

# TACTIC

## CURRENCY HACKING

Money can speak loudly, whether we'd like to admit it or not, so why not turn it into a tool to protest and organize, by stamping messages on local currency, and turning bills into leaflets.

### CONTRIBUTED BY

#### Ramsey George

Ramsey George works on independent media in the Arab World and lives in Amman, Jordan. He is the co-founder of 7iber.com and the program director of Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism.

---

"Money is a terrible master but an excellent servant."  
—P.T. Barnum

Currency hacking, a kind of culture jamming that turns paper money into protest leaflets, has been used by movements across the world to creatively and cost-effectively spread their message.

In 2011, in Occupied Palestine, an activist Facebook group encouraged people to write "Free Palestine" onto shekel paper notes. Eventually Israel's Central Bank had to put out a statement that any notes marked with "Free Palestine" would not be accepted by the bank — which only further boosted the campaign (see: PRINCIPLE: The real action is your target's reaction).

Occupy George designed downloadable stamps that treated \$1 US bills as a kind of graph paper to highlight economic disparity in the USA.

Other examples include gay rights activists who stamped "Gay Money" and "Lesbian Money" onto bills to demonstrate the growing consumer clout of the gay community; and Syrian democracy protesters who wrote messages onto bills and threw them into the air (see: TACTIC: Clandestine leafleting).

This tactic is not without risks, as many countries have laws against defacing currency. While it's a difficult law to enforce, it's always wise to assess your risks. All legal issues aside, currency hacking is a generally safe, provocative and low-cost way to spread your message.

### LEARN MORE

Facebook Campaign Promotes Palestinian Freedom, on Money  
Haaretz, 2011  
<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/facebook-campaign-promotes-palestinian->

### RELATED TOOLS

#### Stories

- Kubatana's yellow poster campaign

#### Tactics

- Advanced leafleting
- Clandestine leafleting
- Culture jamming
- Distributed action
- Encryption
- Guerrilla marketing

#### Principles

- Balance art and message
- If protest is made illegal, make daily life a protest
- Know your cultural terrain
- Show, don't tell
- Simple rules can have grand results
- The real action is your target's reaction
- Use humour to undermine authority

#### Theories

- Activism
- Capitalism
- Commodity fetishism
- Cultural hegemony

freedom-on-money-1.347607

## Money Delivers Gays' Message

Orlando Sentinel, 1993

[http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1993-07-07/lifestyle/9307040249\\_1\\_gay-money-words-gay-national-gay](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1993-07-07/lifestyle/9307040249_1_gay-money-words-gay-national-gay)

- Hacking

- Memes

### **TAGS**

Action design, Art, Capitalism, Colonialism, Communications, Direct action, Humour, Language, Pranks, Social media, Wealth inequality