

Making the News: Anarchist Counter-Public Relations on the World Wide Web

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□ – *Traditionally, radical social movements faced a dilemma regarding media coverage: focus either on mass media, but lose control of their representation, or on alternative media, but fail to get their message to the broader public. The World Wide Web overcomes these problems, allowing movements to create their own media with mass distribution. However, it has two key weaknesses of its own: attracting audiences and mixing in- and out-group communication. In this paper, we show how the structure and content of the anarchist Web-based media work together to separate in- and out-group discourses. We then demonstrate how the anarchists attracted an audience to their Web media. The Black Bloc tactics at the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization brought an increase in media attention, albeit negative. We examine how anarchists took advantage of the larger audience created by this bad publicity and mounted a counter-public relations campaign online. We argue that the Web alters the power relationship between mainstream and alternative media without displacing the need for mainstream coverage.*

Anarchists have a serious image problem. The North American anarchist movement, once an important part of the radical working class movements of the late 19th century, was considered dead and buried by the end of the 20th (Sabatini, 1995). Worse, they were stigmatized with a

long list of negative stereotypes, from the dangerous mad bomber to the clueless young punk. During the November 1999 protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, however, anarchists made an unexpected comeback. They were involved in many aspects of the protests, but it was the Black Bloc that grabbed everyone's attention. This tactic involves a group of protestors, frequently dressed in black with their faces masked for anonymity, who engage in highly disruptive activities, such as property damage or direct confrontation with the police. A small group of anarchists, working as a Black Bloc, vandalized corporate storefronts downtown and successfully evaded the

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police. Suddenly, anarchists found themselves at the center of the media spotlight, displacing other protestors and police violence from the headlines.

Like other activists, anarchists want to "make the news." Activists use the media to publicize their existence and spread their message (Lipsky, 1968). To do this, they must first gain coverage; in addition, this coverage should be sympathetic (Gitlin, 1980). Neither goal is simple. Moreover, these aims are often in tension, since some tactics that increase newsworthiness can decrease sympathy (Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986). Traditional alternative media may resolve these tensions, but they have their own weaknesses, particularly their limited range of distribution. The World Wide Web, however, significantly alters the media landscape of protest, giving activists access to a mass medium that they themselves control. The Web places activists on a more equal footing with other media outlets when waging the battle over public relations (Atton, 1996a; Kellner, 1997). Despite its comparative power, the Web has its own weaknesses. First, its ability to act as both an alternative and a mass medium brings with it the tension of mixing in-group and out-group communication. Second, the Web rarely lives up to its potential as a mass medium, with significantly less access in practice than in theory.

In this work, we examine how activists' use of the Web affects their media and protest strategies. First, we investigate the population of anarchist Web sites and the links between them in order to determine how the network's form and content impact its use as a mass medium. We find a densely connected core-periphery structure that funnels readers towards a small number of central sites. This core acts

as the public face of anarchism online, explaining and justifying anarchist ideology to those outside the movement, while allowing the sites in the periphery to focus on communication within the movement. Although this structure held the potential to facilitate efficient use as a mass medium, that potential remained untapped. Unable to overcome the limited distribution of traditional alternative media, anarchists on the Web were not getting their message out to the public.

We argue that the events in Seattle changed all this. With their Black Bloc tactic, anarchists made the news, but were in danger of being remade by the news coverage. We document the dramatic rise in coverage of anarchists in the mainstream media after Seattle: news that was predominantly negative. Focusing on one of the primary core Web sites, the Infoshop, we show that anarchist Web sites received more traffic after these, and subsequent, protests. Anarchists used this publicity to attempt to counter the negative views of anarchism and the Black Bloc circulating in the media and public opinion. While much has been made of the role of the Internet in the success of planning the protests in Seattle (Smith, 2001), less attention has been paid to its use in managing the post-protest fallout. We provide evidence that the news coverage took on a softer, less negative tone over time, a fact we attribute at least in part to the interaction between the mainstream media and the anarchist Web-based alternative media. Rather than being taken advantage of by their notoriety, anarchists were able to use their already existing Web presence to take advantage of it. Coverage without the Web sites does anarchists little good, yet sites without the coverage do them little good either. Used in tandem,

they allow anarchists more effectively to exploit the untapped potential of the Web, both by bringing a new audience to their sites and by influencing mainstream reporting.

Social Movements and the Media

Lipsky (1968) argues that protest targets four principal groups. First, protest helps sustain and build social movement organizations by promoting solidarity among activists. Second, protest seeks to maximize exposure of movement goals to the broader public through the media. Third, it provides a means for gaining support from third parties critical to movement success. Finally, protest targets authorities able to address the demands of the movement. In this work, we focus on the first three targeted groups; for the most part we ignore authorities. All of these goals are highly interrelated. In particular, effective use of the media can impact the success of appealing to all targeted parties. Media representations influence public support, and affect the level of repression officials can justify (Gamson, 1990; Wisler & Guigni, 1999). Even protestors, although generally connected and informed through their own sympathetic alternative media (Downing, Ford, Gil, & Stein, 2001), still depend upon the mainstream media response for their own self-image, reading their own experiences through the media portrayals (Ryan, 1991).

Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986, p. 72) state, "The modern mass media have become central to the life and death of social movements." Activists must therefore court media attention; developing better strategies for working with and using the media has been

an important focus for many activists (Ryan, 1991). Still, protestors remain in a weak position, with limited influence over what the media covers in an era of increasing corporate control of the media (McChesney, 1999). News media do not simply report events; they create "news stories" (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978). Journalists' and media outlets' conceptions of what is newsworthy rarely match those of the protestors (Gans, 1979), ensuring a struggle between activists and the media over coverage.

A great deal of research has focused on the relationship between social protest and media coverage (Gamson, 1992; Gitlin, 1980; Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986; Oliver & Myers, 1999). McCarthy, McPhail, Smith, and colleagues have been working on a large project detailing the biases in media treatment of protests in Washington, DC (McCarthy, McPhail, & Smith, 1996; Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, & Augustyn, 2001). They identify two significant forms of media bias: selection bias and description bias.

Not all protests will be covered by the media; selection bias determines which ones are. McCarthy et al. (1996) found several factors influencing the likelihood of a protest making the news. Media issue attention cycles strongly influence which protests get covered. That is, a protest's likelihood of making the news is determined by how well it fits into issues already in the news. For example, during the Gulf War, anti-war demonstrations gained more attention because they could be included in larger stories about the war itself (McCarthy et al., 1996). While media issue attention cycles are out of protestors' hands, they do have more control over two other key factors. Most important is size; the

bigger the protest, the more likely it is to gain media coverage. Level of disruption is also important. Counterdemonstrations, violence, and arrests increase newsworthiness (Oliver & Myers, 1999). This general finding held true in Seattle. Deluca and Peeples (2002) found that the violence at the Seattle protests increased media attention on the movement.

Description bias determines the media's secondary selection of how to depict the protests they choose to cover (Hocke, 1998). In their recent work, Smith et al. (2001) examine description bias in media practices, focusing primarily on whether coverage is positive or negative. Contrary to expectations, under most circumstances coverage showed no bias, and what bias there was tended to favor protestors. Bias is more than just a positive or negative slant towards the protest; it is also whether the media covers the larger issues and themes of the movement. Iyenger (1991) classifies protest depictions as either thematic or episodic. Thematic coverage places the issues within a larger context, which disseminates the activists' goals and beliefs through the media. In contrast, episodic coverage focuses primarily on the concrete details of the event and, as a result, ignores protestors' motivations for action.

While negative description bias is relatively rare, violence, arrests, and disruption are likely to generate both episodic and negative coverage (Smith et al. 2001). Consequently, many social movement organizations have moderated their ideology and strategy in order to expand their appeal, seeking strength and exposure through maximizing the number of participants (Everett, 1992). Large groups can overcome selection and descrip-

tion bias, but smaller, more radical groups are at a disadvantage, particularly since press coverage is critical for marginal groups (McIntyre, 1989). On one hand, they must be newsworthy enough to make the news. Without large numbers, disruptive strategies are an effective means to accomplish this (Piven & Cloward, 1977). On the other hand, as noted above, disruption makes episodic and negative coverage more likely (Smith et al., 2001). But even when radical social movements manage to make the news without being disruptive, they still tend to be portrayed as illegitimate (Shoemaker, 1984), while their larger political critique is ignored (Carragee, 1991). With no means to overcome description and selection bias simultaneously, radical groups often find themselves confronted with a Faustian bargain: either negative coverage or no coverage at all (Hertog & McLeod, 1995). Further complicating the situation, tactics that grab media attention may not effectively appeal to authorities (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

One possible response to the shortcomings of the mainstream media is to avoid it altogether. Using their own media, activists choose which events to cover and how to frame them (Downing et al., 2001). But exclusive reliance on alternative media carries the danger of simply preaching to the converted. While activists gain more control over media production, fewer consume the end product. Circulation is low, access and distribution are limited, and there are high barriers to entry, such as cost of printing (Atton, 1996a, 1996b). Alternative media are rarely mass media, seldom reaching the general public or even non-movement activists. Yet strong internal media do more than foster communication within the movement;

they also help movement ideas enter the mainstream. First, they mobilize and build solidarity in the movement, increasing its strength and public presence. Second, they can influence mainstream media since journalists often look to alternative media for developing trends (Ryan, 1991). Nevertheless, the direct effect on non-movement actors is usually limited.

Traditionally, activists have had to strike a balance between high control/low distribution alternative media and low control/high distribution mainstream media. Movements use their own media for in-group communication and solidarity building while courting mainstream media coverage in order to reach third parties and the general populace. But, as discussed above, radical movements are unlikely ever to overcome both selection bias and description bias in the mainstream media, and thus will rarely communicate their views to a wider population.

Many scholars and activists argue that the World Wide Web allows users to bypass traditional alternative and mainstream media and overcome the shortcomings of both. First, by making the means of media production more widely available and giving activists new opportunities to share their views with others (Kellner, 1997), it lays the foundation for a more democratic public sphere (Downing et al., 2001; Poster, 1995). The Web widens public discourse to include more oppositional voices and "subaltern counterpublics" (Fraser, 1992); thus mainstream media lose their monopoly over the production of images and ideas. For example, Smith et al. (2001) argue that Web-based alternative media such as the Independent Media Center (IMC) "allow for a more decentralized channeling of information about public demonstrations than is possible

through the mass media outlets" (p. 1418). The Web provides the means for building alternative mass media and thus expands the capability of activists to set and build public agendas.

Second, since it is accessible from virtually anywhere, the Web overcomes the problems of low access and distribution of alternative media (Atton, 1996a). The Web connects geographically dispersed people sharing common interests (Rheingold, 1993; Wellman & Gulia, 1998), including social movement groups and activists (Castells, 1997; Cleaver, 1999; Diani, 1999; Frederick, 1993; Myers, 1994, 2002; Saxton, 1998). These Web-based mass alternative media offer increased range, immediacy, and ease over traditional alternatives.

Activists also want to reach beyond their own movement to ideologically similar third parties. The flexibility of computer networks facilitates the formation of coalitions between different movements and organizations (Myers, 2002). Ideologically diverse, but compatible, communities can connect in non-hierarchical, networked forms, bridging activist groups and linking together similar messages (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 1995; Castells, 1997; Frederick, 1993; Keck & Sikkink, 1998). Cleaver (1998, 1999) argues, for example, that the Zapatistas and their supporters have created a "left-alternative political fabric" online, effectively using this network to distribute information excluded from the mainstream media while simultaneously bringing together diverse groups.

The hyperlink structure of the Web influences how it is used as a news medium; that is, it impacts which information is consumed and by whom. The Web's basic architectural unit, the hyperlink, reflects its dual nature, con-

necting people and structuring information (December, 1994). By connecting individual Web sites, links structure the larger community network and establish the position of individual sites within it. This network can be read as a text, shaping how readers navigate the information (Jackson, 1997). Links can be interpreted both as a unit of structure, in that they determine the shape of the network, and as a unit of content, in that the type of links reveals much about individual sites and the community as a whole (Miller, 1995).

Much of the rhetoric about the Web has not paid enough attention to the difficulties of implementing it as an effective replacement for alternative and mass media. We identify two potential limitations of Web-based activist media. First, the Web is a medium for both in-group and out-group communication. In-group discourse is that which occurs among members of the same group (for example, communication among anarchists), and it tends to reinforce community and create solidarity. Out-group discourse, on the other hand, involves reaching out to a broader audience in order to spread information beyond the movement and shape the movement's image (Simons, 1970). As Mitra (1997) argues, the mixing of in-group and out-group on the Web can have unintended consequences. In-group discourses are based upon real-life activism and on efforts to confront and deal with internal conflicts. Consequently, they tend to be messier and more contentious than out-group discourse. The situation is further complicated by the fact that building and sustaining coalitions with other activists and organizations is based on some combination of both in- and out-group discourse. There-

fore, using the same medium to reach all three targets may be problematic.

Second, Web access is far more limited in practice than it is in theory. Diani (1999) claims that the Web is not fully public communication, since not everyone has access to the necessary technology. But access to the technology is not sufficient; interest is also necessary. The Web is characterized by the sheer volume of information available. Few will discover most of this information without a specific interest in finding it. Without this interest, the Web's potential to be used as a mass medium remains untapped.

Our research empirically examines how anarchists used the Web to overcome the problems of alternative and mainstream media. We then explore how they were also able to deal successfully with the weaknesses of online media. We argue that the emergent network structure separated in- and out-group communication while tactical innovation helped overcome the access problems of the Web.

The Anarchist Movement and the Web

The Haymarket tragedy in 1886, with eight anarchists falsely arrested for throwing a bomb at a labor rally (David, 1958), marked the beginning of the decline of the North American anarchist movement. Their public image as bomb-tossing terrorists made them an easy target for both the state and other rival movements. Squeezed out by competition from other socialist parties on the one hand, and facing increased government repression on the other, anarchism eventually disappeared from the political field (Sabatini, 1995). Since that time, the movement has remained largely mar-

ginal and invisible. We show how two separate recent innovations worked together to help spur a resurgence of anarchist activism: the Web and the Black Bloc.

Anarchists saw the Web's potential early on, going online earlier than many other groups on the left (Klein, 2000). The Spunk Press Web site (a central, core site in our dataset), an anarchist text archive, went online during the first year of the Web's existence, and many others quickly followed. While many anarchists cite the convergence between the decentralization of anarchist theory and the decentralized structure of cyberspace (Kriha, 1994), most users are drawn by the practical advantages of the Web (Atton, 1996a; Zolla, 1998).

Anarchy is not chaos but, rather, non-hierarchical social organization (Kropotkin, 1910; Ward, 1996). Anarchists work to maximize individual liberty and social equality, which they regard as mutually self-supporting. Anarchist praxis reflects these goals, emphasizing direct action, mutual aid, and prefigurative politics, the building of alternative institutions within the already existing society (Ehrlich, 1996). Additionally, anarchist political organization favors decentralized, non-hierarchical collectives over large-scale, bureaucratic forms (Fitzgerald & Rodgers, 2000).

Historically, anarchists' strict adherence to these principles of equality, decentralization, and small groups has hampered their ability to grow as a social movement (Tarrow, 1998). Today, many in the movement see the Web as a tool for connecting adherents, building coalitions, and reaching a wider audience. The Web allows community building without compromising anarchist principles, with the power "to break down the isolation, to

promote communication, so that small, poorly-financed, or regionally isolated groups can still participate fully in the movement and connect with all other areas of the movement" (Sprite, n. d.). Using the Web, activists are better able to move beyond local boundaries, strengthening movement ties and solidarity (Kemp, 1996).

Anarchists are interested in developing working coalitions with other radical social movements, and the Web is seen as a simple means to reach these groups. According to Sprite (para. 27, n. d.), the online community should therefore "extend beyond @ [anarchist] groups to other autonomist, anti-authoritarian, and non-authoritarian groupings ... thus leading towards more change and understanding of each other." The goal is to situate anarchism within the larger radical social movement milieu by extending links to other groups in order to express solidarity and create new ties.

Hoping to create sympathy for their cause, anarchists are eager to challenge the negative stereotypes and expose a wider audience to the "truth" about anarchism. Sprite (para. 6, n. d.) argues that the Web can "provide an alternative media, which would counter the lies and illusions of the capitalist media. To create a forum for our own voices and analyses to be heard, debated, and acted upon." The Web marks "a dissolution of the constraints on freedom of expression and on the monopoly of publishing and distribution," allowing more participation in media production (Atton, 1996a, p. 115). In a study of French-speaking anarchist organizations, Zolla (1998) found that the goal most cited when using the Web is to spread anarchist ideas and convert outsiders. Atton's (1996a) interviews with anarchists found that most viewed the growing

anarchist Web presence as a “positive move, since it would increase access to documents and publicize anarchism in general, and do much to counter its negative image in the mainstream press” (p. 124).

Although anarchists were busy increasing their presence online, they remained invisible in the real world. Some saw the Black Bloc protest tactic as a way of generating a higher level of visibility for anarchist activists and ideas. Normally, the Black Bloc is used to escalate the disruptiveness of protest tactics, with the size and anonymity of the group a shield for committing illegal acts. It is also a means to express group solidarity. The bloc’s distinctive black clothing and facemasks facilitate these goals of increasing visibility, creating solidarity, and ensuring anonymity (“Black Blocs,” 2000). First used by German *Autonomen* during the 1980s (Katsiaficas, 1997), the tactic had been used only occasionally in the United States before becoming a prominent feature in recent protests against corporate globalization (Glavin, 2000). The Black Bloc remains a controversial tactic, even among anarchists. Some find the tactic inappropriate for mass actions, as it places nonviolent protestors in danger and ultimately is ineffective in reaching its goals (Dominick, 1999). Others, while supportive of the tactic in general, criticize it for excluding women through its overly masculine style (Maggie, Rayna, Michael, & Matt, 2001), as well as for its exclusion of minorities and the poor, who cannot as easily risk arrest (Glavin, 2000).

In the analysis that follows, we first examine the structure and content of the anarchist Web community, to investigate how anarchists use the medium to reach their target groups, and to explore how the anarchist Web me-

dia connects anarchists into a community online. We then argue that the specific structure and content of these media manage the insider-outsider problem of the Web by channeling the public to central Web sites that introduce them to anarchism, while allowing more interested readers (most likely third-party activists) to ease their way into internal anarchist discourse. However, we also argue that it required an “external” shock from the Black Bloc to realize the Web’s latent potential as a mass medium for radical social protest, as increased mainstream media interest in anarchism drew more readers to the Web sites, overcoming the access problems of the Web. We investigate the dynamics between the mainstream coverage of anarchists and the anarchist online counter-public relations campaign in order to examine how anarchist Web media exploited the new attention and how it affected the larger public discourse.

Methods and Data

The goals of this project require a complex methodological setup, with several stages of analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, over time. In this section, we detail our methodological process.

Structure and Content of Anarchist Web Media

In this first component of our methodology, we gathered data on the structure and content of the anarchist Web media by searching for “anarchism” on Yahoo.com in the fall of 1998, before the Seattle protests of November 1999. We then collected the links from each of the 17 sites

found by Yahoo. Linked sites were classified by content as either anarchist or non-anarchist. Sites identified as anarchist then formed the basis for the next wave of the snowball sample, in which we repeated this process of collecting and classifying links. Data collection went through eight waves before reaching redundancy, generating 390 anarchist sites and 2408 additional non-anarchist sites, to which they link. When the collection process was complete, we searched on several other search engines to find any sites missed in the snowball sample. This produced only one additional site for the dataset. While these 391 sites may not in fact make up the entire population of anarchist Web sites at the time the data were collected, we argue that we did collect all the primary sites, and therefore have a reasonably accurate depiction of the general structure of the network.

We categorized each site in our dataset by its content and links. Content falls into two main groups: anarchist and non-anarchist. An anarchist site is defined as any site whose primary focus is the anarchist political ideology and movement. The non-anarchist group is further divided based on the specific focus of the site. Most are politically orientated and grouped by their primary political affiliation (labor, environmental, anti-racism, and so on). Many sites defy such easy categorization, tending to be multi-issue rather than single issue. These were classified either as “radical” (if they advocated extra-parliamentary tactics) or “progressive” (if they advocated working within the system). A large number of sites fall into no particular classification, and are thus lumped into an explicitly non-political category, “other.”

To measure structure, we collected

all links from each anarchist site. Unfortunately, constraints did not allow us to gather systematic data on the links from the non-anarchist sites. Thus, we have data for links between anarchist sites and links to non-anarchist sites from anarchist ones. Using these data in combination with qualitative content analysis of the most important anarchist sites—measured by the number of links they receive from other anarchist sites—we mapped and described the online network.

Quantity and Content of Mass Media Coverage

The next step in our methodology was to gather measures of mainstream mass media coverage of anarchism. We examined the coverage through the lens of selection and description bias; that is, we were concerned with the quantity of coverage of anarchism and the content of that coverage. Thus, we tracked both the changes in the rate of coverage over time and the general tone and depth of the coverage. The key date here was of course the November 30, 1999 re-emergence of anarchism (through the Black Bloc tactic) during the Seattle protests. To track the rate of coverage, we searched LexisNexis by the keyword “anarchist” to identify mainstream media stories about anarchists and anarchism from 1991 to 2001. We use these data to show how the publicity from the Black Bloc overcame selection bias against anarchists and generated mainstream media attention.

Once selection bias is overcome, description bias becomes an issue. We first document initial description bias by tracking the mass media coverage of the Black Bloc tactic used in the Seattle protests. To do this, we survey

TABLE 1
CLASSIFICATION OF LINKS FROM ANARCHIST SITES

Links to	Total no of links	Mean no of links per anarchist site	% of total anarchist links
Other anarchist sites	3399	8.7	40.9
Other left political sites	3335	8.5	40.1
All other sites	1576	4.0	19.0
Total	8310	21.3	100.0

analyses of the media coverage of the Seattle protests, identifying positive and negative, episodic and thematic, descriptions of anarchists.

Reactions from Anarchist Web Media and Their Impact

Finally, we show how anarchists took advantage of the publicity from coverage of the Black Bloc and used the pre-existing structure of their Web media, and its unprecedented speed “to press,” to counter the mainstream media’s description bias and to spread their own message.¹ To do this, we followed the discussions of anarchist tactics online, particularly on the IMC Web site, and the development and updates of the main anarchist sites in our dataset, especially the Infoshop, the key anarchist site detailing contemporary movement tactics, tracking changes in both content and Web traffic. We then study the development of mainstream media coverage of anarchism in the two years following Seattle, paying particular attention to changes in the content of the coverage.

Analysis

Structure and Content of the Anarchist Web

The structure and content of the anarchist Web media determine the

way activists and information are organized online and thus indicates the effectiveness of anarchist Web media before Seattle in reaching the three primary media goals of activists: 1) connecting adherents, 2) forming coalitions, and 3) spreading their ideas to a wider audience. We show how structure and content impact the achievement of these three goals and deal with the problem of simultaneous insider and outsider communication.

The first media goal, traditionally the domain of alternative media, is to connect anarchists into an online community. Our data indicate that anarchists have built a strong, densely connected community, bringing together activists from around the world. We use the basic architectural unit of the Web—the link—as a signal of solidarity and connection between sites. Anarchist linking patterns to other anarchist Web pages, other left-political sites, and non-political sites are summarized in Table 1.

In this section, we focus on anarchist linking patterns to other anarchist Web pages. A total of 3399 links connect the 391 anarchist sites in the dataset. This means that, on average, each anarchist site received, and sent, about 8.7 links to other anarchist sites. Of course, simple means can hide a wealth of information. Table 2 brings out additional details of the anarchist Web network by looking at the distri-

TABLE 2
LINK FREQUENCIES FOR ALL ANARCHIST SITES BY
NUMBER OF LINKS

No of links	Links Sent		Links received	
	No of sites	% of sites	No of sites	% of sites
0	109	27.9	3	0.8
1–4	108	27.6	218	55.8
5–15	112	28.6	109	27.9
16–25	33	8.4	35	9.0
26–60	22	5.6	21	5.4
61 >	7	1.8	5	1.3
Total	391	99.9	391	100.2

Notes: The first column is the number of links—either received or sent. Columns 2 and 3 detail the number of anarchist Web sites and percentage of anarchist Web sites, respectively, that send the number of links in the range in the first column to other anarchist web pages. Columns 4 and 5 are similar to columns 2 and 3, except they deal with the number and percentage of sites that receive the specified number of links, instead of send them. Totals do not add up to 100.0% due to rounding.

bution of links between anarchist sites, both incoming and outgoing; that is, Table 2 categorizes anarchist sites by the number of links they send to, and receive from, other anarchist Web pages.

As shown in the first row of Table 2, all but three anarchist sites in the dataset receive at least one link from another anarchist Web page, with most receiving multiple links. Outgoing links show a similar distribution: almost 75% send at least one link to another anarchist site, most sending more than one. While the 109 sites with no links to other anarchist sites might suggest that part of the sample does not attempt to connect to the broader community, only 26 of these pages make any links at all. The resulting structure is a highly connected network; of all possible pairs of anarchist sites, over 70% are reachable through links, with the mean number of links separating connected sites just over three. Thus, most sites in the network are only three clicks away from most other sites. In short, the anarchist Web

presence meets the structural preconditions for an effective alternative media: it is connected into a dense community.

Second, anarchists want to reach beyond the movement to potential coalition partners. While online community building is primarily based on in-group discourse, signified by links within anarchism, since these third parties border between insiders and outsiders, coalition building tends to straddle this boundary. We use links to ideologically like-minded groups as an indicator of connecting out to potential coalition partners. Table 1 shows evidence that many of these links are to ideologically like-minded groups—potential coalition partners. In fact, including anarchists, 81% of all links made by anarchists are to explicitly left-political sites. Table 3 gives more explicit details of the most popular categories of sites to which anarchist sites link. Most of the top 10 categories linked to are explicitly left-political. Only the “music” and “other” categories do not obviously fit this descrip-

TABLE 3
MOST POPULAR NON-ANARCHIST GROUPS LINKED TO

Content	No of links	% of links to non-anarchist sites	% of total links
Radical	748	15.2	9.0
Music	318	6.5	3.8
Labor	290	5.9	3.5
Progressive	269	5.5	3.2
Anti-racist	266	5.4	3.2
Other	236	4.8	2.8
Socialist/marxist	193	3.9	2.3
Environmental	187	3.8	2.3
National liberation	178	3.6	2.1
Anti-corporate globalization	176	3.6	2.1
Total	3111	58.2	34.4

tion. However, many of the music links are to anti-establishment, political bands. Anarchists, then, are clearly linking into a larger left-alternative political fabric on the Web (Cleaver, 1998). Many of these links reflect real-world organizational overlaps, where anarchists work together with other groups, such as support for the Zapatistas, the campaign for death row inmate Mumia abu-Jamal, and the anti-corporate globalization movement.

Third, we examine the use of the anarchist Web media to spread information on anarchism to a wider public. Links are information, and links structure information. Links play a public role by helping to define the movement's image to outsiders (Miller, 1995). For example, links to sites outside anarchism represent affinities to other political causes and movements, challenging the mainstream image of anarchists as cut off from and antagonistic to other progressive causes (Hertog & McLeod, 1995). It softens the extreme image of anarchism, situating it within a broader political and social context. Working similarly to thematic coverage in mainstream media, these

outgoing links contextualize anarchist goals and ideas.

The anarchist network links to similar, compatible groups. However, linking out of the group can be risky; there is no guarantee the reader will return. Unfortunately, we cannot determine from our data how many of these non-anarchist sites reciprocate the link back to the anarchist network, nor can we determine which sites outside the sample link to anarchists. Although we did not collect systematic data on the number of non-anarchist sites linking into the network, definite trends emerged during data collection. Far more links are being sent out of the anarchist network than are being sent into it, and those that do link back tend to be from ideologically similar groups. Thus, the likelihood of outsiders coming to an anarchist Web site through links is quite small and decreases sharply in less radical areas of cyberspace. Though they worked well for community and coalition building, anarchist Web media were confronted with the same challenge as traditional alternative media: limited distribution.

Links also structure information by organizing the patterns via which we

TABLE 4
TOP FIVE ANARCHIST SITES (RATED BY NUMBER OF INCOMING LINKS)

Name	No of anarchist sites linking in	% of anarchist sites linking in	% of total anarchist links
Spunk Press	117	30.0	3.4
Liberty for the People	106	27.1	3.1
Anarchist FAQ	80	20.5	2.4
Anarchy Archive	68	17.4	2.0
Infoshop	67	17.1	2.0
Total	438	N/A	12.9

access the content. In terms of Web media, links determine which content readers access and in what order. The most striking feature of this network is its high level of centralization, particularly in light of anarchists' allegiance to decentralized forms of organization. But in order for the Web to function as a mass medium, the insider-outsider problem outlined above must be managed; that is, insider and outsider communication must be separated. The structure and content of the anarchist Web, in combination, effectively handles this issue. We find a distinct core-periphery structure with a very small number of sites receiving a very high number of links. The five most central sites (just over 1% of the sample) receive almost 13% of the links, as shown in Table 4. Having a core is essential to using the Web as a mass medium. Importantly for use as both a mass medium and an alternative one, core sites also send a much higher number of links back out to the rest of the network, encouraging movement back to the periphery. As Table 5 details, sites that receive the most links from anarchist Web pages also send out, on average, the most links back to other anarchist sites. From anyplace in the network, the reader is funneled toward the center and then back to the periphery.²

This structure reflects a division of

labor within the network. Anarchists are very self-conscious about their public image. Most sites include their own disclaimer about what anarchism is and is not, emphasizing that anarchism is a legitimate political movement and not simply the absence of order. Many sites, however, rather than dedicating a large share of their Web space to explaining and justifying anarchism, choose instead to refer the reader to the core, thereby creating a centralized public face of anarchism online. Freed of this responsibility, they can focus on their own interests and activism. A form of ideological gatekeeping emerges, which encourages readers to pass through core introductory sites first before moving to sites dedicated to anarchist activism on the periphery. Simultaneously separating and connecting the in- and out-group discourses allows interested readers to ease into the more internal communication.

The content of the core is primarily theoretical. Most of the core sites are text archives, storing the writings of classical and contemporary anarchist thinkers (for example Spunk Press, the Anarchy Archives, and Liberty for the People). The most prominent site is the Anarchist FAQ, which receives links from over 20% of the anarchist sites under investigation. Offering an introductory statement on anarchism to the uninitiated, the FAQ's stated

TABLE 5
MEAN NUMBER OF OUTGOING LINKS BY INCOMING LINKS

Number of incoming links	Mean number of outgoing links
0	2
1-4	5.1
5-15	9.2
16-25	11.8
26-60	15.1
61 >	58.0

goal is “to present what anarchism really stands for and indicate why you should become an anarchist,” and it includes over 1000 pages of original text covering most aspects of anarchist thought and practice. Only one core site, the Infoshop, closely covers the contemporary movement in addition to anarchist theory, offering coverage of activism and “news of interest to anarchists.” Because of its emphasis, this site plays a key role in the anarchist public relations campaign that we detail below.

There is an old joke that if you put three anarchists in a room, you will get four different definitions of anarchism. While this may be a healthy sign of diversity, it also points to the danger of too much tolerance. A viable political movement requires basic agreements on beliefs. The anarchist movement is based on a strong, but often poorly understood, ideology. While the hierarchical structure of the network seems to contradict the anti-authoritarian worldview of anarchism, it can be better read as a sign of agreement on basic principles, giving theoretical coherence to the movement as a whole. Links represent support for principles, not allegiance to the rule of a small number of organizations. This hub and spokes model of organization gives the movement a larger vision without simultaneously compromising the autonomy of individual activists

(Klein, 2000). The core not only legitimates the anarchist movement to those outside, but also helps forge a common identity amongst anarchists online.

The anarchist Web network is densely connected, overlaps with other movement networks, and is based on a division between information for insiders and outsiders. The core has several distinctive features. In addition to receiving a large number of in-links, it sends a significantly higher number of links both within the core and to the rest of this network. This increases the reachability of the entire network, encouraging movement from the periphery to the core and back. Wherever a reader begins, she or he is likely quickly to wind up in the center of the network. This is a much more efficient organization than a purely decentralized, “anarchic” model. Through their pattern of links, anarchists have established a strong underpinning for effectively using the Web as a counter-public relations medium.³ The core-periphery structure funnels readers towards the core, which displays ideological agreement, while a densely connected community facilitates movement through the network and situates anarchism within a broader political context.

The anarchist network is well structured for use as a mass medium, but the Web is crowded; before Seattle it

was unlikely that the audience for these public sites would ever extend far beyond the ideological fellow travelers of anarchism. With relatively few links coming in, avenues of entrance were limited. Furthermore, links only structure choices of movement; they neither determine them nor do they influence starting places. Access is driven by interest. Something more was needed to spark the public's interest in anarchism. To exploit the Web's potential fully, it is necessary to advertise. While some businesses rely on pop-up windows, anarchists prefer broken ones.

Seattle, the Black Bloc, and Media Response

The protests in Seattle brought attention not only to the WTO and its policies, but also to the widespread organized opposition to those policies. Over 30,000 people (Smith, 2001) participated in the broad-based coalitions protesting against the WTO, including as many as 2,000 to 5,000 anarchists (Graeber, 2000a). Use of the Internet in planning the protests was important to the mobilization's success. Indeed, the protests themselves were seen as a realization of the potential to organize and co-ordinate a large-scale protest on the Web (Klein, 2000). The Internet also offered a medium through which others all over the world could follow the events. Whether through email updates, news posted to the IMC or Infoshop Web sites, or other online resources, people were able to get up-to-the-minute coverage that often conflicted with the stories in the mainstream media (for a more detailed analysis, see Smith, 2001).

Although the early news of the protests was the conflict between the protestors and the police, the focus

shifted with the appearance of the Black Bloc. On the morning of November 30 (otherwise known as N30, an international day of protests against the WTO), the Black Bloc began smashing windows and spray-painting anarchist symbols in downtown Seattle, attacking corporate targets such as Niketown, Planet Hollywood, and Starbucks. Contrary to most reports, this tactic was independent of the police repression of the protests, acting neither as the trigger for repression (Ackerman, 2000; Gillham & Marx, 2000; Smith, 2001), nor as a simple response to it (ACME, 1999). According to the *Black Bloc Communiqué*, this attack on corporate property was planned well in advance of the protests, an attempt to give voice to the anarchist critique of both the WTO and the "reformist" tactics of protest "leaders" (ACME, 1999).

The mainstream media immediately took notice of anarchists. As Figure 1 shows, rates of reference across newspapers, magazines, television, and radio were relatively stable for the years preceding the protest (as measured from November 30 to November 29). After Seattle, the amount of coverage increased dramatically. The biggest jump was in the days and weeks immediately following the protests, as also reported by Deluca and Peeples (2002). The amount of coverage stabilized and declined soon thereafter, but with each new protest, the fear of an anarchist Black Bloc again became a focus of media attention. Coverage was, therefore, consistently high over the course of the year 2000. Newspaper coverage more than doubled in this time period, and television and radio exposure increased to over 13 times the average for the preceding decade. Coverage declined somewhat throughout 2001 (with the exception

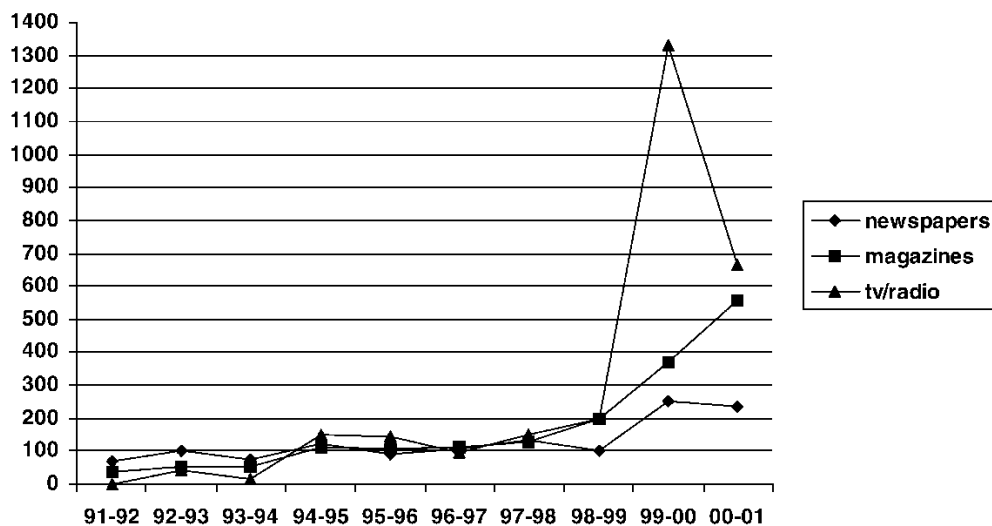


FIGURE 1

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN NUMBER OF REFERENCES TO ANARCHISM IN MAINSTREAM MEDIA FROM THE 1991-1999 AVERAGE

Compiled from a LexisNexis search on the keyword "anarchist," measured from November 30 to November 29

of magazines), a fact Deluca and Peeples (2002) attribute to the lack of violence at later protests. Nevertheless coverage remains at rates much higher than the pre-Seattle period.⁴

Anarchists were all over the news, but the news was not good; that is, the Black Bloc helped anarchists overcome selection bias in the mainstream media, but not description bias. Anarchists were consistently portrayed in a very negative light. Hertog and McLeod (1995) studied media coverage of anarchist protests in the 1980s, finding it distinguished by several key traits, which we also found repeated in the post-Seattle coverage. First, anarchists are depicted as apolitical troublemakers. They are frequently referred to as "self-styled" or "self-proclaimed" (Stowers, 2000), trivializing the anarchist identity and political ideology (McLeod & Detenber, 1999). More attention was paid to their deviant appearance ("black-clad") than to

their politics. Second, the division between anarchists and other protestors was accentuated (Rojecki, 2002). Not only were anarchists portrayed as violent, they were also depicted as ignorant of the issues (Ackerman, 2000). Sympathy was extended only to the "non-violent" protestors, who had to suffer at the hands of both the police and the anarchists (Graeber, 2000a). Third, many media reports emphasized how the anarchists were stealing the limelight from the rest of the protest (Cockburn & St. Clair, 2000; Straus, 2000), disregarding the fact that the media itself had control over what it covered and generally tended to ignore peaceful protests (Graeber, 2000b; Rall, 2001). Coverage of anarchists was much more episodic than thematic, with the spotlight only on their specific acts, ignoring the larger ideological context. Finally, the mainstream media focused on anarchists from Eugene, Oregon, the location of

earlier confrontations between anarchists and the police, and the home of John Zerzan, a prominent theorist of anti-technology anarchism. Zerzan was linked to the Unabomber in both tactics and ideology, further connecting the Black Bloc to terror and political violence (Smith, 1999).

Many protestors were upset with the anarchists' tactics and the resulting media coverage. Organizers of the WTO protests established guidelines for non-violent direct action, both to ensure the safety of the protestors and to give them the moral high ground in the conflict. Many saw the Black Bloc tactics as an open betrayal of these guidelines, leaving them angry and thinking anarchists had misrepresented themselves in order to hijack the protests for their own purposes. Michael Albert (1999, para. 10), editor of *Z Magazine* and a vocal critic of the tactics, argued that they:

(a) divert attention from the real issues, (b) provide a pretext for repression which would otherwise have been unequivocally seen as crushing legitimate dissent, and (c) and [*sic*] arguably most important, cause many to feel that dissent is an unsympathetic undertaking in which instead of actors respecting one another, some, at least, feel that they have the right to undemocratically violate the intentions and desires of most others.

Points (a) and (b) clearly criticize the effect the Black Bloc had on media coverage. The implicit assumption is that, without the Black Bloc, coverage would have been more sympathetic and focused on the political positions of the protestors. Anarchists were seen as ruining a protest that would otherwise have been hugely successful. Hoping to capitalize on the rising potential of the anti-corporate globaliza-

tion movement coming out of Seattle, many activists seemed more than willing to rid themselves of their anarchist liability.

Anarchists' Response to Mainstream Media Coverage

Anarchism was no longer an obscure historical relic. People were now learning from the media about the new threat of the anarchist movement. Many anarchists argued that these portrayals were far from accurate, reinforcing the negative images of anarchism ("Caught in the Web," 2000). Nevertheless, the overall level of media exposure was still much greater than anarchists could have expected only one month earlier. This exposure increased demand for information about anarchism, a demand that anarchist Web sites were there to meet. Anarchists used this opportunity, and their Web pages, to counter their negative public image as apolitical, isolated troublemakers. In looking at this process, one core site in particular merits closer attention: the Infoshop. Run predominantly by an individual anarchist activist in Washington DC, the Infoshop offers frequently updated coverage of contemporary activism and social struggles. During the protests in Seattle, the Infoshop provided breaking coverage, sampling from the mainstream mass media, the alternative media, and eyewitness accounts. Most importantly, the site played a central role in addressing the backlash, both through its content and its structural position between anarchist activists and outsiders. The site acts as a counter information source on the Black Bloc and anarchism, as well as an entry point into the larger anarchist network.

The Infoshop's counter-public relations first took the form of giving an anarchist position on the events in Seattle. New pages were added to the site, including the ACME *Black Bloc Communiqué*, a FAQ on anarchist activities in Seattle, and, ultimately, a page entitled "Black Blocs for Dummies." These texts give the anarchist side of the story lacking in other media. They also shift attention away from an exclusive focus on these tactics; that is, they provide a shift from episodic to thematic coverage. The Seattle FAQ attacks not only the mainstream media representations of anarchists, but the negative responses of other protestors as well.

One main focus of the finger-pointing has been the actions of the Black Bloc and friends, specifically the trashing of store windows and spray-painting of building facades. A lot of disinformation and misinformation surrounds those actions, as well as the involvement of anarchists throughout the week in Seattle. This FAQ aims to clarify what the anarchists actually did in Seattle and N30 around the world. It also explains their goals and desires. ("Frequently Asked Questions," 2000)

The site recognizes that the Black Bloc tactics were probably the reason why many came to the site, but refuses to allow that to set the agenda. Instead, the publicity from the Black Bloc was used as an opening to introduce anarchism and the anarchist movement.

Content is only part of the story. An audience is needed as well. Some, intrigued by the media coverage, might search for anarchists online. Regardless of their starting point, the network structure directs them toward the network core. Other routes are more direct. In many post-Seattle online discussions over tactics, the Infoshop was often cited as the definitive re-

source for anyone interested in anarchism. For example, during many of the numerous debates that took place on the IMC Web site, the Infoshop was consistently invoked as an important resource for those whose only knowledge of anarchism came either through the mainstream media or from what they experienced in Seattle. Anarchists linked to this site in order to back up their own positions, sparing the trouble of rehearsing the same arguments repeatedly.

Of course, to ask people to visit the site does not guarantee that they will. Nor does the increased exposure of anarchists in the mainstream press ensure more traffic to anarchist Web sites. Infoshop's usage statistics, however, reveal a dramatic increase in traffic directly following the protests in Seattle (see Figure 2). In the three months preceding Seattle, the Infoshop received a steady average of 10,500 hits per day, and in the five days after the protest, the site received an average of over 33,000 hits per day—a significant jump. Clearly, interest in anarchism had been piqued, and anarchist Web sites were important in meeting this demand. This initial growth was relatively short-lived; two weeks later, the number of hits per day had dropped to 15,000, although still markedly higher than before the protests. These findings reflect the initial objective of the Infoshop of reacting to events happening in the real world. With the next round of protests, the site took a more proactive role in spreading information on anarchist activism.

The success of the Black Bloc in Seattle assured its place among the primary tactics of anarchists, and it became a prominent feature of most subsequent protests. Beginning with the IMF/World Bank protests in Washington, DC in April 2000, the

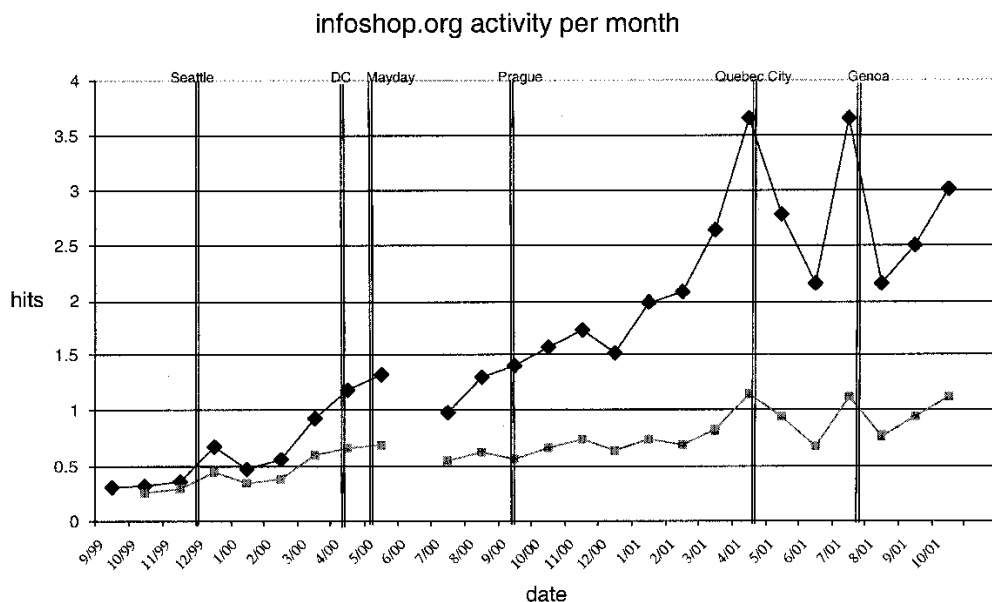


FIGURE 2
MONTHLY AUDIENCE DATA AT INFOSHOP

Source: <http://www.infoshop.org/stats>

Top line: number of hits per month (in millions)

Bottom line: number of visits per month (in 100,000s)

Infoshop served as a billboard to advertise and explain anarchist Black Bloc activity. By posting their intentions on the Web beforehand, anarchists were able to avoid some of the problems from Seattle, where many activists were caught off guard. Furthermore, it created an avenue for recruitment, opening the Black Bloc to a larger number of participants. Since Seattle, readership of the Infoshop has continued to grow steadily and, notably, the increase in visits now begins before the protests rather than after. During the protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Quebec City in April 2001, the site was receiving an average of over 120,000 hits per day, a tenfold increase in eighteen months. The rise in the number of visitors follows a similar trajectory, but with a slower growth

rate, suggesting that visitors access more content per visit over time.

Not all anarchists agree with Black Bloc tactics, although it would be hard to discover this based on a survey of anarchist Web sites. The dissent and disagreement that did occur took place primarily outside the core sites of the network. Some criticisms were published on the Web (Bray, 2000; Dominick, 1999) but, significantly, they appeared not in the center but in the periphery, shielding them from public consumption. This should not be seen as an explicit effort to suppress dissent, as the Infoshop links directly to some of these anarchist criticisms. The content of the site, however, is clearly devoted principally to the support and explanation of the Black Bloc.

Due to its structural position, the Infoshop is strategically placed to serve

as a movement representative. The network efficiently channels readers towards this and other core sites, assuring high rates of access to pertinent information. But the Infoshop is not an isolated site. It also acts as a gateway into the larger anarchist community online, sending a high number of links back to other anarchist sites. The large increase in traffic to the site shows that anarchists have been effective in translating their real-world activism into gains in prominence of their online media.

Developments in Media Coverage of Anarchism

The treatment of anarchists in the mainstream media did not change dramatically over time. News stories continued to characterize them as violent troublemakers at odds with the larger movement. There were, however, two important developments in the media coverage: the amount of thematic coverage increased, and anarchist Web sites became an increasingly important part of the story.

In their analysis of news coverage of earlier anarchist protests, Hertog and McLeod (1995) found important exceptions to the episodic and negative trend of mainstream press coverage. They distinguish between hard news, which focuses solely on the protests and rarely goes beyond episodic and negative coverage, and soft news, which instead gives a more thematic perspective. While this coverage still emphasized differences, the larger political ideas and principles of anarchism were also featured, and anarchists were allowed to speak more on their own behalf. Once anarchists became more prominent in the media, there were more soft news stories, which

often took the form of features in the period leading up to major protests. For example, stories ran on anarchist soccer leagues, bakeries, and collective houses, in addition to coverage of the North American Anarchist Conference held before the Democratic National Convention (Corley, 2000; Leiby, 2000; McGregor, 2001; Roe, 2001; Stelzer, 2001).

This is partly a question of time. The longer activists remain in the public view, the more likely the media are to employ soft news coverage (Hertog & McLeod, 1995). While the continued use of the Black Bloc kept anarchists in the news, we argue that anarchist Web sites have also affected the changing coverage, seen most clearly in the fact that they have themselves become part of the story. Initially, anarchists were linked to an anti-technology ideology. This angle was soon dropped; they are now portrayed as tech-savvy and wired. The role of the Web in planning and advertising actions became an important storyline in the coverage. Often this consisted of non-specific references, simply referring to general "anarchist Web sites." Whenever a particular site was named, however, it was almost always the Infoshop (Crittenden, 2001; Duffy, 2000; Hanes, 2001; Norman, 1999). But naming specific sites is not necessary, given a network structure that funnels readers toward the center. Therefore, even a general search for anarchists on the Web would quickly lead a reader to this site.

Following Seattle, reporters were suddenly interested in the anarchist movement. As Gitlin (1980) points out, journalists rely on movement spokespersons. With no anarchists in their Rolodexes, they needed alternative methods for finding sources. The Web neatly fills this void, offering ac-

cess to formerly hard-to-find populations and an efficient way to find speakers based on nominations (that is, links) from the activists themselves. A structure that leads journalists to recognized spokespeople increases the probability that the speaker will adequately reflect the ideas of the represented group. Many newspaper stories covering the protests interviewed the Infoshop Webmaster for the anarchist side of the story, treating him as the *de facto* expert on the Black Bloc (Dougherty, 2001; Kanaley, 2000; Kirn, 2000; Leiby, 2000).

It is not possible here to make a causal argument that the changes in media coverage are a product of the anarchist counter-public relations campaign, but the relatively high accessibility of the anarchist version of the story ultimately made a one-sided negative account less stable. Reporters' credibility could be threatened if readers are apt to visit anarchist sites on their own. Moreover, because many in the media were not unsympathetic to the protests in general (Rojecki, 2002), they were in a position to be influenced by this campaign. This is not to claim that anyone visiting these Web sites would necessarily become more sympathetic to anarchism. However, Gamson (1992) argues that media content provides a toolbox for readers to use when interpreting political issues. Expanding the number of tools to include counter-themes increases the possibility of readers better understanding the protests and protestors and negotiating oppositional readings of the coverage. Any coverage that does not exclusively support the status quo tends to lead to audiences interpreting protests and protestors more favorably (McLeod & Detenber, 1999).

The relationship between anarchists

and the larger anti-corporate globalization movement improved after Seattle, particularly with regard to tactics. At the April 2000 IMF/World Bank protests in Washington, D. C., the bloc acted primarily in a defensive manner, having decided as a group not to destroy property (Graeber, 2000b). Even Albert (2000, para. 4), critical of the Seattle Black Bloc, pointed to anarchists' "praiseworthy transformation in a very short period." Anarchists continued to advocate a "diversity of tactics" and, at the FTAA protests, many fellow activists chose to participate in, rather than condemn, the confrontational tactics against the police barricade (Milstein, 2001). Some of this progress might be credited to the anarchists' use of the Web to share information more effectively between activists, such as the public calls for Black Blocs before protests, as well as better explanation of the goals behind the movement.

In contrast, at the Genoa protests in July 2001, a Black Bloc participant, Carlo Giuliani, was shot and killed by an Italian police officer. The bloc in Genoa was exceptionally disruptive, fighting not only with the police but with other protestors as well. In fact, many suspect that the bloc had been infiltrated by *agent provocateurs* in an effort to drive another wedge between the protestors and to serve as a pretext for the very harsh crackdown on the protest convergence space (Starhawk, 2001). The continued effectiveness of the Black Bloc tactic is a point of debate, even for many anarchists, who feel that it may be beyond the point of recuperation (Cunningham, 2002). There is no question, however, that it has played a critical role in re-establishing the public visibility of the anarchist movement. This in turn helped anarchists to overcome the access

problems of the Web, allowing anarchists online to tap the potential of the medium to expose a wider audience to their views.

Conclusion

The success or failure of protest depends in part upon public image. The media have historically acted as the gatekeeper between movements and the public, deciding which protests are covered and how. In order to avoid any negative coverage, many protestors play it so safe that they do not even qualify as newsworthy. Bad publicity is considered worse than none at all. This model is different to Hollywood, where there is no such thing as bad publicity. Yet the ultimate goal of both is the same: a positive public image. The important difference is that the Hollywood model treats bad publicity not as the end of a career, but as the beginning. Image-making is a long-term process, not a one-time act. To be respected, one must first be known.

The anarchist case illustrates this alternative model. In order to gain public attention, anarchists used the most effective tactics at their disposal: vandalism and disruption. The fact that this brought with it a storm of criticism in the mainstream media was not necessarily problematic. At least anarchists were making the news—itself a significant change. But without an effective response, the negative coverage threatened quickly to destroy any of the movement's gains from Seattle. Anarchists responded by launching a counter-public relations campaign on the World Wide Web to challenge the mainstream line. Actively making and producing the news from their own perspective, they

worked to influence the way others understood anarchism. The centralized and well-connected character of the anarchist network facilitated the process of making the story public by funneling readers to the primary source of information. That source, in turn, displayed agreement upon a common position, strengthening the coherence of the message and solidarity of the movement.

While the mainstream media and the other protestors originally held very negative views on anarchists, these were somewhat tempered over time. We do not claim that the anarchist media campaign online was the single cause behind these changes. The improved protestor relations were also the result of better co-operation between anarchists and other activists, while the softening news coverage can in part be attributed to standard journalistic practices. Without a fuller study of the larger movement and the mainstream media, the basis for drawing conclusions about these questions is limited. However, the Web was an important player in this process, creating opportunities for sharing information. We show that anarchists used their Web media to defend their ideology and tactics to others and that people were reading these defenses. Improved communication laid the foundation for resolving the questions over tactics within the anti-corporate globalization movement.

The Web dramatically changes the media landscape for social movements. It gives activists more power to shape their own media image, particularly as more people turn to the Web for information. But this is not simply a story of the power of the Web; the importance of the mainstream mass media has not disappeared with the rise of the Web, and it remains the primary

news source for most people. Activists must continue to focus some effort on making the mainstream news. If they spend all their energy making and producing their alternative news online, there is no guarantee that anyone beyond the core movement members will ever see it. Mainstream and alternative media continue to influence each other more than ever. What has changed is the power differential between the two. Alternative voices are

more available, which affects the degree of bias acceptable in the mainstream media. In particular, mainstream description bias becomes less important, and more energy and creativity can be devoted to overcoming selection bias. While those active in social movements cannot afford to ignore the mainstream media, those who study social movements cannot afford to ignore the Web.

Notes

¹ When studying media, there is always the danger of believing that the researcher knows the intentions of the author(s) and can infer the responses of the audience. For the purposes of this paper, we take the stated intentions and goals of authors on anarchist Web sites at face value. With regard to mainstream media coverage of anarchism, we make few, if any, inferences about audience response. According to their statements online, anarchists believe that the negative mainstream coverage of anarchism impacts their public image, that changes in the amount of negative coverage will have positive effects on this image, and that they should act on this belief. We thank an anonymous reviewer for this point.

² Our network analysis does include non-English language and multi-lingual sites (including significant numbers of French, German, Spanish, Swedish, Finnish, Italian, and Dutch language sites). However, only English language sites are found in the core of the network. The linking patterns by language are actually quite interesting. All languages link primarily to sites of the same language, with a few important exceptions. All non-English languages link out to English and multi-lingual sites, and English sites also link to multi-lingual sites (which thus become the gateway from the English side of the network to the rest). Within each language, a structure could be found that was quite similar to the overall structure of the network: a highly centralized, densely connected structure. Most languages had a small number of sites in their respective cores. These sites were also much more likely to be multi-lingual and to both give and receive links across language groups. These core non-English sites also tend to direct the reader towards the larger core of the network. Thus, we believe that the patterns we discuss in the paper are also found in the non-English sites in the network. Since the qualitative analysis focuses on the core sites in the network, English language sites are privileged in this paper.

³ Obviously, our data are just a snapshot of the network's structure at one point in time. The volatility of the Web, with sites disappearing and new ones coming online, suggests that this structure would change over time. However, given the high level of centralization, we argue that this structure would be relatively stable over time, since more prominent and central sites are likely to be more well-known, and thus more likely to receive links from new sites. Also, links are often not updated regularly and are slow to change.

⁴ One important caveat: not every use of the word anarchist is a reference to the anarchist movement, and the numbers are therefore only approximations. However, if anything, this situation was even more pronounced before Seattle, when the term anarchist was more of an empty referent, and thus these results probably under-represent the growth in coverage of the movement.

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Web addresses for sites mentioned in the text:

Infoshop www.infoshop.org
 Anarchist FAQ www.anarchistfaq.org
 Spunk Press www.spunk.org
 Liberty for the People flag.blackened.net/liberty
 Anarchy Archives anarchyarchives.org
 Independent Media Center www.indymedia.org

Received January 12, 2003

Final revision received June 25, 2003

Accepted July 1, 2003