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PRINT IS DEAD: THE PROMISE AND PERIL OF ONLINE MEDIA FOR SUBCULTURAL RESISTANCE

ABSTRACT

Researchers have maintained a consistent interest in subcultural resistance: marginalized groups challenging their subordinate positions in society through words or deeds. Resisting groups increasingly use online media for resistance, but we know little about the web's consequences for subcultural challengers. In this paper I explore the promise and peril of digital media for resistance relative to traditional, printed media, from an ethnographic exploration of punk subculture. Rather than finding support for either supporters or critics of online resistance, I find evidence for an alternative, dialectical perspective in which the internet simultaneously invigorates and problematizes punk resistance. It provides the oppositional group with many technical advantages for the dissemination of subversive culture but also entails social costs such as making the subculture more accessible to its opponents, undermining some of its more radical aspects, and making it complicit in processes of commodification and exploitation. Previous studies, which tend to focus on how the internet empowers challenging groups, largely neglect this dark side of the web. These findings contribute to our understanding of resistance in the new millennium, and its feasibility for subcultural goal attainment, by elucidating the transformative relationship between resistance and the media through which groups practice it.

Key words: Resistance, Subculture, Internet, Punk, Media, Social Change

ON RESISTANCE

Scholars conceptualize subcultures as cultural formations distinct from ‘mainstream’ culture – “an imaginary hegemonic centre of corporatized culture... an archetype, rather than something with a precise location and character” (Clark 2003, 224). The concept of resistance soon grew crucial to the study of subcultures, achieving centrality no later than the 1970s when the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) dominated the field. Resistance constitutes a complex idea that “involves issues and debates that are at the heart of the sociological perspective, including power and control, inequality and difference, and social context and interaction” (Hollander and Einwohner 2004, 551)

The CCCS viewed subcultures as a collective form of resistance to the social forces that maintain the subculture’s structurally subordinate position: a relative lack of wealth, power, and prestige. From this perspective, subcultures express this resistance through creative consumption. They repurpose cultural artifacts (e.g. style, music, vocabulary, etc.) from the dominant culture by symbolically transforming their meanings to express subcultural goals (Clarke et al. 1976; Hebdige 1979). Proponents of a more recent set of perspectives on subculture, post-subculture studies, also locate youth resistance in consumption activities. However, they suggest that resistance occurs largely as an individual, not collective, effort aimed more at expressive self-realization than social change. Individuals selectively adopt or consume cultural goods, assembling these in whatever ways they find pleasing, as “manifestations of self-expression, individual autonomy and cultural diversity” (Muggleton 2000, 167).

Both CCCS and post-subculture studies approaches emphasize active resistance and supplant prior perspectives which portrayed subcultures as collections of passive, deviant individuals. However, both perspectives offer limited views of resistance, presenting somewhat

one-dimensional ideas of how subcultures enact resistance. Fortunately, other researchers offer more nuanced, inclusive understandings of subcultural resistance (Hollander and Einwohner 2004; Raby 2005). Haenfler (2004) provides perhaps the most concise of these conceptualizations. In his formulation, resistance includes multiple, inter-related dimensions. He states that resistance includes “both individual and collective meanings of resistance” as well as both “personal and political methods” which occur “at the micro, meso, and macro levels” (2004, 408). While no single, universally accepted definition of resistance exists, contemporary discussions are in agreement that resistance consists of a multifaceted range of activities targeting perceived oppression (Hollander and Einwohner 2004). It can be a “word, thought, or deed... intended specifically to counter that oppression” (Leblanc 1999, 18), or a “sign of opposition or alternative to existing power relations” (Williams 2007, 580).

Traditionally, subculturalists primarily used printed media for promoting resistance efforts: organizing and disseminating cultural challenges through underground publications (Moore 2007). Increasingly, they perform these same activities online (Williams 2006). Existing scholarship lacks unanimity regarding the potential of the internet as a tool of resistance. The internet may provide external forces with new means to control and exploit subcultural resistance, but it may also provide subcultures with greater means to challenge these. Specifically, “deploying computer-mediated technology... opens challenging terrains of political struggle for voices and groups excluded from the mainstream media and thus increases potential for resistance and intervention by opposition groups” (Kahn and Kellner 2007, 18). This paper explores this mixed potential of the internet, relative to more traditional printed media, to understand the role it plays in the process of resistance.

Resistance and Domination in the Digital Age

Considerable debate focuses on the consequences of the shift to a digital society. On the one hand, the proliferation of personal computers and the internet prompted high hopes for greater individual liberties. A ‘cyberlibertarian’ dream arose that foresaw the emergence of a new online world based on equality, free association, and self-determination which would exclude no one (Barlow 1996; Kahn and Kellner 2003; Turkle 1997). For instance, proponents of this dream believe that government and economic elites produce and control traditional forms of mass media (i.e. the press, radio, and television) whereas average people have greater input in the relatively open internet. This openness makes it difficult or impossible for special interests to dominate the web (Leary 1994).

These hopes for an emancipated, technological future correspond closely to those of many resistance-based subcultures. Cyberlibertarians do not see internet users as passive, exploitable consumers, but as self-directed agents who take an active role in constructing themselves and social reality through free interaction. At the individual level, some argue that these technologies provide users with a number of benefits: “opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, a changed attitude toward intellectual property, the diversification of cultural expression, the development of skills valued in the modern workplace, and a more empowered conception of citizenship” (Jenkins et al. 2006, 3). At the collective level, some claim that the potential of these emancipatory technologies is strong enough to greatly empower social movements (Earl and Kimport 2011) and even create grassroots revolutions (Tsekeris 2009).

In other quarters, concerns over a less optimistic future temper these cyberlibertarian hopes. In many respects, online activities are not independent of external entities such as for-profit interests or the state. One of the most prominent examples of this is in regards to social

networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. These give customers free reign to upload files, network, and so forth on company websites. Simultaneously, users add content to, and improve on, the companies' services themselves, entirely without compensation (boyd 2008). Even when users search on engines like Google and browse content online, they are creating value by providing companies with marketing information (Arvidsson 2006). Moreover, critics of cyberlibertarianism (Kahn and Kellner 2003; Kelemen and Smith 2001) note increasing government regulation and corporate presence online. The internet may ultimately constitute a "space governed feudally where passage is granted only at a price" (Kelemen and Smith 2001, 381), offering individuals only a commodity, an ersatz freedom (Rheingold 1993).

Punk Subculture and Resistance

This shift from print to digital resistance has created considerable concern for oppositional groups like 'punk.' Punk is a contentious subculture that emerged before the internet in the 1970s as a recognizable cultural phenomenon in both New York City and London (Lentini 2003). A set of more-or-less shared concerns and perspectives differentiates the subculture on average from other social groupings. These include an effort to maintain a subculture—and seek social change in society—based on individual rights, community, egalitarianism, and antiauthoritarianism (Debies-Carl 2014). Thus, many punks seek personal lives and a transformed social order based on equality, self-determination, freedom of expression, democracy, and social justice (Malott and Peña 2004). Punks see threats to this progressive vision as taking many forms which they oppose through "grass-roots resistance" (2004, 26). These threats include the coercive authority of governments, majority groups, police, and corporations. Punks organize around an ethical system called "do-it-yourself" (DIY)

(Debies-Carl 2014; O'Hara 1999; Moore 2007). Through this ethic, they aim to live a life based on producing their own goods and services, not relying on experts or professionals, avoiding passive consumption and the forces that advocate it (e.g. corporations), shunning profit as a motive for production, and contributing to their subculture as equals. Thus, punk resistance to mainstream society also includes an effort to maintain and expand an autonomous cultural field that "is not subject to direct interference by the state or by economic forces" (O'Connor 2008, 4).

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Punks refer to one of their main mechanisms of resistance as "zines" or "fanzines" (see Figure 1): self-published, not-for-profit, amateur magazines. Duncombe describes them as "the most recent entry in a long line of media for the misbegotten [that] operates on the margins of society" (1997, 15). Punks generally print these in small runs on photocopiers or through independent presses. One generally acquires a zine, through sale or trade, directly from whoever made it in person (e.g. at a punk concert) or through the mail. Zines often feature music reviews, descriptions of local scenes, publicity for events, general communication and community among punks, articles for sharing information, and columns for self-expression (Moore 2007). Many punks consider creating, purchasing, reading, collaborating on, contributing to, and trading zines as important parts of the subculture (Debies-Carl 2014).

Traditionally, punks used zines as their "primary channel of communication" and this medium remained largely underground and in their hands alone (Moore 2007, 454). Indeed, "[f]anzines have been the lifeblood of punk's intercultural communication, from England's seminal 1977-era fan-driven publication *Sniffin' Glue* to trail-blazing U.S. titles like Bay Area-Based *Maximumrocknroll* and the late, lamented SoCal punk bible, *Flipside*" (Diehl 2007, 218). Yet, contemporary subculturalists spend increasing amounts of time online (Williams 2006) and

many print media are going online as well (Boczkowski 2004). Virtual environments may provide punks with less independence and freedom than the underground press. If oppositional subcultures like punk exist, in part, to offer a challenge to mainstream culture and to corporate and government interests (or at least to operate outside of their influence) how does the increasing digitalization of one of its key tools of resistance modify this challenge?

DATA AND METHODS

Both scholarly literature and lay accounts frequently single out punk as a group of particular and sustained interest. Over three decades of research continuously identify punk as an exceptionally unconventional and oppositional subculture that seeks to change dominant norms and practices or to at least live free from these (Davis 2006; Fox 1987). As Hebdige described it: “No subculture has sought with more grim determination than the punks to detach itself from the taken-for-granted landscape of normalized forms, nor to bring down upon itself such vehement disapproval” (1979, 19).

My interest in punk began in the late 1990s when I occasionally attended shows,¹ read zines, and took an interest in punk rock. I have never identified as a punk, but rather as somewhere between ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ in status (Lofland and Lofland 1995): a sympathetic observer or partial participant. I maintained this position when my casual interest turned into ethnographic investigation beginning in early 2008, at which time I began to attend shows, analyze punk texts, and interview punks specifically for research purposes.² While maintaining

¹ Punks generally use the term ‘show’ rather than ‘concert’ for their musical performances. This intentional element of the subculture’s argot distinguishes punk ‘shows’ from mainstream, commercial concerts, which are not organized around the egalitarian, not-for-profit aspects of the DIY ethic (Debies-Carl 2014, O’Hara 1999).

² The institutional review board approved all procedures for this project.

an interest in the subculture, I officially stopped collecting data in mid-2010. My research goals were broad and aimed to achieve a holistic understanding of punk culture and practices. In the process of researching my broader ethnography (Debies-Carl 2014) a series of themes emerged regarding the effects of digitalization on punk resistance, which I present in this article. To do so, I draw on two of my data sources: in-depth interviews with punk informants and content analysis of punk texts.

Interviews

This study uses two nonrandom sampling methods for locating participants: snowball and purposive sampling. I knew my first three participants personally and, following each interview, asked them if they could suggest other individuals who might be interested in participating. However, postings for research participants on punk websites yielded the majority of the sample. I selected a variety of websites for the purpose of recruiting individuals from a potential range of backgrounds, interests, and geographic locations. For example three such websites—the Pop Punk Bored, Punk Rock Domestics, and Profane Existence—each exhibit dramatically different tones. The first attracts individuals interested in less heavy, more popular forms of punk rock, the second appeals to punks interested in crafts and making things, and the third to anarchist punks. I planned to supplement this sample with further purposive recruitment for a more diverse sample covering a range of geographic locations and punk roles (e.g. show promoter, band member, etc.). However, as the interviews progressed, I found the variation sufficient without the need for further, targeted recruited.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Table 1 presents demographic information for the sample, which consists of 25 individuals (three interviewed as a focus group) ranging in age from 18 to 56 years old (mean = 26.04). This includes 17 male participants and 8 female, with all but three identifying as white or Caucasian. Recent, previous studies suggest population estimations of the subculture similar to these characteristics (LeBlanc 2006; Moore 2007). The sample provides a reasonable degree of comparativeness, including representation of considerable regional and educational variability.

I conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews either in person, via telephone or, on two occasions, via email according to each respondent's preference and to feasibility. Each in-person interview took place in a public location chosen by the interviewee (e.g. cafes) except for one interview in which the individual wanted to meet at their home. Each interview began with the same question, ("What does 'punk' mean to you?") for allowing respondents to describe their subculture and its meaningful aspects on their own terms. A wide range of questions followed including how respondents described punk, thoughts about punk music, the ways each was involved in punk, experiences at shows, whether they ever played in a band, reflections on the state of the subculture, and general demographics. The results of this approach provided a broad understanding of punk culture and are reported elsewhere (Debies-Carl 2014). Of particular relevance to the current report focusing on themes of media and resistance however, the interviews also included questions about zines, the internet, and feelings on how these relate to punk and its way of life. Participants expressed considerable enthusiasm in discussing their subculture and the average interview lasted about an hour and a half.

Content Analysis

In this study I also draw on analyses of punk texts, including zines, books, and websites that punks have published or written about their subculture or other related interests. Again, I selected these through nonrandom and purposive sampling. The texts consist of those I learned of from interviewees, that I encountered at shows or online, or read about in other texts. If a given text expressed views reflecting punk philosophies or perspectives, I retained it for further analysis. The resulting sample included core, popular punk texts (e.g. *Maximumrocknroll* magazine) as well as lesser known texts (e.g. *Dumpsterland*) representing a range of viewpoints. Moreover, additional purposive sampling ensured representation of a range of the various *types* of texts punks use. These included 1) commercially produced books or magazines (n = 20), 2) non-commercial books or magazines (n = 23), and 3) internet-based texts (n = 25). The first category included mass-produced texts that are widely available through stores or other vendors, which also had Library of Congress and UPC codes for facilitating sale. The second category of texts, in contrast, consisted of self-published magazines—called ‘zines’ as discussed earlier—and books that punks printed through independent presses or simply photocopied. Punks refer to this type of text, fondly, as being ‘DIY’: meaning that they are consistent with the do-it-yourself ethical perspective outlined above. The producers of these materials generally print them only once in small runs and, moreover, without an intention of making a profit. The author often states this disinterest in profit explicitly within a given text and prior research further documents the practice (Duncombe 1997; Moore 2007). Electronic publications included conversations in web forums, blogs, webzines and similar materials on websites. For web forums, I followed Kozinets’ (2010) guidance on conducting online research. Specifically, since I did not announce my status as a researcher, neither did I participate in these forums or record identifying information, and only analyzed discussions on easily accessible and publicly available forums

that did not require registration. In sum, the range of texts allowed for a reasonable sample for my analysis of online resistance.

Analytic Strategy

For both data sources, I followed a grounded theory approach (Miles and Huberman 1994) to avoid imposing theoretical assumptions on data and findings, and I conducted the analysis continuously and simultaneously with data collection and focusing (Lofland and Lofland 1995), to enable a flexible research approach responsive to emergent trends. I reduced the data to manageable and meaningful segments through thematic coding, largely establishing the codes through induction (Miles and Huberman 1994). However, I maintained some sensitivity to themes in prior research for more fruitful engagement in scholarly dialog. Following Strauss (1990), this process begins via ‘open coding.’ Whenever a unique but potentially significant pattern emerged within a given interview or text, distinct from the rest of the document, I recorded the theme in a memo (Lofland and Lofland 1995). If the theme emerged more than once across cases, I then recorded all such instances of it as an emergent, general code and categorized further incidents of it accordingly. Once the number of open codes achieved “saturation” such that no new categories were forthcoming, ‘axial coding’ commenced (Strauss 1990). For this I returned to the data and open codes to look for patterns, relationships, or comparisons across themes. Three overlapping and ongoing activities also coincided with coding: the description, interpretation, and analysis of themes (Wolcott 1994). I consistently attempted and compared alternative explanations for themes or the concurrence of themes and used two modes of triangulation. These included a) ‘source’ triangulation, in which more than one informant or text must verify a given statement or theme, and b) ‘method’ triangulation, in

which I checked patterns across both data types for consistency (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Triangulation improves validity (or credibility) of results by ensuring that themes are evident across more than one source or method, thus reducing the likelihood that a given theme is merely idiosyncratic.

FINDINGS

This section first details the important role of zines for punk subculture and resistance. Next, it examines the empowering aspects of the internet when punks go online for similar purposes, while the closing section examines the dark side or negative characteristics of the web.

Zines as a Tool of Resistance

Previous studies describe DIY zines as central to punk subculture (Moore 2007), providing “the primary form of communication amongst Punks” (O’Hara 1999, 62). Data from the interviews and textual analyses confirmed and elaborated on their importance. Respondents described zines as important facilitators of socialization and networking, idea-sharing, and creative self-expression in an uncensored forum. Overall zine production and consumption represent important practices that underlay and connect nearly all aspects of punk subculture.

First, interviewees described zines as an important networking tool, facilitating interaction and social exchange to promote greater cohesion in the subculture. Punks commonly write personal letters to the producers of zines while some zines, like the long-running *Slug & Lettuce* (now online only), feature ‘punk classifieds’ where individuals could post messages and respond to one another. For instance, punks could list that they were looking for people to hang out with, for pen pals, or members for a band. In addition to its specific content, the artifact of

the zine itself contributes to network-building. This is particularly true among punks trading their own zines to one-another:

[Exchanging zines] is an impersonal, personal way of getting to know complete strangers who... you might be friends with, right? Like you get a zine from somebody in some other town, and they write an article that you think is fabulous, so you give them a good review and then they're happy, and they write you a letter, and they say "Thanks for the good review, here's a seven inch [record]." And you're like, "Okay, thanks for the seven inch. You know if you're ever in [city] you always have a place to stay" and they'd say "Right on. I'm going to be there next weekend," and you're like "That's fine, come on over." And, you know, it was like being able to write letters to strangers without having it be bizarre[.] I can't think of anything else that wouldn't be kind of creepy, that allowed that to happen. (Helen, 33, environmental scientist)

Here, the interviewee clarifies the depth of possibilities that zines provide for network formation. First, zines provide punks with an excuse to initiate contact with others. When people exchange zines it is personal in the sense that each is a product of an individual's labor and contains personal thoughts, but 'impersonal' in that the zine serves as a pretense for initiating contact. In other words, the offer to exchange zines serves as a subtle, culturally acceptable pretense of offering friendship to a stranger who may be otherwise awkward to approach. Those involved in such an interaction can then proceed through a series of reciprocal, but not immediate, exchanges potentially culminating into an eventual relationship. Punks may appreciate the contacts or friendships that develop from these exchanges for the social or emotional satisfaction they bring, but these contacts can also produce further resources – in this example, a free place to stay. Conspicuously absent from this process is any economic rational. While Helen indeed

described resource exchange, consistent with punk culture she makes no mention of profit as a motivating principle. Rather such interactions, multiplied across the subculture, contribute to an alternative infrastructure of friends and associates pooling their resources and services.

Participants also reported appreciating zines as sources of information, particularly for information of an ‘alternative’ variety. The textual analysis of printed zines supported this assertion. Many zines contain reviews or advertisements for punk bands and other zines as well as a good deal of discourse regarding punk philosophy and politics. The zines I surveyed also included different ways of looking at the world and criticism of conventional politics, economics, and culture. I read a wide range of alternative information on a range of skills that punks attempted to share with one another including such unusual activities as how to scavenge from dumpsters, shoplift, hop trains, and conduct herbal abortions. Zines also provide punks with considerable information for more prosaic skills like sewing, changing the oil in your car, and even tips on spelling and grammar. On the one hand, the information in zines seems to be encouraging, and providing the means for, punks to live independently and outside of conventional social systems. However, they go one step further than that to a more active form of resistance. One interviewee stated that:

I’ve gotten lots of different ideas from zines and I’ve learned a lot from them. I’ve learned skills in DIY zines that I never would have learned in school or anything like that (...) Right now I’m really into making posters and wheatpasting those and graffiti. I do stencils, and I make stickers and all that. I’m actually saving up to get a silkscreen press right now. I’m gonna start like a t-shirt thing. But, I mean a lot of the techniques that I’ve learned, how to print something out or get free copies, you know, I learned through reading zines. (Aaron, 19, bakery worker)

Aaron discussed not only survival skills, but propaganda skills that he learned from zines. One propaganda method for example, ‘wheatpasting’, uses vegetable starch (e.g. flour) mixed with water to create an adhesive, applying the adhesive to a poster or flyer, and adhering the poster to visible areas in public places. He also mentioned other skills (graffiti, stencils, stickers, silkscreening) that he uses for propaganda purposes. I investigated the zines he acquired these skills from and found that they included additional propaganda skills like how to operate a pirate radio station and, of course, how to make zines. The section on wheatpasting illustrates the propaganda-disseminating intention of one zine with an interestingly didactic tone:

Wheatpasting posters around town is a great tactic to get radical messages beyond the “radical ghetto” (of your friends) and get them where they need to go: before the public. Once a flyer is wheatpasted to a light pole or utility box, it will stay up until someone scrapes it off. Stapling posters is much more temporary (...) The first and most important part of wheatpasting is to make a great flyer: lots of radical stuff, good strong images, LARGE size type to grab people’s attention, humor. If possible, give interested people a way to contact “the movement.”³

Punks mobilize wheatpasting and other semi-illicit communication techniques to disseminate oppositional discourse. They emphasize the need to communicate the “message” by any means necessary, especially to those outside of the group who will not likely read zines directly. Interestingly, these directions emphasize that radical *content* as the most important part of the process, more so even than the technical details for making the paste. Indeed the article does not discuss this part of the process until much later. The directions also emphasize that pasted messages should be oppositional, not only by their repeated use of the term ‘radical,’ but also in

³ Urban Pirates. n.d. “*How to*” *Guide*. [no publisher]. 201 N. Cedar St., Greensboro, NC 27401.

that they repeatedly express concern regarding negative reception. Moreover, this radicalism explains why punks use paste in the first place since they believe someone will quickly take down these posters and this adhesive method makes removal more difficult. Moreover, the last line in this excerpt reflects both the theme of anticipating negative reactions as well as the need to spread counter-discourse. It suggests that the wheatpaster also provide their audience with contact information of some sort, but implicitly acknowledges that this information could incriminating.

Zine-making represents a cultural practice thoroughly entrenched in the punk values of freedom of expression, independence, and productivity as I introduced above. Most of the interviewees who had produced zines described similar motivations for their work as Mollie:

I think a lot of it is just for the art of it. Like being able to put out your own thoughts or your own art or whatever, no matter how bad they might be, without having to go through anybody else. You can do it all completely yourself [make a zine], and you don't really have to care what other people think of it. Like if no one reads your zine, that would be kind of a bummer, but at least you know you still get to put it out, and you can say pretty much whatever you want for the most part. And you don't have to worry about being censored at all. I mean obviously if you're putting out like nazi propaganda then you'd probably have a hard time finding a place that would let you put your zines down, but for the most part you kind of have free rein, to say what you want and I guess, for some people anyway, there's less chance of someone having a rebuttal. You pretty much get to say whatever you want and then that's it, stand on your soap box and it's over. So I think that's probably motivation for a lot of people. And I think getting into the art of actual zine making like, I've seen some that are really amazing, people do like collages or

screen printing and stuff like that that they absolutely put a lot of work into it. Just like the actual zine itself. (Mollie, 21, waitress)

Mollie invokes the concept of freedom of expression consistently throughout this interview excerpt as one of the major virtues of zines. In the process, she implies that other communication media may not be so free. Punks distribute these underground and sometimes anonymous productions through the mail or in person and by doing so enjoy a high degree of freedom from censorship. Through zines individuals can express unpopular or stigmatizing ideas with a degree of protection (Schilt 2003). Zines thus provide punks with freedom from censure, whether from formal agents of control, from the readers of the zine themselves, or from traditional ideas of good taste. Moreover, Mollie gives the greatest regard not to readership or consumption of the zine (although readership is certainly still desirable) but to the productive act itself—both to the production of the zine as well as whatever the zine is showcasing. In her case, she primarily produced a zine as way a of sharing her photography with others. Consistent with the DIY ethic, punks view production as a form of resistance (Moore 2007) that frees individuals from the yoke of passive consumerism and encourages them to do things for themselves. Punks produce zines, rather than simply read the work of others, and also use them as a medium that contains messages valorizing production.

Zines thus spread punk's message of resistance within the movement and beyond. They do so directly, by providing the subculture a means of networking and by containing oppositional discourse, and indirectly by teaching readers other methods of information dissemination. Moreover, they do so relatively free of censorship and external control. Just as importantly, they allow punks to transcend the role of cultural consumer to directly contribute to punk subculture itself.

Advantages of a Digitalized Subculture

Many punks still read and produce zines. However, these no longer represent the subculture's undisputed, core medium. The research revealed that many zines, and many of the traditional functions of zines, migrated from a print format to the internet. Punks quickly embraced new technologies, using blogs, forums, e-zines, specialized websites, and networking websites like MySpace and Facebook to communicate, exchange ideas, advertise shows, and so on without ever having to print a page or lick a stamp. The internet offers many distinct advantages over zines which may explain its quick rise to dominance. Overall, interviewees said that online media provide more efficient and accessible means for socializing and information-sharing relative to printed zines. This in turn means a greater potential reach for uploaded information. Moreover, the internet enables faster communication for punks. They can more easily update content to reflect last minute changes and plans, while saving money, time, and energy.

The respondents frequently cited the internet's greater efficiency, in terms of conveying and receiving information, as a distinct advantage over zines. According to Andrea (26, librarian), "the dissemination of information seems unbelievable. You could reach anybody anywhere in a matter of seconds." This information is similar to that in zines and includes, for example, listings for concert times and locations, information about punk activities in different parts of the world, skill-sharing, and various opinions and ideas. Renée, discussing this aspect of the internet, stated that:

I guess aside from academics and just socializing and trying to keep in touch with my friends, I feel like the internet has been really important to punk rock because, as much as

we all hate to say it, MySpace is really important for music. It has provided bands with I guess, a place to post their music, their news. I guess a lot of musicians are sometimes maybe email challenged, you know, web-design challenged, so they can't really put their stuff online. And they have to find someone who will design their website for free or for little amount of money and they can't really afford that. So MySpace has been really great for transporting ideas and music and, uh, booking I guess. So you can just click on the MySpace page and listen to their music. But, yeah, I definitely, I use the internet way too much, I wish I didn't because it's really hard to pull myself away. (Renée, 20, college radio station employee)

Statements of this sort reveal the importance of the internet's information disseminating abilities. The internet's uses are certainly far-reaching: it supplies information, access to music, a tool for booking shows, and so on. However, it is not just the quantity of information available to users, but the *accessibility* of it that also matters. Many people interested in punk, including many punks themselves, often find aspects of the subculture inaccessible and 'underground.' The internet simplifies finding and posting information relating to punk. Now one can simply type "punk" into a search engine or "click on the MySpace page" instead of relying on word-of-mouth or the occasional zine. Indeed, punks could only find zines themselves, even at their height, in limited ways and in limited locations whereas the internet grows increasingly ubiquitous. Through its new home on the internet then, punk itself can potentially achieve ubiquity. This greater accessibility helps punks diffuse their ideas and philosophy beyond the boundaries of local scenes or networks. Punks can actually listen to music on websites like MySpace or even Amazon and form their own opinions of it without having to rely on those of reviewers or blindly buying an album hoping for the best. This independence is consistent with

punk's philosophy, which stresses that individuals should make up their own minds rather than relying on the opinions of others. This greater accessibility benefits the consumers of punk culture, but it also benefits the production of culture. Renée notes that sites like MySpace, because of their simple interfaces, also make it easy to post information or music without requiring much in the way of expertise. This is also consistent with punk culture's populist leanings and emphasis on production. The web allows more punks to contribute content, to actively participate and not merely consume the works of others⁴, without requiring expert knowledge or specialized training, which would seem to be congruent with a DIY orientation. However, despite her positive statements about the web, Renée "hated" to point out the contributions of the internet to punk and concludes by suggesting she spends too much time online. This foreshadows a dark side to the internet--a possibility I explore in the next section.

The respondents also described the internet as more effective in conveying information and updates rapidly. For example, I examined many show listings in online forums. Users posted updates and responses up to the last minute of the show. Several times, a user cancelled or modified a show at the last minute—something not possible in printed zines. Timely updating also benefits reviewing. Indeed, interviewees credited the need to review new records quickly as another reason why they use zines less often. It could take months for a zine to review a record, by which time the album is no longer new. Most people will have already read about it, or even listened to it, online. Ironically, the same thing is true for reviews of zines themselves. In the recent past, one could read a number of important zines dedicated to reviewing other zines, but

⁴ This observation stands in contrast to the assertions of many post-subculture theorists (Muggleton 2000) who emphasize subcultural *consumption* as a form of resistance.

few such zines remain in printed form. The editor of one extant review zine, *Zine World*, posted the following on her website:

[Review] zines like ours are dinosaurs. Eventually we will be extinct. There's just no way we can compete with the timelines and immediacy of online reviews. (...) [T]here is a lot of lag time in between sending *Zine World* a zine and when the review is finally seen by our readers. Once I receive a zine, it might sit in my box o' zines for a month (or two or more) before it gets assigned to a reviewer. The reviewer usually has a month to turn in his/her reviews; not all reviewers are prompt and meet their deadlines, however. Then the review goes through the editing process; it takes more time to get the whole zine written, edited, proofread, designed, and printed. Even if you retain the centralized mailing, assignment to reviewers, and edited-before-published reviews, a website or blog can still get reviews online faster than I can get them into print, even at my best. Most review sites, however, dispense with the editing; cut out the assignments and the process is even faster. When we relied on reviews (...) to promote our new issues, we knew it would take some time before the orders would come in. So we made larger print runs and patiently kept issues available longer. Now that zinesters rely on the immediacy of the internet to promote their zines, print runs are smaller and zines sell out sooner. By the time a review zine like ours publishes a review, it's old news. The zine may not be available anymore.⁵

Here, the zine editor credits the speed of internet updates for the declining relevance of printed reviews. Moreover, we begin to get a glimpse into how this process works. Various behind-the-scenes activities contribute to the shift to the web (e.g. assigning reviewers, editing, etc.), not just

⁵ Jerianne. The future of review zines? Website posting. <http://www.undergroundpress.org/zine-News/the-future-of-review-zines/#more-72>. Accessed October, 29 2008.

the greater speed of uploading versus mailing materials. Judging from this text, online review zines expedite or entirely omit many of these activities. The zine editor describes those printed review zines that still exist as somewhat obsolete “dinosaurs.” She describes how her review zine has changed in response to online competition to retain some degree of relevance: increasingly she relies on content presumably less time-sensitive than reviews (e.g. articles) and has changed both the size of each issue and the frequency of releases. Interestingly, she posted this text itself online with space for readers to instantly post their responses—perhaps another concession to the digital age and the desire for instant updates.

Another advantage of the internet over print zines is its relative cost-effectiveness. For example one interviewee, John, cited the cost of printing and mailing zines as one of the main reasons he stopped doing his print zine entirely:

It was costing me like \$2,000 to physically print up an issue, and then another maybe thousand dollars to mail out all the copies. (...) I have always had a [zine name] website going back to the early days of personal websites. And toward the end, we started just as sort of an online advertisement: “Here, come order the print zine.” But as time went on I was putting more and more original content on the website too, and finally it just got to the point where it was “You know what? I’m just gonna make it an online webzine and do all the same stuff. We’ll still review records, we’ll still interview bands, but it will be on the web.” And actually the number of hits we get... I really reach way more people today than when I had the magazine because we only printed in our heyday, the most successful days of [zine name], which are probably like right after Green Day in the mid-90s when the whole punk thing kind of exploded and there was tons of money being thrown around. I was doing 2,000 copies. Which wasn’t very many, even if every copy

got passed around to two or three people. That's still like less than the 10,000 people we're reaching [online]. (John, 56, insurance industry worker)

John started out writing his zine to share his love of punk music and his local scene with others. True to punk's DIY ideals, he did not state or imply that he held any profit-oriented motivation, but over time the costs associated with the zine grew too burdensome. Rather than go broke or cease doing something he loves, he increasingly added content to his website—originally just a way of advertising the zine—until the website replaced the zine entirely. He notes that, in addition to saving money, he actually reaches more people through the e-zine. Apparently he prioritizes reaching more people, getting his message to others, and doing it as cheaply and efficiently as possible. He took into account the fact that punks typically pass zines around instead of buying a separate issue each when trying to estimate the printed zine's circulation. He treats this sharing as a form of desirable circulation, not lost profit, but he can still achieve greater circulation online.

Ray, who still reads printed zines when he finds them, expressed a related theme in his interview. He mentioned that he didn't think zines were as important to punk as they used to be compared to the internet. When I asked him why he thought so, he said:

Cause these kids just don't have the drive to... Well I remember—I only made one issue of my zine, but I remember it was a bitch and a half to put together, it was like 30 pages or something. We typed it all on a typewriter, cut it all out, cut all our pictures out and glued it all together manually. Then printed by hand on copy machines, and then tried to sell the thing after like—it took forever. (Ray, 22, retail stock worker)

Starting off with a generalization, he interrupted himself to frame his answer in more personal terms meant to convey a greater pattern. Specifically, zine production entails a considerable

investment not only of money, but of time and effort as well. Though 30 pages may not seem long, the number of manual tasks he needed to accomplish in putting them together, many of which he names, quickly adds up in terms of time. By comparison, computers greatly reduce the *labor* costs of print zines through the numerous software suites commonly available now. “Cut and paste” means very different things in terms of labor on a computer and labor with actual scissors and glue. If zinesters upload the computerized product, they save additional time since they will not have to contend with printing, folding, stapling, addressing, or mailing their work.

Given these considerations, it is little wonder why many punks increasingly choose to use online media. The internet holds many advantages over printed zines and seems to provide a clear argument for why it has become the dominant punk medium. However, digitalization does not mean unambiguous empowerment. Punks also have good reasons for why some of them continue printing zines.

Disadvantages of a Digitalized Subculture

Online media do not surpass zines in *all* capacities. The preceding discussion suggests that as communication tools, their capabilities seem undeniable. In this section however, I examine how some of their ramifications for oppositional groups like punk are problematic as tools of resistance. These disadvantages include the drawbacks associated with greater accessibility, an apparent diminishment in allowing users full self-expression, the artificiality of virtual communication, and a greater capacity for exploitation.

As I discussed above, the internet provides punks with greater accessibility and the ability to reach a wider audience. However, punks might prefer to hide their activities from many of the people included by that greater accessibility. The internet makes punk more open to the entry of

potentially dangerous individuals into the scene, to commodification, and to censure by opening up the cultural space to external inspection. Several of my interviewees noted situations where local hooligans, inimical subcultures (e.g. neo-Nazis), or police have caused problems for punks after finding information about punk shows online (O'Hara 1999). One interviewee, Chase, provides an illustration of this danger and his solution. He actively contributes to the organization of his local scene by compiling a monthly zine with his friends which announces shows and other events of interest to the punk community. Describing this zine, Chase said:

We do it every month but then we have like a phone list. The [printed] one at the beginning of every month that basically shows all the stuff that's in stone, that everyone knows about, and then we have a calling list and like it's a bunch of numbers and you just call everyone. Like "Oh, there's a show here, there's a show here." (...) Like the way it is, it (the zine) says like "Don't just hand out to anyone, make sure it's a friend of yours." And on it, it has little warnings: "Don't reproduce this on the internet or anything like that." Main reason... for not getting it into the wrong hands is like, in [town name], like right down the street from where I live, that place is horrible, they have like these crews of people that will like find out about parties and stuff and they'll just like come and try to beat everybody up. It's really horrible. (Chase, 26, stage technician)

Rowdy locals from outside the subculture plague his area who crash shows and start fights. Thus, he wants to publicize shows, but also needs to limit the publicity to fellow subculturalists or other sympathetic audiences. This is no simple task, but he has devised a clever solution. First, he decided to avoid the internet entirely, instead printing the zine since "websites are too easy to look at by people that you don't want looking at them" (Chase). Second, he prints the zine monthly and maintains a phone list for calling his contacts directly to update information. This

process approximates the timeliness of the internet but involves fewer risks pertaining to accessibility. Third, he has developed a cautious method of distribution: he only provides copies to people he knows and asks that they do the same when they pass the zine on. Moreover, he prints messages on the zine in hopes that individuals who distribute the zine outward through the punk network will maintain discretion and caution in spreading the word. The wrong people may still discover this information, but that possibility would be much greater in the open forum of the internet.⁶

Greater accessibility can also lead to more subtle threats to punk. Discussing her years when she was active in the subculture, Helen recalled the following:

I remember, basically the aesthetics and the music were completely coopted into modern consumptive culture. And they were coopted by *us*, those of us who went and got jobs in the design field. Fuck you guys! Right? I mean I don't blame them, but it happened, and it happened fast and it was complete. And I don't know, now that the internet's here and now that that layer of design geeks took the good stuff and ran, I don't know if something similar is going to emerge in such a way where it takes eight years for it to move to mainstream culture. I think the turnover now is going to be so fast that it's not going to be as possible to have that kind of subculture. (Helen, 33, environmental scientist)

⁶ Of course, different web applications present different levels of openness to a variety of actors. Web forums include a great deal of public accessibility, even when they require user passwords and registration. Email, however, represents a somewhat more private system: but not from governments, hackers, or the platform owners, like Google, who surveil their email servers for advertising purposes.

Here, Helen is describing the process whereby businesses civilize radical punk culture: they remove it from its cultural context, purge it of challenging content, and sell it to consumers as a harmless but entertaining commodity. For example, businesses have easily transformed cultural elements like the anarchist ‘A’ from oppositional symbols into trendy t-shirts images. Worse still, such trivializations contribute to public perceptions that the subculture itself is trivial and without substance. Cooptation and commodification effectively defang messages of resistance—defusing their potential threat to cultural consensus by safely reinterpreting that message in an acceptable form (Hebdige 1979). Helen indicts former punks of capitalizing on the productions of the subculture they abandoned. Intimately familiar with this otherwise underground form that is not easily accessible to the public, they introduce these productions into mainstream culture not as a challenge, but as a safe consumer good. Although business has always capitalized on subcultural fashion (1979), it seems likely that the internet has accelerated the pace of this process since it greatly increases ease of access. Businesses no longer require a former punk or culturally savvy agent to gain access to underground culture: only an internet connection. Thus, any company seeking a hot new style need not send fashion designers or recording representatives into punk clubs to see what punks are wearing or listening to, they can simply type ‘punk’ into a search engine. Kahn and Kellner document just this process for online zines: “as these online cultural spaces grew in popularity, corporate culture was quick to import and copy elements of their style and reinterpret and reposition them” (2003, 302). The result, they note, is that ersatz corporate doppelgangers have driven out and replaced the original e-zines.

The interviewees also expressed a concern that the internet’s technical capabilities as a service platform simply do not allow individuals to fully express themselves. One respondent concisely explained the problem, describing it as “content-free” and providing this explanation:

[B]uilt into the design of the web and how the technologies work is this kind of database-backed personalization and it's basically MadLibs with your data, and [you're] able to make it appear like it's personal for you, or that it's an expression of who they are. So, for example, you know, if you have a web page and it's in plain text, it doesn't imply a great deal of creativity. But checking a bunch of boxes for this floral background with orange text, with blue shadow underneath it, and animated birds or whatever, it implies creativity but what you do is you check some boxes. Zines don't allow that. I mean you actually can't fake it in the same way. (Calvin, 33, "computer guy")

From this perspective, websites like MySpace or Facebook grant their users the illusion of personal expression when they are really offering them only a moderately customizable, but otherwise standardized, experience. Like a MadLib, the user simply fills in some blanks within established parameters, but a programmer has already put the essential structure in place.

Contrary to punk DIY philosophy, this provides users not a true expression of individual liberty, but an insidious imposter. Calvin explicitly compares this reality to zines. Internet software, being more streamlined and less versatile, constrains users' self-expression more greatly than zines (cf. Zwick et al. 2008). The software of web applications allows individuals only limited input whereas zines constrain producers much less since the medium pre-determines very little.

Thus, the web pushes users much closer to the consumer end of the chain of production. Though Calvin does not specifically mention it, this situation implies that users cannot rely on streamlined interfaces if they want to get the most out of the internet for self-expression.

Unfortunately, the alternative requires much greater knowledge of computers and programming than the average user has. This necessity severely limits the populist potential of the internet as

the vast majority of punks, or any other population for that matter, would lack these advanced programming skills and the time to learn them.

Just as many interviewees described the internet as providing a limited or artificial form of self-expression, so too did many see it as providing an impoverished, less intimate form of interpersonal interaction. John expressed an example of such sentiments:

I think there was a certain personal connection back in the old days. If you were gonna sit down and write somebody a three page letter, that was a definite commitment of time and resources. And then if the other person was actually going to read a three page letter and write you a three page letter back. You were actually forging not just contacts, but friendships, you know? And a lot of the people from those days are still very good friends of mine (...) Either they wrote me a letter, a lot of times saying “Hey, could I write for your magazine?” And I wrote back or, I got their record (...) So now we’re really good friends, but it all started with a letter. And I don’t know if you forge those kinds of relationships with the internet. (John, 56, insurance industry worker)

Despite John’s favorable attitude toward the internet as a communication tool, he looks down upon what he sees as its impoverishment of relationships. He, like other interviewees, finds it difficult to put a finger on what it is exactly, but he indicates that there is something missing from online interaction. He suggests that it has something to do with commitment and investment: that these are lacking online or are more difficult to express. The act of exchanging something like a long letter through the mail involves a degree of cost to the sender, even if only in terms of the time it takes to write or the price of postage. Individuals suggests a level of investment to one another, or commitment to building and maintaining a relationship, by taking on these costs. It is harder for one to express such investment in an email, which is free and

which one can write and send quickly. John describes online relationships as contacts like ‘friends’ on one’s FaceBook account, not true friends, as though these involve less intimacy and commitment. Sentiments like these imply something of a threat to intimate punk community in a deeper sense – especially *online* community.⁷

Finally, some of the interviewees raised the concern that, regardless of its other problems or advantages, the internet is not as free from profiteering as zines. One interviewee who was concerned about this possibility described it as follows:

I have a problem with MySpace. I’m really still sifting through in my mind, but basically I think—well it’s owned by Rupert Murdoch, and every time you even go to it, you’re making it money, and it’s making money off the backs of punks who, you know, if you think about it, want to do things DIY. They also want to do things free, which is great about MySpace but it’s not DIY, and it’s not really supporting anything good except the ability to get things for free. (Macy, 19, newspaper intern)

Macy makes an important distinction here between simple thriftiness and the DIY punk ethic. The internet certainly includes free platforms like MySpace for publicity, but DIY requires that punks be thrifty *and* independent of forces like corporations. In fact, punks value thriftiness in part *because* it involves putting less money into corporate hands and contributing to a culture of consumption. However, Macy realizes this is not the case with websites. Productions like zines also require resources made available by non-punk producers (e.g. paper, ink, photocopiers,

⁷ These more subjective, critical judgments of the internet may illustrate a function of age.

However the majority of the sample, although much younger than John, expressed similar criticisms. For example, Phil, who is half John’s age (26), noted that he’s “just not interested in spending that much time having virtual relationships.”

postal delivery). If punks purchase these, doing so certainly benefits companies. This issue concerns many punks considerably, and they spend significant time discussing and implementing means by which to steal resources or scam services when they must interact within mainstream economics (Clark 2004). Internet usage also involves such resources (computers, service providers, electricity, etc.) and, worse, provides a range of other benefits to companies (Zwick et al. 2008). Whenever punks upload content, they provide free labor and experience a sort of exploitation. Moreover, by simply browsing content online, punks directly benefit companies by providing them with marketing information (Arvidsson 2006). Thus, even as they challenge corporate power, using corporate tools to do so empowers the enemy they oppose in the first place. Sites like MySpace and Google *may* present no upfront cost to users, but they do involve more nefarious *social* costs. To this extent, online resistance constitutes, at least in part, online exploitation, and it makes punks engaged in it somewhat complicit in perpetuating the conventional social order the subculture opposes in the first place.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

For a long time, resistant subcultures primarily used print media to issue and organize their social and cultural challenges. In recent years, however, they have increasingly turned to the internet. Much discussion has focused on the internet's seeming invigoration of resistance – its potential in giving a voice to the voiceless and empowering the powerless (Barlow 1996, Turkle 1997). On the other hand, some have also expressed concerns that the promise of the internet is tempered by many hidden dangers (Kelemen and Smith 2001, Zwick et al. 2008). We must understand the significance of the internet in this regard in order to understand the new face of resistance in the dawning millennium. In this paper I have reported issues of this sort, which emerged as major themes and concerns in my ethnographic work exploring punk subculture. In

this final section, I will discuss the significance of these patterns for punk, but also extrapolate on what significance the shift to online media has for the process of resistance more generally for researchers whose interests lay in related areas.

First, I found support for neither a positive, cyberlibertarian view of web-based resistance nor for a critical perspective that suggests largely negative outcomes. Rather the findings support a third perspective, a dialectical process in which the medium of resistance *transforms* the nature or character of that resistance. We cannot understand resistance as an isolated, abstracted concept, but rather we should see it as a process occurring in interaction with its medium. As I describe in this final section, compared to print media the internet both diffuses and defuses resistance. It empowers resistance in terms of its reach and dispersion. At the same time, however, it makes resistant groups less independent and more subject to external forces. The latter, in turn, may weaken or exploit the most radical aspects of a group's challenge to society.

Groups can use either print or online media as effective means of resistance. However, the internet has brought several associated advantages that may explain its quick rise to dominance: it is faster, more efficient, more accessible, more easily updated, cheaper, and labor-saving. This perspective interprets the internet as essentially a tool that enhances the efficiency of resistance. Yet this conceptualization excessively reduces the significance of the web. In reality the internet is *not* simply a tool nor are all of its characteristics positive ones. Rather, we can better conceptualize it as an emergent social context with its own rules, resources, and risks. This highly public and interactive environment entails implications for any group that ventures therein. The current findings suggest that the internet is neither simply 'better' nor 'worse' than print media, but that its effects are transformative. All media contribute to communicative or interactive ends, but all media do not operate in the same way and do not involve the same

participants. Resistance via each medium – print or online – occurs within a different context. Each context, in turn, has different consequences for the character and likely outcomes of resistance efforts.

Resistant subcultures can more easily regulate the production, distribution, and consumption of print media – albeit not perfectly – so that primarily other group members see them. Indeed, even without such tactics, few outsiders ever see underground print media. Subcultures, or any other fairly marginal group, have a more difficult task in regulating online media. For example, as I have illustrated in the current report, punks largely distribute print media among themselves whereas digital media increasingly allow external and often inimical actors into this activity, including corporate marketers, government, and members of hostile subcultures. In other words, zine-making enjoys relatively greater autonomy (Kucsma 2000) compared to internet resources – a set of media much less independent of external influence and oversight. Businesses design, maintain, and surveil the platforms that host digital media. They can, in turn, limit and direct the activities that take place there, and may profit from the added content or use without compensating users (Zwick et al. 2008). Thus, print media offer a degree of protection to their users, insulating them from outsiders to a certain extent, and allowing them to engage in resistance activities in relative freedom. The internet, in all its publicity, provides excessive connectivity between resisters and everyone else online. This can provide opponents or exploiters with an informational advantage or can simply dilute the oppositional message: commodifying it as a harmless new fashion, for example, or allowing outsiders to adopt its style without any of its substance (Kahn and Kellner 2003).

In part then, the internet promotes a deleterious transformation on resistance efforts: it defuses aspects of their challenge and makes their messages more accessible to those who would

exploit them for a variety of ends. We should consider the ability of resistant groups to simply maintain an alternative way of life—even a temporary or incomplete one—in the face of external forces as being a significant achievement (Kozinets 2002). Print media certainly offer advantages ideal in this regard. Yet some aspects of the transformation through online resistance offer resistant groups advantages as well. Researchers generally consider the capacity of subcultural challengers to create social change, at best, modest or subtle (Haenfler 2006). However, the internet's greatest promise may actually lie here. After all, researchers have also claimed that one of the main strengths of subcultures is the ability to introduce a voice of dissent into mainstream cultural discourse (Clarke et al. 1976). This dissent may help call into question the apparent consensus over norms and practices within the dominant culture. Print media, although protective, conversely insulate and isolate resistant groups from the public they need to address. Fewer people have access to underground print channels, and many who do likely already sympathize with a given group's message. The internet, because of the very accessibility that dilutes subcultural radicalism, also provides an unrivaled capacity for resistant groups to spread their message messages beyond their current membership. This fact increases the chances that social change, albeit a compromised change, will occur by providing a more accessible, public arena for groups to organize themselves, recruit members, and disseminate their cultural challenge.

Each medium influences resistance in terms of its meaning, its general character, and what it can achieve. Print can offer a degree of protection to oppositional groups, but limits the dispersion of resistance whereas the transformative effect of the web compromises the integrity of resistance movements while simultaneously increasing their reach and potential outcomes. In fully appreciating the web as a context of resistance, we should also move beyond discussion of

its influence on those efforts and also take into account how it can, itself, present a target for resistance. We have, in many ways, only witnessed the internet's infancy. Multiple actors—including governments, corporations, and resistant subcultures—continuously strive to increase their presence and influence in this environment at the expense of competing groups (Kelemen and Smith 2001, Rheingold 1993). With the internet increasingly hosting a major body of cultural discourse, it seems likely that resistant groups would have more to gain from braving its dangers for spreading their messages of dissent than from protecting themselves by staying removed from it. No guarantee exists that cultural challengers will emerge victorious in the contested terrain of the internet, but that terrain provides their best opportunity to make a large-scale difference (Kahn and Kellner 2007). Should they neglect it for any reason, it could mean the end of that contestation entirely and ensure that the web is dominated by corporations or governments, relegating resistance groups to a position of minor significance in world culture.

The rise of the internet presents resistant groups with many new opportunities and dangers simultaneously. The emancipatory or exploitative potential of these developments will entail ramifications across many segments of society. Online resistance presents users with many drawbacks and contributes to the decline of underground printed media, but print still exists. Resistance groups need not necessarily use one medium exclusively while abandoning the other. Instead, they can use each medium simultaneously and strategically. This combination may maximize the advantages of each while ameliorating negative repercussions. For example, groups can limit sensitive materials to a primarily printed format whereas they can post activities that require the largest possible audience online. For this approach, challengers should maintain awareness of each medium's limitations while making strategic decisions. For those seeking to circumvent various negative aspects of the internet, and the power which dominant social actors

maintain over it, print and its unique capacities remain a viable option. Nor is print likely to ever fade entirely precisely because of these advantages: “The allure of making something that is decidedly *yours*, with *your* hands that you can shove in other folks hands will surely be appealing to all the future generations... it’s not too late to start a fanzine. Go and do it.”⁸ Anyone can best take advantage of online media, while minimizing the risks, if print is not indeed completely dead.

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Name	Location	Sex	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Occupation	Education	Recruitment Site	Type
<i>Interviews</i>								
Aaron	WA (state)	m	19	White	Bakery worker	In College	InfoShop.org	Phone
Andrea	Indiana	f	26	White	Librarian	College grad, pursuing M.A.	Punk Rock Domestic's Phone	Phone
Barrett	Virginia	m	30	White	Tour manager for a band	College grad	Pop Punk Bored	Phone
Bill	Ohio	m	38	White	Record store	College grad	Word of mouth	In person
Carolyn	D.C. Area	f	18	White	Food service	High School	Punk Rock Domestic's Email	Phone
Chase	California	m	26	Don't know	Stage tech	In college	Profane Existence	Phone
Calvin	Ohio	m	33	White	"Computer guy"	College grad, extra courses	Word of mouth	In person
Chris	Wisconsin	m	35	White	Café	High School	Profane Existence	Phone
Dan	Arizona	m	24	White	Victim services advocate	College grad	Punk Planet	Phone
Don	Mass.	m	21	White	Clerical worker	In college	Pop Punk Bored	Phone
Helen	Ohio	f	33	White	Environmental scientist	"13 years of college"	Word of mouth	In person
Ivan	Ohio	m	23	White	Student	In college	Word of mouth	In person
John	New Jersey	m	56	White	Business, insurance	college grad	Pop Punk Bored	Phone
Mollie	Indiana	f	21	White	Waitress	In college	Punk Rock Domestic's Phone	Phone
Mary	Texas	f	22	White	Video game company	GED	Punk Rock Domestic's Phone	Phone
Macy	Ohio	f	19	White	Intern at newspaper	In College	Withheld	In person
Matt	Maryland	m	25	White	Grocery store/dairy	Some college	Pop Punk Bored	Email
Naomi	Ohio	f	25	White	Civil engineer	College grad, extra courses	Punk Rock Domestic's	In person
Phil	Ontario, CA	m	28	White	Works for civil engineer	In college	Profane Existence	Phone
Parker	Ohio	m	28	White	Security Guard	In college	Word of mouth	In person
Renee	Virginia	f	20	"Middle-Eastern"	College radio station	In college	BYOFL	Phone
Ray	Kentucky	m	22	American Indian	Retail, stock	Some college	BYOFL	Phone
<i>Focus Group</i>								
Rick	Arkansas	m	20	White	unemployed	Some college	BYOFL	In person
Shane	Indiana	m	19	White	unemployed	Some college	Word of mouth	In person
Sam	Missouri	m	20	White	unemployed	Some college	Word of mouth	In person
n = 25	Males:	17	Mean: 26.04					
	Females:	8						

Table 1. Descriptive Information of Participants