



**Intercultural school**  
Talents pour le monde

# **EPREUVES D'ADMISSION**

## **1<sup>er</sup> CYCLE**

**LANGUE DE TRAVAIL : ANGLAIS**

## **Epreuve de la matinée : 9h – 13h**

- **Lecture des documents**
- **Synthèse**
- **Traduction**

## I. DOSSIER

### *Doc. 1*

#### **The subtle ways that ‘clicktivism’ shapes the world**

Clicktivism has a bad reputation. As one commentator put it a decade ago: “clicktivism is to activism as McDonalds is to a slow-cooked meal. It may look like food, but the life-giving nutrients are long gone.” And last year, former US president Barack Obama suggested that social media activism – particularly “woke” culture – was no substitute for community organising or protest in the physical world. “There is this sense,” he said, that the way to provoke change “is to be as judgmental as possible about other people, and that’s enough. That’s not activism. That’s not bringing about change. If all you’re doing is casting stones, you’re probably not going to get that far.”

Evidence collected over the last decade suggests that clicktivism, in the aggregate, can be very effective in spreading little-known ideas and publicising non-mainstream notions. While one tweet or post won’t change the world, thousands of them can disseminate beliefs that will. “Clicktivism has a major effect in terms of offering movements an alternative pathway to the public,” according to Deen Freelon and colleagues at the University of North Carolina.

In the US and internationally, Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, far-right anti-immigration advocates, and the men’s rights movement have all furthered their aims through clicktivism, according to research in recent years. Meanwhile, studies suggest that people who engage strongly with politics online also do so in their offline lives. Sharing and tweeting politics on social media correlates with attending political meetings, donating to campaigns and other forms of civic engagement.

Clicktivism has also propagated new vocabulary, both good and bad. For example, a decade ago the term “globalist” – an anti-semitic term - was restricted to far-right corners of the internet. But as researchers have found through textual analysis, the online efforts of right-wing activists gradually introduced it to websites such as Breitbart, before it was eventually picked up by Fox News and even in the speeches of the current US president.

So-called “hyperpartisan” news sites such as Breitbart, the German Compact magazine and Swedish Nyheter Idag can act as “bridges” for once-extreme views into mainstream right-wing outlets, researchers have found.

Intriguingly, the science suggests the right and left deploy different tactics in their clicktivism, at least in the US. While it risks some over-simplification, research to date suggests that a predominant way that left-wing activists aim to spread ideas is via hashtag activism, such as #TakeAKnee, #TimesUp, or other hashtags publicising an action or cause. Meanwhile, activists on the right – particularly the far right, which Freelon argues has grown on US social media in recent years – aim for subtler routes. For example, they plant a story, opinion or idea in a small or obscure news site, or on social media, encourage followers to share it too, then hope a bigger outlet with a bigger audience picks it up, and another, all the way up to major publishers or TV networks.

Even if the mainstream media is only shooting down the false story, the goal is achieved. For many campaigners, “a debunk is better than nothing. It provides oxygen,” writes Claire Wardle of First Draft News, a non-profit organisation set up to fight fake news. After all, if more people are searching for the story that means more people discovering the

campaigners’ ideas, narratives or beliefs. The researcher Whitney Phillips of Syracuse University has called this “the oxygen of amplification”.

Some activists deploy their messages hidden within viral content, easy to miss for even the most sophisticated internet user. For example, last month Marcia Allison of the University of Southern California published a paper describing how fascist campaigners have been using shareable faked animal pictures to spread their ideas. During the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns, many false images appeared online of animals supposedly returning to uninhabited places, from Welsh sheep playing in a children’s park to dolphins swimming through the canals of Venice.

One particular group of far-right activists, called ecofascists, who hold a white supremacist, pro-environmental ideology, latched on to these images, as a way to attach their racist ideology to potentially viral content.

So, those who dismiss online activism as the work of slacktivists fail to understand the subtlety and power of how messages and beliefs move through the modern digital ecosystem. And there is still much unknown about how clicktivism spreads ideas through society, says Freelon. There are whole areas of discourse that researchers cannot study because they are closed off and private, such as Whatsapp groups.

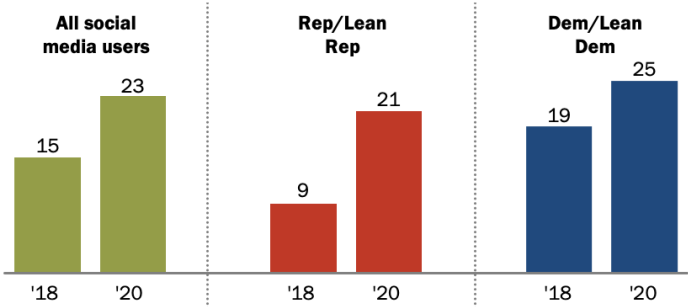
But what we do know is that clicktivism can and does work – and it’s often far more sophisticated and hidden than many people realise.

**Doc. 2**

**Compared with 2018, a larger share of social media users in the U.S. now say their views about an issue changed because of something they saw online**

*% of U.S. adult social media users who say they have changed their views about a political or social issue because of something they saw on social media in the past year*

Rep = Republican  
Lean Rep = Republican-leaning  
Dem = Democrat  
Dem Lean = Democrat leaning



Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 13-19, 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## **Doc. 3**

### **Social Media ‘Clicktivism’ Creates More Apathy Than Empathy**

*Arguments against “slacktivism”*

**‘Clicktivism is to activism as McDonald’s is to a slow cooked meal.’**

One of the most outspoken and longstanding critics of clicktivism, Micah White, believes that the end cannot justify the means and over time can be harmful to the development of activist qualities: just as fast food cannot nourish our bodies clicktivism cannot invigorate or sustain civic spirited activism.

“In promoting the illusion that surfing the web can change the world, clicktivism is to activism as McDonald’s is to a slow cooked meal. It may look like food, but the life-giving nutrients are long gone” states White.

He goes on to say that clicktivism uses invasive databases to meticulously track which members are opening emails, signing petitions, donating money. These emails monitor which emails are more frequently opened – the focus is simply on the clicks, not on the message itself.

Taken one step further, ‘sponsored petitions’ are advertised with access to the databases of supporters (such as the 75 million names on USA website Change.org). Nithin Coca, commenting on the profit model of clicktivist organisations on popular culture website Vice, states that:

“With each click, Change.org makes a profit, and increases its clientele base. Clients are often organizations with deep pockets; Amnesty International, Sierra Club, and even the Democratic Party.”

**Clicktivism takes mere seconds, achieves little and doesn’t encourage people to engage properly with the issues concerned**

South African researcher Khadija Patel believes that while it’s easy to ‘click’ about issues on social media, it’s just as easy to disengage.

“A study published in the Journal of Sociological Science in early 2014 found that the majority of people who ‘like’ a Facebook page for a cause don’t follow up that gesture with a donation. The study found that return rates for charities and campaigns on Facebook can be a tenth of those of more traditional routes such as solicitation through mail.

Analysing the ‘Save Darfur’ page on Facebook, it was found that of the one million-plus people who had liked the page, less than 3,000 ever donated, raising around \$90,000 over three years. In comparison, the broader Darfur campaign raised more than \$1 million in 2008 alone. The authors of the study feel that the Facebook page simply lends the “illusion of activism rather than facilitating the real thing.”

More than a million people like the 'Save Darfur' page. But it is also these kinds of numbers, the crowd, the public act of liking the page, of being seen to engage with a cause that characterises much of our online engagement with causes. It is not activism at all. It is a few strategically placed clicks in the eyes of the people we wish to impress."

Ultimately, the classic tools of activism – dialogue, debate and negotiation with the powerful – have no place in corporate social media activism. They only further alienate individuals from the genuine actions needed to bring about change.

One student blogger, Konsolations, captured the mood in England on the digitalism of activism in the student movement in recent years:

I feel discouraged. This is not just the hallmark of a tradition of studenthood that is dying, but how it sits in the greater topic of political apathy. Freedom of speech and protest in the digital era seems to be exercised only within the void of social media with 'clicktivism' and viral video stunts making people believe they are doing their bit. But ultimately, we're all alienated audiences, no longer active participants in solidarity."

### Online petitions can over simplify complex ethical questions

UK global education NGO Think Global's chief executive, Tom Franklin, argues "Often these petitions will be about the supply-chain behaviour of companies, for example: what they buy; from whom and where; and with what resulting impact on people and the environment. The petitions present the issues in black and white terms – the corporation is behaving badly, but there's a simple solution and the reader can make all the difference by signing a petition.

I question whether this knee-jerk<sup>1</sup> clicktivism really helps people to understand the complex issues behind creating more ethical supply chains. By presenting the issues in these simplistic terms, with the pretence that solutions are straightforward, the impact may actually be counterproductive. It undermines people's true engagement with the issue because they think that by clicking a petition they've done their bit, and it sends companies running for cover from criticism rather than facing their supply chain dilemmas more honestly with their customers."

<sup>1</sup>Knee-jerk reaction = a response often given without taking the time to think

### Doc. 4

#### The #MeToo hashtag has been used roughly 19 million times on Twitter in the past year, and usage often surges around news events

Number of Twitter posts mentioning the #MeToo hashtag, Oct. 15, 2017-Sept. 30, 2018



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of publicly available tweets using Crimson Hexagon.

## Doc. 5



## II. SYNTHÈSE

*Vous réaliserez une synthèse en langue anglaise en vous appuyant sur les documents du dossier. Vous veillerez à ne pas dépasser 400 mots.*

## III. TRADUCTION

*Vous traduirez vers votre langue maternelle le segment suivant (y compris le titre), extrait du Doc.1*

*Vous pouvez traduire « clicktivism » par « clicktivisme » et « slacktivism » par « slacktivisme » s'ils apparaissent dans le texte.*

### **The subtle ways that 'clicktivism' shapes the world**

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## Epreuve de l'après-midi :

### **IV. REDACTION**

*A votre avis, quel est la valeur du clicktivisme ? Pensez-vous que de tels campagnes et mouvements peuvent vraiment changer le monde ou qu'en réalité ils font plus de mal que de bien ?*

*Votre rédaction, écrite dans votre langue maternelle, ne devrait pas excéder 500 mots.*