

TACTIC

APP FLOODING

Appropriate a politically neutral phone application to your cause by overwhelming it with campaign messages.

CONTRIBUTED BY

Beautiful Trouble

Beautiful Trouble is a globally dispersed group of activists whose mission is to make nonviolent revolution irresistible by providing strategic tools and trainings to inspire movements for a more just, healthy, and equitable world.

As smartphones powered by user-generated data become more widespread and more heavily monetized, people are turning to phone applications (apps) to solve basic day-to-day problems: filling a hungry stomach, navigating to a destination, even finding a romantic partner. Most app developers aren't thinking about the political uses of their services when they go live in the Google Play Store, but ingenious users of those apps increasingly are organizing to leverage these platforms to spotlight an injustice, embarrass a target, or change how the public understands an issue.

In Russia, people under lockdown reappropriated a popular app typically used to monitor road traffic to protest their government's mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants, a UK group, created right-swiping Tinder bots to enlighten app users on British Airways' complicit role in deportations. Are apps that thrive on user-generated content a new frontier for political change?

RELATED TOOLS

Tactics

- Creative disruption
- Culture jamming
- Distributed action
- Flash mob
- Guerrilla marketing
- Media-jacking

Principles

- Create many points of entry
- If protest is made illegal, make daily life a protest
- Make the invisible visible
- Simple rules can have grand results

Theories

- Expressive and instrumental actions
- The commons

Methodologies

- Points of intervention

TAGS

Digital organizing,
Communications, Social media