



Review

# Academic Coverage of Online Activism of Disabled People: A Scoping Review

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**Abstract:** Disabled people need to be activists given the many problematic lived realities they face. However, they frequently encounter obstacles in traditional offline activism. Online activism could be a potential alternative. The objective of this scoping review is to examine the extent and nature of the coverage of disabled people in the academic literature that focuses on online activism. We searched the abstracts in Scopus, Web of Science, and the 70 databases in EBSCO-HOST for the presence of 57 terms linked to online activism or online tools or places for online activism, which generated 18,069 abstracts for qualitative analysis. Of the 18,069 abstracts, only 54 discussed online the activism by disabled people. Among these 54 relevant abstracts, only one contained the term “Global South”. No relevant abstracts were found that contained the terms “Metaverse” or “Democrac\*” together with “activis\*”. Only two relevant abstracts contained the phrase “digital citizen\*”. Out of the 57 terms, 28 had no hits. The thematic analysis identified 24 themes: 6 themes in 30 abstracts had a positive sentiment, 7 themes in 30 abstracts had a negative sentiment, and 11 themes present in 23 abstracts had a neutral sentiment. There were three main themes: the positive role and use of online activism; the technical accessibility barriers to online activism; and the attitudinal accessibility problems arising from ableist judgments. The intersectionality of the disability identity with other marginalized identities and the issue of empowerment were rarely addressed, and ability judgment-based concepts beyond the term’s “ableism” and “ableist” were not used. The study underscores the necessity for further research given the few relevant abstracts found. The study also indicates that actions are needed on barriers to online activism and that examples for best practices exist that could be applied more often. Future studies should also incorporate a broader range of ability judgment-based concepts to enrich the analysis and to support the empowerment of disabled activists.

**Keywords:** online activism; digital activism; disability activism; activism; activist; digital citizen; metaverse; democracy; cyberactivism; slacktivism; disability studies; disabled people; people with disabilities; attitudinal accessibility; ableism



**Citation:** Wolbring, G.; Nasir, L.; Mahr, D. Academic Coverage of Online Activism of Disabled People: A Scoping Review. *Societies* **2024**, *14*, 215. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc14110215>

Received: 19 July 2024

Revised: 15 September 2024

Accepted: 18 October 2024

Published: 23 October 2024



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## 1. Introduction

Disabled people <sup>1</sup> face many problems in their lived reality as outlined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) [1] that need activism to fix them. New problems in need of activism constantly emerge. For example, forever emerging new technologies can impact the lived reality of disabled people in a positive or negative way depending on their governance. However, taking part in non-virtual forms of activism is often a problem for disabled people [2–17]. Online activism emerged in recent times as another way to make one’s voice heard. Online forms of activism could circumvent some of the barriers of offline activism but at the same time could also pose new barriers, such as technological barriers for disabled people, if not performed right. To our knowledge, there is no scoping review that focused on the academic coverage of

online activism by disabled people. Therefore, the objective of this study was to better understand the academic coverage of online activism by disabled people and to identify areas where further research and attention might be needed to ensure that online activism fully supports, amplifies, and empowers the voices of disabled online activists to make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others. To fulfill the objective, we looked at 18,069 abstracts containing 57 terms linked to online activism, online tools, and places for activism. Using a hit count manifest coding approach, we asked the following research questions: (1) How often are various disability terms in general, disabled people who also belong to another marginalized identity and ability–judgment based concepts mentioned in the abstracts selected? (2) How often are any one of the 57 online search terms found in the abstracts analyzed? Using a content analysis of the abstracts covering online activism of disabled people, we asked the following question: (3) What themes are evident, and what topics for activism are mentioned or not mentioned in relation to online activism of disabled people?

### 1.1. Online Activism

Democracy expects and needs active citizens [18–26]. Being an active citizen comes with many ability expectations [21]. It is argued that “mobile accessibility, the internet, and social media is reshaping our understandings of public participation in democracy” [27] (p. 1). One definition of online activism is “citizens’ voluntary actions to raise awareness about or exert pressure in order to solve a political, cultural, or social problem” [28] (p. 135). The same source mentions techno-activism, which focuses on actions linked to technological systems (e.g., hacktivism and data activism) [28] as one specific form of online activism. Another perspective on online activism defines it as “online activities that raise awareness about political issues’ and aim to mobilize citizens to take other forms of action to promote political reforms” [29] (p. 68). Collectively, these definitions highlight the significant role of online activism in shaping society and addressing societal problems. Disabled people experience many societal problems. They should, therefore, be considered essential participants in these activism efforts, and it is crucial that they be included in online activism without facing barriers. However, disabled people already experience barriers in offline activism [2–17]. Online activism could circumvent some of the barriers if performed right. However, online activism requires specific abilities and accessibility features. Therefore, it has the potential for new barriers (such as technological accessibility). It could also reinforce existing accessibility barriers (like attitudinal accessibility) disabled people already face in offline activism. So, if not performed right, online activism could result in the marginalization of disabled people in online activism. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that online activism is conducted in a manner that is inclusive and accessible to all, including disabled individuals. The academic literature has an important role to play to ascertain the online activism reality of disabled people and to provide data and best practices to ensure the full inclusion of disabled people in online activism.

Many aspects of online activism are targets for academic inquiry, such as the effectiveness of online activism [30–32], the combining of street protests with online activism [33–39] and the impact of online activism on offline activism [40–42]. Digital civic participation [43], the collective identity of online and offline feminist activists [44] and online activism as a factor and indicator of youth civic identity [43] are some other topics investigated. People involve themselves in online activism in many different ways [45] such as “Creators, Conversationalists, Critics, Collectors, Joiners, Spectators, and Inactives” [46] (p. 257). Online activism is described as supporting the feminist movement in some areas [47–53] including girl activism [54,55] but it is also described as having some pitfalls [56,57]. Online activism is described as supportive of marginalized voices [46,58–61] but also that it might lead to problems due to lack of access [62,63]. It is reported that there is a digital activism gap between social classes [64]. As disabled people are disproportionately represented among people living below the poverty line [65,66], this suggests that the digital gap based on social class might disproportionately impact disabled people. It is argued that “algorithms

in social media can influence attitudes” [67] (p. 9) and that “the tendency is for elite, hierarchical and conservative groups to dominate online activism spaces” [67] (p. 9) citing a study by [64]. It is argued that

“These “counterpublics”—as Habermas initially conceived to explain the unique sites and methods that members of marginalized citizens use to produce non-dominant forms of knowledge—now reflect mainstream sources that can use similar tactics to delegitimize counter-movements to realign them with dominant narratives that can undermine the legitimacy of social movements” referencing [68]” [46] (p. 264).

It is noted that intersecting oppressions do not simply disappear in online activism [69]. As such, it is of importance to cover the impact of intersectionality of disabled people with other marginalized identities on online activism of disabled people, given that intersectionality is an important topic for disabled people, as their lived reality is impacted by belonging to another marginalized identity [70–73].

Some other topics covered are the changed nature of movements [29,74–82], online activism and indigenous people [83], online activism and ethics [84], bias influences on online activism and its success [85], repression of online activism [86], predicting online participation through Bayesian network analysis [87], digital rage [88] and crowdfunding [89]. Artists are reported to be involved in online activism [90]. Some see online activism not as real activism [91–94], which is a view that has been questioned by others [46]. Given that all these issues have been raised in the context of other groups and that many, if not all, of these issues also impact the online activism of disabled people, it is important that these issues are investigated within the context of disabled people.

Online activism is increasingly prevalent in the Global South, as highlighted in various studies [95,96]. However, numerous challenges persist, such as pervasive attitudinal biases toward this region [97]. The Global South is often conceptualized as a “site of counter-epistemic and alternative practices” [98] (p. 412) with movements like “Other #MeToos” illustrating how global movements are adapted and translated to fit “non-Western, postcolonial, minoritized, and marginalized contexts” [99] (p. 1). For instance, resistance to “datafication” in the Global South differs significantly from the Global North due to substantial “political, economic, social, and technological differences” [98] (p. 412) (see also [100] for data activism). Moreover, online activism in the Global South is fraught with challenges beyond just the digital divide [101–103].

Considering that the majority of disabled people live in the Global South [104], this means that the struggles faced by online activists in the Global South directly impact the online activism of disabled people. All the problems noted in the literature around online activism in the Global South are also relevant to disabled people. But disabled individuals in the Global South not only face the same challenges as other activists, but they also encounter additional barriers due to their disabilities, including the intersectionalities disabled people have with other marginalized identities. This underscores the importance of understanding and investigating the unique experiences and challenges of disabled individuals as online activists in the Global South to ensure that the voices of disabled online activists are heard and supported in order to be able to address problems disabled people face.

### 1.2. Disability Activism and Disabled Activists

Disability activism has been going on for a long time [105–108] and is important [109–112]. Disability activism takes place every day [109] and influences Disabled People’s Organizations [113]. Disability activism uses many different tactics and strategies [105,109,114–119], and the potential future of disability activism is discussed [120]. The intersectionality of disabled activists is highlighted as an important aspect [121], and that increasing the literacy on the lived reality of disabled people is a benefit of involving disabled people in activism [122–124]. It is seen as important to understand the activism of young disabled people [16,17]. Disabled people are often enticed to become activists due to the problematic

lived reality of disabled people [6]. There is a linkage between disability activism and being a disabled politician [125,126]. Disabled people are “epistemic activists” [127] because they see themselves as experts of their lived reality [128–133]. However, although activism is seen as important to disabled people, there are many barriers to disability activism. “Nothing About Us Without Us” [134–140] reflects the sentiment that disabled people want to be heard on topics that impact them [8,117,141–146] but think they are often ignored [4,145,147–151]. The following section expands on some existing barriers.

### 1.2.1. Barriers to Disability Activism

There are many accessibility barriers that disabled people experience in their daily lives that can influence their abilities to be activists. The Accessibility Canada Act, for example, lists four main areas of access barriers disabled people experience in their daily lives: (a) physical, (b) architectural, (c) technological, and (d) attitudinal [152]. Attitudinal accessibility is described as an indicator that “reflects attitudes and initiatives aimed at overcoming biases, stereotypes, and stigmas regarding persons with disabilities” [153] (p. 16) and “the impact of society’s attitudes towards individuals with disabilities” [154] (p. 210). These access barriers are also highlighted in the 2022 report “What we did and what we learned: Monitoring Disability Rights” published by the Canadian Human Rights Commission when they state, “A barrier can be in a building or space. It can be a policy. It can be in information or communication. It can be in the negative attitudes of other people” [155] (p. 4). According to Disability Rights Wisconsin, “People with disabilities may face physical, communicative, attitudinal, systemic, or other barriers as a part of daily life” [156]. On the webpage of the Australian Federation of Disability Organizations, the following accessibility barriers are listed: attitudinal barriers, environmental barriers, architectural or physical barriers, institutional barriers, organizational or systemic barriers, and communication barriers [157] (for another source reflecting similar categories of barriers to accessibility, see [158]). The European Disability Forum has many sources in their publication section covering many different accessibility problems [159]. Jenny Morris, a disability rights activist, lists in her 2003 submission “Barriers to Independent Living: A scoping paper prepared for the Disability Rights Commission” to the UK Disability Rights Commission many accessibility barriers identified by the disability rights movement that prevent independent living [160]. Then, there are many legal documents that list many different accessibility barriers. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [1] lists “accessibility to the physical, social, economic and cultural environment, to health and education and to information and communication” in Preamble V. Communication and information barriers are expanded on in article 2 and article 4 H. Article 9 is specifically about accessibility and mentions many accessibility barriers. It also asks for monitoring the implementation of accessibility efforts and to train society on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities, and it lists numerous action items. The issue of access to justice is flagged in article 11. Other articles mentioning accessibility barriers are articles 19 b, 20b, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, and 32. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities suggests that disabled people face access issues in all aspects of their lived reality. Various countries cover in their disability acts numerous barriers to accessibility (for example, for India see [161]). Many of these accessibility barriers play themselves out around disabled people being knowledge producers [162–164], including as students [165], community scholars [166] and activists [2,3,10–15,167]. For example, that disabled activists and their activism are often invisible [10,11], ignored [12,13], or rejected [14,15], one could classify under attitudinal inaccessibility. Disabled people who want to become politicians (a form of activism) face physical inaccessibility’s and social stigma [125] (an attitudinal inaccessibility). Online forms of activism could circumvent many physical accessibility barriers disabled people experience in offline activism. At the same time, online activism could also pose the same barriers present in offline activism (attitudinal accessibility) [2–17] and could pose new barriers (technical and digital information barriers) if not performed right.

Indeed, to prevent technical and digital information barriers in online activism demands an active approach given that disabled people in general experience a digital divide. In their book, *Digital Disability: The Social Construction of Disability in New Media*, the media and disability studies scholars Goggin and Newell assert that “digital technologies are designed to further the non-disabled status quo” [168] (p. 9). This statement underscores a pervasive issue where the design and accessibility of digital technologies fail to cater adequately to the requirements of people with disabilities. A 2023 Forbes article highlights this by revealing that “as of 2022, only 3% of the internet is accessible to people with disabilities” [169]. For other sources that give numbers for the digital divide that disabled people face internet access and digital devices wise in the USA; see [170–173]. For sources covering specifically the problematic reality of the digital divide and other digital problems faced by disabled people in the Global South, see [174,175]. These reported lived realities of disabled people collectively highlight the multifaceted challenges faced by disabled people in accessing and participating in online spaces both in the Global North and the Global South. The digital divide has significant implications for online activism of disabled people and social inclusion.

Then, there are problems experienced by activists in general that also impact disabled activists, such as the danger of activist burnout.

### 1.2.2. The Issue of Activist Burnout

There are an increasing number of academic articles that engage with the danger of activist burnout [176–192]. Various causes of activist burnout are listed, such as “problems within and between movements [178,182,183], being different from the norm [178,182,183], unreasonable expectations [183], working too much [183], working on issues around identity [183], the persistence of sexism, racism, and other oppressions [178], emotional labour [178], the impact of ones lived experience outside the activism impacts the activism [178], and treatment of activists in organizations [178]” cited from [193] (p. 3).

Disabled activists are uniquely vulnerable to burnout due to their negative lived reality.

As Carol Gill, a former director of the oldest disability studies program in the USA in Chicago, noted:

“After struggling with employment bias, poverty, blocked access to the community and its resources, unaccommodating and selective health services, lack of accessible and affordable housing, penalizing welfare policies, and lack of accessible transportation, some may experience what is known in the disability community as “disability burn-out”. This term refers to emotional despair engendered by thwarted opportunities and blocked goals. It is aggravated and intensified by years of exposure to disability prejudice and devaluation. In fact, a frequently repeated theme in research interviews with persons with disabilities and illnesses is, “I can live with my physical condition but I’m tired of struggling against the way I’m treated” [194] (p. 180) (cited in [193]).

Disability burnout, as worded in [194] (p. 180), reflects “disablism burnout” [193]. This refers to the systemic discrimination experienced in one’s daily life based on negative ability judgments [193]. The burnout of disabled environmental activists is highlighted [2,3], a burnout, which is often caused because the activism community does not fully understand or take into account the specific requirements of disabled people in being activists (for some examples of the negative reality, see [4,5]). These barriers are not merely about physical inaccessibility; they include the pervasive attitudinal biases and systemic discrimination that disabled people encounter in most aspects of their lives (disablism). Furthermore, disabled people do not only have to combat the external barriers imposed as the result of irrelevant and biased ability expectations but they also must navigate the internal stressors that come from being constantly in a state of advocacy. The pressures of activism, which include the emotional and physical toll of advocating for one’s own rights and the rights of others, can become overwhelming. This continuous need for activism can lead to what has been termed “disabled activist burnout” [193].

Being an activist is a critical component of allyship [195]. Allies help to amplify the voices of those who are marginalized, including disabled individuals. Non-disabled people can be allies to disabled people, disabled people can be allies to other disabled people, and disabled people can be allies to people and causes not directly linked to disabled people. Therefore, the issue of activist burnout is of significance for the discussion around allyship, as allies could experience “ally burnout” [195,196]. When disabled activists face burnout due to disablism burnout, their ability to act as allies for others—whether for fellow disabled individuals or for causes linked to other marginalized groups—is compromised and as such could lead to ally burnout. This can create a vicious cycle, where the lack of effective allyship from disabled activists further isolates them and weakens the broader movements for social change. As such, the impact of disablism burnout on allyship requires offline and online accessible activism space, and it is important that activist burnout, including ally burnout, is covered in the academic coverage of online activism of disabled people. If performed right, online forms of activism could strengthen the ability of disabled activists to fight disability/disablism burnout through building communities and a sense of belonging and to be allies to others, but if performed wrong, it could add to disability/disablism burnout and with that to disabled activist burnout and a decrease in their abilities to be allies. Furthermore, if performed wrong, such as if the online activism space exhibits attitudinal inaccessibilities, it might lead to a decrease in non-disabled allies becoming involved in disability activism if the online activists internalize the negative attitude.

### 1.3. Digital Citizen/Ship and Disabled People

Being a digital citizen is increasingly expected from members in various societies, and digital citizens are expected to be digital activists [197,198]. It is highlighted that “digital citizenship influences and is influenced by young feminist activism outside the Global North centres” [199] (p. 131).

The “digital citizenship education handbook” by the Council of Europe states,

“A digital citizen is someone who, through the development of a broad range of competences, is able to actively, positively and responsibly engage in both on- and offline communities, whether local, national or global. As digital technologies are disruptive in nature and constantly evolving, competence building is a lifelong process that should begin from earliest childhood at home and at school, in formal, informal and non-formal educational settings” [200] (p. 10/11)

and

“Digital citizenship and engagement involves a wide range of activities, from creating, consuming, sharing, playing and socialising, to investigating, communicating, learning and working. Competent digital citizens are able to respond to new and everyday challenges related to learning, work, employability, leisure, inclusion and participation in society, 5 respecting human rights and intercultural differences” [200] (p. 11).

Other abilities expected from a digital citizen are critical thinking skills; being able to engage in community life; being able to build and maintain an online presence and identity as well as online interactions; managing one’s data; ability to interact with others in virtual social spaces, and being a lifelong learner [200]. At the same time, it is stated in the handbook that “Digital citizens can enjoy rights of privacy, security, access and inclusion, freedom of expression and more” [200] (p. 14).

However, access and inclusion and the abilities expected from digital citizens pose numerous challenges for disabled digital citizens. All the content of the handbook suggests that how we discuss digital citizens and digital citizenship is of high importance to disabled people, including disabled activists.

Various pitfalls are discussed in the academic literature in relation to digital citizens. It is argued that due to digital echo chambers and the biased use of digital media, the digital citizen is “increasingly exposed to bias undermining the key assumptions of liberal

democracy” [201] (p. 212). The digital echo chamber is also a problem for disabled people given the biased perception of disabled people and the dynamic of motivated reasoning noted as a problem for bettering the lived reality of disabled people [202]. How will the biases disabled people face offline and online play themselves out in the expectation to educate students to be good digital citizen and in digital citizenship education [203,204]? It is argued that digital citizenship comes with digital rights and responsibilities [205], but how will this play itself out in a world where disabled people do not see themselves as offline citizens due to the various barriers they experience [206–209]? How will “digital citizen humanitarianism” [210] play itself out around disabled people as activists and as being acted upon? Being a digital citizen comes with ability expectations [211–214]. How does digital citizen empowerment [215,216] play itself out around disabled people? Will the abilities that are expected lead to the digital disempowerment of disabled people? What does it mean for disabled people as digital citizens to be part of a digital society? Choi developed the digital citizenship scale with the following subsections: “Internet Political Activism, Technical Skills, Local/Global Awareness, Critical Perspective, and Networking Agency” [217] (p. 107). However, the scale does not cover accessibility. Given the ever-increasing digital world and the ever-changing ability requirements of digital citizens in their role of being activists, it is important to generate data on the reality of disabled digital citizen activists.

In conclusion, disabled individuals face numerous challenges in their daily lives that necessitate active advocacy and activism but encounter significant barriers in taking part in offline forms of activism. For these individuals, online or virtual activism could present a viable alternative provided it is implemented thoughtfully and inclusively. Furthermore, various societies increasingly expect all citizens, including disabled people, to engage digitally, including as digital activists. Therefore, it is crucial to consider both the opportunities and challenges that online activism presents. The potential of online activism to empower disabled individuals as digital citizens and online activists is substantial, but it also carries risks if not approached correctly. Understanding how disabled people are represented in the academic literature focusing on online activism and digital citizenship is essential. This understanding helps to identify both the gaps in existing research and the insights that can inform more effective and inclusive online activism and digital citizen strategies. By critically examining what is and is not covered in the literature, we can better shape online activism to ensure that disabled individuals are not only included but are also empowered to lead and effect change in their own lives and in the lives of others. Therefore, the goal of our study is to explore the extent and nature of coverage of disabled activism within academic literature that focuses on various aspects of online activism and digital citizenship. This exploration aims to highlight the current discourse and identify areas where further research and attention are needed to ensure that online activism fully supports and amplifies the voices of disabled people as activists.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Study Design

Scoping studies are useful in identifying the extent of research that has been conducted on a given topic and the current understanding of a given topic [218,219]. In our initial search, we found 1662 abstracts covering the activism of disabled people and 339 containing the phrase “disability activis\*”. Given that disabled people face many problems in offline activism and that online activism changes the requirements for performing activism, we focused in this scoping study on the extent and content of academic research that has been conducted on the online activism of disabled people. Our study employed a modified version of the stages for a scoping review outlined in [220]. We fulfilled all the requirements of the PRISMA chart for scoping reviews [221,222] with the exception that we decided not to use a flow chart as a figure. Given the many different flows we would have to show due to the many different search strategies, we decided to provide the same information under the search strategy as a table. We added the PRISMA chart into Appendix C.

## 2.2. Theoretical Frameworks and Lenses

We interpret our findings through three lenses. One lens is the field of disability studies, which investigates the social, lived experience of disabled people [223,224], and disablism, the systemic discrimination based on not measuring up to irrelevant ability norms [225]. The second lens is the field of ability-based studies (the three strands of ability-based studies: ability expectation and ableism studies [226,227], studies in ableism [228–230] and critical studies of ableism [231,232]), which focus on the investigation of ability-based expectations, judgments, norms, and conflicts [233]. Using this lens, we make use of some of the ability-based concepts (ableism, disablism, internalized ableism, internalized disablism, ability security, ability insecurity, ability equity, ability inequity, ability equality, ability inequality, ability privilege, ability discrimination, ability oppression, ability apartheid, ability obsolescence, ability consumerism, ability commodification, ableism foresight, ability governance, ableism governance) and technology-focused ability judgment terms such as techno-ableism and techno-disablism coined within the disability rights movement and the fields of disability and ability studies [227,233–246].

As a third lens, we use the lens of empowerment. Empowerment is mentioned in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in relation to women with disabilities [1], and the UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development uses empowerment [247]. Empowerment is linked to activism in many ways. “Social connections are important to empower people to perform collective actions and generate social change. Empowerment needs access to information, resources, and the ability to influence policies and practices and civic engagement can empower marginalized groups. Community activism can empower marginalized groups to fight for social change” [248] (p. 1). Activism is seen to give a sense of empowerment due to collective identities and relationships with others [249,250]. Empowerment is linked to activism because they are both seen to focus on social change and justice [250]. Intersectionality is seen as an important aspect in the empowerment process [250]. Empowerment is also linked to digital citizens [215]. It is argued that hierarchies within activism are disempowering [251]. In the present review, empowerment builds upon and aligns with the disability studies and ability studies lenses. This includes attention to the implications with respect to disempowerment in domains where exclusion is occurring, such as lack of access to activism and judgment of one’s activism, and, conversely, areas where better data and practice might empower people with disabilities to be activists.

## 2.3. Identification of Research Questions

In order to better understand the coverage of online activism by disabled people, we looked at 18,069 abstracts containing 57 terms linked to online activism, online tools, and places for activism. Using a hit count manifest coding approach, we asked the following research questions: (1) How often are various disability terms in general, disabled people who also belong to another marginalized identity and ability-judgment based concepts mentioned in the abstracts selected? (2) How often are any one of the 57 online search terms found in the abstracts analyzed? Using a content analysis of the abstracts covering online activism of disabled people, we asked the following research question: (3) What themes are evident, and what topics for activism are mentioned or not mentioned in relation to online activism of disabled people?

## 2.4. Data Sources and Data Collection

We searched between 8 January 2024 and 9 June 2024 (strategies 1–13) and 12 August (Global South-related strategy 14), the academic databases EBSCO-HOST (an umbrella database that includes over 70 other databases itself), Scopus and Web of Science with no time restrictions. These databases were chosen because together they contain journals that cover a wide range of topics from areas relevant for answering the research questions. As for inclusion criteria, scholarly peer-reviewed journals were included in the EBSCO-HOST search and reviews, peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, and editorials were included



in Scopus, and the Web of Science search was set to all document types. As to exclusion criteria, every piece of data found through the search strategies not covering the content mentioned under inclusion criteria was excluded from the content analysis.

#### Eligibility Criteria and Search Strategies

Step 1: We selected over 57 keywords to obtain abstracts covering online activism. We chose the term “Metaverse” because the Metaverse, if the vision is fulfilled, will impact the way we conduct activism. We chose “Activis\*” AND “social media” because social media is an area of online activism and a source of information for online activism and offline activism. We chose “Reddit”, “Tumblr”, “Twitter”, “Instagram”, “Facebook”, “TikTok” and “YouTube” as these are platforms for online activism. We chose “Online activis\*”, “Hashtag activis\*”, “Cyber-activis\*” OR “Cyberactivis\*” OR “Cyber activis\*”, “Slacktivis\*”, “Digital Activis\*”, “Blogging”, “social media platform”, “media platform”, “Online platform”, “DIY”, “Do it yourself”, “maker movement”, “online social network”, “digital action”, “Internet activis\*”, “data activis\*”, “chat-room\*”, “social network”, “virtual”, “fandom”, “online advocacy”, online communit\*”, “WhatsApp”, “WeChat”, “Telegram”, “Douyin”, “QQ”, “Snapchat”, “Weibo”, “Qzone”, “Kuaishou”, “Pinterest”, “formerly Twitter”, “LinkedIn”, “Skype”, “Quora”, “Tieba”, “Viber”, “Microsoft Teams”, “imo”, “Likee”, “Picsart”, “Twitch”, “Discord” and “Stack Overflow” as terms as they could have content covering online activism.

We chose the term “Digital citizen\*” because being a digital citizen assumes that one is being able to be an online activist [200]. We used the keyword combination “Activis\*” and democracy because activism is about shaping society, which also can take place online. After the content analysis of relevant abstracts that covered the online activism of disabled people, we downloaded the full texts of abstracts that used ableism, disablism, ability, or ableist in the abstracts to see whether they engaged with other ability judgment-based concepts in the full text.

#### 2.5. Data Analysis

To answer the three research questions, we used a manifest coding and a qualitative content analysis approach (for which abstracts were used for which RQ, see Table 1).

For the quantitative analysis (manifest coding) (RQ 1–2), the abstracts obtained through various strategies were searched on the computer by two of the three authors of this study independently using the advanced search function in the Adobe Acrobat Software version 2024. The two authors searched for how many abstracts contained the various terms linked to the keywords in Tables A2 and A3, Appendix A. The two authors then compared the numbers for each keyword (peer debriefing). No differences were found between the authors. For results of Table A1, Appendix A, which reported on the numbers for “activism”, “disability terms” and “online terms” by themselves, and in various combinations, two of the authors completed the hit counts, using the online searches of the databases used in this study. Both authors received the same results.

For the qualitative analysis (RQ 3), we performed a content analysis of the sets of abstracts (strategies 2–11,13) investigating the coverage of disabled people in relation to online activism. The same two authors used the comment function in Adobe Acrobat Software for the coding procedure to independently ascertain first relevant abstracts (so abstracts that covered online activism of disabled people) and then how disabled people were mentioned in conjunction with the online activism related terms. Peer debriefing between the two authors of the study was performed to compare the themes.

**Table 1.** Search strategies used.

Strategy	Sources	Search Terms	Hits (From the Three Databases) – Duplicate (Dup) =
Strategy 1a	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (“Disability activis*”)	252/215/140 = 607 – dup = 339 (downloaded) initial search mentioned under 2.1, used for background not for further analysis
Strategy 1b	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (“Activis*”) AND ABS (“Disability minorit*” OR “Ability minority” OR “Disabled” OR “Disabled people” OR “disabled person*” OR “Disabled women” OR “disabled woman” OR “women with disabilities” OR “Women with a disability” OR “Woman with a disability” OR “Disabled artist*” OR “artist* with disabilities” OR “with disabilities” OR “people with disabilities” OR “person* with disabilities” OR “learning disabilit*” OR dyslexia OR “Impair*” OR “visually impair*” OR “visual impair*” OR “hearing impair*” OR “physically impair*” OR “physical impair*” OR “cognitive impair*” OR deaf OR “Adhd” OR “autism” OR “attention deficit” OR “Autistic women” OR “women with autism” OR “Autistic woman” OR “woman with autism” OR “neurodiver*” OR wheelchair)	1098/1464/594 = 3216 – dup = 1662 (downloaded); initial search mentioned under 2.1 and used for RQ-1 (Table A1, Appendix A)
Strategy 2	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (“Online activis*”)	377/277/236 = 890 – dup = 457 (downloaded) RQ-1 and 3 (qualitative analysis, Tables 2 and A3, Appendix A)
Strategy 3	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (Slacktivism)	92/56/62 = 210 – dup = 106 (downloaded) RQ-1 and 3 (qualitative analysis, Tables 2 and A3, Appendix A)
Strategy 4	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (“Cyber-activis*” OR “cyberactivis*” OR “cyber activis*”)	167/137/95 = 399 – dup = 231 (downloaded) RQ-1 and 3 (qualitative analysis, Tables 2 and A3, Appendix A)
Strategy 5	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (“Activis*”) AND ABS (“social media”)	2479/2259/1485 = 6223 – dup = 2977 (downloaded) RQ-1 and 3 (qualitative analysis, Tables 2 and A3, Appendix A)
Strategy 6	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (Metaverse)	3487/955/1547 = 5959 – dup = 4031 (downloaded) RQ-1 and 3 (qualitative analysis, Tables 2 and A3, Appendix A)
Strategy 7	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (“Digital citizen*”)	945/820/531 = 2297 – dup = 1290 (downloaded) RQ-1 and 3 (qualitative analysis, Tables 2 and A3, Appendix A)
Strategy 8	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (“Hashtag activis*”)	94/77/63 = 234 – dup = 124 (downloaded) RQ-1 and 3 (qualitative analysis, Tables 2 and A3, Appendix A)

Table 1. Cont.

Strategy	Sources	Search Terms	Hits (From the Three Databases) – Duplicate (Dup) =
Strategy 9	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (“digital activis*”)	394/228/236 = 858 – dup = 486 (downloaded) RQ-1 and 3(qualitative analysis, Tables 2 and A3, Appendix A)
Strategy 10	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (Activis*) And ABS (democrac*)	3000/1000/3384 = 7780 – dup = 4245 (downloaded) RQ-1 and 3(qualitative analysis, Tables 2 and A3, Appendix A)
Strategy 11a	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (“activis*”) AND ABS (“social media platform” OR “media platform” OR “Online platform” OR “DIY” OR “Do it yourself” OR “maker movement” OR “social network” OR “online social network” OR “digital action” OR “Internet activis*” OR “data activis*” OR “chat-room*” OR “fandom” OR “online advocacy”)	907/344/271 = 1525 – dup = 1015 (downloaded) RQ 3 (qualitative analysis, Table 2)
Strategy 11b	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (Twitter OR Instagram OR facebook OR “reddit” OR blogging OR TikTok OR YouTube) and ABS (activis*)	1122 downloaded RQ 3 (qualitative analysis, Table 2)
Strategy 11c	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (WhatsApp OR WeChat OR Telegram OR Douyin OR QQ OR Snapchat OR Weibo OR Qzone OR Kuaishou OR Pinterest OR “X (formerly Twitter)” OR LinkedIn OR Skype OR Quora OR Tieba OR Viber Or “Microsoft Teams” OR “imo” OR Likee Or Picsart OR Twitch OR Discord OR “Stack Overflow”) and ABS (activis*)	1985 RQ 3 (Table 2)
Strategy 11d	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS(hashtag OR blogging OR “Twitter” OR “Instagram” OR “facebook” OR “TikTok” OR “TikTok” OR “You tube” OR “YouTube” OR “social media platform” OR “media platform” OR “Online platform” OR “Reddit” OR “DIY” OR “Do it yourself” OR “maker movement” OR “online social network” OR “digital action” OR “Internet activis*” OR “data activis*” OR “chat-room*” OR “fandom” OR “online advocacy” OR “online communit*” OR whatsapp OR wechat OR telegram OR douyin OR qq OR weibo OR qzone OR kuaishou OR pinterest OR “formerly Twitter” OR linkedin OR skype OR quora OR tieba OR viber OR “Microsoft Teams” OR “imo” OR likee OR picsart OR twitch OR discord OR “Stack Overflow” OR “Hollaback!” OR “Onlyfans”) and ABS (“activis*”)	2202 generated in Endnote 9 software merging some existing downloaded abstracts from other strategies. RQ 1 (Table A3, Appendix A)

Table 1. Cont.

Strategy	Sources	Search Terms	Hits (From the Three Databases) – Duplicate (Dup) =
Strategy 12	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (metaverse OR “Online activis*” OR “Digital citizen*” OR “Hashtag activis*” OR “Cyber-activis*” OR “cyberactivis*” OR “cyber activis*” OR “Slacktivis*” OR “Digital Activis*” OR “social media” OR hashtag OR blogging OR “TikTok” OR “TikTok” OR “You tube” OR “YouTube” OR “social media platform” OR “media platform” OR “Online platform” OR “Reddit” OR “DIY” OR “Do it yourself” OR “maker movement” OR “online social network” OR “digital action” OR “Internet activis*” OR “data activis*” OR “chat-room*” OR “fandom” OR “online advocacy” OR “online Communit*” OR whatsapp OR wechat OR telegram OR douyin OR qq OR snapchat OR weibo OR qzone OR kuaishou OR pinterest OR “formerly Twitter” OR linkedin OR skype OR quora OR tieba OR viber OR “Microsoft Teams” OR “imo” OR likee OR picsart OR twitch OR discord OR “Stack Overflow” OR “hollaback!” OR “onlyfans”) And ABS (disability terms from strategy 1b)	4149/6173/3066 – dup = 4980 Downloaded RQ-1 (Table A1 and RQ-2 Table A2 Appendix A)
Strategy 13	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (57 online terms from strategy 12 And ABS (disability terms from strategy 1b) AND ABS (“activis*”)	58/40/37 = 135 – dup = 73 RQ-1–3, Tables A2 and A3, Appendix A)
Strategy 14a	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (57 online terms from strategy 12) AND ABS (“global south”)	314/162/181 = 658 – dup = 366 (not used for analysis)
Strategy 14b	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (57 online terms from strategy 12) AND ABS (“global south”) AND ABS (activis*)	30/21/19 = 70 – dup = 39 (not used for analysis)
Strategy 14b	Scopus/EBSCO-HOST/Web of Science	ABS (57 online terms from strategy 12) AND ABS (“global south”) AND ABS (activis*) AND ABS (of disability terms from strategy 1b)	1 (is within abstracts from strategy 2)

**Table 2.** Numbers of relevant abstracts for different online terms in qualitative content analysis.

Online Terms	Total Abstracts Found	Relevant Abstracts Found	Abstracts with a Positive Theme	Abstracts with a Negative Theme	Abstracts with a Neutral Theme
Metaverse	4031	0	0	0	0
Activism and democracy	4245	0	0	0	0
“Activis*” AND “social media”	2977	18 (two duplicates)	5	9	3
“Digital Activis*”	486	10 (one duplicate)	7	6	3
“Online activis*”	457	9	4	8	5
“Twitter” OR “Instagram” OR “Facebook”	1122	8 used	6	2	4
OR “Reddit” OR “Blogging” OR “TikTok” OR “YouTube” AND activis*		(twelve duplicates not used)			
“Social media platform” OR “media platform” OR “Online platform” OR “DIY” OR “Do it yourself” OR “maker movement” OR “online social network” OR “digital action” OR “Internet activis*” OR “data activis*” OR “chat-room*” OR “fandom” OR “online advocacy”	1015	7	3	4	4
“Hashtag activis*”	124	3 (one duplicate)	2	0	0
“Digital citizen*”	1290	2	0	0	2
“Cyber-activis*” OR “cyberactivis*” OR “cyber activis*”	231	1	1	1	1
“Slacktivis*”	106	2 (both duplicates)	2	2	1
(“WhatsApp” OR “WeChat” OR “Telegram” OR “Douyin” OR “QQ” OR “Snapchat” OR “Weibo” OR “Qzone” OR “Kuaishou” OR “Pinterest” OR “formerly Twitter” OR “LinkedIn” OR “Skype” OR “Quora” OR “Tieba” OR “Viber” OR “Microsoft Teams” OR “imo” OR “Likee” OR “Picsart” OR “Twitch” OR “Discord” OR “Stack Overflow” OR “Hollaback!” OR “Onlyfans”) and (“activis*”	1985	5 relevant ones but all duplicates so not used	ND	ND	ND
All abstracts		18,069			

## 2.6. Trustworthiness Measures

Trustworthiness measures include confirmability, credibility, dependability, and transferability [252–254]. Peer debriefing was employed as already outlined. As for transferability, we give all the details needed so others can decide whether they want to apply our search approaches on other data sources or whether they want to use other search terms or other disability terms and whether they want to perform more in-depth analysis of terms based on the hit counts.

## 2.7. Limitations

The search was limited to specific academic databases and English language literature and to abstracts. As such, the findings are not to be generalized to the whole academic literature, non-academic literature, or non-English literature. We also did not use every

possible disability term or every possible term linked to online activism. Given our focus, we also did not engage with online systems that developed around patient groups and digital health activism (for some sources see [255–260]). However, our findings allow conclusions to be made within the parameters of the searches.

### 3. Results

In Section 3.1. (quantitative data), we report in a summary fashion on the quantitative results for RQ 1–2 (full data are in Tables A1–A3, Appendix A). In Section 3.2 (qualitative data), we report on the results of the qualitative content analysis of the 18,069 abstracts, and in Section 3.3, we report on the full texts of the abstracts that contained the terms ableism, or ableist or disablism.

#### 3.1. Quantitative Data

As to the quantitative data, we provide first in a summary statement the results for the coverage of activism, disability terms, and online terms by themselves and in various combinations (full data in Table A1, Appendix A). We then outline the results for the presence of each of the 57 terms linked to online activism in (a) the online terms together with the disability terms and (b) the online terms together with the disability term and the term *activis\** (full data in Table A2, Appendix A). Finally, we give the numbers for (a) disability terms; (b) intersectional phrases depicting disabled people that also belong to another marginalized group; (c) disability-related terms mostly seen within a medical framework; and (d) ability judgment-based concepts in the abstracts we analyzed (full data in Table A3, Appendix A).

In short, the results shown in Tables A1–A3 in Appendix A are as follows.

In Table A1 (Appendix A), we summarize the findings for three key questions:

1. Hits for Terms:
  - (a). Disability terms (Row 2/Column 2).
  - (b). 57 online activism-related terms (Row 4/Column 2).
  - (c). The term “*activis\**” alone (Row 3/Column 2).
2. Hits for Term Combinations:
  - (a). Disability terms + “*activis\**” (Row 2/Column 3, Row 3/Column 4).
  - (b). Online activism terms + “*activis\**” (Row 4/Column 3).
  - (c). Online activism terms + disability terms (Row 4/Column 4).
  - (d). Online activism terms + disability terms + “*activis\**” (Row 4/Column 5).
3. Percentage of Abstracts on Online Activism by Disabled People:
  - (a). Starting point: Disability terms (Row 5/Column 4).
  - (b). Abstracts containing “*activis\**” (Row 3/Column 4).
  - (c). Online activism terms (Row 2/Column 3).

The results indicate a limited coverage of disabled people’s activism in academic literature especially in conjunction with online terms. Among 4,465,071 abstracts with disability terms, only 1662 (0.037%) also included “*activis\**”. For online-related terms, 875,109 abstracts were found with 16,890 (1.93%) including “*activis\**”. When combining disability and online terms, only 73 abstracts (0.43%) included “*activis\**”.

Table A2, Appendix A covers how many of the 57 terms linked to online activism or online tools or places for online activism we used were mentioned and how often in the abstracts that contained (a) the online terms together with the disability terms and (b) the online terms together with the disability term and the term *activis\**. Of the 57 terms we looked at, 28 had 0 hits with the disability terms and “*activis\**”, 21 had less than 10 hits, 5 had between 10 and 15 hits, and two had more (83 hits, “social media” and 33, twitter). Furthermore, certain online terms generated over 100 hits with disability terms but dropped to zero when “*activis\**” was added (e.g., Metaverse or TikTok) or one hit (reddit). Many terms had fewer than five hits in both cases (e.g., “Digital citizen\*”, “Hashtag *activis\**”,

“Cyberactivis\*” and “Slacktivism\*”), and some had no hits at all (e.g., “digital action”, “data activism\*” and “Hollaback!”).

Table A3, Appendix A, which covers the presence of (a) disability terms; (b) intersectional phrases depicting disabled people that also belong to another marginalized group; (c) disability-related terms mostly seen within a medical framework; and (d) ability judgment-based concepts highlights that while generic disability terms were present, specific characteristics (e.g., learning disability, cognitive impairment, neurodiver\*) were much less represented. Phrases combining disability with other marginalized identities had few to no hits, and ability judgment-based concepts were rarely (ableism/ableist) or not at all used.

### 3.2. Qualitative Analysis of Abstracts

The qualitative analysis highlighted varied sentiments and themes across a wide array of abstracts related to online activism and disabled people with a mix of positive, negative, and neutral perspectives across different platforms and terms (see Table 2).

To recap Table 2, we found 54 relevant unique abstracts in the 18,069 abstracts reflecting nine different sets of abstracts we investigated. The set of 4031 abstracts containing the term “Metaverse” and the set of 4245 abstracts containing the terms “activis\*” and “democracy” generated no relevant abstract. Within the 54 relevant abstracts, we identified 24 themes. Six themes in 30 abstracts had a positive sentiment, seven themes in 30 abstracts had a negative sentiment, and 11 themes present in 23 abstracts had a neutral sentiment.

In general, we identified the following positive sentiment themes: (positive use of online activism/powerful tool/needed to fight bias in offline activism set ups; social media important for activism of disabled people/increasingly used for activism by disabled people; increases visibility; online media trusted more; empowerment of disabled activists; and action item). As negative sentiment themes, we identified the following: (lack of accessibility; questioning ableism/ableist realities; using terms such as barriers or problem, or challenges; online activism seen as a tool for offline activism only (seen as a problematic view); judged negatively due to participating in online activism; disabled activists question negative labeling of online activism; and negative coverage of disabled people online. As neutral sentiment themes, we identified the following: (identity of disability; ally; social media changes disability activism; more research on online activism and disabled people needed; reorganization of activism; online use for private and activism purposes; needs to become a digital citizen; coverage of indigenous disabled people; coverage of disabled people of color; intersectionality and the “Global South”).

As to which of the nine sets of abstracts contained which themes in how many abstracts, as identified by our qualitative analysis, we added these data into Appendix B.

In the remainder of Section 3.2, we outline the themes we found focusing on the online activism of disabled people in the different sets of abstracts. We searched the obtained abstracts for the disability terms from strategy 1b and the phrase “disability activism” and looked for any content relevant to online activism by disabled people. We did not separate below the different sets of abstracts by themes (this is available in the bullet points in Appendix B and as numbers in Table 2). Where present, we start under each online term section with the abstracts that cover the theme of ableism and after that the abstracts that cover the theme of intersectionality due to the importance of these two themes for online activism by disabled people.

#### 3.2.1. Metaverse and Activism (4031 Abstracts)

Not one abstract covered disabled people as activists (using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1, and the phrase “disability activism”).

#### 3.2.2. Activism and Democracy (4245 Abstracts)

Not one abstract (using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1, and the phrase “disability activism”) was dealing with online activism and disabled people.

### 3.2.3. Social Media and Activism (2977 Abstracts)

Eighteen abstracts covered social media and online-related activism of disabled people (using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1 and the phrase “disability activism”).

Three covered ability judgments-related terms. One abstract investigated 335 tweets published from August to December 2018 under the hashtag MeCripple, which was used to out ableism and the microaggressions against people with disabilities in Spain [261]. In another abstract, it is argued that online activism by disabled people is hindered by able-bodied notions of activism that “leaves their individual experiences out of the discussion of social media activism” [262] (p. 619). And the third abstract covering the #DisabilityTooWhite hashtag looked at the intersectionality between racism and ableism [263], so it covered the theme of ableism and intersectionality. The second abstract covering intersectionality mentioned “women with disabilities” [264].

Lack of accessibility was a theme in five abstracts [262,265–268] (references [265,267] are duplicates from the 457 set of abstracts containing “online activism”) and in one where the wording suggested that accessibility is a problem [269]. Social media was seen to offer new ways for activism if performed right [267] (one of the duplicates, but that theme was not listed in the write up of the other set). One argued for the “empowering role of the Disability Support Network and the use of inclusive information and communication technologies” [266] (p. 3). In one abstract, it was outlined that one book chapter focused on the history of social media and the debate within disability activism on different online media [270]. Social media was noted as important for the activism of disabled people [268,271] as it allows disabled people to control their imagery [271]: for example, the disability identity among women with disabilities within China and their activism [264] and incidents where social media changed the nature of disability activism [272]. Another explored the social media initiative “Dear Julianna” as an example of online disability activism and media representation that questions conventional media narratives of disabled people [273]. One focused on the academic approaches to disability activism and social media [274], and another focused on the hashtags #ActuallyAutistic and #AskingAutistics and their use in identity formation [275]. The focus of one abstract was how knowledge and lived experiences of wheelchair mobility are related to “dysfunctional media infrastructure spaces and their translation to social media activism as well as open data practices” [276] (p. 132). Two abstracts covered deaf/Deaf people. In one abstract, the Deaf actor Marlee Matlin’s linkage between being an actor and activist, including online activist, is discussed [277], and the second covered the Twitter hashtag campaign, #WhereIsTheInterpreter, which was used to question the inaccessibility of pandemic communications in the UK [278]. Meeting online was seen as important for activism and making the problem visible to the public so they could become allies [261].

### 3.2.4. Digital Activism (486 Abstracts)

This set of abstracts generated ten relevant abstracts (covering online aspects of disability activism using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1, and disability activism). One abstract [272] was also found in the set of abstracts, covering social media and activism.

Three abstracts covered ableism as a theme in various contexts [279–281]. In one abstract covering #CripTheVote, it was argued that digital activism allows for new forms of “digital expression in ways that uniquely address the concerns of disabled populations and challenge the compulsory able-bodiedness of “movement” necessitating embodiment” [279] (p. 604). One abstract focused on the digital activism of women with disabilities on Instagram, concluding that “digital activism is a powerful tool for the movement of people with disabilities and that it is part of a network of anti-ableist activism resistance” [280] (p. 1), and the third argued that the possibilities of digital disability activism to story ableism within broader feminist debates are underexplored [281].

In one abstract, it was argued that digital activism allows one to reflect on the relationships between filmmaking, digitality, and disability [282]. In one abstract, the example of using digital disability activism to question “comments about COVID-19 deaths made by



the Director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Preventions” was discussed [283] (p. 88). Digitalized disability activism in Turkey was covered in one abstract [284], and in one abstract, it was argued that digital technologies might be useful to reach privileged audiences but that there are barriers to reach “communities who are disadvantaged by factors such as race, class, or disability” [285] (p. 289). One abstract discussed the self-representations of disability in a digital campaign on Instagram against the discrimination of people with disabilities, and that this effort was “a step towards increased visibility and politicization of disability” [286] (p. 71). One noted that disabled people and other marginalized groups questioned the negative sentiment toward digital activism as “an inadequate and inferior form of political participation” [287] (p. 63) and argued that it is seen by “feminist, disabled, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ activists” [287] (p. 63) as an essential “tool to raise awareness, advance political demands, and build coalitions” [287] (p. 63). One article back in 2015 concluded that the “role of digital activism is now embedded in disability protest culture and set to play a crucial role in future disability politics more generally” [272] (p. 937) (also found in the set of abstracts, covering social media and activism).

### 3.2.5. Online Activism (457 Abstracts)

Nine abstracts were relevant covering the online activism of disabled people (using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1, and the phrase “disability activism”).

As to a reason for online activism, in one abstract, it was described how Las FemiDiskas, an anti-ableist, feminist social movement organization, developed “virtual engagement strategies to resist ableist and sexist violence experienced in individual homes and public spaces” [288] (p. 433).

Four abstracts noted that disabled people face barriers and challenges to online activism [265,267,288,289]. In more detail, one abstract noted that online activism became more popular in general but that disabled people face barriers in online activism and proposed “ActVirtual” as an online platform for accessible activism [265]. Two investigated the online 2017 Disability March as an activity. One reported that disabled people felt they were judged negatively as participants in the virtual disability march and that this negative experience to their identity as activists posed an opportunity to increase the accessibility for disabled activists by using technologies [289]. The second one had the following themes related to the March: (a) positive, unique, enabling use of online activism; (b) supported solidarity; (c) online activism a good tool to “promote disabled individuals within broader protest discourse and contemporary policy issues that are often essential to the survival and well-being of marginalized individuals” [290] (p. 1); and (d) topics mentioned as activism issues (disability disclosure, health care coverage needs, human rights need to improve, opposition to the new political administration) [290]. One noted, “We find that visibility is essential for successful online activism, but that the pursuit of visibility requires disabled content creators to navigate additional challenges, including social stigma, algorithmic suppression, accessibility issues, and a heightened risk of harassment” [267]. And one stated

“The COVID-19 crisis pushed for the creation of a safe space to discuss and create a collective voice for women with disabilities. Online activism has opened a door to new inclusive spaces, where location is not an obstacle to collectively organizing, as long as there is internet accessibility. The creation of these new virtual spaces transforms existing material spaces and shapes the collective identity of women with disabilities and challenges and reconstructs notions of disability and gender. Exploring how digital and remote activism is deployed by women with disabilities and allies shines a light on future, kinder, non-discriminatory, and transnational practices within social movements” [288] (p. 433).

In one abstract, it was noted that the literature treats disabled online activism as a tool for organizing physical protests and actions, which is a notion the author does not agree with [291]. Three abstracts highlighted online activism as something positive [291–293] including portraying the identity one wants [291] and to increase solidarity [292] if performed

right [292]. One noted that Chinese disabled people use the virtual world for private and activism purposes [294].

### 3.2.6. "Twitter" OR "Instagram" OR "Reddit" OR "facebook" OR "Blogging" OR "TikTok" OR "YouTube" and "Activis\*" (1122 Abstracts)

This set of abstracts generated 20 relevant abstracts (covering online aspects of disability activism using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1, and the phrase "disability activism"). Out of the 20 abstracts, 12 were duplicates from other sections and thus are not listed here. We only list here the ones that were not duplicates. As for non-relevant abstracts, we for example classified abstracts that used the terms such as "deaf ears" and "attention deficit" together with "network performance impairments" as false positives.

As for the relevant eight, regarding the intersectionality of disabled people with other marginalized identities, one abstract covered First Nations peoples with disability [295].

As to general themes, one investigated the use of the twitter #HandsOffMyADA as a form of activism campaign against the proposed H.R. 620 bill. It did not give any result details in the abstract, but it noted that disabled people and others use twitter increasingly for activism [296]. One study looked at competing interpretations of disability online, focusing on the meaning of Down's syndrome, and argued that Bakhtinian theory is a useful tool for "understanding online relations and changes in the notion of disability" [297] (p. 398). One engaged with the use of facebook captions in online communication to explore critiques and examples of what disability activists describe as inspiration porn [298]. One covered the use of social media, specifically Facebook, as a platform in conjunction with the topic of decolonizing disability and caring and the experiences of First Nations peoples with disability [295]. One focused on the "hateful discourses about disability on Reddit" [299] (p. 1) and various other problematic coverages of disabled people on Twitter and Instagram but only saying it will be of interest to activists [299]. One engaged with the "autism acceptance movement", advocating for "respect, support, and accommodations so that autistics can participate in public life" [300] (p. 7). One looked at "computer-mediated communication (CMC) during social movement activities in 2006 at a university for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing" [301] (p. 674). and reported that the CMC such as blogs and vblogs were trusted more than traditional media [301]. The accessibility of YouTube was flagged as a problem [124].

### 3.2.7. "Social Media Platform" OR "Media Platform" OR "Online Platform" OR "DIY" OR Tumblr OR "Do It Yourself" OR "Maker Movement" OR "Social Network" OR "Online Social Network" OR "Digital Action" OR "Internet Activis\*" OR "Data Activis\*" OR "Chat-Room\*" OR "Fandom" OR "Online Advocacy" OR "Online Communit\*" and Activis\* (1015 Abstracts)

This set of abstracts generated seven relevant abstracts (covering online aspects of disability activism, using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1 and the phrase "disability activism").

Three abstracts used ability judgment-based concepts. In one abstract, it was argued that offline forms of activism are limited for people with intersectional invisibility, and therefore they must change how activism is performed. The abstract covered the use of Tumblr by "queer disabled activists who reject traditional notions of activism as ableist, heterosexist, and racist as a form of accessible resistance" [302] (p. 170). And one stated, "Women of color with disabilities, in particular, still struggle to challenge their positionality on the margins due to multifaceted layers of oppression, ranging from sexism, racism, classism, and ableism as further complexities of identity" [303] (p. 41). One covered TV Tropes, calling them "an informal encyclopedia of narrative devices that uses community engagement to read narratives in a critical yet accessible way. Employing the macro-structure organization of the database, users frame the linkage of pity and disability in an atypical manner that subverts mainstream ableist assertions", and "the decision to separate the labels of disability and injury is indicative of tensions around the categorization of the

body. Examining how the division can be broken in both theory and fandom creates new, productive models of activism” [304] (p. 221).

As to the intersectionality of disabled people with other marginalized identities, one covered queer disabled activists [302] and one covered “people of color with disabilities” [303] (p. 41) without any specific engagement with the intersectionality. As to intersectionality-based concepts, we found intersectional invisibility in [302].

Two covered the accessibility politics of the DIY and the maker collective *En torno a la silla* (ETS) [305,306]. One talked about a radical disability maker movement in the context of universal design but does not cover online aspects [307]. One mentioned the purpose of using the hashtag #DisabilityTooWhite and the website Ramp Your Voice as tools to empower “people of color with disabilities” [303] (p. 41), and one focused on the “practice of allies in a specific context, social media performance, as a newly emerging platform for political activism” [308] (p. 85).

### 3.2.8. Hashtag Activism (124 Abstracts)

This set of abstracts generated three relevant abstracts (covering online aspects of disability activism, using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1 and the phrase “disability activism”). One [278] is already covered under social media and activism. One covered ‘#AMyVsegdaDoma’ as a means to generate a collective identity of disabled people and their families, questioning the societal exclusion of disabled people [309]. The #NoBodyIsDisposable was mentioned as a tool for street-based and virtual activism [310].

### 3.2.9. Digital Citizen (1290 Abstracts)

This set of abstracts generated two relevant abstracts (covering online aspects of disability activism, using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1 and the phrase “disability activism”). Digital media was seen as an opportunity for patients, but then it was stated that “bio-digital citizenship” has involved a fundamental reorientation of ‘activism’ from less of a struggle for rights to more of a striving to achieve a public profile and attract funding” [311] (p. 478) and they called “for a reconceptualization of ‘activism’ to more adequately reflect the workings of power in the digital age, whereby the agency and hopes of citizens are central to the workings of political rule” [311] (p. 478). And one other argued that “visually impaired learners need mobile learning and education to become digital citizen within the society” [312] (p. 969).

### 3.2.10. Cyberactivism (231 Abstracts)

This set of abstracts generated one relevant abstract covering online aspects of disability activism (using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1 and the phrase “disability activism”). In the one abstract, it was argued that the “interplay between cyberactivism and disability advocacy” [313] (p. 1116) is rarely analyzed. Using the #boycottautismspeaks movement as an example, it was argued in the abstract that cyberactivism can bring self-advocates together and to give a voice to them that they otherwise would not have, and that it is a way to link to other causes and to be allies to others [313]. Parsloe et al. furthermore argued that cyberactivism “may help self-advocates strengthen group identities and facilitate connections with other groups with similar interests and motivations” [313] (p. 1116) and used the example of the use of cyberactivism by members of the autism community to generate counternarratives to the medical narrative of autism [313].

### 3.2.11. Slacktivism (102 Abstracts)

This set of abstracts generated two relevant abstracts (covering online aspects of disability activism, using all the disability terms from strategy 1b, Table 1, and the phrase “disability activism”). Both were also mentioned in the 457 online activism abstracts; one covering the ableism theme [262] and the other listing a variety of issues linked to online activism, including questioning the notion that online activism by disabled people is only useful to enable offline activism [291].

3.2.12. WhatsApp OR WeChat OR Telegram OR Douyin OR QQ OR Snapchat OR Weibo OR Qzone OR Kuaishou OR Pinterest OR “X (formerly Twitter)” OR LinkedIn OR Skype OR Quora OR Tieba OR Viber OR “Microsoft Teams” OR “imo” OR Likee OR Picsart OR Twitch OR Discord OR “Stack Overflow”) and Activis\* (1985 Abstracts)

Five relevant abstracts were found covering disabled people and online activism, but all were duplicates already mentioned in other sections.

### 3.3. Coverage of Ability-Judgment Based Concepts in the Full Text of the Abstracts That Contained Ability Judgments-Based Concepts

Six full texts were available [261,262,279,281,288,304], one was not [302], and for another one, the full text was not in English [280]. Of the six, two mentioned “internalized ableism” [281,304], one ability privilege [281], and one disablism [281] in the full text.

## 4. Discussion

In short, our results indicate an under-engagement with disabled people within the context of online activism in general and a lack of coverage of intersectionality of disability with other marginalized identities. Furthermore, only eight abstracts reported on online activism related to specific action items. Except for ableism and ableist, ability-judgment-based concepts were not used. Of the 57 online-related terms we looked at, 28 had 0 hits with the disability terms and “activis\*”, 21 less than 10 hits, 5 between 10 and 15 hits, and 2 had more (83 hits, “social media” and 33, “twitter”). Our qualitative analysis identified only 54 relevant abstracts (after elimination of duplicates between the sets of abstracts). The only themes mentioned five times or more were the positive use of online activism/powerful tool/needed to fight bias in offline activism set-ups (15 times), lack of accessibility (nine times), questioning ableism/ableist realities (11 times), and using terms such as barriers, problems, or challenges (six times) (the last three could be clustered further under negative issues with online activism). As to sentiment, 30 abstracts could be seen to reflect positive sentiments, 30 negative sentiments, and 23 neutral sentiments. Two engaged with how disabled people’s online activism was treated within a specific activism community (both covering the online 2017 Disability March as part of the 2017 Women’s March on Washington) [289,290]. The Global South was only mentioned in one abstract. And many problems that disabled online activism and disabled online activists can encounter, such as burnout and allyship, were not mentioned.

Our findings are problematic given the importance of online activism for disabled people. This discussion is divided into three parts. In the first part, we interpret our results through the lens of disability studies, whereby this part includes a subsection on disabled people as digital citizens. In the second part, we interpret our results through the lens of empowerment. In the third part, we interpret our results through ability judgment-based concepts. In the first subsection, we use the ability judgment-based terms to cover the negative reality of disabled people in online activism. In the second subsection, we indicate that the ability judgment-based concepts could also be used beyond disabled people and to enable marginalized groups.

### 4.1. Online Activism and Disabled People

Disabled people face many barriers in offline activism, including attitudinal barriers [2–17]. Online activism, if implemented right, could be an alternative to offline activism. However, if not performed right, online activism could introduce new barriers, such as technological barriers, or exhibit some of the same problems disabled people encounter in offline activism already (e.g., attitudinal inaccessibility). Therefore, it is essential to map out what is being said and not said in the academic coverage of online activism by disabled people. Our data suggest that disabled people are rarely or not at all covered, given that of the 18,069 abstracts analyzed, only 54 discussed online activism by disabled people (narrative write up in Appendix A, and Table 2 and qualitative content section). For example, the “Metaverse” generated not even one relevant abstract (Table 2 and qualitative

content section), although if it comes into full existence as envisioned, it could have many implications on how to engage in activism.

Our study underscores the critical need for further research on various aspects of online activism by disabled individuals. That further research is needed was also flagged in relevant abstracts [281,291,313]. As noted, “Studies of able-bodied activism—even when addressing social media activism by marginalized groups—tend to ignore disability activism” [262] (p. 619).

The omission of coverage is particularly glaring when we looked for the presence of the term “Global South”. The majority of disabled people reside in the Global South [104], yet our analysis identified only one relevant abstract that explicitly addressed online activism of disabled individuals within this region (Tables 1 and 2 and qualitative content analysis) asking, “How do women with disabilities organize against patriarchal violence in private and public spaces during pandemic times in the global south?” [288] (p. 433). The lack of coverage of the Global South in disability online activism research reflects broader systemic biases in academic inquiry. Scholars have argued that the Global South is often marginalized in global discourse on disability rights and activism [314–318]. This marginalization not only perpetuates a lack of visibility but also hinders the development of localized, culturally relevant strategies for online activism in these regions. As the digital divide remains a persistent issue, especially in lower-income countries, the unique challenges and opportunities for online activism of disabled people in the Global South deserve much greater scholarly attention.

Beyond the invisibility, our qualitative analysis suggests that disabled people also face other online activism barriers including lack of access [262,265–268,285,289,291] and the fear voiced that if not performed right it will lead to problems [292] might already be a reality. Not having access comes with negative consequences. It is, for example, argued that a lack of web accessibility decreases the possibility for disabled people to be part of environmental advocacy [319]. However, the lack of access to performing and consuming online activism can be seen as one facet of the general problems disabled people face in accessible digital technologies [320]. Cocq, the author of one of the relevant abstracts we found [286], called out in the full text (citing disability studies and media studies scholars work [168,321,322]) the digital divide disabled people face, stating that the accessibility problem is “based on assumptions regarding a certain body type” [286] (p. 74), that the “digital divide exists and that it continues to reproduce social exclusion and ableist oppression in the lives of people with disabilities” [286] (p. 74) and that the intrinsic inaccessibility of technology is labeled as “digital disability” [286] (p. 74). For various sources covering the digital divide experienced by disabled people, see [168–172,174,175]. Given that the gap in access is a main theme in our sources and that digital accessibility is a general problem for disabled people, our data suggest that we might see an increase in the online activism divide between disabled and non-disabled people the more people make use of online activism. This divide could play itself out differently for different disabled people in different geographical locations on the access and usability level.

Part of understanding the landscape is to have a sense of the impact of online activism by and on disabled people. We found only one abstract that covered that theme. Cocq examined the self-representations in a social media campaign against the discrimination of people with disabilities and concluded that social media use allowed for self-representation but at the same time stated that the study cannot judge “the impact of these voices in terms of change or public debate” [286] (p. 82). More coverage is needed of the impact of online activism by and on disabled people. For example, we found no abstract that engaged with whether the problems disabled people face in relation to environmental activism [2–5] are solved by using online activism and how such online activism of disabled people is received or supported within environmental activism.

More literature is also needed to address various aspects of the online activism discussions happening outside the area of disabled people.

For example, many question the utility of online activism [30–32,91–94], which goes against what we found as a sentiment toward online activism in our abstracts. Most of the negative sentiments in our abstracts were linked to lack of access, not uselessness of online activism. Terms used to indicate the negative sentiment toward online activism in general, such as slacktivism, were questioned in our data [262,291]. Furthermore, in the full text of [262], the term ‘slacktivism’ was linked to able-bodied assumptions about activism, which ignores the inaccessibility of offline activism for many disabled people [262]. This rebuttal of the negative sentiment toward online activism fits with other marginalized groups questioning the negative view of hashtag activism (see, for example, the views of “critical race studies, gender studies, and feminist scholars Brooke Foucault Welles, Moya Bailey, and Sarah J. Jackson” in [310] (p. 450), whereby Snider highlights the usefulness of #NoBodyIsDisposable which “links concerns about racism, immigrant rights, fatphobia, and ableism to one another to represent the intertwined nature of oppression” [310] (p. 452)). Another problem noted for online activism in general is that intersecting oppressions do not simply disappear in online activism [69]. Intersectionality is an important topic also for disabled people, as their lived reality is impacted by belonging to another marginalized identity [70–72]. At the same time, it is argued that disabled people are often neglected in the intersectionality discourse [70,72,73]. Our study reflects this sentiment. We found only six abstracts that covered the intersectionality of disabled people with other marginalized identities: one covering “queer disabled activist” [302] (p. 170), one “First Nations Peoples with disability” [295] (p. 1), one “people of color with disabilities” [303] (p. 41), one using the phrase “intersectionality between racism and ableism” [263] (p. 1) and two “women with disabilities” [264] (p. 110), [288] (p. 433). Our data show what is called the intersectional invisibility (one feels more invisible as a marginalized person if one belongs to more than one marginalized identity) [323,324] of disabled people (something also mentioned in one of our relevant abstracts [302]). The intersectional invisibility of disabled people could be classified as intersectional oppression [323,325–328] and intersectional bias [329–335]. It could be seen as a problem for intersectional activism [336] and intersectional self-advocacy [337]. The reported activism conflicts between disabled people and non-disabled people [2,4,70,123,148,167,338–340] could be seen as one factor in intersectional conflict problems.

Activists face many dangers. One danger that receives increasingly academic attention is the danger of activist burnout [176–192], albeit rarely in relation to disabled activists [3,193]. Many factors, including attitudinal problems, have been identified that enhance the danger of activist burnout [176–192]. All of the factors reported also apply to disabled activists [193]. Our data suggest that burnout as a concept has not been investigated as a topic in conjunction with the online activism of disabled people. The burnout danger disabled online activists face deserves much more coverage, and this coverage should be linked to academic discussions around the danger of activist burnout in general [176–192]. For example, it is noted in two of our relevant abstracts that disabled activists face dangers in being online activists. Sannon et al. stated that disabled content creators have “to navigate additional challenges including social stigma, algorithmic suppression, accessibility issues, and a heightened risk of harassment” [267] (p. 1). In the full text, Sannon et al. identified the following responses from disabled online activists on how they deal with the problem of harassment they encounter; “Educate and spread awareness (e.g., draw attention to ableist harassment), Take no action (e.g., be resigned to receiving harassment), Alter content strategy (e.g., self-censor sensitive content), Alter algorithm strategy (e.g., get on the right side of TikTok), Control comments (e.g., filter or delete comments), Control audience (e.g., block or restrict viewers)” [267] (p. 13).

Furthermore, the 30 abstracts containing the theme of a negative experience of online activism related to disabled people suggest that disabled online activists are in high danger of activist burnout.

The danger of disabled online activist burnout also deserves more coverage, as disabled people face some unique burnout dangers that can impact their ability to be online

activists that need to be considered. For example, the danger of disabled online activist burnout is increased by the disability burnout/disablism burnout disabled people experience in their daily lives [193]. As Carol Gill, a former director of the oldest disability studies program in the USA in Chicago noted, describing disability burnout:

“Some may experience what is known in the disability community as ‘disability burn-out’. This term refers to emotional despair engendered by thwarted opportunities and blocked goals. It is aggravated and intensified by years of exposure to disability prejudice and devaluation” [194] (p. 180) (cited in [193]).

Another issue that deserves much more coverage is the topic of allies. Being an ally is an important concept for disability activism not only because disabled people need allies from other social groups given the extent of activism needed, but disabled people also want to be allies of others [341–344]. But problems with allyship are noted [195]. Given that being an ally assumes that one is an activist [195], allies are in danger of ally burnout [195,196] in sync with experiencing activist burnout. Then, online activism by disabled people raises specific questions and action items for allies. Like, what are the actions allies should take in relation to disabled people as digital citizens and digital citizenship and disabled people? What abilities does the ally need? What barriers does the ally experience? Are there barriers to being an ally (disabled or non-disabled person) of disabled people that are specific to online activism? How do these ally issues and online activism issues play themselves out in different cultural and geographical settings?

#### The Case of the Digital Citizen and Disabled People

We found a lack of coverage of disabled people in the discussions around the digital citizen, which is a problem. That disabled people are not a topic within our sources fits with the many sources over the years that highlight the sentiment that disabled people do not see themselves as full citizens [206–209]. The two relevant abstracts we found both argued for the importance of engaging with disabled people in conjunction with the term digital citizen [311,312]. This makes sense. Being a digital citizen who also ought to be a digital activist comes with online and offline ability expectations [200–205,210–217,345,346], all of which pose different challenges and need different solutions for different disabled people. All the ability expectations, including the ones in the “digital citizenship education handbook” by the Council of Europe [200], suggest that how we discuss digital citizens and digital citizenship is of high importance to disabled people, including disabled online activists.

We now move to our second lens to interpret our findings.

#### 4.2. Online Activism of Disabled People and Empowerment

Empowerment is seen as an important issue for disabled people, as is, for example, noted in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in relation to women with disabilities [1] and the UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development [247]. The 30 abstracts with positive sentiments often suggest the potential for empowerment, like being able to connect with others [248–250], although the term “empower\*” is only mentioned twice [266,303]. However, the 30 abstracts with negative sentiments suggest that there are barriers to the empowerment of disabled people to perform online activism and, with that, to influence social changes. Empowerment is seen to be about fixing the “exclusion or absence of power, resources, and decision-making capacity due to marginalization, disenfranchisement, and other structural, institutional, and discursive constraints” [347] (p. 2). Our study suggests that much more work is needed to make that an achieved goal in conjunction with the online activism of disabled people, whereby we see the invisibility of disabled people in the discourse as a form of disempowerment. If empowerment is inherently related to activism because they are both oriented to social change and justice [250], the barriers to online activism we found are disempowering.

Another example of the disempowering academic coverage is that disabled people were only mentioned four times within the set of abstracts containing the terms democracy

and activism and not at all in relation to online activism and democracy, which suggests the dynamic of othering disabled people in the discussions of activism and democracy. Democracy expects active citizens [18,19] who ought to have many abilities [21]. It is argued that the emerging digital world is “reshaping our understandings of public participation in democracy” [27] (p. 1). The premise of the quote demands the presence of disabled people in the discussions around democracy and activism in all forms, including online activism, which our data suggests is not the case (on the academic level). The term “digital citizen empowerment” is often used [215,216], but how does that play itself out around disabled people? Will the abilities that are expected from digital citizens lead to the digital disempowerment of disabled people? We found no data in our study that answer these questions.

Many of the problems disabled people face that are covered in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 can be classified as problems linked to ability-based judgments, which can be disempowering. Within the disability rights movement and the fields of disability and ability studies, over 25 ability-judgment based concepts have been coined [227,233–245] to discuss ability judgment-based issues. In the next section, we will engage with some of the concepts.

#### 4.3. Ability Judgment-Based Concepts and Disabled Activists

The term “abilit\*” had many hits in our sources, which makes sense given that many abilities are linked to being an activist and activism and that being an active citizen and digital citizen comes with many ability expectations (for example competencies) [18–26,200]. However, of the 25 ability-based concepts, only ableism/ableist was found in the abstracts we investigated [261,262,279–281,288,302–304]. This is a missed opportunity. All these 25 ability judgment-based concepts could be used to flag, critique, and provide solutions to specific ability-based problems disabled online activists, disabled online activism and disabled people as digital citizen experience. The 25 terms could also be used by disabled online activists to raise awareness of societal issues.

Access-ability is an ability one ought to have. The term “accessibility poverty” was coined to refer to “a situation of low accessibility that severely restricts a person’s ability to participate in the activities deemed normal in a particular society” [348] (p. 39). Many sources [152–160], including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [1] and many other legislative documents, such as the one from India [161], highlight many access-ability issues disabled people face. Many of these barriers, such as physical, technological, and attitudinal barriers, were mentioned as problems in our abstracts [261,262,265–268,275,279,280,285,288,289,298–300,302,304] reflecting different forms of accessibility poverty and problems with ability-based judgments, norms, and conflicts.

We give now some examples of the usefulness of the ability judgment-based concepts to discuss the problems disabled activists experience in online activism.

We start with ability security (ability to have a decent life with one’s set of abilities) and ability identity security (that one is able to have a positive identity of one’s sets of abilities) [246]. Many of our 30 negative sentiment abstracts, including the ones linked to attitudinal inaccessibility, could be seen to have the consequence of ability insecurity and ability identity insecurity (although they do not use the terms) for disabled activists. Attitudinal problems are linked to the fact that one is not accepted for who one is, and as such, attitudinal inaccessibility could be seen as one cause of ability identity insecurity (that one cannot be at ease with one’s set of abilities). Then, all the barriers and negative sentiments we found limit the online activism of disabled people and, as such, limit the ability to demand ability security (the ability to have a decent life with one’s set of abilities). At the same time, the situations and thoughts in the abstracts that had positive sentiments could be seen to enable the ability identity security of disabled online activists and with that, enable the ability of disabled online activists to fight for ability security.

Then, there are the concepts of internalized ableism (that one accepts a certain ability expectation narrative) [235] and internalized disablism (that one accepts a negative treatment based on that ability narrative) [236–239]. Being constantly exposed to negative ability



judgments and disablism, many might internalize and, with that, accept these negative ability judgments and the disablism. One consequence of such internalization could be that disabled people do not challenge the negative ability judgments and the disablism they experience. In our results, two abstracts had as a theme the questioning of negative ability judgments and the disablism within the activist space. In one abstract, it was described how Las FemiDiskas, an anti-ableist, feminist social movement organization, developed “virtual engagement strategies to resist ableist and sexist violence experienced in individual homes and public spaces” [288] (p. 433), and in a second abstract, it was argued that “digital activism is a powerful tool for the movement of people with disabilities and that it is part of a network of anti-ableist activism resistance” [280] (p. 1). Internalizing disablism could also negatively influence disabled people wanting to be activists and what disabled people see as topics in need of activism.

Ability privileges (having certain abilities privileges one to experience other abilities) [233] is another useful term to discuss the state of online activism of disabled people. Ability privilege was present as a sentiment in the ableism content of our abstracts (although they did not use the phrase “ability privilege”. For example, it was argued in one abstract that able-bodied notions of activism “leaves their [disabled people] individual experiences out of the discussion of social media activism” [262] (p. 619). In a second abstract, it was argued that digital technologies might be useful to reach privileged audiences, but that there are barriers to reach, “communities who are disadvantaged by factors such as race, class, or disability” [285] (p. 289). Having the ability to fit body/mind ability norms or to have a certain level of income, for example, ability privileges one to experience online access, to be able to use digital tools, and to make sense of the digital world.

Ability obsolescence (that one’s existing set of abilities becomes obsolete) [245,349] is another useful concept. The digital world is constantly evolving and continually requires changes in abilities digital citizens and, with that, online activists have [200]. The societal dynamics around ability obsolescence play themselves out differently between disabled online activists and disabled digital citizens and between disabled and non-disabled online activists and digital citizens. As such, the term should be used more to discuss the impact of ability obsolescence on disability online activism and disabled digital citizens. Then, disabled online and offline activists could use the term to link themselves to discussions going on around the impact of negative impacts of technologies on employment. In the end, these discussions are about ability obsolescence, so whose abilities in which job profile become obsolete [350].

Another set of useful concepts is ability inequity, ability equity, ability inequality, and ability equality. Access to digital technologies was flagged as a problem in many of our sources, for example [262,265–268]. This lack of access to digital technologies is an example of ability inequity (unjust or unfair distribution) and ability inequality (uneven distribution) of access to and protection from abilities generated through human interventions [227,246]. Humans generate digital technologies, and to be able to use them becomes an ability expectation, but then not everyone has access to them or can use them in the way they are designed. And with that, the ones who cannot use them face negative consequences, so they are not protected from not being able to use digital technologies.

The concepts of ability inequity, ability equity, ability inequality, and ability equality are also useful concepts disabled online and offline activists can use to highlight the differences of consequences of a given action. To give one example, Desmond Tutu coined the term adaptation apartheid [351] to flag the differences in impact of climate change on different groups, the differences in the adaptation capacities of different groups, and the lack of support for the ones that cannot adapt without help. In other words, what Desmond Tutu questioned was the ability inequity and ability inequality experienced by certain marginalized groups in relation to climate change. Disabled people are severely impacted by adaptation apartheid, and the terms ability inequity, ability equity, ability inequality and ability equality could be used by disabled online and offline activists to link the problems caused for disabled people by how adaptation is discussed to ability judgments.

In the end, one can make a case for all the 25 ability judgment-based terms as being useful to make visible and critique and to find solutions to specific ability judgment-based consequences.

We so far gave examples purely on disabled people. However, ability-based conflicts also play themselves out at the intersection between different identities, such as disabled people belonging to other marginalized identities. Ability judgment-based conflicts are a main factor in generating intersectional conflicts, which is about different views of the intersecting identities and lived realities by individuals and other social actors [352,353] due to different identities being judged differently ability-wise.

To give an example from history by the author Minister who covered disabled women

“In a society where women were denied social and religious equality with men on the basis of their perceived lack of physical, intellectual, and moral ability, early women’s rights activists argued for gender equality by contending that women and men have equal capabilities. Although this argument of equal gender capability became the foundation for the women’s movement, it assumed an ideology of ability present within nineteenth-century health reform movements—an ideology which marginalizes people with disabilities” [70] (p. 5).

This quote not only shows that disabled people experienced disablism due to the ability judgment narrative by non-disabled women, this quote also highlights that another marginalized group (women) were negatively ability judged (by men).

#### Ability Judgment-Based Terms beyond Disabled People and Disabled Activists

We focused in our article on disabled people and disabled activists; however, ability judgments are a general cultural reality [226,227]. The Minister quote highlights how women were negatively ability judged by men with the purpose to make men ability superior over women. Ability norms and judgments are (were) not only used in a disabling way against disabled people, but they are (were) also used to justify the negative treatment of other marginalized groups and to support, for example, racism and sexism (covered in [226,354]) and colonialism [355] dynamics. In a recent study, students indicated that different social groups have different ability expectations [167]. Different ability expectations influence how different social entities, from individuals to nations, judge and interact with each other, with the potential for ability expectation-based conflicts between the one’s with different ability expectations (see discussions around environmental issues, for example).

Thus, the 25 ability judgment-based concepts could also be applied to people seen as non-disabled to discuss the general problem of the negative use of ability judgments to marginalize others. And with that, the 25 concepts could be a language that generates a “we” in the activism movement, including disabled activists as part of the “we”. This group of “we” could make use of the expertise of disabled activists who engage with ability-based judgments for a long time. If used as a system critique, the 25 concepts could be an activist focus for all marginalized groups and could be a focus that brings together disabled and non-disabled activists.

So far, we have covered in this paper negative ability expectations. But ability expectations could also be used to enable marginalized groups. The ability to defend human rights [25] (p. section “Media and informational literacy”) could be seen as a positive ability expectation by the people involved in the document. The UN Human Security Framework from 1994, which covers economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security and has been expanded on since then [356], could be seen as positive abilities a human should be able to experience. The capability approach is about the ability to be and to do [357], which are abilities one should be able to experience. Well-being indicators are also about abilities one should be able to experience.

As such, ability expectations can be used by disabled activists, their allies, and other marginalized groups to put forward ability expectations that make a positive difference for them. We leave the reader with a quote from a dialogue between the two main characters

in the 2003 computer game “Deus Ex Invisible Wars” [358], which is a game that focused on the future with humans that are enhanced beyond the species-typical, highlighting the foundational impact of ability judgments and ability consumerism on society. This quote highlights the need for ability expectation governance/ability governance [246,359] as a term and framework that is rarely explicitly used, although it is implicitly present as a needed action for offline and online activism.

“Paul Denton: If you want to even out the social order, you have to change the nature of power itself. Right? And what creates power? Wealth, physical strength, legislation—maybe—but none of those is the root principle of power.

Alex D: I’m listening.

Paul Denton: Ability is the ideal that drives the modern state. It’s a synonym for one’s worth, one’s social reach, one’s “election”, in the Biblical sense, and it’s the ideal that needs to be changed if people are to begin living as equals.

Alex D: And you think you can equalie humanity with biomodification?

Paul Denton: The commodification of ability—tuition, of course, but increasingly, genetic treatments, cybernetic protocols, now biomods—has had the side effect of creating a self-perpetuating aristocracy in all advanced societies. When ability becomes a public resource, what will distinguish people will be what they do with it. Intention. Dedication. Integrity. The qualities we would choose as the bedrock of the social order” [358].

## 5. Conclusions

Disabled people face many barriers as offline activists [2–17]. Online forms of activism could circumvent many of these barriers, but if not performed right, they could also add new barriers (technological) and old offline activism ones (attitudinal access barrier) to online activism. Furthermore, in many societies, it is increasingly expected that all citizens, including disabled people, ought to be digital citizens, which includes being digital activists [197,198]. The potential of online activism to empower disabled individuals as digital citizens and online activists is substantial, but it also carries risks if not approached correctly. Understanding how disabled people are represented in academic literature on online activism and digital citizenship is essential. This understanding helps to identify both the gaps in existing research and the insights that can inform more effective and inclusive online activism strategies so that disabled people as activists can make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others. Our data suggest that disabled people are mostly invisible in the discussions around online activism in general and even more so if one looks for the term “Global South” and that needed evidence is not generated. The picture emerging from our data is that online activism has a lot of potential if performed right but that the reality is often disempowering for disabled online activists. That the Global South only showed up in one abstract also suggests a disempowering academic engagement with the topic for disabled people from the Global South.

As to academic implications, given our findings, more data are needed to ascertain the reality of online activism as an alternative to the off-line activism of disabled people. Data are needed on the level of acceptance and the barriers and enablers of online activism, whereby one must look at many different disability realities, including the intersectionality of a disabled person with other identities and lived realities.

Our data suggest the opportunity for many academic collaborations and opportunities for participatory action research to fill the gaps in knowledge, amplify the positive realities, and eliminate the negative realities our analysis found.

As to educational implications, one of the goals of education is to train active citizens [22,23,360], change agents [361–363] and digital citizens [204,364–367]. Data must be generated on the barriers disabled people face in being active citizens, digital citizens, and change agents so that the data can be used in appropriate courses to make everyone aware of the problems and to generate solutions and allyships.

As to policy implications, short of that, best practices are not published in academic articles, but elsewhere, our data suggest that evidence is missing to develop and enforce best practices for online activism and, with that, to empower disabled activists.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, G.W. and D.M.; methodology, G.W.; formal analysis, G.W. and L.N.; investigation, G.W. and L.N.; data curation, G.W. and L.N.; writing—original draft preparation, G.W.; writing—review and editing, G.W. and D.M.; supervision, G.W.; project administration, G.W. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Not applicable.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Not applicable.

**Data Availability Statement:** Not applicable.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Appendix A

In Table A1 we give the answers to three questions (1) What are the hits for (a) disability terms (row 2/column 2), (b) the 57 online activism or online tools or places for online activism terms (row 4/column 2) and (c) the term *activis\** by itself (row 3/column 2)? (2) What are the hits for different combinations of the search terms so abstracts that contained (a) the disability terms and the term *“activis\*”* (row 2/column 3 and row 3 column 4), (b) the 57 online activism or online tools or places for online activism terms and the term *“activis\*”* (row 4/column 3, (c) the online activism or online tools or places for online activism terms and the disability terms (row 4/column 4), (d) the 57 online activism or online tools or places for online activism terms +disability terms +the term *activis\** (row 4/column 5)? (3) What are the percentages of the abstracts covering online activism by disabled people in comparison to the starting point of available (a) disability terms containing abstracts, (b) abstracts containing the term *“activis\*”* and (c) the 57 online activism or online tools or places for online activism containing abstracts (result listed in row 5/column 4)? We also provide the percentages of the abstracts containing the disability terms and the term *“activis\*”* based on the starting point of abstracts containing the term *“activis\*”* (row 3/column 4) and based on the starting point of abstracts containing the disability terms (row 2/column 3).

The results in short show that the activism of disabled people is little covered in general and in conjunction with the online terms if comparing to the available starting abstracts.

As to available abstracts, based on our keywords within the three databases (Table 2), 4,465,071 contained at least one of our disability terms. Together with *“activis\*”* there were 1662 abstracts (0.037%). All the online related terms together gave 875,109 abstracts. These together with *“activis\*”* gave 16,890 abstracts. The disability and online terms together generated 4980 abstracts. Now, the disability and online terms together with *“activis\*”* generated 73 abstracts so 0.43% of all the *activis\** abstracts containing the online terms and 1.6% of all the abstracts containing the online and disability term.

Table A2 shows some online terms generated over 100 hits with the disability terms but were 0 if *“activis\*”* was added to the search (e.g., *“metaverse”* or *“Tiktok”*) or one hit (e.g., *“reddit”*). Some were below five hits in both cases (e.g., *“Digital citizen\*”*, *“Hashtag activis\*”*, *“Cyber-activis\*”* OR *“cyberactivis\*”* OR *“cyber activis\*”*), *“Slacktivis\*”* or *“internet activis\*”*) and some were 0 in both cases such as *“digital action”*, *“data activis\*”* and *“Hollaback!”*).

Of the 57 terms we looked at, 28 had 0 hits with the disability terms and *“activis\*”*, 21 less than 10 hits, 5 had between 10 and 15 hits, and 2 had more (83 hits, *“social media”* and 33, *twitter*).

Table A3 shows that generic disability terms are present, while phrases linked to specific characteristics were often much less present (e.g., *learning disability*, *cognitive*

impairment, hearing impaired, neurodiver\*), that hits for phrases combining disability terms with terms linked to other marginalized identities had few hits if any. The phrases depicting women, and the generic terms disability/disabled had hits in the activism\* containing abstracts, while linkages between ethnic identity, or indigenous identity and disability identity were not present. Except for ableism and ableist and a few for disablism, ability judgment-based concepts were not visible.

**Table A1.** Online hits for disability terms, online activism terms and activis\* by themselves and in various combinations.

Terms	Just the Terms-	+Activis*	+Disability Terms	+Activism and Disability Terms
("Disability minorit*" OR "Ability minority" OR "Disabled" OR "Disabled people" OR "disabled person*" OR "Disabled women" OR "disabled woman" OR "women with disabilities" OR "Women with a disability" OR "Woman with a disability" OR "Disabled artist*" OR "artist* with disabilities" OR "with disabilities" OR "people with disabilities" OR "person* with disabilities" OR "learning disabilit*" OR dyslexia OR "Impair*" OR "visually impair*" OR "visual impair*" OR "hearing impair*" OR "physically impair*" OR "physical impair*" OR "cognitive impair*" OR deaf OR "Adhd" OR "autism" OR "attention deficit" OR "Autistic women" OR "women with autism" OR "Autistic woman" OR "woman with autism" OR "neurodiver*" OR wheelchair)	4,465,071 (not downloaded or otherwise analyzed)	1662 (after downloading and elimination of duplicates) 0.037% (in relation to column 2)	-	-
"activis*"	285,802 (not downloaded or otherwise analyzed)	-	1662 (after downloading and elimination of duplicates) (0.5% in relation to column 2)	-
(metaverse OR "Online activis*" OR "Digital citizen*" OR "Hashtag activis*" OR "Cyber-activis*" OR "cyberactivis*" OR "cyber activis*" OR "Slacktivis*" OR "Digital Activis*" OR ("social media" And Activis*") OR hashtag OR blogging OR "Twitter" OR "Instagram" OR "facebook" OR "TikTok" OR "TikTok" OR "You tube" OR "YouTube" OR "social media platform" OR "media platform" OR "Online platform" OR "reddit" OR "DIY" OR "Do it yourself" OR "maker movement" OR "online social network" OR "digital action" OR "Internet activis*" OR "data activis*" OR "chat-room*" OR "fandom" OR "online advocacy" OR "online communit*" OR whatsapp OR wechat OR telegram OR douyin OR qq OR weibo OR qzone OR kuaishou OR pinterest OR "formerly Twitter" OR linkedin OR skype OR quora OR tieba OR viber OR "Microsoft Teams" OR "imo" OR likee OR picsart OR twitch OR discord OR "Stack Overflow" OR "Hollaback!" OR "Onlyfans")	875,109 (not downloaded or otherwise analyzed)	16,890 (not downloaded or otherwise analyzed)	4980 (after downloading and elimination of duplicates)	73 = 0.083% (in relation to column 2) 0.43% (in relation to column 3) 1.6% (in relation to column 4)

**Table A2.** Hits for the 57 terms linked to online activism or online tools or places for online activism we used in abstracts downloaded that contained (a) the online terms together with the disability terms and (b) the online terms together with the disability term and the term *activis\**.

Terms	(a)	(b)
	(metaverse OR "Online <i>activis*</i> " OR "Digital citizen*" OR "Hashtag <i>activis*</i> " OR "Cyber- <i>activis*</i> " OR "cyberactivis*" OR "cyber <i>activis*</i> " OR "Slacktivism*" OR "Digital Activism*" OR ("social media" And <i>Activism*</i> ) OR hashtag OR blogging OR "Twitter" OR "Instagram" OR "facebook" OR "TikTok" OR "TikTok" OR "You tube" OR "YouTube" OR "social media platform" OR "media platform" OR "Online platform" OR "reddit" OR "DIY" OR "Do it yourself" OR "maker movement" OR "online social network" OR "digital action" OR "Internet <i>activis*</i> " OR "data <i>activis*</i> " OR "chat-room*" OR "fandom" OR "online advocacy" OR "online community" OR whatsapp OR wechat OR telegram OR douyin OR qq OR weibo OR qzone OR kuaishou OR pinterest OR "formerly Twitter" OR linkedin OR skype OR quora OR tieba OR viber OR "Microsoft Teams" OR "imo" OR likee OR picsart OR twitch OR discord OR "Stack Overflow" OR "Hollaback!" OR "Onlyfans")	(metaverse OR "Online <i>activis*</i> " OR "Digital citizen*" OR "Hashtag <i>activis*</i> " OR "Cyber- <i>activis*</i> " OR "cyberactivis*" OR "cyber <i>activis*</i> " OR "Slacktivism*" OR "Digital Activism*" OR ("social media" And <i>Activism*</i> ) OR hashtag OR blogging OR "Twitter" OR "Instagram" OR "facebook" OR "TikTok" OR "TikTok" OR "You tube" OR "YouTube" OR "social media platform" OR "media platform" OR "Online platform" OR "reddit" OR "DIY" OR "Do it yourself" OR "maker movement" OR "online social network" OR "digital action" OR "Internet <i>activis*</i> " OR "data <i>activis*</i> " OR "chat-room*" OR "fandom" OR "online advocacy" OR "online community" OR whatsapp OR wechat OR telegram OR douyin OR qq OR weibo OR qzone OR kuaishou OR pinterest OR "formerly Twitter" OR linkedin OR skype OR quora OR tieba OR viber OR "Microsoft Teams" OR "imo" OR likee OR picsart OR twitch OR discord OR "Stack Overflow" OR "Hollaback!" OR "Onlyfans")
	AND disability terms from strategy 1b 4980	AND disability terms from strategy 1b AND " <i>activis*</i> " 73
"Blogging"	49	7
"Chat room"	52	1
"Cyber- <i>activis*</i> " OR "cyberactivis*" OR "cyber <i>activis*</i> "	3	3
"Data <i>activis*</i> "	0	0
"Digital action"	0	0
"Digital Activism"	19	14
"Digital citizen"	39	2
"Discord"	0	0
"DIY"	155	10
"Do it yourself"	54	1
"Douyin"	2	0
"facebook"	1087	10

Table A2. Cont.

"Fandom"	39	6
"Hashtag activis*"	1	1
"Hashtag"	47	15
"Hollaback!"	0	0
"imo"	255 (all false positive)	0
"Instagram"	258	9
"Internet activis*"	1	1
"Kuaishou"	0	0
"Likee"	0	0
"LinkedIn"	38	0
"Maker movement"	32	1
"Media platform*"	339	8
"Metaverse"	295	0
"Microsoft Teams"	25	0
"Online activis*"	14	10
"Online advocac*"	3	0
"Online communit*"	66	3
"Online platform"	262	2
"Online social network"	78	1
"Onlyfans"	1	0
"Picsart"	0	0
"Pinterest"	10	0
"QQ"	134	0
"Quora"	6	0
"Qzone"	0	0
"Reddit"	171	1



Table A2. Cont.

“Skype”	109	0
“Slacktivis*”	3	3
“Snapchat”	34	0
“social media platform*”	311	7
“social media”	3898	83
“social network”	405	4
“Stack Overflow”	8	0
“Telegram”	46	0
“Tieba”	2	0
“TikTok” or “TikTok”	147	0
“Twitch”	2469 (mostly false positive due to word not about the online platform, did only check first 100)	0
“Twitter”	828	33
“Viber”	0	0
“Virtual”	442	15
“WeChat”	120	1
“Weibo”	23	0
“WhatsApp”	255	1
“X (formally twitter) OR “formerly twitter”	0	0
“You tube” or “YouTube”	545	9

**Table A3.** Presence of (a) disability terms; (b) intersectional phrases depicting disabled people that also belong to another marginalized group; (c) disability-related terms mostly seen within a medical framework and (d) ability judgment-based concepts in the different sets of abstracts analyzed.

Terms	Metaverse 4031	"Online ac- tivism*" 457	"Activis*" AND "social media" 2977	"Digital citizen*" 1290	"Hashtag activis*" 148	"Cyber- activis*" OR "cyber- activis*" OR "cyber activis*" 231	"Slacktivis*" 106	Activism and democ- racy 4245	"Digital Activis*" 486	hashtag OR blogging OR "Twitter" OR "Instagram" OR "facebook" OR "TikTok" OR "TikTok" OR "You tube" OR "YouTube" OR "social media platform" OR "media platform" OR "Online platform" OR "Reddit" OR "DIY" OR "Do it yourself" OR "maker movement" OR "online social network" OR "digital action" OR "Internet activis*" OR "data activis*" OR "chat-room*" OR "fandom" OR "online advocacy" OR "online communit*" OR whatsapp OR wechat OR telegram OR douyin OR qq OR weibo OR qzone OR kuaishou OR pinterest OR "formerly Twitter" OR linkedin OR skype OR quora OR tieba OR viber OR "Microsoft Teams" OR "imo" OR likee OR picsart OR twitch OR discord OR "Stack Overflow" OR "Hollaback!" OR "Onlyfans")  AND activis* 2205	Metaverse OR "Online activis*" OR "Digital citizen*" OR "Hashtag activis*" OR "Cyber-activis*" OR "cyberactivis*" OR "cyber activism*" OR "Slacktivis*" OR "Digital Activis*" OR "social media and activism*" OR hashtag OR Blogging OR "TikTok" or "TikTok" OR "You tube" or "YouTube" OR "social media platform" OR "media platform" OR "Online platform" OR "Reddit" OR "DIY" OR "Do it yourself" OR "maker movement" OR "online social network" OR "digital action" OR "Internet activis*" OR "data activis*" OR "chat-room*" OR "fandom" OR "online advocacy" Or "online communit*" or WhatsApp OR WeChat OR Telegram OR Douyin OR QQ OR Snapchat OR Weibo OR Qzone OR Kuaishou OR Pinterest OR "formerly Twitter" OR LinkedIn OR Skype OR Quora OR Tieba OR Viber Or "Microsoft Teams" OR "imo" OR Likee Or Picsart OR Twitch OR Discord OR "Stack Overflow" OR "Hollaback!" OR "Onlyfans")  AND disability terms from strategy 1  AND "activis*" 73
	Disability terms										
Disability minorit**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Ability minority"	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disabled	18	36	33	28 (dis- abled citizen 10)	0	0	7	41	4	26	84
"Disabled people" OR "disabled person**"	3	10	10	5	0	0	0	10	0	7	33

Table A3. Cont.

"Disabled activist" OR "activist* with disabilit*"	1	9	5	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	6
"Disability activ*"	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	9
"Disabled artist" OR artist* with disabilities	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
"people with disabilities" OR "person* with disabilities"	11	4	13	6	0	0	0	5	3	25	28/0
"with disabilit*"	33	20	0	12	0	0	0	11	5	25	60
"disabilit*"	67	124	179	36	1	4	6	88	36	165	259
"learning disab*"	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Down Syndrome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dyslexia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7
"Impair*"	23	0	3	9	0	1	0	4	1	4	0
"visually impair*" Or "visual impair*"	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
"hearing impair*"	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
"physically impair*" OR "physical impair*"	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
"cognitive impair*"	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Deaf	8	2	3	0	2	0	0	4	1	15	15
"Adhd" OR "autism" OR "attention deficit "	27	0	5	18	0	0	0	6	0	20	0/20/1
"neurodiver*"	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	14	2
Wheelchair*	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

Table A3. Cont.

Intersectional phrases containing disability terms with some other marginalized group											
intersectionality	0	8	39	2	7	0	0	18	13	35	4
“Indigenous disabled” “disabled Indigenous” OR “Indigenous person with disability” OR “Indigenous people with disability”	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
“aboriginal disabled” “disabled aboriginal” OR “aboriginal person with disability” OR “aboriginal people with disability”	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
“Black disabled” “disabled Black” OR “Black person with disability” OR “Black people with disability”	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
“Autistic women” OR “women with autism” OR “Autistic woman” OR “woman with autism”	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
“Disabled women” OR “disabled woman” OR “women with disabilities” OR “Women with a disability” OR “Woman with a disability”	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	4	2	4	21

Table A3. Cont.

Disability terms with a medical connotation											
"Patient"	298	12	41	16	0	1	0	27	1	28	3
"mental health"	169	1	63	39	2	0	0	21	9	42	0
"mental illness"	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
"Chronic disease"	26	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Ability based concepts											
Ableism	0	0	18	1	1	0	0	0	12	12	5
Disablism OR disableism	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1
Ableist	0	6	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	14	17
Disableist OR disablist	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
"internalized disablism" or "internalized disableism" (abstract and full text	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Internalized ableism"	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0

Table A3. Cont.

"Ability security" OR "ability insecurity" or "ableism security" or "ableism insecurity" OR "Ability equity" or "ability inequity" or "ability equality" or "ability inequality" OR "ableism inequity" OR "ableism equity" or "ableism equality" or "ableism inequality" Or "Ability privilege" OR "Ability discrimination" or "ableism discrimination" OR "Ability oppression" or "ableism oppression" OR "Ability apartheid" or "ableism apartheid" Or "Ability obsolescence" or "ableism obsolescence" OR "Ability consumerism" or "ableism consumerism" or "ability commodification" or "ableism commodification" OR "Ability foresight" or "ableism foresight" Or "Ability governance" or "ableism governance" Or "ability expectation governance" (full text)	0	0	0	0	0	1 (ability oppression)	0	0	0	0	0
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## Appendix B

We identified six positive themes (30 abstracts):

- (1) Positive use of online activism/powerful tool/online activism needed to fight bias in offline activism set ups: (15 times in seven sets of abstracts)
  - “Online activism” and “digital activism” (four times each);
  - “Cyber-activism” and “social media platforms. . .”, “slacktivism” (two times each);
  - “Hashtag activism” and “Activism” AND “social media” (one time each).
- (2) Social media is important for activism of disabled people (four times in three sets of abstracts):
  - Activism” AND “social media” (two times);
  - “Digital Activism” and “twitter” (one time each).
- (3) Increases visibility (four times in three sets of abstracts):
  - “Digital activism” (two times);
  - “Twitter. . .” and “slacktivism” (one time each).
- (4) Online media trusted more one time in one set of abstracts:
  - “Twitter. . .” (one time).
- (5) Empowerment of disabled activist (two times in two sets of abstracts):
  - “Activism” AND “social media” and “social media platforms” (one time each).
- (6) Action item (positive sentiment) (four times in two sets of abstracts):
  - “Twitter. . .” (three times);
  - Activism” AND “social media” (one time).

There were seven negative themes (30 abstracts):

- (1) Lack of accessibility (nine times in five sets of abstracts):
  - “Activism” AND “social media” (five times);
  - “social media platforms. . .” and “Online activism” and “digital activism” and “twitter. . .” (one time each).
- (2) Questioning ableism/ableist realities (11 times in five sets of abstracts):
  - “Activism” AND “social media” and “digital activism” and “social media platforms . . .” (three times each);
  - “slacktivism” and “Online activism” (one time each).
- (3) Using terms like barriers, problems, challenges (six times in three sets of abstracts):
  - “Online activism” (four times);
  - “Activism” AND “social media” and “digital activism” (one time each).
- (4) Online activism seen as a tool for offline activism only (one time in one set of abstracts):
  - “Online activism” (one time each).
- (5) Judged negatively for participating in online activism (one time in one set of abstracts)
  - “Online activism” (one time).
- (6) Disabled activist questions negative labeling of online activism (one time in one set of abstracts):
  - “Digital activism” (one time).
- (7) Negative coverage of disabled people online (one time in one set of abstracts):
  - “Twitter. . .” (one time).

There were neutral themes in 23 abstracts:

- (1) Covers identity of disability (five times in three sets of abstracts):
  - “Twitter. . .” (three times);
  - “Online activism” and Slacktivism” (one time each).
- (2) Ally (three times in three sets of abstracts):

- “Online activis\*” and “Activis\*” AND “social media” and “social media platforms . . .” (one time each).
- (3) Social media changes disability activism (two times in two sets of abstracts)
    - “Activis\*” AND “social media” and “digital activis\*” (one time each).
  - (4) More research on online activism and disabled people needed (two times in two sets of abstracts):
    - “Cyber-activis\*” and digital activis\*” (one time each).
  - (5) Reorganization of activism (two times in two sets of abstracts)
    - “Digital citizen\*\*” and “digital activis\*” (one time each).
  - (6) Online use for private and activism purposes (one time in one set of abstracts)
    - “Online activis\*” (one time each).
  - (7) Needs to become digital citizen (one time in one set of abstracts)
    - “Digital citizen\*” (one time).
  - (8) Coverage of indigenous disabled people (one time in one set of abstracts)
    - “Twitter. . .” (one time).
  - (9) Coverage of disabled people of color (one time in one set of abstracts)
    - “Social media platforms. . .” (one time).
  - (10) Intersectionality (four times in two sets of abstracts)
    - “Social media platforms. . .” (two times);
    - “Online activis\*” and “Activis\*” AND “social media” (one time each).
  - (11) Global South (one time in one set of abstracts):
    - “Online activis\*” (one time).

### Appendix C. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) Checklist

Section	Item	Prisma-ScR Checklist Item	Reported on Page #
<b>TITLE</b>			
Title	1	Identify the report as a scoping review.	1
<b>ABSTRACT</b>			
Structured summary	2	Provide a structured summary that includes (as applicable): background, objectives, eligibility criteria, sources of evidence, charting methods, results, and conclusions that relate to the review questions and objectives.	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known. Explain why the review questions/objectives lend themselves to a scoping review approach.	1
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of the questions and objectives being addressed with reference to their key elements (e.g., population or participants, concepts, and context) or other relevant key elements used to conceptualize the review questions and/or objectives.	1–2



Section	Item	Prisma-Scr Checklist Item	Reported on Page #
<b>METHODS</b>			
Protocol and registration	5	Indicate whether a review protocol exists; state if And where it can be accessed (e.g., a Web address); and if available, provide registration information, including the registration number.	N/A we think but we might misinterpret it. We conducted a thematic analysis looking for relevant content related to the research questions. But we had no protocol as such.
Eligibility criteria	6	Specify characteristics of the sources of evidence used as eligibility criteria (e.g., years considered, language, and publication status), and provide a rationale.	9–13, Table 1
Information sources *	7	Describe all information sources in the search (e.g., databases with dates of coverage and contact with authors to identify additional sources), as well as the date the most recent search was executed.	9–13, Table 1
Search	8	Present the full electronic search strategy for at least 1 database, including any limits used, such that it could be repeated.	Table 1
Selection of sources of evidence †	9	State the process for selecting sources of evidence (i.e., screening and eligibility) included in the scoping review.	Table 1
Data charting process ‡	10	Describe the methods of charting data from the included sources of evidence (e.g., calibrated forms or forms that have been tested by the team before their use, and whether data charting was done independently or in duplicate) and any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigators.	How we extracted and analyzed the data 13
Data items	11	List and define all variables for which data were sought and any assumptions and simplifications made.	N/A there were no variables as such, only inclusion criteria content wise was it had to cover online activism of disabled people
Critical appraisal of individual sources of evidence §	12	If done, provide a rationale for conducting a critical appraisal of included sources of evidence; describe the methods used and how this information was used in any data synthesis (if appropriate).	Not conducted, not appropriate, sources are included based on having relevant content based on the research question
Synthesis of results	13	Describe the methods of handling and summarizing the data that were charted.	13
<b>RESULTS</b>			
Selection of sources of evidence	14	Give numbers of sources of evidence screened, assessed for eligibility, and included in the review, with reasons for exclusions at each stage, ideally using a flow diagram.	We have that in Table 1

Section	Item	Prisma-Scr Checklist Item	Reported on Page #
Characteristics of sources of evidence	15	For each source of evidence, present characteristics for which data were charted and provide the citations.	N/A We did not chart characteristics of the data like authors. We only conducted a thematic analysis of online activism and disabled people-related content
Critical appraisal within sources of evidence	16	If done, present data on critical appraisal of included sources of evidence (see item 12).	Not done
Results of individual sources of evidence	17	For each included source of evidence, present the relevant data that were charted that relate to the review questions and objectives.	The qualitative content analysis was conducted (pages 15–21 and Appendix B), but before that, there was also manifest coding of the sources 13–14 and Appendix A
Synthesis of results	18	Summarize and/or present the charting results as they relate to the review questions and objectives.	We summarize results in different subsections of the discussion
<b>DISCUSSION</b>			
Summary of evidence	19	Summarize the main results (including an overview of concepts, themes, and types of evidence available), link to the review questions and objectives, and consider the relevance to key groups.	21 beginning of Section 4 but then we discuss relevance of the findings 21–28
Limitations	20	Discuss the limitations of the scoping review process.	We have limitation as 2.7 under method
Conclusions	21	Provide a general interpretation of the results with respect to the review questions and objectives, as well as potential implications and/or next steps.	28–29
<b>FUNDING</b>			
Funding	22	Describe sources of funding for the included sources of evidence, as well as sources of funding for the scoping review. Describe the role of the funders of the scoping review.	N/A

JBI = Joanna Briggs Institute; PRISMA-ScR = Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews. \* Where *sources of evidence* (see second footnote) are compiled from, such as bibliographic databases, social media platforms, and Web sites. † A more inclusive/heterogeneous term used to account for the different types of evidence or data sources (e.g., quantitative and/or qualitative research, expert opinion, and policy documents) that may be eligible in a scoping review as opposed to only studies. This is not to be confused with *information sources* (see first footnote). ‡ The frameworks by Arksey and O'Malley (6) and Levac and colleagues (7) and the JBI guidance (4, 5) refer to the process of data extraction in a scoping review as data charting. § The process of systematically examining research evidence to assess its validity, results, and relevance before using it to inform a decision. This term is used for items 12 and 19 instead of “risk of bias” (which is more applicable to systematic reviews of interventions) to include and acknowledge the various sources of evidence that may be used in a scoping review (e.g., quantitative and/or qualitative research, expert opinion, and policy document). From: [222].

## Note

<sup>1</sup> We acknowledge that there is an ongoing discussion regarding how one should identify the group of disabled people. There are two main options. One can use people-first language (people with disabilities) or identity-first language (disabled people). Different people, including people within the disability community, prefer one or the other or use both. We prefer disabled people instead of people with disabilities and, as such, use disabled people in our own writing.

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