Digital Organizing: Six Ways To Up Your Game

A new set of resources provides strategies to help grass roots and community groups organize in digital spaces. The resources take the form of nine free-to-download documents about the use of social media and apps to "engage, organize and build political power online." Siomara Valladares, Kate Somerville, and NEPC associate director Michelle Renée Valladares created these resources.

"As more and more organizers build power in digital spaces, we hope these tools will be a useful introduction to what is possible," said Siomara Valladares, the project's principal investigator.

Here are six strategies identified by the research team for engaging in effective "digital organizing:"

1. Build your base by consistently engaging with your members and learning about the subcultures of the social media platforms they prefer. Keep in mind that social media is public!

2. Get your message out there by using apps to gather information from members, by cross-posting and cross-tagging messaging on different platforms, by creating a shared calendar that aligns postings with organizing work, and by working from an internal and external communications toolkit that you create.

3. Inspire action with powerful videos, broadly disseminated messaging, and public support for the work of your allies.

4. Choose apps that fit with the needs of your organization and your members. This means recognizing your tech-related strengths and weaknesses, accounting for the internet and cell phone reliability of your organization and its members, and focusing on apps that facilitate the democratization of access to information.

5. Be creative, curious, and flexible, using digital spaces to increase diversity, amplify your organization's values and goals, and build community.

6. Use digital tools broadly for external and internal purposes, serving multiple objectives, from fundraising to building internal capacity. Offer professional development as needed.

The Research Hub for Youth Organizing, a joint project of the National Education Policy Center and CU Engage, produced the material in partnership with The Colorado Trust. The Colorado Trust's interest in the resources was sparked by requests from participants in its Building and Bridging Power program, which provides funding and support to grass roots organizations. These resources can be accessed at https://www.coloradotrust.org/digital-organizing-resources/.

NEPC Resources on Community Organizing and Engagement

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