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Questions on Facebook and Sanader

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To: Domen Savic <domen@e-demokracija.si>

hi

first, to be 100% clear, I am not the one who organised anything, by profession I am communications consultant, specialy in the area of politics and particulary in the field of internet so what I did is that I have tried to help, lobby or in other ways try to influence and improve what happened today; you will not find my name anywhere in recent events :)

my internet "position" in croatia derives from the fact that I own one of the most influential blogs in croatia called mrak.org, and i also own collaborative blog pollitika.com which is basically largest web site of its kind in Croatia and it is exclusively dedicated to political themes

that said I can answer your questions:

a) facebook is a social network, and in particular it is designed to stimulate communication, if you look at facebook structure, it is quite easy to create different groups, fan pages, or invite people to events - and all of those will spread thru your friends and their friends in piramidal or viral kind of way. this means that facebook is extremly easy to use, interaction is built in from ground up and spread of information between different layers of people is extremly fast and efficient. (myspace was favourite social network before facebook, but it is not so easy to use, and it does not stimulate users for communication and that is the reason why it is slowly fading away while facebook is rapidly growing) if there were no facebook, it would be much harder to organise (or meet people) but probably we would have find another tool to do same or similar things

b) facebook group started from the protest and it grew spontaneously, people in croatia are tired, depressed and group struck particular note and plenty of people responded, and responded fast

c) sanader is a populist prime minister, he is perfectly capable of saying one thing in the morning and completely different thing in the afternoon, and whole government will deny that he said something else in the morning regardless of visual evidence (ie. video or sound recording), he is simply not a trustworthy person, he is also arogant and dismissive - so no, I am not overly surprised that he flip_floped on this issue just like he did on many others, no surprise there, more like expected behaviour from him

d) well, protest in zagreb managed to have about 3-5.000 people, far less then 60.000 facebook group members; I will say that this was expected or that it was reasonable to expect that it is much easier to click "join" to a facebook group then to come from suburbs to be a part of the protest; so in that sense it was a success. also, since we are internet generation, we joked on the protest that number of people should include number of people watching video stream from the protest too; jokes aside, i would say that protest was moderate success but what is important, the crowd gained some experience, and the next protest will be more successfull

d1) if you watch what happened in recent US elections (I was there :), you will see that huge if not major part of success was Barack Obama campaign ability to motivate people online to start volunteering, showing up on rallies or helping in other ways - so, we have success story which we could use. so, it is just a question of time when someone in our part of the world will find similar recepie to move people from behind to monitor to the street

e) I do not know if there are immediate plans to move forward with this particular group, there will probably

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be some but in my opinion it will probably fade away, but if we have learned anything, that is that there will be others and they will be more successfull

i have answered in free form, feel free to modify, translate or otherwise edit the text (grammar and spell check is welcome :) as long as you keep the idea intact

if you need anything else (further clarification or something, now or in the future) let me know

marko

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