

You Can Inspire Others Too!

Doing good and inspiring others to do the same has never been easier than now

Would you ride a *tuk tuk* across India for charity?

That was what British twin brothers Jack and Finn Harries and their friends did. Sharing their adventures on YouTube [videos](#), which have received more than 4 million views, they raised more than US\$177,000 and much awareness for the Teenage Cancer Trust in the United Kingdom.

The internet has changed not only the ways we work, learn, communicate and play. It has also transformed the ways we do good and help others.

Anyone with an internet connection and a smartphone – teenagers like you too – can raise awareness of meaningful causes and social injustice. We can write blogs, make videos and take pictures, and post them on social media. When like-minded friends and followers like, share and retweet, our message goes viral and touches even more people, not just locally but around the world too. With the help of the internet and digital technologies, we can reach out to a large audience more quickly with less physical effort and at much lower costs.

In other words, doing good and inspiring others to do the same has never been easier than in this digital age. Beyond information searches, entertainment and communication, the internet offers you opportunities to make a difference to the world around you. If you feel strongly about something, whether it is the environment, animal or children's welfare, or the underprivileged, take up arms – no, *roll over your mouse* – now and advocate positive change. You can inspire others online too; here's how.

INSPIRING OTHERS

An activist campaigns to bring about change. As a digital activist, you can make use of the internet and digital technologies to champion your cause, drive your message, and inspire and help others.

- **Spread the word:** Set up a blog and write about harmful effects of sharks' fin consumption; film videos and tell the stories the rural poor in Cambodia who do not have access to clean water; share the auto-generated status about the donation you have just made to a children's charity on Facebook. Concerned about the negative impact of cyberbullying? Set up a Facebook page to support victims and encourage people to post only positive messages.

Digital tools such as blogs, online videos and social media help you to raise awareness, tell stories, educate your audience and shape their opinions and call them to action. When they are inspired and persuaded by your message, they will be moved to take action, digitally or offline.

- **Organise initiatives:** Planning an exhibition on animal abuse or a mass recycling event with a group of like-minded friends? Video chats, email, and instant messages through mobile apps such as WhatsApp and LINE can help you communicate and organise actions.
- **Take action:** Even if you don't initiate social campaigns or volunteer time and physical effort offline, there is much you can do online: sign petitions, share videos or statuses, donate money and change your Facebook avatar, in support of causes. When supporting social causes, as for everything you do, exercise critical thinking, do your research and evaluate any call to help spread messages or donate funds. Don't fall prey to scammers and conmen.
- **Post positive messages:** You can also inspire others simply by focusing on the positive in your social media posts. Write encouraging messages on your Facebook or Twitter feed, and spread positive stories and news. Rants and gripes serve only to feed and grow the negativity. Take a stand and speak up against injustice or hurtful behaviour such as cyberbullying.

WHAT TOOLS CAN I USE?

The following are some digital tools you can use to talk to many more people at any one time and enable your messages to go viral.

- **Social media:** Social networks such as Twitter and Facebook have made it easy for you to spread your message, campaign for support, call supporters to action and more.
- **Websites and blogs:** Think of these as your own online newspapers and magazines for your audience.
- **Videos:** Revealing emotions and tugging at the heartstrings, videos are one of the best mediums to tell stories and engage your audience.
- **Mobile messaging apps:** You can get your message across to your audience through text messages, videos and pictures via these powerful tools.
- **Online petitions:** Avaaz.org, Change.org and MoveOn.org are online petition platforms and activist networks that allow you to communicate with a worldwide audience and get them to

pledge their support. These sites let you start online petitions and offer inspiring stories of what online activism can achieve.

- **Crowdfunding platforms:** Raise money for your cause or event through crowdfunding. Crowdfunding platforms such as [GIVE Asia](#), [Indiegogo](#), [Kickstarter](#) and [Crowdrise](#) can potentially help you reach a large number of public supporters who can then pledge their contributions to your initiative online.

ME, A SLACKTIVIST?

Some say that taking digital actions – signing online petitions, liking and sharing posts and the like – merely encourages [slacktivism](#) and results in little real outcome. Some studies have shown that slacktivism lowers the urgency to donate, while others have found that slacktivists tend to contribute more meaningful actions to a cause than non-slacktivismists. The jury is still out, but think about this: If not for slacktivists and their clicks, many causes will go unnoticed by others, including the media and policymakers. Slacktivism may be the first step to active engagement in social causes for many. So go ahead, find out more about causes, help spread their messages online, and you may even do more for them in the real world down the road.

MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE

As a teenager, you may not have a lot of resources. Fortunately, you have the internet and digital technologies at hand. The internet is not only for passive browsing, information, entertainment and casual communication; it has the power to help you reach out to and mobilise a wider audience quickly and effectively. Take advantage of it to spread your message and rally support for your cause, and you can make the world a more positive and better place.

BE INSPIRED!

[Do Something](#)

This United States-based non-profit's website has lots of ideas and how-tos for teens to take action for causes of all kinds, from bullying and violence to discrimination and human rights.