

Digital Organizing: Definitions, Applications, Methods and Ethics

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JCP Special Issue Call for Papers

Contemporary social movements, such as #BlackLivesMatter, #OccupyWallStreet and #MeToo, took root and gained momentum primarily in digital spaces. Various social media platforms have served as incubator, amplifier and at times deterrent, for movements around the world, yet the community practice and social action literature has neglected to actively engage with this vitally important shift in the “how” of organizing. Robust research concerning theories and frameworks explaining digital organizing, the logistics and pragmatic realities of implementation strategies and tactics, methodological approaches to analyzing such efforts, and methods for evaluating the multi-level impacts is critically needed.

The current special issue seeks to ameliorate this gap in the literature by inviting paper submissions on digital organizing from an applied social science perspective. We define digital organizing as the use of Web 2.0 technologies to develop, manage, and/or disseminate digital and/or in-person political and/or social actions. We define applied social science as inquiry aimed at defining, investigating and/or intervening in a real-world social problem based on theories or frameworks regarding human development and interaction.

Furthermore, the profession of social work is particularly poised to contribute to the global dialogue on the ethics of researching digital organizing, especially concerning the impact it may have on marginalized populations in light of digital tracking practices, including algorithmic recommender systems and surveillance data mining practices. This would be consistent with the Social Work Grand Challenge to “Harness Technology for Social Good.”

Possible paper topics include:

- Examination, evaluation, and/or critique of Web 2.0 technologies for community organizing & practice by individuals, groups, and/or organizations
- Theories and frameworks of organizing in the digital age, especially examining whether existing social movement theory is relevant to digital organizing
- Ethics of digital technologies for digital organizing/practice—what role can/should applied social scientists play in the development of emerging technologies such as Artificial (Un)Intelligence, TeleHealth platforms, Virtual Reality and the Internet of Things
- Strategies for preparing and educating future applied social scientists (ex. social workers, governmental employees, etc.) to ethically engage technology in their professional community practices
- Methods for analyzing, understanding, and evaluating digital organizing efforts, including computational social science methods, qualitative approaches, and participatory community approaches.

- Potential opportunities and unintended consequences of participating in digital social movements (e.g., survivors of abuse tweeting about their assaults, individuals expressing politically dissenting views, whistleblowers, etc.)

Contributions can include:

- Full-length original research articles (up to 25 pages)
- From the Field (max. 15 pages)
 - These are practice-oriented articles concerning the use of tech within community organizing and planning.
- From the Classroom (max. 15 pages)
 - These are teaching-oriented articles evaluating the use of tech for community practice-oriented education.
- Innovations in Community Research (max. 15 pages)
 - These are strictly methods papers concerning the use of new or novel methods in the study of digital organizing and practice.

Submission details

Manuscripts should be submitted online by October 15th, 2020 and labeled ***FOR SPECIAL ISSUE – DIGITAL ORGANIZING*** for consideration by the special issue editors. Submission is via <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/wcom>. Manuscripts should not exceed the above page limits; all pages should be double-spaced (including the abstract, references, tables and figures). References, citations, and general style of manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the APA Publication Manual, 7th ed. Refer to Instruction for authors, <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=wcom20&page=instructions>

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