

Welcome!

أهلاً وسهلاً (*Ahlan wa sahlán*)

Bixêr hatin

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Go Beyond

Amplifying Impact.

Strategies for Digital Advocacy and Social Change

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Today

- Introduction and Stage Setting
- Digital Media Landscape
- US Trends in Social Media
- Free Speech in Social Media
- Workshop – What is Working?
- Who Owns the Narrative?
- Advocacy
- Strategy
- Audience
- Workshop – Mini-Campaign
- Change
- AI – Now, Near, Next
- Wrap Up

But First, A Little About Me

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Married 32 years, two kids, one dog,
one caravan (travel trailer)

Biker, hiker, skier, builder

30+ years in Digital Marketing across
industries, businesses and roles

Lots of startup and agency
experience

UW MBA Professor – Digital Marketing
Systems and Strategies

Point B Consultancy – 4 years

Key Issues I Care About

- Environment Preservation
- Voting Rights
- Government Fiscal Responsibility

















- Activists and Advocates
- Fashion Influencers
- Professionals
- Communications Directors
- Media Platform Creator (Warjin)
- Social Media Specialist – Agency
- Developer of micro-influencer network
- Content Creators
- Husbands, Wives, Fathers, Mothers, Sons, Daughters
- Represent Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Palestinian Territories & Saudi Arabia
- All 10 visiting the U.S. for the first time – welcome!

What would you like to accomplish today?

Media Engagement Landscape in the U.S.

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 Digital Media (Overall)	 ~8 hours/day — Still growing fastest
 Digital Video	 ~4 hours/day — Overtaking TV
 Traditional TV	 Declining — ~2.5 hours/day
 Digital Audio/Podcasts	 Catching up — >50% of listenin
 Traditional Radio	 Still Solid (~92% weekly reach)
 Social Media (News)	 Now highest source (54%)
 Podcasts (News)	 Gaining traction (~27%)



The #1 Podcast
In the U.S.
~20 million listeners
per week

How does this compare to your home?

<https://www.edisonresearch.com/the-top-50-podcasts-in-the-u-s-for-q2-2025-from-edison-podcast-metrics>

Billionaire Ownership of Media

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Rodolphe Saade'
- Pragmatic



Murdock - Conservative



Musk – Crazy
Tech Centric

Sinclair Family –
Very Conservative
200+ Local TV Stations



Trump - Conservative

Patrick Soon-Shiong
Tech Centric



Jeff Bezos – Tech Centric

What is the most surprising social media trend you've seen this year?

Advocacy, Influence & Change in a Dynamic World point b

- Change in how we communicate is happening faster now than ever before – and it won't slow down
- AI is enabling innovation at a micro level and at massive scale
- Social Media has enabled the creation of smaller and smaller media networks – down to a network of one
- Combating negative comments and false narratives is one of the hardest things to do in Social Media
- Technology is moving faster than governments can regulate or control
- The technology we have today will be much different in three years
- “Being human” is your unfair advantage in the age of AI

Your social media reality appears to be much more challenging than the U.S. – Do you agree?

North American Landscape of Free Speech in Social Media

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- The algorithms drive what we see > organic reach is declining
- Laws regulating access starting at state level > Texas, Mississippi...
- Social media became more political under Obama
- Mis-information is rampant – less human fact checking now
- Facebook gets older, TikTok/Instagram claims the youth
- Internet trolls erode trust – anonymity drives poor human behavior
- Scammers and hackers drive distrust and fear
- We listen to our preferred media networks – Fox vs MSNBC
- More “private” groups, chats and social interactions
- Harder to have “civil” conversations
- More creator economy, less influencer impact
- AI is more than a content creation accelerator

Global Free Speech Trends – What Do These Mean to You?

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Trend	Significance
Regulatory pressure & overblocking	Stricter moderation often limits nuance and unintended content
Government censorship & shutdowns	Direct online access control is increasing
Algospeak & linguistic adaptation	Users creatively evade algorithms. Using modified words that algorithms don't catch like "unalive" instead of "dead" & meme's instead of words.
Rise in distrust & reduced perception of freedom	Public feels more monitored and less expressive
Declining media independence & safety	Journalists and platforms face systemic risks
Decentralized platforms emerging	Potential refuge—but not without trade-offs. Smaller groups talking to each other.
Social media used as a direct to consumer announcement platform	Ownership of the platform (Truth Social, X) increasingly important source of power

Do you think new platforms like Blue Sky, Mastadon, Truth Social or Gaming Platforms like Twitch will have a major impact on the big established platforms?

What is an example of a successful social media campaign or viral piece of content in your world?

- What was the campaign or content?
- What elements made it successful?
- How was success measured?
- Is it a repeatable strategy?

Who Owns the Narrative – Washington, DC Example

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On Monday, Trump announced that the federal government will take over law enforcement in DC.

	The Left (Progressives)	The Right (Conservatives)	The Middle (Moderates)
Key Media Outlets	MSNBC	Fox News	CNN, NPR
Primary Statistic	Crime is down 25% from previous year in DC. Homicide rate down	DC has the third highest crime rate in the country	Both are sort of true. Some sites say 4 th highest crime rate, some sites put decline at 35%.
Primary Headlines	D.C. doesn't need rescuing	Trump cracks down on DC Crime with Guard Deployment, Police Takeover	Advocates fear Trump's crackdown in D.C. will put many homeless people behind bars (NPR)
Source of Information	Staff reporters, former law enforcement officials in DC.,law professors	Head of Police Union in DC (Trump supporter), White House staff	D.C. Residents, Homeless advocates, D.C. Attorney General

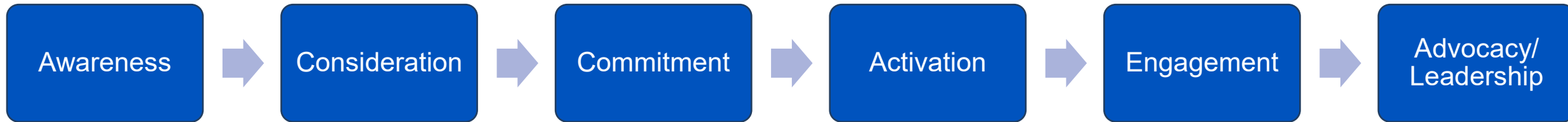
Media Companies Pick and Choose the Following:

- The headline > primary positioning and area of focus
- Who gets interviewed > different people have different bias
- What statistics get selected and shared > justify the narrative
- What stories to cover
- How often it is covered
- How much air time or words the story gets
- How the story gets distributed through radio, podcast, print, website, mobile, social media

Who Owns the Narrative in Your Country?

Advocacy

Advocacy is the under appreciated stage in the audience journey.
Communication/Relationship changes through journey



Questions in audience's mind change from "What is this?" to "Why do I care?" to "How can I help?"

- **Awareness** > Issue introduction and discovery. Why is it important to me?
- **Consideration** > Audience needs more information. Why should I get involved? Who do I trust?
- **Commitment** > Audience decides to act. What does that look like? What are options?
- **Activation** > Audience takes first action. What is the easiest way for someone to commit?
- **Engagement** > Supporter builds a habit, deepens connection to issue. What is the path towards Advocacy?
- **Advocacy** > Support recruits and inspires others. What tools can we provide to help them amplify the message?

Gender Abuse Victim

**Wife & Mother**

Married, Two Kids,
Works out of Home

Experience Triggers**Types of Abuse**

- Husband beating wife
- Abusing kids
- Sex trafficking

Phase	Awareness	Research & Consideration	Decision & Action	Rebuild Life & Become an Advocate
Victim Situation, Questions & Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can't take it any more. • Can I get help? • Is there a way out? • My kids are in trouble 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do I go to for help? • What will it cost? • Who will find out? • What are my options? • Can I get protection? • What have friends done? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who makes me feel most comfortable? • Who do I trust? • What is the plan? • How will this work? • Will police help me? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's next for me and my family? • What happens to the abuser? • What is my support network?
Victim Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scared • Worried for themselves and family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxious • Hesitant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprehensive • Desperate • Ready 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relieved • Anxious • Hopeful
Key Triggers, Need Signals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spousal abuse • Trafficking • Rape, violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital visit • Lost job due to abuse • Friends/Family intercede 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to police • Kids get abused • Enter program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in program • Advocate to others • Move from abuser
Where are They Getting Information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends & community • General Media • Social Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search engines • Clinic/hospital • Influencers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Org websites & email • Gov't websites • Influencers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to community
Key Channels & Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News stories • Outdoor/bus ads • Display ads • Social Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic & paid search • Helpful websites • Campaign landing page • Friends & family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic & paid search • Call center (in/out) • Social media • In-person meetings • Legal system (sort of) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call center • Organization website • Contact email • Social media • In-person advocacy
Key Metrics & Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions & GRPs • Clicks & CTR • Awareness (survey) • Keyword Searches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response Data • Views & Clicks • Site Visits & Metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific page views • Conversion rate • Contact/Lead rate • # of requests for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of phone calls made • # of talks given • # of people reached • # of people in network
Organization Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aided awareness • Visit website • Search for information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on website • Request information • Understand options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request help • Participate in program • Get protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread the message • Participate in program • Rebuild life in safety

What does advocacy mean to you?

Strategy

How do you approach strategy?

Strategy – One Framework

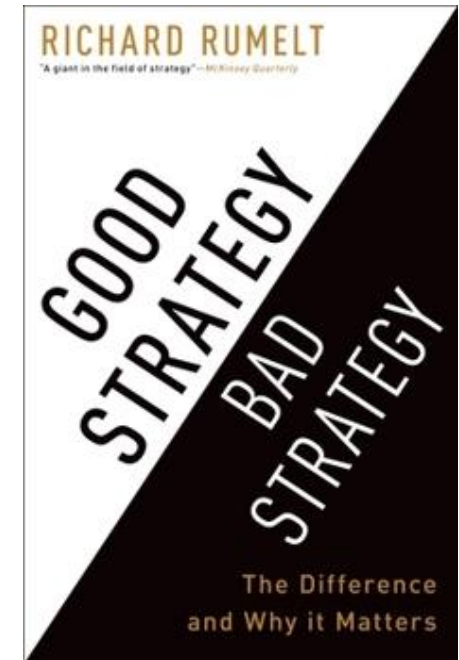
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A good strategy is clear, focused and actionable.

It is built on a deep understanding of the situation and involves a coherent plan for overcoming key challenges.

Developing a strategy

- 1) **Situation Diagnosis** > What is going on? What are key challenges & obstacles?
- 2) **Guiding Policy** > What is the overarching approach to solving the challenges?
- 3) **Coherent Actions** > What are the coordinated steps to execute the guiding policy?



Diagnosis: Identify the Core Challenge

General Advocacy Challenges

- **Noise and misinformation** dominate platforms, reducing the effectiveness of genuine advocacy.
- **Algorithm-driven visibility** can bury meaningful content in favor of viral entertainment.
- **Trust gaps** exist between influencers and institutions or causes, especially in politically sensitive regions.

Middle Eastern Context

- **Censorship or regulatory scrutiny** may limit speech or access to certain tools.
- **Platform access and language barriers** may influence tool choice and effectiveness.
- **Cultural norms** around activism and public discourse differ from Western contexts—family, religion, and national identity play a more prominent role.
- **Audience fatigue** from repeated or shallow campaigns reduces impact.

Strategic Diagnosis:

“Advocacy efforts by Middle Eastern influencers are often diluted by generic messaging, limited access to trust-building tools, and a lack of coherent positioning in environments shaped by cultural complexity and platform constraints.”

Guiding Policy: Create a Focused Strategic Approach

Rather than “raise awareness” in broad strokes, define a *guiding policy* that creates clarity of purpose and guides all actions.

Strong Guiding Policy:

“Empower Middle Eastern social media influencers to become trusted, culturally grounded advocates by focusing on authentic storytelling, narrow issue focus, and high-trust community engagement.”

This policy:

- Encourages **depth over breadth**.
- Builds **personal and emotional resonance** with audiences.
- Respects **regional sensitivities and diversity**.
- Aligns with the influencers’ **personal brands and voice**.

Good Strategy – Align Tactics with Strategy

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Objective	Coherent Action
Build trust	Share personal, culturally relevant stories tied to the advocacy issue. Highlight shared values.
Increase reach with credibility	Partner with local micro-influencers, NGOs, or religious leaders who already have trust.
Focus the message	Limit campaigns to 1–2 tightly defined issues per quarter (e.g. clean water, refugee support, education).
Equip with tools	Train on simple GenAI tools (localized image generation, translation, subtitle AI, summarization for advocacy reports).
Mitigate risk	Use encrypted messaging or non-public platforms for risky coordination; be aware of censorship boundaries.
Create momentum	Use consistent visual style, campaign hashtags, and call-to-actions that translate across Arabic, Farsi, Hebrew, or other regional languages.

Examples of Bad Strategy + Power Tools

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- **“Let’s raise awareness for human rights in the region”**
> Too vague, no leverage, lacks a plan.
- **“We’ll go viral and create change”**
> Wishful thinking, no diagnosis of challenge or plan.
- **“Everyone should post once per week about this issue”**
> Lacks focus, not coherent or tailored.

Bonus: Leverage Strategy Power Tools

- **"Focus on the crux"** > What is the *one thing* stopping progress? (e.g., apathy, fear of repercussions, misinformation?) How do we take action to change this?
- **"Use leverage"** > What advantage do you have? Why are you different? Unique? (e.g., storytelling talent, relationships/connections, platform fluency). How do we highlight that in our content and actions?
- **"Build proximate objectives"** – What immediate, actionable outcome can you achieve in 30 days? (e.g., raise 10,000 signatures, get featured by a known account, connect with 100 micro-influencers). What are the actions to achieve that?

Audience

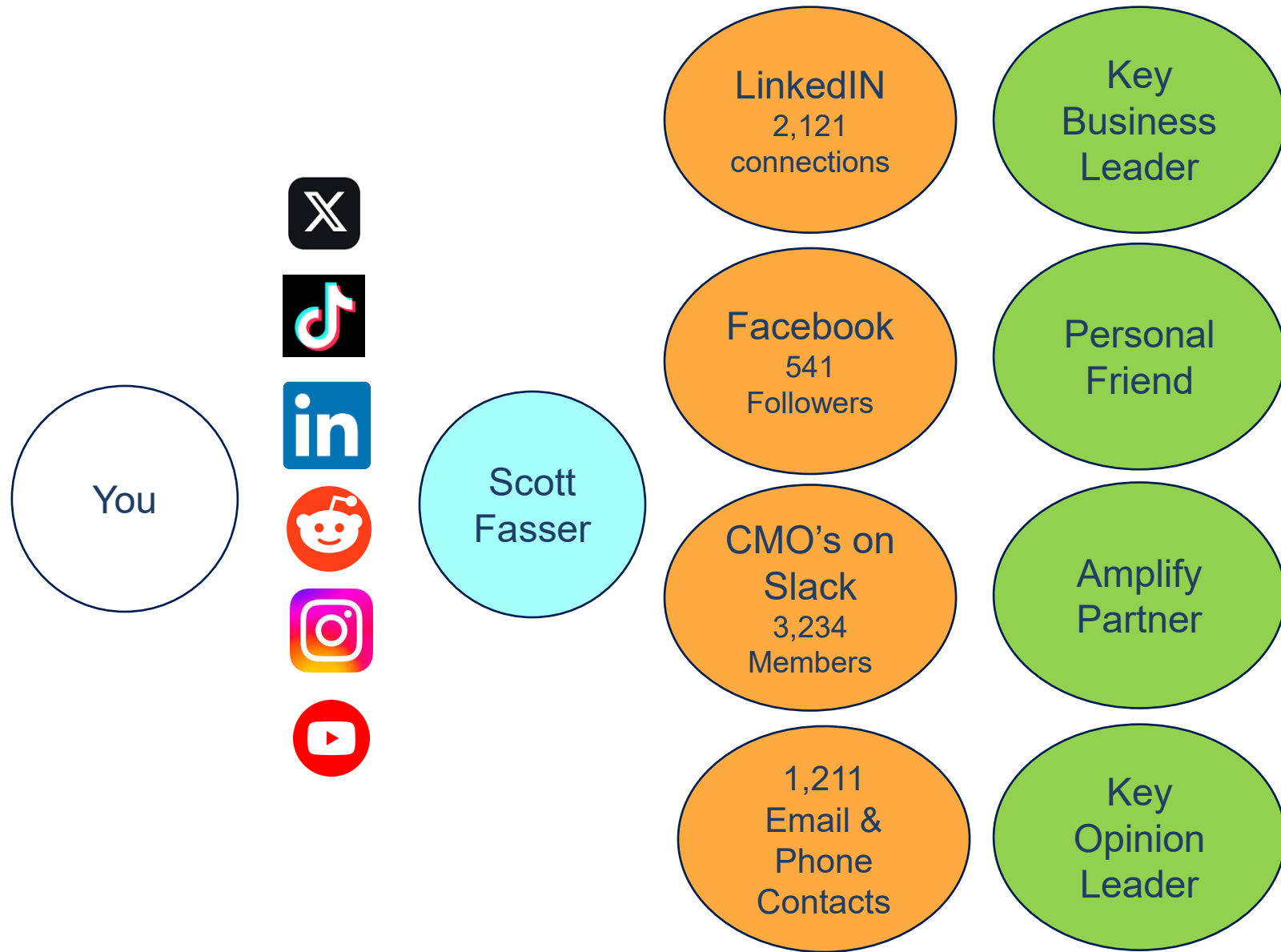
Who is Your Primary Audience?

Who do you need to reach and convert to an Advocate?

Who are the Accelerators?

Audience – Everyone Has Their Own Series of Networks

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Overwhelmed with content

Get information from different sources

Engage on multiple social platforms for different reasons/needs

Care about multiple issues

Part of multiple communities

Inspired to action via multiple triggers

Can introduce you to Accelerators!

Pro Tip

Use audience research tools like Spark Toro to find like minded websites, influencers and advocate partners

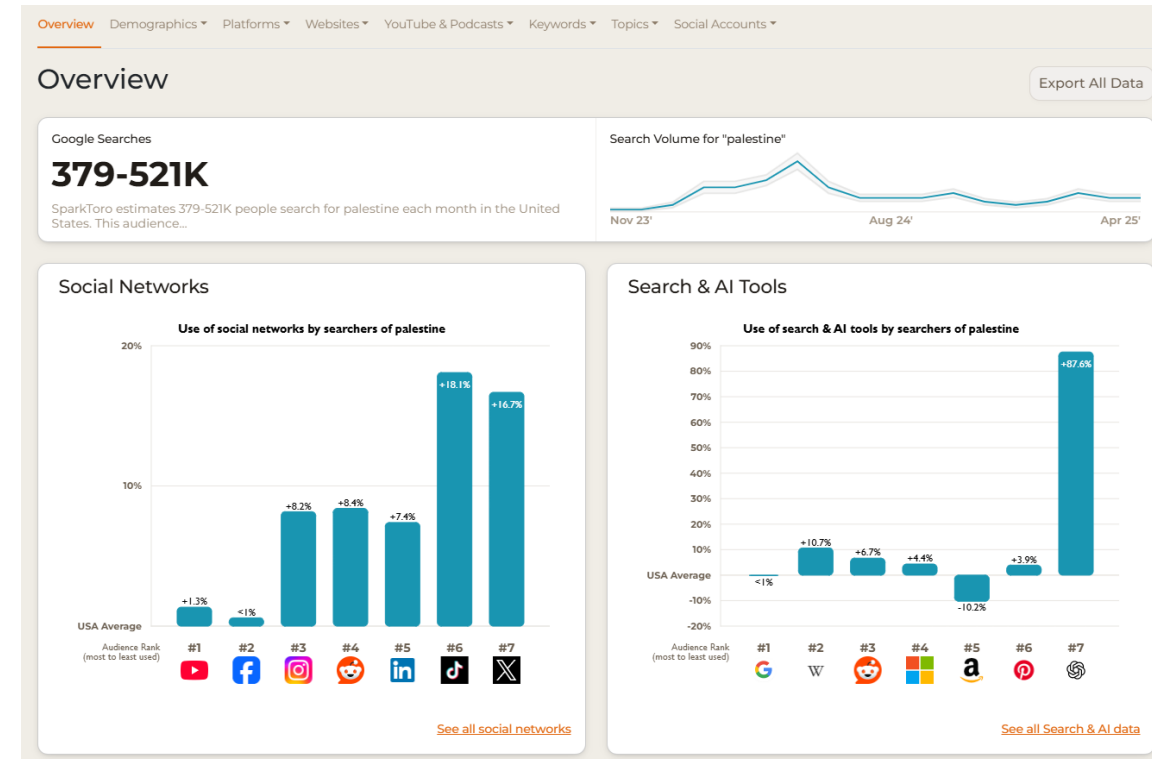
Spark Toro – Tool – Find Your Activists, Pundits, Silent Followers

“Palestine” Key Word Results

- Social Media Platforms
- Search & AI Tools
- Websites – large and small
- Social Media Accounts
- YouTube Channels
- Podcasts
- Affinity Keywords
- Demographics of Accounts

Primary Uses

- Where are people talking about Palestine?
- What keywords are they using?
- What websites are the most active?
- What social media accounts can I/should I reach out to?
- What are the keyword volume trends?
- Which YouTube channels and Podcasts?



Spark Toro – Find Your Activists, Pundits, Silent Followers

Highest Affinity Keywords

pro palestinian countries

official name of egypt

issue with iran

senegal's government

is human rights universal

SubReddits



The Dismal Science

Reddit's largest economics community. Serv read, discuss, and learn more about topics re



World News

A place for major news from around the worl



Political Discussion

Websites

Website	Affinity	Domain Authority	Est. Visits/Month
Pcrf.net	62 ^{/100}	55	67K visits
Amnesty.org	60 ^{/100}	88	1.7M visits
Unrwa.org	60 ^{/100}	70	164K visits
Cfr.org	57 ^{/100}	86	1.5M visits
Middleeasteye.net	37 ^{/100}	82	970K visits
Visitpalestine.com	35 ^{/100}	37	<5K visits

[See all websites](#)

And here are a few hidden gems

Palestinecampaign.org	30 ^{/100}	56	39K visits
Cityofpalestinetx.com	28 ^{/100}	38	5K visits
Arab.org	21 ^{/100}	41	529K visits
Palestineherald.com	18 ^{/100}	55	5K visits

[See all hidden gem websites](#)

Workshop Exercise

Let's build a "Problem to Action" Mini-Campaign

- Break into 3 groups
- Select a social issue relevant to you (examples below)
 - Environmental Conservation
 - Youth Empowerment
 - Cultural Heritage Preservation
- Create a short story board on paper or one of the white boards
 - The Problem: An image or headline representing the issue
 - The Human Face: A personal story or specific individual affected by problem
 - The Audience: Who are you trying to reach with this campaign?
 - Accelerators: What other organizations, networks or influencers can help amplify?
 - The Call-To-Action: A clear, simple action that the Accelerator and the End Audience can take
- Discussion
 - Each group will share their story board and discuss what makes the call-to-action compelling, the accelerators will participate and how it connects to the story.

**Change, when
change is hard**

One Framework for Change

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Logic & Planning

- Clarify the goal › Where are heading? A compelling vision/destination
- What are things that are working? Replicate it.
- Define short term steps. Clear steps reduce decision paralysis.

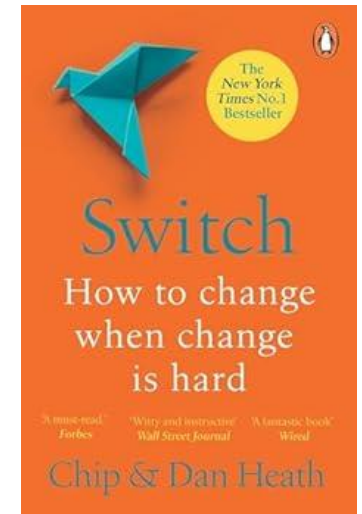
Motivation – the emotional component

- What is the feeling that change will create? Appeal to emotions.
- Break change down to be smaller and more accessible. Feels doable.
- Foster a sense of identity and capability to create lasting change.

Shape the Environment

- What systems can be modified to encourage the right behavior not wrong?
- Build and reward habits. Reinforce desired change with structured routine.
- Showcase the leaders and rally the audience. Social proof of change.

**Change is
HARD and
requires three
key pieces**



Let's Apply These Elements to a Scenario

Advocating for **water conservation in a Middle Eastern city** where water scarcity is critical, but public awareness and engagement are low.

Logic & Planning

Point to the Destination – What is the Vision?

- Visualize the goal with a powerful image: “In 2030, every household has reliable clean water”
- Make it personal and time bound

Find the Bright Spots – What is Working?

- Highlight local communities already succeeding with water conservation. Such as a village that reduced water waste by 30% through reuse and drip irrigation.

Clear Next Steps – Break down conservation into three specific, doable online actions

- Share a short tip on Instagram and TikTok
- Use a campaign hashtag in a story
- Commit to a small behavior change such as “finding and fixing leaks in home”

Let's Apply These Elements to a Scenario

Advocating for **water conservation in a Middle Eastern city** where water scarcity is critical, but public awareness and engagement are low.

Motivation – The Emotional Element

Find the Feeling. How will the change make you feel?

- Share a 30-second reel showing a child carrying water long distances vs playing in a safe neighborhood with water from sink. A relatable human contrast.

Shrink the Change. Describe smaller chunks of work towards the change.

- Position the first step as “easy and quick” – “A few minutes today can save water for your family tomorrow”

Foster a Sense of Identity Towards the Goal

- Frame participation as par of being a “Protector of our Future” or “Water Guardians of Amman/Baghdad/Riyadh”
- Use badges, filters or frames that let people signal their identity online
- Provide shirts, hats or something that signifies they have taken a water saving step

Let's Apply These Elements to a Scenario

Advocating for **water conservation in a Middle Eastern city** where water scarcity is critical, but public awareness and engagement are low.

Shape the Environment

Tweak the Environment

- Partner with influencers or NGO's to create a WhatsApp sticker pack or Telegram GIFS that spread conservation tips.
- Add "conservation challenges" to popular local Facebook groups

Build Habits

- Encourage a weekly #WaterWednesday post or tip-sharing tradition
- Use platform scheduling tools so message appear at high-engagement times

Rally the Audience

- Showcase visible supporter numbers: "12,000 people have pledged to save water this week"
- Feature stories from families, schools or community leaders already participating

What Can You Do to Create Lasting Change?

AI is Revolutionary

The Rise of AI – How Digital Media Companies are Evolving

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AI – Generative AI combined with Machine Learning and Predictive Analytics is redefining how content is created, how audiences are engaged and how revenue is generated.

What's Happening Now

- Tech and consulting companies are laying off workers – especially early career – by using AI instead
- Content creation and streamlining production workflows are increasing volume and velocity of content
 - Attention grabbing headlines are generated and rapidly tested, core text content is written then human edited
- Algorithms are getting super charged by AI and more finely tuned towards engagement and monetization

What's Happening in Near Term

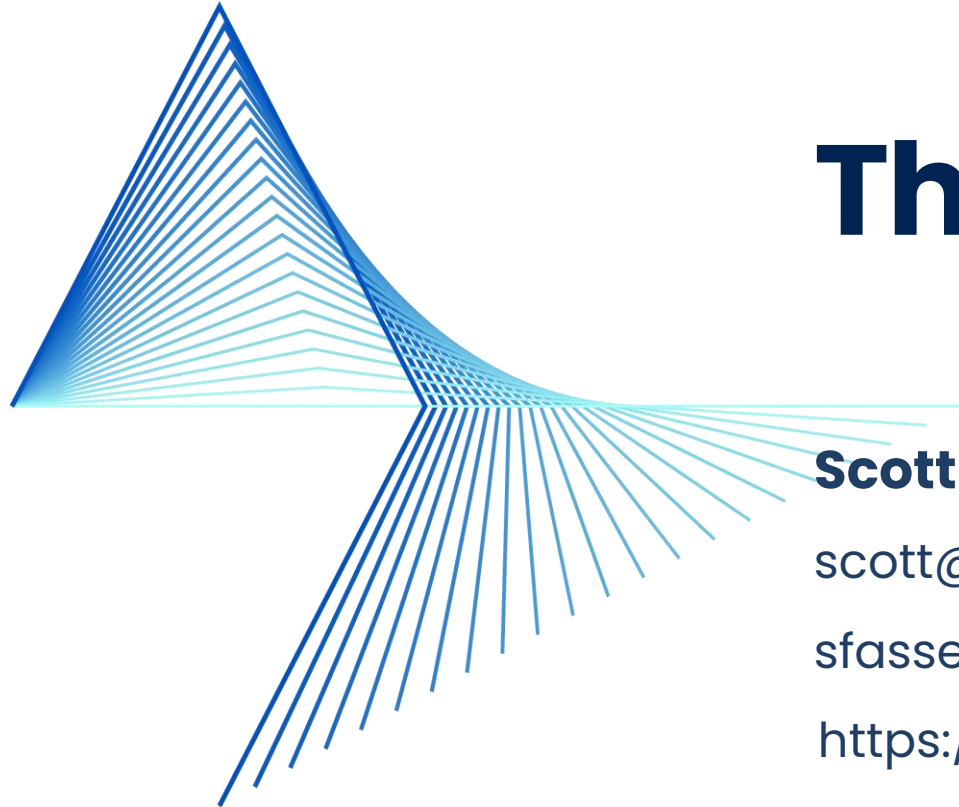
- AI Agents will take over more human tasks and string together multiple systems
- Conversational AI – real-time generation of content is being developed and improved increasing personalization
 - Content creation by AI agents accelerates which includes realistic audio and video – trust may erode
- New business models and end user generated apps will be available as part of platform eco-system

What's Happening Next

- Autonomous systems create new kinds of content and interactions such as the Metaverse
- Fully automated content ecosystems
- Dynamic personalization result in real 1:1 communications between agents and consumers
- New business models enabled by new customer experiences and augmented reality like the Metaverse

**How has AI changed your work today?
What about tomorrow?**

- Change is our only constant > be comfortable in a constant state of change
- The change you WANT doesn't just happen > you have to plan and make it happen
- Every narrative needs a clear call-to-action and a system to support the decisions
- Authenticity, Community and Being Human are your most powerful assets
- Social media influence can come from both the top (media company ownership) and bottom (many voices with similar message across audiences)
- Technology will continue to evolve, get smarter and offer opportunities to reach more people with key messages and calls-to-action



Thank You!

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McKinsey Advocacy Map

1. Position Development – Define cause and objectives.
2. Educating Policymakers – Provide data, context, and human stories.
3. Grasstops Mobilization – Engage influencers and leaders.
4. Grassroots Mobilization – Activate community participation.
5. Electoral Engagement – Where applicable, connect with civic processes.
6. Media Engagement – Shape public opinion via targeted media.

Needs-Based Audience Segmentation

- Activists – Highly engaged, ready to act.
- Pundits – Opinion leaders and commentators.
- Quiet Followers – Supportive but less vocal.

Tip: Tailor message tone, content, and call-to-action to each segment.

AI in Advocacy – Opportunities & Risks

Opportunities:

- Speed & scale in message creation.
- Hyper-personalization for different audience segments.
- Narrative reframing for cultural context.

Risks:

- Misinformation and deepfakes.
- Ethical concerns with undisclosed synthetic content.
- Access and equity limitations.

Example: Compelling Advocacy Narrative

1. Audience

Urban youth (18-25) in Amman

Value: community pride, cultural heritage

Online: Instagram, TikTok, YouTube

4. Action

Action: Share the video with 3 friends and use hashtag #HeritageHeroes

Can be done today

Impact: Track hashtag use and shares

2. Message

Key Idea: 'Our heritage is our future'

Short Statement: 'Preserve the past, empower the future.'

5. Emotional Hook

Emotion: Pride + urgency

Story: A young artist restoring traditional murals in their neighborhood

3. Medium

Platform: Instagram Reels + TikTok

Format: Short 30s video with music, visuals of historic sites