

Decision Making represents an important contribution to the study of judicial behavior. The merging of case law analysis and statistical modeling sheds important light onto the complex, nuanced process of Supreme Court decision making. Rather than succumbing to the temptation of offering a “one-size-fits-all” approach, Pacelle, Curry, and Marshall not only take on many of the difficult challenges associated with explaining judicial behavior, they embrace them. Scholars of judicial politics would be well served to follow their lead.

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Digitally Enabled Social Change: Activism in the Internet Age by Jennifer Earl and Katrina Kimport. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2011. 272 pp. \$32.00.

In this fascinating new book, Jennifer Earl and Katrina Kimport take up the compelling question of whether Internet-based mobilization simply allows activists to “supersize” their efforts by enhancing the scope and speed of organizing, or whether it signals fundamental changes in the social processes related to political mobilization. *Digitally Enabled Social Change* draws from a systematic analysis of a random sample of Web sites promoting electronic tactics (e-tactics) and e-mobilization to test whether the Internet has transformed activists’ “repertoire of contention” (p. 16–17) and other dynamics related to political organizing. Their quantitative study is supplemented with interviews of Web site organizers.

The analysis of how activists take advantage of the possibilities of the Web centers on the concept of “technological affordances,” or “the actions or uses a technology makes easier” (p. 32). The authors assess how well different activist Web sites leverage these affordances. The authors compare different types of Web sites—such as those that serve as “warehouses” for electronic petitions and other e-tactics, those linked to a particular social movement organization or campaign, or those created and maintained by one or two individuals. They also compare sites that host e-tactics with those that simply link to other Web site hosts, and their investigation yields sometimes subtle yet instructive differences among these sites.

The results support both the “supersize” theory of Internet activism and the “theory 2.0” argument that some fundamental change is unfolding. For instance, reduced costs of activism alter the biographical constraints on potential activists, thereby expanding the possible pool of activists and organizers. Also, reduced organizing costs and the decentralized character of the Web appear to make formal organizations less essential to political mobilization than in the past. Electronic activism takes on a larger range of issues and is less connected to existing social movements than other forms of activism.

The implications of these trends are considered in the book’s closing chapters, and the authors raise some important ideas about whether the rise of

Internet activism produces ideologically thin forms of activism, and whether it can sustain activist involvement over time. Do the reduced costs of e-activism help cultivate decentralized social movement leadership?

This is a well-researched and important study that draws from a nuanced understanding of the social movement literature, and it raises some important questions about how technological change affects our basic assumptions and concepts. For instance, the authors argue that we need to rethink concepts like “collective action,” since e-tactics are both collective and private actions. Since co-presence of activists is not required for Web-based collective action, our research and theorizing may be more aptly labeled “protest” rather than “social movement” studies.

My only disappointments were with the book(s) these authors didn’t write. Since the research ends in 2006, the authors have not explored how social media such as Facebook have affected political organizing. In addition, much more can be said about the interface of technology, social change mobilization, and identity. For instance, I would have liked to see these authors relate their findings on identity and individualized forms of activism to Paul Lichteman’s notion of “personalist politics” (*The Search for Political Community: American Activists Reinventing Commitment*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996) or to Robert Wuthnow’s exploration of how modern institutions affect social ties (*Loose Connections: Joining Together in America’s Fragmented Communities*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). A discussion of the implications of economic inequalities and demographic variation in Internet access as well as a consideration of the transnational dimensions of Web-based activism would be welcome additions to the conversation this book has begun.

In sum, with this path-breaking assessment of how technology impacts our thinking about movements, Earl and Kimport have laid the foundation for some fascinating new areas of research. The most-profound work will carry on the quest to discover whether and how changes in political action repertoires are linked to broader social and institutional as well as technological changes. I hope to soon see new work that expands the lens of this book to consider how global-level forces are implicated in these changes, including how technological and political changes affect both states and political mobilization.

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Mass Informed Consent: Evidence on Upgrading Democracy with Polls and New Media by Adam F. Simon. Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011. 238 pp. \$49.95.

Adam F. Simon believes that “sample surveys are the finest democratic technology yet devised...” (p. 1). If pollsters faithfully convey an issue and present