

Alexandra Samuel

curriculum vitae

Summary

A social media strategist who creates dynamic, mission-driven online communities by combining innovative community concepts with a deep understanding of public engagement.

Highlights

Founder and CEO, Social Signal, 2005-present.

- Launched one of the web's leading progressive social media strategy companies, known for our expertise in online engagement and participation.
- Clients and projects include NetSquared.org, Tyze.org, The Elders, Facebook Green Gifts, ChangeEverything.ca and AmericaSpeaks.

Ph.D. (Political Science), Harvard University, November 2004.

- Dissertation topic: Hacktivism and the Future of Political Participation.
- National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow, 1996-1999.

Internet strategist and researcher, 2001-2005.

- Facilitated the OECD's first meeting for high-level e-government leaders.

Contributor, The Toronto Star, 2004 – 2005.

- Wrote feature stories on technology-related issues, including the advent of tagging and technology-enabled development leapfrogging.

Research Director, Governance in the Digital Economy, Digital 4Sight, 1998 – 2001.

- With Don Tapscott, created a US \$2 million international research program to address the impact of information technology on the business and nature of government.
- Led the research program to deliver key learnings to senior e-government leaders in more than twenty government clients worldwide.

Research Assistant, Department of Government, Harvard University, 1995 - 98.

- Wrote research paper on the implications of the Internet for social capital as background paper for Prof. Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

Special Assistant to the Premier of Ontario, April 1993 - June 1995.

- Served as primary political support for Premier during public events and meetings, liaising with policy staff to provide real-time advice on emerging issues.

Bachelor of Arts (High Honors in Politics), Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, May 1992.

Citizenship: US & Canada

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Education

Ph.D. (Political Science), Harvard University, November 2004.

- Dissertation topic: Hacktivism and the Future of Political Participation.
 - Developed a new theoretical framework for understanding online political engagement, based on original research into politically-motivated computer hacking.
- National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow, 1996-1999.

A.M. (Political Science), Harvard University, 1998.

Bachelor of Arts (High Honors in Politics), Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, May 1992.

- Majors: Politics and Women's Studies. Minor: History.
- Winner of the John Lewis Memorial Prize for the best student in political theory.

Experience

CEO, Social Signal, 2005-present.

- Launched a social media strategy company specializing in participation design for mission-driven online communities.
- Signature projects include:
 - *NetSquared.org*: Created an online community of practice for nonprofit organizations working with social web tools, sponsored by CompuMentor, which provides technology services to more than 80,000 American nonprofits.
 - *AmericaSpeaks*: Identified innovative options for using social media to deliver on the organization's core public engagement mission, as part of a web strategy team.
 - *Green Gifts*: Conceived and managed the development, launch and maintenance of a sustainability-themed Facebook application for BC Hydro, BC's public electricity utility.
 - *tyze.org*: Conceived and created an online platform for personal care networks, in partnership with the PLAN Institute; received more than \$400k in funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
 - *The Elders/Every Human Has Rights Campaign*: Provided advice on online strategy to The Elders, a new NGO whose leadership includes six winners of the Nobel Peace Prize. Advised on the relaunch of the web site for their Every Human Has Rights Campaign.
 - *ChangeEverything.ca*: Conceived and built an online community, sponsored by Vancity, that lets people blog about changes they want to make in their lives, communities and the world. Selected as a 2007 Webby Nominee and 2006 Webby Honoree.
 - *telecentre.org*: Developed the web strategy and beta site for a distributed web network for the global telecentre movement, funded by the International Development Research Centre of Canada and Microsoft.

- Responsibilities and achievements include:
 - Developing online community strategies and innovative social media concepts for public, private and non-profit projects with a community, environmental or social service focus.
 - Facilitating strategic communications workshops that build organizations' capacity to make effective use of social media and identify social media options that align with an organization's mission, assets and goals.
 - Innovating new approaches to social media strategy, including concept development workshops, engagement audits, technical blueprints and engagement plans.
 - Educating and training nonprofit, government and business leaders in the effective use of social media tools through workshops, presentations and online guides.
 - Documenting technical requirements, creating wireframes and guiding platform selection for social media projects.
 - Planning and managing the development of complex online community projects on platforms including Drupal, Facebook and WordPress.
 - Assessing, reviewing and advising on a wide range of web applications for internal collaboration, external communications and personal knowledge management, such as project management tools, social bookmarking and social media monitoring.
 - Creating engagement plans, hiring community management teams, training community moderators and creating content for a wide range of online communities.
 - Hands-on configuration of Drupal and WordPress sites, including the initial builds for telecentre.org, NetSquared.org and ChangeEverything.org.
 - Hiring and managing our own team of six core staff and a dozen subcontractors.

Internet strategist and researcher, 2001-2005. Projects included:

- Conducted interview research on federal civic engagement for *AmericaSpeaks*.
- Through *Dialogue Networks*, worked with Vision Critical to develop a model and marketing materials for panel-based public engagement using leading market research software.
- Directed the research and communications for the launch of the *Cairns Project*, a database of best practices in online collaboration and participation.
- Facilitated the OECD's first meeting for high-level e-government leaders.
- Advised business, government, and NGO clients on e-business strategy.
- Created workshop methodology for developing e-business strategy.
- Designed small business and academic web sites.

Research Director, Governance in the Digital Economy, Digital 4Sight .1998 – 2001.

- With Don Tapscott, created a US \$2 million international research program to address the impact of information technology on the business and nature of government.
- Led the research program to deliver key learnings to senior e-government leaders in more than twenty government clients worldwide.
- Adapted e-business models to the context and needs of electronic government.
- Developed research agenda and recruited research team from scholarly community, Digital 4Sight staff and external experts.

- Researched and wrote the program prospectus, backgrounder, strategic framework and summary report plus papers on “Citizen Engagement” and “Serving e-Citizens”.
- Steered and edited case studies and white papers from staff and academic experts.
- Collaborated with the Harvard Information Infrastructure Project to organize a joint meeting with faculty from the John F. Kennedy School of Government.
- Planned conference agendas and presented key findings at client conferences in Boston, Switzerland, and Washington, DC.
- Developed and delivered research workshops that guided clients through the implementation of research findings.

Special Assistant to the Premier of Ontario, April 1993 - June 1995.

- Served as primary political support for Premier during public events and meetings with international corporate, government and NGO leaders, liaising with policy staff to provide real-time advice on emerging issues.
- Managed follow-up on Premier’s activities, briefing Premier’s Office and Ministers’ staff on stakeholder responses and meeting outcomes.
- Gathered background information on events and communities, and channeled information and briefing materials to Premier before and during events.
- Provided timely and politically appropriate responses to inquiries from business and community groups, political offices and the public by working with ministries.
- Drafted the Premier’s politically sensitive correspondence.

Executive Assistant to the Parliamentary Assistant, Ministry of Housing, June 1992 - April 1993.

- Analyzed and managed select housing policy areas for the Minister’s office, including the government’s response to a high-profile report on long-term care facilities.
- Coordinated passage of Bill 112 (An Act to Amend the Building Code Act).
- Briefed and advised P.A. on local and provincial issues.

Academic and Research Experience

Research Assistant, Department of Government, Harvard University, 1995 - 98.

- Wrote research paper on the implications of the Internet for social capital as background paper for Prof. Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
- Researched and wrote paper on human rights regimes for Prof. Andrew Moravcsik.
- Researched French-language coverage of French economic performance and macroeconomic policy, for Prof. Peter Hall.

Sessional lecturer, “The Internet and Politics,” Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia, Spring 2002.

- Designed and taught a third-year course for fifty students; instructor rating of 4.2 out of 5.
- Designed an extensive course web site at <http://www.alexandrasamuel.com/netpolitics>.

Teaching Fellow, Harvard University Department of Government, 1997 - 98.

- Led discussion sections for a total of forty students for "Politics of the European Union."
- Advised undergraduate thesis on "Political Campaigns and the Internet."

Research Assistant, *The Digital Economy* by Don Tapscott (McGraw-Hill, 1995), April-May 1995.

- Researched multimedia economic trends and gathered industry statistical data.
- Designed and produced statistical appendices and charts.

Media Experience

Contributor, *The Toronto Star*, 2004 – 2005.

- Wrote feature stories on technology-related issues, including the advent of tagging and technology-enabled development leapfrogging.

Contributor, CBC radio and television, 1999 - 2003.

- Wrote and produced stories on technology issues for national syndication.
- Offered guest commentary on a variety of political and technology stories for programs including *TodRadio*, *This Morning*, and *Counterspin*.

Columnist, *The Vancouver Sun*, October 2001 – December 2002.

- Wrote weekly business section column on economic issues, with special focus on topics related to new technology or political economy.
- Authored periodic op-ed columns on topics related to electronic politics, including electronic voting, the digital divide, and music piracy.

Additional Publications and Presentations

Social Tech Training (faculty member), three-day intensive workshop offered by Web of Change and the MaRS Discovery District, June 2008.

"Bringing Your Community to Life", session at NetSquared 3, May 2008.

Web 2.0 and Your Organization (with Jason Mogus), workshop offered by the Hollyhock Leadership Institute, March 2007, and by the Centre for Social Innovation, July 2007.

"Lessons Learned from Non-Business Environments", Community 2.0 Summit, March 2007.

"Remixing Business for a Convergent World", South by Southwest Interactive, March 2006.

"Hacktivism and the Future of Democratic Discourse," in *Democracy Online: The Prospects for Democratic Renewal Through the Internet*, ed. Peter Shane, Routledge, 2004.

"Hactivism and the Rise of Transnational Politics" presented at the American Political Science Association annual meetings, August 2003.

"Digital Travail on the Way to a Dissertation," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 17, 2003.

"Reacting to 9/11: Electronic Consultations and Citizen Dialogue" (with Chip Hauss), presented at American Political Science Association annual meetings, September 2002.

"Using the Internet for Citizen Engagement", presentation at *New Terms of Engagement for Global Leaders* conference, Simon Fraser University, April 2002.

"Technology and Teaching: Reacting to 9/11" (with Chip Hauss and Jed Miler), in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, March 2002.

"Decoding Hactivism: Purpose, Method and Identity in a New Social Movement", presented at Innovations for an e-Society Congress, Germany, October 2001.

- Winner, best paper award.
- Published in volume of selected conference proceedings (*Innovations for an e-Society*, eds. Banse et al., edition sigma, 2002).

"Digital Disobedience: Hactivism in Political Context", presented at the American Political Science Association annual meetings, September 2001.

"German Shepherds", *Business 2.0*, May 1999.

"A Global Guide to Y2K" (Canada and Germany profiles), *Business 2.0*, January 1999.

"Cookies are not so sweet" (on privacy online), *Dollars & Sense Magazine*, January 1999.

Additional Activities

Program chair, Information Technology and Politics, American Political Science Association annual meeting, 2005.

Co-founder and moderator, DO-Consult (e-mail list for researchers and practitioners in the field of online consultation), January 2002 - present.

Council member, Information Technology and Politics section, American Political Science Association, 2002-2004.

Board member, Vancouver Community Network, 2000 – 2003.

- Vice-President, November 2001 - 2003.

Additional Skills

Languages:

- French (strong reading and conversational)
- German (reading and conversational)
- Spanish (basic reading and oral comprehension)

Technology skills:

- Website and blog development using Drupal and WordPress.
- Certified online moderator (Hansard Society program).
- Expert user and trainer on a wide range of social web sites, web applications and desktop tools; voracious reviewer and evangelist for new collaboration tools.

Citizenship: U.S. & Canada