



# PODCAST 9

## SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN THE DIGITAL WORLD



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Welcome to our podcast ! Over the last few episodes, we have explored many current trends and issues connected to social solidarity. This time we are diving into a very new and emerging topic - The Digital World.

## **The digital world is vastly and quickly developing so is it possible for social solidarity to take place online?**

In an era dominated and revolutionized by digital interactions, social solidarity has taken on new forms, adapting to the virtual landscape. Digital platforms have enabled people to connect, collaborate, and support one another in ways that transcend geographical barriers.

The increase of Online Communities plays an important role in promoting social solidarity by bringing together individuals with shared interests, struggles, and aspirations. These communities exist across multiple platforms, including Reddit, Facebook Groups, Discord, X and Instagram to name a few.

From parenting groups to gaming rooms, you are now able to find online whatever it is that you are interested in. These groups promote social solidarity through providing support, guidance and building further friendships.

There are Professional and Educational Apps for example LinkedIn, and Coursera, which enable professionals and students to share knowledge and opportunities. The rise of digital spaces facilitate local and global mutual aid efforts, where individuals help each other with financial, emotional, or logistical support.

There are of course challenges that come with the increase of online communities. Many online communities reinforce existing beliefs, sometimes leading to misinformation or radicalisation. The anonymity of the internet can lead to toxic behaviours that undermine solidarity and not everyone has equal access to these communities due to lack of internet access or digital literacy.

It is not only online communities that promote social solidarity in the digital world. Raising money for social causes, medical expenses, charity work or community projects through the use of platforms such as GoFundMe have enabled individuals to get together for a common cause. These digital fundraising tools have enabled access to financial support, allowing anyone to request or contribute funds.

This is a great way for communities to strengthen social solidarity often through quickly mobilising support for communities which have been affected by natural disasters such as flooding, wild fires or earthquakes.

However, as with anything online we need to be aware of scams as some people exploit crowdfunding for personal gain.

Social media continues to become a primary tool for activism, enabling rapid mobilization, awareness, and engagement. The rise of online movements such as #MeToo Movement which raised awareness about sexual harassment and #BlackLivesMatter which sparked global protests against racial injustice, social solidarity begins to unite more and more communities online.

It is much simpler and faster to open up your phone and join a group than it ever was before.

That's why we need to maintain good Cyber Ethics. Cyber ethics and responsible digital citizenship are crucial to maintaining and strengthening social solidarity in the digital world. The way people interact online, through sharing information, engaging in discussions, and respecting others directly impacts trust, inclusion, and collective action.

### **So, how important is building trust online?**

Trust is the foundation of social solidarity. Ethical behavior online fosters a sense of reliability and security in digital interactions. When individuals act with honesty, respect privacy, and engage responsibly, they create an environment where people feel safe to express themselves and seek support.

## Is social solidarity affected by trust?

Yes it is. Trust encourages open and meaningful discussions and strengthens relationships in online communities. Once trust is lost, even online it leads to disengagement, skepticism, and hostility.

If you take a mental health support group on Facebook as an example. The group thrives when members share experiences respectfully and maintain confidentiality. However, if someone leaks personal stories outside the group, trust is broken, and solidarity weakens.

Cyberbullying is on the rise in the digital world, with harassment taking an increasingly online form. Harassment and cyberbullying can destroy social cohesion and create divisions within digital communities. When individuals or groups face discrimination or targeted attacks, they may withdraw from online spaces, weakening solidarity. Many social justice activists, especially women and marginalized communities, experience severe online harassment. This discourages participation and weakens movements like #MeToo.

In order to combat those issues there needs to be stronger moderation policies and anti-harassment tools with digital platforms enforcing ethical standards and accountability.

## Now let's move onto the topic of online misinformation.

We all know how fast news spreads and disinformation spreads even more rapidly online, undermining solidarity by causing confusion, distrust, and division. False information can manipulate public opinion, weaken social movements, and even create hostility between different groups.

Misinformation has a big effect on social solidarity. Whilst Fact-based discussions unite communities toward common goals and contribute to informed decision-making, Fake news creates division and distrust through manipulation tactics that weaken social justice efforts.

A big example of this is the Covid - 19 Pandemic where false claims about vaccines divided communities, making it harder for public health efforts to succeed.

Please remember to fact check before you share posts online and report those who you know are spreading misinformation.



## Privacy is another important part of online social solidarity.

As social solidarity moves into the digital age, we need to ensure that you are protecting privacy and encouraging others to be ethical in their data use. Privacy violations, data breaches, and unethical surveillance practices erode trust in digital spaces. When people feel that their personal data is not secure, they are less likely to engage in online communities, activism, or financial contributions to digital causes.

Ethical data practices create safer, more inclusive online spaces whilst people are more likely to support causes when their information is secure.

When we start to explore the online world we need to remember to promote privacy laws, end to end encryption and adhere to any GDPR regulations that are set out.

A responsible digital citizen contributes positively to discussions, respects diverse perspectives, and fosters inclusive environments. Ethical online interactions ensure that marginalized voices are heard and that solidarity extends across different backgrounds.

We need to remember the fine line between Constructive Activism and Hate Speech. A movement for climate action thrives when people discuss solutions and collaborate. However, when conversations turn into hostile attacks on individuals or opposing groups, solidarity is lost, and progress is hindered.



Cyber ethics and responsible digital citizenship directly influence the strength and resilience of social solidarity in the digital world. Ethical online behavior promotes trust, inclusivity, and collective action, while unethical practices such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and privacy violations—undermine unity.

## What We Can Do to Strengthen Social Solidarity online?

- Act responsibly online by verifying information and respecting privacy
- Support victims of cyberbullying and create safe spaces
- Engage in meaningful digital activism
- Advocate for ethical policies that promote inclusivity and data security

By fostering ethical digital behaviour, we can create a more connected, supportive, and unified online world where social solidarity thrives.

Through embracing responsible digital citizenship, we can ensure that technology continues to serve as a force for unity, empowerment, and positive social change.



In the digital age, social solidarity thrives when individuals and communities come together with empathy, responsibility, and mutual support. As we've seen, the internet offers powerful tools for connection, advocacy, and collective action, yet it also presents significant challenges that can undermine trust, inclusivity, and unity. Central to fostering positive social solidarity online is the practice of cyber ethics and responsible digital citizenship.

Ethical behavior in digital spaces whether through combating misinformation, respecting privacy, or preventing harassment is the cornerstone of a cohesive and supportive online community. When people act responsibly, it builds trust, encourages open dialogue, and strengthens social movements, creating an environment where solidarity can flourish.

At the same time, the digital world has introduced new forms of online communities, crowdsourcing, and activism, enabling individuals to contribute to causes and support one another in innovative ways. Whether through global movements like #BlackLivesMatter or crowdfunding efforts for medical expenses, technology has made it easier to unite and take collective action. However, the potential for cyberbullying, disinformation, and digital exclusion requires constant vigilance and ethical practices to ensure everyone can participate equally.

The digital divide remains a key obstacle to true global solidarity, as unequal access to technology continues to leave some communities marginalised. Efforts to bridge this gap through affordable internet, digital literacy programs, and inclusive tech development are essential for ensuring that the benefits of a connected world reach all.

We hope you enjoyed this podcast. Please like and subscribe for more content surrounding social solidarity. The next episode will focus on new generations of social solidarity. Remember to stay safe online !

See you next time!



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