

How has social Media grown to influence people?

If we are looking at the history story of social media, we also have to look at how social media has grown to influence users. Sometimes the influence is positive and sometimes it is negative. It is important to look at both sides of the story.

As a class read and discuss the following situations where social media was used to influence someone or a group of people. Students should notice that courts don't really become involved unless the situation becomes negative, like cyber bullying, which is influencing the creation of new laws.

- Missouri Teen Megan Meier commits suicide due to bullying. One of first cases where cyber bullying is taken to court and records are searched.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/16/us/16myspace.html>
- Tyler Clementi's roommate, unbeknownst to Clementi, videoed a private moment and posted it online. The roommate used several different social media sites to promote the video and antagonize Clementi, which led to his suicide. Students were in college, and it turned into a national story.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/30/nyregion/30suicide.html?pagewanted=1&r=1&sq=rutgers&st=cse&scp=1>
- When news broke that the Del Taco, known for its saucer shape, was to be demolished, a social media storm broke out in St. Louis. Even Mayor Slay got on the Twitter bandwagon with it:
 - http://blogs.riverfronttimes.com/gutcheck/2011/06/del_taco_south_grand_alderman.php
 - June 22, 2011 is when the FB group started by June 24 they had 10,000 signatures on a petition to keep it open, unfortunately the efforts didn't prevent the demolition.
<http://mayorslay.com/blog/post.php?postID=17366>
- An NBC show, Community, was said to not return, and Twitter and social media exploded with fans trying to save the show. And they did.
 - http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/08/community-nbc-fans-online-effort_n_1333651.html?ref=college
 - <https://twitter.com/#!/search/savecommunity>

After going through these examples, have students brainstorm other examples of social media influencing people and decisions.

Assessment: For this assignment, please choose one of the following social media cases to examine. Use any information that we have discussed in class, or any information that you find on your own (please cite any information), summarize the situation, and then formulate your own opinion in this case.

Address the following topics: How would this situation be different if social media was not a factor? How does this show, or not show, that social media has changed media and communication.

Options:

1. <http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/04/courtney-love-settles-twitter-defamation-case/> --Courtney Love sued for defamation
2. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/16/technology/judge-dismisses-case-of-accused-twitter-stalker.html> --- Man accused of harassing woman across country
3. <http://paidcontent.org/article/419-ruperts-wife-wont-get-twitter-handle-back-any-time-soon/> --- Fake accounts impersonating celebrities or companies