

Fight for the Future and Net Neutrality: A Case Study in the Origins, Evolution, and Activities of a Digital-Age Media Advocacy Organization

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During the net neutrality debate, Fight for the Future, a new activist organization, played a vital role in coalition building and demonstrating the importance of technical expertise to media policy advocacy. This feature elucidates the work of this new media advocacy organization as it interfaced with peer organizations and with the Federal Communications Commission.

Keywords: net neutrality, Fight for the Future, media advocacy

The Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) 2014 decision to impose network neutrality regulations on Internet service providers has been widely hailed as a triumph by the public interest and advocacy communities that work on media policy issues (Faris, Roberts, Etling, Othman, & Benkler, 2015). Histories of media policy activism have suggested that such successes are relatively rare (Dunbar-Hester, 2012, 2014; Napoli, 2009). Consequently, a lack of research exists on media policy advocacy that examines the conditions, strategic approaches, and organizational dynamics that contribute to successes and analyzes how goals can be achieved. This feature focuses specifically on Fight for the Future (FFTF), an organization that played a significant role in running online campaigns for net neutrality advocacy, and examines its successful implementation of a number of strategies in the struggle for net neutrality. As the FCC was considering its policy options in 2012–2014, FFTF was active in gathering online supporters and using campaigns designed to influence the FCC's decision making. FFTF also worked with a coalition of organizations with a shared interest in getting broadband Internet redefined as a common carrier, one of the key issues in maintaining net neutrality. Such a victory was important because it limited the degree to which Internet service providers could treat certain types of data as prioritized over others, otherwise known as the creation of "Internet fast lanes" (FCC, 2015).

This feature also seeks to draw a distinction between FFTF and activist groups that were old enough to have focused on other facets of past media reform, as well as groups that joined the net neutrality struggle but for which Internet policy advocacy was a peripheral concern.¹ FFTF's advocacy relied heavily on a cultural understanding of the Internet's capacities to enable specific actions, such as e-mail and social media campaigns, beyond what would have been possible in a predigital advocacy scenario

¹ It should be noted that other activist organizations such as Credo, Demand Progress, and Free Press were also involved in online campaigns.

(Dutton & Peltu, 2007). Such an understanding of the Internet's affordances was important to the success of FFTF's advocacy. How FFTF's specific capabilities and approaches shaped its role within the larger coalition of organizations advocating for net neutrality is discussed below.

This feature focuses on FFTF's net neutrality advocacy work that began in 2013, based on its position as a digital-age social advocacy organization (Napoli, 2009, 2010). In particular, it examines why FFTF was successful in addressing three specific challenges: (1) overcoming shortcomings in technical expertise that have, in the past, marginalized some advocacy organizations in their efforts to play an influential role in Internet policy and governance issues; (2) negotiating the interplay between online and offline forms of activism; and (3) building and working with coalitions of other advocacy organizations in ways that overcame the limited resources faced by all of these organizations to achieve mutually agreed-on policy outcomes.

Methodologically, this feature relies on interviews with a founding member of the organization, Holmes Wilson, as well as with members of other advocacy groups in Washington, D.C., which worked in coalition with FFTF during the critical time of April 2014 to February 2015. In addition, this feature draws on discourse analysis of media content produced by FFTF and others, which provides a backdrop against which to frame the insights provided through interviews. Using these data sources, this feature interrogates how FFTF used particular strategies to overcome the challenges listed above. A brief history of the organization and strategies aids in situating its role as a digital advocacy organization.

Origins and Strategies

FFTF formed in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 2011, where Holmes Wilson and Tiffiniy Cheng had met in high school and subsequently, as recent college graduates, ran FFTF's predecessor, Downhill Battle. Through Downhill Battle, they were involved in efforts to protest against policies that they saw as hampering free speech online (Howard-Spink, 2004). One of the goals of the organization was to rally for change to copyright policies that major music labels used to maintain their dominance. One campaign focused specifically on allowing DJ Dangermouse's *The Grey Album* to be freely distributed online. The album, which mixed The Beatles' *The White Album* with Jay Z's *The Black Album*, was made without the permission of either recordings' rights holders, and was wildly successful as measured by illegal downloads. Downhill Battle also focused on the detrimental effects of media deregulation that led to a concentrated ownership of music by the four major record labels (Lee, 2013, p. 20). One of the organization's main arguments against restrictive copyright policy was that the potential power of the Internet was being compromised by corporations that were threatened by the changing consumption habits of Americans. Thus, Downhill Battle promoted file sharing as a method of civil disobedience that could propagate the free flow of ideas (Mason, 2009, p. 127). Downhill Battle also attempted to help the victims of lawsuits brought by the Recording Industry Association of America against alleged file sharers. After seeing the potential for social action organized through online communication, Wilson and Cheng formed FFTF to use similar strategies to effect change in other online policy areas.

FFTF, just like Downhill Battle, was admittedly humble in its staff and financial support compared with larger organizations, but its members considered its relatively low overhead costs an advantage in

being able to stay nimble.² FFTF's initial funding came from the Media Democracy Fund, a grant-making body that has funded similar media policy advocacy projects that include ColorOfChange.org, the Media Mobilizing Project, and the Future of Music Coalition. The organization consists of a small staff, many of whom live in geographically disparate locations such as Brazil and Boston.

According to Wilson, the organization's biggest victory before undertaking net neutrality advocacy was the defeat of the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA), a Congressional bill that would have greatly curtailed a website's ability to act as a safe harbor for content (House of Representatives Resolution 3261, 2011). Some of the aspects of SOPA that were especially troubling had to do with its handling of copyright infringement, bypassing safe-harbor affordances for Internet service providers, and governing the structural underpinnings of the Internet (domain name system). Critics claim that the bill's passage would have resulted in unprecedented censorship online (Bridy, 2012). Generally speaking, SOPA would have passed unless the public's participation made apparent that its terms were seen as unjust and overreaching, and FFTF played a major part in fomenting this opposition (Sutter, 2012). As an issue affecting Internet policy, the organization's treatment of SOPA anticipated many of its net neutrality-related actions.

For FFTF, the net neutrality debate exemplified an ideological struggle in which power fell along lines that resonated with neoliberal patterns of increasing corporatization on one side and marginalized rights and visibility of ordinary citizens on the other (Quail & Larabie, 2010). As discussed earlier, the proposed fast lanes that Internet service providers desired would have created price-based tiers of Internet speed that could have put new, cash-poor companies at a disadvantage while simultaneously bolstering established companies that could easily clear this new barrier to entry (Spangler, 2014). FFTF's often ideologically oriented campaign articulated this view, seeking to draw on the feelings of frustration that its constituency was feeling about other aspects of society—employment, indebtedness, and what Hardt and Negri (2012) called "a struggle for the common" (p. 7), which signifies a desire to end the precarious status of basic tenets of democratic society. One of the underlying tensions present in much of FFTF's work concerns control of content online, which bears on the broader issues of equality and freedom of speech. The organization sought to legitimize its efforts as part of a moral framework against these neoliberal tendencies.

FFTF's efforts to oppose anti-net neutrality measures, as do all of its campaigns, consisted of a mixture of mass e-mails to members and coordinated efforts in Washington, D.C., to affect the positions of lawmakers and FCC officials. A key differentiating factor to FFTF's previously mentioned victory, the defeat of SOPA, was that net neutrality was an affirmative struggle to prevent what Wilson called "stupidity and cultural destruction" (Holmes Wilson, personal communication, June 15, 2015). He said that the nature of an affirmative struggle (one that takes an offensive position through proposed legislation) dictates a longer narrative arc than one to change destructive legislation such as SOPA. For this reason, the ability to keep members engaged proved more of a challenge during the one and a half years that net

² FFTF is a registered 501(c)4 nonprofit organization that currently receives funding from a number of foundations including The Ford Foundation, The Knight Foundation, and The Shuttleworth Foundation, as well as from companies such as Yelp and Reddit (<http://www.fightforthefuture.org>).

neutrality was an active campaign than the relatively shorter campaign of preventing SOPA from becoming law. This longer engagement has involved continued advocacy in the face primarily of court cases in which corporations have tried to dismantle net neutrality through legal challenges to the FCC's policy (Holmes Wilson, personal communication, May 1, 2016).

FFTF is unique among advocacy groups in a number of ways. It is a small organization: Including its two founders, it consists of a staff of 10 at the time of this writing. The FFTF team is distributed around the globe and does not have a D.C. office like many of its peer advocacy groups. FFTF attributes this to the flexibility the Internet affords it, making the organization particularly invested in defending equal access to the Internet for individuals and small companies. Its communicative actions in support of net neutrality were primarily centered around gathering support online via e-mails, tweets, and other social media content (FFTF, 2015b). In addition, at only four years old in 2015, FFTF was perhaps the newest activist organization to lend its resources and efforts toward net neutrality.

FFTF, like many media policy activist organizations, seeks to minimize the effects of corporate control of the Internet. As a result, much of its content from the net neutrality campaign frames Comcast, Time Warner, and other cable providers as having a disproportionately large and damaging effect on the infrastructural layer of the Internet over which important cultural discourses circulate. Furthermore, FFTF's claims that such corporations operate with a high degree of chicanery suggest a general distrust of those parties. FFTF's antiestablishment sentiment, one that creates an aversion to being permanent members of any coalition, aligns with its belief that coalitions should be formed only when they can effectively create social change for a narrow purpose (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011). Consequently, FFTF's day-to-day interactions with coalition members are tightly related to singular issues such as net neutrality.

Although coalition building within advocacy groups was certainly important work in which FFTF was involved, much of its daily activity had to do with organizing Internet users to participate in certain actions rather than interfacing directly with the FCC or the White House. Generally, these actions consisted of tweeting, sending Facebook status updates, updating its Tumblr, and e-mailing constituents. Some of these specific actions are outlined below.

In the next three sections, the main challenges that FFTF faced are explored, especially in relation to its interaction with other advocacy organizations during the net neutrality campaign. These challenges were (1) negotiating the role of technical expertise within an advocacy organization, (2) balancing online and offline activities, and (3) addressing the communicative strategies and dynamics of participating in a broad coalition of activist organizations.

Technical Expertise

FFTF's advocacy focuses on three core issues: online privacy, copyright policy, and access to a fast Internet (FFTF, 2015a). Its regular work of communicating with its members and the Internet public through e-mail and social media pertains exclusively to these goals. The routines it uses, regardless of the campaign, include e-mailing constituents; posting content to social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr; and developing technological tools such as websites. All of these were used during the net

neutrality campaign and contrast with the work of some of its coalition partners that focused on interfacing with the FCC or with lawmakers directly, as well as organizing protests. As such, technology plays an important role in the daily functioning of FFTF.

The amount and importance of activist-related communication taking place online have increased as the Internet's presence has grown to displace other communicative practices. Nielsen (2013) argued, "a rapidly growing number of digital and networked technologies are increasingly ubiquitous and increasingly integral to many forms of social action, including political activism" (p. 174). This allows for activism to be dispersed across the Internet's infrastructure much more efficiently than through other media, so it is no wonder that, as will be shown, FFTF is as passionate about the tools it builds as it is about the policies it wishes to affect.

Of course, such notions of Internet novelty must be tempered with some historical context. Discussing the Zapatistas and Indymedia movements of the 1990s and early 2000s, Wolfson (2012) wrote,

in reviewing the role of media in social movement building, it is important to have a nuanced view, recognizing the possibility in new media tools as well as the problems, grounding their use in the lives of communities, but not extending those possibilities too far. (p. 165)

So, even though there is evidence that the Internet has reconfigured communicative practices in an unprecedented manner, it is important to maintain an understanding of how social movements of the past have harnessed the power of media to bring about social change. FFTF took advantage of the technological changes that occurred before 2012 for the same kind of democratizing efforts that were the goals of past social movements.

Similarly, Lievrouw (2011) wrote that "we tend to equate 'new' with unprecedented, and to forget that successful innovations are almost always built on the foundations of existing techniques and systems" (p. 28). As powerful and important as net neutrality was as a policy, especially in how FFTF framed it, its adoption and impact can only be measured by considering the history of involved organizations, the legacy policies that help to frame it, and the new communicative practices that emerge from these foundations. What follows is a discussion of some of the specific tools that FFTF used that demonstrate both its expertise and advocacy strategies.

One specific component of FFTF's net neutrality campaign was the creation of a website for each member of Congress, where voters could see whether their congressional representatives supported or opposed the policy. Accordingly, anyone in the United States could see the stance that their legislators had taken on net neutrality and their relationship to the "big cable" monopolies, which FFTF described as a major source of funding for opposing net neutrality measures. Through the creation of these 535 websites, FFTF used particular modes of communication that Wilson claimed the "Internet is good at" to operate at a scale that pre-Internet modes would not have allowed (Holmes Wilson, personal communication, June 12, 2015). Because the individualized websites increased visibility for each congressperson, citizens could

have a more granular understanding of how people they voted for stood on this vital issue of Internet policy.

A second component of the net neutrality campaign consisted of "Internet Slowdown Day." For this project, FTF, Demand Progress, and Free Press organized thousands of websites from participating organizations. On Thursday, September 10, 2014, participating websites throttled connection speeds and displayed banners aimed at raising awareness of what could happen if net neutrality did not become policy. According to [battleforthenet.com](#), a website that FTF created, more than 40,000 websites participated, including those of large companies such as Netflix, Tumblr, Vimeo, Etsy, and Kickstarter (FTF, 2015c). As was the case with the congressional websites, Internet Slowdown Day was designed to act as a bridge between the general population and the activist groups advocating for net neutrality. Critically, [battleforthenet.com](#) also provided tools for individuals with blogs and mobile apps to spread awareness of the potential consequences of losing net neutrality (see Figure 1). Underlining the success of this strategy, [battleforthenet.com](#) boasted 1 million Facebook shares of relevant content resulting from Internet Slowdown Day.

Modal:

Big ISPs want the power to slow (and break!) sites like ours.
Tell lawmakers: "Protect Internet freedom. Defend net neutrality."

[Read the letter](#) | [Learn More](#)

| Name | Email | Address | Zip / Postcode |
|--|-------|---------|----------------|
| <p>SIGN OUR LETTER TO LAWMAKERS</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fight for the Future and Demand Progress may contact you about future campaigns.</p> <p>We'll deliver this letter to your members of Congress and the White House. We'll never share your email with anyone else. Privacy Policy</p> | | | |

To show the modal on September 10th, paste this code into the <HEAD> of your site. [More info.](#)

```
<script src="//widget.battleforthenet.com/widget.min.js" async></script>
```

Figure 1. The Widget for which Fight for the Future made the code available in preparation of September 10, 2014, Internet Slowdown Day.

A third component of FFTF's campaign was mass e-mails sent to members who had subscribed through its website. During the time immediately before and after the net neutrality ruling (September 2014 through February 2015), e-mails were sent several times a week and sometimes daily. Generally, there were specific reasons for the e-mails, such as recent policy changes, updates on particular lobbying efforts, reports on the effects of certain actions such as the Internet Slowdown Day, or requests for members to take further action by signing petitions or contacting politicians. All of FFTF's social media activity was designed to activate its member base. Such activity was important for maintaining a persistent image online, a strategy that Wilson recognized as a component of the campaign's success. Because digital communication is often plagued by ephemerality (Penney & Dadas, 2014), FFTF posted and e-mailed regularly during times when increased participation was needed.

A final component of FFTF's net neutrality campaign was the creation of an easy way for Internet users to submit comments to the FCC. Before 1996, comments had to be mailed to the FCC, an action that took considerably more effort than filling out an online form (Kutler, 2016). Through the same website used for Internet Slowdown Day, *battleforthenet.com*, a user interface that was easier to navigate than the FCC's own website, was employed, with a preloaded generic message template that could be modified by the user. Of the 4 million comments that were delivered to the FCC, FFTF claims to have funneled 1 million through its website (Meyers, 2015). In addition, an e-mail from FFTF explained that, on the night before the commenting period was to close, the FCC's website "broke" because of the volume of comments: "There's been such an overwhelming response to the FCC's net neutrality proceeding that its website that's supposed to receive comments has CRASHED" (Holmes Wilson, personal communication, July 15, 2014; Faris et al., 2015; Wyatt, 2014). By using these particular technological tools to activate public participation, FFTF acted as a bridge between the FCC and the general population.³

A criticism leveled at Internet-mediated political engagement is that it is largely impersonal and therefore possibly ineffective (Morozov, 2012). For example, FFTF's individualized pages for each congressperson and senator provided a somewhat anonymous critique of those members of Congress who did not support net neutrality; they may have lacked the potency augured by in-person protests or visits to those politicians' offices. Wilson recognized that the Internet has inherent weaknesses when it comes to amplifying certain human behavior, and readily admitted that FFTF's efforts cannot be totalizing for fomenting social change. He did not claim that FFTF's efforts were designed to undermine the work of groups that had a long history in Washington working on particular issues. Nevertheless, FFTF's strong online presence and clever use of virtual communication strategies certainly helped push the pro-neutrality coalition to victory.

Another associated criticism of Internet activism is that it engenders a lackadaisical approach to inciting social change. Lentz (2014) argued that "being called upon to participate in episodic media policy struggles, to sign petitions, contribute to issue campaigns, retweet arguments, watch mesmerizing TED Talks, or take part in protests at opportune flashpoints does not an educated digital citizen make" (p. 135), suggesting that the digital activist might be akin to the "armchair anthropologist" or the "WebMD

³ It is understood that the FCC already had lowered the barrier to entry for comments through its online system; FFTF's tools made for an even easier task by prepopulating some of the required fields.

medic"—someone who only needs a superficial involvement in a social movement to be considered a stakeholder.

FFTF would argue against this view. By being aware of how net neutrality could affect their everyday Internet usage and by taking simple steps to affect the relevant decision making, "normal" Internet users played a role in the calculus the FCC had to make in its formulation of the new policy. For FFTF, the embeddedness of its members in the struggle need not be measured by their level of participation, but rather by their quantity, to be considered successful. Wilson (personal communication, August 3, 2015) wrote that

I think debates about "exceptional" vs. "not" or [the Internet being a] "tool" vs. "universe" are easy traps to fall into, because they're interesting abstract questions but obscure the simple and otherwise pretty obvious reality that the Internet makes certain things 10, 100, 1000, 10000000 times easier.

Then the question is just, what are those things? One of them seems to be sharing ideas. And that's a big one. That alone could make the Internet as big a deal as money, writing, or even language.

As Wilson highlighted, online communication provides pragmatic advantages to former methods of activism organization. Although they did not completely take the place of in-person action, e-mails, social media content, and online petitions expanded the abilities of FFTF to work toward its goals in the net neutrality struggle, including raising funds and awareness. The things that the Internet makes "10000000 times easier" allow a group such as FFTF to leverage its deep technical knowledge into effectively being part of a coalition. By making certain modes of communication easier, such as sending a comment to the FCC with a few mouse clicks, FFTF was able to both deepen and broaden commitment to net neutrality without undermining the efforts of other groups or cheapening the methods of past modes of activist communication. By leveraging the minimal commitment required of individuals for online participation, FFTF was able to parlay the participation of many into a large-scale impact, challenging the notion that Internet participation is, by nature, shallow.

Negotiating the Interplay Between Online and Offline Forms of Activism

FFTF's success was not predicated solely on Internet engagement. FFTF also recognized the importance of "showing up" in person. By participating in offline activities such as protests, it sought to act as both an outlet speaking directly to decision makers such as the FCC and as a conduit through which the public could communicate. During the net neutrality proceedings at the FCC, FFTF members camped outside its headquarters in a demonstration of protest. It also worked with one of its sponsors to play a pro-neutrality video on a billboard-sized screen outside of the same headquarters as the comment period was closing in an effort to get the FCC's and the public's attention. Wilson said that "it's the mix of being able to do traditional on the ground activism and online activism that makes us so strong as an organization, especially when you combine that with our ability to do messaging for these campaigns" (Holmes Wilson, personal communication, June 12, 2015).

In addition, FFTF interfaced with political leadership and with the press. Although a wide array of press outlets covered both the FCC's deliberations about the issue and the related protests that FFTF organized, one of the most significant measures of the group's efficacy was in Tiffiniy Cheng's invitation to participate in shaping the White House's official position on net neutrality. This took place after Internet Slowdown Day drew widespread attention (Meyers, 2015). A resulting video that President Obama released on the White House's website used key phrases and ideas borrowed from FFTF's sites and e-mails in its encouragement to the FCC to adopt net neutrality as a policy (Whitehouse.gov, 2014).

Another on-the-ground action aimed at drawing attention to FFTF's online activity involved renting a portable billboard and placing it directly across from the FCC on September 15, 2014. In an effort to emphasize the importance the organization placed on digital rather than face-to-face communication, FFTF allowed the public to submit pro-net neutrality content to be displayed on the billboard. Almost concurrently, however, FFTF assisted in organizing rallies and protests in a number of cities to further make visible the fight for neutrality, and participated in interviews with the press to publicize its cause. On November 5, 2014, FFTF sent an e-mail with the following text:

This Thursday . . . we're organizing emergency protests across the country, but we need more people to step up and help "anchor" protests in their towns. Anchoring a protest is easy: it just means you pick a time and location, and agree to be there and get as many of your friends as possible to come. The protests themselves are simple: we are asking people to gather in the evening at government buildings and hold their glowing cell phones, laptops, and tablets aloft to shine light on the growing corruption in DC and demand real net neutrality. (Holmes Wilson, e-mail communication, November 5, 2014)

By acting as a hub that connected eager Internet users to physical protest locations, FFTF facilitated activism through both digital tools and rallies and protests. Such a strategy resonated with the other actions outlined here that highlight the organization's role as both a channel for others to take social action and an outlet speaking directly to the FCC and other parts of the federal government.

Coalition Activity

The coalition in which FFTF participated consisted of a number of organizations that understood the importance of presenting a united front to the media and to the opposition. There was a wide array of organizations with various reasons for joining, but they united under the moniker "Team Internet," using FFTF's central website (<http://www.battleforthenet.com>) as central storage for the group's information. FFTF was important in the construction, maintenance, and strategies behind the website and its related social media. Many of the organizations took part in weekly conference calls to align on specific actions and messages communicated to the media. The coalition included Demand Progress, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Free Press, Public Knowledge, the American Civil Liberties Union, Center for Media Justice, Color of Change, National Hispanic Media Coalition, and others (FFTF, 2015d). These groups were able to rely on FFTF for many of the specific capacities that have been discussed in the previous two sections; FFTF also played a key role in the period during which the FCC was accepting comments

regarding its formation of net neutrality. As mentioned previously, FFTF organized a group of picketers outside FCC headquarters, a strategy that later allowed it to hand deliver comments when the FCC's website went down:

Our tiny team of staff and volunteers worked round the clock in the days leading up to the comment deadline, and when the dust settled we had personally delivered 130,000 comments to the FCC in just 3 days. **That's more than 1/3 of all the comments delivered during that time!** (Holmes Wilson, personal communication, July 23, 2014)

This type of flexibility gave FFTF the appearance of an edgier, scrappier nonprofit compared with its counterparts, which, in turn, allowed it to build a reliance on coalition partners for legal and lobbying capabilities (FFTF did not have any legal counsel, whereas others in the coalition did). The work that went into capacity building, then, for FFTF was done with the understanding that it would be a component of a larger Internet policy advocacy effort.

FFTF's leadership role in raising awareness online about net neutrality was critical, but working in coalition with other leading organizations to pool resources was equally integral to its strategy. Wilson, furthermore, emphasized that FFTF's participation in a "big tent" process allowed it to be involved in protesting as well as facilitating other organizations to contribute knowledge and resources. As a result of this interdependence, the coalition remained fluid and issue-specific.

Conclusion

This study has sought to situate the role of FFTF within the broader organizational activity during the net neutrality struggle. It began by noting that, as a new organization concerned primarily with digital rights of citizens, FFTF's technical expertise and cultural position as a group of technological experts allowed it to engage the public in the fight for net neutrality in a particular way. Because networked publics allow for a greater volume of people to be involved (boyd, 2007), FFTF was vital in the combinatory effect of what advocacy organizations communicated to the FCC and what ordinary citizens submitted, eventually leading to a victory for the coalition through the participatory effects that some scholars describe (Jenkins, 2012). Its particular strengths in both online and offline activism allowed FFTF to contribute important tools to the larger coalition, strengthening both awareness of the coalition's message and facilitating interorganizational ties amongst the various groups that composed it.

Equally important, however, FFTF's work in a coalition of organizations demonstrates how a new advocacy nonprofit can function within an established civil society infrastructure. By taking part in a collective that had a fairly unified policy stance on net neutrality, FFTF was able to increase visibility for the issue online while simultaneously building its own "brand" as a new model for a geographically dispersed, technologically mediated group. As explored here, many of the methods that were used to make the public aware of why net neutrality was important were developed by FFTF, including e-mail and social media campaigns, particular websites, and protesting at the FCC in late 2014. In addition, cooperation with the coalition allowed for FFTF's abilities and resources to be augmented by legal

expertise provided by larger, older organizations. Conversely, FFTF was able to establish itself as highly capable for a specialized set of tasks that the coalition found useful.

For future research, it is important to map the changing relationships between advocacy organizations during specific times of activity such as net neutrality. As coalitions form for these specific issues, tools that visualize such networks and the nature of relationships would assist individual organizations in developing effective strategies for resource sharing. The future of advocacy on issues such as net neutrality will likely involve more coalition activity—even ones that attempt to cross national borders (at the time of writing, FFTF is involved in advocating for net neutrality within the European Union). Such activity will rely on actors that are geographically distributed, and so tools that allow organizations to effectively pool resources will prove important to their success. FFTF's role in the net neutrality coalition is an excellent model for examining the potential roles of individual organizations within future coalitions, and its successful strategies for online and offline public engagement should serve as a rich resource for organizations engaged in future campaigns.

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