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## Prosocial media in action

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## **ProSocial Media in Action**

### **Abstract**

Online social media has been criticized by social psychologists as ineffective in providing significant social change to such a degree that the term 'Slacktivism' has been coined as a counter term to online 'Activism.' Yet, research to support this theory is inadequate. To understand more about the activism/slacktivism debate, two events were studied that occurred in close proximity in the winter of 2013 and 2014- Giving Tuesday and "SnowedOutAtlanta." Giving Tuesday began in 2012 in the United States as a way to give back to charitable organizations during the holiday season following the chaotic consumerism displayed during Black Friday and Cyber Monday. In 2013, other countries followed suit to make it a world-wide online giving phenomenon. The Facebook, group "SnowedOutAtlanta" was created by Atlanta resident, Michelle Sollicito after two inches of snow created a traffic gridlock in Atlanta that quickly turned chaotic. She sensed a strong need and created an open, online Facebook group where people could easily join and connect to one another. A content analysis was conducted on the tweets from Giving Tuesday 2013 and from the Facebook group page "SnowedOutAtlanta" 2014. Does social media provide a meaningful forum for prosocial helping behavior and if so, how and why people are giving of their time, money, and resources? These two events provide insight into the current 'Slacktivism' debate.

**Keywords: Prosocial behaviour; Slacktivism; social media**

## ProSocial Media Introduction

The aim of the current study is to further examine the “Slacktivism” debate that argues that social media encourages a lazy form of activism and is not a place for meaningful social change (Morozov, 2011). Slacktivism, coined by Morozov, (2011) is a term that describes the lazy, ineffectiveness of online activism. It is also described as low-cost, low-risk online activism (Lee & Hsieh, 2013). “Clicktivism” is a term used interchangeably with slacktivism, which signifies the ease of which individuals can click on an online petition or a social media activist page and feel like they are actually helping. Other researchers agree that online social and political activity often fails to achieve real world change and that the only success it brings is a mere Twitter ‘retweet’ or a Facebook ‘like’ or ‘share’ (Conroy et al, 2012). Slacktivists are wary of online activism and think that individuals need to guard against it, making sure it doesn't stop real action (Kavner, 2012). There is a strong criticism that these prosocial online tactics do not have a significant lasting effect because activism associated with social media is dependent upon weak tie relationships such as Twitter followers and Facebook ‘friends’ that are merely acquaintances whereas meaningful activism requires a strong, robust, organizational structure (Morozov, 2011). Morozov (2011) posits that the internet is nothing but a net delusion that is defined by cyber utopianism and internet centrism that blinds us to an evolving internet landscape that may actually limit democratic possibilities.

Yet, many researchers disagree with this pessimistic view. For example, Lee & Hsieh (2013) found that exposure to online activism influenced individual decision on subsequent civic actions. For instance, participants that signed an online petition were significantly more likely to donate to charity which demonstrated a consistency effect (Lee & Hsieh, 2013). Other researchers point out that the unique platform that social media supplies, enables participants to engage cheaply and easily (Coleman & Blumler, 2009). Another advantage of online activism is the ability to reach a large number of people with minimal effort and at low cost, hence potentially increasing public awareness of a social or political issue/movement. By creating awareness of issues, mobilization of citizens is also made possible (Christensen, 2011). In addition, the act of public awareness is often the first step towards fixing a problem, doing good deeds, or creating change (Conway 2012; Golsborough 2011).

Social media has become a popular venue that fosters various forms of online activism. With its ease of use and immense popularity, social media, also coined social

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network sites (SNS) have experienced a massive boom since their creation a few years ago, and it has now become the most popular activity on the internet (Qualman 2009). Boyd & Ellison (2008) define SNS as web based services that allow individuals to ‘1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system 2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connections 3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system’ (pg. 211). Facebook is the largest and most popular social media site with over 1.2 billion monthly users worldwide and over 1.6 billion page views per day (Sedghi, 2014). Facebook is also the top photo-sharing site on the web with more than 14 million photos posted everyday (Stone, Zickler, & Darrell, 2010). Facebook provides the opportunity for users to create their own profiles where they can post information about themselves, their educational background, work history, hobbies and interests, relationship information, and post pictures. Users can also send private and public messages to friends as well as share videos and pictures. Currently with over 800 million users and translated in over 70 different languages, Facebook is a unique tool in understanding social interaction and online behaviour.

Slacktivism will be examined through two events where social media played a vital role in helping behaviour. These events were Giving Tuesday 2013 and SnowedOutAtlanta2014. These two events were chosen because of the accessibility of data along with their relevance during the time of data collection. In addition, both events were created in an on-line environment in response to a social need.

Giving Tuesday began in 2012 in the United States as a way to give back to charitable organizations during the holiday season in response to the chaotic consumerism displayed during Black Friday and Cyber Monday. In 2013, other countries followed suit to make it a world-wide online giving phenomenon. This event trended on twitter with the hashtags #GivingTuesday and #Unselfie as thousands tweeted about their donations or volunteer efforts. The term ‘unselfie’ was created for this event and individuals were urged to take a picture of themselves giving back or donating to a good cause and upload it to their Instagram or twitter accounts.

The Facebook group “SnowedOutAtlanta” was created by Atlanta resident, Michelle Sollicito after two inches of snow created a traffic gridlock in Atlanta that quickly turned chaotic. Children were stranded in schools, people were stuck in their cars, with no place to sleep (Garner, 2014). Sollicito checked her Facebook that night and saw friends offering help or asking for help on her Facebook feed but they were not connected. She sensed a strong

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need and created an open, online Facebook group where people could easily join and connect to one another. In less than 24 hours the group gained over 50,000 members (Kendall, 2014). Group members banded together and offered their assistance and resources to those in need. Two weeks later the group was reactivated as a second winter storm hit Atlanta. Sollicito was praised for her efforts and labeled the 'Snow Angel of Atlanta' to which she replied 'To those who say that I single-handedly united all the people of Atlanta, I tell them that I did it with the help of 50,000 friends, and an awesome tool called Facebook' (Sollicito, 2014).

Yet, these two events are just two examples of online activism and Prosocial Behaviour. I hypothesize that the 'Slacktivism' argument is not only overly cynical, but also that online activism can have a profound effect on society. Both Giving Tuesday 2013 and SnowedOutAtlanta resulted in a unique communication medium where help could be offered and received that could not have occurred prior to social media's creation.

To understand more about Prosocial Behaviour in a social media setting and how and why people are giving of their time, money, and resources; a content analyses was conducted on the tweets from Giving Tuesday 2013 and from the Facebook group page "SnowedOutAtlanta" 2014.

## **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Research Question 1: Is social media only a place for online Slactivism? Or does true online activism exist?

Research Question 2: Why, how, and when do people help on social media sites?

Hypothesis 1: 'Slacktivism' is too cynical a view and true online activism does exist.

Hypothesis 2: People help on social media sites in similar ways as they do offline. People see a need and they fill that need. Yet, the scope of how people can help is much larger as social media bridges spaces and connects individuals that otherwise would not be connected.

## ProSocial Media Method

### Participants

16,493 tweets were downloaded from Tuesday, December 3, 2013 from 5:10am until 5:10pm using the hashtags #GivingTuesday and #Unselfie. The 12-hour time slot aimed to capture an entire workday on Twitter in hopes of maximizing on online user engagement. In addition, 371 Facebook posts were downloaded from the group page SnowedOutAtlanta on January 29, 2014, and 235 posts were downloaded from February 13, 2014.

### Procedure

Tweets were downloaded using an open access Twitter Archiving Google Spreadsheet (TAGS version 5.1, created by Martin Hawksey) using the hash tags #GivingTuesday and #Unselfie. 16,493 tweets were collected from Tuesday, December 3, 2013 from 5:10am until 5:10pm. A content analysis was performed on the tweets. A content analysis is beneficial in capturing patterns and themes in large amounts of data. The tweets, since high in volume, were analyzed by searching for certain key terms in Microsoft excel. These search terms led to commonalities and patterns among the tweets. For example, it was quickly evident that a charity entitled the Salvation Army had many tweets. Once identified it was easy to use excel to count the tweets with Salvation Army within the tweet. Then, systematic ways of identifying the donor organizations were used to identify charities with multiple supporters. In many cases the @ sign was used to identify the re-tweeter, or the organization that the original tweet was designed to support. The text function was used to identify the first and second @ tweeted, and the result was sorted alphabetically. Next, since, many of the tweets referenced an http site; this text was extracted and matched for the same http. Finally, an attempt was made to match the tweeter against the charity to see if the tweeter was a potential donor, or a charity requesting support or thanking a tweeter. Figure 1 below describes the content analysis procedure used for the Giving Tuesday Tweets.

Figure 1: Content Analysis Procedure for Giving Tuesday Tweets

1. Search for key terms (i.e. volunteer, help, charity) → 2. Identify donor organisation → 3. Search for the “@ sign” to find retweets or donor organisations → 4. Identify http sites that are referenced → 5. Match the tweeter against the charity
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The 606 Facebook posts were downloaded using the Facebook analytics page and then copy and pasted into an Excel spreadsheet. The 606 posts were just a small sample of the multitude of posts that were made to the Facebook group. The first 371 Facebook posts were downloaded on January 29, 2014, and the first 235 posts were downloaded from February 13, 2014. Although there were thousands of posts, only the first 600 were used to keep the data analysis manageable while also providing a meaningful look into the online themes during SnowedOutAtlanta.

The first The Facebook posts were analyzed and categorized into themes manually using a qualitative approach called 'Thematic Analysis' (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). Thematic analysis is a widely used analytic technique in the social sciences (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Aronson, 1994; Joffe, 2011). This approach relies highly on data familiarization. The data goes through a process where it is continuously coded and modified until clear themes are identified and supported with examples from the tweets and posts themselves (Howitt & Cramer, 2008).

## Results

### Overview

A high volume of tweets were downloaded from the 12-hour period. The Tweets were then analyzed using key word searches in excel and identifying patterns and themes among the tweets. A large variety of charities were mentioned as well as tweets from famous celebrities. The celebrity tweets helped promote Giving Tuesday and resulted in the most retweets. The SnowedOutAtlanta Facebook posts were categorized manually. The main categories that emerged from the posts were as follows: problem resolved, thanks, help needed, help offered, prayers, information requested, suggestions provided, information provided, complaints, provide praise, bump, and comments.

### Giving Tuesday Tweets

16,493 tweets were collected from the 12-hour period. The downloaded tweet data included the identification stream, the user, the tweet itself, the user's language, the time of the tweet, the profile of the tweeter, the source of the tweet, the profile image of the user, the user follower count, the user friends count, and the status url. Tweets were posted from individuals, businesses, and charities. First, the duplicate tweets were eliminated which

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dramatically reduced the tweets to 9,452. With 1826 tweets, the Salvation Army surpassed the others by a wide margin. Then, systematic ways of identifying the donor organizations were used to identify charities with multiple supporters.

Using all these techniques, 8122 of the 9452 tweets were categorized. Once these tweets were categorized, the remaining tweets were individually analyzed, to include actually looking at the internet site that was available if it was tweeted. The following charities were mentioned (Table 1 lists those with more than 20 tweets). A broad range of charities were referenced, including local charities such as the YMCA, local parks, national parks, along with well-known charities such as the American Heart Association and the Salvation Army. Tweeters included the charities themselves, who, in general were either thanking tweeters for their support or tweeting have donors consider their charity for giving Tuesday. Approximately 4553 tweets identified as supporting a specific charity, 1965 tweets could not be identified to a specific charity with a large portion of this supporting Giving Tuesday. 1534 tweets were identified as having been tweeted by a charity.

**Table 1: Charities Mentioned in Giving Tuesday Tweets**

	<b>Tweets by Charity</b>	<b>Tweets by Others</b>	<b>Total Tweets</b>
<b>Salvation Army</b>	8	1828	<b>1836</b>
<b>Giving Tuesday</b>	0	1965	<b>1965</b>
<b>Food Banks</b>	23	267	<b>290</b>
<b>UN Foundation</b>	23	179	<b>202</b>
<b>Free the Children</b>	0	126	<b>126</b>
<b>Upworthy</b>	7	111	<b>117</b>
<b>Girlup</b>	0	111	<b>109</b>
<b>ADRAIntl</b>	9	61	<b>70</b>
<b>PFFOrg</b>	37	30	<b>67</b>
<b>NASPA</b>	12	47	<b>59</b>



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<b>FamilyLivesOn</b>	48	9	<b>57</b>
<b>Autism</b>	47	8	<b>55</b>
<b>Donors Choose</b>	8	44	<b>52</b>
<b>University of California</b>	15	36	<b>51</b>
<b>Cancer</b>	5	45	<b>50</b>
<b>SAALLSTARS</b>	15	30	<b>45</b>
<b>Snap2Live</b>	3	41	<b>44</b>
<b>Good Will</b>	27	16	<b>43</b>
<b>Free Morgan</b>	1	36	<b>37</b>
<b>Smithsonian</b>	4	33	<b>37</b>
<b>AfricanArtOutreach</b>			
<b>UNvolunteers</b>	6	31	<b>37</b>
<b>Awearness</b>	13	23	<b>36</b>
<b>Habitat for Humanity</b>	14	22	<b>36</b>
<b>American Heart Assn</b>	3	29	<b>32</b>
<b>Red Cross</b>	6	26	<b>32</b>
<b>United Way</b>	18	14	<b>32</b>
<b>Climate</b>	7	24	<b>31</b>
<b>International Teams</b>	14	16	<b>30</b>
<b>Dalai Lama Fellows</b>	13	18	<b>31</b>
<b>Cystic Fibrosis</b>	2	28	<b>30</b>
<b>UNDP</b>	9	21	<b>30</b>
<b>IndieGoGo</b>	6	22	<b>28</b>
<b>Baycrest Foundation</b>	7	21	<b>28</b>

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<b>STEM Fields</b>	13	12	<b>25</b>
<b>BBBSA</b>	9	18	<b>27</b>
<b>Unicef</b>	0	26	<b>26</b>
<b>ShotAtLife</b>	9	14	<b>23</b>
<b>Ronald McDonald</b>	9	12	<b>21</b>

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Several of the categories uncovered interesting results. The Salvation Army tweets were, by far, the largest of any charity. These tweets appear to be generated from 3 tweets from people with a large following. First, Austin Mahone, a pop singer with 4.7 million followers, tweeted an unselfie. In the next 120 seconds, 530 tweets were sent in support of Giving Tuesday, 512 of which were re-tweets of Austin Mahone’s tweets. A total of 1,733 of the Austin Mahone re-tweets resulted. In addition, Kelly Rowland, a singer with a 5.7 million twitter following, tweeted, with a result of 75 re-tweets, including one by the XfactorUSA with almost 2.5 million followers. Duane Reade, with over 1.4 million followers generated 9 tweets for the Westside YMCA in NYC. The Smithsonian with over a 1 million followers generated 37 tweets for their African Outreach program. A tweet generated by Jean Michel Cousteau with 27,000 followers generated 37 tweets to save Morgan the captured ORCA. DeNada Brewing Company offered \$1 for every re-tweet up to \$250. They got 243 re-tweets in the 12-hour period analysed.

In addition, published articles about Giving Tuesday were the source of many tweets, most of which did not identify a specific charity. The Forbes article generated five charity and 28 non charity tweets, a Huffington Post article generated four and 22, respectively, and article by Matthew Bishop generated two and 25 respectively, and George Kelly article zero and 20. Also, over 237 tweets were generated to support giving Tuesday in honour of the cartoon Newspaper comic feature “Peanuts” represented by the tweet @Snoopy, the initial tweet being generated by the Peanuts tweet with 195,000 followers as shown below in Table 2.

**Table 2: Published Giving Tuesday Articles and Snoopy**

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	<b>Tweets by Organisation</b>	<b>Tweets by Others</b>	<b>Total Tweets</b>
<b>Snoopy (IHO)</b>	0	237	<b>237</b>
<b>Forbes Unselfie Article</b>	5	25	<b>30</b>
<b>George Kelly Article</b>	0	24	<b>24</b>
<b>Huffington Post Article</b>	4	20	<b>24</b>
<b>Matthew Bishop Article</b>	2	18	<b>20</b>

Other General themes that were uncovered in the analysis include volunteer which was mentioned in 177 tweets, children, or kids in 485, youth in 81 , women in 118 and girls in 166 as shown below in Table 3.

**Table 3: Other General Themes**

	<b>Number of Tweets</b>
<b>Volunteer</b>	117
<b>Children/Kids</b>	485
<b>Youth</b>	81
<b>Women</b>	118
<b>Girls</b>	166
<b>Total</b>	<b>967</b>

### SnowedOutAtlanta

SnowedOutAtlanta was different from Giving Tuesday in that it was created by a local citizen (Michelle Sollicito) because of an immediate need to offer help to those who

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were stranded or stuck due to weather conditions in Atlanta, Georgia. Because of the longer format and the fewer number of posts, they were analyzed and coded manually. The main categories that emerged from the analysis were as follows: problem resolved, thanks, help needed, help offered, prayers, information requested, suggestions provided, information provided, complaints, provide praise, bump, and comments. An example of a post from the problem ‘resolved’ category is ‘She made it home finally at 9:30 this morning. Thank u all for the help and prayers.’ An example post from the category ‘Thanks’ is ‘YOU are awesome!! Thank you for helping!!’ Table 4 below shows an example from each category.

**Table 4: SnowedOutAtlanta Category Examples**

	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Problem Resolved</b>	‘She made it home finally at 9:30 this morning. Thank u all for the help and prayers.’
<b>Thanks</b>	‘YOU are awesome!! Thank you for helping!!’
<b>Help Needed</b>	‘My brother and sister in law are stuck at exit 7 on 285 heading towards 85. She's pregnant and he's handicapped. Their phones died at 1am and we've lost contact, but I don't think that area is moving...does anyone know? They've been out there since 11:30 yesterday morning.’
<b>Help Offered</b>	‘I'm off I-20, exit 59- if your close and need shelter, good, blanket- you name it! Please respond to this and I'll make it your way!’
<b>Prayers</b>	‘Adriane I am saying a special and specific prayer right now for your mom's strength and safety. I know it's not much but it's what I can do. I know you are scared honey. Hugs to you.’

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**Information**

‘Steph I was trying to figure out a way we could take food to people? Any thoughts?’

**Requested**

**Suggestions**

‘With all this as a possibility. If motorists must travel or be on the road they need to have an emergency kit prepared with some crackers, snacks and water in the car at all times. Kitty litter as well. A few bags if need be. They are about 3 bucks for some cheap stuff and it will help you gain traction on ice.’

**Provided**

**Information**

‘I-95 Northbound is in good shape!’

**Provided**

**Complaints**

‘Right now, that should be illegal. These tow companies stand to make small fortunes on the misfortune of others. They should be given ample time to get back to their cars when it is safe to do so. Hopefully if they are towing abandoned cars, they are not charging people to do so, and are doing it as a means of just helping clear the road ways.’

**Provide Praise**

‘Thank God for his mercy on the city of Atlanta...southern hospitality at its finest...all the friendships create everlasting bonds, tap yourself on the back Atlanta!!!!’

**Bump**

A term used when individuals would comment or reply to a post so that it would return to the top of the page. It signified the importance of the post and the need for others to see it.

**Comments**

‘Adriane, my sister is in the same boat on Roswell Road in Buckhead. I know that doesn't help your mom, but know you are not alone.’

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Table 5 below lists the categories from the first and second snow storm and the total from both events.

**Table 5: SnowedOutAtlanta Categories**

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Snow Storm</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Snow Storm</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>(Jan 29<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<b>(Feb 13<sup>th</sup>)</b>	
<b>Problem Resolved</b>	6	0	<b>6</b>
<b>Thanks</b>	38	7	<b>45</b>
<b>Help Needed</b>	16	5	<b>21</b>
<b>Help Offered</b>	40	5	<b>45</b>
<b>Prayers</b>	8	14	<b>22</b>
<b>Information Requested</b>	29	20	<b>49</b>
<b>Suggestions Provided</b>	35	38	<b>73</b>
<b>Information Provided</b>	111	54	<b>165</b>
<b>Complaints</b>	30	14	<b>44</b>
<b>Provide Praise</b>	33	8	<b>41</b>
<b>Bump</b>	17	27	<b>44</b>
<b>Comments</b>	50	63	<b>113</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>669</b>

The complaints category was divided into sub-categories which included General, Government, and Media and is shown below in Table 8.6. An example of a General Complaint is “Unliked and unfollowed! And my message to all the northerners making fun of us is to find a different way to get to Florida. The Georgia border is closed to you!” An

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example of a Government Complaint is “Let’s see if our Governor can get it straight this time! Stop pointing fingers and create a plan, a workable plan.” An example of a media complaint is “We are not stars (We are not Chipper Jones) so for you to mention him on the news and not ordinary working citizens about rescuing people, show your stations character 11Alive”.

**Table 6: Complaints: Sub Categories**

	<b>1st Snow Storm</b>	<b>2nd Snow Storm</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>(Jan 29th)</b>	<b>(Feb 13th)</b>	
<b>General</b>	19	14	<b>33</b>
<b>Government</b>	5	0	<b>5</b>
<b>Media</b>	6	0	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>

The Comments category was also divided into sub-categories which include General, Petty, and Weather and is shown in Table Six. An example of a General Comment is “Stay safe!” An example of a Weather Comment is “Lol! I'm moving to FL for the winter!” An example of a Petty Comment is “Joan Hobbles Todd I have seen your anti-Christian comments on here and you absolutely will not win an argument with me about global warming but go ahead and try if you're bored and desire.”

**Table 7: Comments: Sub Categories**

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Snow Storm (Jan 29<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Snow Storm (Feb 13<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>General</b>	35	54	<b>89</b>
<b>Petty</b>	3	6	<b>9</b>
<b>Weather</b>	13	3	<b>16</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>113</b>

## Discussion

To summarise the results for the Giving Tuesday tweets, 16,493 tweets were collected from Tuesday, December 3, 2013 using the hashtags #GivingTuesday and #Unselfie. After removing duplicate tweets, 9543 remained. By far, tweets for the Salvation Army surpassed the others with over 1800 tweets. A broad range of charities were referenced, including local charities such as the YMCA and local parks to national, well-known charities such as the American Heart Association and the Salvation Army. Several of the categories uncovered interesting results. For one, when looking deeper at the Salvation Army tweets which were by far, the largest of any charity, the tweets appeared to be generated from three tweets from famous people with a large following. In addition, published articles about Giving Tuesday were the source of many tweets, most of which did not identify a specific charity.

To sum up the results from the SnowedOutAtlanta posts, 371 Facebook posts were downloaded from the group page SnowedOutAtlanta on January 29, 2014, and 235 posts were downloaded from February 13, 2014. The main categories that emerged from the analysis were problem resolved, thanks, help needed, prayers, information requested, suggestions provided, information provided, complaints, provide praise, bump, and comments.

While it is not possible to determine how many of the tweets and re-tweets actually generated a donation to a specific charity we do know that the Huffington Post reported that donations for this year's Giving Tuesday drive were up 90% over last years, which could



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indicate that the on-line activity provided a GivingTuesday with a much broader support base, and that it indeed provided a forum for real activism. The SnowedOutAtlanta2014 analyses, however strongly supports the contention that not all on-line use is of the Slactivism variety. In this case, real needs were identified and real help was given and documented, largely as a result of the ability to connect more than 50,000 on-users. Especially in SnowedOutAtlanta, individuals went beyond the walls of their WiFi connections and took to the streets to help those in need. These two events provide a powerful argument against the ‘Slactivism’ debate. The theory that Prosocial Behaviour online does not exist and that it is just a venue that promotes a lazy form of activism coined “Slactivism” (Morozov, 2011) is proven wrong with the two social media events studied in this article. Both events went above and beyond ‘clicktivism’ and ‘slacktivism’ and were true examples of online Prosocial media in action. Although Giving Tuesday and SnowedOutAtlanta are just two examples, they are strong cases of helping behaviour being effectively carried out through social media sites. These two cases are also strong arguments against the idea that meaningful activism requires strong, robust, organizational structure as well as strong-tie relationships. Even with the weak tie relationships of twitter members and the members of the Facebook Group ‘SnowedOutAtlanta,’ significant prosocial action was achieved. In addition the only “strong, robust, organizational structure” that was required was creating an online group that can be achieved in a matter of minutes. Strangers went out of their way to pick up stranded passengers, or provide shelter, and deliver food and water to those in need. If they couldn’t help in that way, many provided useful suggestions and information online. Also, Michelle’s foresight, and initiative in creating ‘SnowedOutAtlanta’ clearly resulted in a unique communication media where help could be offered and received that could not have occurred prior to social media’s creation.

This is not to say that the tweets and posts did not exhibit negative aspects of social media. For example, the Salvation Army reported that their online kettle donations were \$2.4 million this year, only a \$.3 million increase over last year (Goldberg, 2013). Given the large number of tweets in the short time after the Austin Malone tweet, indicate slactivism was present as well. Also back and forth arguing occurred multiple times on the ‘SnowedOutAtlanta’ Facebook page. One comment about religion or one use of foul language word could spark multiple posts among some of the group members. Posts about helping others could quickly morph into a religious or philosophical debate that escalated quickly.

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Another interesting finding was the significance of tweets by Famous twitter users. The popularity of Salvation Army tweets benefited greatly by the first tweet by the famous pop singer, Austin Mahone and as mentioned in the results section, many famous artists helped charities by tweeting about them and others quickly followed their lead. This highlights the importance of a strong following on twitter. Twitter popularity is essential to get the word out and create online activism on this social media venue.

Indeed, there were limitations to this study. For one, these are just two isolated events that occurred and cannot be used to generalize. But with that said, Giving Tuesday is an annual online giving event, and SnowedOutAtlanta is being used as a guide for putting social media to good use during disasters. In addition, a content analysis was used to analyze the data. Although a content analysis is beneficial in identifying themes and patterns in the data, its strength does not lie in strong statistical tests. This is another reason why the data cannot be generalized. Yet, the data provides a strong starting point in understanding activism on social media sites.

There are also many directions for future research. For one, data for the individuals who posted the tweets and Facebook posts were not collected because of the nature of the study and the limitations in collecting online data. Future research could examine certain demographics and variables of the participants compared to online activism. Another direction for a future study could be a stronger statistical analysis to pinpoint some of the variables contributing to online activism.

Giving Tuesday 2013 and SnowedOutAtlanta were two real social media examples that provided valuable insight into Prosocial Behaviour online. The both provide strong arguments against the negative outlook on Online Activism coined 'Slacktivism' and provide evidence that pairing the unique connecting tools of social media with Activism and Prosocial Behaviour is a powerful unison.

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