

Today, many people like me are constantly on the Internet, using computers, iPhones and androids. I am personally interested in how my generation uses technology versus the older generation. I am also interested in the group called Anonymous that wants to encourage justice for all people and world peace. Through the course of my research, I arrived at the topics of activism, Internet activism, hactivism, and the Occupy Movement.

In the older generation, an activist was someone who took political or social action in support or in opposition to a cause. Those actions took many forms such as letters to the government, to the editors of newspapers and the person's representative or senator; organizing boycotts of products or laws. An example of this would be Martin Luther King's organizing of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955.

Cyber activists have built upon the older generation's efforts utilizing the Internet are able to reach people who are interested in their topic and to educate people who might not be aware of the subject. The Internet is great to access information more quickly than looking in a book; in fact, we can now even read books online. But then you can also put a photo on the Internet and you can never delete it. Photos and videos can go viral in seconds, some funny but mostly gossip. It is the use of electronic communication technologies and social media to educate and convince the community of the 'rightness' of that person's thoughts.

This raises many demographic issues from the Internet itself! Everyone uses the Internet: I looked for a survey on the Internet and found a pie chart titled, *'Internet Users in the World by Geographic Regions -2012 Q2.'* There are about 1076.7 million people in Asia using the Internet, 518.5 million people in Europe, 273.8 million in North America, 254.9 million in Latin America/Caribbean, 167.3 million people using the Internet in Africa, 90.0 million in the Middle East, and 24.3 million people in Oceania Australia. Anonymous started because lots of people where on the Internet all over the world. Most of my peers, I am really fond of the Internet. I use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Vine and Instagram every day.

People are starting to see what goes on in their world; for example, Youtube.com has many videos that can be viewed by millions of people every day. People can get blackmailed or they can become famous, people like Anonymous can record police officers doing the wrong thing and have the whole world see what they have done to a sometimes-innocent protester. It is easy for Anonymous to use the Internet. By using the Internet they merge art that can be shown in many different ways such as photography, videos, propagandas, and hacking. The Internet can bring happiness by offering entertainment such as cute little puppies and kittens; it can also answer random and obscure questions such as 'How many brain cells does a human have?'

The Internet can also bring political awareness and present political views. The organization that captured my attention and is the focus of my project is the group called Anonymous. The Anonymous members have been variously described as hackers, hactivists, free expression zealots, Internet trouble makers and assorted combinations of thereof. Anonymous' goal is to protect the 99% of the people who live in the world who are neither rich nor powerful to stand up to their governments. Their motto is 'We are Anonymous. We are legion. We do not forgive, we do not forget.' Pause. 'Expect us.' To me this means they are getting ready for something big such as hacking into television network and delivering a message to the world. They show the population what could happen to innocent bystanders such as posting a video of police pepper spraying peaceful demonstrators. I interpret the phrase 'Expect us' to mean that Anonymous is warning everybody, especially the government and law enforcement, that they are watching and will reveal the secrets and post them online for all to see.

Anonymous has been around since about 2003 when people started posting to the message board on 4Chan.org. The initial posts were frightening and offensive with everyone trying to outdo the others. The most famous meme to be attributed to Anonymous is the 'lolcat' which showed photographs of adorable cats with captions of the cats' feelings or desires. This was adorable but it was also deceiving because Anonymous was into more serious matters such as politics, current events, opinions, and more. The organization does not have a leader or hierarchy but instead is made up of people with great opinions who want to make the world a better place. They refer to themselves as a non-organization or a phenomenon that is an 'ever changing band of individuals.' They believe they can make the world a better place by convincing people to fight for their rights and by revealing corruption in government and law enforcement and corporations.

Anonymous has two logos that can be easily manipulated to become more individualized to the wearer. The first logo is a headless suit in front of the United Nations flag. Instead of the head there is a question mark.

But it was the second logo that really caught my attention and it sparked my idea for this project. This logo is a mask. Anonymous decided they wanted to expand their network and actually go outside to demonstrate but they wanted to remain anonymous. They decided upon a mask and they identified five or six possibilities such as masquerade mask, a Batman mask and others.

They surveyed toy stores across the world and discovered that every store had the mask from the movie *V for Vendetta*. The movie is based on a graphic novel of the same name and is about a man trying to destroy government corruption in England. In the end he blows up the Parliament building in London while leading everyone to peace. Not only was the mask readily available but it also matched their interests. The mask from the movie is a highly stylized version of Guy Fawkes who was a 17th Century British figure who was executed following a plot to assassinate King James I. In 1604 Guy Fawkes became involved with a small group led by Robert Catesby they planned on killing King James and replace him with his daughter Princess Elisabeth. The plan was called the 'Gun Powder plot.' They were going to put gunpowder and blow up the house of parliament with gun powder. But then in 1823 Henry Perronet Briggs discovered the plot. On November 5th 1605 everyone in London celebrated the king's escape from the assassination. Now on November 5th represents of thanks and a failed plot.

I chose to work with the Anonymous mask for my project because I believe the mask gives people the opportunity to come together without fear of revealing themselves. And if everyone wears the anonymous mask it can make a difference in the world. They wear the mask because it is very easily to purchase, and people can change it to look more like what the mask to be. The mask is almost eerie because the mouth is almost smiling, but it's not. The last scene in the *V for Vendetta* shows all of London wearing the same mask watching the Parliament building exploding. Also, this November 5th, people wearing the Anonymous mask were marching in front of the White House to protest each of their particular issues and some just for the thrill of wearing the mask. For my project I am taking off the mask and revealing the creative thinking behind the mask, and then I am also showing how a person's creative thinking can hurt. For example, a masked demonstrator may be struck by a policeman's baton or peppered-sprayed or knocked down by water from a fire hose. Demonstrators can also be hurt mentally; they may give up their cause if the police have physically attacked them.

One of my inspirations is my friend; Wenqing Yan {Yuumei} introduced me to Occupy. Yuumei does digital art, traditional watercolor painting, sculpting and origami. Yuumei has a

degree in art from UC Berkeley; she focuses on environmental and cyber activism. She attended UC Berkeley during the time of Occupy Wall Street, when what students did on their own campus peacefully turned into riots because of police misbehavior. But not just Yuumei saw this happen, the whole online community saw this and people started to ask themselves, 'Is this world we live in?'

I think that people should learn to present themselves to the government without a mask. It is almost cowardly to wear and almost mysterious that is what the government and Fox TV assumes or tells the public. In my mind, I can understand why Anonymous hide their faces, they hide their faces so the police will not catch them. Do you think being an activist affects the community?

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