A Dramaturgical Approach to Online Activism within Youth Empowerment Organizations

FARNAZ IRANNEJAD BISAFAR, Khoury College of Computer Sciences, Northeastern University, USA

BROOKE FOUCAULT WELLES, Communication Studies, Northeastern University, USA

ANDREA G. PARKER, School of Interactive Computing, Georgia Tech, USA

Social Networking Sites (SNS) offer youth activists and youth empowerment organizations (where adults help youth address community issues) opportunities for civic action. Impression management is critical to youth empowerment organizations' work online, as they attempt to influence the opinions of their audience. However, there is a dearth of research characterizing online impression management in the context of youth empowerment organizations. To address this research gap, we conducted a qualitative study investigating the use of SNS in a youth empowerment organization. Using Goffman's dramaturgical model, we characterized how youth tried to hack SNS algorithms, and their desire to better identify their audience. Our findings reveal how youth use SNS to create authentic images and connections with their audience. On the other hand, we discuss adults' desire to convey a curated organizational image and challenges that arose. We conclude with design implications for tools that support impression management online for youth activists.

CCS Concepts: • **Human-centered computing** → **Social networking sites**.

Additional Key Words and Phrases: Youth Activism, Social media, Goffman

1 INTRODUCTION

Youth activism, which is defined as youth civic engagement with the goal of social change, plays an important role in creating equity and inclusion for marginalized groups [12]. In this regard, youth-led activism within low-SES communities can create opportunities for changing public policies and help alleviate barriers to health and life opportunities [60]. Moreover, youth civic engagement can positively affect the personal development process of youth and increase the likelihood that youth will engage with civic issues after they become adults [60].

Recent social movements have shown that SNS plays an important role in facilitating the work of youth activists. As a result, youth's preferences have shifted from traditional forms of political participation (e.g., voting) to the use of SNS for activism [63]. In fact, SNS offer various opportunities for activism by reducing the cost of collective action and facilitating ways of organizing and voicing societal concerns more publicly. Facebook and Twitter create opportunities for the expression

Authors' addresses: FARNAZ IRANNEJAD BISAFAR, irannejadbisafar.f@northeastern.edu, Khoury College of Computer Sciences, Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Ave, Boston, Massachusetts, USA; BROOKE FOUCAULT WELLES, stowell.e@husky.neu.edu, Communication Studies, Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Ave, Boston, USA; ANDREA G. PARKER, andrea@cc.gatech.edu, School of Interactive Computing, Georgia Tech, Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

of interest and support for issues of importance (e.g., by using the "retweet" or "like" button). Additionally, activists can use various SNS features (e.g., hashtags) to create awareness around societal issues. SNS also help activists organize online and offline events and engage in collective action.

Despite all the opportunities that SNS introduce for activism, youth activist groups can face many challenges when using SNS in their work. Some of these challenges relate to the ways in which activist groups attempt to leave the desired impression on their audience. For example, activists seek to engage their audiences in their initiatives and as a result, carry out important self-presentation work to shape how their audiences view them. For instance, previous research has found that activists can face challenges when communicating serious messages about societal issues in front of an audience that uses SNS primarily for entertainment [16, 27], and who may not be interested in more weighty content. Therefore, in order to help youth more effectively bring about social change in their community, it is critical to study how youth activists currently engage in impression management online and how systems might better help them create their desired image in front of their audiences.

One of the commonly used theories regarding self-presentation is Goffman's dramaturgical framework. Goffman describes *impression management* as the process through which people (termed actors) engage in performance as they adjust their behavior in front of an audience (the individuals observing the actors' actions), in an attempt to control the impression that their audience forms about them [2]. Goffman defines two settings: the front stage and the back stage. The front stage is a place where actors try to show the best version of themselves, while the back stage is where actors prepare for the front stage. For example, in a restaurant setting, the dining area (front stage) is where employees act in a formal manner, whereas in the kitchen area (the back stage) employees act more casually and prepare for their front stage performance.

Goffman's dramaturgical approach was initially used to explain face-to-face communications [17] and was later expanded to characterize impression management in computer mediated communication settings [15, 24, 30, 42]. Human-computer interaction (HCI) researchers have used Goffman's theory to analyze impression management in various settings online (e.g., online dating, job applicants' use of SNS, and youth's use of SNS) [15, 40, 51, 57]. While there is a rich literature characterizing how people engage in self-presentation online, two important gaps in research exist. First, there has been little work investigating the dramaturgical aspects of youth-led activism. Impression management is critical in this context, as youth activists must navigate peer pressure from their audience while simultaneously working to change opinions [27]. Second, while prior social computing research has typically examined how *individuals* engage in self-presentation [15, 42], prior work has rarely examined how groups engage in impression management together on SNS (work by Beckmann and Gross [3] is a notable exception). And yet, Goffman's framework not only theorizes the self-presentation work that individuals do but also how this work unfolds in group settings. Goffman introduced the concept of *performance teams* to explain how actors in a group setting cooperate in the back stage and during their performances to construct a united front (that they have all agreed upon) to their audience [17]. Given that social computing tools are used both by individuals and groups to engage audiences (e.g., as in the case of youth empowerment organizations), there is a need for more research examining the dynamics of performance team impression management online.

To address these research gaps, we studied the role of impression management in the work of youth activists involved in youth empowerment organizations. Youth empowerment organizations provide an environment for youth to engage in social action that can create positive change at an individual and community level and lead to a more equitable society [48]. Such programming

is increasingly being developed across the world, to engage youth–particularly those from low-income and marginalized communities–in social justice initiatives [1, 28, 67]. Youth empowerment organizations try to provide an environment where power, and leadership responsibilities are shared equitably among youth and adults working in such organizations [29]. In the organization we partnered with, youth activists work alongside adults, who support them to use SNS to foster public engagement with their initiatives, and ultimately affect social change (e.g., gang violence, youth-police relationships, mental health). This offered us an opportunity to further understand the role that SNS can play in supporting youth activism. We conducted interviews with adult staff members and focus groups with youth at an empowerment organization in a city located in the Northeastern United States. Our analysis of the transcribed interviews and focus groups was guided by these research questions: *RQ1: How do members of a youth empowerment organization use SNS for impression management? RQ2: What challenges do organization members, youth and staff face in creating an idealized presentation of self and the organization online?*

Our findings characterize impression management practices and complexities that arise in a youth empowerment organizational context. First, we will discuss obstacles that can arise when organizational members attempt to create a unified and curated front stage for their audience. Second, we will illustrate how youth use various SNS features to create a sense of authenticity and connect with their audience. Lastly, we will show how youth desired to hack SNS algorithms and learn more about their audience. We conclude with implications for the design of tools that support the work of youth activists on SNS (such as technologies that support collective impression management for youth activists).

2 RELATED WORK

2.1 Activism on SNS

Previous research has explored the benefits of using SNS for activism. SNS such as Facebook and Twitter provide platforms for people to voice their opinions [4] and can enable information circulation, the public deliberation of ideas, and help people to mobilize action [52]. For instance, researchers have investigated the role of Twitter at raising awareness about accounts of violence against black women; stories that are often not portrayed by mainstream media[65]. In this regard, Tufekci discusses the emergence of networked micro-celebrity activism, enabled by SNS [62]. Networked micro-celebrity activism refers to people who are not part of specific political parties or institutions, and use SNS as a means to create attention around a cause of interest. In this way, networked micro-celebrities have the power to create their own framing of social movements.This is a power which was traditionally in the hands of mass media gatekeepers[62].

Despite opportunities presented by SNS for civic action, researchers have pointed out some barriers that SNS present [4, 27] in the context of youth activism. Irannejad Bisafar and colleagues [27] discussed the challenges youth face in discussing societal issues on SNS (e.g., Instagram and Facebook), such as the disconnect between the purpose of youth's message and audience expectations, given that these spaces were primarily used by their peers for fun and entertainment. This challenge highlights an important area of research, that is, understanding the extent to which youth activists are mindful of their audiences on SNS and the ways in which they utilize self-presentation strategies to overcome disconnects between their goals and audience expectations. Indeed, activists' use of impression management strategieshas been previously studied in offline settings [21]. For instance, Greenebaum [21] has used Goffman's dramaturgical framework to explain how activists, in offline settings, try to promote vegetarianism positively amidst the stigma surrounding vegetarianism. However, to our knowledge, prior research has not examined how activists within empowerment organizations engage in online impression management. In this

paper, we discuss findings from our study of self-presentation on SNS that help to fill this gap in research.

2.2 Dramaturgical Approaches to Studying SNS

In this section, we discuss aspects of impression management that have been studied in HCI and CSCW, to help situate our research contributions.

2.2.1 Audience in Impression Management. One of activists' primary high-level tasks is constructing framings for social movements–such framing is "a process of meaning construction that allows audiences within the movement to understand a social situation in a specific way" [26]. This process of framing involves activists' articulation of social problems, policy, or other injustice in a particular way, identifying possible solutions to that problem, issuing calls to action, and communicating these messages to their audiences of interest [26]. The process of communication can be seen as one of impression management, as activists attempt to shape their audiences' perspectives on the issues at hand, the strategies they propose to address these issues, and the activists themselves as they advocate for change. In this section, we review previous research on the role audiences play in the context of impression management, and how audiences are different in online settings as compared to offline settings. Lastly, we situate our work by explaining how our study will add to the body of knowledge on impression management by exploring how youth activists in civic organizations interact with their audiences on SNS.

Goffman's framework describes social interactions as being composed of two roles: audiences and actors. Audiences are individuals who observe the actors. Actors put on their front stage performance while monitoring and adjusting their performance based on the constant feedback that they receive from the crowd (i.e., their audience). Therefore, knowing one's audience and their reaction is critical in impression management. However, with the use of SNS, many crowd reactions are not visible, which creates challenges. For instance, Zytko et al. argue that one of the main frustrations that people face when using online dating profiles is the lack of adequate feedback from their audiences [68]. Zytko et al. describe how the lack of feedback leaves users unaware of how they are perceived by people they are communicating with, and unsure about how they should act [68]. These challenges are amplified in goal-oriented spaces (i.e., spaces in which individuals and organizations unite to achieve a shared objective [54]).

Marwick and boyd argue that in the case where there is a lack of knowledge about one's crowd, people take cues from their social environment and create an imagined audience for whom they adjust their language and style of presentation [42]. In their research, Litt [37] discusses macro-level and micro-level factors that influence one's imagined audience. Macro-level factors include social norms, the active audience online, and the features of SNS. For instance, Facebook allows users to filter who can view their specific posts. This feature on Facebook influences the imagined audience of the person who is creating the post [37]. On the other hand, micro-level factors include one's social skills, and motivations. For instance, how well users can interpret social cues and what motivations they have for using SNS, can influence their imagined audiences [37]. Moreover, Oolo and Siibak discuss impression management strategies that youth employ by distinguishing between different imagined audiences [47]. For instance, youth use tactics such as strategic information sharing and self-censorship based on the crowd they are addressing: their ideal crowd (e.g., close friends) and their extended audience (i.e., individuals beyond their core close-tie network, for whom they need to perform differently) [47].

Our work contributes to online impression management research by investigating impression management practices, challenges, and nuances that arise within a goal-oriented context: the work

of youth activists within an empowerment organizational context. As we will discuss, this context introduces particular dynamics and constraints that impact online impression management.

2.3 An Exhibition Approach to Online Presentation of Self

In the previous section, we reviewed how the concept of an audience in impression management differs in online settings compared to offline settings. In this section, we introduce Hogan's adaptation of Goffman's theory for online settings in order to situate our findings. While Goffman's dramaturgical theory was originally formulated to characterize face-to-face communication, Hogan [24] has developed a re-framing of this theory for online settings. Hogan argues that self-presentation on SNS is different than in face-to-face communications. According to Hogan, online communications can better be characterized as *exhibitions* rather than Goffman-esque performances [24]. Hogan argues that one of the characteristics of performance is that it is "bounded by time and space", meaning that actors engage in self-presentation in front of an audience who is present at a specific time and place in order to observe the actors. In contrast, in SNS, users' self-presentation is a form of exhibition, because unlike performances, exhibitions are not necessarily delivered at a specific time or space. Instead, in online settings, people submit their content to a third party, called the *curator*. Hogan uses the term curator to describe SNS algorithms that distribute content to audiences and determine which audience sees that user's content. In this sense, an exhibition could be defined as space where people submit content (e.g., SNS posts) that is stored and later distributed to the audience by the curators, to enable later interactions between the submitter and the receiver of the content. Therefore, in online settings, the third party creates a separation between the actor and the audience, preventing the users from monitoring and addressing their audience [24]. In our work, we use Hogan's exhibition framing of impression management along with Goffman's dramaturgical approach, to help us more effectively analyze how youth activists engage in impression management on SNS.

2.3.1 Authenticity in Impression Management. Another aspect of impression management is conveying a sense of authenticity. Authenticity refers to the extent to which an audience perceives a performance to be credible, original, and sincere [19]. In fact, impression management tactics are only successful if the observers perceive them as authentic [5]. Huy and Shipilov have pointed to the significance of authenticity in building emotional capital within organizations, defined as "the aggregate feelings of goodwill toward a company and the way it operates" [25]. These researchers describe authenticity in social media as occuring when messages and actions in the virtual world are aligned with those in the physical. While Huy and Shipilov studied the importance of authenticity within organizations' internal social media practices, researchers have also studied the importance of authenticity in other online contexts.

For example, researchers have examined the challenges involved in creating an authentic presentation of self on SNS. Ellison et al. have investigated how individuals use online dating profiles in order to create a specific impression on their audience while also trying to present an authentic version of themselves [41]. Marwick and boyd argue that authenticity is situated in relation to the audience. They use the example of differences between people working in the fashion industry versus people working in open-source software development. The authors argue that for the former group, assembling an outfit based on the latest trend might convey authenticity; whereas in the latter group, ignoring trends might be perceived as authentic. Similarly, Bennett discusses the challenge of creating a sense of authenticity when performing for various types of audiences online [4].

Salisbury and Pooley [53] have categorized various strategies used to convey authenticity on SNS, including consistency and sharing personal details. For instance, consistency is the extent to

which a user's presentation online matches their presentation offline, and over time, and across various SNS platforms [6, 22, 41, 56]. On the other hand, sharing personal details about one's life is another way to create a sense of intimacy and relatedness and as a result a sense of authenticity for the audience.

The presentation of an authentic self is important for effectively persuading audiences–a key component of activism [20, 25, 59]. In Webb's work with an activist group in North India, the author discusses the importance of relying on working-class residents, as opposed to elite voices, in presenting the benefits of the activists' work in local communities. Webb argues that involving local voices, who presented in their local languages helped portray a sense of authenticity [64]. Authenticity also influences how journalists decide on the newsworthiness of the articles they choose to report [59]. Presidential campaign activists are an example of a group that tries to create official and professional campaign events; however, Sobieraj has found that such actions are often perceived as staged and manipulative by journalists [59].

Despite prior work demonstrating the work involved in presenting an authentic self online, and the importance of conveying a sense of authenticity when engaged in activism, little is known about how youth activists construct a sense of authenticity on SNS nor how their positioning within empowerment organizations might impact such attempts. Our work helps address this research gap by characterizing how youth activists work to create an authentic presentation of their empowerment organization on SNS.

2.3.2 Performance Team. While our discussion thus far has focused on how individuals engage in impression in our research focused on the work of youth activists within empowerment organizations, it is also crucial to understand how such impression management happens amongst groups of people online. Increasingly, civic organizations are creating programming that seeks to help youth "develop a sense of agency to make a difference in the world", through increased confidence in their ability to affect change and participation in action that seeks to affect the positive transformation of their environments [67]. These organizations aim to provide supportive environments for youth to build their sense of efficacy for affecting change and to enable access to resources to carry out their social justice efforts [67]. An important part of nurturing youth empowerment for affecting change is partnering youth with supportive adults who function as role models, mentors, and who can facilitate the development of needed skills and access to social, material, and informational resources needed for social justice efforts [32, 67]. These youth-adult partnerships are designed to be equitable in nature, with a power sharing model that is designed to uplift and provide youth with support needed to bring about positive change in their personal lives and in their communities [28]. In order to understand impression management within these partnerships, it is not only important to study how youth engage in self-presentation as individuals, but also how the organization as a group engages to create the desired image of the organization. In this section, we overview Goffman's concept of performance teams to explain how our study contributes to knowledge about collective impression management online.

In his book, *The presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman discusses the reciprocal dependence that exists amongst team members [17]. Members rely on each other's performances to go as expected in order for the whole team to leave the intended impression on their audience. For instance, in a shoe store setting, if one of the salespersons uses inappropriate language, this can reflect poorly on the store. To prevent such damage to the store's image, a manager might assume a director role by allocating parts to team members (e.g., communicating desired behaviors to store employees) and bringing team members back in line with suitable conduct. As a result, members of a team can work to reach unanimity about the impression they would like to project before performing in front of the public [17]. For instance, in the shoe store example, to create a

unified front stage, employees should agree on the impression they would like to leave on their customers. Goffman uses the term *performance team* to refer to ways in which a group of people manages impressions in front of their audience. Performance team members discuss details of their performance during *staging talks* (e.g., the size of the audience, their roles within the performance, possible disruptions that might happen, etc.). While the shoe store example presented here helps to illuminate Goffman's concepts, it represents an idealized version of what happens in team settings. In reality, there may be less coordination and more disagreement within performance teams, for example, about what impression should be created or how one's actions contribute to or detract from that goal. We examined such group dynamics through our study of adult staff and youth activist perspectives on the use of SNS for impression management.

The notion of performance teams is an important concept within impression management. While much research has studied impression management online, this work has mainly focused on how *individuals* engage in this self-presentation. Our work takes a different approach, by using Goffman's dramaturgical theory to study *collective* impression management in a youth empowerment organizational context.

3 METHOD

We conducted a qualitative study to examine how youth and adults in a youth empowerment organizational context leverage SNS for their work.

3.1 Study Site Overview

The organization we worked with empowers youth (aged 14-21), most of whom are from low-income neighborhoods, to identify and address community issues that they deem important. The organization has four sites. We studied youth and adults at three sites situated in a metropolitan city in the northeastern United States. In this qualitative study, we chose to study one organization over a prolonged period of time (Spring 2016 - Summer 2018), by conducting several rounds of data collection with youth and staff members. It is important to note that the goal of qualitative studies is not to achieve statistical-probabilistic generalizability [8, 50]. Instead, the goal is to achieve naturalistic generalizability, by providing thick descriptions and details of the context of the study and by linking findings to prior work [45, 58]. Naturalistic generalizability is attained when a reader compares the results of a study and determines whether results resonate with their own or vicarious experiences. Therefore, we purposefully chose to study one organization over an extended period of time, to add to the depth, richness, and credibility of the knowledge acquired from the study of our sample population [14].

At the organization we worked with, youth are employed for an annual contract and focus on various issues each year (e.g., mental health, developing positive police-youth relationships, and gang violence). Each physical site of the organization was composed of 12-15 youth working with 2-3 adult staff members to address community issues. Youth and adults meet in person, after school hours on weekdays for an average of three hours each session. During these sessions, adults support youth, helping them to plan and execute various initiatives within the community. For instance, each year the organization organizes a conference with artistic performances to raise awareness about local issues. Youth lead the execution of events including dialogues on how to address racism.

At the time this study was conducted, the organization had one main Facebook account (with more than 2000 followers) and a Twitter account (with more than 1500 followers). The content posted to these social media accounts mostly focused on their events and articles about the organization's achievements. For instance, the organization posted flyers that youth and staff created for specific events, or news articles that celebrated their achievements. Additionally, youth were encouraged

Study #1: Interview   **Study #2**: Focus group   **Study #3**: Focus group   **Study #4**: Focus group
Participants: Staff   **Participants**: Youth   **Participants**: Youth   **Participants**: Youth
Guiding question: **Guiding question**:   **Guiding question**:   **Guiding question**:
How can   What opportunities   What do youth desire   What is the process
technology better   and challenges do   to learn about their   through which youth
support the   youth face when   online audiences and   do outreach within
organization's   using SNS in their   how do youth want to   their communities and
goals?   work as activists?   interact with their   the types of audiences
                                                         audiences online?   they want to target?

Refined questions guiding the analysis

RQ1: How do members of a youth empowerment organization use SNS for impression management,

RQ2: What challenges do organization members face in creating their idealized self-presentation online?
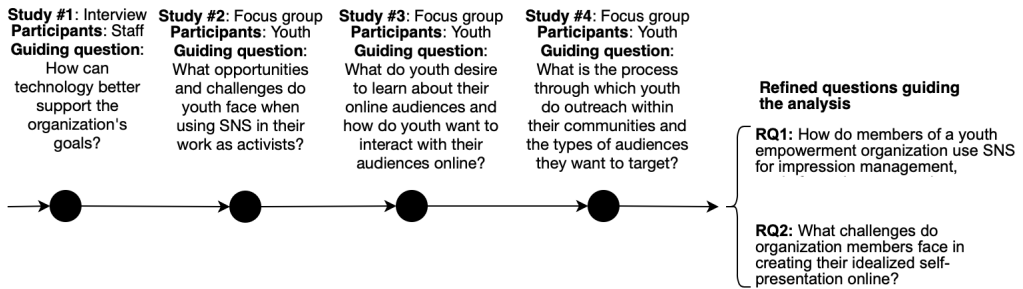
Fig. 1. Overview of Data Collection Phases

to use their own social media accounts for their work; Facebook and Snapchat were the primary platforms that they chose to use. On these personal accounts, youth also posted flyers for events, as well as pictures and videos, during times when they were preparing for or participating in an event.

3.2 Data Collection

Our in-depth qualitative inquiry consisted of four phases of data collection (Fig. 1). In the first phase of our study, we conducted interviews with seven staff members working at three of the organization's sites during Fall 2015. Our interview questions were designed with the goal of understanding obstacles that the organization faces and the opportunities for using SNS. We also asked questions to understand how technology could better support the organization's goals. The interview sessions were led by one member of our research team. Findings from the interviews with staff members shed light onto how staff and youth use their organizational and personal SNS accounts respectively for outreach in their community, and the challenge that the organization faces in managing their organizational social networking accounts. After learning about the staff's perspective on the use of SNS for their work, we sought to study youth's practices around the use of SNS for activism.

Phases 2-4 of data collection consisted of three rounds of focus groups with youth, through which we aimed to iteratively understand the challenges they face when using SNS for their work and opportunities of technologies to better support them. We chose to run focus groups with youth as a way of helping spur conversation and group discussion of their practices around and attitudes towards SNS. Moreover, we wanted to facilitate discussions in a format that mirrored the natural practices within the organization we studied. Youth in the organization held group meetings every week to discuss topics such as community issues and planning upcoming events, and regularly engaged in group activities. Therefore, any intervention designed for the youth, would be used in a group setting. The focus groups with youth were conducted independently from interviews with staff members. We did not discuss findings from interviews with adults with youth during the focus groups (and vice versa).

In the second phase of data collection (Spring 2016), we conducted two focus groups (one focus group at each of two sites) with a total of 20 youth (n=10 per focus group, with 12 minors). During the focus groups, youth discussed ways in which they currently use SNS in their work as activists, and the challenges they faced. We also asked youth to share posts from their social media accounts with us (if they felt comfortable doing so), to serve as prompts for the discussions. Through analysis of the data gathered in this phase, we found that youth experienced challenges when trying to use their personal accounts to engage their audiences.

We used our next phase of data collection to further examine this challenge. In the third phase of data collection (Winter 2017), we conducted two additional focus groups with a total 17 youth (11

minors). In these focus groups, participants discussed how technology could help them to better communicate with their desired audiences. These discussions further explored what youth desired to learn about their online audiences and how they wanted to interact with them. Lastly, in the fourth phase of data collection, we conducted a final round of focus groups (Summer 2018) at two sites with six youth at each site (nine minors). During these focus groups, youth discussed the outreach process they used within their communities and the type of audiences they wanted to target.

All focus group sessions were led by two members of our research team, and interviews were led by one member of our team. We analyzed our data after each round of data collection (Fig. 1). Our findings from each phase of data collection helped us design and conduct the subsequent data collection phase, and iteratively refine the guiding questions for both our focus groups and data analysis. In each round of data collection, we started with broader questions exploring the opportunities and challenges of using SNS within the organization. As we progressed through the focus groups and analysis, we identified the importance of the organization's audience for their work. Therefore, our questions gradually evolved from the exploration of how youth and staff used SNS to how they perceived their online audiences.

Our prolonged data collection over two years helped us gather and learn from the perspectives of different youth in the organization (youth were employed annually and as such each round of data collection engaged both youth who had participated in a previous round of data collection and new youth). Also, the longitudinal nature of the study helped our research team to create close rapport and trust with the organization. We also included questions about the challenges and benefits of using SNS during all the focus groups to gain a comprehensive understanding of youth's practices around the use of SNS for their work. We would also like to point out that during these two years, one of the youth later became a staff member at the organization. While this is outside the scope of this paper, we suggest that future work study how the shift in youth's role from youth to staff members may affect their attitudes towards impression management on SNS.

Throughout this 2-year study, we developed a close collaboration with the staff at the organization. Through this collaboration, we learned about the organization's culture and made sure to integrate our study within the program to be less intrusive in the work of the youth and staff. Additionally, we worked with staff members to learn from how to engage and approach the youth, and sought staff's perspective when designing the study. Youth and staff met together an average of three times each week at one of the physical sites of the organization. Staff at the organization helped allocate time slots during their weekly sessions for our research team to conduct our study. Therefore, all of the youth who were recruited for the study were employed by our partner organization. We compensated youth by paying for the time we spent with them for the study according to their hourly rate of pay as an employee of the empowerment organization. The interviews with the staff were scheduled individually. We compensated the staff members with gift cards. In addition, the work we report on in this paper allowed us to establish a collaboration with the empowerment organization that we utilized to secure follow-on grant funding. This funding allowed us to pay staff members to join our research team as consultants, and to provide further funding to support youth participation in our work. Aside from this monetary compensation, the long-term goal of this project is that the organization will eventually benefit from a tool we create to support youth empowerment organizations in their use of SNS for outreach.

3.3 Data Analysis

We audio-recorded all of the sessions (focus groups and interviews); these recordings were then transcribed verbatim. We used open coding [13] to inductively characterize concepts in the qualitative data, and then clustered related codes into the higher-level themes reported in this paper.

To analyze data collected through our multiple rounds of focus groups, we followed an iterative process. Specifically, two researchers used open coding to identify emergent themes from our first round of focus groups, and these initial codes guided our preliminary analysis of the data from our subsequent focus groups while we also used an inductive approach to label emergent phenomena. Given the nature of our study design (in which each data collection phase built upon and sought to further explore themes that arose in previous phases), utilizing these initial codes as a starting point for analysis helped us examine how themes developed in our first rounds of data collection were further expanded upon through subsequent data collection, in addition to characterizing newly-arising themes. Then, after the final stage of data collection, the lead researcher re-analyzed all of the data, both deductively (using the previously-generated codes) and inductively (to capture newly-identified phenomena).

During this final analysis of our data, it became apparent that one of the main themes in the data centered on how youth and adults use SNS for self-presentation in front of their online audiences. Therefore, we used Goffman's dramaturgical framework as well as Hogan's theoretical constructs to further unpack and refine our findings and to further answer RQ1 and RQ2 (Fig. 1). The use of theoretical frameworks is a commonly-used practice to guide qualitative research at different levels (e.g., defining research questions, developing interview questions, and analyzing data) [7, 11]. In this research, we used Goffman and Hogan's theoretical constructs to help formalize and deepen our analysis after the inductive open coding step.

All analysis was reviewed regularly during research team meetings. Prior to data collection, our research protocol was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at our University.

4 FINDINGS

Our findings characterize the work of youth and staff at a youth empowerment organization, including how adults and youth used social media to engage in impression management. We characterize adults' desire to create a unified and curated image of the organization online and their obstacles in achieving this goal. We also discuss how youth used various SNS features to convey a less-curated, and a more authentic image in an attempt to better connect with their audience, and how the strategies they used online reflect attempts to shift their self-presentation work from a form of exhibition to a performance.

4.1 Unified and Curated Front Stage

In this section, we discuss how staff members viewed the creation of the organization's online identity.

4.1.1 Centralized maintenance vs. collective engagement. Along with a website and channel on YouTube, the organization also had one Facebook page and one Twitter account. We call these pages the organizational social networking accounts. The organization had chosen to be represented online as a single entity, that is, to have single social networking accounts that encompass all of the organization's physical sites. Mary, one of the staff members, explained how they used their organizational accounts:

> We are simultaneously reaching youth and also adults [...] So we have sort of our, array [of audiences] and um, because we're trying to present like a face of the organization we do that. [...] We're talking on those organizational accounts about things happening in [our three physical locations] all at the same time.

Mary also added that:

> There's like a ton of complications [...] we're trying to reach all these different audiences. We don't want to have like a million different pages [...] out there, because that's confusing.

As noted by Mary, the organization has various types of audiences online. Previous researchers have investigated the challenge that individuals face for self-presentation in online settings when they are exposed to multiple types of audiences; a phenomenon known as context collapse (where multiple audiences merge into one context) [42]. The organization we worked with is also facing the challenge of context collapse as it pertains to multiple audiences. Our findings address our second research question by shedding light on another level of challenge related to managing multiple situations (various physical sites) and varied actors (multiple staff members and youth) as they collectively shape the identity and online image of the organization.

Mary's quote shows how the organization wanted to use social networking accounts to represent a single front stage identity for the organization (located at three different sites) to various types of audiences, all at the same time. In this regard, Susan, another staff member, discussed her hesitation with having separate accounts for each physical site:

> I feel like if, if we separated it, it takes away a lot. [...] We're all working towards the same thing. We're all like doing pretty much the same work just in different ways. [...] We'll still always be one.

Susan described her desire for a centralized account as stemming from a need to have unity across the organization's physical sites. This elucidates the value of a collectivistic presentation of the organization-one in which the common goal across sites is prioritized even amidst the varied ways in which each site carries out its work.

Moreover, in order to address the issue of multiple actors, the responsibility of maintaining the organizational social networking accounts was delegated to a single staff member. Mary, the staff member in charge of SNS maintenance, posted content created by her, the staff, and the youth. She additionally shared related posts from youth's social media pages. She described this process to us:

> So sometimes there's like an event. Like a Facebook Event that I'll create based on a youth event. And sometimes the youth will create a Facebook Event through their own page or whatever and then [I] will post it on our page. Um, and tweet about it and things like that. And we'll also do, you know, some Live tweeting and take pictures from events. Staff will take pictures on their cell phone and text them to me. And then I'll just put them up on the, you know, those kinds of things.

Of course, the main challenge posed by such centralized maintenance was the limited human resources for keeping the organizational social networking accounts updated. For example, Susan described the challenges Mary faces in posting content for the various sites:

> I just feel like that's probably the biggest challenges, that we don't always cover everything. Because it's only technically one person doing it. So [Mary] has a lot. [...] But she does a great job doing it honestly. I'm like shocked about all the stuff she already does. [...] So she does very well with it. You know, but I just feel like she should get some help.

Moreover, this delegation of the SNS maintenance tasks led other staff members to feel detached from the organization's work online. For instance, when asked about the organization's Twitter account, Emma (a staff member) remarked:

> My first interaction with our Twitter Account was for-I didn't know we had one until our event on the 20th. And we were like, "Oh, do we have one?" Oh, yeah, I guess we do. But I don't get to use it that often.

Similarly, David (a staff member) was unsure whether the organization had SNS:

> I'm pretty sure [the organization] has a Twitter too. I don't really use a Twitter. Mary
> [...] is the main person that runs our Facebook page, our Twitter [...] every time I have
> something I can give it to her and I'm like 90% certain we have a Twitter. I could be
> wrong. I'm not a big Twitter person.

Despite the aforementioned detachment from the organizational social networking accounts, the organization preferred a centralized model in order to avoid added complexities. For example, Mary discussed a challenge that could arise from allowing youth to manage the organizational social networking accounts. For example, youth might not consider posting the contextual information needed given that youth in multiple cities view the sites:

> Their enthusiasm sometimes outweighs like their, you know, thought process around,
> "Well, I have to make sure I say [the name of the city], because somebody in [in another
> city] might also be reading this and get confused." Or you know, "[I] have to include
> the area code for the phone number."

In this case, Mary preferred to take charge of the accounts herself, rather than delegating the task to others. When discussing the possibility of decentralizing the updating of the social networking accounts, Susan indicated that it would beneficial:

> If [Mary] can have some help with that, or if we [staff members] could even access to
> put our own stuff up on there too. Um, but I'm sure that would get a little hectic itself.

Mary explained how allowing all youth to post on the organization's accounts can make it challenging to monitor the type of content that is being posted and could threaten the image that the organization is portraying to their audience:

> We don't want, you know, to give free reign to like every youth organizer that works
> here to post as [the organization], because then we have to go through and get rid
> of them all when they're no longer youth organizers and there's like certain liability
> there that no one's checking what they say. And you know, what if they swear as
> the organization? You know, all those kinds of things. That you want to prevent that
> instead of just responding to it after it happens.

In summary, despite the challenge that having a single account and a single person to manage all the social networking accounts presents, the organization had adopted a centralized SNS management strategy. This choice was made because the organization did not want to jeopardize a unified and curated front stage presentation of the organization. Goffman also discusses this phenomenon in the context of offline communication [17]. As mentioned earlier in the paper, performance team members are dependent on each other's performances. Therefore, Goffman argues that only people that can be trusted to carry their role without giving off unintended impressions are included in performance teams. In our study, staff members expressed concern about the language that youth might use online and how that might create the wrong impression about the organization. This finding helps convey how staff wanted the organization to be presented online and how they tried to mitigate an unwanted image of the organization by having one staff member managing the organizations' page.

4.1.2 Data Waste and Creation of Multiple Images Online. One of the characteristics of online activities on SNS (i.e., creating pages, interacting with others, etc.) is that such activities create a persistent digital footprint of the user; one that defines the user's online identity over time. Prior work has discussed both benefits and challenges that digital footprints can present. For instance, this digital history can be useful for content personalization and understanding user behavior more generally [18, 34, 39, 46]. On the other hand, digital footprints can be problematic because

of the impressions that may be formed based on the content that is available about people online (e.g., in terms of the loss of control over one's data, how companies may determine whether to employ someone based on their SNS behavior, and in terms of how our past behaviors online might later be problematic) [10, 38, 49]. In this paper, our findings build upon this prior body of work by unpacking the implications of collective digital trails in an empowerment organizational context. Specifically, we focus on how the organization members' digital trails and resulting data waste complicate the maintenance of their unified image online.

During our interviews and focus groups with youth, we identified sources of data waste created over the years by youth and staff members that impacted the organization's image online. This included defunct social networking accounts and pages that persisted despite inactivity. Mary described some of the SNS pages that their organization has created, but which have not yet been deleted:

> The social media stuff [...] have been many times where people [at the organization] have created like a [...] Facebook Page for their [physical] site or Twitter for their site [...] And truthfully nobody posts on them. They have no followers, because nobody uses them [...] so we used to have a Group which is like an old Facebook thing. A Facebook Group. And that still exists, because you can't close it unless all the group members leave. But nobody, but we don't use it anymore.

We argue that the creation of what we call social networking site waste contradicts the organization's mission of having a unified image online. For instance, a member of our research team, who had attempted to find the organization's Facebook page, had to ask Mary which one was actually used. Mary also said that:

> Now we have a page called: The [name of the organization]. And there's also a separate one in [name of a city] that they started, because they thought that would make sense, but then it didn't really happen.

Previous researchers have, in fact, investigated how the accumulation and persistence of data on SNS can create temporal context collapse [55]. For instance, Schoenebeck et al. have studied the impression management of adult Facebook users on SNS after their transition from adolescent Facebook users to adult Facebook users, based on the social networking content that the users produced over time. Adults in that study were engaging in retrospective impression management, trying to reconcile their past self-presentation and their present self-presentation [55]. Similarly, our findings illustrate the challenge of online data waste, that is, persistent digital footprints (in this case the creation multiple pages and not maintaining and/or deleting them), in terms of it leading to the creation of multiple images for the audience; something that the organization wanted to avoid in order to create a unified image online.

While impressions can persist offline through individuals' memories and physical artifacts, in offline contexts most research has examined impressions managed through the synchronous, real-time performance of actors in front of an audience. However, in online impression management, data waste can lead to unwanted digital footprints at a larger scale, which can, in turn, give off undesirable impressions to the audience. While previous studies have mostly discussed the implications of digital footprints for individuals, our work provides insight into the implications for groups. We argue that the negative side effects of digital footprints can be amplified when multiple actors (social networking site users) try to collectively use SNS and are engaging in collective and distributed impression management.

4.2 Authentic Front Stage

In the previous section, we discussed adult staff members' desire to create a curated front stage. We now discuss how, in comparison to these perspectives from our adult participants, youth discussed using features in their personal social media accounts to create a more ad-hoc front stage. We also illustrate that youth's interest in presenting an unplanned front stage was associated with their desire to create a connection with their audience.

During our focus groups with youth, they discussed the importance of using SNS to make their audience feel included in the work they are doing at the organization. For instance, Julie (one of the youth) mentioned that:

> I feel like a way I do outreach that is very effective is group stories on Snapchat. So I make a story, then I send it to a bunch of people and then I just constantly update it or whatever. [...] Like [event name] I'll post like the flyers. I'll post people doing musical performances [during rehearsals at the organization] and say like, "Oh, come to see the rest." I feel like once I did them, a lot of people started engaging in it. So it's one thing to outreach and then be like, "Okay, I'm coming through." Another thing is them feeling like they're part of something. So I feel like group stories on Snapchat definitely help.

In her quote, Julie describes updating her pre-selected contacts with pieces of information that are addressed to the audience as they become available. She believed that this approach helps her to make her audience feel part of the work that the organization does.

Previous researchers have investigated the process of impression management through the use of Snapchat stories [13]. McRobers et al. argue that Snapchat stories can be classified as a space that falls between a back stage and front stage, where users create experimental and improvised content; content that is not necessarily rehearsed, or curated [44]. Similarly, Triêu and Baym's study of the use of stories on Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram revealed that users found stories to be closer to a "real" representation of people's everyday life as opposed to other types of content (e.g., posts on users' feed) that may be more "polished" [61].

In our study, Julie's quote describes how she uses Snapchat stories to update her audience about their rehearsal and preparation work at the organization, and make her audience feel that they are engaged in the back stage (rehearsal and preparation), and as a result create a sense of authenticity and connection with the audience. Perception of authenticity is necessary for impression management because tactics used in impression management are only successful if deemed authentic by the observers [5]. Previous researchers have also shown that authenticity is central in the work of activists because it helps their audience to self-identify with them, leading to the success of their movements [64].

Our focus groups with youth revealed other SNS features that youth used to help their audience be part of the work that they do at the organization. For instance, Dave (one of the youth) discussed the Live feature on Facebook and how it helps him to show his audience what is happening at the organization:

> One feature that I think there's one on Facebook Live where you can use it and you go Live and you can kind of, it's Live; it's happening as it's happening. Just showing that and just showing... you don't necessarily interact with it itself to be engaging, you know what I'm saying. Since it's Live, people are just going to watch it and you be Live, in whatever you're doing. So let's say we are all working and we are having this survey, if we were Live right now, I don't have to necessarily talk to the Live stream itself and just be here and it could still be as engaging, whether or not I'm interacting with it or not.

Dave explains how the Live feature helps him to engage his audience by just providing a window into what the organization is doing in a natural setting. In fact, previous research has shown how the feelings of immersion (feeling of being where a particular event is happening) and immediacy (seeing what is happening, as it is happening) are important factors that make Facebook Live videos engaging [23]. Events on Facebook Live videos unfold as they are happening, and are hence less censored, creating a sense of authenticity from the perspective of the observers [23].

We argue that the use of in-the-moment SNS features to convey an authentic version of the organization stems from the fact that youth at the organization want to create a connection between the organization and their audiences. In fact, youth discussed the challenge that they faced in engaging their audience with their work at the organization because of the impression their peers had of the organization. They described how their peers viewed the organization as mostly "corny" and "boring". For instance, Julie said:

> Our group...It doesn't have an amazing reputation, so people might think that the like organization is corny and stuff.

Julie's quote shows a perceived gap between the image that youth wanted to project about the organization and the image that their audience had about their group. Leary and Kowalski [35] have shown that the discrepancy between people's desired image and the image that they currently convey to their audience is a motivator for impression management. As a result, we argue that youth's perceived gap about their image is one of the reasons why they engaged in impression management online and wanted to convey an authentic presentation of themselves.

4.3 Hacking the Curator & Recycling Content

In this section, we will discuss the youth's practice of recycling their previously-shared online content and how it relates to their desire to create an online performance. We build upon Hogan's work distinguishing exhibitions and performances [24] to explain how youth attempted to create a performance on SNS. In performance, actors can synchronously perform in front of an audience, and get feedback directly from the audience with no curators needed to deliver actors' messages. However, by using SNS, actors have less control over when their audiences experience their performances, as this task is relinquished to curators (i.e., SNS algorithms) that will deliver actors' messages. However, our data show how youth demonstrated a desire for some control over the timing of message delivery to their audiences. Some of the youth discussed how they will, at times, re-post a message that they had previously shared (e.g., to their Facebook page) about an event that they were organizing, especially when it is close to the date of an event; a time frame in which it is critical for the actors (youth) to deliver their messages to their audience. For instance, Melissa (one of the youth) mentions how she would re-share content with her followers:

> When I post about outreach, I usually post on my Instagram and I post it often. I'll repost it, just sort of remind people.

During our focus groups, youth even asked if we could develop an app to enable them to control the frequency of posting content for a specific event. For instance, one of our participants explained the importance of dynamically adjusting posting frequency:

> You have to keep reminding people that this is gonna happen. So like and also your, your thing could like get lost in like the shuffle of just, you know, stuff. So like they might not see it the first day, but then, then three days later they might see it. Like make sure you can always set how many times it is. Because what if like you set it like for two times a week or something. But then when it gets closer to the event like maybe you want to do it like... Do it like every single day and just like throw it in people's face so they continuously see it.

While this example might initially appear as a simple act of reposting a message, it illustrates how youth operate within the curated system to gather an audience at a specific time (before an event). Building upon Hogan's work [24], our findings characterize how youth attempt to circumvent the curator, that is, the social media algorithms that determine when and how content is made visible to users. The presence of a third-party digital curator that manages the displaying of content, is the hallmark feature of what Hogan terms an exhibition. We argue that youth are attempting to shift their online interactions to be closer to a performance, that is, direct engagement with their audience in a synchronous or near-synchronous manner. Youth attempt to convene their audiences in order to view their posts at specific times - more specifically, the time before an event when it is critical for youth to remind their audience of their message.

Another example, which depicts how youth wanted to hack the curator, is found in a quote from one of the youth, Sydney. Sydney mentioned that sometimes she goes back to her old SNS posts and re-shares them, hoping that new people would see them:

> It's good to like go back and look at. Like say if it's like a certain topic that reminded you of how to like, you know, do something, I don't know, anything. [...] You can like go back and reread it. And you can even re-share something if you feel like. Sometimes I re-share a lot of my stuff just because I feel like not a lot of people seen it or I didn't-or I feel like, like I need to share it again just to, you know, share it again. Maybe somebody new will see it.

This quote from Sydney is another example for how youth recycled their SNS posts in order to take control of convening their audience and as a result create a performance; a task that they feel cannot solely be delegated to the curator. We argue that when using SNS, youth could have submitted their messages online and left it to the curator (SNS algorithms) to deliver their message to their audiences. Instead, they make a deliberate attempt to control the distribution of their message in order to increase its chance of being seen. In other words, youth are aware of the fact that the content they submit (post) might not have been delivered to an audience in the same manner as in a synchronous performance. Therefore, they deliberately repost the content as a way to gain more control over convening their audience. Of course, we cannot say whether youth are successful in actually taking control (because it is ultimately SNS algorithms that decide when the audience sees content), but rather describe their intent in doing so.

In summary, the ways in which youth recycle content represent a means of hacking the curator, that is, the SNS algorithms that determine the audience for their online performances. By re-posting a previous post and intending to change the frequency of re-posting at key times, youth are attempting to move their online interactions with their networks from an asynchronous to a (near-)synchronous model. This online activity is more akin to a performance that is temporally-bounded than a more passive (i.e., curator-managed), asynchronous exhibition.

5 DISCUSSION

In the previous section, we characterized some of the issues that activists within a youth empowerment organization face when trying to create their desired impressions online. In this section, we discuss some of the implications of our findings for the design of social computing tools that help activists achieve their self-presentation goals.

5.1 Collective Impression Management

5.1.1 Collective Impression Management in Organizational Context. In the organization we worked with, the adult staff communicated a desire to maintain a curated and unified front stage image. Therefore, they chose a centralized management strategy, in which only one person posted content

on the organization's social networking accounts. However, we also illustrated that such a central-ized management strategy gave rise to issues of disengagement for other members and transferred all the workload of online page maintenance to only one individual. Therefore, we argue that in order to help organizations create a unified representation on SNS while spurring engagement and the collaboration of their members, there is an opportunity for technology to provide a back stage space for collaborative preparation of a unified front stage identity.

To this end, we suggest that future work explore collective impression management on SNS in more depth. Previous researchers have in fact explored collective impression management in offline settings, but in other contexts, such as in the lives of married couples and teams of doctors managing the impressions of their patients [36]. While most collective impression management research has been offline, Mazmanian and Erickson have investigated the importance of collective impression management for solving the issue of technology-enabled *total availability* within service-oriented industries, which are highly dependent on clients' approval [43]. Total availability refers to the fact that with the development of information and communication technologies, employees in many service-based industries are expected to be available 24/7 for their clients. Of course, total availability is an issue because it creates workplace stress and health issues for employees. Mazmanian and Erickson posit that collective impression management may help reduce the time that individual employees need to be available. The authors discuss how by following a structured coordination scheme in the back stage (e.g., making sure all employees are aware of their goals, follow the same script, and participate in meetings to coordinate), employees were able to take time off, while conveying an impression of total availability in the front stage (in front of their clients) [43].

Beyond Mazmanian and Erickson's work, little research has investigated collective impression management in online settings. Our study helps fill this research gap. In the case of the organization we worked with, our findings shed light on some of the coordination issues that the organization needed to tackle in the back stage in order to collaboratively create content for the organizational SNS pages. For example, as we discussed previously, when posting content in the organizational social networking accounts, youth would sometimes forget to include metadata that was important for helping the audience make sense of their posts (e.g., specifying to which of the organization's sites the content of a post corresponds) and also creating a unified image of the organization.

To mitigate such "off-script" behavior, Goffman describes how team members in offline settings rely on various provisions before, during, and after a performance, to avoid discrepancies. Such provisions include staging talks (talks about the details of their performance), having directors (i.e., individuals who manage the behaviors of the team), and engaging in team collusion (interactions among team members a performance to communicate the information they would like to keep in secret from their audience) [17]. However, in computer-mediated contexts like SNS, since interactions are often asynchronous, work is needed to examine how some of these provisions might be translated, reframed, reinvented, or even complicated in online settings. For instance, to address the aforementioned issue of youth forgetting to include important metadata in their posts, one simple design idea could be to create tools that help users create messages for SNS by automatically adding a site location tag to a post. Such an approach could be an alternative, online-relevant way of addressing the goals of staging talks. In this case, after team members agree on the desired features of their messages in the back stage, they could help to automate these features for their front stage performance.

Indeed, HCI studies of impression management on SNS have mostly focused on the presentation of self as an individual, that is, how individuals engage in impression management to create an idealized version of themselves to their audiences. We argue that there is a paucity of research examining collective impression management for groups on SNS. Through our research, we were able to illustrate the challenges that rose from using SNS to create a collective image of the

organization online. Future research could explore how groups agree on their collective online identity. This question is especially critical and complex in the work of activist groups, as group members repeatedly co-create their identities [9].

5.1.2   Designing for Collective Impression Management and Power Imbalance. In this section, we will discuss the important role that power and power imbalance plays in collective impression management. While youth empowerment organizations try to create equitable power sharing among youth and adults, in our study, adult staff were in control of the content creation for the organization's account. While providing adult supervision is how the organization implements the director-actor roles (adults as directors) in order to ensure no actor goes off-script, alternative design approaches might explore more equitable governance of the content posted on the organization's account. For instance, one path could be for designers to explore adapting group decision support systems, to help members more equitably articulate and negotiate their collective identity in the back stage [31]. Group decision support systems are tools that help the negotiation process among members of a group. These systems try to control for dominance and power imbalance among members during the time members negotiate around specific topics. For example, for a specific activism campaign, an app could allow group members to submit suggested content for social media posts. The app could then enable members to rate submitted content and deliberate upon what to use for each campaign. In this case, the role of the director is not assigned to a specific person, rather this role is distributed and all actors decide what to post online. This approach could mitigate off-script front stage performances while reducing the power imbalance among the roles of directors and actors.

It will be important for future work to not only assess the positive implications of tools that attempt to support more cohesive online identities in groups-but also potential challenges that can arise. For example, in the context of youth activism, research is needed that examines individual perspectives on what an ideal group impression would be, how these opinions diverge and the implications of such divergence, to what extent group members want to work together to develop a joint identity, and the impact of collective impression management on individuals' sense of autonomy, control and motivation to use online platforms.

5.2   Creating Connection: Invitations to the Backstage

Our results illustrate how the youth tried to create a connection with their audience, using various SNS features. They desired to invite their audience into their back stage as a way of creating an authentic presentation of themselves online. However, with asynchronous modes of interaction, a person's online and offline selves are not always aligned. *Detached self-presentation* is one concept that researchers have examined when studying online impression management, which refers to "a cognitive division of self-concept caused by a difference between the current offline self and the presented online self" [66]. For example, an SNS user might have a Facebook profile picture of himself on a hiking trip, which conveys that he lives an active lifestyle. In contrast, while that person's friends are viewing his profile that same person may be at home on the couch, surfing the Internet. This disconnect between the *simultaneously* projected online self and the real-world self is a hallmark of SNS. Our study showed how youth attempt to bridge these online and offline selves. Youth discussed using SNS features such as the Facebook Live and Snapchat stories as a way of displaying their authentic self, closing the gap between their offline and online selves for their audience.

Detached self-presentation presents both potential benefits for SNS users (e.g., by creating an environment in which shy individuals may feel more comfortable sharing their ideas with others, due to reduced apprehension regarding how others will view them) as well as potential

challenges (e.g., through the cognitive dissonance that arises from dual online and offline identities). An important question for future work exploring online youth activism will be examining the implications of attempts to bring the online and offline selves into greater alignment. For example, it would be valuable to study how youth decide what to share about their work as activists. Youth, of course, cannot share every facet of their civic work and as such selectively choose what they feel would be best to share with their audience. These decisions regarding what to disclose likely require cognitive and emotional labor as youth engage in a form of social calculus, weighing what information might be most positively received by one's audience with what information may be most effective for raising awareness about a particular issue, with how the information may impact their audience's appraisal of them as a person. Future work is needed to examine the implications of work done to reduce the gap between the online and offline self, on relevant psychological, social, and emotional outcomes such as activism self-efficacy and collective efficacy.

Previous work has shown how people create a sense of authenticity on SNS (e.g., by sharing personal details about one's life) [33]. In this study, we discussed how youth used newer SNS features such as Facebook Live and Snapchat stories to engage in self-presentation techniques in augmented verbal and non-verbal communication modalities. Future work should further study how SNS features can better help activists to create a sense of authenticity.

For example, storytelling scaffolds might better help youth to create rich media diaries that communicate the trajectory of their work, and progress being made towards achieving their social action goals. Such scaffolds may help activists to even more effectively communicate the arc of their efforts over time. Similar tools may help youth engage in more authentic self-presentation by giving their audiences greater context for the content they share, thereby helping the audience to make sense of the work that youth engage in.

More broadly, there is a great opportunity for social computing research to examine how existing and future SNS features can help youth to convey an authentic sense of self to their audience. While impression management has been widely studied in other SNS contexts, when we focus our attention on online activism, important and unique questions arise. For example, youth activists must contend with the challenge of posting about serious social problems on platforms that their peers often view as venues for sharing entertaining content [27]. An important question for future work is, how can SNS help youth to convey an authentic sense of self with their audience (and thus a stronger communication with them) when the content that the audience expects is very different than that which youth desire to share?

6 CONCLUSION

In this study, we examined the activist work of a youth empowerment organization through Goffman's dramaturgical framework. We specifically explored how these organizations engaged in impression management on SNS. Our findings revealed the challenges staff members faced in creating a planned and unified front stage for the organization. Additionally, we characterized youth's desire to connect to their audiences through the use of various social networking features and their desire to learn about their audience. We finally presented recommendations for future studies to explore how interventions could support the work of youth activists on SNS (e.g., exploring the role of collective impression management within youth empowerment organizations).

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