DemocracyLab: Open Source Politics

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Final Project Challenge

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Table of Contents

Introduction

In a world where social media is ever present, it is hard to believe that the use of it is still ever changing. Social media has been advertised as a virtual connector of families and friends, has started jobs, and has become a place where someone can dump out their feelings on the world. Who would have thought that websites such as Facebook or Twitter would ignite political movements and encourage people to stand up against disrespect, dishonest politicians, and challenge their government as a whole? Though social media has gained a new purpose, it is hard to ignore the increasingly growing issues that come with political discourse over the internet. There has been worry of miscommunication, people being misinformed or even starting movements that are similar in name but carry different meanings. It is also prevalent that the quality of political discourse on the internet tends to be full of emotion and lack substance. How then can people use social media and have productive political discourse? Where can people go to talk about issues that concern them? One answer to the developing problems could be DemocracyLab.

DemocracyLab, a nonprofit organization founded by Mark Frischmuth, is an organization that specializes in creating online tools for the specific purpose of initiating political discourse. DemocracyLab is onboard with the idea that at times social media can be flawed, and are moved to improve the democratic process and produce collaborative solutions to public problems. Not only do they want to initiate successful political discourse, but eventually make policymakers and others aware of what the people are talking about and the changes they would like to enact. By focusing on collaboration, meritocracy, and the responses of the masses, DemocracyLab has a tool that can help people gather around an issue and possibly find a solution. In an effort to patronize and

analyze the quality of the internet tool, Mark and his Communication Director, Claire Adamsick, challenged a group of University of Portland students to use their tool to bring about political discourse on an issue that clearly involves the student body. In this challenge, the group would have to find an issue that affected students, find a way to involve students in the internet tool, and at the end have at least 100 students participate by utilizing the DemocracyLab internet tool.

An issue that has been prevalent on campus is the constant struggle between students and their student body leadership team about how their money is spent. One issue that arose was the constant change of the Campus Improvement Fund (CIF). This fund was designed in order to allow students to fund a physical change on campus without the aid or permission of the Administration. Past physical changes include the opening of a coffeehouse on campus, additional sidewalks, and even the installation of pedestrian street lights to warn cars when students are crossing the street. However, as time has passed the quality of these improvements has lessened by the semester. In an attempt to put the money to good use, the Associated People of the University of Portland (ASUP) tried to redirect the money towards a school campaign. This idea was so controversial that the student body was surprised to learn that this resolution had passed. From then on, for three years, one semester's $20,000 would be donated to the University of Portland's Rise Campaign in order to help the school reach its monetary goals before initiating campus expansion.

After the monumental change that occurred just last year, the CIF took yet another turn. ASUP passed a resolution stating that if students wanted to, they could donate their CIF money (the semester of money not going to the Rise Campaign) towards a major

project on campus. This became known as the Major Project Fund. This fund, which is controlled by the Campus Program Board (CPB), has been used in the past to host concerts, fun fairs, and other activities on campus. This constant change in the purpose and use of the CIF has not only discouraged students from engaging with their student body but also left many feeling powerless in their own community. Students have felt they have gone unheard and misrepresented. It is for this reason that the DemocracyLab internet tool could be very useful to the University of Portland community.

Current Employment of Social Capital

DemocracyLab is an organization that seeks to increase social capital in the political process. Before its inception, founder Mark Frischmuth recognized that government, on an international level, had been failing to correctly address the general needs of the people. In order to better address the people's needs, DemocracyLab's mission statement reads, "DemocracyLab's mission is to improve the democratic process and to produce collaborative solutions to public policy problems" (DemocracyLab web page). DemocracyLab improves the democratic process through an interactive deliberative online tool that encourages citizen participation through the social networking website Facebook. This online tool humanizes the political process, a process that is traditionally viewed as formal and daunting. Rather than letting a party label influence voter decisions, DemocracyLab seeks to identify the values that lie at the root of a given political issue. The general public identifies the values through the open source software. Without the participations of volunteers, government officials, and concerned citizens, the organization has little room for growth due to its dependency on the input and collaboration of participants. In other words, the participation, knowledge, and views of individuals are the necessary resources DemocracyLab needs to sustain itself.

Through the open source software DemocracyLab uses to build discussion on the political matters, participants are able and encouraged to alter the tool, which adds depth and understanding on issues such as the Oregon Budget. This being said, for the purposes of this paper, we use Bourdieu's (1985) holistic definition of the theory. "The aggregate of the actual or potential resources linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationship" (248). The input and collaboration of the general public are

a resource to DemocracyLab. Building relationships and participation leads to the organization's success in creating discussion that represents a vast majority of concerned citizens. Below are a few more ways DemocracyLab uses social capital on both a larger scale and in day-to-day practices.

Being a relatively new and small entity, DemocracyLab's use of social capital extends to its demo on the Oregon Budget, and the project currently in place with the University of Portland. The Oregon Budget demo is a pilot that seeks to engage future clients, city governments, municipalities, and other community organizations that work in the collaborative democracy field. The Oregon budget demo and the University of Portland Capital Improvement Fund demo aim to identify what the strengths and weakness are of the open source software. In true social capital spirit, DemocracyLab hopes to take the feedback of pilot participants and make the appropriate changes that will thus create a more user-friendly online forum for discussion and collaboration. The organization's goal is to create an inclusive online deliberative system that represents perspectives of all participants. Current research of the organization is geared towards enhancing the online tool and ensuring that the decision-making within the online tool will encourage future collaboration among participants, rather than hinder political discussion.

Facebook, DemocracyLab's medium for political discussion, encourages building relationships and knowledge through collaboration. Participants and members of DemocracyLab join discussion through a Facebook application that is linked with open source software to organize views and opinions on issues that affect the political system in the United States. The software collects the diverse thoughts of participants, and helps organize consistencies and variances of the specific issue at hand. The online tool is the

first step in creating an ongoing discussion on political issues. Once a diversity of participants have shared their values, objectives, and proposed policies through the interactive online tool, the next step for DemocracyLab is to take the consistencies and categories of participants' views on a given political issue and use them to guide face-to-face discourse.

One example is DemocracyLab's current project with the University of Portland. Individuals who participate in the online discussion of the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF), are able to organize and rank values, objectives and outcomes. While we, the students overseeing this project, have listed five possible policies to correcting lack of involvement with the CIF, students who did not take part in the initial process of creating an online discussion can add values, objectives, or policies that were not thought of by the discussion creators. Essentially, the Facebook application uses the views and knowledge of participants as a *resource* to increase the depth and quality of political discussion. In turn, participants are assured that their opinions and thoughts directly impact in the DemocracyLab process.

DemocracyLab uses social capital through its interactive software and its deliberative process. Social capital reflects the resources one attains or has access to through existing relationships and networks (Xiong & Bharadwai, 2011). Participation and deliberation are sources that contribute to the overall success of DemocracyLab's mission statement. In turn, DemocracyLab's service is a resource to the public, because it provides a medium to organize the wide range of thoughts and perspectives on political policy in a user-friendly way. Because the general public edits the online tool, values, objectives and proposed policies are broken down into understandable terms. In addition, by mapping out

the values and objectives that stand behind policy, citizens can better understand the

thought process behind proposed solutions to political matters.

Theories for Organizational Improvement of Social Capital

The phrase "social capital" has been popularized in recent years by the research of Robert Putnam (2006) and was actually coined by L.J. Hanifan to stress the importance of community involvement to sustain democracy. The theorist referred to social capital as "those tangible substances that count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit" (Putnam, 2006). As we have learned this semester, there are many definitions of social capital. It is, however, generally understood that this concept includes interpersonal and social interactions, as well as political ones – these interactions create such outcomes as political and civic participation (Putnam, 2006). Having worked with an organization that strives to promote political discourse, we have seen social capital at work. While the structure and objectives of DemocracyLab serve its purpose well, there are a few theories that can potentially help this organization understand itself better in terms of Social Capital.

The first theory that may prove to be beneficial is the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) Theory, which essentially points out that individuals construct their own social realities while engaged in discourse. It is concerned with how we coordinate and establish meaning during interactions (Pearce, 2005). When looking at this particular theory in terms of social capital as it relates to DemocracyLab, one must understand the importance of creating messages that can be understood by all people involved in a discourse. Message coherence and coordination are stressed in this particular theory; it is often difficult to understand the perspectives and opinions of other individuals when they are not explicitly stated, and this can hinder and even stop the flow of conversation. Thus,

DemocracyLab must continue to provide discussion forums and simulations with concrete definitions and examples embedded within them. It is much easier to misconstrue a statement when it is not thoroughly explained, which can threaten social capital on many levels. Misunderstandings can hinder discourse or create invalid results. These negative results can be deterred by applying the concepts embedded within CMM Theory and attempting to create a group meaning, rather than an individual one (Pearce, 2005).

This leads us to our second theory, Groupthink. This particular theory notes the consensus-seeking tendencies of groups. Though a mutual understanding of concepts is important, as noted in the previous paragraph, the seemingly inherent tendency to adjust to the whims or opinions of a group greatly detracts from the aims of a group like DemocracyLab (Hart, Stern, & Sundelius, 1997). This organization strives to address issues in terms of individual opinions, not opinions tailored to popular inclinations. Groupthink is a kind of communication interchange in which maintaining group cohesiveness and solidarity is more important than considering the facts in a realistic manner, and this can lead to many negative outcomes (Eaton, 2001). Groupthink theory strives to recognize the dangers of decision-making using this tactic, as it can limit discussion to only a few alternatives, lead to a premature acceptance of a solution without seeking out pitfalls, and seemingly negate the group need to reexamine alternatives (Cline, 1990). What is most interesting about this theory, however, is that it seems to foster social capital within a group while, simultaneously, usurping the democratic process. Our recommendation is to be wary of Groupthink as a productive communication mode.

Though detrimental to rich and diverse political dialogue, Groupthink can be helpful in establishing strong connections within organizations. Social Network Theory follows this

sort of behavior closely, as it keenly examines how the social structures of relationships around a person, group, or organization affect beliefs or behaviors (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). As an organization, DemocracyLab is promoting social capital by giving people a common platform through which to express their values, objectives, and ideas. This non-profit creates communities of "interconnected individuals who are linked by patterned communication flows" and share information within communication structures – social networks (Rogers, 1986). Social Network Theory could be valuable to DemocracyLab in terms of assessing the communication structure of the organization. They can use and analyze patterns, and systemize the communication structure of DemocracyLab, making it the most effective discourse platform possible. Special attention must be given to specific aspects of communication patterns in order to do this effectively. Once there is a truly accessible system in place, DemocracyLab can foster a large amount of social capital and greater numbers of site users. The more systemized the process, the more likely the information will flow coherently and into the hands of a variety of social networks (Monge & Contractor, 2003).

Answering the Challenge

The challenge presented to our group by DemocracyLab was rather straightforward – to get the University of Portland student body to use DemocracyLab's online interactive Facebook tool to start a political discussion on a campus issue. Together, with the guidance of Mark and Claire, we decided to start a discussion about the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) and student leadership involvement. The goal was to involve students by having them utilize the online tool to discuss this issue, hoping that at least 100 students would participate.

The first step was to gather information about the issue. Specifically, we needed to understand the different viewpoints students on campus had concerning the CIF and student leadership. This involved interviewing a variety of different students. Each group member interviewed three to five students, from freshman to seniors. About one third of the students interviewed were involved in student leadership activities, such as ASUP senators and presidents of on campus clubs/organizations.

After the interviews were completed, we were then in a position to create content for DemocracyLab's online interactive Facebook tool. We used the information gathered from our various interviews, along with our own knowledge and opinions on the topic, to identify values, objectives, and policies related to the CIF and student leadership. Our data pointed us towards compiling the following list of values: education, community, safety, representation, quality, service, image, and transparency. Many different objectives came about from our interviews. For organizational purposes, we lumped some of these objectives together if they were similar. The objectives we identified are as follows:

increase student participation in ASUP, improve the quality of student representation, increase understanding of ASUP and CIF, increase awareness of CIF process, increase interchange of ideas between students and administration, increase administration control in funding and spending decisions, and increase constraints of ASUP spending. Finally, we came up with five different policies, or plans of action, that the University of Portland and/or its students could potentially enact to solve the issue surrounding the CIF and student leadership involvement. The policies we created are: requiring participation in ASUP, creating incentives for students' participation in ASUP, long-term saving of money to rebuild facilities, current policy of CIF, and creating awareness of ASUP via social media.

After creating this content for DemocracyLab's interactive Facebook application, we added it to the website. Mark and Claire had a few suggestions for editing, and once those changes were made the tool was ready for students to use. As mentioned earlier, our goal was to have at least 100 students use the online tool. We went about reaching this goal by asking our classmates and friends to use it, as well as promoting it through our own personal social media accounts (mainly by posting the link on our Facebook accounts with a brief description and thanking students for participating). Another tactic used was to ask professors who taught classes in computer labs to demonstrate the tool and ask their students to use it during class time. We were able to get two professors to do this and it worked extremely well, almost doubling the amount of participants that had previously used the tool.

As it stands, the tool has been used by over 60 students. This is great, but clearly it is short of our goal of at least 100 students utilizing the interactive Facebook application. However, even though we have not reached our goal, we still have valuable information to

pass along to DemocracyLab concerning the interactive Facebook application and its usefulness. First, it is important to note that the tool was generally well received by students. One thing in particular many students mentioned was that they liked how after ranking and organizing values, objectives, and policies, they were able to see how others ranked them overall. Baring this in mind, we feel that this is something the tool could expand on. For example, it may be helpful to include other ways of displaying this information, such as including graphs or pie charts of this same information on the right side of the page next to the data for clarity.

Another helpful addition to the interactive Facebook application might be an online forum where those who used the tool can go to see how others are ranking values, objectives, and polices. This would allow users to checkup regularly on the rankings, even days after using the application. This forum could also be a place for questions to be asked concerning the values, objectives, and policies, as well as a way for users of the application to express their opinions about the content. This would not only entice users to keep up with the issue and stay involved, but it would also be a way for the DemocracyLab team to get direct feedback from users of the application. We strongly believe that creating a space for users of the tool to leave comments, as well as ways for the DemocracyLab team to respond to these comments and answer any questions posed by users, will further enhance the interactive Facebook application and generate hype about DemocracyLab.

One common question students asked was what the name of the online tool was that they were using. On DemocracyLab's website it is named the "Interactive Facebook Application." However, this title is not clearly labeled on the actual application itself. To make the tool more cohesive with the website, we suggest making this title clear and in

large font on the application page so that users understand they have clicked on the right link and are in the right place. We might also suggest actually renaming the tool so that "Facebook" is not in the title. When the word "Facebook" is in the title, many people assume that they will be taken to a Facebook page when they click on the link, and therefore it can cause confusion when they find that the link does not take them directly to a Facebook page. This confusion can cause frustration and lead some to believe the link is somehow broken or incorrect, which could cause them to give up on using the tool altogether. To avoid this situation completely, we suggest giving the application a new title and to place this title clearly on DemocracyLab's website as well as on every page of the tool itself.

One of the biggest problems the group faced was that there was no way to supply students with a direct link to the "UP Capitol Improvement Fund" page. In order to get to this page, students had to jump though many hoops. First, the student must to go to DemocracyLab's "Demo" page. From there, the student clicks on the "Interactive Facebook Application" link. This opens up a new window and requires the student to sign into Facebook. Once signed into Facebook, the student must click on the small "change issue" button, which we discovered was difficult for students to find. Once on this page the student could then click on the "UP Capitol Improvement Fund" link. From our observations and from voluntary feedback given to us by students who used the tool, these steps caused confusion and frustration. We found it difficult to spread the word about DemocracyLab's online application via social media because of these many steps. We could not simply post the link in our Facebook status updates and ask for people to use it because the tool requires explanation for how to get to the page we desired them use. This is why we strongly suggest that DemocracyLab make it possible to share a direct link to not just to

the tool but to the specific issue within that tool that the person would like discuss (somehow make it so that there is no need for the small "change issue" button). Although clicking on links and buttons is by no means a difficult task, we live in a world where convenience is everything. This is especially true for busy college students who are asked on a monthly, if not weekly, basis to complete online surveys by professors and fellow classmates. This is why tools like SurveyMoneky are successful – they require just one easy click to take you to your desired survey. We hope that DemocracyLab can find a way to use direct links because we feel this would *greatly* increase the amount of people who would make use of this great online resource.

The other main issue we ran into while encouraging students to use the online application was that once they got there they were confused as to what they were supposed to do. Although there is an explanation give at the top, there is no use of the term "drag and drop." This is ultimately what the user needs to do – drag the values, objectives, policies and drop them into the appropriate boxes to the right (or leave them where they are). We feel this could be more clearly stated on the page to eliminate any possible confusion regarding what is expected of the user. Our suggestion is that DemocracyLab provides a short and simple step-by-step explanation of how to use the tool on the top of the page (underneath the title of the application / title of the issues the user is addressing). Our other small suggestion is to make these steps appear in a darker and brighter color, because the font color is currently light grey and somewhat difficult to read against the white background.

Limitations and Reflections

Many of the problems we ran into throughout this project have been addressed in the previous section, as well as our suggestions for how to go about solving these problems. However, there were just a couple more limitations we would like to address. One limitation was that the site was not able to handle many people using the tool at one time. This was quickly addressed by the DemocracyLab and by the next time a large group of students used the tool this was no longer an issue. We would simply advice DemocracyLab that from this point forward if they know that a large group of people will be accessing the application that they monitor the site (if possible) during this time.

The biggest limitation to this project that our group found was University of Portland students' utter lack of interest in anything related to student leadership and the Capitol Improvement Fund. We were unsure about how to address this issue as it became a theme of our findings as we interviewed students (the ones that were not ASUP senators or club presidents). To reflect this theme we included it into some of the policies we created (i.e. requiring participation in ASUP and creating incentives for students' participation in ASUP). However, when it came to promoting the use of the tool, we found that this lack of interest (and knowledge) on the topic of student leadership and the CIF severely hindered our success. Therefore, we label this issue as a clear limitation of this project.

Our suggestion for the creators of DemocracyLab, so that they no longer run into this problem in the future, is to specifically reach out to communities with an interest in democracy and leadership, or communities where issues are passionately cared about by a large number of people. This would ensure that the users of this online tool that

DemocracyLab reaches out to have a high likelihood of being interested in and caring about the issue presented in the online tool.

Another limitation for this project was time. Interviewing students takes time, especially if one has to seclude meetings with specific students, such as ASUP senators or the presidents of on campus clubs. These interviews were very important because they allowed us to create high quality content. However, the time left after interviewing students and developing the content was not long, particularly considering this was during the last few weeks of school when many students were focusing on final exams and the soon-approaching graduation and summer vacation. This short amount of time was one reason, although we feel not the largest reason, why we did not reach our goal of at least 100 students accessing the tool.

When reflecting on this process, we agree that this tool may not be best suited towards the University of Portland student body. We feel this tool could be extremely successful at other colleges and universities with larger, well-known leadership and student government programs, or schools with high involvement in student leadership activities. Bigger schools, such as the University of Oregon and Oregon State University, may be such schools, and if DemocracyLab would like to continue to encourage students to use the tool these schools might present better opportunities.

That being said, the overall reaction from the University of Portland's student body concerning DemocracyLab's online tool was positive. Students' particularly liked to see how their ranking compared to other students. Therefore, we highly encourage DemocracyLab to provide options for users of the tool to receive updates about how the values/objectives/policies are ranked by other users in the future. This could be though

email updates or, as we suggested earlier, an online forum. We hope that DemocracyLab

finds our suggestions and findings helpful as they move forward and expand their business.

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Bourdieu, P. (1985). "The Forms of Capital," in The Handbook of Theory and Research for
the Sociology of Education, J.G. Richardson, ed. New York, NY: Greenwood, 241-58.

Bourdieu explores the implications of cultural capital and social capital. He

describes Cultural Capital as a concept that manifests in three states, embodied,

institutionalized and objectified. More importantly, Bourdieu addresses the importance of

developing social capital through networks. Agents who participate in acquiring Social

Capital are most successful when they have many networks and take the initiative to

maintain those networks.

Cheong, P. H. (2011). Religious leaders, mediated authority, and social change. *Journal of
Applied Communication Research, 39*(4), 452-454.

Cheong explains how in recent years religious leaders have used social media to

rally members of their church or religion to participate in acts of service or to consciously

think about a religious matter. This has become increasingly pertinent with the foundation

of multiple mega churches in the United States. In the wake of such international travesties

such as the Haiti Earthquake religious leader Bill Hybels and 5500 volunteers were able to

give out 1.7 million meals within 24 hours. It was through the use of social media that this

was accomplished. The Article also expressed that it was key for these religious leaders to

remain consistent and a constant presence in the social media world even if there is no

specific cause or event to push. This Article could aid DemocracyLab in developing a

constant online presence on either twitter or Facebook to rally people to their cause before

making use of their application.

Howard, P. N., & Parks, M. R. (2012). Social media and political change: Capacity, constraint, and consequence. *Journal of Communication, 62*(2), 359-362.

Howard and Parks article outlines how many communication experts analyzed the uprising in many countries as of late. Concentrating primarily on the Arab Spring, Howard and Parks observed that many of these uprisings were only made possible through the use of social media. But it was not that these uprisings utilized Twitter or Facebook. Howard and Parks define social media in a much broader sense. First as the information infrastructure and tools used to produce and distribute content (i.e. Facebook or Twitter). Second, the content that takes the digital form of personal messages, news, ideas, and cultural products (i.e. tweet or post). Finally, as the people, organizations, and industries that produce and consume digital content (i.e. the Arab people). This article could aid DemocracyLab in developing a social network which could stand alone from Facebook or Twitter. Realizing that social media is more than just the tool that is used could help DemocracyLab expand past a Facebook application.

Khamis, S. & Vaughn, K. (2011). 'We are all khaled said': The potentials and limitations of cyberactivism in triggering public mobilization and promoting political change. *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research, 4*(2), 145-163.

Khamis and Vaughn's article outlines the ways in which the Facebook page named "We are All Khaled Said" affected the Egyptian revolution. In their findings they drew conclusions that social activists should not prioritize the use of social media in affecting social change over face-to-face contact. The Arab Spring was enacted by thousands of activists taking to the streets and protesting for a cause. Social media was used as a tool in the revolution and was not the revolution itself. Khamis and Vaughn urge all readers to

neither over estimate or underestimate the use of social media in political change. Social

media cannot start a movement nor is it so feeble as to affect no change at all. This

Facebook page provided a common denominator for the Egyptians to rally behind, but after

the revolution ended the page began to express multiple differing opinions and became

useless as a political tool. This article could aid DemocracyLab in not overestimating their

product – if the population is looking for a forum to express their political ideals, they will

flock to that forum.

Reilly, I. (2011). 'Amusing ourselves to death?' Social media, political satire, and the 2011
election. *Canadian Journal of Communication 36*(3), 503-511.

"Amusing Ourselves to Death?" examines the way in which social media was used as

a tool to spread political satire, mobilizing voters in the 2011 Canadian election. The

incumbent conservative candidate Stephen Harper was targeted by many groups for his

political practices. These groups worked to create political satire targeting the candidate.

What Reilly found was that though the political satire being spread throughout the web

was able to bring together "vote mobs" and bring to the forefront many political issues, it

was unable to make significant political change. Though these many groups fought against

Harpers reelection, he won with about 40% of the vote. This is why Reilly uses the phrase

("Amusing Ourselves to Death?") coined by Neil Postman to headline his article. Though the

satire is amusing it ultimately had no power in the polls. This article can help reinforce

DemocracyLab's efforts to reach younger political minds through the use of social media,

yet does not give answers on how to best rally a group of younger political activists.

Sayed, N. (2011). Towards the egyptian revolution: Activists' perceptions of social media for mobilization. *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research, 4*(2), 273-298.

Sayed's research shows how the Arab Spring was caused in multiple countries within the same span of time, as well as how each country's socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds affected its revolution. Many have said social media was the springboard that caused; however, Sayed explains that social media has filled a gap of communication which has always been desired amongst the more youthful citizens of Arab nations and it is the combination of this new media with such factors as government controlled traditional media and multiple other restricting conditions which gave rise to this revolution. Sayed points out how revolutions such as the ones experienced in Arabic nations could not succeed as they have in any other place in the world. Many factors contributed to the Arab Spring yet social media was the catalyst use to let it succeed. This article points out the many factors which have gone into political change through social media. This could aid DemocracyLab in pinpointing which groups of people would be most likely to get the best use out of their product based on these extemporaneous factors.

Xiong, G., & Bharadwaj, S. (2011). Social capital of young technology firms and their IPO values: The complementary role of relevant absorptive capacity. *Journal of Marketing, 75*(6), 87-104.

In their study, researchers Xiong and Bharadwai discover the outcomes of a young technology firm's efforts to increase Social Capital. By investing in business to business (B2B) relationships, the technology firm was able to increase its standing in the professional realm by gaining access to resources from other business (knowledge,

strategy suggestions) and becoming more well-known in the professional technological

world.

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