

3b- The Revolution Will Be Hashtagged.

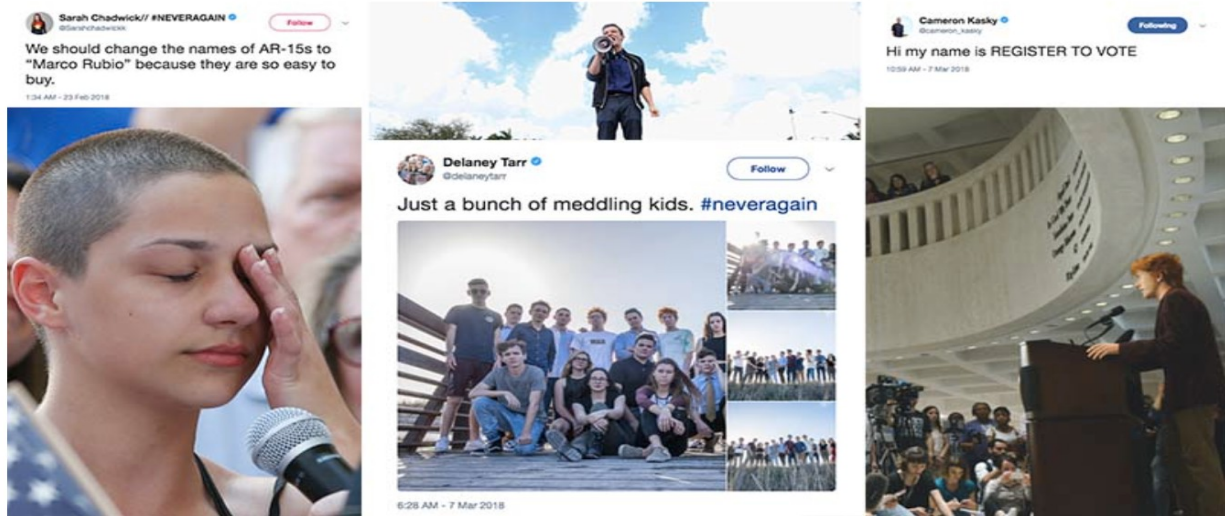


Photo credit: Getty images (bottom left) and Rain Valladares via [Twitter.com/rain_valladares](https://twitter.com/rain_valladares) (bottom right)

When a gunman took over his school, student-journalist David Hogg knew it was a moment he should document. Hiding in a closet with classmates as a former student stalked the halls of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School with an AR-15, Hogg took out his phone to report what was happening. Within a few days of the February 14 shooting in Parkland, Florida, that killed 17, he and his friends were tweeting about their grief, rage, and plans for action. In the process, Hogg and his classmates began to change the rules about how we talk about mass shootings in the U.S. In the weeks since the incident, the Parkland students have amassed thousands of followers on Twitter. Just two weeks after she created her account, Emma González, one of the most visible, had more than twice as many followers as the official account for the National Rifle Association. The students' #NeverAgain movement has gained endorsements and donations from the likes of Oprah Winfrey, George and Amal Clooney, and Lin-Manuel Miranda. Their national GoFundMe page had raised more than \$3.2 million at the time of publication.(...)

Already, it has become common for observers to note that something “feels different” this time about the national dialogue around guns. Media attention on the issue has lingered longer than usual. The students' activism is strengthened by a facility with Twitter and other social media that comes from spending an average of nearly nine hours a day (not including time spent on schoolwork) using technology. Plus, they're coming of age in the Trump era, when tweets regularly make the front page of *The New York Times*, and in the midst of the #MeToo movement, which stripped Hollywood moguls and TV personalities of their power seemingly overnight. (...)

The students' strongest impact may be on the private sector. More than 20 corporations have terminated their relationships with the NRA in what *The Atlantic* calls “a perfect storm of articulate student outrage and savvy online activism.” Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart, both major gun retailers, announced they would stop selling “assault-style rifles” and would stop selling guns to anyone under 21 years old, regardless of local and federal laws.

In addition to being articulate and demanding, the Parkland students are used to being seen: in live-streamed video on Facebook, on a friend's Snap Map, and in photos on Instagram — making them less reluctant than previous generations might have been to appear on national news so soon and so frequently after a national tragedy. They appear undeterred by internet trolls. Research shows that about a third of teens have been cyberbullied and even more have seen it happening online, so receiving negative attention online was likely not a surprise.

Hogg, the student-journalist, even thanked those spreading conspiracy theories accusing him of being a crisis actor, saying they are “great advertisers” for his cause. Despite their newfound fame as high-profile activists, the students continue to remind followers that they're still kids — comfortable retweeting memes and pictures of dogs when they're not organizing trips to meet legislators or confronting Sen. Marco Rubio on live television.