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Abstract

The digital liberties movement is an emerging social movement that draws together activism around online censorship and surveillance, free/libre and open source software, and intellectual property. This paper uses the social movement literature's framework to build an understanding of the movement, expanding the dominant framework by including a focus on the networks which sustain the movement. While other communities and movements have addressed these issues in the past, activists within the digital liberties movement are beginning to build a sense of a collective identity and a master frame that ties together these issues. They are doing this in online spaces, including blogs, and through campaigns around landmark issues, which also help to build the network which the movement relies upon. The 2012 campaign against the U.S. Stop Online Piracy Act has highlighted the movement's strength, but will also, perhaps, raise challenges for digital liberties activists as they confront the tension between attempts to disavow politics and a profoundly political project.

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Introduction

Activists use the Internet and affordable telecommunications to build and maintain inter- and intra-movement connections, to mobilise movement participants at short notice, and to bypass government controls and mass media gatekeepers. However, digital technologies have also played an important role in facilitating the growth of the global financial flows, and in expanding government surveillance of, and control over, citizens. For this reason, it is vital to see these technologies as contested: not as simply facilitating activism, but rather as sites of struggle in addition to being potentially useful tools.

Activists increasingly recognise this, and are engaging in struggles to retain or regain control of key technologies. This paper argues there is a new movement emerging that links these struggles through the master frame of citizen — rather than government or corporate — control of digital technologies, and is tied together within a network of organisational and individual connections, built through a series of important struggles. I have used the term "digital liberties movement" (DLM) here without claiming that it is widely adopted by movement activists themselves. The use of a label not adopted by movement activists is not unusual in social movement scholarship. For example, the use of "first wave feminism" and "second wave feminism" was coined by Marsha Lear as an analytical tool [1], and even as scholars use these terms they recognise that they have limitations [2]. This is in addition to the fact that many women (and men) who scholars describe as being part of the feminist movement eschew, or even actively critique the labels "feminism" and "feminist", as is the case with many African-American and Islamic activists working for women's rights (cf., Collins, 1996; Moghadam, 2002). Problematic as they may be, these labels serve a useful analytical purpose in providing a framework for understanding activism. I have therefore adopted the label "digital liberties" as a tool for understanding the movement because it encapsulates both the grounds of battle (including hardware, software, and online spaces) and the general disposition of the movement (which highly values individual autonomy, and is inclined towards libertarian principles).

The DLM draws together struggles around intellectual property, free/libre and open source software (F/LOSS), online censorship, and surveillance of digital spaces. In demonstrating the links between activism in these areas, this article draws on a significant body of academic literature that discusses aspects of the movement's work, as well as movement texts, primarily those shared online, personal communications with movement activists, and a limited network analysis of the links between movement organisations. [Section One](#) provides an overview of the movement working within the dominant framework provided by the mainstream literature on social movements, while [Section Two](#) explores the movement in more depth, drawing on an

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understanding of movements as built through fluid networks.



Section 1: Framing the digital liberties movement

While the existing social movement literature provides a useful framework to discuss the emergence of the DLM, this literature is limited in that it tends to define movements in ways that emphasise their unity and coherence. Tilly, a central scholar in the literature, defines a social movement as, “a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities” that uses a particular repertoire of tactics on behalf of a group of people that claim to be worthy, united, numerous, and committed [3]. To this, della Porta and Diani [4] add the importance of collective identity as a key characteristic of social movements. All of these requirements assume that movements are well-organised, have clear targets and demands, and an easily-mapped membership. However, this is clearly not the case for many movements. The numerous criticisms of Occupy Wall Street’s lack of a policy for reform (*cf.*, Reed, 2011) demonstrate that not all movements make clear demands. Similarly, as noted above, although scholars frequently refer to the “feminist movement”, it is not built on a unified collective identity. Rather, the movement is characterised by “differences and variety within feminist thought” and “multi-voiced intonations” [5]. In outlining the DLM I have not, therefore, attempted to claim that the movement is built on a unified collective identity and strong organisational base, although movement identities and organisational structures are certainly emerging and strengthening.

Instead, this research has built on the existing framework for understanding social movements by adding a focus on the networked structure of the DLM. Existing scholarship on social movements has argued for the importance of network structures [6], and “there is some agreement that the definition of social movements as *networks* is a useful conceptual tool to investigate how collective action depends on social *relations* embedded in webs of meaning and practice” [7]. A focus on movements as networks, rather than as organisations or coalitions, allows for a more complex and nuanced understanding of their composition, politics, and activities: this will form the core of [Section Two](#).

Della Porta, *et al.* argue [8], building on Snow and Benford’s (1988) work, that movements’ master frames play a vital role in drawing together schemas of activists from different parts of the movement. The DLM’s master frame brings together various individuals, activists, and organisations working across a range of areas. At first glance, it may be difficult to see the connection between the issues that the DLM addresses, as they cover areas as wide-ranging as online civil liberties, F/LOSS, digital rights management (DRM), and intellectual property rights. Additionally, in many cases the political dimensions of these issues are unclear. Establishing that there is a connection, and framing these issues as political, constitutes a large part of digital liberties activists’ work. The frame that ties the DLM together is the attempt to build an understanding that citizens (or, more often, ‘users’), rather than corporations — especially large corporations — or governments, should control digital technologies and online spaces, tying this control to democratic principles and ideals of personal freedom. This master frame has been developed through key struggles, and serves as a cohesive force for the movement.

As mentioned above, della Porta and Diani [9] see the presence of a collective identity as a key characteristic of social movements and an important factor in movement cohesion. However, Polletta and Jasper have argued that while collective identity may play a significant role within movements, the way in which participants identify with a movement is not necessarily straightforward, and participants “may identify primarily with a movement organization, affinity group, style of protest, or degree of moderation or radicalism” [10] rather than with the movement as a whole. As a matter of fact, Polletta and Jasper write, “One can join a movement because one shares its goals without identifying much with fellow members (one can even, in some cases, despise them)” [11]. In the case of the DLM, there are a number of terms that have been used by media, scholars, and participants themselves to identify movement participants, including “infoanarchists” (Schwartz and Cha, 2000), “online civil libertarians” (Borland, 2001), “pirates” [12], “(anti-)intellectual property activists” (Brown, 2005), “copyfighters” (Farivar, 2008), technology activists (Doctorow, 2011a), and free culture advocates (Bayley, 2011). The emergence of ‘Anonymous’ as an identity which is increasingly available for political action is also important in this respect: as Gabriella Coleman (2012) notes, since 2008 ‘Anonymous’ has come to be associated with “an irreverent, insurgent brand of activist politics” rather than the trolling which characterised previous actions. Participants who are figuratively and/or literally wearing the ‘Anonymous’ mask have played a significant role within the DLM, including in the recent campaigns against the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and the Protect Intellectual Property Act (PIPA). Together, these emerging collective identities demonstrate the growth of the movement.

Working with Ashmore, *et al.*’s [13] use of collective identity as a psychological concept referring to an individual rather than a group, it is clear here that although there is no single term that DLM activists routinely use to refer to themselves, there is an emerging sense among activists that they are connected to a broader movement. This is also in line with McDonald’s argument that we need to shift towards understanding social movements as “constructed in terms of fluidarity rather than solidarity” [14], with a monolithic and all-encompassing sense of collective identity no longer structuring participants’ involvement in social movements (if it ever did), and Chesters and Welsh’s claims that there can never be “an uncomplicated, unified or seamless collective identity” within movements [15]. Participants’ identification with the movement shifts over time, and is also built through involvement in

movement events and campaigns. To the extent that a sense of collective identity can be said to exist within the DLM it is, as in other movements, fragmented and fluid.

The movement's demands also shift with time, and stretch across a range of areas. Most of the DLM's demands, however, fit within a reformist agenda: there are very few challenges to existing political structures, although to some extent the DLM does challenge the power of large content industry organisations (such as the Recording Industry Association of America and the Motion Picture Association of America) within these structures. As will be seen in the discussion below around key struggles in the movement's history, DLM activists have tended to work against increased online surveillance (without challenging the role of law enforcement within a liberal democracy), against the extension of copyright periods (without challenging the notion of copyright), and against unwarranted censorship of online content (while allowing for censorship in some respects). "The Freedom of Internet Act", developed by Reddit users in the wake of the campaigns against SOPA and PIPA (De Rosa, 2012) is an excellent demonstration of the predominant approach within the DLM, and addresses many of the movement's concerns. This collaboratively-produced document "aims to guide the international community with a declaration of individual user's personal digital rights", and argues that "balance between government and corporate interests, and individual internet user's [sic] rights, must be established" (Reddit users, 2012). This demand for a balance between the interests of the state, corporations, and individuals is a common theme in the DLM's demands.

While the reformist focus of the DLM's demands is frequently reflected in the movement's protest repertoire, online civil disobedience and direct action also play a significant role within the movement. The struggles discussed below are often carried out within existing legal and political channels: through petitions, lobbying politicians, letter-writing, and legal channels. However, tactics such as these are frequently complemented by actions which attempt to sidestep or openly flout the law. The campaigns around the Decrypt Content Scrambling System (DeCSS), 09F9, and Grey Tuesday (discussed below) all illustrate one of the movement's primary tactics: in each of these cases, the Web and peer-to-peer networks were used by activists to spread information in contravention of the law, particularly copyright law. Distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks are another popular, if controversial, tactic: as well as being illegal in many countries, activists within the DLM have criticised DDoS attacks, with one of the founders of the EFF writing that "ddos is its own form of censorship" (Barlow, 2012; see also Pirate Bay, 2012). Nevertheless, during the campaign against SOPA and PIPA some activists working under the Anonymous banner used DDoS attacks against the sites of government and commercial sites which supported the bills (Lohman, 2012), and this tactic is likely to be used again in the future and remain a part of the DLM's tactical repertoire.

The targets of the movement's demands are frequently national governments, and primarily take the form of a demand for limits to government power. The United States government, in particular, is a key target for much of the movement's activism. This is in part because many of the strongest organisations within the DLM, such as the Electronic Frontier Foundation, are based in the U.S. However, it is also because the U.S. government has been instrumental in crafting a range of national and international legislation that extends copyright terms, imposes harsh penalties for copyright infringements, extends online surveillance, and/or acts in other ways to prevent user control of digital technologies. Other governments have also become targets for similar reasons, with national and international activists working against: the French HADOPI law (passed in its final version in 2009, the law revokes Internet access for individuals with multiple copyright infringements); Canada's Bill C-11 (which makes far-reaching changes to Canada's copyright regime); and the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (a multi-national treaty which DLM activists argue will have serious effects on privacy and civil liberties), among others. Corporations are often a secondary target: in the campaigns against SOPA and PIPA, for example, information was circulated on companies which helped to draft the bill (*cf.*, VodkaCranberry, 2012). A significant number of people chose to close their accounts with GoDaddy in protest against the company's support of SOPA (BBC News, 2011), which ultimately lead to GoDaddy publicly changing their position on the bill (GoDaddy.com, 2011). In the process of making demands, DLM activists help to build the movement by defining it in opposition to their targets.

Section 2: The importance of networks

While an understanding of the movement's master frame, identity-building work, demands, and targets helps to provide a basic sketch of the DLM, it is only possible to understand the movement by viewing it as continually being constructed and reconstructed. Social movements shift constantly: participants enter and leave, targets change, even the master frame and collective identity (or identities) which sustain the movement undergo a process of continual change and reconstruction. The following section therefore discusses the evolution of the movement and the role of key struggles in the development of the movement.

There have been a number of landmark campaigns and struggles that have played a role in the formation of the DLM, bringing together communities and groups which may, previously, not have recognised the commonalities in their analysis. Each of these has been an important step in the development of the master frame (the recognition that the technical is also political), and a rallying point bringing together different parts of the movement. These include the 1998 *Eldred vs. Ashcroft* case over copyright extensions in the U.S. (Lessig, 2004; Vaidhyathan, 2004a); the 1999 development and illegal dissemination of DeCSS, which broke technological locks on DVD content [16]; the 2003 activism around Diebold Election Systems' voting machines [17]; Grey Tuesday in 2004, which involved illegal sharing of DJ Danger Mouse's

mashup of the Beatles' *White Album* and Jay-Z's *Black Album* [18], the 2007 sharing of an encryption key known as 09F9 that facilitated the breaking of restrictions on sharing high definition DVD content (Felten, 2007a; 2007b); the ongoing struggle for Net Neutrality in the U.S.; the arrests in 2009 of four members of Pirate Bay (Kiss, 2009; Thompson, 2009); and the recent campaigns against the U.S.' PIPA and SOPA, which we will discuss in more detail below.

These struggles have played an important role in the development of the DLM. DeCSS was one of the first widespread revolts against technological locks on access to digital content (also known as DRM), helping to develop a political discourse around DRM. Similarly, the analysis and dissemination of damaging material on Diebold Election machines not only provided a clear connection with the mechanisms of democracy, but also demonstrated the potentially stifling effects of copyright law, which Diebold attempted to use to shut down criticism of its machines [19]. *Eldred vs. Ashcroft* was a rallying point for free culture groups around the world. The benefits of the Swedish trial of Pirate Bay members for the *Piratpartiet*, which saw membership soar in the months following the trial (*Piratpartiet*, 2009; Sjoden, 2009) has pointed to emerging links between the DLM and conventional politics, as happened with the environmental movement and Green parties in previous decades. Finally, the issue of net neutrality and the campaigns around SOPA and PIPA have helped to develop not only the public understanding of the politics of the Internet's structure and regulation, but also the movement's cohesion, as activists built coalitions around the campaigns. Analysis of these struggles allows us to draw out some common threads which tell us more about the DLM as a whole.

Most of these struggles have attempted to highlight the political aspects of an issue previously conceived of as primarily technical in nature, helping to construct the movement's master frame. In the case of the 09F9 revolt, Edward Felten notes that people participated in sharing the number in part as a reaction to what they saw as censorship, a concept which a decade ago may have seen as absurd when applied to a number (Felten, 2007b). Similarly, on the DeCSS gallery, which shared different artistic interpretations of the DeCSS code, the issue of access to the code was framed in terms of freedom of speech, with the curator writing that the gallery was put together in order to highlight "the absurdity of Judge Kaplan's position that source code can be legally differentiated from other forms of written expression" (Touretzky, 2000). Similarly, activists involved in Grey Tuesday framed their sharing of the *Grey Album* in terms of protecting freedom of speech — preventing the censorship associated with copyright takedown notices, as well as freedom to "cut and paste" existing cultural content into new messages (Downhill Battle, 2008). In the case of the Diebold machines, activists took what was considered to be an uncontroversial upgrade to voting procedures and turned it into a debate about citizen oversight into the voting system. Lessig (2004) spends much of his analysis of *Eldred vs. Ashcroft* lamenting his approach to the case, arguing that his focus on the U.S. Constitution's provision for limited terms of copyright lost the case, where a clearer focus on the political harms done by copyright extension (which he believed were obvious) would have been more effective. Finally, activism around net neutrality, SOPA, and PIPA has worked to highlight the political aspects of the Internet's structure and governance; the *Save the Internet* coalition argue that an open and non-discriminatory structure is "the reason why the Internet has driven economic innovation, democratic participation, and free speech online" (*Save the Internet*, n.d.), and the 2012 protests against SOPA and PIPA demonstrated a remarkably successful attempt to frame the struggle as a matter of 'defending freedom' (Fight for the Future, 2012). Together, these protests and campaigns have been part of the DLM's attempt to understand, publicise, and shape the political effects of information technology.

These struggles have also demonstrated the importance of the networks which the DLM is built on. The network structure of the movement is complex: the DLM is composed of a number of overlapping networks, with some organisations and individuals more tightly connected than others. There are several organisations that form nodes in this emerging network structure. One of the most important of these is the Electronic Frontier Foundation, which was founded in 1990 and fights for "our freedoms in the networked world" (Electronic Frontier Foundation, 2008). Another central organisation, Public Knowledge, also based in the U.S., is "a Washington, D.C.-based public interest group working to defend citizens' rights in the emerging digital culture" (Public Knowledge, 2008). In Europe, key organisations include the Foundation for a Free Information Infrastructure and the Piratbyrå, or Piracy Bureau, a Swedish organisation which was engaged in "reflection over questions regarding copying, information infrastructure and digital culture" (Piratbyrå, 2007) until it disbanded in 2010. There are also a number of organisations working primarily on F/LOSS which play an important part in the movement, including the Free Software Foundation. While these organisations have played a key role in the emergence of the movement, there are many others around the world working on similar issues, including *La Quadrature de Net* in France, Electronic Frontiers Australia, and pirate parties in over 40 countries. Umbrella organisations, such as Pirates without Borders, help to connect organisations internationally as well as across issue areas: Pirates without Borders' goals include "promotion of free knowledge, free culture, free software, digital sustainability, more free citizens and the freedom of each individual" (Pirates without Borders, 2010). The campaign around SOPA also saw new organisations and coalitions forming, including the Internet Defense League and Fight For the Future, which are helping to strengthen connections across countries and issue areas.

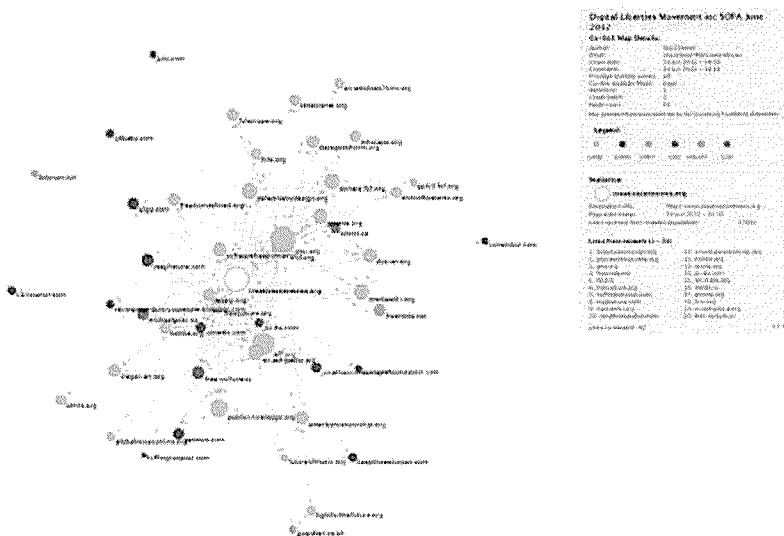
As well as, and in tandem with, the campaigns that these organisations engage in, they are also frequently involved in network building activities. These activities include organising and promoting conferences and discussions, as well as more informal gatherings such as dinners. Events such as these are often conceived of primarily as spaces in which activists develop strategies for action, but they are also important in order to build links, coalitions, and a sense of movement identity, as has been demonstrated by the many discussions and debates over

the purpose of the World Social Forums (Teivainen, 2004; Whitaker, 2004). Increasingly, activists are creating events that explicitly aim to build the movement, such as New Zealand's Retake the Net (Retake the Net, 2011): "We aim to retake the net to create new and positive things — be it content that can be shared and used under friendly licenses, infrastructure that can route around controlled networks, or ways to circumvent censorship" and AdaCamp, which focuses specifically on women in open technology and culture. There are also other events which, while not explicitly aimed at supporting activism, host important discussions and help to sustain movement networks. The Chaos Communication Congress, for example, "isn't just about technical hacking, it is a hub of political activism based around a few common goals: transparency of governments, privacy for private people and the removal of excessive restrictions on sharing information" (Brooke, 2011). All of these events bring together activists and work across several or all of the DLM's issue areas including censorship, surveillance, F/LOSS, and copyright.

While gatherings in specific locations are important to the construction and development of social movements generally, digital technologies have become increasingly useful in helping movement participants to build and maintain networks. The World Wide Web, e-mail, and social networking sites have played a major role in the emergence of the movement. *Boingboing*, a group blog, and *Slashdot*, "news for nerds", are pre-eminent in this regard, and Reddit is also beginning to play a significant role in hosting the discussions and organisation which the DLM is built on. While *Boingboing* has a clear set of bloggers who post, and *Slashdot* has a cadre of developers, editors, and official authors, both include mechanisms for readers to suggest items, and there are comment threads attached to each post in which readers can hold discussions. For this reason it is useful to think of these Web sites as discussion forums, rather than in terms of the more traditional one-to-many media model. As Kreimer notes, the interactivity of the Internet allows "information to blend into recruitment and mobilisation" [20]. Both readers and authors/developers/editors become part of a community, and have an impact (albeit unequal) on the tone and content of the sites.

The communities that surround these sites are building an understanding of how the issues covered by the DLM are interlinked, and a sense of involvement in a common struggle. In part, this happens through the news items posted: both *Boingboing* and *Slashdot* regularly post items related to developments in intellectual property regimes and enforcement, F/LOSS, online surveillance and rights violations, and other topics relevant to the DLM. Tags and categories help to frame these issues: *Boingboing* authors regularly tag items related to copyright and intellectual property with "copyright", while many posts relating to the use of digital technologies for surveillance or information-gathering on citizens are tagged "civilib" (see, for example, Doctorow's [2011b] coverage of Chaos Computer Club investigations into German police surveillance software). On *Slashdot*, items are divided into categories such as "linux" and "politics", as well as being assigned tags such as "netneutrality", "p2p", "privacy", and "antimicrosoft". Authors' commentary, similarly, positions and interprets issues within the movement's frames, and readers add to this by reinforcing, reframing, or contesting authors' interpretations. For example, a post (Doctorow, 2011c) on *BoingBoing* about the effects that SOPA would have on Tor, which allows you to bypass censorship, attracted 36 comments, including claims that the article was "hyperbolic" and a "deceptive exaggeration" (CoyoteDen, 2011), followed by several commenters who supported Doctorow's initial analysis. The importance of these sites was emphasised in an interview with Christian Engström, then Vice Chairman of the Swedish *Piratpartiet* (Pirate Party). He not only attributed his early involvement in activism to following discussions about software patents on *Slashdot*, but also said of the *Piratpartiet*, "we were born out of *Slashdot*, people reading *Slashdot*" [21]. *Slashdot*, *Boingboing*, Reddit, and a host of smaller Web sites function as spaces in which movement participants discuss issues and build a common analysis, creating the movement as they do so.

Web sites can also be used to approximate connections between different organisations within the DLM. Issue Crawler allows the creation of maps which look at the links between Web sites. These links could represent either organisational ties (links to organisations involved in a coalition or campaign) or common interests (links to articles or other content on related issues). The following map (which can be viewed in more detail and downloaded online: Croeser, 2012) looks specifically at digital liberties activism surrounding SOPA, using the sites of important organisations within the DLM as starting points:



Grey arrows represent links; an arrow from one site to another shows that the former linked to the latter. While the nodes of this map have intentionally been limited for the purposes of clarity, it is illustrative of the links between organisations active around different issues within the DLM. For example, the map shows strong links between organisations focusing on F/LOSS (Free Software Foundation, Libre Planet, and Software Freedom), on DRM (Defective by Design), free and open culture (Creative Commons and Free Culture), advocacy organisations focusing on online civil liberties (Public Knowledge and the Electronic Frontier Foundation), and organisations which look primarily at Web governance (Keep the Web Open). This demonstrates the increasing interconnection of movement organisations and the strengthening of the movement.

This strength was demonstrated during the campaigns against SOPA and (to a lesser extent) PIPA, which have catapulted digital liberties activism into the spotlight in much the same way that the 1999 anti-World Trade Organisation protests in Seattle brought attention to the global justice movement. In a much-quoted article, activist Smári McCarthy wrote that, "Last week, we won. The Internet, long seen as a mostly harmless collection of kitten aficionados and porn fiends, fought epic battle of self preservation", arguing that activists had played their trump card (the blackout of many sites in protest of SOPA) too soon, and "escalated the arms race plenty by putting thermonuclear computational equivalence into play" (McCarthy, 2012). Whether or not one agrees with McCarthy's assessment of activists' strategies, it's clear that the campaign against SOPA has demonstrated the organisational strength of the DLM and its potential to raise awareness of key issues and influence policy.

While the discussion so far should give a reasonable idea of the political perspectives that dominate the DLM, it is important to acknowledge digital liberties activists' frequent rejection of conventional political identities in order to get a better understanding of the movement and its potential effects. While participants in the DLM have on occasion been described as communists and/or socialists (Himanen, 2001; Kelly, 2009; Stallman, 2008), many within the movement have been quick to distance themselves from these labels. Lawrence Lessig, one of the leading proponents of creative commons licences and a key figure within the DLM, responded immediately to Kevin Kelly's (2009) claims that digital culture was experiencing a "New Socialism". Lessig (2009) writes that "none of the things that Kelly (and I) celebrate about the Internet are 'socialist'" because they are based on freedom, rather than coercion. In the same piece, Lessig objects to Mark Helprin's *Digital barbarism* (2009), complaining about the "mushiness in thinking" involved in Helprin's "incessant Red-baiting — the suggestion that the movement of which I am a part is a kind of warmed over Marxism from the 1960s" (Lessig, 2009). While Richard Stallman, a prominent free software advocate, does not object to the label with such vehemence, he does write,

[a]nyone who criticizes certain business practices can expect to be called "communist" from time to time. This is a way of changing the subject and evading the issue. If people believe the charges, they don't listen to what the critics really say. (It is much easier to attack communism than to attack the views of the free software movement.) (Stallman, 2008).

These sentiments are representative of the mood within most of the movement, which eschews an open affiliation with left-wing and anti-capitalist ideologies.


In addition to this rejection of left-wing politics, many digital liberties activists reject any political identification. Leaders of the Swedish *Piratpartiet*, for example, explicitly argue that it is neither left- nor right-wing, and that its members come from both sides of the political spectrum [22], yet it is at the same time obviously engaged in a political project. When it comes to F/LOSS advocates, Wayner writes,

[t]o some extent, the politics of the free and open source movement are such a conundrum that people simply project their wishes onto it. John Gilmore told me over dinner, "Well, it depends. Eric Raymond is sort of a libertarian but Richard Stallman is sort of a communist. I guess it's both." The freedom makes it possible for people to mold the movement to be what they want. [23]

Anthropological research by Gabriella Coleman supports this. Coleman notes that "FOSS [free and open source software] developers would suggest that it is unacceptable to claim that FOSS has as one of its goals anti-globalization, or for that matter any political program." [24] This insistence that all sides of the political spectrum are represented, or that none are, is common within the DLM. It sits uneasily with their attempts to frame digital technologies as having significant political effects, but has been sustainable so far largely because the movement has not been able to sit within the broader U.S. discourse of "freedom" and individual liberties. As the movement grows, however, it is likely that activists will have to confront the contradictions involved in attempting to eschew an overt political identification.

Conclusion

The DLM, like many other social movements, is composed of multiple overlapping issue areas. It is built and sustained through the everyday practices of movement activists: cross-linking between key organisations' Web sites, participation in movement events and campaigns, online and face-to-face discussions, and movement communications. This picture of the movement is enabled by drawing on understandings of social movements as less cohesive and unitary than the mainstream literature often assumes them to be, as composed of networks and a fragmented sense of collective identity. While this theoretical framework is more untidy than the standard model, it allows for a more complete understanding of the DLM.

This is important because the work of digital liberties activists has the potential to have serious consequences not just for the development of digital technologies, but also for activists who use these technologies. Activists rely on digital technologies to build and sustain their movements, as well as to communicate effectively with supporters and other audiences. Shifts in the control of these technologies therefore have the potential to have serious effects for activists in other movements (including those involved in the Arab Spring and Occupy), and for individual activists' safety and effectiveness. The DLM therefore has a significant contribution to make: much of digital liberties activists' work consists of trying to convince a broader audience that the issues that they are addressing matter, that intellectual property, software licenses, online censorship, and digital surveillance have important political and social effects. The digital liberties movement provides a vital reminder that discussions of activism within the academic literature, as well as within activist communities, need to build an awareness of digital technologies not only as tools, but as sites of struggle in themselves. 

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Notes

1. Kinser, 2004, p. 129.
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4. della Porta and Diani, 1999, p. 24.
5. Kinser, 2004, p. 138.
6. Cf., della Porta and Diani, 1999, p. 159.

7. Bosco, 2001, pp. 309–310.
8. della Porta, *et al.*, 2006, pp. 63–64.
9. della Porta and Diani, 1999, p. 24.
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12. Engström, personal communication, 27 July 2007.
13. Ashmore, *et al.*, 2004, p. 82.
14. McDonald, 2002, p. 111.
15. Chesters and Welsh, 2005, p. 199.
16. Lievrouw, 2003, p. 8; Vaidhyanathan, 2004b, pp. 70–72.
17. Benkler, 2006, pp. 227–229.
18. Serazio, 2008, p. 86.
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