

Hacking Local Politics

Or: How we learned to stop worrying and love fighting for a
a ban on Facial Recognition Tech
(and how you can too)

BY



Overview

- Intro
- **Poli-sci 101 & Integrated advocacy 101**
 - Identify Issue
 - Is local gov best suited?
 - Coalition Building
 - Power mapping, Campaign planning
 - Community engagement
- **Looking Forward**
 - Progress from the bottom up
- **Now you (power-mapping exercise)**



Figure 1: Capital Media Solutions site (2022)

About us

- Intro Munira
- Intro Chris

recent ACLU-MN/RT4-MN Victories

ACLU-MN:

Student Data Privacy Bill

RT4-MN:

Beating back 5Mil in fusion center funding



Coalition Website:

<https://snsmn.org/>

FRT ban timeline

- **SNS Coalition formed spring/summer 2020**
- Found “star” Lawmaker (Steve Fletcher), built relationships with city staff
- Created website, branding. Added new people and orgs.
- Mobilized in Response to the killing of George Floyd & **Pivoted to Face recognition after resistance** from city staff (no appetite for larger bill)



Figure 2: access partnership site (2022)

FRT ban timeline cont.

- **Negotiating language with staff**
 - Got help from EFF and ACLU national
- **While negotiating, Created urgency:**
 - Held a town hall, added more groups / volunteers
 - Public pressure: social media, news cycle, op-eds
- **Once Language Finished, build support for bill:**
 - Community engagement Event, community meetings
 - Social Media, Petition, Open Letter, Public engagement with CMs
- **Massive push to have people testify and comment**
 - Local Orgs Coalition, Constituents
 - Outside groups: EFF | Amnesty International | STOP
- **Vote was unanimous**



Poli-Sci 101

Understanding Local Government

- **Why local government?**
 - Greater chance of success, less “locked in” than state/national
 - With great power...
- **Council**
 - Makeup? What is your local system?
 - Find a bill author (your champion)
- **How a bill becomes a law**
 - Drafting (city attorney/clerk and your bill author)
 - engage with city departments and committees
 - Deliberation (council member action)
 - Council vote + Signing (beware of mayoral veto)



Figure 3: corridor news site (2022)

Understanding Lobbying

Lobbying = convincing someone (usually lawmaker) to do what you want

Power mapping is an old social justice organizer tool to literally map out the political landscape, you must understand landscape before influencing it

Technical stuff:

- Getting meetings
- Pitch, talking points
- Campaign planning
- Maintaining relationships
 - Only as powerful as the connections you have

Figure 4: national law journal site (2022)



Advocacy 101

Issue Identification and Analysis

Contemplate:

What are you trying to do, what is your issue?

Is local government the right jurisdiction? An applicable starting point?

Tools/resources needed to get desired outcome?

Go it alone, start your own org, or join existing group?

DON'T BE AFRAID TO PIVOT

Coalition Building

Local politics are often heavy on community collaboration

Why? Credibility and power

Who do you need on your team to achieve goals?

Coalition 101 Explainer:



Figure 5: LiquidPlanner site (2022)

Community engagement

How are you mobilizing people?

Accessibility and public education on your issue

Organizing testimonies

Calls to actions

****Media engagement: Press, social media



Figure 6: Bam Radio Network site (2022)

Actual Techno Solutions

- Buy Domain. Build website.
- Be the expert in the room
- Data collection and presentation
- Infrastructure
- Fixing Printers. Basic IT
- Adversarial tech

Pitfalls & Problems

It's no Cakewalk!

- **Small jurisdictions mean limited impact**
 - No Panacea—an FR ban in Mpls doesn't stop other cities, states, agencies.
 - Especially with data sharing
- **Coalitions (even small ones) are hard to maintain, messy, fragile**
- **Taking tools away from Police is unpopular (law enforcement opposition)**
- **Lawmakers lack of knowledge and feel their constituency doesn't care (is surveillance ever in a campaign platform?)**

Looking Forward

Potential Policy areas

- **Broadband Access**
- **Criminalization of security research**
- **Consumer Privacy**
- **Right to Repair**
- **Government use of FOSS**
- **Vulnerability disclosures, Vulnerabilities market**
- **Section 230 and FISA**
- **Robotics, climate change, food safety, AI, bio-engineering, and more!**

Why aren't there more Tech/digital rights coalitions?

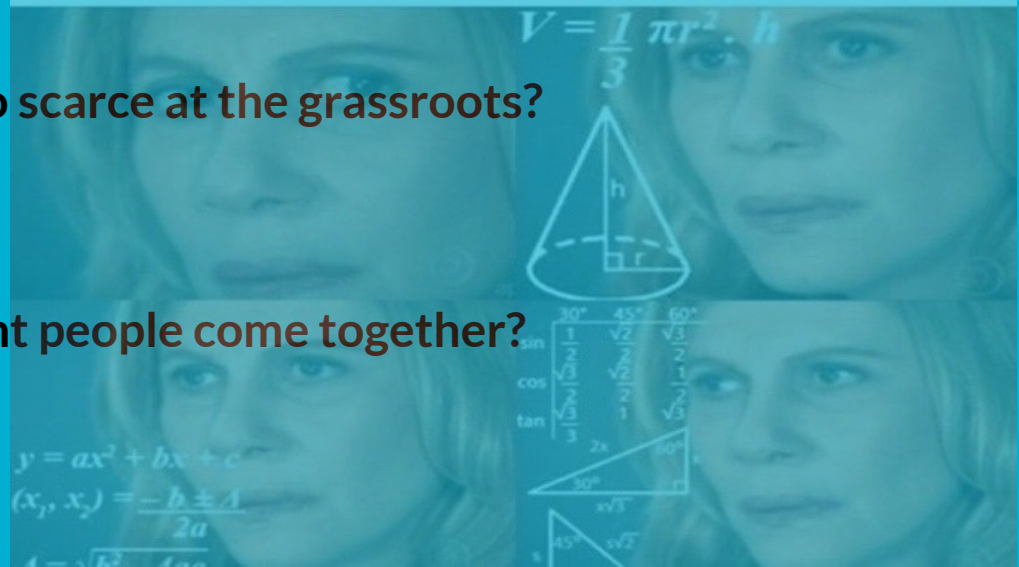
Why is surveillance/data advocacy so scarce at the grassroots?

- Knowledge gap
- Social awareness

What is the benefit of having different people come together?

- Political power
- Resources
- Popular support

Hackers, non profits, community social justice organizers, labor unions, small business

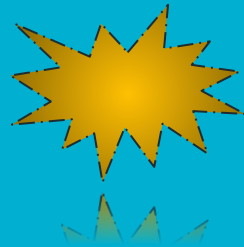
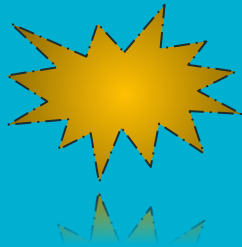
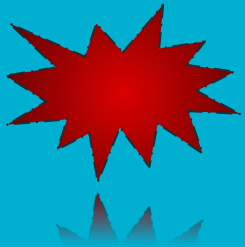


Digital Revolution from the ground up

How to build digital civil rights consciousness among ordinary people?

Don't be afraid to start your own collective

Important to build local bases (people power) to get national and global wins



Power Mapping Exercise / Q&A

Essentially OSINT

1. **Open Spreadsheet / notepad**
2. **Look up your city council website**
 - Put in the names of every council member + contact info
 - See if you can identify chair / rank
3. **Add to spreadsheet**—campaign website / candidate bio
4. **Identify Target** for prelim meeting



Thank you from:

