

**SUN+** TRY SUN+ TODAY! 99¢<sup>\*</sup> SUN SUBSCRIBERS GET IT **FREE**  
 Unlimited digital insider access • Behind the scenes coverage • Investigative reports

# Social media yearbook 2012: Where this year's biggest headlines started

BY DAHLIA KURTZ ,QMI AGENCY

FIRST POSTED: MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2012 05:00 AM EST



A collection of 2012's biggest stories thanks to social media.

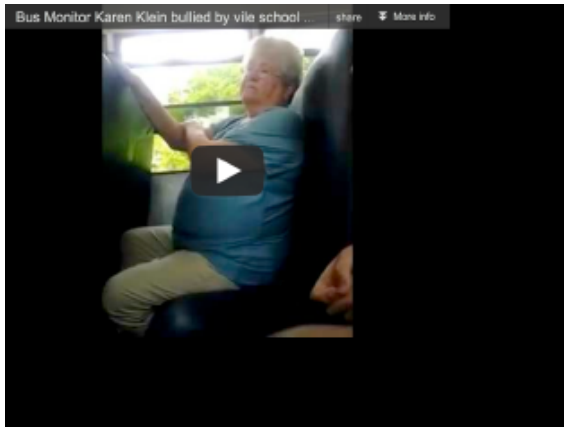
It declared war. It saved lives. It gave the world a song that few could sing, but became the most watched video ever on YouTube: Heard of 'Gangnam Style', right?

Even if you don't have a Twitter or Facebook account, social media accounted for some transformational changes that impacted you and the rest of the planet in 2012.

For the first time ever, war was declared online when the Israeli Defense Forces tweeted to the world of its widespread campaign on terror sites and operatives in #Gaza, before it alerted the media.

Hélène Campbell of Ottawa needed a double-lung transplant. While wait-listed to continue life, the 20-year-old began a Twitter campaign to spread the word about organ donation. Word spread from Justin Bieber to Ellen DeGeneres. Organ donor rates in Canada surged. Online registration at Beadonor.ca quickly jumped from 300 to 3,000 and the advocate got her lungs.

The poster child for bullying was a grandmother. Just think back over \$700,000 of fundraising ago to Karen Klein, the bus monitor whose story went viral after we saw her fall victim to juvenile tormenters.



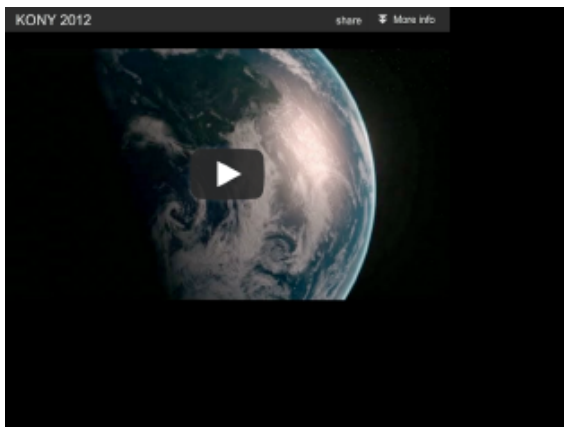
Bullyingcanada.ca says young people and parents have contacted the help website more than ever this year. But so too have the number of digital first-responders – everyday people who reach out through the Internet to those in need.

Still, no one could save Amanda Todd. The Coquitlam, BC teen made the video: My Story: Struggling, Bullying, Suicide and Self Harm. It spread after she took her own life.



But the web wasn't just all harm and no grace. It rescued others. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in the U.S., social media has helped to recover 98.5% of AMBER alerts since 2005.

From missing children to Invisible Children - the latter charity created the biggest viral story of the year when KONY 2012 reached over 100 million views in a week. What rapidly rose as vast activism fell to mass slactivism: It went from a massive movement, to a story fraught with controversy, to a news item about the charity's co-founder, Jason Russell, caught on video naked, slapping the sidewalk (and something a little more X-rated), in the middle of San Diego.



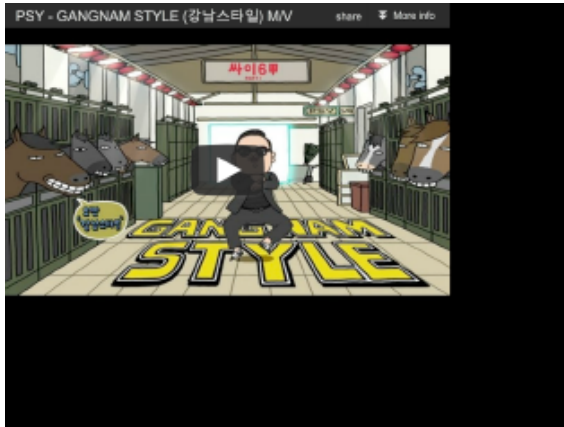
In London, social media became perhaps the biggest Olympic sport, right behind athletes hooking up – 150,000 condoms strong.

Then a monkey named Darwin walked into an IKEA store in Toronto just last week and gave IKEA the free advertising it needed worldwide.

Many of these stories were born into the world of social media, only to be adopted by the mass media once they hit the age of trending.

In the end, social media has impacted what we reveal, how we stay in touch, which people we influence, and how we communicate – with the Pope for instance. Simply tweet @Pontifex for absolution.

So what will happen with social media in 2013? Well, one thing is certain, even if you choose not to go, it will somehow take you along for the ride, 'Gangnam Style'.



## SPONSORED LINKS

---



### **H & R Property Management**

Find your Perfect  
Apartment in the Greater  
Toronto Area

[Click Here for More Info](#)



### **Ambrosia Natural Foods**

Factory Outlet Health  
Foods Certified Organic  
Produce Bulk Foods  
[AmbrosiaNaturalFoods.com](http://AmbrosiaNaturalFoods.com)



### **Summer SALE on NOW!**

Hot tubs, Patio furniture &  
Billiards Factory Direct  
Prices!

[Click here for specials!](#)

[See All Sponsored Links](#)