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I believe that technology and social media will definitely be a source of fuel for the next movement; because, for the first time in history, most of us are connected across provincial and national borders 24/7, with the ability to communicate almost instantly. We are able to see historic events as they happen (Hong Kong protests for example) and are able to communicate directly with those involved through social media.

We saw how powerful of a tool social media is when the Hong Kong protests reached our western coast. Hong Kong supporters in Canada were able to organize and voice their opinions relatively quickly because they were connected to those of the same opinion in Canada, but also those back home in Hong Kong. This allowed their voices to be heard and allowed them to show their support of the protests.  Imagine what already organized unions could do with social media!

Unions can utilize this new tool by communicating with a large amount of their members instantly, and discussions across branches can take place on the same platform, and in the blink of an eye. They can do this outside of the view of their employer, allowing them to organize quickly and discreetly.  Workers can also organize themselves with the aid of the union rather than having the union organize the workers; as the workers are directly connected to each other-- a small amount of workers who share a grievance can create an online poll to see if there are similar grievances outside of their area and connect to those who share their opinions. Many smaller actions are more effective than one large action.  Unions can utilize social media algorithms to determine major demands (online polls, comments, social media posts) and to identify areas where labour organization is of particular importance, and do so quickly and efficiently. Unions can share videos and announcements with members outside of meetings, and also communicate and answer questions about the union with newer members, or those on the fence about joining the union.

Unions can also use social media to communicate with the public, allowing them to garner support from those outside of the union, and let the public know of events happening.  Openness and interaction with the public is a crucial step to garnering more support of the union. Similarly, unions can organize with other unions and individuals who share the same demands but aren’t a member of that particular union.  Cross union support is a helpful tool to make sure demands are heard and met; and social media allows cross union support to be shown and organized easily.

While social media and technology isn’t an instant, fix all solution, it is certainly going to be an important part of the next movement because it allows quick and efficient communication with those across provincial borders, allows members to organize themselves and get in contact with other branches, and see events happening as close to live as possible.  Unions can also use social media to communicate with the general public and garner support from them. As such, social media is a critical part of increasing member engagement and fueling the movement.