

Social Media and the *New* Public Sphere



Re-thinking the roles of political communication and public opinion in the age of participatory media



- **Political Communication and Public Opinion Scholar**
- **The role of entertainment and social media in the public sphere**
- **The uses and effects of these media on attitudes, opinions, and behaviors, which have social, economic, and political consequences for individuals, groups, and organizations in civil society**

Simply put, how do these media affect our democracy?



April 15, 2009: Obama Denies Habeas Corpus



Tonight's Focus:

Social Media and Politics



- **The rise of social media in political communication**
- **Intersections between socially mediated politics and public opinion**
- **Changing dynamics and roles for political elites, journalists, and publics**
- **Discussion**

Social Media

Data source: Knight Foundation

- Over 5 billion consumers use social media
- 200 tweets are sent per day with over 10 million users
- Over 1 billion users on Facebook
- YouTube is the second largest search engine and largest video site on the Internet
- Tumblr has 10 million users per month
- Flickr is the largest image sharing site and has the most images available. 100 million images are uploaded and used with it



The Rise of Political Social Media in the United States

Pew Research Center Internet and American Life Project



1994: Senator Diane Feinstein, Democrat of California, put up the first campaign site.

1998: The Minnesota campaign of independent Jesse Ventura featured email.

2000: GOP presidential candidate John McCain began raising money online and used the Internet to disseminate political news and information.

2004: Howard Dean's presidential campaign used blogs to generate voter interest, recruit, motivate volunteers and change the interplay between citizens and campaigns.

2008: Social media tools were used including candidate Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, texting services and others. The *New York Times* said Barack Obama was the first presidential candidature to truly understand social media.

2010: Most Congressional campaigns and over 53% of voters used social media to connect to election information and news.

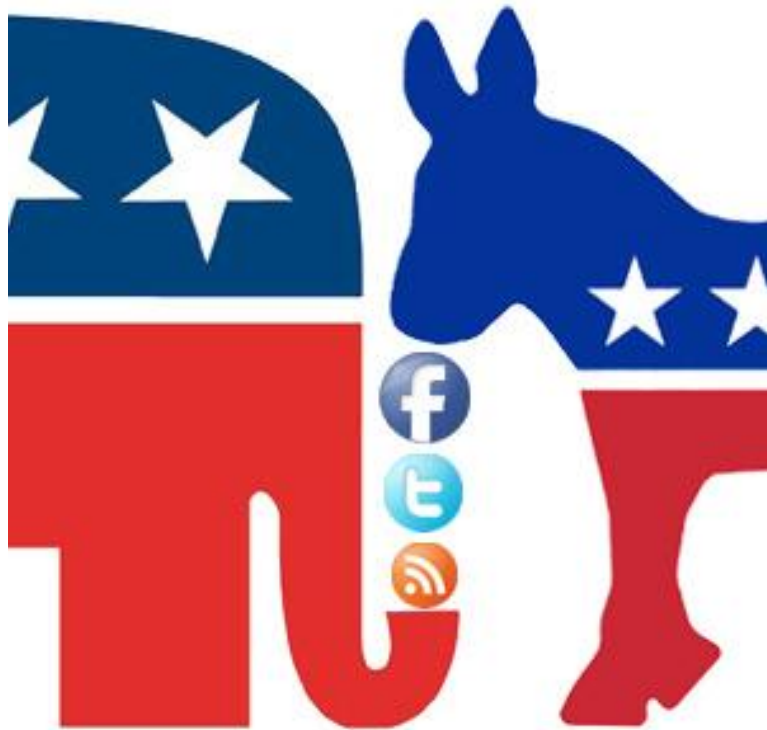
2012: Mobile apps are expected to rise significantly during election cycle.

Social Media and Politics



- The rise of social media in political communication
- **Intersections between socially mediated politics and public opinion**
- What we know about the uses and effects of social media in US and international politics
- Changing dynamics and roles for political elites, journalists, and publics
- Discussion

The New Public Sphere.....in the United States



**July 23, 2007 – The first
YouTube Debate**

**April 20, 2011 – The
first White House
Facebook Town Hall**

**July 6, 2011 – The first
White House Twitter
Town Hall**



The New Public Sphere.....in the Middle East

“The structural changes changing our world today are in fact empowering individuals as never before.” (Prepared by: ISN Staff;

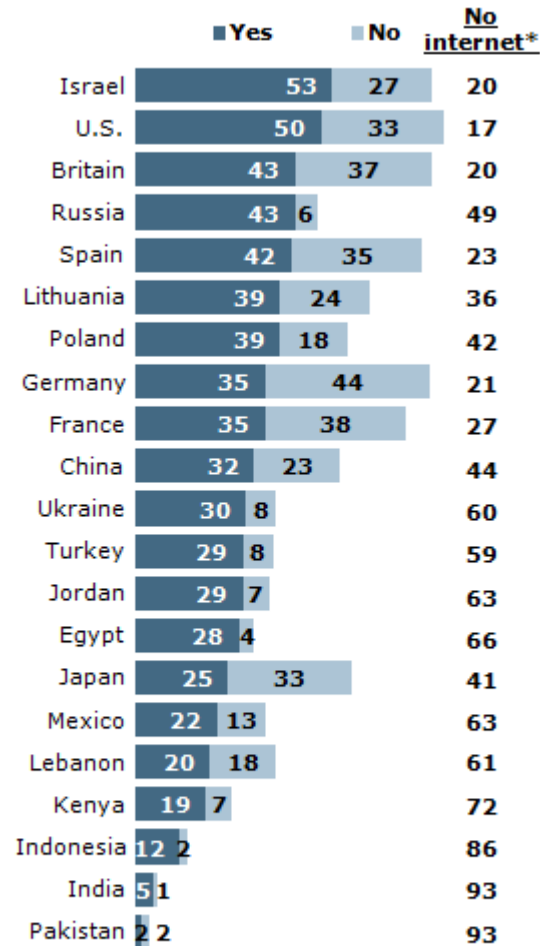
<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/>)



Social media global attitudes project

“In 15 of 21 countries, at least 25% of those polled use social networking sites. Israel (53%) and the U.S. (50%) top the list with the highest percentage of adults who say they use online social networking sites such as Facebook.” (PEW global attitudes survey, 2011).

Social Networking Usage



* Respondents who do not use the internet.

Based on total sample. "Don't know/Refused" not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q69.



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Scholars are growing interested in understanding the social media ecosystem.....it is proving to be a complex, dynamic system that is rapidly changing and difficult to empirically examine

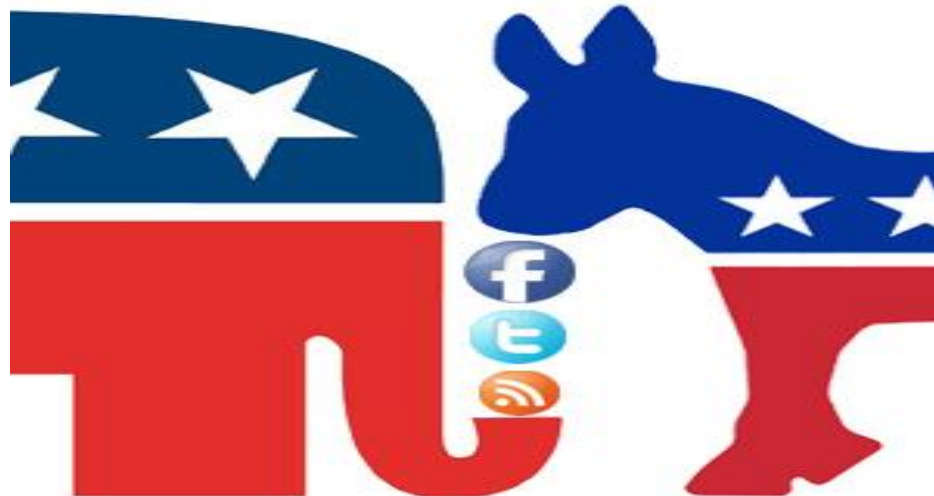


Social Media Landscape 2011



Social Media Matters in US Politics

“During the 2010 elections, more Republicans used Twitter than did Democrats running for the House of Representatives.....and empirical evidence suggests a that there was a significant relationship between Twitter Use and increased odds of winning the election.” (LaMarre, 2012)



Social Media Matters in World Social Change

“After analyzing more than 3 million tweets, gigabytes of YouTube content and thousands of blog posts, a new study finds that social media played a central role in shaping political debates in the Arab Spring” (O’Donnell, 2011) <http://www.washington.edu/news/articles/new-study-quantifies-use-of-social-media-in-arab-spring>



But Can Social Media Hurt Democracy?



“There has been much coverage of the role of social media in spreading democracy. But what dangers can social media pose when in the wrong hands? Can it be more effective against freedom than working for it?” (NATO, http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2011/Social_Medias/Dark-Side-Social-Media/EN)

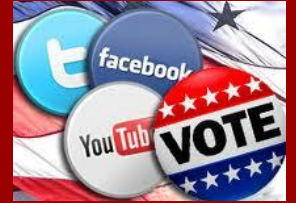
Examples: Facebook and Twitter are illegal in China

Authoritarian regimes such as Iran are using using social media to identify and track protestors

Wikileaks puts classified information at risk



Information and Democracy



“If you took all of the information produced in the entire history of US journalism and turned it into digital data.....it would equal about the amount of information produced in a single day on the Internet” (MIT media lab, Knight foundation media learning seminar, 2012)





Thank You!

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