Susan Haas

YouTube and the Occupy Wall Street Movement: Students investigate citizen advocacy and media representation

Abstract:

This panel presentation discusses the pedagogical impact of YouTube material in teaching students about the role of media in representations of citizen advocacy and protest. Social media have been used to construct and multiply chapters of Occupy Wall Street around the world. YouTube in particular has been critical in countering mainstream media representations of protesters and reportorial framing of Occupy Wall Street’s goals and the responses of authorities in various Occupy cities. As Occupy protests persisted, mainstream media began to alter their representations and reporting, partly in response to YouTube posts by Occupy participants and witnesses. Mainstream media like CNN and The New York Times have used YouTube posts in their reporting. This study uses data from 143 undergraduate students who worked in pairs to complete a research assignment aimed at parsing and understanding the complexities of the interaction of media, technologies and society, using Occupy Wall Street and its offspring chapters in the US and Commonwealth Nations, and focusing in particular on the role of YouTube.