

Digital Protest Safety and Secure Organizing

Video Transcript

00:00:03:03 - 00:00:05:06

Riley

There you go. I grew up, most.

00:00:05:06 - 00:00:30:21

Riley

Of my life in Thunder Bay. Until I moved to Toronto for university. I did my undergrad in political science and indigenous studies, and I'm now doing my PhD in, political science and indigenous studies and specifically, looking at the role that youth play in social movements and, movement politics. So that's my area of expertise and what I spend most of my days doing.

00:00:30:23 - 00:00:56:04

Riley

And I've also, been, community organizer and somebody interested in organizing spaces since I was a teenager. I sometimes think about, like, I was lucky to have, like, parents who were very involved in, like, their local unions when I was younger. And so this was like, since I was like a kid, I remember, like, being on the picket lines with my parents and stuff like that, as, like this kind of first entry point into organizing.

00:00:56:06 - 00:01:02:21

Riley

And I also grew up in a time when, like, everybody was getting their first Facebook accounts at, like 12 years old.

00:01:02:23 - 00:01:08:13

Riley

And everything like that. So not quite like an iPad kid era, but like, just before it.

00:01:08:15 - 00:01:08:20

Riley

And.

00:01:08:20 - 00:01:09:15

Riley

So I feel.

00:01:09:15 - 00:01:32:00

Riley

Like of a lot of these like, folks, this, almost a bilingualism right of like, I remember a world pre internet and pre social media in the way that we have it now. But also have had to learn and, and see how it's evolved to take such a huge part of our lives and our thinking and how it, intersects with things like organizing, like I've mentioned, I'm so interested in.

00:01:32:00 - 00:01:53:02

Riley

So, that's a little bit about me and what gets me here. I'm going to share, some slides with you. I was telling Sarah when they started that, I found these templates, called digital nostalgia. And so I was thinking back to that, like. Yeah, 2011, when Facebook era, Microsoft at its beginnings.

00:01:53:02 - 00:01:54:19

Riley

And I was like, it's perfect.

00:01:54:19 - 00:02:20:18

Riley

So, that this slide template, if you're wondering, and what I figured we're going to do today, is start like very, very basic. I know that there's people coming in this room with, like, varying levels of expertise. And also the team at platform mentioned to me that some of the folks that were interested in this sort of programing, are starting at like the very basics and like, want to, to build from there.

00:02:20:22 - 00:02:39:24

Riley

So we're going to start, like I said, I think at the beginning. And then if folks throughout have like, want to take the conversation in a different direction or maybe have a question that goes beyond the scope of what I'm giving here, I'm more than happy to also talk about that together and figure out, if we can dig into something that's more relevant for people.

00:02:40:01 - 00:03:05:11

Riley

But to start, this is what I was thinking is I want to have a conversation about three areas related to digital safety and security, and then we can go from there. So one is just an overall conversation about digital hygiene, which I will explain more thoroughly. And try and think about like how could we each create a digital hygiene checklist for ourselves?

00:03:05:13 - 00:03:31:11

Riley

A lot of this, advice that I'm going to hopefully leave you with today is about how you can build routines and practices into your daily life that makes you more secure in the internet and also makes, being in this online world less dull. A daunting because you've regularized some of the protections for yourself. So starting with digital hygiene, and moving into ethical engagement.

00:03:31:11 - 00:04:03:19

Riley

And so Sarah, at the beginning was also mentioning about I want to talk about that a little bit there, how AI is changing our online landscapes and how we can maybe engage with that more ethically, if it's possible at all. And also about, mental health as a form of security on the internet and burnout and feeling, the stress that comes with surveillance and anxiety and feeling like you have to be online all the time as another form of safety that I don't think, often gets talked about in the same way as we do.

00:04:03:19 - 00:04:07:04

Riley

Like, you have to two factor authenticate things, you know?

00:04:07:06 - 00:04:08:11

Riley

But I think it's still is.

00:04:08:11 - 00:04:20:17

Riley

Still pretty integral. So that's the plan. And like I said, if at any point, not even just at the Q&A, you want to maybe pause or, stop and say something or you're like, Riley, you're talking way too fast.

00:04:20:17 - 00:04:22:13

Riley

Or whatever it might be.

00:04:22:15 - 00:04:28:24

Riley

Just throw up a hand or throw it in the chat, and I'll, keep an eye out there. So with that.

00:04:28:24 - 00:04:30:23

Riley

Said, let's get.

00:04:30:23 - 00:04:56:02

Riley

Started. And I wanted to start with a question, because I think it's first important to establish, that, that online organizing, while, while people have different feelings about it and some of them, some people question the importance of online, online spaces and the actual impact that online spaces can have in organizing practices.

00:04:56:04 - 00:05:22:18

Riley

I do think that there are a lot of values to it, and I think I'm sure people who showed up today also think that. And so I wanted to, like, ground us by asking like, can we think of our earliest memories or an impactful memory of being politicized by an online space? And how the internet has maybe interacted with your own, sort of organizing practices, if it has.

00:05:22:20 - 00:05:36:10

Riley

Anybody feel free to type it out in the chat or just shout it out. I was asking my sister this if I this maybe springs anything to to people's minds. And she mentioned Kony 2012.

00:05:36:10 - 00:05:47:13

Riley

Do you remember this? Everyone. Right. And I know like, there's a lot of stuff that came out after about, about the guy who created that movement and, you know, whatever. But I.

00:05:47:13 - 00:05:49:00

Riley

Think for a lot of people, that was.

00:05:49:00 - 00:05:49:12

Riley

A super.

00:05:49:12 - 00:06:14:19

Riley

Early memory of like YouTube and it was YouTube and Facebook and like all of these social media platforms that, really mobilized and spread awareness and like, translated to donations and, offline sort of awareness campaigns. And it was, certainly, I think a political moment for folks. In the chat, I see, I remember the days of forums where people were talking about the Iraq war.

00:06:14:20 - 00:06:39:11

Riley

Nice. Yeah, totally. And I think Reddit still is like another forum esque space, right? Where people are still engaging in conversation, long form conversation, often, more so than just like the picture bites that we see on something like Instagram or the 140 characters on X or Twitter or whatever. So yeah, that's great. Tumblr. I remember a lot of getting my news back in the day from Tumblr.

00:06:39:12 - 00:06:42:16

Riley

When I was in high school.

00:06:42:18 - 00:06:49:18

Riley

For me, it's early Facebook talk about provincial and federal elections. Things seemed easier than for real.

00:06:49:18 - 00:06:55:02

Riley

For real. This is great.

00:06:55:04 - 00:06:57:15

Riley

This is very tough for me to remember. Maybe something from.

00:06:57:15 - 00:07:01:11

Riley

Myspace. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I'm trying to think about a.

00:07:01:11 - 00:07:06:06

Riley

Specific Myspace related art. Related commentary.

00:07:06:06 - 00:07:09:20

Riley

I might remember. Yeah.

00:07:09:22 - 00:07:45:18

Riley

So I think it might take a second to recall these moments in time. But part of the reason it is also so difficult is because, like, like I've mentioned, the internet has become such a regularized part of our lives that, like, and we do get so much of our news there, and that we build these communities that inform us and whose work we follow and all of those things that, we forget that at one point in the time it was like, you know, this very brand new, sort of way of, of engaging people, and for organizers to take up this tool, oh, rise up, rise up email list before the

00:07:45:18 - 00:08:05:16

Riley

days of Facebook, I remember there's two, more recent I played Mario Kart online, and I've seen a lot of usernames of manga or from, yeah, video games as like a whole other separate thing about it. I didn't know Mario Kart was having this this happen, but I feel like I remember my little brother, for example, playing like Fortnite.

00:08:05:16 - 00:08:06:04

Riley

And.

00:08:06:04 - 00:08:07:05

Riley

And that being, you.

00:08:07:05 - 00:08:09:05

Riley

Know, something that would happen there in.

00:08:09:05 - 00:08:49:00

Riley

The media. Okay, I love this reminiscing. So, yes, I think we can all agree that we have been impacted by online, political work and political activism. And so what is the point of online organizing? How does it connect us to traditional activism? It's not just about accumulating follower counts on a social backdrop. I think that online organizing is about facilitating collective action and the internet is just one tool in, activists toolbox, right?

00:08:49:02 - 00:09:17:05

Riley

It's one that's important. And it's one that is, you know, that has many facets to it. But it is not in and of itself social action, though we can use it for social action. And I think that there are many sort of, values that we can strive to uphold when we organize online in order to make that to make the most out of this tool that we have.

00:09:17:07 - 00:09:34:10

Riley

So one and I think that this is like a common conversation people have these days is like when you're in online spaces, are you there? Because you're actually trying to mobilize people, or are you there for some level of performance or social clout? Like, I feel like this is a debate that I see again and again.

00:09:34:12 - 00:09:55:03

Riley

Even, as you know, maybe recently or as prominently in my mind as, like, the Black Lives Matter summer and, you know, the black squares that were on Instagram and people for a lot of people, this was them trying to say I'm engaging in a form of online collective action. But then there was a whole bunch of debates about the performance versus the non performance.

00:09:55:05 - 00:10:22:05

Riley

And so we continue to have that conversation. But in general, seeing the internet for what it is, is a tool. Also strategy that just like any other tool, we have to use it strategically. Sometimes it makes the most sense, sometimes it doesn't. And that is, I think, the backbone of, of all forms of activism and all the mediums that we have to use it with and that we use it for a specific goal.

00:10:22:05 - 00:10:42:03

Riley

And the strategies help us reach those goals. But ultimately we should be trying to achieve something, more so than just like wanting to have commentary on something, right? And so these are some of the things that come up for me when I think about, like, how can the internet be a meaningful place and what are some of the things that we have to do to make it a meaningful place?

00:10:42:03 - 00:11:00:18

Riley

I don't know if anything else stands out for folks, like when you see a post and you're like, I feel like that's important versus like, is this just fluff on my feed? You know, is there anything that folks reflect on that way?

00:11:00:20 - 00:11:10:10

Riley

If not, that's okay to you?

00:11:10:12 - 00:11:32:23

Riley

Like, I can give a second in the chat and come back to it as well. So, with that all in mind, the importance of, social media and the internet as a tool established, here are some of the things again, I want to talk about in being safe while using this tool. So the first is digital hygiene.

00:11:33:00 - 00:11:57:21

Riley

Digital hygiene is basically a practice of, of, keeping your online worlds, in check so that you can build security, create, sufficient privacy controls for you, and essentially not have this tool work against you for the benefit of, of bad actors. More to that point, I love this, like retro Club Penguin get off.

00:11:57:22 - 00:12:05:08

Riley

Like, transparent. I found I was really sent to a place when I found it. So what is digital hygiene?

00:12:05:10 - 00:12:06:22

Riley

According to the Canadian Internet.

00:12:06:22 - 00:12:10:14

Riley

Registration Authority, digital hygiene is this big.

00:12:10:14 - 00:12:35:09

Riley

Catch all term for any sort of practice or behavior related to cleaning up and maintaining your digital world. And so there's a very long list of things that we can all do to improve our digital hygiene. And some of these probably seem intuitive to a lot of people. But as much as, like I'll say, even though they are intuitive to me and I maybe know I should be doing that, do I always actually regularly do.

00:12:35:09 - 00:12:39:01

Riley

These things to keep my digital worlds clean?

00:12:39:03 - 00:13:10:00

Riley

Not always, I'll admit. So reviewing all of the privacy and account settings for the services that we use online so that we can ensure that we aren't willingly giving away information that we don't have to you. I think until you do that, I think there was on Instagram was I saw an infographic going

around a couple of months ago where they were like, you know, you can opt out of a lot of, the targeted ads they might give you, for example, or, some data collection measures that they have.

00:13:10:02 - 00:13:29:24

Riley

But we don't always take the time to go and look through those things. And limit what we're willingly giving away to, like, these big corporations. And so that's one big thing for sure. This is where I have my club penguin coming in is deleting all of your old accounts. I don't even want to think.

00:13:29:24 - 00:13:34:12

Riley

About all of these old inactive accounts and things like that that I.

00:13:34:17 - 00:14:15:21

Riley

Have floating out on the internet. But that I think I it would be somewhat easy, at least for me to go through, and try and eliminate these, like, old lives, basically that I've had on online. Right. And because, a lot of folks that we're talking to right now who also like me. The internet came into their lives during this, like, really young stage of development is that there's a lot of things on there that, like, we definitely forget about, that we created when we didn't have a full consciousness about what internet safety is or what even the internet would turn out to be in the way that it has,

00:14:15:23 - 00:14:48:00

Riley

that we should really be, I think, more conscientious of, and of course, practicing password protecting not just your devices and your accounts, but also your files and stored information. And with that, I want to add specifically related to protest safety. Is that, there's been a lot of calls recently, for folks to eliminate, for example, the bio medical information that you put, as a way to, protect your devices.

00:14:48:00 - 00:15:14:04

Riley

So, like, for example, if anybody has a MacBook, you probably know you can put like your fingerprint on it, right, turn it on or off or like if you're iPhone and you can use facial recognition to turn it on or off. In a lot of places, for example, if you, if you get arrested at a protest and somebody, the police or a police officer takes your phone, for example, it's very easy for them to just, like, hold it up to your face and have access to that.

00:15:14:04 - 00:15:40:15

Riley

Right? As opposed to if you didn't have those sorts of facial recognition or fingerprint recognition, tool set up, things that we've set up for the convenience of ourselves but don't actually necessarily protect our safety specifically if we're doing like more, more challenging work. So a call to remove, facial and finger and all of those sorts of forms of recognition has been going around.

00:15:40:17 - 00:15:49:03

Riley

I'm sorry. Neopets. Have a hotel. Yes, I love these. I was talking to.

00:15:49:05 - 00:15:53:22

Riley

My partner about this, and they were like, wow. Like I forgot about Neopets. I was like a Neopets czar.

00:15:54:00 - 00:16:00:22

Riley

I think on there when I was younger. And I'm like, you got to go delete that. So,

00:16:00:24 - 00:16:26:08

Riley

Yeah. So these are just some things that I can think of, as we're going through and we're going to talk more about digital hygiene in a second. But like, maybe if you can think either for yourself or feel free to put it in the chat, like other things, other general digital hygiene practices, that are good to have on our radar, that people, you know, might again know to do but don't actually prioritize it in their day to day life.

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Riley

Feel free to add those out there. So why is it important? The benefits of the internet are Bountiful. Yes, but the basis is that we are always working against bad actors. And that could be. Yes, like individuals who use the web for nefarious use or individuals and organizations. People who dox people who want to get your personal information for their own, their own devices.

00:16:55:21 - 00:16:56:15

Riley

Yes.

00:16:56:17 - 00:16:57:22

Riley

Or just more.

00:16:57:22 - 00:17:18:17

Riley

Certainly and more generally is the fact that a lot of the the internet is monopolized and that the people that own much of the internet and most much of the internet infrastructure, they don't work for us. Right? They work for profit. They work for their, shareholders. And they inevitably mediate so much of our interactions.

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Riley

And so, with that assumption in place, it's really important that we, do what we can to protect ourselves despite the inevitability of working with this in this imperfect system. And in that way, isn't the internet kind of, like, just like this one microcosm of our larger world? Right? Like where so much of our interactions in our daily life are mediated.

00:17:41:08 - 00:18:00:11

Riley

We know by bad actors, by, the for profit corporations we rely on and work for, for governments that, don't always seem to have the best interests of their constituents in mind. The internet is no different. And so in the same way that we take precautions in our daily life, it's important to think about the internet.

00:18:00:11 - 00:18:00:18

Riley

As a.

00:18:00:18 - 00:18:04:21

Riley

Physical space, right, where that also can take place.

00:18:04:23 - 00:18:06:16

Riley

00:18:06:18 - 00:18:08:14

Riley

From yesterday's workshop labs.

00:18:08:14 - 00:18:09:14

Riley

00:18:09:16 - 00:18:24:24

Riley

Mirror share the importance of doing regular updates to your devices, if you're able. And as often as there are security patches, I had no idea. Yeah, that's a great point. Not just accepting all cookies and visiting a website. Yeah, I don't know how many times I just like. Yeah, get it off my screen.

00:18:24:24 - 00:18:31:06

Riley

You know, the up. But it's bad. It's bad practice.

00:18:31:08 - 00:18:53:14

Riley

Another one. I think it's going to come up here, but it's like regularly going through your emails and like unsubscribing from these things that you might not have even remembered giving your contact information away to. But that's another thing that I do regularly turning off your mic and camera from apps when you're not using it. Yeah, being aware of surveillance from Google while using Chrome.

00:18:53:14 - 00:19:12:04

Riley

These are great. And, I know I, my little brother made fun of me, but like, I sometimes put like a little sticker above my camera, right. Just because, like, what? Does it hurt me? Also, to have that there, if nothing other than just, like, out of my mother, layer of protection. Right. Little things like that.

00:19:12:04 - 00:19:25:17

Riley

And I think that they actually have developed, like, you can get them, I can't think of the company off of my top of my head. If anyone has of them. No. But, like, it's like a little clip that you can just, like, put on, to your laptop to do it. So you're not, like, sticker rubbing.

00:19:25:23 - 00:19:28:00

Riley

On it like I was doing.

00:19:28:02 - 00:19:35:00

Riley

But that people, yeah, have created tools to try and help us do that more easily.

00:19:35:02 - 00:19:56:05

Riley

So two ideas I also want to talk about especially, are, first of all, encryption. Some people know about encryption, but if you're like a really, beginner again, to, thinking about digital safety, maybe it's a newer idea. And so we specifically want to look for devices that can support us with end to end encryption.

00:19:56:07 - 00:20:30:16

Riley

And so that's a security feature that helps keep your communication secure. Specifically, end to end is important because, while some, some services offer a level of encryption, they only might do that, like one way meaning, what's it called? What, you send is safe, but not necessarily what you receive. And with either end of those, communications, you can still learn a lot about a person, right, in their interactions, and you can still gain a lot of very sensitive data that way.

00:20:30:18 - 00:20:55:23

Riley

And so, there are, services like signal, I think stands out as a very popular one. There are other Android specific messaging services, especially that you can use. And so you want to ensure that nobody other than those that you're contacting, can see the messages that you're sending. And again, that's a, an especially important thing for organizing when you might be sending out specific details about like, where are you going to meet?

00:20:55:23 - 00:21:19:22

Riley

What are sort of your targets that you want to achieve? And sensitive information that I'm sure a lot of people who are anti your protest would love to have those details on. Right. So it's a it's an important security feature in that way. And like I said just routinized digital hygiene. Can you dedicate it's a at a task it call to us all, myself included.

00:21:19:24 - 00:21:43:03

Riley

But can you dedicate at least an hour every few months to a digital hygiene checklist, unsubscribing, changing your passwords, adding accounts to authenticating apps? Also performing, regular social media and search audits on yourself. This is something that it always like maybe we do secretly for not the red, not necessarily.

00:21:43:03 - 00:21:45:21

Riley

For security purposes, but is something we could do is security.

00:21:45:21 - 00:22:07:11

Riley

Purposes in mind is like, yeah, googling yourself. Look at the apps that you have on your phone, like Facebook and Instagram and all of those, and put your name in there and see what's coming up. My mom did this and she found out that there was like this whole other, like, cryptocurrency account using her name and photo and all of these things, that she, like, they had no followers.

00:22:07:11 - 00:22:25:03

Riley

And like, at this point had, like, no reach or anything like that, but she just, like, had no idea that this was happening until, you know, somebody sent her that DM and was like, hey, I think somebody is using your information for whatever. And it had been an active account, I think, for like six months or something.

00:22:25:05 - 00:22:43:13

Riley

And it was one of those things that if she had just been performing like these, like regular checks, like maybe she could have, either privatized her account sooner or she could have reported it sooner, in any case, had more information that could help her earlier on. So that's, one of the other things I would add to the list.

00:22:43:15 - 00:22:45:13

Riley

00:22:45:15 - 00:22:57:13

Riley

Anything standing out for folks about, digital hygiene or any stories that folks might have of when digital hygiene, helped them.

00:22:57:15 - 00:23:08:14

Riley

We also good times do it.

00:23:08:16 - 00:23:27:11

Riley

Yeah. Sarah, there is some comments in the chat. Also, if you speak, if you raise your hand, I can unmute you. Oh, perfect.

00:23:27:13 - 00:23:39:22

Riley

I think if they're coming through the chat, they might just be going to you. I only see Marsha's as the last one.

00:23:39:24 - 00:23:47:02

Riley

Okay. Oh, good. There we go.

00:23:47:04 - 00:24:14:11

Riley

Are there any password managers you recommend? Yeah. So, like, I know that there are, like, for example, Google and Microsoft has one, but these are sort of the corporations. But we've also been talking about that aren't necessarily, the most trusted with our information. There are some indie ones, that exist out there. But I believe I have on the last slide, actually, I have a full resource slide for you folks at the end.

00:24:14:13 - 00:24:29:17

Riley

So I'll make a note in my brain to remember to point those out specifically. But any level of them, will help. So even even the not so nice like Google and Microsoft ones.

00:24:29:19 - 00:24:30:23

Riley

00:24:31:00 - 00:24:56:14

Riley

There is also this app, a multifactor authenticated authenticator app called duo, that a lot of, like, universities and nonprofits use. So if you're looking for, a multifactor, to set up as well, that can be a helpful one. Yeah, that's another thing is a lot of people don't realize that, like, you can make multifactor authentication for a lot of your things.

00:24:56:16 - 00:24:59:22

Riley

We often only do it when, like for example, our bank makes.

00:24:59:22 - 00:25:00:14

Riley

Us.

00:25:00:16 - 00:25:11:05

Riley

Or like, you know, we have some websites that make us do multi-factor authentication, but it's something that, that we can also set up for ourselves. Often, through some services.

00:25:11:07 - 00:25:16:24

Riley

So that's a good point as well. Okay.

00:25:17:01 - 00:25:45:22

Riley

Maybe I'll move to the next one. And then if anything again pops up for folks, we can circle back. Oh, but first, our digital hygiene. I was quite surprised to see that you that what can be found in face search engines like Pym ise. Oh, that's a great, piece of advice. So going through and looking, through this site to see, like, I guess, that search audit piece, I don't know if there's anything that you found particularly interesting of what you were able to find, Marsha.

00:25:45:22 - 00:25:55:02

Riley

But that's a really cool suggestion.

00:25:55:04 - 00:25:57:01

Riley

Oh, good. I won't put you on the spot to mention where I.

00:25:57:01 - 00:25:58:22

Riley

Also,

00:25:58:24 - 00:26:06:04

Riley

Pictures of myself. Images that with that it thought were of me. Yeah.

00:26:06:06 - 00:26:09:09

Riley

I hope everybody's. I'm sure the next browsers are up in people's.

00:26:09:09 - 00:26:16:22

Riley

Phones right now being like, hey, am I here?

00:26:16:24 - 00:26:21:13

Riley

Oh, here. Thanks, Sarah, for putting in. Also, one of the password managers,

00:26:21:15 - 00:26:30:04

Riley

They're keepass. Cool.

00:26:30:06 - 00:26:30:21

Riley

This is for.

00:26:30:21 - 00:26:52:05

Riley

People important for people who don't want their image online. Absolutely. Yeah. And that's like a huge surveillance point as well. Right. And, so when I'm talking about like, yeah, don't give just your face away to your phone, for example, like, you wouldn't want those images that especially with I can be like propagated and used and, are difficult to control.

00:26:52:09 - 00:27:16:17

Riley

With that said, I think it's also important. As much as you're doing digital hygiene checks on yourself, you're reminding me that is to like, think about the people in your life, especially the closest people in your life, who have some of your information, who have your face on their profile, who have, again, basically a digital presence of you through them and to ensure that they have, safety there to you?

00:27:16:19 - 00:27:34:02

Riley

I know notice that this is also like a practice that's becoming more and more popular in like parents circles, for example, where there's like a growing movement of people to say, like, I don't want photos of my kid online. And like that, that's something that, a lot of people have come to like respect from parents.

00:27:34:02 - 00:27:59:12

Riley

But I also think it makes sense to is a is a fine boundary to uphold like beyond just like child age people to say like, if you don't want your face there, it's become very normalized. To just like take pictures of people and to, to publish things and not necessarily check in with your friends. And so making sure that other people around us also have, consent in digital hygiene is a good practice as well.

00:27:59:14 - 00:28:02:02

Riley

All right. Let's rock.

00:28:02:04 - 00:28:32:14

Riley

So ethical engagement, how do we spend time online in ways that uphold our values? To me this is like a very important piece in terms of the feelings of security in that, like I, I can often find being online overwhelming. I can I'm intimidated, I think, by what I mentioned before, but like the fact that there are so many, bad actors that mediate my online interaction and so having some level of awareness about, like.

00:28:32:16 - 00:28:32:23

Riley

Who.

00:28:32:23 - 00:28:59:13

Riley

Do I want to be in an online space? Where are my limits for what I will engage with and won't engage with, and what are things that I should be skeptical of is really helpful personally? So that's why I have this whole section for you here. And this is from like, a US based nonprofit, but that they have these four pillars of ethical digital engagement, transparency, accessibility, inclusivity, and follow up, and we'll talk more about them.

00:28:59:13 - 00:29:40:05

Riley

But that basically, the the main heart of it all is, is that, to be a really, a strategic and impactful online organizer. It's about, building authentic communities and building trust. And that that's something that gets very lost in, today's online media culture, which is very much about like, clicks and views and shares and, what, you know, actual marketing professionals would call like, vanity metrics, that don't necessarily equate to like a really, meaty community building that actually is responsive and meets goals.

00:29:40:07 - 00:29:51:04

Riley

What does it matter if you have a thousand people who see your things, right? Or you have this many followers if they don't, show up in real ways and tangible ways for your community. So.

00:29:51:06 - 00:29:51:15

Riley

This.

00:29:51:15 - 00:30:06:01

Riley

Is we're getting into more of a, I think, like an organizing ethos here. So first we're going to talk about I, I had this one meme I was going to put here, of Skully.

00:30:06:03 - 00:30:08:03

Riley

And it says, yeah, I use I.

00:30:08:03 - 00:30:10:07

Riley

Actual imagination.

00:30:10:09 - 00:30:11:10

Riley

But it was.

00:30:11:10 - 00:30:15:06

Riley

It made me chuckle. But in any case, I figured this picture got the point.

00:30:15:06 - 00:30:21:18

Riley

Across quite effectively. And so I went, I wrote, like, why is I.

00:30:21:18 - 00:30:48:15

Riley

Harmful in organizing the general advice I'm going to give you here to spoil it, right, is to say that I'm very, very skeptical, and hesitant to use any form of AI when it comes to our online world and especially around organizing. And there are a bunch of reasons for that. So first of all, is that when we're talking about online organizing, we know that having accurate information is very, very important.

00:30:48:17 - 00:31:05:11

Riley

We're we're supposed to be educating people if we're supposed to be spreading awareness. These are core tenants of what online spaces are for. And we just know that AI has been shown to just straight up lie to people. Right? Like ChatGPT does not. You don't. If you check those sources, sometimes they're just, like fully make believe.

00:31:05:13 - 00:31:05:20

Riley

That.

00:31:05:24 - 00:31:41:16

Riley

They don't give you, the answers that you're looking for, things that are peer reviewed. And so for the basis of just having and spreading good information and good knowledge amongst people, there's a problem there. And that's separate from the infrastructure of AI that has a whole bunch of other concerns. Right. Like we're talking more about the water that it takes to cool AI infrastructure, that we know people have to, first of all, artists and, and people whose work is taken by AI and churned out for free, and people who work in, training the AI systems.

00:31:41:16 - 00:32:10:03

Riley

And they are experiencing in many cases, like real PTSD from what they're in, real trauma from what they have to sift through this machine for. So there's a lot of ethical concerns about the infrastructure of AI as well as its outputs. And then this kind of ties into our point about digital hygiene, right? Because if you know anything about AI, you know that it stores all of its user inputs in order to expand its knowledge base.

00:32:10:05 - 00:32:36:18

Riley

And so we shouldn't, in my view, necessarily be giving all of our information willingly away to this device to be stored in, in essentially perpetuity for reasons that we don't know about. And there are companies like OpenAI, anthropic and others who have already committed to working, for example, with the US military and surveillance services, in order to take like these big contracts with the states.

00:32:36:20 - 00:33:15:06

Riley

So, again, these companies are not our friends. And we while AI has been, showing up a lot in, in our daily lives in ways that like we, we maybe didn't consent to, there are still ways that we can avoid further use. And that's what I really want to recommend here. I also know that, for example, Google, you know how when you put it in and it like, shows up now that the first thing is always that like AI piece, there is one of the commands that you can give Google to in the settings to, not have I show up as your first automatic sort of response.

00:33:15:08 - 00:33:28:24

Riley

I can't remember it off the top of my head, and I should have had it in the slide. I don't know, Sarah, if you know what I'm talking about. Amazing. So that'll go in the chat as again, another way to also limit our interaction with with the robot.

00:33:29:01 - 00:33:32:20

Riley

At all friends. Right.

00:33:32:22 - 00:33:40:24

Riley

Oh, amazing. Yeah, I think Sarah's on it for us. Appreciate it.

00:33:41:01 - 00:33:44:23

Riley

Okay.

00:33:45:00 - 00:33:49:19

Riley

Some more ethical considerations.

00:33:49:21 - 00:33:51:04

Riley

Yeah.

00:33:51:06 - 00:33:59:01

Riley

Incredible. Thank you. So Sarah just threw it in the chat. Modify your search URL by adding this, like, code at the end.

00:33:59:03 - 00:34:00:22

Riley

00:34:00:24 - 00:34:29:11

Riley

Some more things I think about when I think about how do we engage online in an ethical way, in a way that actually supports community? One is can you include image descriptions? Can you attach transcripts or closed captions to your work so that people with visual and auditory disabilities can access this information? Just like how in, you know, real world, quote unquote organizing, you have to be really considerate of the accessibility.

00:34:29:11 - 00:34:30:10

Riley
Like the world your.

00:34:30:12 - 00:34:31:02
Riley
The world.

00:34:31:02 - 00:34:50:22
Riley
You want to achieve is the one like you have to action essentially. Right. Like that's kind of an organizing ethos. Is that I think that that also should go for online as well. And that, a lot of applications that we use even in like social, social media, mainstream social media, allow us to do things like in blue Sky, right?

00:34:50:22 - 00:35:17:15
Riley
You can put image descriptions and anything that you post, yourself. It takes two seconds. Instagram has auto captions, zoom has auto captions for you. They're little things that, like, we already might do in many ways that we can, remind ourselves to make an automatic practice. Should you put, And can you put, a trigger warning on information that might be particularly distressing for people to happen to encounter online?

00:35:17:15 - 00:35:30:02
Riley
And they might not have otherwise consented to seeing. One of the things that is like, also my pet peeve that my friends and I talk about is when people put like, trigger warning and then they go into a thing, but they don't say what the trigger is.

00:35:30:02 - 00:35:37:23
Riley
Going to be. It's just trigger warning. And so like, again, being clear and specific and deliberate about our language and.

00:35:38:01 - 00:36:15:09
Riley
What we're putting out there. And then this last one is a big one that I'm going to stick on for a second is can you create a plan for disengaging or reducing your engagement from platforms that we know are run by bad actors? So, for example, when, Twitter now X was bought by Elon Musk, there was this like mass exodus to, other sort of platforms either away from like those like, you know, small post, platforms in general or towards things like blue Sky, and discord, movements from what apps?

00:36:15:09 - 00:36:36:10
Riley
WhatsApp, which is owned by meta, to signal or to other messaging platforms. And so here is kind of just like a really quick, you know, step by step about how we do that in general as a bag, but I think is is hopefully instructive for people not really knowing where to begin. So is one is just first building awareness.

00:36:36:10 - 00:36:57:17
Riley
We need to be aware of the platforms that we support with our engagement and also, that means doing a level of research and committing ourselves to a level of awareness and research, about big

tech, essentially. This is not something that I love. I understand this, I hate reading the tech sections of The.

00:36:57:17 - 00:37:00:15

Riley

Guardian or whatever newspaper I'm reading that day, but.

00:37:00:15 - 00:37:23:15

Riley

I've found out some really important information in even glancing at headlines and doing a specific digs over the years. To realize where I'm giving essentially, you know, with my time and my accounts and all of these things, my money to, once you realize that there is potentially a bad actor that you're engaging with, you can also then ask, are there alternatives?

00:37:23:16 - 00:37:59:13

Riley

This is the second set of research. And if not, how much are you reasonably able to limit your interaction in the meantime? If there is an alternative, you can start to build your new networks in that place. I understand that part of the reason that people use social media and they use these online platforms. Yes, part of it is prefer pleasure, but a huge part of it is about necessity, about being in connection with people, that they otherwise have a really difficult time keeping in contact with, that that's where they share, things like maybe mutual aid requests where they actually, like, need to be able to get these words out

00:37:59:13 - 00:38:29:19

Riley

to people. So I'm not saying like, you're a bad person if you're on Instagram, it's not that, but it's about can we, at least be conscious of, and start to build infrastructure? That isn't so dependent on, on these services. And then the last is just kind of like this continuous, continuous awareness, pay attention to the platforms you move to see how those change and evolve over time, see if new future options arrive.

00:38:29:19 - 00:38:44:01

Riley

Just because there isn't an Instagram alternative at the moment doesn't mean that there ever won't be. And surely if you're thinking about it, other people are thinking about it too. And so building again, this sort of plan for disengagement is.

00:38:44:01 - 00:38:44:06

Riley

Is.

00:38:44:07 - 00:38:58:03

Riley

A piece here. I don't know if anybody else has done a move like this over, the time, but it's it's really, it's really easy, actually. More so than you think it will be in many cases.

00:38:58:05 - 00:39:02:02

Riley

Sorry. My dog's like. Yeah. It's.

00:39:02:04 - 00:39:23:05

Riley

I had a friend, for example, message, group message, a bunch of us about, getting off of WhatsApp. They said, hey, I'm moving away from WhatsApp. I, try to limit my interactions with companies that are owned by meta. And I would really appreciate it if we could talk on an on signal, for example.

00:39:23:05 - 00:39:34:14

Riley

And it caused a bunch of people and people were like, oh yeah, and we're super accommodating to that. And, got a new account and it was like very, very easy. Right. And, it's now where we organize all of our soccer meetings, for.

00:39:34:14 - 00:39:36:18

Riley

Example, instead.

00:39:36:20 - 00:40:06:08

Riley

And it was just one message that, you know, this person mass sent out, but caused this also this ripple effect in, in a positive way. So just, an example. Again, ethical use of the internet doesn't mean amassing engagement. It means engaging. Well, and there's a reason it feels fake when you see, like, mega influencers talk about their followers, like their community.

00:40:06:10 - 00:40:32:23

Riley

It's because community knows each other. Community shows up for each other online and offline where possible. And so I mentioned already sharing mutual aid, citing your sources. There are mechanisms that you can use the internet with to build reciprocity and trust. And you can do those things also without having to give away unnecessary information or becoming enmeshed with people.

00:40:33:00 - 00:40:47:18

Riley

So I'm also in saying this, not suggesting that you give your whole life into the internet so that people trust you. I'm saying that you choose intentionally what interactions you do have online.

00:40:47:20 - 00:40:49:20

Riley

Okay. How are we in it so.

00:40:49:20 - 00:40:52:14

Riley

Far, folks?

00:40:52:16 - 00:40:57:13

Riley

Thumbs up anybody or anything. We want to sit and talk more about.

00:40:57:15 - 00:40:58:06

Riley

Hey.

00:40:58:07 - 00:41:18:05

Riley

Okay. I'm glad. Beauty. So I'm coming up into like the last little section here, plus the resource share. And then we'll have like some time for dialog. So if you have any questions you want to ask, you can also throw them in the chat whenever. And I'll can come back to them at the end section as well.

00:41:18:07 - 00:41:24:09

Riley

Thanks, Alexis. Art. Okay, so big piece.

00:41:24:11 - 00:41:37:02

Riley

Managing and avoiding burnout. We've talked a little bit about like managing your digital safety. Like with the infrastructure of the internet. I would consider ethical engagements like a sense of.

00:41:37:02 - 00:41:40:15

Riley

Like spiritual safety and communal safety.

00:41:40:17 - 00:41:52:05

Riley

And then this last one is managing burnout, which is about like your mental health and often, yes, also your physical health, as another form of safety related to the internet.

00:41:52:07 - 00:41:59:19

Riley

God, please take our phones away. Felt, and.

00:41:59:21 - 00:42:11:06

Riley

I know this picture. What she's like. Got the, like, 1% battery on her. I'm like, it's wild. Layers to this image. How do you distance yourself from the world that is in your pocket?

00:42:11:08 - 00:42:12:13

Riley

Is is a big.

00:42:12:13 - 00:42:21:14

Riley

Question that I have some advice I'm going to tell you. But also, I will let you know in advance that I am in an imperfect practice of these things.

00:42:21:16 - 00:42:31:09

Riley

Do as I say, not as I do. And so let's see what some of that might be. And it's, burnout.

00:42:31:09 - 00:42:33:21

Riley

Is so real in many ways. In this.

00:42:33:21 - 00:42:36:13

Riley

Way, it's also.

00:42:36:15 - 00:43:01:23

Riley

Hard when the source of our drainage is so accessible and can be made to feel so essential. If we're not online, it can be something as small as, like, feeling like you're missing out in the conversation. The social conversation of the moment. I have this happen to me the other day where, for work, for example, I do like a lot of commentary on, like, the news and on TV.

00:43:01:23 - 00:43:18:07

Riley

And so that means my phone's always going off with news alerts, and I feel like I'm always on because staying up to date is part of the job. And then I even, like, I was on, a TV show the other day where they wanted to talk about, you know, that Coldplay concert guy.

00:43:18:09 - 00:43:25:11

Riley

And I hadn't seen it. I had no idea it was even a thing. And everybody was like, oh, my God, you haven't seen this. It's everywhere. And I was like, what?

00:43:25:16 - 00:43:27:11

Riley

I'm in a mad dash scramble to.

00:43:27:11 - 00:43:30:13

Riley

Like, read everything about this and see it.

00:43:30:15 - 00:43:30:22

Riley

And.

00:43:30:22 - 00:43:32:07

Riley

So this is.

00:43:32:07 - 00:43:55:22

Riley

How we again come to be so dependent and this is so essential to our lives in some ways that are avoidable, in some ways that are not. And I think also within activist circles, there's this feeling like if we put our phones down, we are willfully making ourselves ignorant and that we are shutting ourselves off from essential information, and that that is an, an an injustice to our causes.

00:43:55:22 - 00:44:30:22

Riley

Right. And that feeling, is, is one that is really heavy to deal with and I think just perpetuates this cycle of burnout. Once again, I don't I have to believe that it doesn't have to be that way. Right. That you can play a role in online organizing. First of all, that doesn't require social engagement, that you can be online, use these devices without having to be, responsive to every piece of the news cycle and every, message that comes in, in every DM.

00:44:30:24 - 00:44:40:19

Riley

That so much of our organizing, if you've ever planned something online to then translate to in person, you know, happens like how much of the world do you think has changed in a word, doc?

00:44:40:19 - 00:44:46:03

Riley

Like, it's actually probably a lot. And there's a lot of ways that you can engage with it.

00:44:46:03 - 00:45:05:01

Riley

That it's still, you know, for your purposes and for your causes. But again, has limits. And so people I know have taken up, for example, like having, their phone, like applications lock at certain times and lock themselves out of it as like a very, a very direct way of limiting their engagement.

00:45:05:04 - 00:45:06:06

Riley

In specific parts.

00:45:06:06 - 00:45:14:04

Riley

Of the internet. Right. Like, it's not like we they lose their phone, but we recognize the things that especially drain us. It also.

00:45:14:04 - 00:45:14:12

Riley

This.

00:45:14:12 - 00:45:33:09

Riley

The basis of this is that you have to be able to ask yourself, what is my trigger that tells me I'm becoming overwhelmed? That I am becoming, burnt out? I was talking to my friends about this, and she's like a big social butterfly. She's always planning dinners and events for the groups and stuff like that.

00:45:33:15 - 00:46:04:02

Riley

And she said for her, it's when she feels like messaging people back is becoming a chore, is like her sign to herself that she's like, like something's wrong. I need to take a break. I need to recharge. Because I don't often feel this way, or I don't always feel this way when I'm at my best. So it's a question for all of us to ask ourselves, and I don't know if anybody knows off the top of their head or wanted to share, but it's like, what is my personal trigger that tells me I'm overwhelmed.

00:46:04:04 - 00:46:13:07

Riley

I can give you a second to two sets to reflect.

00:46:13:09 - 00:46:14:21

Riley

Like I can't keep up.

00:46:14:23 - 00:46:15:24

Riley

00:46:16:01 - 00:46:21:09

Riley

Like the idea of and, like, looking at the emails and the little red notifications on everything.

00:46:21:09 - 00:46:27:22

Riley

You're just like, oh my God. Yeah, that's fair.

00:46:27:24 - 00:46:51:10

Riley

Yeah, for me, I when I start procrastinating to like things that I would sometimes be so on top of and like have no hesitation doing feel like that they're taking forever. The other part of this ask is, then once I know the things that trigger me, what do I actually need to be able to meaningfully recharge myself?

00:46:51:12 - 00:46:55:16

Riley

I'll share this as, like, also just a piece of, community.

00:46:55:21 - 00:46:56:11

Riley

Advice.

00:46:56:11 - 00:47:16:05

Riley

That I threw out there. But I have yet to come up with a perfect system related to the internet for this, but, to give you an example of what this looks like, I think this, like, what do I need to recharge question and then meaningfully actioning it. So I do a lot of like speaking stuff like this and, a lot of the time it's lovely and fun like this.

00:47:16:05 - 00:47:17:04

Riley

And then some.

00:47:17:04 - 00:47:18:11

Riley

Of the time it's like a.

00:47:18:11 - 00:47:18:24

Riley

Very.

00:47:18:24 - 00:47:42:06

Riley

Corporate or stuffy or like, difficult, in some way engagement. And so what I took to doing a couple years ago is I realized that I was like, oh my God, I leave some of these, some of these spaces, and I'm just so drained I can't do anything for like the next couple of days or like, I'm ruminating on, like, what one ignorant person in the Q&A thing said, you know, forever.

00:47:42:12 - 00:48:03:01

Riley

And, so I was like, okay, if there's I start to build, what I called, like, self-care fees into my invoicing, where I didn't necessarily say it all the time or break it down specifically, but I would just for myself

say, okay, if I'm going to go and do this, am I going to need like a dinner after with my wife to just, like, decompress?

00:48:03:03 - 00:48:18:14

Riley

What would the cost of that be? Am I not going to be able to work the next day because I'm going to be so, like so still caught up in that moment, what would be the cost of a day's missed work afterwards? That I can just rest without feeling the economic pressure? And so it was.

00:48:18:14 - 00:48:18:24

Riley

This.

00:48:18:24 - 00:48:28:21

Riley

This, way I built it for myself in like, one type of engagement, to try and mitigate some of that burnout. Oh, I'm glad folks like the self care fees.

00:48:28:23 - 00:48:30:17

Riley

Yeah.

00:48:30:19 - 00:48:47:06

Riley

And so, yeah, if I think about that, what do I need? I need to be able to, put my laptop away, maybe all together and just, like, not even look at it for a couple days. And how can I create the conditions to do that? That might be my planning in, in a way, to mitigate burnout.

00:48:47:08 - 00:49:13:17

Riley

I'm still working on it in that regard, but there are. So, this is from, this book called The Activist Handbook. And, these are two quotes that I think really, are very sage pieces of advice. And they point out that as with any long term project, you may need a little more than immediate success to sustain your enthusiasm.

00:49:13:19 - 00:49:30:07

Riley

You need perseverance and faith to get through the long, hard time. So that's general activist wisdom, right? Like, is that when when you first come into an issue or a cause? I feel like a lot of people know this, is that you come in and you're hyped up and you're ready to go and you're like, let's fix the.

00:49:30:07 - 00:49:32:23

Riley

World, basically, right?

00:49:33:00 - 00:49:33:15

Riley

And that can.

00:49:33:15 - 00:49:40:24

Riley

Get you going for some time. And then you're like, oh my God, it's years and things are still horrible.

00:49:41:01 - 00:50:07:01

Riley

And that unless you're building yourself a foundation of sustenance, you will burn out very, very quickly. And so they add that successful social change activists learn to be the tortoise rather than the hare. They recognize that looking after yourself and your family is important. And there's, a kind of a climate activist name, to who talks about this a lot.

00:50:07:03 - 00:50:26:11

Riley

They're from, South America. And they said, like, you know, for example, the work that they do is around supporting indigenous women. And as an indigenous woman herself, what does it matter if, the she's, like, beating herself down with this labor? When that's the very thing she's, like, trying to preach to other people, right, is protect indigenous women.

00:50:26:11 - 00:50:41:04

Riley

And she can't even do that for herself because she's dedicated herself to this cause, to the point that it's harming her, and not putting any sort of protections or foundations of sustenance in place, like her mentioning, so this is me beating the nail on the head.

00:50:41:04 - 00:50:43:04

Riley

Again just to say.

00:50:43:06 - 00:50:45:14

Riley

Take your burnout seriously.

00:50:45:16 - 00:50:46:14

Riley

And really.

00:50:46:14 - 00:50:56:20

Riley

Reflect on, like, what it is you need in order to, to move through it. And a good way. Generally, I've given you so much homework.

00:50:56:22 - 00:51:06:11

Riley

I've, I've, I've instructed you to make so many checklists. One of like your values. What type of organizer is do you want to be.

00:51:06:11 - 00:51:24:21

Riley

Vision board it if you must. This will help you decide how you engage with others, how you can use the internet as your tool right to best serve you. It's that strategy piece that we were talking about. I gave you some ethical engagement questions. Are there more ethical tools we can use? Can we make our work more accessible?

00:51:24:21 - 00:51:43:12

Riley

How generally are we building trust online in an authentic way? Avoiding burnout, which we talked about, and digital hygiene? How can we do all of these things? So I just want to take oh, and this is my last reminder and takeaway for myself and all of you. Is that at the end of the day, your Instagram account doesn't organize.

00:51:43:12 - 00:52:05:24

Riley

People organize. And so if this is something that connects us to people, great. But that we have to be aware of, of so many different things like we've been talking about for the last hour or so. And like I mentioned as well, our online roads, like our in-person ones, are inextricable from systems of capitalism, colonialism, other dominating systems.

00:52:05:24 - 00:52:32:00

Riley

Sara started it off this way, right. Talking about colonialism in the internet. And so it's impossible to create a perfectly, effective, ethical, empowering online space. But we we do have best practices, we can develop them, we can share them, and it can make it a lot less daunting to deal with the enormous, enormous sort of, intersections that we're working with.

00:52:32:02 - 00:52:55:19

Riley

So here are some resources. Like I mentioned, I want to point out here, I'm going to go here so that I can click on the links better. But there's a bunch of different things here. So this was one I want to show you first. And so it's a lot of those, it's like a very it's a downloadable, PDF that asks you a lot of those reflection questions, that I was also prompting you to ask.

00:52:55:22 - 00:53:14:06

Riley

Some of them are related to digital safety. Some of them are related to other parts of organizing. But if you wanted to take some time, you know yourself beyond just this workshop to actually do that. Then hopefully this is something that can make you that can make it a little bit easier, for you to get started.

00:53:14:08 - 00:53:16:09

Riley

Another thing here.

00:53:16:11 - 00:53:18:13

Riley

Is the burnout scale.

00:53:18:15 - 00:53:42:04

Riley

And so this is an online quiz from this organization called the Burnout Project that are trying to convince people to take burnout more seriously. And they have, like, all of these different sort of factors that might be related to burnout. Right. And they will you basically do this quiz, and they'll tell you not only, like not just a yes or no.

00:53:42:04 - 00:53:52:17

Riley

Are you, experiencing burnout, but clinically, what that would indicate to them on the level of burnout you're facing, like, are you getting to a place where you might have to start thinking about it, or are you deep in.

00:53:52:17 - 00:53:53:06

Riley

The pits.

00:53:53:06 - 00:54:20:19

Riley

And you need like some immediate sort of transformation in your in your ways? You're working. Right. So having again, some some guidance on, on that reflection piece is helpful. If you're interested specifically on, like the rules that Canada has and the laws that Canada has, around digital safety. So Canada has its own, first of all, digital hygiene, checklist.

00:54:20:19 - 00:54:46:18

Riley

So you can download this and do it a once a month thing or put a reminder in your phone, and I also have links here to, Canada's digital charter and the laws that we have around, the internet. So there's a bunch of different things here. The activist handbook, another really cool one. There's like over 450 guides on a million different things relating to activism that you can research.

00:54:46:20 - 00:54:54:18

Riley

So hopefully somewhere in this resource list is something, that can help you if you want to get more into it. But yeah.

00:54:54:18 - 00:54:56:04

Riley

I think, I think that's.

00:54:56:04 - 00:55:08:10

Riley

Everything for me. So I'll stop sharing. And, yeah, we have about 20 minutes, I think, to, have a discussion if you'd like. So thanks so much for showing up, folks.