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SOCIAL MEDIA

POLITICS

December 2021

Brianna Sanchez, Emma Beach, Nate Crystal, Mahagani C

Table of Content

- ➡ TikTok & Gen Z's Political Power by Brianna Sanchez (3-4)
- ➡ Black Excellence in Business by Nate Crystal (5-6)
- ➡ Creator Spotlight: Jo Luehmann by Mahagani C (7-8)
- ➡ Creator Spotlight: Shina Nova by Emma Beach (9-10)
- ➡ Youth Involvement by Mahagani C (11-12)
- ➡ Who Should You Be Following ? by Emma Beach (13-14)
- ➡ Instagram, Activism, and the 2020 Presidential Election
By Brianna Sanchez (15-16)
- ➡ A Modern Day Propaganda by Nate Crystal (17-18)
- ➡ Work Cited (19-20)

Overview

This magazine forefronts the intersection of social media, politics and race. Over the course of you reading this magazine you will learn about the different aspects of these intersections and as well as some people who are worth checking out. If you want to know about different Black owned businesses, people who are involved in promoting different issues such as the climate crisis, BLM, indigenous rights, reproductive justice and more, this magazine will help inform you. Be on the lookout for some creator spotlights and advertisements. We hope you enjoy the magazine and learn something new.

TikTok & Gen Z's Political Power

By Brianna Sanchez

Young activists have created platforms on a social media app called 'TikTok,' these platforms have given young creators the chance to share their experiences as BIPOC in America. TikTok is a social media platform for creating, sharing, and discovering short videos. The app can be used as an outlet for self expression and the videos can be shared across communities. TikTok is a favored app among young people because of how easy it can be to create content that goes viral. While many critics believe that the app is not an appropriate way to spread political information due to misinformation, most young people disagree. The app is an incredible way for us to connect with our peers and collaborate with like-minded creators. Many content creators have used their account to spread knowledge about topics like race, gender identity, sexuality, and politics. A large number of these creators actually take this as a chance to explore many different intersections and how they impact people across the nation.

This article will explore the intersections of race and how it plays a role in social media activism. It is evident that over the past year social media has been a reliable outlet for young people to share their political beliefs and their experiences as a younger generation existing in society right now. As a result of Covid-19, many people have become more active on social media and have found an outlet for self expression on apps like TikTok.

Gen-Z for Change, a popular coalition of 500+ creators and activists fighting for progressive change, use their social media platforms to promote political action and civil discourse. The coalition strives to accomplish goals via: government, fundraising, awareness, and change. They want young people to be actively involved in politics and elections (especially post 2020 Presidential Election).

Gen-Z for change also sells merchandise and constantly has fundraisers that they promote on social media. They donate proceeds to charities that advocate for racial equality, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental improvement, and many related issues. Another significant part of their mission is to raise awareness about issues that Gen-Z are particularly passionate about.

Overall, they hope to enact a better future for all by pushing a progressive agenda. Gen-Z for Change first became popular on TikTok during the height of Covid-19 and the 2020 presidential election. This particular account flooded many TikTok users' 'For You' page back in 2020. A 'For You' page is a customized collection of videos that TikTok believes meets your personal interests. TikTok's algorithm is designed to present you with a collection of videos you might enjoy, based on how you normally interact on the app.

This means that people who find themselves interested in content involving social and political issues are more likely to find Gen-Z for Change on their 'For You' page. However, this account was especially successful because they have multiple creators making content for their account.



@genzforchange

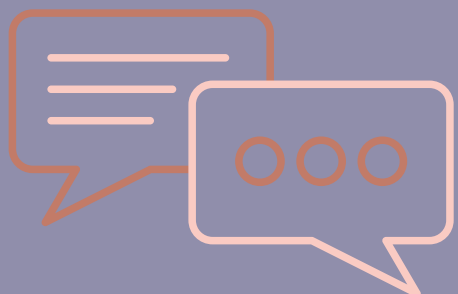


@sheshortnbrown

This means that they may have creators that are famous for dancing or vlog style videos creating content regarding issues like climate change or women's rights. When they do this they bring in multiple different viewers and generate a consistent following from many different communities on TikTok. Gen-Z for change has been an influential account on TikTok and encourages youth around the board to be politically active and socially aware.

Overall, they hope to enact a better future for all by pushing a progressive agenda. Gen-Z for Change first became popular on TikTok during the height of Covid-19 and the 2020 presidential election. This particular account flooded many TikTok users' 'For You' page back in 2020. A 'For You' page is a customized collection of videos that TikTok believes meets your personal interests. TikTok's algorithm is designed to present you with a collection of videos you might enjoy, based on how you normally interact on the app. This means that people who find themselves interested in content involving social and political issues are more likely to find Gen-Z for Change on their 'For You' page. However, this account was especially successful because they have multiple creators making content for their account. This means that they may have creators that are famous for dancing or vlog style videos creating content regarding issues like climate change or women's rights. When they do this they bring in multiple different viewers and generate a consistent following from many different communities on TikTok. Gen-Z for change has been an influential account on TikTok and encourages youth around the board to be politically active and socially aware.

A specific person that partners with Gen-Z for Change is Lily Winder, a student at Stanford University, and a social media activist. Lily Winder (She/Her) creates videos that highlight ongoing issues that Native people face and started #PeopleNotMascots, a website that works to combat racism when dealing with high school Native mascots.



What has been your greatest accomplishment on TikTok regarding educating viewers on topics like race, gender identity, and sexuality?

"People Not Mascots is a website I created where people can contact their state representatives and sign petitions to do away with native mascots. Magazines and articles, like this, have spread the word about *People Not Mascots*, and it is snowballing into a larger conversation... (also because of how it has spread on TikTok)."

What is something you want to share with readers?

"It is really important to listen to BIPOC content creators when you see them on social media. Specifically, indigenous creators, do not have representation in television and movies so if you do come across an indigenouse person, it is important to listen... lend them your ear and listen. It is crucial to improving the conditions of native people. In addition, value the time BIPOC creators put into educating you on social media. It is an honor and a privilege that they are sharing this information with you and educating you. It is a mentally exhausting task and a lot of times it is really hard. If you see someone on your 'For You' page, take the time to listen and even engage in their call to action."

I want readers to understand what it is like to have political power on social media and how people can use it to feel liberated. As political and social activism become more popular across all social media platforms, I encourage Gen-Z to participate in it. Gen-Z for Change is a great example of how easy it can be to find a community of people eager to enact change. They are working step by step to bring awareness to marginalized communities and by doing so they are making it more accessible for all people, specifically Gen-Z. Creators like Lily Winder also prove the effectiveness of political participation for young adults. She has created content to help educate people about topics she is passionate about and in doing so has inspired many other people to do the same. While it may not always be easy, it is possible to execute change on a fundamental level, even if you are young. Both Gen-Z for Change and Lily Winder have growing accounts and do not plan on slowing down anytime soon. I urge all readers to take a look at both Lily and Gen-Z for Change's TikTok, maybe you will be inspired to join their collective voice.

Black Excellence in Business

by Nate Crystal

Technology is basically in every part of our lives. We wake up with it and we go to bed with it. We use it on the subway and walking on the sidewalks with it. During this pandemic, people turned to streaming services such as Netflix and HBO Max to give them comfort and to take up the time of the long days spent inside. Whether or not they should have been working or in my case doing school work. But the internet is more than a place where people go to waste time or watch that new movie with Timothee Chalamet that Hollywood is persistent in pushing out. No shade just he was in a lot recently.

The internet and more specifically social media is used by people in the business arena to find a home and to make a name for their brand. It would be an understatement to say that this pandemic affected small businesses and businesses in general. It would also be an understatement to say that people in our society also get the same opportunities as the person standing across from them or next to them. That is not to say that those who do succeed are in some way exceptional but do display excellence.

This pandemic caused massive shutdowns and “43% of businesses had temporarily closed, and nearly all of these closures were due to COVID-19”(Bartik, Alexander W., et al). Some of these businesses shut down because they had no options. Others were able to stay alive because they had the money saved or because they were able to use social media which is a non-physical space to bolster their brand and keep their company alive. This article will not talk about all businesses, however, it will highlight 3 Black-owned businesses that display excellence and use social media, and give back to the community.

The first business that will be talked about is Hanahana Beauty. You think finding the right store or company to buy products to help your skin is a hard task?

Well, I have good news, you need not look any further. This company was founded by Abena Boamah-Acheampong who is Gainian American. She started this business because she wanted to make products where the information about what was in them was transparent and because she knew that products, specifically skincare products, can be made sustainably. The mission of this business is “to disrupt the global beauty industry. [Their] intention is to increase accessibility, transparency, and sustainability in all aspects of what [they] create. From the fair sourcing of [their] shea butter to the creation of [their] homemade products, down to the responsible representation of people working with [them] at every end”(Hanahana Beauty).

You can find Hanahana Beauty online or through social media. Their Instagram account has amassed a following of 44.2 thousand and their Tik Tok has gotten a total of 28,409 views. The content on these accounts highlights their products as well as highlighting the importance of skincare. Definitely worth checking out.

The next Black-owned business that I will talk about is called The Lit. Bar. Never heard of it!? Then you are in for a treat. That is when you visit for a book reading, community event or just to buy a book. Noëlle Santos, a 33-year-old entrepreneur and the owner of The Lit. Bar opened the book store on April 27, 2019. This was right at the beginning of the pandemic but that did not slow down Noëlle Santos from achieving big. This book store “is currently the only bookstore serving the 1.5 million people of the Boogie Down Bronx”(The Lit. Bar). Their mission is to use the “power of literature, to restore kings & queens to their thrones and help us cope preach the importance of community & shop local mend the gap between the young and old recite John Lennon & J. Cole I declare war on reality shows that teach our children to aspire to Instagram follows.”(The Lit. Bar) Not only do they have a large community in the Bronx but on Instagram, they have 62.4 thousand followers. Their content features Black authors and community events hosted there. So if you want to have some wine and read some books, The Lit. Bar is the store for you.

The next business is a cannabis company based out of Boston called Ardent. It's hard to discuss the situation of Black brands in cannabis without also discussing the United States' cruel and unfair War on Drugs. The cannabis prohibition has shattered families and communities especially those that are Black. This is not a problem of the past as some think. According to a 2021 study by the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color made up 94 percent of cannabis-related arrests in New York City in 2020. These stats are the result of War On Drugs and Black people continuously being targeted for possession. It is important to know this when shopping for cannabis because Black people were the subject of racist legislation that encouraged law enforcement to arrest Black people for minor possession.

With that in mind let's talk about Ardent. Ardent was founded by Shanel Lindsay who founded this company in 2015. This company is special because of their innovations in the cannabis industry. They developed a way to make a "portable device that drastically improves administration and effectiveness [of cannabis]. With a team of partners skilled in all aspects of manufacturing from advanced thermal engineering to elite electronics, [they] produce the NOVA™, a laboratory-grade precision decarboxylator for medical cannabis patients"(Ardent) The mission of this company is to bring people, with honest information and unbiased science, the cannabis plant. So that it "can become a rich and inexpensive source of numerous plant-derived drugs and pharmaceuticals, leading to improved health for countless individuals. To that end, [they] continue to develop, patent and promote better ways to stabilize, utilize and deliver the benefits of cannabis"(Ardent).

Ardent helps their consumers along their cannabis journey with the use of social media and through the work of its founder Shanel Lindsay. On Instagram, the company has 78.6 thousand followers and uses that platform to talk about their products and the different things that can be created using it.

Ardent's founder Shanel Lindsay in addition to being an entrepreneur is an attorney. She has used her knowledge of the law to help destigmatize the cannabis industry. She also works with EOS (Equitable Opportunities Now), which is a nonprofit that fights to make the cannabis industry in Massachusetts more equitable. She uses this platform and the others she has created to help Black and Brown people in the industry.

This article has covered three Black owned businesses that display excellence. There was Hanahana Beauty which makes skin care products, The Lit. Bar which is bringing books to the Bronx, and Ardent which is reimagined ways to use cannabis. All of these businesses are worth checking out and spending some money at.



Creator Spotlight

Jo Luehmann

by Mahagani C

Social media influencers have a great deal of power. Influencers are known for creating trends and influencing decisions, but they also have the ability to persuade society to support political issues. They can be a voice for marginalized groups and encourage others to get involved in helping underserved communities. Being that influencers have a large trusted network of loyal followers and fans, their platforms allow them to have a voice on these social and political issues. They can call out racial injustice, inequality and persuade others to get involved. This tool of persuasion is just one extent of their reach. They also play a big factor in raising awareness.

Having a large platform on social media also comes with a lot of pressure and responsibility. People look to these influencers to provide them with some sort of inspiration and guidance. These expectations often push influencers to publicly address political and social issues. The BLM movement sparked a lot of people's interest on social media. This movement inspired influencers in particular to consider using their platform as a means to speak about important issues affecting people in the Black community and around the world. A ripple effect was sparked, and staying silent was no longer an option. All it takes is a few influencers to set a trend, and get people talking. Soon enough, the BLM movement was gaining a ton of awareness and educating the masses on the issues in the Black community.

"It's made a lot of people realize that the concept of 'I don't want to be political' is a huge privilege and that silence is violence" - Rogers

Marginalized communities don't generally get to participate because society sets up social barriers to prevent them from engaging in meaningful activities. People disregard their ideas and values, which is why it's so significant to have an influencer give these individuals a voice. Social media has opened up opportunities of empowerment for these groups to fight against oppression. Marginalized individuals share posts online for two main reasons, one being to share accomplishments their group has achieved and the other, is to share hardships they have endured for support. Some people have found a real sense of community and have benefited from these interactions while others haven't always shared that same pleasant experience.

Jo Luehmann is a well known influencer on Instagram, she is also an educator with a masters degree in ministry and theology. Among many of the topics that she speaks about on her page, she mainly uses her social media platform to speak out against white supremacy and advocate for marginalized communities. She has a large following of about 52,000 followers which grows by the day. That's a large group of people to educate on racial issues and advise them on how to dismantle a system of oppression rather than support it. She very openly expresses her opinion on political views and generally receives good feedback from her followers. People are inspired by her lectures and show her an immense amount of support. Jo has brought attention to high rates of violence against Black people, police brutality, marginalized identities and other significant issues on her Instagram. One thing people seem to love about her is her emphasis on the fight continuing, even if one case ends in justice that does not mean the work to bring about relief from social oppression or bring about equality is over. She is always pushing people to do more, and be better.



Ardent



Cannabis and more
Shop Now

Creator Spotlight

Shina Nova

by Emma Beach

Many creators have been able to gain a following on Tiktok, everything from beauty, music, to even politics. With Tik Tok's unique "For You Page" algorithm, creators can achieve a lot of views, and hopefully followers, by reaching an audience wider than their pre-existing following. Several users have been able to share their content and gain huge followings, allowing them to get brand deals, promotions, and even jobs, launching their careers. Creators have been using their platform that they have gained to share their knowledge about their communities, talk about social justice issues, and educate millions of people. TikTok now has grown to an app that allows users to learn about marginalized communities, hear first-hand accounts of their experiences, and gain a wide knowledge about their community. TikTok currently has one billion active users, making it a prime place for activists to build their platform.

Shina Nova is a young Inuk woman who is part of the Innuuvunga community, from Canada. Shina Nova started with a small platform on her Tik Tok, predominantly sharing her and her mother's throat singing videos. Shina Nova was able to gain millions of followers and expand her platform, sharing her community and educating millions. Shina Nova currently has 3.2 million followers on Tik Tok. On her platform she now shares traditional Inuk dress, often modeling her handmade coats and other attire. Using trending sounds she shows outfits that are part of her culture, and often her mother contributes to the videos. She also partners with other Indigenous creators who make jewelry, and shows off the jewelry in her videos in an attempt to help small businesses. Shina Nova shares traditional meals, how they are cooked, and how delicious they are. She demonstrates how to cook traditional Bannock, what an Ulu is used for, and shows how she cooks her favorite food, Baluga.

Not only does she share knowledge about her community, but she is also very politically active and informs her followers on several different topics. Some of the topics she educates on are how high food costs are in indigenous communities, the effect of colonization on her community and culture, food insecurity in Inuk households, and honoring Indigenous women and girls who have gone missing. During National Indigenous Peoples Months, she did several videos educating her followers on her community, along with promoting a fundraiser for indigenous children in her community, raising over 200,000 thousand dollars. This fundraiser is one example of how activists can use their platform to help their communities. Tik Tok, along with other social media platforms are making it easier for younger generations to become politically active. Shina Nova is a prime example of being able to use social media to promote knowledge and social activism for marginalized communities. Thousands of creators are doing the same, to help educate others. Tik Tok has encouraged political participation among several communities, and has allowed the spread of knowledge to increase when it comes to policy involving marginalized communities. Shina Nova is recreating the narrative and is an influencer teaching the accurate knowledge about Inuk culture, giving a space for her followers to unlearn problematic stereotypes, and relearn the accurate information about Indigenous culture.

Shina Nova recently was featured as a model for Sephora Canada, representing her community in their recent campaign. She has also collaborated with several other creators from her community. Recently she worked with Notoriouscree/Jame Jones, an Indigenous educator and content creator, and Basement Gang for a project with Cadillac Fairview.

She recently worked with Coursera to promote education on: Fur trade, land claims, legal systems and rights, and indigenous political activism. As her platform grows, Shina Nova can work with more brands and creators to be able to spread awareness about Inuk culture.

Her platform continues to grow, and with this she can educate millions of people about indigenous culture and spread awareness. There are several content creators that have used TikTok to kick start their journey of education and awareness. Uplifting these creators voices can bring policy change that help marginalized communities. Shina Nova is one of many who continue to bring awareness through social media. If you want to learn more about Shina Nova and her community, you can follow her on these platforms:

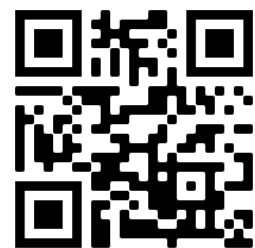
TikTok: @shinanova
Instagram: @shinanova



“I want people to know that I am not scared of being who I am and that I embrace myself as an Inuk person and am not ashamed. I hope I encourage others to do the same. To throat sing with my mom is a connection I cannot explain, it’s a lot more than just a song. We connect with our ancestors, our voices. I feel like I teleport when I practice my culture. For me it’s important to change people’s views because we were always put down, we were always told what to do and what not to do. The message I want to send to the Indigenous youth is you are capable of anything, don’t let anyone take away your identity. You are beautiful.” -Shina Nova

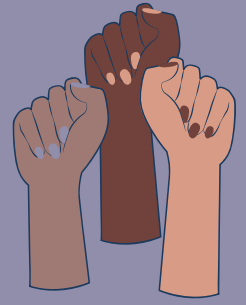
**Hanahana
Beauty**

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Youth Involvement

By Mahagani C



Almost every teenager around the world has access to a device or cell phone with internet. Having easy access to the internet also enables the younger generation to have access to social media. Due to the fact that Generation Z grew up in a time when the world was infatuated with the web and social media, they are often thought to be more technologically advanced and hooked to their devices than Generation Y. However, researchers found that both Gen Y and Gen Z are heavily reliant on the internet and their smartphones. Both of them also spend most of their time interacting with their smartphones for communication with friends and family, dating, work, entertainment, news and most importantly social media.

Social media is currently one of the biggest sources of news and information. These days, millennials are more likely to get their news from apps like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and so forth. A study showed that when people pick up their smartphones, around 37 percent of them go directly to a news site or app for information. Whereas, 57 percent of people would rather turn to a social media site or messaging app for information. The first thing people do in the morning before they even brush their teeth, is check their phones for updates on the latest news. Social media keeps teenagers updated on what's happening in the world around them and it plays a large factor in sparking their political interest and engagement.

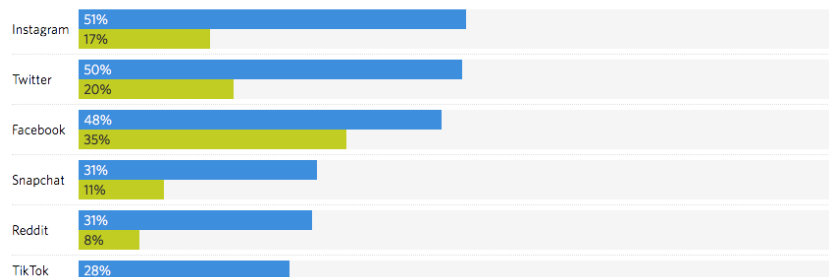
Most millennials said that they learned information about the 2020 election from social media. Teens are more eager to get involved in political conversations and events when they come across information about issues in their communities online. Not only are the youth using social media to learn more about politics, but they are also using it to create their own political content. Over 60 percent of the youth that participated in the 2020 election through social media reported that creating content online helped them feel more represented and informed. It's a great platform to give the youth a voice.

Most teens are eager to get involved in politics but often find it difficult to gain respect or attention from public officials. Social media has provided the youth with the opportunity to have a platform. This has given them the ability to recruit, educate and inspire others around them to get involved in the conversation about issues in the Black community and encourage them to take action. Most teens have a large following on social media, so it's easier for them to use those networks and connections to their advantage. It's an easy and convenient way to spread information quickly.

Social Media is a Bigger Source of Election Information for Young People in 2020 than It Was in 2018

The percentage of young people (ages 18-24) who said they had seen information about the election on each digital platform.

■ May 2020 ■ September 2018



The youth are utilizing their social media platforms to push lawmakers into making fair and unbiased policies in regards to issues affecting people in communities of color. Most of the teenagers that involve themselves in activism are not old enough to vote, but that shouldn't stop them from having a voice. They can still take part in initiating legislative change through other forms of participation like rallies and protests. This is an effective way to have their voices heard, and engage in political activity.

In light of various events involving police brutality and violence against Black people, Black Lives Matter Protests have surged throughout the country. Through the use of social media, these protests have encouraged other forms of political activism to take place. They have also been able to generate a large following, especially in regards to youth participation. In Buckhead, Atlanta a few students decided to hold a demonstration to speak out against police violence after the death of George Floyd.

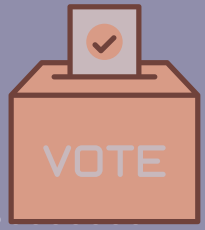
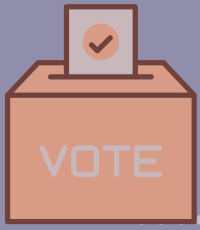
A few posts on social media resulted in about 2,000 people showing up to march at the Governor's mansion in support of their cause. This goes to show how eager the youth are to get involved and will use their influence to initiate change in their communities. At these protests, the youth defend and demand democracy. This not only proves their ability to identify injustice but also, emphasizes their will and desire to challenge it. Protest movements do inspire others to get involved and initiate legislative action. Their goal is to get laws and policies created that will help people in communities of color.

Teens use a popular social media app called Instagram to exchange ideologies and share helpful tips with one another. One thing they address is how to be better allies to black people and how to help others in the black community. They give safety tips to those attending protests like how to document and confront police brutality. They also share information about where to donate and what petitions people can sign to support the fight against racial oppression, injustice, and support the Black community. Social media is all about connecting. Not only are these kids connecting with one another, but they are also finding a connection to a cause, and the things going on in the world around them. It's allowing the youth to get involved, feel included and voice solidarity.



Instagram, Activism, and the 2020 Presidential Election

By Brianna Sanchez



Instagram played a key role in motivating voters to participate in the 2020 Presidential Election. An online racial justice organization called 'Color of Change' worked to engage Black voters in an effort to combat voter suppression. In addition, Facebook launched an initiative in 2020 that created a voting information center for its apps and it managed to help register 4 million voters. Believe it or not, celebrities also played a significant role in encouraging people to register to vote, to learn how to vote, and to actually follow through with voting on election day. While all of these are incredibly different examples of promoting voter turnout, there is one thing they all have in common: social media. As our society modernizes it is evident that social media can be exceedingly important when it comes to motivating voters to *vote*.

In 2020 Color of Change, a large civil rights organization, called for the removal of voter suppression in Black and Latino neighborhoods in Ohio and Wisconsin. Clear Channel, a media conglomerate, ran ads that highlighted maximum punishment for 'voter fraud' that, for the most part, was nonexistent. This caused unnecessary fear around voting, which can be dangerous and hinder the rights of minority voters. In a statement, the Executive Director of Color of Change, Rashad Robinson says that, "These billboards are clearly designed to intimidate voters, and they're part of a coordinated right-wing attack on the voting rights of people of color." However, they did not stop by calling out voter intimidation but continued to address issues like unacceptable voting conditions. Color of Change made fervent efforts to call out voter suppression and even demanded that House Democrats launch investigations concerning this issue.

They state that, "Conditions like people waiting in long lines for up to 4 hours to vote, voting machines breaking down, and polling locations opening late are not accidents." Each time Color of Change used all of their social media platforms, specifically Instagram, to call attention to this specific problem. This is significant because through their platforms they are able to reach incredible amounts of people to garner support.

In 2020 Facebook launched a Voting Information Center for Facebook, Instagram, and Messenger. This was created in hopes to be a tool for people to go and find information on how to register and vote. Facebook made a statement declaring that their reason for launching this initiative was to "help every eligible voter in the US who uses our platform to vote this year." Facebook also stated that this was a non-partisan effort simply made to empower. Voters were able to access this information directly from the menu on both Facebook and Instagram. This feature is one that stuck out to most and encourage people to easily get involved in the 2020 election. Through this information center people could find out if they were registered to vote, and if they weren't they could register through a link to their state's website. Significant information like timelines, deadlines, and vote by mail options were made accessible to every person that had Facebook and/or Instagram.

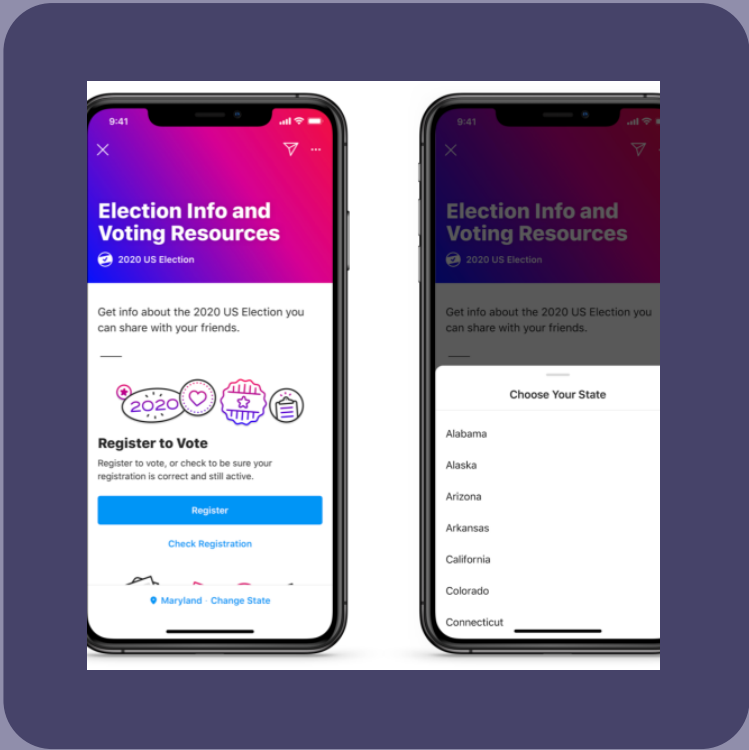
In addition to all of this, the Voting Information Center also managed to recruit poll workers and maintain consistent updates during the 2020 election season. Although there were people who argued that there should not be political ads on apps like Facebook, it is clear that this initiative was groundbreaking nonetheless. The Voting Informative Center was one of the largest voter registration efforts and ensured that people could at least access election information.

In 2020 almost everyone could count on at least one of their favorite celebrities to make an Instagram post or TikTok encouraging their fans to register and vote. One of the most popular Instagram posts that circled the internet in 2020 was posted by Ariana Grande, an famous pop star that has dominated the music industry for almost 10 years now. Grande encouraged her fans to register to vote and vote early. She continued to do this up until election day. Grande shared critical voting information in the form of creative graphics and captioned one post, “No longer asking or gently encouraging but begging.” While it is understandable why people may be hesitant to accept that celebrity endorsements have any affect on voter turnout, there is proof that it is possible. According to Vote.org, they saw a 1500% increase in voter engagement through instagram when Kylie Jenner posted an iconic bikini photo, in an effort to influence her followers to register and vote. Whether celebrities actually have a significant impact on voter turnout or not, it is undeniable that sharing information on voting is incredibly helpful and can encourage other’s to do the same.

The 2020 Presidential Election was only the beginning of a start to a new age of voter outreach. During this election season we saw just how influential social media apps like Instagram can be, especially for politics and political engagement. As we become more digitalized we will see the normalization of efforts like Facebook’s Voter Information Center and people will be encouraged push back on issues like voter suppression. Even without a celebrity to encourage us to be politically involved, we will definitely be influenced by apps that we use in our everyday life.



@colorofchange





Who Should You Be Following ?

By Emma Beach

Topics



Climate Change

Within the United States, corporations have been taking advantage of limited regulations on environmental policy and sustainability, creating mass pollution and damage to the environment. With the rise of social media, activists have been utilizing their platforms to spread awareness on climate change and pushing policy makers to create policy that will regulate corporations and put the environment first. Climate change has severe effects on everyone, but it also has disproportionate effects on marginalized communities. According to Leonardo Yip in Earth.org: “Marginalized groups and minority communities have been hit harder than any other groups by the increasing effects of climate change, particularly those from lower economic countries, people of color as well as future and younger generations.” (Leonardo Yipp, earth.org). Policy around climate justice has been a hot topic for politicians and advocates, and arguably one of the most important. Gen-z specifically has become very involved in advocating for policy change and supporting the limitation on corporations that harm the environment. In recent years we have seen several young activists lead the discussion on environmental policy, and they continue to step up and pressure policymakers into change.

BLM

The Black Lives Matter movement was founded in 2013, but with the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, new protests have started around the United States, and internationally. The BLM movement seeks to educate individuals on black history, promote black owned businesses, protest police brutality and racist policy, and so much more. The recent BLM protests have been the biggest protest in U.S. history, bringing approximately 15 million people to march according to Pew research. The BLM movement, and advocates that support it are asking for significant policy change within the United States that would dismantle white supremacy, acknowledge, and remove racist systems, and more. Several BLM groups have police reform and defunding at the center of their demands. Influencers who support BLM have used their platform to educate on a wide variety of topics, encourage voting, and promote Black owned businesses.

Reproductive Justice

Reproductive Health care is an essential part of healthcare. Within recent years there has been an increase in reproductive regulations, limiting access to family planning clinics and access to abortions. With limited access to abortions, there is an increase in unsafe and unregulated abortions, leading to more deaths. Marginalized communities are disproportionately affected by regulations on health care and limited access to abortions. With regulations on policies like Title X, family planning clinics are forced to shut down, leaving communities with extremely limited access to cancer screening, STI treatment and prevent, sex education, access to contraceptive, and so much more. Activists for access to reproductive healthcare and bodily autonomy have utilized social media to be able to spread awareness on oppressive policies, how marginalized communities are affected, and much more.



Who Should You Be Following ?



Creators

Xiye Bastida

Xiye Bastida is a climate justice activist and co-founder of Re-Earth Initiative, which is an international NGO that is youth-led. Bastida is an Indigenous youth leader advocating for indigenous and immigrant communities internationally. She uses her platform to push for policy change, and pressure world leaders to acknowledge climate change, and do something about it. Bastida spoke at the United Nations World Leaders Summit in Glasgow, she had a list of demands for world leaders on climate change. Bastida has partnered with several groups to promote climate policy. She recently worked with Levi, Panera, spoke at the Teen Vogue Summit and TED Talks. Bastida has also led protests against fossil fuel pipelines. Bastida encourages the youth to be politically involved and lead the change they want to see in the world when current leaders have failed to step up.

Instagram: @xiyebeara

Website: www.xiyebeara.com

Tyra Blizzard

Tyra Blizzard is a content creator that speaks on several different areas, but always gives very good information on black history. Tyra states that she is “Changing the world, one uncomfortable conversation at a time” (Tyra Blizzard). On Tiktok Blizzard will often respond to other creators or commenters, to better educate them. These conversations aren’t always easy but are often necessary. Some areas that she touches on are: Racism, implicit biases, cultural appropriation, history of black hairstyles, how to be a good ally, the intersect of sexuality and race, etc. Blizzard brings tough conversations to her platform that not everyone may agree with, but her content is extremely educational.

Tiktok: @tblizzy

Instagram: tyrablizz

Youtube: T Blizzy

Lakia Williams

Lakia Williams runs a podcast called Black Feminist Rants where she focuses on black feminism, reproductive justice, and sex-positivity. Williams brings guest speakers onto her podcast. Recently she has had conversations about Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, Transphobia and Racism, and the history of birth control. Not only does Williams share knowledge through her podcast BFR, but she also shares informative posts on Instagram that recap her podcasts, share important links and organizations, and even petitions that you can sign. “Black Feminist Rants is a Reproductive Justice digital platform and podcast that centers the experiences of Black women and Femmes navigating social justice spaces and the world.” (Lakia Williams)

Podcast: Black Feminist Rants

Instagram: @blackfeministrants

Instagram: @kiawilliams

Modern Day Propaganda

by Nate Crystal

I want to start this article by saying there are a lot of positives that social media brings. As you have read in this magazine it brings people together, gets people engaged, allows people to start businesses, it can encourage cultural exchange, and bring awareness to issues. All of these things are good but acknowledging its issues is equally as important as pointing to its benefits. As many of us are aware this pandemic has brought to light just what some of these issues are. The circulation of harmful propaganda is one of the many problems posed to companies and the government today. In this article, I will talk about the problems of propaganda on social media as well as some solutions.

An important thing to keep in mind when thinking about this article is that everything we do is political. This idea is not mine, as much as having you think that would be cool. It came out of the second wave of feminism, which made a synonymous claim: the personal is political. This article is not about feminism, however, but it is about the idea that the movement brought to the table which allows us to see the subtle ways that are actions in the private realm are tangled up with public perception. Seeing information for what it is can sometimes be challenging. It being challenging is precisely why we find ourselves in this predicament. Nonetheless, in our lives propaganda is everywhere.

I feel, as I am sure a lot of people do, that the word 'propaganda' means something bad. It is a heavy term and is one that I associate with anti-semitic speech and posters from WWII in nazi Germany. This can be a misnomer, however, because it excludes other forms of propaganda and allows them to fly under the radar of harmfulness.

Harmful propaganda has been around in America since it was founded. And there is a relationship between what is circulating in popular thought and policies that are implemented by the government. A revolutionary thought. Sarcasm aside, this idea can be more elusive than it seems. A quick look into the past with a critical eye can illuminate some of the harmful propaganda that was elusive to the people then. Staying with the theme of WWII but not looking at Germany but America, we can glimpse at how media was used to cultivate and propagate ideas. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan the president at the time, Roosevelt, "signed Executive Order 9066 as a means to protect 'against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material'"(Robertson). These images were circulating in the media at the time and their intention was to dehumanize and demonize Japanese Americans. These images justified Roosevelt signing Executive Order 9066. Hindsight is 20/20, however, that is not to say that people then did not know it was wrong, just that popular belief was ignorant. Today people are no less susceptible to harmful information that causes harm and violence.



There is a difference, however, to how these messages are being spread today. One only needs to pick up their phone and go to Instagram and within 15 minutes they will have seen not only subtle propaganda but also the kind that is overtly political. These subtle messages can get built upon through the repetitions of certain types of messages. This leads to people becoming radicalized into harmful ideologies. This idea is called going down the rabbit hole or in regards to Youtube the Rabbit Whole Effect.

Modern-day forms of misinformation are directly correlated to Legislation just as it was the case during WWII. One example of this is a popular white supremacist talking point called replacement theory. This is a racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that “posit the existence of a plot to change America's racial composition by methodically enacting policies that reduce white Americans' political power”(Primack et al.). This conspiracy theory takes many forms, one form being Tucker Carlson. Many times in his commentary he uses this theory as a way to scare white people. These messages circulate on social media and reach different people who then perpetuate it. The pushing of this ideology to republicans and white people justifies voter suppression laws which in turn justifies this conspiracy theory. This is a rather obvious example, to some of us, but to others, it can be convincing and lead to their radicalization.

The best way that this problem can be fixed is by creating a system that holds companies that perpetuate these ideologies accountable. This is being attempted through changing legislation but while that is happening we can use our awareness to our advantage. However, being aware is hard. Breaking down information and understanding it from different perspectives is hard. A parable given by David Foster-Wallace is a 2005 commencement speech can help us get started. The story goes “There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says ‘Morning, boys. How’s the water?’ And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes ‘What the hell is water?’(David Foster-Wallace). Using awareness to find the subtle and maybe obvious realities is difficult but trying creates benefits for not just one person. It can allow everyone to become better for knowing that we are in water.



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