use in mind. They make it easy for their users to upload different types of content using their services. Another aspect to this is called “mash-up”: a web-based application that combines elements of other services into a single application, which makes it easy to share pieces of information from

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<sup>10</sup>[www.picasaweb.com](http://www.picasaweb.com)

<sup>11</sup>[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

<sup>12</sup>[www.blogspot.com](http://www.blogspot.com)

<sup>13</sup>[www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com)

<sup>14</sup>[www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)

<sup>15</sup>[www.delicious.com](http://www.delicious.com)

<sup>16</sup>[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

<sup>17</sup>[www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)

one social networking platform to another. For example, with Facebook and Twitter, you can have all of your Facebook status updates automatically published on your Twitter account (and vice versa).

**Automatic adding of user-defined content** Individuals can tag pieces of content as they wish, including the content from people on their “friends” list. Social networking platforms then collect (or “aggregate”) all of the pieces of content that are tagged similarly.

These common elements of social networking platforms and services have changed the way we use the internet today: how we interact with one another, how we produce and share content and how we create spaces for ourselves.

## 4.1. Why tap into social networking for your campaign and advocacy?

Social networking offers the following potentials:

**Broadening the reach of your campaign** Social networking allows you to contact audiences and partners that are beyond your current reach. It helps you identify and locate other people or groups in these social networking platforms who might be able to support your campaign. For instance, you could share your campaign calls and actions with other networks. Your campaign followers may arrive at a critical outreach point and garner enough support to validate your key messages.



*Baidarie Sialkoot, partner in Pakistan*

**Publicising your campaign** Because social networking allows for easy sharing of information between different social networking sites (or mash-ups), your campaign can exist in various spaces online. For example, you can have a Twitter account for your campaign, a blog and a Facebook page, and share information from one space to the other automatically.

**Cost-efficient way of communicating** For organisations with a minimal communications budget, it might be more efficient to create a free blog as their website than to build their own website. From the human resource perspective, it may take fewer people to run your social networking spaces than to manage your organisational website.

## 4.2. Things to watch out for...

However, social networking has certain limitations that may pose challenges to your campaign:

**Turning online support into real action** One of the biggest challenges in online campaigning is ensuring that online activities have impact on the ground. The use of social networking does not ensure that the people who support your cause on Facebook will join you when you need to take a piece of legislation to your lawmakers. Nor will having many followers on Twitter necessarily mean that you have as many supporters when you need people to volunteer to organise relief work.

**Loss of control over your content** Because social networking makes it easy for people to comment on your information, tag it and share it with their own networks, you can not be assured that the content you publish on these sites will be represented according to your design. Misrepresentation of your campaign is always a drawback in campaigning through social networking platforms, especially if you have no full control over its content. Furthermore, it will also make it easier for your opponents, or people who have the opposite view from you, to feedback on your campaign negatively (maybe even try to ruin your campaign's image).

**Decreased security** One of the dangers of using online spaces is that it gives people a false sense of security. Many believe that just because you are running an online campaign you can be less careful about what you publish. In fact, risks to your campaign can be enhanced in online campaigning because you will have very little control over who can see your campaign and where your campaign messages will be published.

**Competition** Other campaigns are also using social networking to reach a broader audience. This means that your campaign will be competing with other campaigns for support. This means that you will have to commit to maintaining your social networking spaces as long as your campaign goals and objectives allow you to.



Women activists in Lahore, Pakistan in a rally to mark International Women Human Rights Defenders Day (29 November 2010). The rally was organised by VNC's partner, the Shirkat Gah Resource Centre.

## 4.3. Selecting and using social networking tools for your campaign<sup>18</sup>

Effectively using social networking to support campaigns requires the use of a combination of social networking tools. Different social networking services can play different roles in your campaign. There are three main roles that available social networking services can have in your campaign:

**Main website** Campaigns are usually grounded in intensive and exhaustive content (research papers, articles, blogs) that expound on the issue you are working on and the change that you are trying to make. It is necessary for your campaign to have a main space where all of this information and knowledge can be stored. Having a main website for your campaign also makes it easier for people to know more about your campaign activities and issues. Blog services like WordPress, Blogspot or LiveJournal can be used as main spaces for content. In some cases organisations invest in websites built on content management software (CMS) like Drupal<sup>19</sup> or Joomla<sup>20</sup> as their main campaign site.

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"Bloggers such as Leil Zahra Mortada took grave risks to keep the world informed daily of the scene in Tahrir Square and elsewhere."

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From: "The Middle East's Feminist Revolution", Naomi Wolf, 1 March 2011  
<http://tinyurl.com/68dyz33>

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### Blogging during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

Between 25 November and 10 December, in partnership with other Chennai civil society organisations, Prajnya organises and coordinates events and activities at venues across the city in order to raise awareness of the different ways in which women in particular are vulnerable to violence, from their homes to zones of conflict. Campaign Chronicles is the 16 Days blog which spotlights activities. This is the second year that Prajnya has organised the 16 Days Campaign in Chennai. Our posts from the first year (2008) are also archived at the Campaign blog

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**Hosts for multimedia content** You will need to have different kinds of content to support your campaign messages, including photos, audio (or podcasts), graphics (posters, logos, etc.) and video. For example, you may collect and publish photos that will illustrate your issues. You will then need to choose social networking services that handle specific types of content like EngageMedia<sup>21</sup> or YouTube for video, Flickr or Picasa for photos, and Odeo for podcasts.

**Services for updating your allies** Drawing allies and targets into your main website to understand the issue requires being able to send them smaller messages that will entice them to find out more about your campaign. This is where micro-blogging services like Twitter or Facebook can be

used. Through these services you can send links to your site or specific entries from your main website or your multimedia content with short, inviting descriptions that will encourage them to delve deeper into your issue. This is also a good way to keep your allies and targets updated on your campaign. They also make it easier for others to spread the message to their networks.

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<sup>18</sup>Note: This is the basic configuration of how social networking tools must be connected for your campaign. You will need to have different combinations of tools depending on your campaign needs

<sup>19</sup>[www.drupal.org](http://www.drupal.org)

<sup>20</sup>[www.joomla.org](http://www.joomla.org)

<sup>21</sup>[www.engagemedia.org](http://www.engagemedia.org)

## 5 . Steps in choosing social networking tools for your campaign

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### **Step 1: Discover how the functions of social networking tools can work for your needs**

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*"The nature of social media, too, has helped turn women into protest leaders. But social media, through the very nature of the technology, have changed what leadership looks and feels like today."*

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From: "The Middle East's Feminist Revolution", Naomi Wolf, 1 March 2011  
<http://tinyurl.com/68dyz33>

Different social networking services offer various types of functionalities. It is necessary to spend some time getting to know your options. It is also a good idea to consult with other organisations and people who are familiar with different social networking tools.

A list of viable options is important as a guide to which social networking sites to explore.

Some of the key functionalities that are essential to look for are:

**Content functionalities** Different social networking platforms handle different kinds of content.

Services like Facebook,<sup>22</sup> WordPress,<sup>23</sup> Multiply<sup>24</sup> and Myspace<sup>25</sup> handle a range of multimedia content but there is a limit to how much content you can share. Services like Picasa,<sup>26</sup> YouTube,<sup>27</sup> Odeo<sup>28</sup> and Vimeo<sup>29</sup> support specific kinds of multimedia content and have higher capacity to support more content from your campaign. It is necessary to list down your content needs and find out which social networking platforms can support them.

**Reach capacity** Your online campaign needs to have "followers" or "friends" in order to reach more people. However, different social networking services handle "followers" differently. For example, if you decide on having a group on Facebook to play the role of updating your allies for your campaign, it is important to note that once your group reaches a certain number of followers, the service stops automatically sending updates. This means that your followers can only find out about your campaign updates if they go to your group page, and it is unlikely that they will because they would not know that there is new content there. Twitter, on the other hand, does not have such limitations.

**Bandwidth considerations** Bandwidth is the speed of your internet connection. From a technical perspective bandwidth refers to how fast you can send and

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#### **Tip**

Create a "dummy" account on the different social networking tools that you have selected to test how they work. A dummy account is a fake identity on these social networking sites that will not be connected to you, your organisation or your campaign.

To create a dummy account you will need an alternative email address with Google or Yahoo. Use this new email address to create an account on any social networking site for testing.

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<sup>22</sup>[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

<sup>23</sup>[www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)

<sup>24</sup>[www.multiply.com](http://www.multiply.com)

<sup>25</sup>[www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)

<sup>26</sup>[www.picasaweb.com](http://www.picasaweb.com)

<sup>27</sup>[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

<sup>28</sup>[www.odeo.com](http://www.odeo.com)

<sup>29</sup>[www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com)

receive data through your internet connection. Some social networking platforms work best in high bandwidth situations. It is good to choose a social networking platform that will work efficiently for people with low internet connectivity.

**Offers a variety of updates** Another consideration here is to look for a social networking service that allows users to get updates in multiple ways (via email, SMS, etc.) so your allies and targets do not necessarily have to go to your social networking spaces to get your updates.

**Cross-posting between social networks** The social networking services you choose for your campaign must be able to connect with one another so that you can send updates on one platform and automatically publish on another.

### Step 2: Go back to the plan

Your campaign plan will guide you to choose the tools that you will use for your online campaign. The social networking tools you select must always be connected to your goals. Specifically, revisit your goals and determine how they can be achieved considering the potentials and limitations of these various social networking platforms.

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#### Guide questions:

How can social networking support my campaign goals?

How can social networking limit my campaign goals?

What are my expected results from using social networking for my campaign? How will they contribute to achieving my campaign goals?

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### Step 3: Figure out your content

The next consideration is the types of content you will be producing for your campaign. Specific social networking platforms can accommodate different kinds of content. For example, if your campaign will have a lot of video your options must include video-sharing sites like Engagemedia,<sup>30</sup> YouTube,<sup>31</sup> Vimeo<sup>32</sup> or the WITNESS Hub.<sup>33</sup> This diagram shows the different social networking tools and how they can be used:

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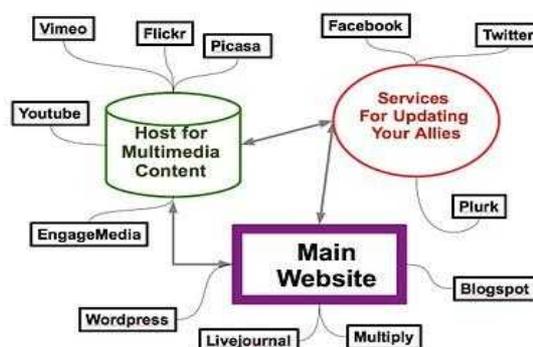
#### Guide questions:

What types of content are available that will support my key messages and evoke support for my campaign?

What content do I have permission to share?

What social networking services do I need to support the content that I will have more of in my campaign?

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<sup>30</sup>[www.engagemedia.org](http://www.engagemedia.org)

<sup>31</sup>[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

<sup>32</sup>[www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com)

<sup>33</sup>[hub.witness.org](http://hub.witness.org)

#### **Step 4: Locate your targets and allies**

It is important to know what social networking tools your targets and allies are using. Having a presence in their online spaces will allow you to connect with them directly and send them your messages. You will need to have a good understanding of your targets and allies in order to discover what social networking tools they use.

## 5.1. Blogging



*Blogging for Campaigns*

A blog (short for web log) is a type of website that is easy to organise and maintain. It also publishes content like a diary or a journal, i.e. the latest entry is always on top. Blogs have existed since the late 1990s. They gained popularity in the early 2000s with popular, free blogging services like Blogspot<sup>34</sup>, LiveJournal<sup>35</sup> and WordPress<sup>36</sup>.

Initially, blogs were used by individuals to publish their online journals. But blogs have been used by organisations and campaigns to create websites that contain public information, news, updates and content about their issues.

They have also been used as spaces to hold discussions relating to different issues.

Blogs can be the main website for your campaign. You can use blogs to bring together all of your campaign content. It can be the space where your supporters get all of the information about your campaign.

### 5.1.1 .Planning your campaign blog

Before you set up the blog for your campaign you will need to determine the following:

**The name of your blog** This should be based on your campaign's name. It should be short as it will determine your blog's web address.

**The look and feel of your blog** This will help you plan for what your blog will look like. If you already have a logo your blog colours should reflect it.

**The type of content you will publish on your blog** This could include blog entries, photos, videos and audio.

**Who will be allowed to publish on your blog** This could be either your campaign team or open to all supporters. This is important so that you know the privacy settings of your blog.

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[Blank Noise](#) is a project initiated by Jasmeen Patheja with nine other girls as an effort to discuss, address and combat street sexual harassment in India.

They have held local workshops to reflect on how street sexual harassment has affected women and girls. They have expanded to use art (written, visual and performance) to raise awareness and confront the issue of sexual harassment in urban areas.

One of their initiatives is [Blank Noise - Action Heroes](#).

In 2007, to celebrate International Women's Day, they invited bloggers from all over the internet to blog about their experiences of sexual harassment and how they fought against those who harassed them. [Over 100 bloggers committed to write a blog entry](#).

As a result the Blank Noise campaign gathered tips and strategies in response to urban sexual harassment.

Blank Noise continues to use blogs as their main method of sharing information about their campaign activities and as a space to gather support.

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<sup>34</sup> [www.blogspot.com](http://www.blogspot.com)

<sup>35</sup> [www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com)

<sup>36</sup> [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)

**The keywords that you will use for your blog** These are words that will define your campaign and the issue that your campaign is about. When you set up your blog you will need categories that will make it easier for users to find content on your site.

### 5.1.2 . Setting up a blog for your campaign

For this toolkit we are using WordPress as a blogging service. WordPress is a free blogging service that allows for a lot of flexibility, such as:

- You can have a private or a public blog
- There are different themes (layout and design) for you to choose from
- You can change the way your blog looks very easily
- You can determine different categories
- You can post different kinds of content (video, photos, links)
- It allows you to have "pages" – static content that can have important information (such as the "About" section for your campaign)
- You can display information in different ways
- You can install WordPress on your own server.



*Strategic E-Campaigning Workshop hosted by BAOBAB in Lagos, Nigeria, 7-9 June 2010*

### 5.1.3 . Setting up a WordPress blog

First, you have to **create an account**.

Go to [WordPress.com](http://WordPress.com).<sup>37</sup>

Click on "Sign up now". This will take you to this page.<sup>38</sup>

After you have filled in the required information check your email.

WordPress will send you a confirmation and instructions to log in.

**Go to your Dashboard** The Dashboard is the area where you can do all of the tasks you need in order to set up your blog and create content. If you are logged in to your blog you will always have access to your Dashboard. Go to the top of the page and click on My Blog.

**Add categories** Categories are the main topics on your site. You will be able to organise your posts (blog entries) according to categories. It is important to organise your content very

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**Tip:** One of the best ways to do this is to do a search on [pipl.com](http://pipl.com) using your targets' and allies' names. It will show you where they are in different social networking platforms.

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<sup>37</sup>[www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)

<sup>38</sup>[en.wordpress.com/signup/](http://en.wordpress.com/signup/)

clearly in your blog. This will make it easier for people to find content. You can always add categories at any time.

**Add new posts** Posts refer to the entries in your campaign blog. Each blog post can be organised according to different categories. You can view all of the posts you have on your site. This allows you to make changes to different posts at the same time.



*Online Activism Workshop hosted by Equal but Different, Iran*

**Add pages** WordPress allows users to create pages, which can have important content about your campaign. You can create as many pages as you need.

Your pages should generally include the following:

- Information about your campaign
- Information about the issues
- Information about your campaign activities.

You can also view all of the pages that you have created.

**Add new media** Media refers to other types of content like photos or videos. You can add content directly from your computer.

**Configure the themes** Themes refer to your website's layout and design. You can choose from many available themes for free. Note that each theme has different functionalities. It may take some time to choose a theme that fits your campaign.

**Configure widgets** Widgets, or plug-ins, are small applications that are pre-installed in every WordPress website. Widgets allow you to do the following:

- Show content from other social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter
- Allow you to display the content on the site on different areas of your webpage.

The widgets area allows you to place the available widgets on your sidebar.

## 5.2. Facebook



Facebook is one of the most popular social networking tools today. According to Facebook statistics<sup>39</sup> it has 500 million active users.

In the last few years non-profit organisations have used Facebook as a way of raising awareness on different issues.

If we consider the model that we are using for this toolkit, Facebook falls under the short messaging service tools.

You can use Facebook to:

- Gather supporters from the Facebook community
- Keep your supporters updated on their campaign activities and issues
- Draw Facebook users to your main website.

### Some tips in getting supporters for your campaign in Facebook

When you first set up your Facebook group, page or cause, have your content ready. Post your campaign logo, your campaign name, goals, activities and your contact details.

Target your invitations to your allies. Sending invitations to everyone in your friends' list will not bring your campaign more support. Only those who are already interested in your issue will join your campaign.

Send a clear message to the people who have joined you to invite their friends to your Facebook group, page or cause.

Send clear messages about your campaign so that the people you invite will know what it is about. It is also good to be clear about what actions your members can take.

Keep your Facebook group, page or cause updated. Post questions about your issue or new information regularly to keep your members interested in your campaign.

<sup>39</sup>[www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics](http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics)

**What are the available tools within Facebook that can support your campaign?**

There are three main options in Facebook that can support your campaign:

- Create a page on Facebook for your campaign
- Use the Causes application
- Create a group.

It is important to understand the differences between the options before you decide which one to use for your campaign.

“Facebook mimics the way many women choose to experience social reality, with connections between people just as important as individual dominance or control, if not more so.

“You can be a powerful leader on Facebook just by creating a really big ‘us’. Or you can stay the same size, conceptually, as everyone else on your page – you don’t have to assert your dominance or authority. The structure of Facebook’s interface creates what brick-and-mortar institutions, despite 30 years of feminist pressure, have failed to provide: a context in which women’s ability to forge a powerful ‘us’ and engage in a leadership of service can advance the cause of freedom and justice worldwide.

“Of course, Facebook cannot reduce the risks of protest.”

From: “The Middle East’s Feminist Revolution”, Naomi Wolf, 1 March 2011  
<http://tinyurl.com/68dyz33>

The table below illustrates the differences between the options for Facebook

| <b>Functionality</b>  | <b>Groups</b>   | <b>Pages</b>  | <b>Causes</b>  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>How can you start using it?</b>                                  | It comes default with your Facebook account   | It comes default with your Facebook account                           | You have to install the Causes application   |
| <b>Who can see your campaign?</b>                                   | Only Facebook users   | Everyone (including those with no Facebook accounts)                  | Only Facebook users who have the Causes application on their Facebook account                  |
| <b>How can Facebook users show their support for your campaign?</b> | They can join. They can “Like” your group. They can invite other users to your group. | They can “Like” your page. They can share your page to their friends. | They can join your Cause. They can invite others to join. They can donate funds to your Cause. |
| <b>Send quick updates to members</b>                                | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |
| <b>Video/photo sharing</b>  | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |
| <b>Announce events</b>  | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |
| <b>Discussion forum</b>   | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |

|                                   |  |      |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|------|--|
| <b>Track number of supporters</b> | Yes  | Yes  | Yes  |
| <b>Extra features</b>             | You can share documents in your group.   | None | Automatically tracks the "Impact" of your campaign (number of members, viewers, who has read your posts).  |
| <b>Cons</b>                       | People may not appreciate being included in a group that they did not sign up for. | None | You and everyone who wants to join your campaign will have to install the Causes application. This might discourage other people from joining your campaign. |

Please note that you will need to have a Facebook account before you can use any of these options.

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One of the best examples for using Facebook to raise awareness on an issue is the Pink Chaddi campaign.

In February 2009 the Pink Chaddi (Pink Underwear) campaign was launched as a peaceful protest against violent attacks on women who were accused of violating Indian "culture".

It was sparked by an incident in a Mangalore pub where a group of young women were beaten up for "violating Indian culture". Their transgression was wearing Western clothes and drinking alcohol with men.

The Pink Chaddi campaign was started by a group of women through a Facebook group online called "Consortium of pub-going, loose and forward women". Within a couple of weeks the group had more than 35,000 members. The Facebook newsfeed ensured that every time a new member joined the group an announcement would go out to their friends. Members could also invite others to join.

While discussion, ideas, debates and solidarity took place online within the Facebook group, it was directly linked to offline action – asking Indian women to send pink panties to Shri Ram Sena, the orthodox Hindu group behind the attacks, on Valentine's Day.

According to reports, eventually more than 50,000 users joined the campaign group on Facebook, more than 300 blogs linked to the campaign blog and more than 150 news stories mentioned the campaign.

However, the Facebook group had been defaced and after they had reached 5,000 members the campaign was no longer allowed to send messages to the group. They then set up a Facebook page to continue gathering support, discussing the issue and raising awareness.

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Sources:

- [www.gauravonomics.com/blog/three-lessons-activists-and-marketers-...](http://www.gauravonomics.com/blog/three-lessons-activists-and-marketers-...)
- [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pink\\_Chaddi\\_Campaign](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pink_Chaddi_Campaign)
- [globalvoicesonline.org/2009/02/13/india-the-pink-underwear-resist...](http://globalvoicesonline.org/2009/02/13/india-the-pink-underwear-resist...)

## 5.3 Twitter

### 5.3.1 . Twitter basics

Twitter<sup>40</sup> is a social networking tool that allows users to send short messages (140 characters maximum) to other users. Twitter is one of the simplest social networking tools available. This is why it has become so popular.

Before maximising Twitter for your campaigns you should learn about what you can do on Twitter. We will be using the Take Back the Tech! twitter account<sup>41</sup> as an example of how a campaign can use Twitter.

Twitter is about two main activities:

#### 1. Viewing and sending messages

*Tweet* is what messages are called on Twitter. A message on Twitter must be 140 characters long or less. Characters include letters, numbers, symbols, punctuation marks and spaces. Twitter has a built-in counter so you know how many characters you have left for your tweet.

*Direct message* is when you send a private message to a specific user. You can only see your direct messages when you are logged in to your account.

*Retweet* is when you forward another user's message to others.

*@Mention or Reply* is when you direct your message to specific users or when you reply to another user's tweet. To mention a specific user, use @ with their username. To reply to a user click on the "Reply" button.

*#Hash tag* is when you add a topic to your message. To tag or add a topic to your message use # with the topic. Using # in your tweets is important for two main things:

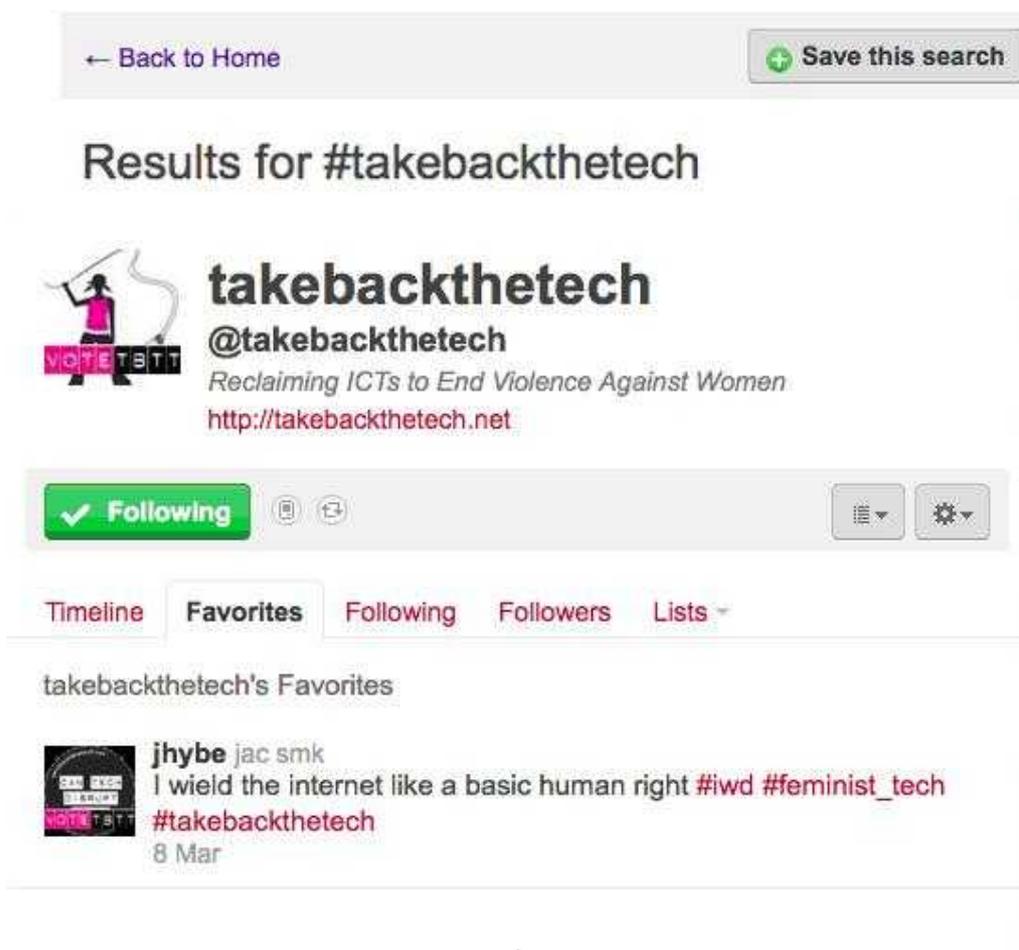
- Making a topic popular
- Tracking which people and how many are interested in a particular topic.

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<sup>40</sup>[www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

<sup>41</sup>[www.twitter.com/takebackthetech](http://www.twitter.com/takebackthetech)

The example below using #takebackthetech shows all of the Twitter users who have also used the same topic.



*Favourites* is when you save tweets that are useful or important to you. This is similar to bookmarking your favourite or useful websites. But instead of sites, you will be “bookmarking” tweets.

## 2. Build and manage your contacts

*Follow:* To build and manage your contacts on Twitter you will need to “follow” other Twitter users. By following them you will receive their updates on Twitter when you log in.

*Following:* This means the users you follow on Twitter. Every time they tweet you will receive an update from Twitter.

*Followers:* These are the people who follow your Twitter account. They will receive your tweets.

Promoting your Twitter so that the amount of people following your campaign increases is a great way to build a stronger following. For example, if you have 377 users that are following the campaign, this means that 377 people are able to see the messages from your campaign. More importantly, there are 377 people who can potentially retweet the campaign messages.



# takebackthetech

@takebackthetech

Reclaiming ICTs to End Violence Against Women

<http://takebackthetech.net>

✓ Following



Timeline Favorites **Following** Followers Lists ▾

takebackthetech follows 74 people



**scasexp** scase

scottish coalition against sexual exploitation



**endVAW** Janine Moolman



**eroticsindia** Maya & Manjima

The APC Women's Program EroTICs Research team from India



*Lists* is a way of organising your contacts on Twitter. You can create groups of the people you are following. Your followers can see and follow your lists. This also means that your followers can add you to their lists.

This example shows that many users have included the campaign in their lists.



### Twitter for campaigns

Twitter can be one way that you can get online support for your campaign. It is also a good strategy to draw people into your main website.

## 6 . Securing your online activism

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The internet is considered one of the greatest inventions in modern time. However, it has plenty of downsides – and foremost among these is the issue of security,<sup>42</sup> i.e. **intrusion** into one’s privacy and unauthorised access to vital personal information.

Online security is about ensuring that communication and data are kept safe from other people.

There are two main areas to consider when you set up your online security:

**Protecting your identity** No one should have access to your online identity.

This includes making sure that no one can use your email account, your social networking spaces or your credit card information; and making yourself anonymous online.

**Protecting your data** Safekeep your data and all other information about you and your group, and secure access to your online files. This includes protecting your computer files from unauthorised users, keeping your computer virus-free and backing up your files and data.

We will discuss these areas and some steps you can take for your online security in the following sections.



*Strategic E-Campaigning Workshop, Bali, Indonesia, August 2010*

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<sup>42</sup>[www.internetsecurityguide.org](http://www.internetsecurityguide.org)

## 6.1. What are the common types of internet security risks?

**Malicious software or malware** Being online exposes you to infection by computer viruses and spyware (software that gathers personal data). These types of software are dangerous because they can damage your computer – from destroying all of your files to sending out unauthorised emails from your email account to your contacts and getting access to your private information (your email address, your usernames and passwords, etc.).

Your computer could get infected with malware just by opening documents and plugging in USB sticks that are already “infected” or by receiving email from an “infected” computer.

**Phishing** This is the practice of illegally acquiring personal information in order to access your financial information. This is more commonly used for identity theft and extortion. Generally phishing is done through the following:

- *Spam or unwanted and unsolicited messages.* You receive these unwanted messages through email, chat, comments on your blog/website and your social networking sites. These messages are generally designed to lead you to a “fake” website where you are asked to log in. The most common example of these are websites designed to look like popular social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, etc.). When you log into this fake site, people running these sites will have access to your username and passwords.
- *Unsafe and “free” wireless networks.* Phishers can illegally retrieve personal and financial data through wireless (Wi-Fi) networks. They offer “free” Wi-Fi internet in public places and can collect usernames, passwords and other data from anyone using their networks.
- *Malicious software known as malware.* Some viruses are designed not to destroy your data but to look for your personal and financial information.

## 6.2. Communication and internet protocols: What these mean for you



*Strategic E-Campaigning Workshop hosted by BAOBAB in Lagos, Nigeria, 7-9 June 2010*

Whenever you connect to the internet you pass through servers which are run by other people who would then have access to the content you send via the internet.

To fully understand online security it is important to be familiar with some terms and language related to how the internet works.

The internet is governed by a set of **communication protocols** called TCP/IP (Transmission

Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). A “communication protocol” is a set of rules that govern how we connect to one another, how we send and receive messages from one another and what channels we use in order to connect and send and receive messages. We often encounter them in their abbreviated forms on the internet.

It is important to know the basics of internet protocols for the following reasons:

- To understand how data and your information is transmitted online.
- To realise that whenever you connect to a website you pass through many servers that will have access to your internet protocol data.

More importantly, knowing how the internet protocol works will help you understand how you can better secure your online communications.

### **Communication protocols include the following:**

*Hyper Text Transmission Protocol (HTTP)*. This transmits and displays web pages, for example, <http://www.google.com>. Hyper Text Transmission Protocol Secure (HTTPS) is an optional tool used by websites that protects your data. HTTPS ensures that your connection to a website is encrypted, which means that the data you send to that website (for example, your username and password) are only visible to you and the website. This is very important to use for sites that you need to log into (for example, Facebook, Gmail, Yahoo! Mail).

*Post Office Protocol version 3 (POP3)*. This is the protocol that transmits emails.

*Internet Relay Chat (IRC)*. This transmits messages in real-time and through text-based chatting.

*Internet Protocol address (IP address)*. In order to connect to the internet you will need an IP address, a set of numbers (e.g. 208.112.452.43) without which you will not be able to connect to the internet. Each IP address is unique and is based on the internet company that provides you the service (otherwise known as the internet service provider or ISP).

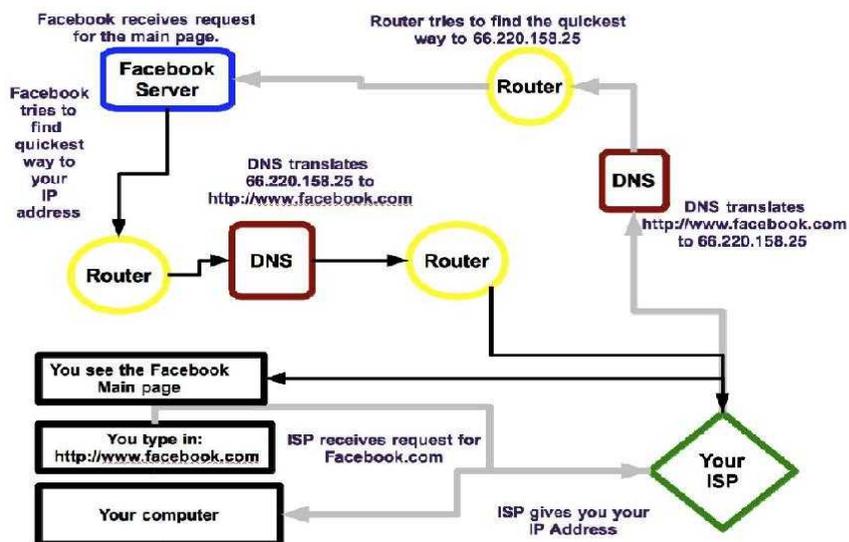
*Routers* are devices on the internet that tell where your data should go.

Each website in the internet also has its own IP address.

*Domain Name Servers (DNS)* are needed to translate IP addresses, which are numeric and difficult to remember, into accessible letters and numbers.

For example, when you connect to Facebook you use <http://www.facebook.com>. But what you are really connecting to is 66.220.158.25 (one of Facebook's IP addresses). Between your computer and Facebook's servers there is a DNS server that translates 66.220.158.25 into <http://www.facebook.com>.

This can be illustrated here:



### 6.2.1 . What information does your IP address reveal about you?

IP addresses are allocated to and by internet service providers (ISPs). A country usually has several ISPs. When you communicate on the internet you are actually sending out the name of your ISP. In some cases it also shows the address of your ISP and other information such as your country and city.

For example, if your IP address is 125.161.140.118, you may not know it but these numbers could automatically reveal your location (country and city) when you connect to the internet.

For example, the IP address 125.161.140.118 reveals the following information:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 125.161.140.118  | <a href="#">Track IP, host or website</a>   |
| Examples: 213.86.83.116 (IP address) or google.com (Website)                         |   |
| <b>125.161.140.118 IP address location &amp; more:</b>                               |   |
| IP address [?]: 125.161.140.118 <a href="#">[Whois]</a> <a href="#">[Reverse IP]</a> |   |
| IP country code:   | ID  |
| IP address country:  |  Indonesia |
| IP address state:  | Jawa Barat  |
| IP address city:   | Tangerang   |
| IP address latitude:   | -6.1781   |
| IP address longitude:  | 106.6300  |
| ISP of this IP [?]:  | PT. Telekomunikasi Indonesia  |
| Organization:  | PT TELKOM INDONESIA   |
| Host of this IP [?]:   | 118.subnet125-161-140.speedy.telkom.net.id <a href="#">[Whois]</a> <a href="#">[Trace]</a>  |
| Local time in Indonesia:   | 2011-01-14 20:11  |

It reveals geographical information such as the country (Indonesia), the state (Jawa Barat) and the city (Tangerang). It also reveals which ISP this IP is from (PT. Telekomunikasi Indonesia).

It is important to know your IP address and what information it reveals about you because this is the standard information you send about yourself whenever you are online. To find out what your IP address is and what information it relays go to <http://whatismyipaddress.com/>. This will show you your IP address. Click on "Additional IP details" to show what information about you and your ISP it reveals.

It is also important to realise that any data you send over the internet is "open". Anyone who has access to the ISP servers, the DNS and the routers can see all of the data you transmit online. These can include:

- The websites that you visit
- The emails that you send: who you send emails to, the main content, the attachments
- Your passwords to email and social networking sites

## 6.3.Understanding online security risks

The other consideration in online security is your level of risk depending on different online threats. How you understand risk is based on your experience and your understanding of the worst-case scenario if your online security is compromised. For instance:



*Salmmah Resource Center- Sudan*

- Have you encountered data loss in the past?
- How did you lose your data?
- How did you recover them or why were you able to recover them?
- Has your Facebook or email account been used by someone else in the past?

There are a wide range of risks involved in the internet. Users, either individuals or groups, would have to know them and evaluate what their level of risk is and, based on this, devise strategies to minimise or eliminate such risks.

### 6.3.1 . Assessing your risk level

Here is one way of assessing your online risk level:

- Low risks: Other people have access to your information but will not do anything malicious with your data and have not compromised your privacy. These could include people that you trust (family and friends), whom you know and trust will not do anything malicious.
- Moderate risks: Someone has access to your vital information but has not denied you access to your information.
- High risks: Someone has access to your information, has used it against you (e.g. sent offensive emails in your name) and has denied you access to your own information (e.g. has changed the password or has deleted your files). These people have targeted you or are just randomly seeking to cause damage to others.

Another way of assessing risk is asking yourself the following questions:

- What are the consequences of losing access to my email?
- What are the consequences of losing access to my social networking sites?
- What are the consequences of losing my important files? Which files or data can I afford to lose and which not?
- What are the consequences if my computer stops working? What is my fallback?

- Aside from myself, what data/information/content do I have on other people in my network, community and organisation? What will happen if other people gain access to information about them?
- How will losing my files affect my organisation?

Your level of risk depends on your assessment of the sensitivity and the value of your information that is made available to others because of your exposure on the internet. For example, if you were working on a campaign that deals with issues that are highly sensitive and contentious in your country and/or your partners' countries and which involves a security threat to yourself and others, then one would assume that this level of risk extends to your online security.

If this is the case you will need to prioritise and plan how to manage your online security with your group and those closely related with you whose own security might be at risk by their association with you. Some questions that you will need to answer are:

- If you are running a public campaign through the internet who are likely to oppose you? What measures would be taken by them against you?
- Who will be put at risk by your campaign? What are the risks?
- What steps or measures should you take to minimise or eliminate the risks that have been identified?

### **6.3.2 . Online security solutions: Protect your online identity**

Your online identity makes you unique in the online world.

In the context of online security, your online identity includes:

- Your IP address, which allows others to know which country and city you are connecting from
- Your email address or email account from where you send messages to others and which you also use to set up accounts in social networking sites
- Your usernames and passwords in your email accounts and social networking sites which enable you to contact others
- The public name that you use in your online spaces
- Your credit card information (for those who do online shopping or use paid services online)
- Your photographs online

Each of these comes with risks that can potentially compromise your online security and identity. Below is a table that outlines the possible risks attached to the different aspects of your online identity and suggests solutions to address these risks.

### 6.3.3 .Types of online risks and possible solutions

The table below sets out some basic steps you can take to protect your online identity. Following that are more detailed steps and strategies to minimise online risks

|                      | <b>Risks</b>  | <b>Prevention and solutions</b>   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| <b>IP address</b>    | Your ISP will know your internet activity. This is especially risky if you are going to websites that are producing content that is "illegal" or blocked in your country.   | If possible choose a trusted ISP, one that is supportive of social issues.<br><br>If this is not possible use an anonymising software like Tor (The Onion Router), which masks your IP address. For more information about Tor go to: <a href="http://www.torproject.org">www.torproject.org</a>  |
|                      | Corporate and/or government surveillance of your internet activity  | Use Tor to anonymise your internet activity.  |
| <b>Email address</b> | If your email address is made public you will receive unwanted advertising emails (spam).   | Do not use your personal and/or work email to sign up to social networking sites and websites.  |
|                      | If your email password is compromised whoever has that information can:<br><br>Deny you access to your own email account by changing your password<br><br>Read all your emails<br><br>Send emails in your name<br><br>Create social networking accounts in your name. | Keep good passwords in order to prevent others from guessing your passwords.<br><br>Always use HTTPS when you log into your email account.<br><br>Never leave your email unattended. If you are using a shared or a public computer, always remember to log out of your email.<br><br>If your email has already been compromised take the following steps:<br><br>Report the situation to your email provider and ask them to block the unauthorised user.<br><br>Inform your contacts about the situation to secure your credibility and to protect their own security.<br><br>Minimise your use of your "infected" email account until the intrusion has been resolved. Change your password right away.<br><br>Open a new email account as soon as possible. |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Your public name (especially if you are using your real name in social networking sites)</b></p> | <p>Your personal information will be known to everyone who has access to your public profile.</p> <p>Your announcement of your location and your activities will be known publicly.</p> | <p>Limit the information you publish in your social networking spaces.</p> <p>Never publish your home address, phone numbers and work address in these spaces.</p>   |
|  | <p>They can use your real name to create "fake" identities online.</p>  | <p>You can take the following steps:</p> <p>Report the situation to the social networking site administrator.</p> <p>Let the people in your friends' list know.</p>  |
| <p><b>Your credit card information</b></p>   | <p>They can use your credit card to purchase services and goods online.</p>   | <p>Always use reliable online shopping sites.</p> <p>If the site does not allow for HTTPS access it is not a reliable and secure site.</p> <p>Before you purchase anything online explore customer reviews of that site. You can use Google to find news and reviews about the site.</p> <p>If your credit card has already been compromised you must let your credit card company know.</p> |
| <p><b>Your photographs</b></p>   | <p>People who do not know you will know what you look like. The photographs can be used to track you in your real life.</p>   | <p>Limit who can see your photographs. Depending on your social networking site, there are different privacy and security settings that you can use to prevent strangers from seeing your photographs and any information about you which you post in these sites.</p> <p>You can also ask people on your friends' list not to tag your photographs.</p>                                     |

## 6.4. Minimise your risks online

**Do not use your work or your personal email for social networking sites** It is good practice to use a different email address for each of your social networking spaces (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.). If you use one email address for all of your social networking sites it is easier for individuals and companies who send spam to find out your real email address. Also, if you want to delete your social networking account it would be easier if you have an email address for that account only (from Yahoo! or Google). All you need to do is delete that email address.

**Keep good passwords** Your password keeps your data and the control of your data safe from others.

- Password protect your computer so that no one can use it without your consent
- Good passwords are made up of 6 to 12 alpha-numeric characters (a combination of letters, numbers and symbols)
- Do not use dictionary words (in any language)
- Use a different password for every account
- Do not use passwords based on information that people know about you (like your birthday, the name of your pet, your mother's name)
- Change your passwords regularly.

### 6.4.1 . Advanced strategies for protecting your online identity

#### Make yourself anonymous

If you believe that you should employ more drastic solutions to protect yourself online (e.g. if you have a government that monitors internet use or if you are communicating sensitive information) the following will help you protect your online identity.

There are two ways that you can anonymise yourself online:

#### 1. Install anonymising software

You can install software that masks your IP address so that you can appear to be from another country and hide your ISP information.



*Posters by VNC partners in Aceh, Indonesia during their 16 Days of Activism campaign.*

First, install Firefox and use it as your default web browser. When you have Firefox installed you can install a plug-in (a small application that you add on to other software) called Tor. Tor was developed by activist technologists who aim to protect activists on the internet. (For more information go to [www.torproject.org](http://www.torproject.org))

Note that when you use Tor your internet connection will slow down. Unfortunately, this is not ideal for people who have low bandwidth.

## *2. Create fake online identities*

One tactic to protect yourself online is to use a fake identity. Do not use your real name or any name that might put your real life at risk. Do not post your real pictures online.

### **Encrypt your passwords**

Every time you log into a website (like Gmail, Yahoo! Mail, Facebook, etc.) your username and password are visible to anyone with access to that connection. This includes the website administrator. If you have HTTPS (Hyper Text Transmission Protocol Secure), this will encrypt your usernames and passwords. This means that only you and the server of the website you are logging into will be able to see that information.

You can install HTTPS Everywhere, a Firefox plug-in or extension, which automates HTTPS for all of the popular websites like Google, Facebook, Wikipedia, etc. (available at: [www.eff.org/deeplinks/2010/06/encrypt-web-https-everywhere-firefox-extension](http://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2010/06/encrypt-web-https-everywhere-firefox-extension))

A plug-in is a small application that you add on to other software. In the case of HTTPS Everywhere, it is an application that works with the Firefox web browsing software.

### **Credit card protection tips**

- Never, ever publish your credit card details (name, card number, etc.) in any public space. This includes your social networking space and your email messages.
- When you purchase a service or a commodity online make sure that you buy from trusted vendors. Before you buy, Google the vendor to check if there have been theft reports of credit card data related to that vendor.
- Check the website address in order to know if the vendor uses a secure connection. If it starts with <https://> then the connection is secure. Never buy from a vendor that lacks <https://>.

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### **Protecting your email contacts**

Aside from your own identity it is important to protect the people in your network. More than security, it is unethical to share other people's details without their consent.

For example, you can divulge information inadvertently when you CC (carbon copy) other people in your emails. This allows all your receivers to see the others' email addresses.

A simple solution is to use BCC (blind carbon copy). BCC keeps the email addresses hidden from the other recipients.

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## Protecting your data

This is about maintaining your access to and the integrity of your data and not allowing unauthorised access by others to these data. Unauthorised access could lead to the theft of your data, the loss of your own access or to unauthorised changes to your own data.

**Keep your computer virus-free** Computer viruses are malicious software that can: (a) destroy your computer operating system and leave you with no access to your files; (b) corrupt your files and make them unreadable; (c) access your computer's address book to gain information about your contacts; and (d) spread to your contacts when you send them files through emails, chatting and sharing of USB sticks.

You can get viruses from different sources. They can be attached to emails, to files that you download from the internet and to external storage devices (like USB sticks, external hard drives and CDs/DVDs).

- You must have an anti-virus software like AVG ([free.avg.com/za-en/homepage](http://free.avg.com/za-en/homepage)) or ClamAV ([www.clamav.net/lang/en/](http://www.clamav.net/lang/en/)) that will protect your computer. It is important to ensure that your anti-virus software is updated. New computer viruses are being created every day. An outdated anti-virus software will not be able to detect and remove new viruses.
- Schedule a time of the day to automatically run your anti-virus software on your computer. This could be done during lunch breaks when you are not using your computer.
- Make sure your anti-virus software checks your external storage devices for viruses.



*Strategic E-Campaigning Workshop hosted by BAOBAB in Lagos, Nigeria, 7-9 June 2010*

**Back up your data** Make sure you have at least two back-up copies of your important data in case something happens to your computer. Make sure your back-up devices are located in different places.

Back up your data at least once a month. This will decrease the risk of losing data if your computer crashes.

**Password-protect your computer** Passwords that protect your computer minimise the risk of allowing other people to access your data.

You should password-protect your computer when:

- **You start or restart your computer** People without the password to your computer will not be able to turn it on.
  - For Windows, take the following steps:
    - Go to your Control Panel
    - Click on "Users". Right-click on the user account you want to set up a password for.
  - For Mac, take the following steps:
    - Click on "System Preferences"
    - Click on "Accounts". From this window you can set or change the passwords.
  
- **You activate your screensaver** All computers have screensavers that automatically run when the computer has been left idle for some time. When your computer is idle, it is possible you are away from your computer. If you do not password-protect your screensaver anyone who goes near your computer while you are away will be able to look at your files.
  - For Windows, take the following steps:
    - Right-click on your desktop
    - Select "Properties"
    - Click "Screensaver"
    - Select "Password-protected"
    - Click on "Change". Then click "OK".
  - For Mac:
    - Click on "System Preferences"
    - Click on "Security"
    - Select "General". Then click the option to require passwords for the screensaver.
  
- **Create user accounts** In many cases people share computers with families, co-workers and/or friends. It is important to maintain your privacy even if you have a shared computer environment by creating specific spaces for each user that you create. Thus, they will not be able to have access to your files even if you are sharing the same computer.

You could create a “Guest User” account that your family, co-workers and friends can use if they need to borrow your computer. If you are consistently sharing your computer with somebody you will have to create an account for each one.

### **Protect your web browsing history**

Your web browser (e.g. Firefox, Internet Explorer, Opera, etc.) stores data that show which sites you go to. While this makes it easier for you to find sites that you have visited or frequently visit, from a security perspective it also makes it easier for others to know which sites you have been to and therefore could pose a risk for you and those closely related to you.

Removing your browsing history is extremely important when you have to use a public computer (internet cafe, etc). (See links to specific instructions for Internet Explorer<sup>43</sup> and Firefox<sup>44</sup>).

### **6.4.2 . Something to consider: Encrypting your emails**

Encryption is the process of turning data into code that can be read only by someone with the key to unlock that code. In other words, when you send an encrypted email, only those you have given the key to “read” that email would be able to read it.

Encryption is one of the more technical topics in online security. But it is important for those in high-risk situations to understand how you can make your email more secure.

#### **A few basic concepts**

Data that can be read and understood without any special measure is called *plaintext* or *cleartext*. The method of disguising plaintext in such a way as to hide its substance is called *encryption*. Encrypting plaintext results in unreadable gibberish called *ciphertext*. You use encryption to ensure that information is hidden from anyone for whom it is not intended, even those who can see the encrypted data. The process of reverting ciphertext to its original plaintext is called *decryption*.<sup>45</sup>



*Solidaritas Perempuan -Indonesia*

In order to encrypt and decrypt you will need keys. PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) is a system that makes it easy for users to create keys for encryption and decryption. If you want to encrypt your emails, the first step is to download PGP software like GNUPG <sup>46</sup>which you will have to install in your computer.

The second step is to use Thunderbird<sup>47</sup> for your emails.

<sup>43</sup>[www.ehow.com/how\\_6075\\_delete-browsers-history.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_6075_delete-browsers-history.html)

<sup>44</sup>[www.ehow.com/how\\_2033392\\_delete-web-history.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2033392_delete-web-history.html)

<sup>45</sup>[www.pgpi.org/doc/pgpintro/#p2](http://www.pgpi.org/doc/pgpintro/#p2)

<sup>46</sup>[www.gnupg.org](http://www.gnupg.org)

<sup>47</sup>[www.mozillamessaging.com/en-US/thunderbird](http://www.mozillamessaging.com/en-US/thunderbird)

Once you have installed Thunderbird you will then need to install a plug-in for Thunderbird called Enigmail.<sup>48</sup> Enigmail makes it easy for you to encrypt your emails.

Once you have installed Enigmail<sup>49</sup> you can then use it to create your keys. Once you have keys you can then start sending emails.

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<sup>48</sup><http://enigmail.mozdev.org/home/index.php.html>

<sup>49</sup>For step-by-step instructions: <http://enigmail.mozdev.org/documentation/quickstart.php.html>

## 7 Recommended reading

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Security in a Box: Tools and tactics for your digital security  
[security.ngoinabox.org](http://security.ngoinabox.org)

Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders  
[www.frontlinedefenders.org/manuals/protection](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/manuals/protection)

On Security/Privacy and Social Networking  
[ftx.apcwomen.org/node/71](http://ftx.apcwomen.org/node/71)

Some Answers to Social Networking Hacking  
[ftx.apcwomen.org/node/72](http://ftx.apcwomen.org/node/72)