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Introduction

Science and technology multiply around us. To an increasing extent they dictate the languages in which we speak and think. Either we use those languages, or we remain mute.

-J.G. Ballard

In the Introduction to the French edition (1984) of *Crash* (1974)

We live in a world of competition, progress and consumption, and now in the year 2014, we have accomplished technological achievements unthinkable to previous generations. Since the beginning of Britain's Industrial Revolution in the mid-18th century, Western civilization has never looked back when it comes to getting bigger, faster, and stronger. Because technology inherently enables us to create more technology, growth and, soon after, *waste* have been bi-products of our triumphs. Human life on earth has become increasingly easier as a result of advancements in technology. This caused population growth, and consequently, an exponential increase in demand for material goods and services.

The primary resources that power the production of these goods and services are fossil fuels, which are responsible for 82 percent of CO₂ emissions in the U.S.¹ Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the key agent when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions, which are thought to be the leading cause of global climate change. Fossil fuels are non-renewable energy sources that include coal, oil, and natural gas. Since the tremendous technological developments of the Industrial Revolution, the burning of fossil fuels has increased

atmospheric CO₂ concentration by a third.² Today, the United States relies on the use of fossil fuels for 82 percent of our energy.³

The debate over whether or not humans are responsible for changes in weather patterns and the extreme climatic shifts at the poles is reaching a consensus. The Fourth Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change summarizes the role of human activity as it relates to climate change: "...there's a more than 90 percent probability that human activities over the past 250 years have warmed our planet."⁴

On March 15th, 1971, British scientist and writer C.P. Snow told the *New York Times*, "Technology...is a queer thing. It brings you great gifts with one hand, and it stabs you in the back with the other."⁵ We have reached a point where metadiscourse regarding this evolving materialism has become necessary in order to define and analyze the dividing line between what is convenient or inconvenient for the climate and humanity as a whole.

The facts are clear, industrialization and globalization are showing their dark sides—our planet *is* warming. Preventing climate change is not in the hands of any single individual, let alone that of a single country; in order to slow the effects of climate change, efforts must be made on a global scale. Furthermore, in order for this global endeavor to take hold, a need for a common language arises as a result of the multi-lingual and multi-cultural features of humanity. Confusion or semantic misinterpretation can undoubtedly lead to failures when attempting to reach diverse audiences. According to Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, language is a system of *signs*, which are comprised of *signifiers* and *signifieds*. A signifier is the *form* in which communication is being presented; this includes words, images, or facial expressions. A signified is the

notion to which the signifier *refers*.⁶ The need for a sign in place of “climate change” that can be universally comprehended has become an apparent prerequisite for global action. The environmental advocacy group, 350.org, is tuning into this need by attempting to bypass language whenever possible and replace words with numbers, visuals, and actions. 350.org, is an environmental network that uses as little language as possible to disseminate its message, the result of which is a successful worldwide, Internet-mediated platform that strives for climate safety.

In this essay, I will discuss the characteristics of 350.org through the lens of actor-network and articulation theories. I will begin by introducing 350.org, explaining who started it, how it operates, and what its objectives are. Then I will give a brief description of actor-network theory and articulation theory, to familiarize my readers with the key terms and concepts that I will be using. Moving into my analysis, I will explain 350.org as it relates to the theoretical frameworks. In the later portion of my analysis, I will propose that while 350.org operates as an obvious example of an actor-network, it is finding strength in a unique modification to classic actor-network theory that I will call *self-enrollment*. I will end my analysis with a discussion of how actor-network and articulation theorists’ would approach and explain successful campaigns accomplished by the 350 movement.

The Rhetoric and Context of 350.org

350.org is a website that serves as a platform for grassroots organization and mobilization advocating for environmentally related initiatives. 350.org was founded in 2008 by author and environmentalist Bill McKibben along with a group of university friends in Vermont. McKibben’s 350 project followed the overwhelming success of his

Step It Up campaign in 2007, which was a national version of his five-day walk across the state of Vermont in 2006. The Step It Up demonstration has been named the “...largest day of citizen action focusing on global warming in our nation’s history.”⁷ These events took place on April 14, 2007, as part of National Day of Climate Action, and took effect in the form of various demonstrations in all 50 states. “Despite the varied backgrounds of the participants and the uniqueness of each event, they [were] united in delivering a critical message: For Congress to put America on a course to cut carbon emissions 80% by 2050.”⁸ Because of the tremendous support and participation in the Step It Up campaign, McKibben saw the potential, as well as the need, for a more long lasting platform to both organize and mobilize environmental action.

The name 350.org comes from climate scientist James E. Hansen who earlier in 2008, stated in his article titled, *Target Atmospheric CO₂: Where Should Humanity Aim?*, “If humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted, paleoclimate evidence and ongoing climate change suggest that CO₂ will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at least 350 ppm, but likely less than that.”⁹ In choosing this to be the title for his campaign, McKibben did something unique: he bypassed language all together, allowing his message to be interpreted and spread by people in any part of the world.

350.org takes place in a mediated, infinite sphere made up of countless fragments of information known as the Internet. However, somewhat uniquely, 350.org does not only act within the technologically limitless, yet physically limited space of its home webpage. 350.org is what David Karpf calls a “neo-federated organization;” these are Internet-mediated advocacy groups that “...retain a semblance of the chapter-based

structure of traditional federated organizations, but focus on offering online tools for offline action.”¹⁰ When thinking of environmental advocacy taking place in a multidimensional, multi-purposeful, yet interconnected and co-reliant realm, it seems natural to make associations with actor-network theory (ANT).

Actor-Network Theory, Actors, and the Question of Agency

Actor-network theory “...gains much of its notoriety through advocating a socio-philosophical approach in which human and non-human, social and technical factors are brought together in the same analytical view.”¹¹ Actor-network theory is not an easy concept to explain, simply due to its versatility and diverse range of applications. The theory finds its beginnings in the sociology of science and technology; however, because of its relativistic and interpretive nature ANT has made its way into disciplines such as “...sociology, geography, management and organizational studies, economics, anthropology and philosophy.”¹² With such a wide array of dissimilar fields making use of actor-network theory, consensus on a single interpretation, application, or even definition seems to be impossible. Much of its ambiguity stems from the fact that *everything is an actor-network*, and “...everything – people, organizations, technologies, nature, politics, [and] social order(s) – are the result, or effect, of heterogeneous networks.”¹³

A popular approach to ANT proposed by sociologist, John Law, is centered around the metaphor of a *heterogeneous network*.¹⁴ “This [heterogeneous network] lies at the heart of actor-network theory, and is a way of suggesting that society, organizations, agents, and machines are all *effects* generated in patterned networks of diverse (not simply human) materials.”¹⁵ When Law refers to the term *agent* in his definition of actor-

network theory, what he is referring to is an *actor*—the terms may be used interchangeably.

An “actor” in ANT is a semiotic definition -an actant-, that is, something that acts or to which activity is granted by others. It implies no special motivation of human individual actors, nor of humans in general. An actant can literally be anything provided it is granted to be the source of an action.¹⁶

When we talk about actors in ANT, they are seen as having agency. Michel Callon and Bruno Latour define an actor as, “[a]ny element which bends space around itself, makes other elements dependent upon itself and translates their will into a language of its own.”¹⁷ Because an actor is the source of its own action, we should understand agency as a verb. Agency is usually considered a human’s ability to take action toward a desired and meaningful outcome that is shaped by a combination of selected communicative devices. Thus, agency can be seen as the *intent* behind our every action and inaction. Agency has been, and can be defined in a number of ways; however, Karlyn Campbell, professor of Communication Studies at University of Minnesota, offers a definition that is useful for a basic understanding of agency. Campbell explains agency as something that is, “... ‘invented’ by authors who are points of articulation...” and “...refers to the capacity to act, that is, to have the competence to speak or write in a way that will be recognized or heeded by others in one’s community.”¹⁸

Slack and Wise propose two modifications to the concept of agency that are important when thinking of agency in relation to actors within a network. The first is “...agency does not require human intention, which means that technologies can be also be involved in relations of agency.” Furthermore, “... agency is not a possession of agents; it is a process and a relationship.”¹⁹ Technologies should be viewed as possessing agency, which is a way of saying that our modes (or channels) of communication

simultaneously communicate something, while dictating the qualities of our interaction. In ANT, agency can also be seen in the form of the communication channel an individual selects to communicate his or her message. Because each channel bears its own constraints and qualitative features, inevitably the message will be interpreted depending on the selection. For example, whether we select the telephone, e-mail, or a handwritten letter, etc. the technology we choose is now an *active participant* in relations of agency.²⁰ As cited in Slack and Wise, “Bruno Latour has argued, the technologies are actually mediators, not intermediaries.”²¹ In this context a mediator is the agent (or technology) situated in the middle of two parties that serves the function of facilitating and transmitting communication between them—this is the process of *translation*. This is in reference to the second modification, which states agency should be viewed as a process and a relationship, as opposed to a possession of agents. Technologies utilized to transmit messages are participants in a continual relationship between parties; this relationship is mediated and shaped by the type of technology, and thus becomes a distinct party in and of itself. Furthermore, “...ANT argues that both human and non-human actors [should] be understood within a network wherein their identity is defined through their interaction with other actors.”²²

It is also important to note that actors are also networks depending on your perspective or scope, hence the name *actor-network*. Michel Callon explains this concept by saying, Reducible neither to an actor alone nor to a network...An actor-network is simultaneously an actor whose activity is networking heterogeneous elements and a network that is able to redefine and transform what it is made of.²³ Law explains that networks come to look like single point actors through the process of network

consolidation, or *punctualization*,²⁴ which is, "...the appearance of unity, and the disappearance of network, [due to] *simplification*." Punctualization should be thought of as our scope when examining a network, because "...much of the time we are not even in a position to detect network complexities,"²⁵ thus, they become single point actors within our network. An example of this would be to solely reference your computer, without making any mention of the various components of which it is comprised.

Related to concepts such as punctualization, network consolidation, and most closely translation, is the concept of *enrollment*. Translation can be seen as "...the interpretation given by the fact-builders of their interests and that of the people they enroll"²⁶ to support and strengthen the claims within their network.²⁷ An example of 350.org's use of enrollment can be seen when the organization enrolls *useful* pieces of information from a wide array of scientific research that show significant climate degradation. Since there are often too many fragments of information that make up a claim to individually cite each in detail, only the information that strengthens their network of evidence in support of their claim will be enrolled.

It may be useful to breakdown Callon and Latour's definition of an *actor* as it relates to 350.org. First, "any element which bends space around itself," here we can think of both consolidated networks such as computers, climate change, advocacy, and science, to seemingly more particular single point actors like Bill McKibben himself. These are all actors within the network of 350.org; each of these plays a role in shaping the discourse that takes place when we talk about 350.org and its purpose as an organization. It is important to note that while I am referencing Bill McKibben as a "single point actor," this distinction is a matter of punctualization, and is contingent upon

my scope when looking at 350.org as a whole. Should I choose to change my scope and zoom in, Bill McKibben could most certainly be viewed as a network himself. Second, it “makes other elements depend upon itself.” This is a way of saying that all actors within a network are interconnected and co-reliant on one another. The success of each environmental initiative posted to the site is dependent on the success of another. Third, it “translates their will into a language of its own.” In Slack and Wise they explain that “[i]n terms of actor-networks, to translate means to alter the form of something to bring it into alignment with the technology, system, or culture.”²⁸ We are more familiar with this concept than we may be aware of; a good example of this is a graph. Bruno Latour calls these *instruments* or *inscriptions*, which are, “...any set-up, no matter what its size, nature and cost, that provides a visual display of any sort in a scientific text.” Graphs offer what Latour calls “...a final layer in a scientific text,”²⁹ that provide a way for specialized scientific data to be translated into a visual form that can be easily conceptualized by lay audiences.

Articulation

Related to actor-network theory is the theory of articulation. Kevin DeLuca summarizes Laclau and Mouffe’s definition of articulation as explained in their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* by saying,

Articulation is ‘any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified...the practice of articulation, therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity.’³⁰

In reference to actor-network theory, the practice of articulation takes place when connections between nodal points (actors) are established, acting as a bridge between each distinct campaign, hence forming a large network. Moreover, when the many heterogeneous nodal points that 350.org is made of become connected, each separate campaign's identity is modified. Despite the strength of the connection, each local campaign is now part of a network, one that is a much larger global environmental movement—unavoidably changing its identity.

Articulations are “partially fixed” in their meaning; this is to say that these connections can be weak or strong, depending on the strength of the nodes that make up a specific network. This would also then imply that articulations are open-systems that are subject to change depending on potentially new and stronger competing networks, or flaws discovered within a network, something Latour calls “trials of strength.”³¹ To further develop our understanding of actors, networks, translation, enrollment, and articulation, let us think in terms of an argument. An argument is comprised of a *network*, made of bits and pieces of information that allow you to believe a claim to be true or false. These bits and pieces of information can be attained from various sources through the act of *enrollment* and *translation*, and through *articulation* similarities and connections are made between distinct networks. When taken out of the context of your argument these fragments may seem to have nothing in common at all. However, for the sake of your argument they *do* have something in common, and thus are *actors* that are both influential and codependent on one another. When the opposing argument is presented, the two competing networks are pitted against one another in a “trial of strength.”

ANT and 350.org

When examining 350.org through the lens of actor-network and articulation theories, what we see is a conglomerate of heterogeneous actors and networks, held together through the act of articulation to form a greater network that is 350.org. “Networks are maps of *articulations*,”³² and within 350.org there are both human and non-human actors, working toward a common objective. We should think of how each bit of science (the base of the entire movement) is part of a larger network of previous scientific research and information that borrows from, and builds off of, countless actors and networks. Equally, each project and campaign gains notoriety and public attention because it is an actor within the broader network that is 350.org. As mentioned before, actors make other elements of the network depend on itself; this is to say that each actor is to a varying degree codependent and interconnected with the other actors in the network. Despite the fact that 350.org serves as a platform for a wide array of campaigns, scaling from big to small, radical to artistic, and ongoing to single-day events, the participants (actors) within the network are mutually dependent. This interconnectedness and codependence can be viewed on a small scale, like the success of the website itself in reference to attention from the media and overall public awareness of its existence, while on a more macro-scale the success of each campaign is dependent on the success of another due to the contribution that each campaign has toward the health of the environment.

Due to Bill McKibben’s tactful acts of enrollment during the preliminary stages of 350.org, a network that is self-sustaining and ever expanding has been established. McKibben’s first act of enrollment was the use of the number 350 taken from James E.

Hansen's article titled *Target Atmospheric CO₂: Where Should Humanity Aim?* The selection of Hansen's research was not random by any means; Hansen is somewhat of a household name when it comes to climatology. In April 2013, *The Washington Post* dubbed him "NASA's most famous climate scientist,"³³ and in 1988 Hansen was one of the first climate scientists to propose the concept of man-made greenhouse gases in front of Congress.

In the early stages of 350.org, McKibben did not only enroll the number 350 because it was associated with a reputable name, but also because of the universality of numbers. 350.org is both a network and a mediator. As previously explained, it is the job of the mediator to transmit information from one party to another through the process of *translation*. Even something as simple as the name of the site "350.org" is significant. It has been said that numbers are the only true universal language, which is a statement that should be strongly considered when attempting to embark on a worldwide movement. On the site's "What We Do" tab a brief explanation of their title says, "The number 350 means climate safety: to preserve a livable planet, scientists tell us we must reduce the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere from its current level of 400 parts per million to below 350 ppm."³⁴ This is an example of translation in the way that 350.org is now being universally recognized and easily conceptualized by a vast audience to mean *climate safety*. The use of a number, as opposed to a title containing words—which would be at the mercy of language barriers and cultural interpretation, is an act of translation. While steps can be taken on a local level to conserve natural resources in an attempt to slow the effects of climate change, what is truly needed at this point in time, is the involvement of our global community. After all, climate change is a *global* issue, and should we ever

wish to see a more stable environment, what we need is a large-scale, forceful push for environmental advocacy. The title 350.org alters the form of specialized scientific research, while avoiding the use of any specific language, bringing it into alignment with 188 distinct countries.

Also on the “What We Do” tab on their website is a short video clip with a heading that reads, “With over 4000 languages spoken around the world, words don’t always get the point across. This word-less animation explains 350.org in 90 seconds.” The video is simple and easy to follow; it starts with animations depicting what CO₂ is, and what the main human contributors to CO₂ pollution are. Then it goes on to explain why 350 ppm is ideal for a healthier environment, and finally how to get involved. By sidestepping around language 350.org is effectively reaching more people around the world and maximizing the use of the Internet as a global platform for disseminating information.

Clearly, 350.org is attempting to reach each and every potential advocate for the environment, and is doing so by utilizing the Internet as its mouthpiece for several reasons. Of course not everyone has easy access to the Internet; however, in areas that do it is usually granted at little to no cost. This also applies to the organizers of 350.org; in the beginning stages of 350.org their budget was relatively small, and the Internet is a uniquely flexible tool when seeking to “...deploy a hybrid arsenal of tactics that emphasizes online-to-offline grassroots organizing.”³⁵ By using the Internet as the medium for spreading their message, official staff and community leaders are able to share new information, and post about past, present, and future events both quickly and inexpensively. These advantageous features of the Internet have allowed for rapid network growth and enrollment. “We live in an age in which creative ideas can spring up

just about anywhere and then, thanks to new forms of communication, spread remarkably quickly.”³⁶

Before 350.org was officially “350.org,” in 2007 McKibben enrolled students who were involved in the Campus Climate Challenge at Middlebury College where he taught in his hometown of Middlebury, Vermont. McKibben asked these students to help him organize his Step Up campaign. After yet another successful campaign, the small team began to form 350.org in 2008. It is incredible what the enrollment of the Internet has done for the spreading of the 350 movement, co-founder May Boeve recalls,

The seed of what 350.org eventually became, was, if we could make all these connections from one place to the U.S., wouldn't that also be possible around the world? So technology has been central to what we think about the possibility of our work from the beginning.³⁷

It should now be all the more obvious why Slack and Wise argue that “...technologies can be also be involved in relations of agency.” The message of the 350 movement would be nowhere near as effective should it have been broadcasted on the radio, television, print, or word of mouth. This is to say that technology in this case has been a key actor within the network, which was thoughtfully enrolled by McKibben and his team from the beginning.

Another successful act of enrollment was the targeting of university students to spread awareness and organize 350.org. University students are a uniquely effective population when it comes to spreading information and raising awareness about a certain issue or cause. A great deal of its effectiveness is all the more obvious when we view universities as an interconnected actor-network. University campuses are actors when we view them in the context of 350.org, however, they are also large complex networks comprised of intertwined academic disciplines, student, teacher, and alumni relations,

geographic locations, scholastic materials, and so on. Because of the various articulations between campuses, McKibben and his colleagues were able to encourage college campuses across the United States to rally and organize their own environmental clubs and 350 campaigns.

In 2012, Bill McKibben and 350.org launched a road tour called Do the Math, which travelled to 21 cities across the United States in 21 days. The movement called for large oil burning companies to not burn all the oil that they had available to them in order to slow global warming effects. The Do the Math Tour was yet another success, selling out all 21 shows. Along with the Do the Math Tour, McKibben and 350.org launched their Fossil Free campaign, which is still active today. The Fossil Free campaign calls for universities and colleges, religious institutions, as well as cities to divest in fossil fuel companies.³⁸ On the website (gofossilfree.org) under the “about” tab, their reasoning is as follows, “If it is wrong to wreck the climate, then it is wrong to profit from that wreckage.” Their demands are as follows, “We want institutions to immediately freeze any new investment in fossil fuel companies, and divest from direct ownership and any commingled funds that include fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds within 5 years.” As of May 2014, 12 colleges and universities, 25 cities, 2 counties, 29 religious groups, 20 foundations, and 6 other institutions have made commitments toward divesting in the fossil fuel industry.³⁹ Through campaigning for various environmental initiatives 350.org is enrolling seemingly dissimilar parties into its ever growing and strengthening network.

Since 2008, 350.org has grown substantially as a network, and what we are seeing is that it finds its strength in numbers and articulations to other networks. Bill McKibben

explains the nature of 350.org by saying that what "...we'll need in a time of increased climate stress [are] communities that place a premium on resiliency and adaptability, dramatically decentralized but deeply linked."⁴⁰ What we see is that these articulations between a diverse array of actors are creating yet an even stronger network. When looking at 350.org as a network comprised of various campaigns around the world, advocating for a wide range of environmental initiatives, one would see a far-reaching assemblage of environmental activism. However, when looking at the different campaigns posted on the website out of the context of 350.org you realize how disconnected they are. From the Rampal coal plant in Bangladesh, to Fracking in the UK, and even all the way back to divestment on university campuses in the U.S. Each of these is very much its own network with its own obstacles to overcome within its local governments. But through articulation, translation, and enrollment they are brought together, their common denominator to lower carbon emissions.

It is without a doubt that 350.org has become one of the most powerful global networks when it comes to issues concerning the harms of current fossil fuel consumption. With thousands of volunteer organizers actively campaigning in over 188 countries, 350.org's name and message is gaining recognition from both the government and the public. In 2012, Philanthropia ranked 350.org the second best non-profit organization working on climate change.⁴¹ Signs of 350.org's strength can be seen in one of its most prevalent and long running campaigns opposing the Keystone XL pipeline, titled "Reject and Protect." The project proposed by TransCanada Energy Company would be a pipeline that stretches from Alberta, Canada, to the Gulf Coast refineries in Texas. 350.org has been a key actor in delaying the major oil company's plan to

implement the pipeline by putting pressure on both the U.S. Senate and the President through major grassroots demonstrations and protest. On April 18th, 2014, President Obama and his administration announced that they would delay their decision on whether or not to approve the Keystone XL pipeline indefinitely.⁴² Although this does not mean that the President has said “no” to the proposed plan, it is still a rather impressive feat for a grassroots movement to have the power to put a hold on a large corporation such as TransCanada. In a brief statement issued by The White House, one of their reasons mentioned for postponing the decisions was that they needed time to “...review and appropriately consider the unprecedented number of new public comments, approximately 2.5 million, received during the public comment period that closed on March 7, 2014.”⁴³

This begs the question of *how* has 350.org become such a force within policy making? When looking at powerful networks, actor-network theorists study “...the associations between heterogeneous actors—associations that are proposed and attempted, failures and successes.”⁴⁴ In that case, we are in a position to assume that 350.org has attempted many associations, and has been rather successful at growing a large, and consequently, powerful network. Furthermore, when studying the power of a network, associations “...can be used to describe how networks come to be larger and more influential than others, how they come to be more durable through enrolling both social and material actors, and where power comes from and how it is exerted.”⁴⁵ A recent example of successful associations between heterogeneous actors is exemplified by 350.org’s “Reject and Protect” campaign. “On April 22nd, [2014] a group of ranchers, farmers and tribal communities from along the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline route,

called the Cowboy Indian Alliance, rode into Washington DC and set up camp near the White House to tell President Obama to reject the pipeline.”⁴⁶ However, representatives from 350.org did not go to each participant and attempt to enroll him or her into what is now the “Cowboy Indian Alliance.” Interestingly, something that is happening within 350.org is different from our classic view of actor-network theory.

Traditional actor-networks grow from current actors within a given assemblage enrolling human and/or non-human actors into the network through the act of translation and articulation. What we are seeing in 350.org is a sort of *self-enrollment*. Individuals from various demographics are self-enrolling into the “Reject and Protect” campaign due to their common concern toward the health of the environment and the predicted harmful effects of the pipeline. Additionally, when viewing the media as a non-human actor, it too can be seen as self-enrolling to the network in the form of media coverage. This raises the question of whether this act of self-enrollment can be attributed to the success of the network. This is because when actors self-enroll, it eliminates the possibility of a failed attempt to build associations between actors and networks. This makes things interesting for ANT scholars because “...it is usually the case that ANT looks to the network builders as the primary actors to follow and through whose eyes they attempt to interpret the process of network construction.”⁴⁷ This is not to say that 350.org does not attempt to actively enroll new actors. 350.org enrolls human actors through newsletters, word-of-mouth, and public demonstrations, etc., while it also enrolls non-human actors by keeping its members and website up to date with all the latest scientific, political and social news pertaining to environmental issues that strengthen their network. With this in mind, perhaps it would be best suited to view 350.org as a “both-and” enrolling system, where

as actors within 350.org attempt associations between human and non-human actors—similarly, human and non-human actors self-enroll.

The effectiveness of 350.org is something that is neither definable nor quantifiable, however, what we have seen through 350's "Do the Math" and "Reject and Protect" campaigns' is progress in their desired direction. When we make a shift in our punctualization, 350.org transforms from a mass of smaller movements into a larger single-point actor. Kevin DeLuca explains that when

Environmental justice groups...recognize their common struggle against the discourse of Industrialism while simultaneously engaging in local struggles situated in place. In this recognition, in their rhetorical practices of constructing nature in ways that lead to linkages and networks among disparate groups, environmental justice groups embody a possible politics in a postmodern social field marked by fragmentation, simulation, and diversity.⁴⁸

DeLuca's account of environmental justice groups summarizes 350.org quite nicely as well. 350.org is comprised of a scattered, yet united activist network, fighting against large corporations and the devastation of ecosystems for industrial growth and maintenance, both locally and globally. When each of the campaigns within 350.org are punctualized into a single-point actor, 350.org gains more reputability due to its vast and diverse membership as well as public recognition. As a result of 350's reputability it has become a commanding force when it comes to corporate and legislative measures relating to the fossil fuel industry.

Conclusion

350.org takes shape as an Internet-mediated platform that advocates for environmental justice and the termination of society's over-dependence on fossil fuels. When analyzing 350.org's characteristics and structure, the employment of the

complimentary and overlapping features, concepts, and terms of actor-network and articulation theories allows for a clearer image of its local and global configurations. I defined and explained the terms that I utilized during my analysis, followed by connecting each to how it expressed itself within the scheme of 350.org. Additionally, I attributed a great deal of the 350 movement's success to the circumvention of language. By sidestepping language whenever possible, the movement has rarely been at the mercy of semantic interpretation.

By now it should be clear that actor-network theory is especially unique because it can be applied to essentially every aspect of human and non-human actuality. While 350.org serves as a useful example of the components and functions of actor-network theory, I made note of one variation to this approach. Actor-network theorists typically view enrollment as an action taken by actors within a network in attempt to strengthen existing beliefs and structures; in 350.org I proposed a variation that I referred to as *self-enrollment*. Through this notion I suggested that perhaps 350.org finds a portion of its success as a result of self-enrollment. When human and non-human actors enroll themselves into a pre-existing network, the probability of a failed attempt to bridge associations between actors and networks decreases.

As a global community, we stand at a turning point when it comes to our current means of harnessing energy. We are witnessing the beginning of the end to longstanding destructive and unsustainable practices that wreak havoc on our fragile ecosystems. Bill McKibben explains,

Global warming is no longer a philosophical threat, no longer a future threat, no longer a threat at all. It's our reality. We've changed the planet, changed it in large and fundamental ways. And these changes are far, far more evident in the toughest

parts of the globe, where climate change is already wrecking thousands of lives daily.⁴⁹

Organizations like 350.org and its community members around the world make the conscious choice to believe that our planet is changed, but not lost. They believe that through their widespread demonstrations, each loose connection can form a large and powerful network. Through advocating for the end of senseless fossil fuel consumption, the 350 movement emphasizes that we are at a pivotal moment in history; if we fail to recognize the severity of the situation we have created, we are destined to live in a future of regrets.

Notes

¹ Environmental Protection Agency. "Carbon Dioxide Emissions." EPA.

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/gases/co2.html> accessed June 7, 2014).

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