

## Please support the Yes Lab!

Dear Friends,

The Yes Men [need your help](#).

For years, we've been tossing our little buckets of water on the blazes of social injustice. Last year, we decided to form a bucket brigade: a system (we're calling it the [Yes Lab](#)) to help others do the kind of funny, headline-grabbing actions we're known for.

It worked. In its embryonic first year, the Yes Lab helped launch nearly a dozen activist media campaigns (see below), garnering a total of *4.5 metric tons* of media hype. It even attracted threatening legal letters (frames not included) from five coal companies, one oil transport company, one utility, France, and GE! (Seriously, GE, no one meant to knock \$3.5 billion off your share price. But no one's sorry, either.)

Given this proof of concept, the Yes Lab is now (almost) ready for prime time.

It's got a brand-new home at New York University, complete with plenty of space, a big supportive crew, lots of eager collaborators, and a structure that will let it tackle five or so projects at once. (If you're in New York, come to our [launch Sept. 14](#) and see how you can get involved!) It's also got a lovely new [website](#) that will soon have a number of fancy tools to help hundreds more carry out or join up with Yes Lab projects.

There's only one hitch. We've got the venue, the participants, and (soon) the tools. But we're short on cash for the projects themselves—which, of course, are the entire point of the Yes Lab. That's why today, [we're asking for \\$10,000 on Kickstarter](#), to hire project managers and cover expenses for projects that don't have other funding. It's all the Yes Lab needs to become a fully-functioning mischief machine.

OK, you got the point of this email: the Yes Lab needs money. So here, without further ado, is a summary of last year's mischief, accomplished by just a few dozen folks. Imagine what hundreds will be able to do!

### General Electric Short-Circuited

Activists [US Uncut](#), with a little help from the Yes Lab, sent out [a press release](#) announcing that General Electric would repay the \$3.2 billion tax credit they received last year despite massive profits. The announcement was momentarily picked up as true by the AP, and the market, unable to leave a good deed unpunished, responded by knocking \$3.5 billion off GE's share price. The result was massive, enlightening coverage of GE's tax-cheating ways on everything from local TV to CNN.

### What the heck is an Asthmaze?

A small group of activists wondered how a big coal company might address the fact that coal [causes childhood asthma](#). The result: "Coal Cares," a [faux greenwashing campaign](#) in which Peabody Coal tried to "make asthma cool" with free themed inhalers to kids living within 200 miles of a coal plant. The site, taken as real by many, quickly went massively viral, which [didn't amuse Peabody one bit](#) but did help publicize coal as a major public health issue. And as it happened, in the week following the launch of Coal Cares, a real-life [attempt by the coal industry to mislead children](#) was defeated by the [Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood](#). Hooray!

### Beat Up On Chevron? We Agree.

Chevron decided to launch a \$90 million greenwashing campaign with a street-art aesthetic, and was stupid enough to approach street artists for help. One of them, Cesar Maxit, promptly leaked Chevron's plans to Amazon Watch. The Yes Lab helped Amazon Watch and Rainforest Action Network (RAN)

release a [much more honest version](#) of Chevron's campaign just hours ahead of the "real" McCoy, generating a deluge of media coverage. [Hundreds of user submissions](#) and some [amazing videos](#) from FunnyOrDie further derailed Chevron's \$90 million lie, infuriating Chevron even more—though not quite as much as the [\\$18 billion judgment against them](#) in Ecuador, which Chevron has vowed never to pay. The fight goes on.

### **Coal Burns Wealthy Neighborhood. Neighbors Nonplussed.**

Students from Columbia College in Chicago came together with Greenpeace and the Yes Lab to create the illusion that a new coal plant was planned in their city—but that instead of going in a poor neighborhood (like the two coal plants that already exist in Chicago), this one would be built in a rich one. The plans got a rise out of residents and [the media](#), and helped focus attention on Chicago's much-needed [Clean Power Ordinance](#).

Canada was the victim of two Yes-Lab-assisted actions, both targeting the Alberta Tar Sands, the England-sized mess that has made Canada the worst per-capita carbon emitter on earth.

### **Hair Clogs Pipeline**

In the first Canadian action, a group of activists had Enbridge—who are aiming to build a massive pipeline from the Alberta Tar Sands through pristine wilderness to the British Columbia coast—announce "[My Hair Cares](#)," a crackpot plan to sop up inevitable spills along the pipeline route with the hair of volunteers. The resulting [press](#) publicized [Enbridge's botched spill cleanup in Michigan](#), and let Canadians know how stupid it can be to let oil flow through your watershed.

### **More and More Mordor**

In the second Canada-centered action, a group of students, working with Greenpeace, launched a [surreal campaign](#), complete with infomercials, cell phone videos, a tweeting campaign, [a Facebook page](#), etc. to make folks in Canada think that the new Hobbit film was saving money on Mordor scenes by shooting them in the Tar Sands. The "news" went quickly viral and helped to cement the Canadian Government's reputation as top-shelf planet-killing bastards.

### **Canadian War Room Defeated**

Another Canadian action on the same subject took place way back in December 2009, before the Yes Lab really existed—but it happened according to the same model, so the Yes Lab is claiming it. Read about it [here](#)!

### **France Remains Offensive**

An ad-hoc group called CRIME (Committee for the Reimbursement of Indemnity Money Extorted from Haiti) [announced](#), on France's behalf, the repayment of €17 billion to Haiti in relief aid—a payment equal to that which France extorted from Haiti in 1804 as a condition for their independence. Because of France's ham-fisted [reaction](#), the story received global attention, alerting many to the deep colonial roots of Haiti's problems. The media attention was also used to launch [a campaign](#) that further built pressure on France to do the right thing.

### **People Bite Apple**

It's a bummer that our shiny tech toys are made using the blood of people—or, more precisely, the "conflict minerals" that play a big role in the violence and instability of Central Africa. So a group of students, together with [Friends of the Congo](#), produced a fake Apple ad campaign touting a "[Conflict-Free iPhone](#)," and calling for the [citizen's arrest of John Paulson](#), whose company finances some of the worst extraction practices. The project received hundreds of [media hits](#) worldwide.

### **Unnatural Gas**

Students and local activists launched a campaign to cover Manhattan with stickers warning residents that if a ban on hydraulic fracturing is not extended in New York State, they'll soon need to test for their

water's safety by trying to light it on fire. The project [communicated viscerally](#) just what's at stake if gas companies are allowed to drill in New York's aquifer, as the companies are demanding.

### **Shell Game Uncovers Oil Slick**

In the Hague, activists impersonated oil giant Shell and publicly apologized for devastating the Niger Delta each year with oil spills larger than that of the Exxon Valdez. The action generated hundreds of [stories](#)—all highlighting Shell's atrocious record.

Phew. Not bad for something that still hasn't launched!

Meanwhile, as long as we're writing a long breezy email, we have other news too:

### **Tim DeChristopher**

Tim DeChristopher's [amazing story](#) continues to inspire a movement. He's currently [living in a federal prison](#), in a tiny room he was offered in exchange for single-handedly saving hundreds of thousands of acres of gorgeous Utah wilderness from destruction at the hands of Big Oil and Gas. Listen to [Tim speak](#) about why he did what he did, and what he's asking of you—and then make up your mind.

### **CointelCOC**

Speaking of small rooms, we are still, almost two years later, waiting for the judge to rule whether to throw out the [US Chamber of Commerce's lawsuit against us](#). Meanwhile, the Chamber's lawyers—the same ones who are apparently suing us—recently made big news for [dirty tricks not seen since the days of CointelPro](#). We almost hope we have a chance to address these creeps in court. Meanwhile, we'll have to be content trying to express our anger [in other ways](#).

### **Yes Men Revolting**

Our latest film, [The Yes Men Fix the World](#), didn't. It won the Berlin Audience Award and the UK's most prestigious prize in documentary film, was released theatrically in the U.S. and 40 other countries, and was shown on HBO and all kinds of other TV. But it simply did *not* fix the world—which is why our new film will be called *The Yes Men Are Revolting*. It'll feature many of the Yes-Lab-assisted actions above, as well as conversations with funny people who have overthrown tyrannies worldwide. It'll be funny and watchable, and will use the word "revolution" quite a bit. Isn't it time? The rich (except for Warren Buffett) are not getting nicer, and our leaders seem less and less able to think about us. So let's say it: "re-vo-lu-tion." Gooooood.

Finally, huge, huge thanks to all of you who helped make the long list of Yes Lab-supported hijinks happen. We believe humor can have a role in shaking off tyranny, whether of one crazy [dictator](#) or of a whole [bad idea](#). Please keep active in whatever way you can, and if you can, please [pledge to our campaign](#). THANKS!!

Gratefully yours,  
The Yes Men