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**Members of Congress & Social Media:
Beyond Facebook and Twitter**

Project Directed by
Sherri R. Greenberg

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Social Media Usage in Congress
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FOREWORD

The Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs has established interdisciplinary research on policy problems as the core of its educational program. A major element of this program is the nine-month policy research project, in the course of which one or more faculty members direct the research of ten to twenty graduate students of diverse disciplines and academic backgrounds on a policy issue of concern to a government or nonprofit agency. This “client orientation” brings the students face to face with administrators, legislators, and other officials active in the policy process and demonstrates that research in a policy environment demands special knowledge and skill sets. It exposes students to challenges they will face in relating academic research, and complex data, to those responsible for the development and implementation of policy and how to overcome those challenges

The curriculum of the LBJ School is intended not only to develop effective public servants, but also to produce research that will enlighten and inform those already engaged in the policy process. The project that resulted in this report has helped to accomplish the first task; it is our hope that the report itself will contribute to the second.

Finally, it should be noted that neither the LBJ School nor The University of Texas at Austin necessarily endorses the views or findings of this report.

Angela Evans
Dean

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The rapidly evolving world of social media has transformed how we communicate with each other. It has even revolutionized how Members of Congress communicate with and present themselves to their constituents, rendering mail and franking regulations almost irrelevant. Nearly every Member of Congress has adopted Facebook and Twitter, but this is only a share of their total social media presence. This report explores the adoption and use of platforms beyond Facebook and Twitter by Members of Congress, candidates for open congressional seats, and Texas Legislators. To understand how Members are using social media and identify trends, we conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis of their adoption and usage of select platforms.

We collected original data on the adoption of social media platforms by Members of Congress, and we used descriptive and bivariate statistics to identify trends in both adoption and usage. We also conducted case studies and coded the content of posts for select Members of Congress, congressional candidates, and Texas Legislators. Finally, we supplemented our case studies through surveys and interviews with campaign staff, Texas Legislature staff, and social media consultants.

Our findings confirm that Facebook and Twitter are the most widely adopted and used platforms by all three groups. But other platforms enjoy as wide of adoption or are growing in importance. Adoption of YouTube is as universal as Twitter adoption among Members of Congress. The most widely adopted platforms beyond Facebook and Twitter are YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Google+, and Medium. We have identified Instagram, the fourth most widely adopted platform, and Snapchat as emerging platforms.

The average Member of Congress has adopted six platforms—though they are not all necessarily linked to the Member’s official website. We found several noteworthy trends in platform adoption based on the personal characteristics and district demographics of Members. Party affiliation, age, and tenure are the main factors that influence platform adoption and usage. Democrats tend to adopt more platforms than their Republican counterparts. Younger and newer Member also tend to adopt more platforms. Similar trends that predict a Member’s adoption of platforms also indicate their likeliness to increase usage of the platforms. Members who represent districts that are wealthier, younger, and more urban, tend to adopt more platforms.

We identified trends in platform-specific uses of social media by individual Members, candidates, and legislators. Members tend to use the most widely adopted platforms for the following uses: YouTube for issue position and media coverage posts, Instagram for personal and district posts, and Medium for vote explanations and issue position posts. We also identified differences in adoption among the three groups. Platform adoption among Members of Congress tends to vary more widely, while congressional candidates and Texas Legislators tend to use tried and tested platforms due to their lower level of visibility and resources.

Social media will continue to shape interactions between elected officials and their constituents, and allow elected officials to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. The ever-evolving nature of social media makes it challenging to predict the future uses and trends of platforms. In just the time that we conducted our research, we saw the end of Vine and the advent of both Facebook Live and Instagram Live. But we can predict that Facebook and Twitter will continue to dominate, especially if Facebook continues to replicate the functions of other platforms. Other platforms are growing in adoption and usage though, and understanding how these emerging platforms, new trends, and novel uses are shaping the communications of Members of Congress are essential to understanding their personas as elected officials and their interactions with constituents.

INTRODUCTION

“...and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations?”
– *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll

Social media provides more opportunities for pictures and conversations than Alice in her Wonderland ever could have imagined. Members of the United States Congress use Instagram, Snapchat, Medium, and other tools to contact and communicate with constituents, fellow Members, and the public. The adoption of new social media platforms presents important questions about congressional communication: besides Facebook and Twitter, which social media platforms do Members use, and why? Additionally, once a Member has signed up for a social media platform, how will the office use the platform?

Previous work by Sherri Greenberg has explored the use of Twitter and Facebook by Members¹ and committees.² Our research advances these prior studies of social media and Congress by exploring newer, and typically less used, platforms. This particular research area is fairly new, though an increasing number of studies about social media, and politics in general, have been published.

Identifying social media platforms that Members use, and why they use them, builds understanding of how Members’ communication strategies have changed with the advent of newer platforms. Furthermore, Members’ social media use continues to raise questions regarding application of internal congressional rules—such as the franking privileges, and legislative technology use—to new forms of communication.

The foundational framework for understanding representation by Members of Congress is David Mayhew’s *Congress: The Electoral Connection*.³ Mayhew contends that the primary goal of Members of Congress is reelection, so they take actions and positions that help them accomplish policy goals for their districts. In a sense, the campaign never ends for Members of Congress. Therefore, Members design their direct constituent communication through both advertising and official channels to help them win the next election. The Members’ need to communicate positions, accomplishments, and interest in their districts is a natural function of our system of government. Elections are how citizens elect representatives and how citizens enforce accountability.

Since constituents hold Members of Congress accountable through elections, Members must communicate that they have represented their constituents well, so they may show they deserve another term. The media through which Members communicate may change over time, but the messages they communicate remain the same. Constituents need to know that their representatives are effective, so Members communicate the accomplishments from their terms. In Mayhew’s words, Members claim credit. Members advertise to ensure name identification in

¹ Sherri Greenberg, “Congress + Social Media” (Austin, Texas: Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, October 22, 2012).

² Sherri Greenberg, “Congressional Committees and Social Media” (Austin, Texas: Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, 2014).

³ David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974).

their districts, associated with the goals that constituents voted for, and with successfully delivering on those goals.

Mayhew's model enables us to view Members' actions in a way that holds true for all Members, regardless of the rules of the Congress in which they serve,⁴ and regardless of the media they use to communicate. What makes a communication strategy successful? Why do Members choose to highlight certain accomplishments over others? Central to our research, why would Members choose to extend their social media presence beyond the mainstays of the field—Facebook and Twitter?

Since Members have limited resources, they likely will choose the most efficient communication methods—ones that reach many constituents and have the ease and versatility for Members to discuss their positions, claim credit for accomplishments, or highlight ties to their districts. Our research found all of these types of messages from officeholders, and we found that Members increase their social media usage during campaigns.

Despite advancing technology, Members still are motivated by the same reasons and want to send the same messages as they always have. Social media allows Members more opportunities to reach constituents, and thus, to show how well they represent their districts and why their constituents should reelect them. Instead of earning press coverage or hosting an event, Members can communicate with their constituents daily through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Medium, and other platforms.

Our study analyzes how new technologies affect political representation and communication. Markus Pryor's study⁵ of the influence that television has had on reelection is a good first look at how technological developments have changed political communication and affected reelection. Pryor found that an incumbent's advantage increased with the number of televisions in the incumbent's district. Television reaches a wider audience than older forms of news media, so more voters are exposed to political news coverage and advertising.

The internet has further strengthened communication between Congress and voters. A Congressional Management Foundation study by Kathy Goldschmidt and Leslie Ochreiter⁶ of the internet's influence on congressional engagement and communication with constituents found that the internet is now the primary method voters use to learn about and communicate with their Members of Congress.

As one of the oldest social media platforms, elected officials have used YouTube for years. The platform developed support for government users early, and various research entities provide Members YouTube best practice guidance. GovLab at New York University, for example, has a dedicated YouTube page to demonstrate how to use the platform efficiently, professionally, and

⁴ The rules of each chamber and the caucuses and committees on which a Member serves are important to understanding Members' behavior and decisions as well, but the underlying motivation for an individual Member is reelection.

⁵ "The Incumbent in the Living Room: The Rise of Television and the Incumbency Advantage of U.S. House Elections," *The Journal of Politics* 68, no. 3 (August 2006): 567–673; 657–673.

⁶ Kathy Goldschmidt and Leslie Ochreiter, "Communicating with Congress: How the Internet Has Changed Citizen Engagement" (Washington, DC: Congressional Management Foundation, 2008): 9.

productively.⁷ Its page includes videos and FAQs to answer questions ranging from copyright issues, to technical assistance, to video production, and effective messaging. Gary Lee Malecha and Donald J. Reagan⁸ highlight the YouTube use by parties, committees, and congressional leadership in building a multilayered communication strategy with useful constituent engagement messaging. For campaigns, Mary Chayko⁹ points to President Obama's campaign YouTube strategy, which provided the campaign heavy leverage in reaching voters while saving the campaign money. In fact, Chayko discusses, the Obama campaign used YouTube to raise money through small donations. The use of YouTube allowed the former president's campaign to sustain an extensive communications strategy that did not solely rely on costly TV advertising.

Social media could increase this trend exponentially as voters can follow their representatives daily on multiple platforms, and elected officials can spend less time and money on their communication strategies. A Congressional Research Service (CRS) report by Jacob Straus and Matthew Glassman¹⁰ argues that the advent of electronic communication has had the most profound effect on Member's interaction with their constituents to date. In less than 10 years, use of social media by Members went from virtually nonexistent to an expected part of their communication strategies. Today, nearly every Member has a social media presence, and the explosion of new platforms has increased their potential methods of interaction.

As they adopt new platforms, Members must learn the written and unwritten rules of social media. Written rules and restrictions specific to their offices can come from the House or Senate handbooks, but Members learn about the unwritten rules of how to use social media—the best way to adopt a platform and the best content for each platform—from their peers' experiences.¹¹ Hence, early adopters must have an agile social media strategy because they have fewer cases from which to learn. The early adopters become the first examples for other Members on any given platform. Dave Lassen and Leticia Bode's¹² findings suggest that Members of Congress learn from their institutional peers in adopting new social media platforms. After enough early adopters discover the most effective ways to use a new platform, their colleagues will follow suit. This builds from the seminal work of Everett M. Rogers on how new ideas are adopted in his book, *Diffusion of Innovations*, including his observations on the spread of the internet in his fifth and latest edition. Rogers discusses the propensity for people to adopt a new idea if their peers already have adopted it.¹³ Additionally, as more Members adopt a platform, the content those Members post becomes more similar.¹⁴

⁷ Stefaan Verhulst, "YouTube for Government," GovLab, October 2, 2014, <http://thegovlab.org/youtube-for-government/>.

⁸ Gary Lee Malecha and Daniel J. Reagan, *The Public Congress: Congressional Deliberation in a New Media Age* (New York, New York: Routledge, 2012): 2.

⁹ Mary Chayko, *Superconnected: The Internet, Digital Media, and Techno-Social Life* (Los Angeles, California: Sage Publications, 2017): 170.

¹⁰ Jacob Straus and Matthew Glassman, "Social Media in Congress: The Impact of Electronic Media on Member Communications" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 26, 2016).

¹¹ Dave Lassen and Leticia Bode. "Social Media Coming of Age: Developing Patterns of Congressional Twitter Use 2007-2014." *Twitter and Elections around the World: Campaigning in 140 Characters or Less*. Ed. Richard Davis. (Routledge Publishing, 2016); Ch. 12.

¹² "Social Media Coming of Age: Developing Patterns of Congressional Twitter Use, 2007-2014," in *Twitter and Elections Around the World: Campaigning in 140 Characters or Less*, ed. Richard Davis, Christina Holtz-Bacha, and Marion R. Just (New York: Routledge, 2017): 190–206.

¹³ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, Free Press, August 2003, 5th Edition.

¹⁴ Ibid.

However, as new social media platforms emerge and increase their share of congressional social media usage,¹⁵ it is unclear how these platforms with novel capabilities will affect this rapidly changing and self-governing landscape. Are emerging platforms helping legislators influence the actions and ideologies of their constituents, or vice versa? These questions emphasize the competitive nature of emerging social media adoption as both Members and established social media platforms vie for influence, relevance, and narrative control.

A seminal work regarding how issues come to legislators' attention is John Kingdon's *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*.¹⁶ In this work, Kingdon discusses the importance of focusing events—incidents that mobilize attention—in legislative agenda-setting. Certainly, major events have initiated significant and novel social media use by Members of Congress.

Our study found that the top platforms beyond Facebook and Twitter that Members are adopting are YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, and Medium. Of note, researchers at Florida International University, Texas Woman's University, and University of Illinois Springfield are finding similar trends in their current research on adoption of emerging social media platforms by nonprofits. They found that other than Facebook and Twitter, the nation's largest nonprofits are using YouTube and Instagram.¹⁷

The communications field is competitive both for politicians and for the social media platforms that can contribute to their election and success in office. As new platforms and capabilities emerge, the established platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, incorporate these capabilities to maintain their market dominance. The demise of platforms such as Vine and the movement to all-inclusive platforms makes the research on this topic just as fluid as the field it studies. Hence, we only can analyze a specific moment in time.

OVERVIEW

The Research Team (the Team) at LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin researched and assessed the current landscape of congressional social media use beyond Facebook and Twitter.

The Team conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses to explore two questions:

- Which social media platforms are Members of Congress using other than Facebook and Twitter?
- How are they using these platforms to present themselves to and communicate with the public and their constituents?

¹⁵ Christy Lewis, et al., "A Connected Congress: Best Practices for Engaging Constituents on Social Media" (Washington, DC: The Congressional Institute, January 2016).

¹⁶ John W. Kingdon and James A. Thurber, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, R.R. Donnelley and Sons Company, August 2002, 2nd Edition.

¹⁷ Anna Clark, "Social Media and Large Nonprofit Organizations: Emerging Trends and Best Practices," Panel Presentation, ASPA 2017 National Conference, March 20, 2017, Atlanta, GA.

Beyond studying Members of Congress, the Team collected data on social media use among candidates for open congressional seats and among members of the Texas Legislature for a more comprehensive understanding of elected officials' social media use. While Members of Congress were the primary research focus, the November 2016 election allowed us to compare how candidates use social media when running for office with elected Members' use in office. The Team's proximity and access to the Texas Legislature provided another opportunity for insight into elected officials' social media use.

PURPOSE

This report provides qualitative and quantitative analyses of social media platform adoption and use—other than Facebook and Twitter—by Members of Congress, candidates for open congressional seats, and members of the Texas Legislature. The Research Team used descriptive and bivariate statistics, case studies, and data visualizations to analyze all three groups' social media use.

METHODOLOGY

The Team employed the following methods for data collection and analysis of Members of the 114th Congress, candidates for open congressional seats, and members of the 85th Texas Legislature.

Members of the 114th Congress

The Team identified social media accounts that were linked to Members' official websites and those that were not linked to the official websites. Researchers visited Members' official websites and looked for links to their social media platform accounts located on splash pages, home pages, social media and press tabs, and elsewhere. Additionally, researchers explored the internet and each social media platform for any accounts that were not linked to a Member's website. The Team considered official accounts to be those compliant with the guidelines in the Members' Congressional Handbook for the 114th Congress. Researchers collected this information which formed the basis of the dataset. Finally, the Team compiled demographic information for each district and state from the U.S. Census Bureau and Ballotpedia to develop context for a Member's social media presence.

The Team identified the most popular social media platforms adopted by Members of Congress and categorized Members according to their number of platforms. The Team differentiated linked social media platforms from unlinked social media platforms. Platforms that are linked to a Member's website are linked platforms, whereas those that are not linked to a Member's website are unlinked platforms. The Team coded the level of social media adoption into three categories for both total platforms and linked platforms. Researchers divided Members of Congress into the following three groups: *light adopters*, *average adopters*, and *heavy adopters*. For total platforms adopted, light adopters have fewer than five platforms, average adopters have

five to seven platforms, and heavy adopters have eight platforms or more.¹⁸ For linked platforms adopted, the light adopters have fewer than three platforms, average adopters have three to five platforms; and heavy adopters have more than five platforms. The total scale of platforms ranged from zero to twelve.

The Team used distribution of platform adoption quartiles to determine the cutoffs between the categories. We classified those within less than 25% of the distribution as light adopters, 25% to 75% as average adopters, and more than 75% as heavy adopters. This technique also enabled the Team to apply discrete mathematics and statistical tests and gave us the ability to evaluate marginal differences within Member or district characteristics. With this arrangement the Team was able to apply contingency table analyses for measuring the magnitude or effect size of marginal differences via relative probabilities with 95% confidence. The Team incorporated this technique in the statistics and data on these findings and details are in **Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2**.

Table 1: Table of Adoption Level Classification

	Light Adopter	Average Adopter	Heavy Adopter
Total Platforms	0-4 platforms	5-7 platforms	8-12 platforms
Linked Platforms	0-2 platforms	3-5 platforms	6-12 platforms

We included the following platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Periscope, Snapchat, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, and Medium. The Team generated descriptive summary statistics for total platform adoption and linked platform adoption for subsets of the Members based on their demographic and district/state characteristics. We conducted a bivariate analysis for each characteristic or independent variable against the number of social media platforms adopted. We then conducted a bivariate analysis for adoption of YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, and Medium among each Member and district characteristic.

Our team built a database analyzing platform adoption of each House and Senate member to evaluate any relationships between social media presence and ethnicity, gender, age, chamber, partisanship, length of service, and leadership. Additionally, we selected a segment of Members for a usage case study, to evaluate platform adoption versus platform usage.

We selected the following 21 Members to further analyze as case studies: John Conyers (D-MI), Joe Courtney (D-CT), Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), Mia Love (R-UT), Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO), Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Beto O’Rourke (D-TX), Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Bruce Poliquin (R-ME), Harold Rogers (R-KY), Paul Ryan (R-WI), Bill Shuster (R-PA), Elise Stefanik

¹⁸ Heavy, average, and light total and linked adopter categories were classified using quartiles of the overall distribution of Congressional adoption where about less than 25% of the distribution are classified as light adopters, 25% to 75% as average adopters, and more than 75% as heavy adopters.

(R-NY), Cory Booker (D-NJ), John Cornyn (R-TX), Ted Cruz (R-TX), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Bernie Sanders (D-VT), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Tim Scott (R-SC).

The Team selected these candidates to create a diverse sample based on party, chamber, leadership, gender, age, years of service, ethnicity, geographical location, and whether the district or state is primarily rural or urban. The Team coded posts on all platforms from May 1 to June 30, 2017, and November 15 to December 13, 2017, into the following categories: *personal, events, press, colleagues, coalitions, voter mobilization, opponents, volunteers/staff, fundraising, local, issue position, legislative process, and interaction*. The Team selected these dates to include periods of heightened legislative activity. After we collected data from these case studies, the Team classified Members’ social media use as light, average, and heavy users by individual platform and by aggregate social media use.

Table 2: Table of Usage Level Classification

	Light User	Average User	Heavy User
Instagram	0-6 photos	7-36 photos	37-108 photos
YouTube	0-3 videos	4-12 videos	13-59 videos
Medium	0-1 posts	2-7 posts	8-19 posts
Aggregate*	0-42 posts	43-86 posts	87-122 posts

Note: Data collected from May 1-June 30 and Nov. 15-Dec. 12

* Aggregate use only applies to Members who had all three platforms.

The usage categories for content coding are defined as follows:

Connection/Personal (CP): Covers personal posts highlighting family, pets, sports, or current events not related to official position or campaign

Events (E): Posts highlighting event attendance in official capacity

Press/Media Coverage (PR): Reposts or responses to news coverage of the Member or candidate

Colleagues (COL): Posts about or related to same-party affiliates

Coalitions (COA): PAC or organization supporting the candidate, campaign, party, or Member

Voter/Constituent Mobilization/Call to Action (M): Posts calling on district members to vote, or to call on constituents to mobilize members in the legislative process

Opponents (O): Posts directly related to a legislator's or candidate's opponent.

Volunteers/Staff Highlight (V): Posts highlighting volunteers and/or staff (often thank you posts)

Fundraising (F): Posts highlighting fundraising activities

Local/District (LD): Posts highlighting work in the district or news regarding the district

Issue Positions (IP): Posts directly related to the legislator's or candidate's position on a current issue or policy

Legislative Process (L): Posts highlighting the legislative process, such as bill writing or committee hearings

Interaction (I): Highlights Member or candidate responses to comments on their posts—either to constituents or other legislators

Given the dynamic nature of social media platforms, we used multiple data collection techniques. Our objective was a complete survey of social media presence for each Member—541 in total. Our approach generated a snapshot of a Member’s presence on each social media platform based solely on the existence of an account, but it did not address usage. The Team completed our method twice to increase reliability. The first iteration surveyed all 541 Members across eight major social media platforms, and the second surveyed the same population across only the top four social media platforms. We used the following social media presence data collection techniques:

We examined each Member’s official website for social media platforms links, which we recorded and then followed to their platform accounts. Whether Members’ .gov websites displayed active links to their official social media accounts became our criteria for linked or unlinked. We also searched the internet for each Member’s social media accounts. We pursued and recorded each result from the search. We searched each social media platform for each Member by name. When names were common, we applied additional identifiers such as “congressman,” “congresswoman,” “senator/sen,” or “representative/rep” to narrow the search results.

Some social media platforms have established protocols to identify elected officials, using special visual “badges.” Ensuring that their social media accounts comply with a platform’s visual criteria as an elected official is advantageous to Members’ promotion. We could not definitively identify some accounts as part of Members’ official communications. Also, some accounts with extremely limited usage suggested Members’ efforts to assess an emerging platform’s potential without becoming consistent users.

We drew a distinction between adoption and usage, and defined content coding and Zombie accounts as follows:

Adoption: The existence of an account on a social media platform ostensibly representing a Member in an official capacity and in compliance with their Chamber’s standards of conduct.

Usage: An account reflecting a Member’s consistent and active use of the social media platform as part official communications efforts and in compliance with the Chamber’s standards of conduct.

Content Coding: The designation of the entirety of a Member’s official activity on one or several social media platforms by messaging content or intent within a specific time frame.

Zombie: Presence on a platform, but no usage for an extended period of time.

Social media platform adoption involves creating an account on a platform, while usage involves posting content such as messages, videos, or pictures on a platform. In this research, we differentiate between social media platform “usage” and “adoption” to analyze an individual’s frequency and posting of content rather than only examining an individual’s platform adoption.

The Team employed two analytic tools to analyze Instagram and Snapchat use by selected Members of Congress. We used *Keyhole*, an online service that is used to track and analyze Instagram accounts, to track Members’ Instagram use. We used *Snaplytics.io*, an analytic data service, to assess Members’ Snapchat use. Using *Snaplytics.io*, the Team tracked 50 Members and determined their number of total snaps from January 1 to March 29, 2017. We then coded and counted posts based on whether they were photos or videos.

Open Seats

Open seats are congressional races without incumbents running for re-election. In the 2016 election, there were 46 open seats, five of which were in the Senate. In our analysis, we included any social media accounts associated with candidates’ campaigns. The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) uses national polling data to determine which presidential candidates are eligible for inclusion in presidential debates, requiring each participant to have the support of at least 15% of the national electorate. We defined major party candidates by applying this 15% standard, including in our research only those candidates who had received the support from at least 15% of the voters in their respective congressional districts or states. These accounts are not subject to the same rules as the accounts of elected Members of Congress. However, if current officeholders are running for new offices, presumably they will not use the official social media accounts of their current offices for campaign purposes, as this violates House and Senate rules. The Team included demographic information for candidates contesting open seats.

After identifying each candidate, the Team compiled a dataset of social media platforms that the candidates used for their campaigns. To find this information, the Team visited the candidates’ campaign websites to determine which social media platforms were linked, used Google searches to identify other social media platforms that may not be linked to the campaign sites, and searched social media sites by candidates’ names to find any potential accounts.

The Team contacted the campaigns directly via phone or email and asked the following questions:

1. *Which social media platforms does your campaign currently use?*

2. *Is there a staff member dedicated to social media?*
3. *Does your campaign have an explicit social media strategy? If you answered yes, what are your strategy and goals?*
4. *Why has the congressional candidate and/or campaign chosen to use certain platforms and not use others?*
5. *Has your campaign considered using Snapchat or Periscope as a tool for campaign communications? Why or why not?*
6. *How is your social media strategy adjusted throughout the campaign (e.g. according to polls, opponent's usage, etc.)?*
7. *What resources do you dedicate to social media (designated staff, financing, time, etc.)?*

Based on responses from the candidates' campaign staff, the Team selected the following nine candidates for case studies: Martin Babinec, Lou Correa, Roger Marshall, Kim Myers, Bao Nguyen, Jamie Raskin, Claudia Tenney, Shelli Yoder, and Todd Young. Five of these nine candidates won their respective elections and are Members of the 115th Congress. The Team coded posts on all platforms from October 17 to November 8, 2017, into the following categories: *personal, events, press, colleagues, coalitions, voter mobilization, opponents, volunteers/staff, fundraising, local, issue position, legislative process, and interaction.*

The first section of each case study is an overview of the candidate. This section includes relevant demographic information and a short description of the candidate's prior political background. The second section describes the election's political environment, including historical information about the seat and a description of the political field. The third section describes the campaign's social media strategy regarding platforms used, post frequency, and type of content shared. For campaigns that responded to our survey, this section also describes their responses, and any other sentiments and information about social media strategy that they shared with the Team.

The 85th Texas Legislature

The Texas Legislature is a bicameral body that only meets in odd numbered years for 140 days. The proximity of the Texas State Capitol to the LBJ School of Public Affairs presented an opportunity to speak in-person with public officials and their staff regarding the changing landscape of social media in legislative communications.

The Team used information from interviews and case studies to illuminate how elected officials chose to adopt social media platforms and how they used these tools to communicate with constituents, the media, and other officials. We developed a methodology to answer these questions and to complement findings from the overall study of Members of Congress. We used informational interviews with political social media consultants to develop a baseline knowledge of social media usage and strategy for public servants, and political election and issue campaigns. Researchers conducted informational interviews with one Republican and one Democratic social media consultant.

We devised the following questions to facilitate our interviews:

1. *Can you give background on current social media landscape in Texas Legislature?*
2. *What are the main uses of social media platforms for elected officials' constituent engagement?*
3. *How do you define who is active and not active?*
4. *Are there any legislators who are not active on social media?*
5. *What platforms are legislators using?*
6. *Are there differences between the House and Senate on how they engage social media? If so, what are those differences?*
7. *Are there differences between in session and out of session use of social media? What are the differences you see?*
8. *What is the difference in social media use by party affiliation?*
9. *What are the trends in social media that you are seeing?*
10. *What do you think will be the next platform that Texas elected officials will adopt?*
11. *What trends in content are you seeing that elected officials are disseminating?*
12. *Does the district have an impact on how elected officials engage social media? Hispanic? Rural? Urban?*

Based on our informational interviews, we constructed the following research questions for semi-structured qualitative interviews with Texas legislators regarding their social media use and strategy, with an emphasis on novel usage:

1. *How does your staff delegate responsibilities for managing social media accounts? Which staff members find their time most impacted by social media?*
2. *To what degree do you believe that the Representative or Senator has shown interest in the office's social media accounts?*
3. *How does the office vet the quality of your social media content?*
4. *Have your office's social media accounts generated any noticeable growth in positive or negative attention for the Representative or Senator?*
5. *Have you noticed any overall attitudes toward legislators who are highly (or only very minimally) active on social media?*
6. *Can you recall any memorable social media interactions with constituents that created opportunities or problems for your office?*
7. *Are there any emerging social media platforms that you would like to see your office use in the coming year?*
8. *How could increased social media use (i.e. the Periscope coverage of the sit-in this summer) affect the status quo at the Legislature?*

9. *Who in your office drives social media engagement—the legislator, or a particular staffer?*
10. *Do you see social media platforms as a continuation of traditional communication strategies? Or do you think social media platforms present any unique opportunities that have not been possible in the past?*

Finally, we employed qualitative social media analysis to supplement the completed informational and legislator interviews, allowing us to develop a comprehensive mixed methods approach to better understand our findings. We searched for Texas Legislators on all social media platforms of interest, and we determined that legislators only were using Instagram as part of their professional social media presence. However, some legislators had unused accounts on Snapchat and Periscope.

We found Texas Legislators on Instagram by searching for the hashtag caption *#txlege* from July 1, 2016 to October 31, 2016. We compiled a list of legislators who used Instagram during this time, and we followed them with an Instagram account that we made specifically for our research. The search provided 35 legislators, for whom we checked the platform daily for new posts, snaps, and live streams. We downloaded posts and saved them for content and function analysis. We completed content and function analysis of all of the posts from these 35 legislators during the 140 days before and during session. We followed common qualitative research practices that allowed us to discontinue Instagram post data collection after we established and verified trends. For our categories on content coding, please see page 11.

Platforms

Given social media's evolving landscape, each platform differs in its history, use, and functionality. Below are descriptions of each of the platforms included in our study and their common uses by elected officials.

Facebook

Facebook, founded in 2004, initially focused on college students. This social network has expanded to include any individual over the age of thirteen with a valid email address worldwide. Users can access Facebook via computer or smart devices using a web browser or application. Facebook is the world's largest social media platform, with over 1.8 billion active users. Facebook is a platform to share information with peers, family, friends, and one's identified community. Facebook pages are a tool within Facebook where Members can manage a public official online presence for the offices that they hold separate from their personal accounts. Facebook pages do not have a follower limit and instead of linking individuals as "friends," they have followers who engage with the page's content. Facebook pages allow Members to engage with constituents in their district by posting content in the form of text, photos, videos, or links to other media. Members also have begun to use and integrate the platform's live video-streaming feature into their social media strategies. In 2016, Facebook revived its 2006 blogging feature called "notes" that seems to be competing with Medium for Member entries. Facebook is the most widely adopted platform by Members.

For more information visit <https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info>.

Flickr

Flickr, founded in 2004, is a photo library site owned by Yahoo!. As Flickr was an early photo curation website, many public figures began using the site to publish photos from events for their personal collections or sharing with the public. Flickr is notable for its large format image uploads. Users can access Flickr via computer or smart devices using a web browser or application, and the platform has payment options for increasing image storing caps. Flickr is becoming an outdated platform. Some Members post photos regularly, but many others have not used the platform in some time and have switched to other platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram.

For more information visit <https://www.flickr.com/about>.

Google+

Google+, founded in 2011, is Google's social media response to Facebook. Features include the ability to post photos and status updates to the stream or interest-based communities, group different types of "relationships" (rather than simply "friends") into Circles, a multi-person instant messaging function, multi-person video chat called Hangouts, events, location tagging, and the ability to edit and upload photos to private cloud-based albums. Google+ never really captured widespread appeal and is now marketed as the "social layer" that connects all of Google's services together. Informational interviews obtained during the course of this project indicate that Members have Google+ profiles to boost their search results among constituents.

For more information visit <https://plus.google.com/about>.

Instagram

Instagram launched in 2010 as a free mobile application, and Facebook acquired it in 2012, which increased interoperability between the two platforms. Instagram is a photo sharing platform for smart devices that links to other platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Flickr. To create an account, a user must download the application on a smart device and login using either an email address or Facebook credentials. This platform is photo-based, though users can also post text. An additional feature of Instagram is the photo editing options to include text and graphics over photos and videos. A key component of Instagram's functionality is the ability to upload photos and videos to Instagram and use push technology to post content on linked social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Flickr. Also, Members embed its photo galleries on Instagram into their website. There are over 600 million monthly active Instagram users. Analysis of Member usage via case studies shows Members primarily use Instagram to post photos and videos of daily activity, personal information, work in the district, and meetings with constituents.

For more information visit <https://www.instagram.com/about/us>.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking platform, founded in 2003, that allows users to capitalize on their networks by connecting with other individuals and potential employers. Users can access LinkedIn via computer or smart devices using web browser or application. There is a paid version of the platform that allows for direct messaging between users even if you are not directly connected to them. The paid version of the platform also better promotes these users to potential employers and includes a robust job search feature. Potential uses of LinkedIn by Members are limited, and informational interviews obtained during the course of this project indicate that LinkedIn is commonly used between low-level public servants and administrators for networking purposes.

For more information visit <https://press.linkedin.com/about-linkedin>.

Medium

Twitter co-founder Evan Williams started Medium in 2012 as a supplement to Twitter and its 140-character limit. Medium combines an open publishing blogging platform with social media features to create a product that has led to social journalism. Users can access Medium via computer or smart devices using web browser or application. Like Twitter, Medium has many high-profile contributors, including politicians and journalists. Medium offers the public a platform to interact with these more visible users, or to contribute their own articles on an existing or a new topic. In terms of more advanced social media functionality, Medium allows its users to recommend and share posts to other users, and allows for the upvoting of higher quality content within a writing topic. Users also can search for posts by topic and subtopic for more precise search results. Medium incorporates capabilities of failed platforms with novel functions to create a more inviting social media experience. Medium reported 1.5 million hours spent on the site by its users in March 2015, and in March 2017, it announced a curated article membership program to entice insightful readers and authors. Members frequently use Medium to blog about their issue positions, to discuss their filed legislation, or to explain their votes on legislation.

For more information visit <https://about.medium.com>.

Periscope

Periscope, founded in 2014, is a live video streaming platform used on mobile devices that enables users to broadcast live streaming video. In 2015, Twitter purchased Periscope and recently integrated the tool with its own platform. Users only can use Periscope on a mobile or smart device via the application. To create an account, users have to provide a valid email address or a Twitter account. Several Members used Periscope to livestream events on the House Floor from June 22 to June 23, 2016 that were not captured by C-SPAN cameras. The introduction of other streaming services such as Facebook Live and Instagram Live have hurt Periscope's market share, since the other platforms have larger audiences. Periscope's primary functionality for Members is to serve as a platform to livestream video and link to the stream on other social media sites. Because Periscope does not have a large audience on its own and other

platforms have invested in integrated video streaming tools, it is likely the platform will become obsolete.

For more information visit <https://www.periscope.tv/about>.

Pinterest

Pinterest, founded in 2010, focuses on users who share lifestyle-related visual information by posting “pins” on “boards” that are used as filters for the user. Pinterest can be accessed via computer or smart devices using either a web browser or an application. Users can upload or link images and videos via pinning, and they can add descriptions of the information. Pins are posted to a board where users can filter and manage the content as a common theme. Users can browse content pinned by others and repin information to their board. Pinning occurs within the application and through a “pinning” widget on a lifestyle website prompting users to pin information to the application. The goal of the application is to connect people through a social network to discover things they find interesting from like-minded people. The lifestyle focus on the platform makes it difficult for Members to use and connect with constituents because of the narrow focus on the content. There is not enough information from data collected to indicate any trends or functional uses of Pinterest for Members of Congress.

For more information visit <https://about.pinterest.com/en>.

Snapchat

Snapchat, founded in 2011, only is accessible through a smart device application. The premise of the platform is to send and receive pictures and messages that are explicitly short-lived. Snapchat allows users to share public and private photo and video content, as well as send private messages and two-way video calling. Public Snaps self-delete after 24 hours and can be viewed an infinite number of times during this period, while private snaps self-delete after viewing. Snapchat also has a “Discovery” feed with local and national sponsored content from different brands and publications, as well as curated posts from special events such as political debates and conventions, concerts, and sporting events. A 2014 survey revealed, however, that 71% of people use the app for its messaging capabilities rather than to “discover” promoted content. Snapchat has protections against content screenshots by notifying a user when someone screenshots their content. Snapchat allows users to follow any of their smartphone contacts. Users must manually enter the names of other contacts to add and follow them. Members typically use the platform as a means to broadcast their day’s events, including work on Capitol Hill, events and meetings in the district, and personal posts.

Members of Congress have started adopting Snapchat to communicate with constituents. For example, Representative Beto O’Rourke (D-TX) has an American flag next to his Snapchat name. The Public Affairs Council published a comprehensive list of users from the 115th Congress, and lists 52 members from both the House and the Senate. However, not all of these users are active on the platform.

For more information visit <https://www.snapchat.com>.

Tumblr

Tumblr, founded in 2007, is a blogging platform specializing in social network microblogging. Users can create their own blogs, post their own material, and reshare content within their niche, which cultivates social networks of microblogging communities. Users can access Tumblr via computer or smart devices using web browser or application. Users can find content through tag searching, and can also “like” and directly message other bloggers. Tumblr has a popular “ask me anything” (AMA) feature, which allows users to ask blog owners questions anonymously or by using their screenname. Then, the blog owner can share the anonymous or named AMA with their network along with a response. Given Tumblr’s rooting in microblogging rather than insightful journalistic content (see Medium), Tumblr has a notable amount of adult content blogs which potentially make the platform less appealing to public figures. Tumblr says it supports free expression and has rolled out a safe mode feature which allows users to block this content. In January 2016, Tumblr reported 555 million monthly visitors.

For more information visit <https://www.tumblr.com>.

Twitter

Twitter, founded in 2006, is a platform where individuals create usernames called “handles” and post 140 character messages called “tweets.” Twitter can be accessed via computer and smart devices either through a web browser or application. The primary Member uses of Twitter include: communication with constituents, communication with media, following public figures, and receiving timely news. The anatomy of a tweet consists of the handle which begins with a Commercial At (@) character, the text of the tweet, including optional hashtags and attached media. Users can attach photos, videos (30 seconds or less), URLs, and other visual media to the tweet. Recently, Twitter integrated seamless video live streaming with their subsidiary, Periscope, allowing Members and constituents the opportunity to broadcast a Member’s event. To filter a tweet into a particular conversation, a hashtag is applied to the tweet so that followers searching for a particular topic can find similar content.

Form more information visit <https://about.twitter.com>.

YouTube

YouTube, founded in 2005, is one of the most popular video platforms, and it is owned by Google. Users can access and upload videos on YouTube via computer and smart devices. There are two types of users of YouTube: individuals who watch videos, and those who upload and publish video content. Users do not need an account to watch a video on YouTube, and YouTube’s embed function allow user to watch video content without visiting YouTube’s website. Users need a valid email address to create an account and either subscribe to or create channels. Once a channel is created, users can begin uploading video content of varying lengths with a description indicating the core content of the video. Users can share videos across YouTube channels and platforms outside of YouTube. Members primarily post video footage of their media appearances and committee and floor speeches to their channel for engagement and archival purposes. In addition, trends in platform usage show Members cross-posting YouTube

video content on other social media platforms indicating the primary function of YouTube is to act as a server for video content.

For more information visit <https://www.youtube.com/yt/about>.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The Team analyzed social media platform adoption and use among three groups of elected officials: Members of the 114th Congress, Members of the Texas Legislature, and open seat candidates for Congress. The Team relied on findings from these three cohorts to develop conclusions regarding why and how legislators use social media platforms for various purposes and with different usage content. Furthermore, the findings and analysis of these three cohorts allowed us to compare social media interaction while making conclusions among and across these categories.

Members of Congress Findings and Analysis

We identified several key trends in social media adoption and usage among Members of Congress.

Trends in Social Media Adoption

According to the adoption database, Members on average adopted a total of six platforms. Our case study analysis suggests that members do not use all of the platforms that they adopt. Moreover, of the six platforms, only four platforms on average were linked to the Member's Congressional webpage. This indicates that Members use fewer platforms than they adopt to communicate to the public. About one-third of adopted platforms served little purpose (**See Appendix B, Table 1**).

Resources

Resource availability constrains Members' office activity; social media is no different. Senators have more resources to dedicate to all operations, so they are better able to dedicate those resources to social media. According to a 2017 CRS report, a Senator's Personnel and Office Expense Account shows an allowance range between \$3,043,454 to \$4,815,203. Comparatively, each House Member has a Representational Allowance of \$944,671.¹⁹

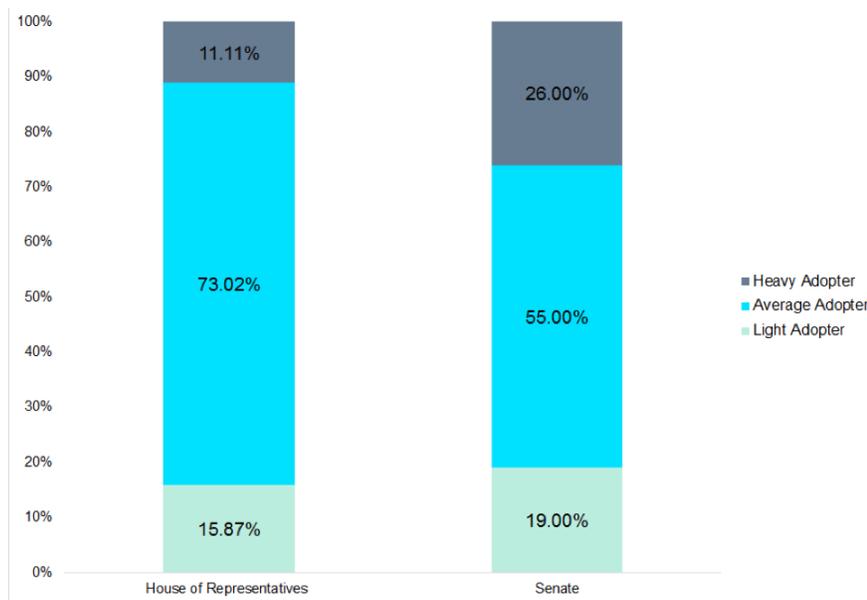
Additionally, most US Senate offices represent a larger geographic area and population; thus, they need to communicate to broader audiences with diverse geographic, ethnic, age, and income

¹⁹ Ida A. Brudnick, Legislative Branch Appropriations, 2017, report to accompany S. 2955, 114th Cong., 2nd sess., S.Rept. 114-258 (Washington: GPO, 2016), pp. 21-22, July 14, 2016, Washington, DC.

backgrounds. Second, due to the larger presence and responsibility of the Senate offices, each Senator has a larger staff in his or her state and in Washington, D.C. with larger staff budgets than those of House Members. The nature of the US Senate office creates a need to communicate on a broad set of issues as well. Due to the structure of the Senate, each Senator will have more duties, be a member of more committees, and represents and communicate with a larger population.

Senators are 3.92 times more likely to be heavy adopters of linked platforms than House Members. The difference in each Chamber’s proportion of heavy, light, and average adopters is striking. In the Senate, 55% of Members are average adopters compared to about 73% in the House. Senators are more frequently heavy or light adopters than House Members: 26% of Senators are heavy adopters compared to 11% of House Members. However, a greater percentage of Senators are light users than House Members (see **Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2**).

Figure 1: Level of Platform Adoption by Chamber



Representation

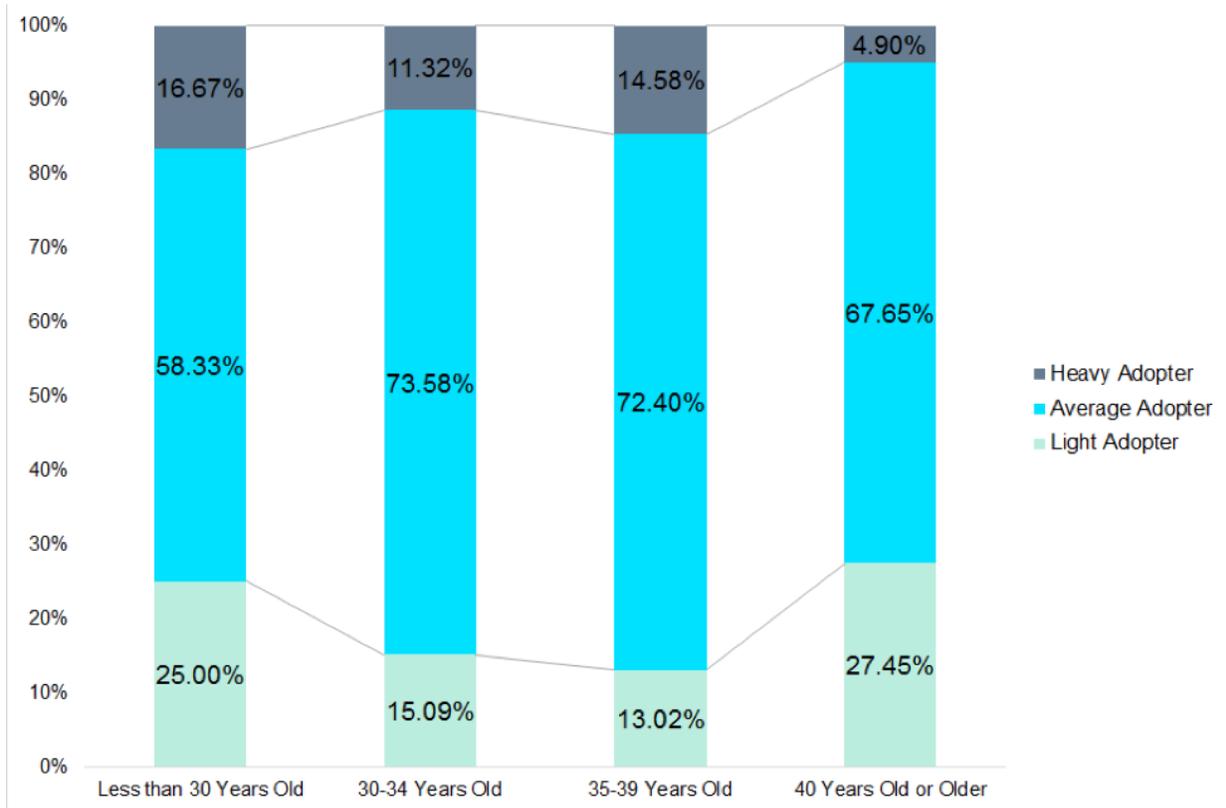
Our findings show that Members’ distinct characteristics influence the adoption and use of social media platforms that they use to communicate with the public, demonstrating that Members use social media strategically. Moreover, Members’ social media platform adoption is concentrated among population centers (see **Appendix C, Maps 1 and 2**).

Platform adoption tends to increase as district median age decreases and as district median income increases (see **Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2**). Data from the Pew Research Center on social media platform adoption and usage by the general public show that older people are much less likely to regularly use or adopt social media. Even when a platform is well-established and

heavily adopted among the general public, the proportion of younger and older people using the platform might differ by over 50%.²⁰

Our research shows that Members use social media more when their constituents are younger.

Figure 2: Level of Platform Adoption by Median District Age

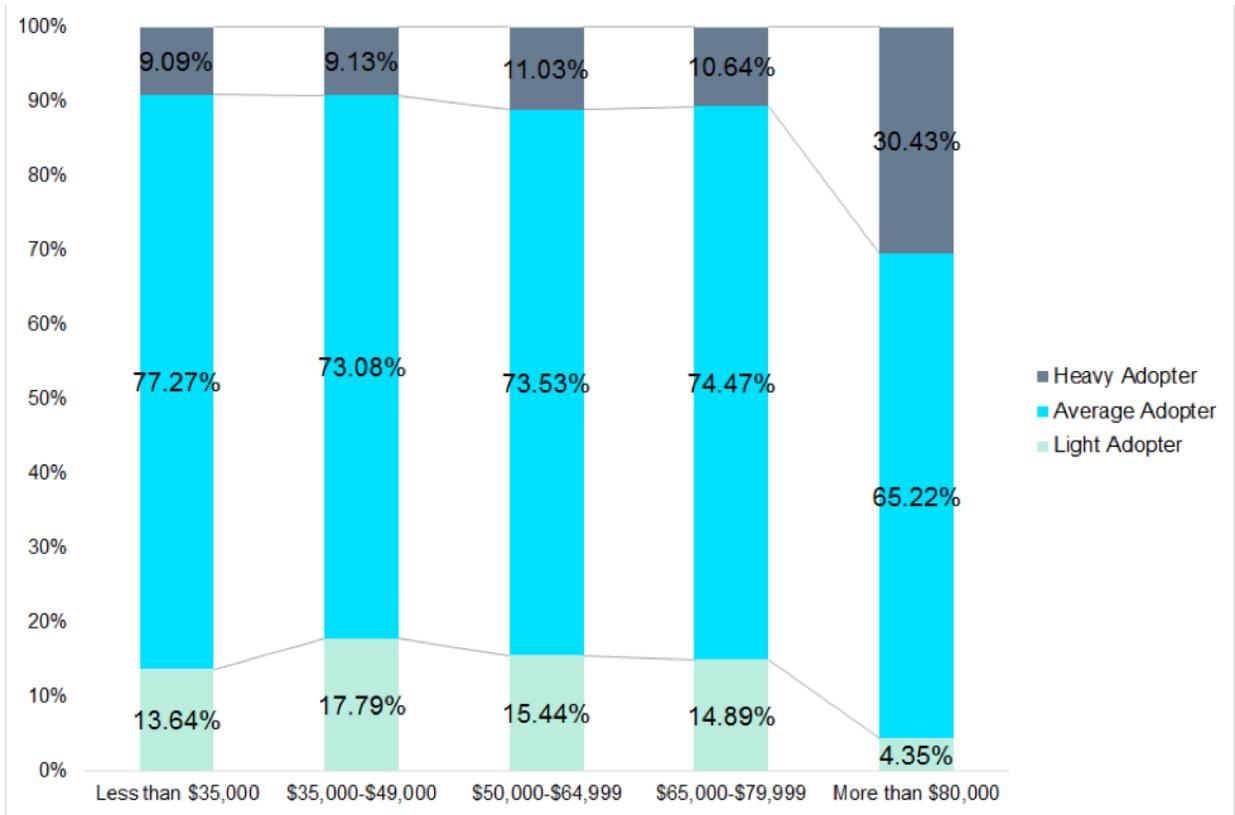


Pew data show that, among the general public, social media usage and platform adoption increase with an individual’s income.²¹ Similarly, we found a small trend that platform adoption increases as a Member’s median district income increases (See **Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2**).

²⁰ Pew Research Center, “Social Media Fact Sheet,” *Internet, Science & Tech*, January 12, 2017, <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/>.

²¹ Ibid.

Figure 3: Level of Platform Adoption by Median District Income



Since Congressional leadership represents their parties and Chambers, the audiences that they target might be larger. However, we found no significant difference between platform adoption by Members with leadership positions and other Members. This suggests that Members may primarily focus their communication strategy on their districts, rather than adopting more platforms to reach a bigger, national audience.

Member Characteristics

Social media adoption and usage are extensions of a Member’s personal brand and behavior. Our research suggests that a Member’s characteristics (e.g. demographics and tenure) influence the Member’s level of adoption of total and linked social media platforms.

Race

Non-white Members of both chambers tend to adopt more platforms than their white peers, and are more likely to adopt several more platforms than white Members (see **Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2**). About 12% of white Members are heavy adopters, whereas over 21% of non-white Members are heavy adopters. There are far fewer non-white Members in both chambers. Social media use may allow these Members to amplify their voices.

Figure 4: Average Adoption by Race, 114th Congress

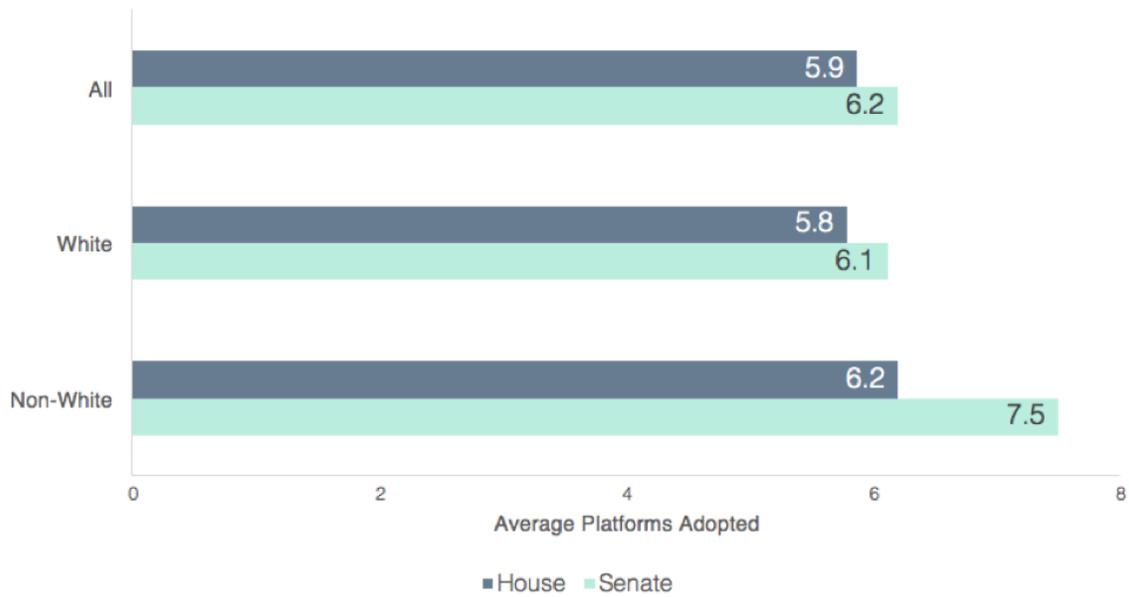
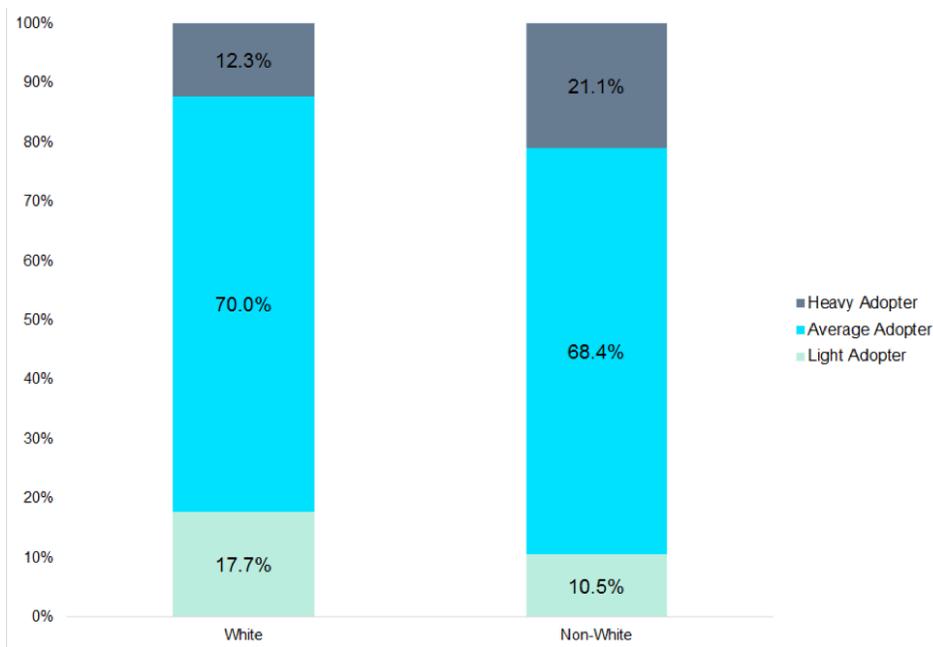
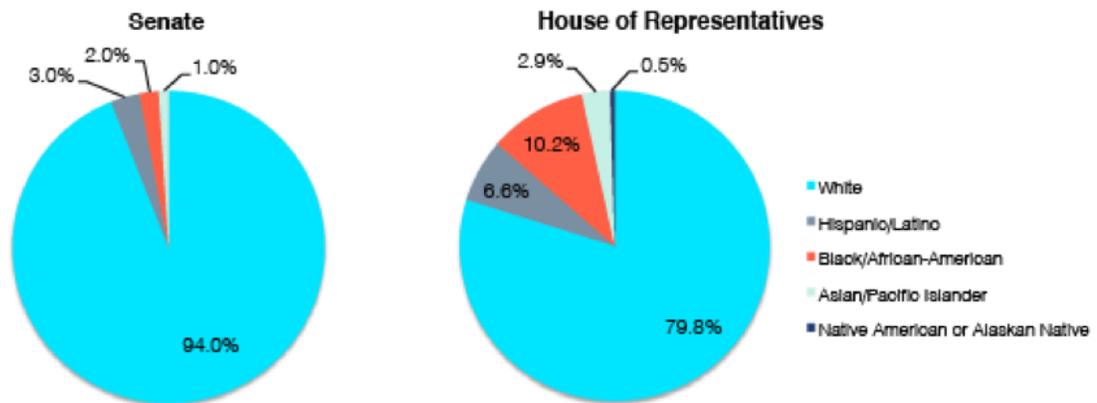


Figure 5: Level of Platform Adoption among White and Non-White Members



We found that non-white members are likely to adopt more platforms than their white colleagues. There are, however, many fewer non-white members in each Chamber.

Figure 6: Race and ethnicity breakdown in the 114th Congress



Political Party

Democrats and Independents tend to adopt more total platforms than Republicans, and are almost 1.5 times as likely to be heavy adopters, meaning they have adopted 8 or more total platforms. In a heavy/average/light adopter breakdown, 11.6% of Republicans are heavy adopters, while 16.7% of Democrats are heavy adopters (see **Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2**). However, while we found a significant difference in relation to total platforms adopted, we found no significant difference in the number of linked platforms adopted between both parties.

Figure 7: Level of Adoption by Political Party

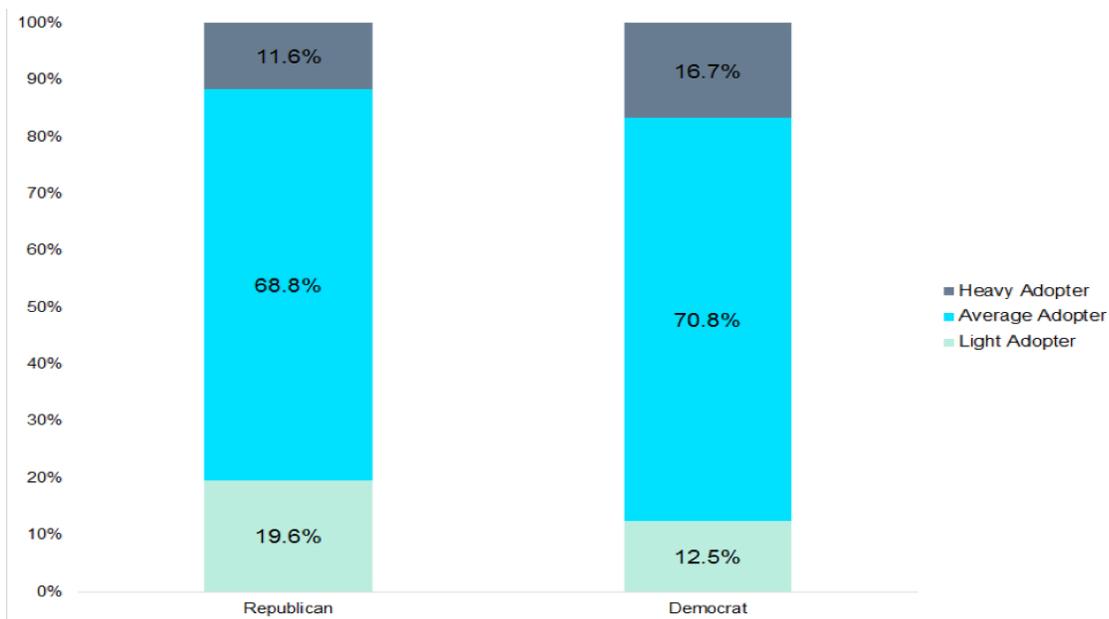
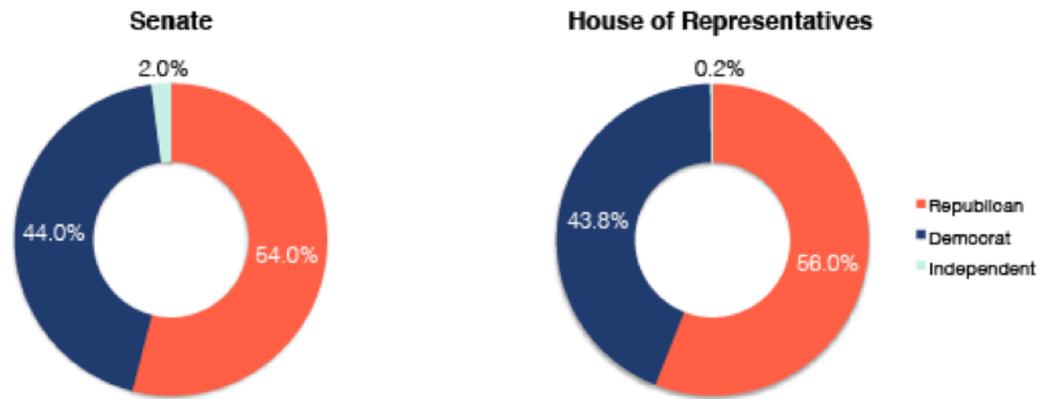


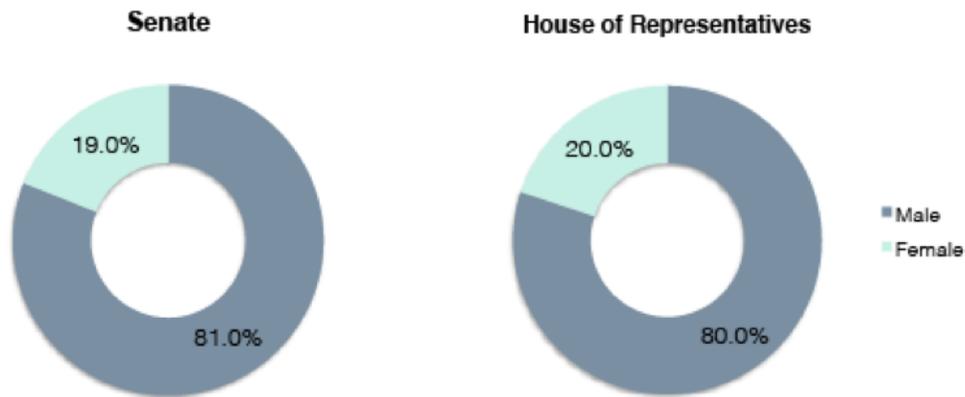
Figure 8: 114th Congress by Party



Gender

The 114th Congress is male-dominated in both Chambers, and our research shows that there is no significant difference between adoption of social media platforms between men and women in this body. Data from Pew suggests that this is similar to gender differences in platform adoption among the general public.²²

Figure 9: 114th Congress by Gender



Age

Members in each Chamber are, on average, between 60 and 69 years old. We found that older members tend to adopt fewer platforms than their younger colleagues (See **Appendix B, Tables**

²² Ibid.

1 and 2). This finding mirrors adoption by age in the general public as shown by Pew,²³ and also echoes our finding that Members serving younger districts tend to adopt more platforms.

Figure 10: 114th Congress, by Age

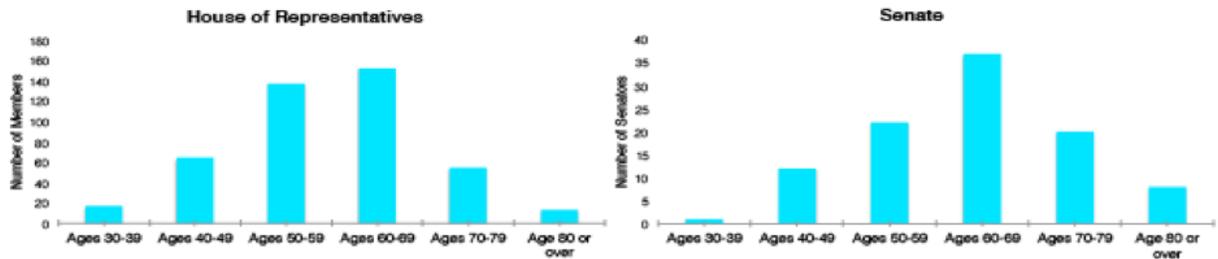
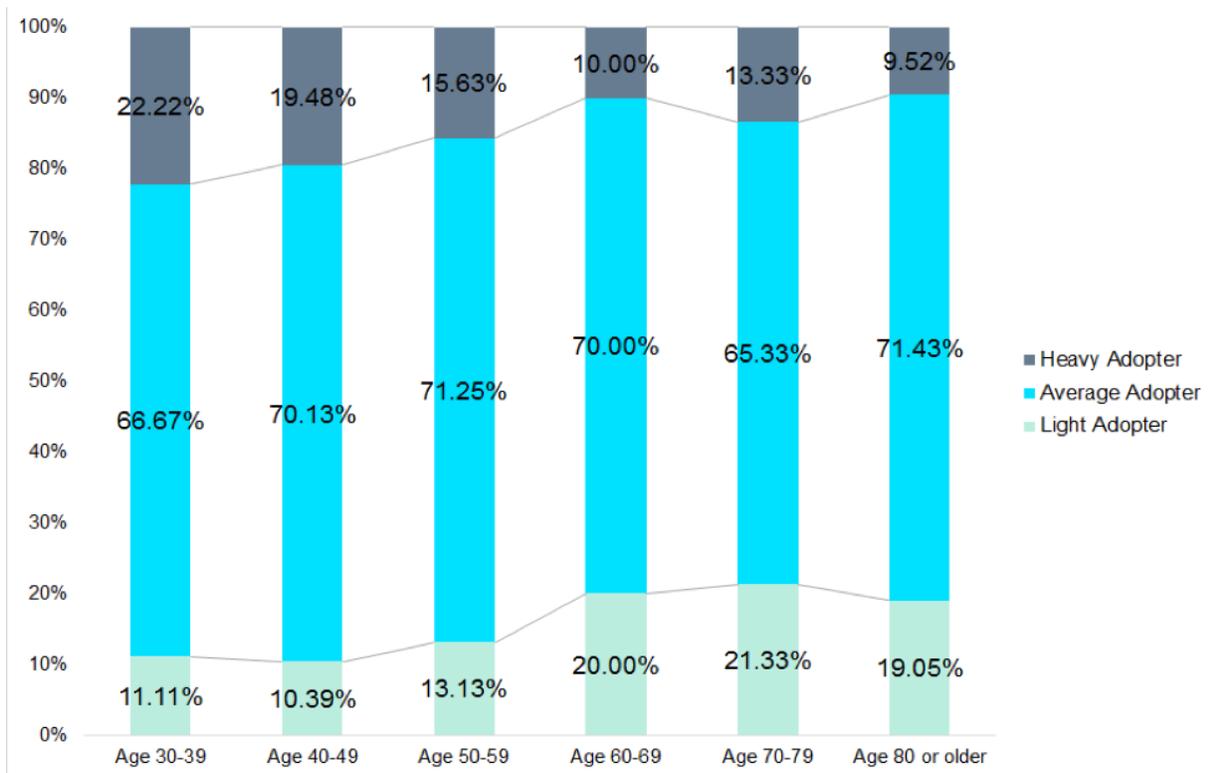


Figure 11: Level of Platform Adoption by Age



²³ Ibid.

Tenure

The majority of Members in each Chamber have served fewer than 10 years, and our research shows that these newer Members tend to adopt more platforms than longer-serving Members (see **Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2**).

Figure 12: 114th Congress by Tenure

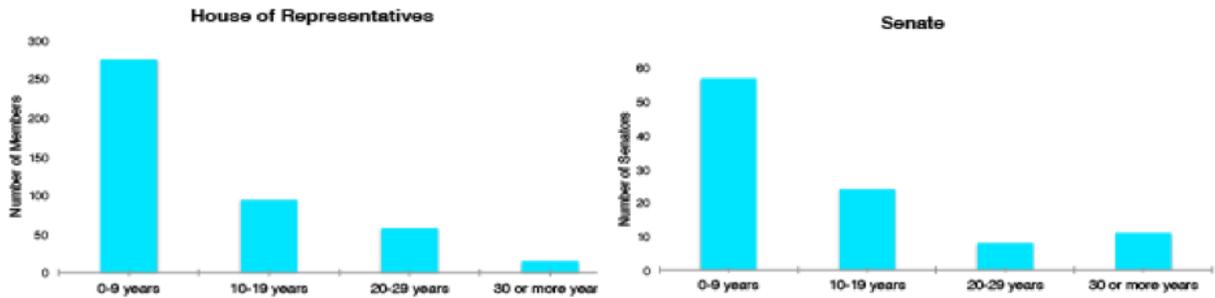
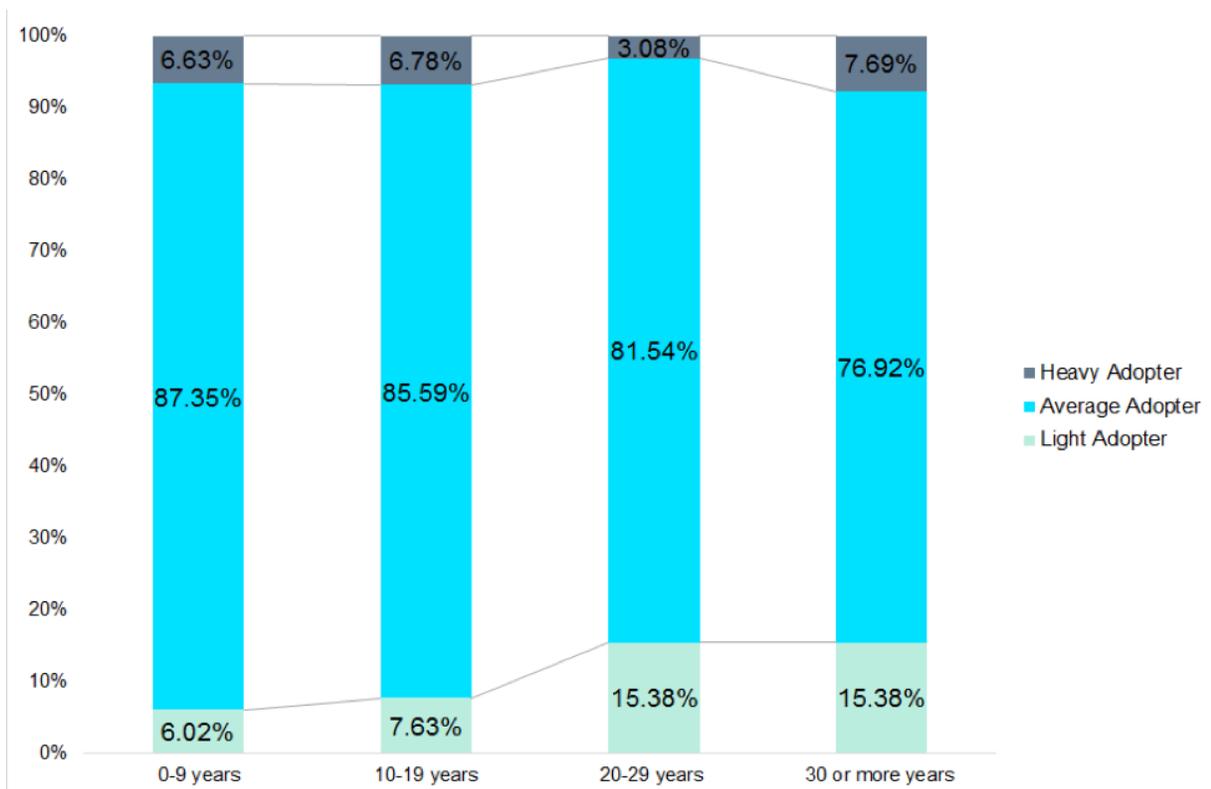


Figure 13: Level of Platform Adoption by Tenure

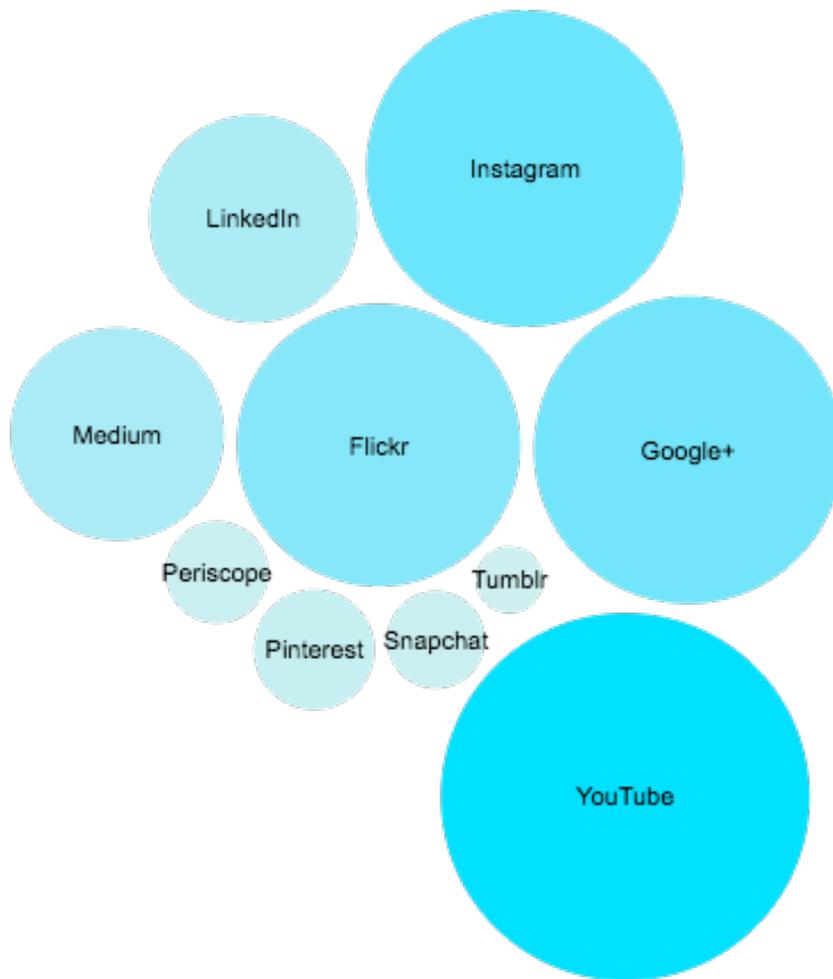


Established Platforms

YouTube and Instagram are the better established social media platforms, as shown by our adoption and usage data. YouTube and Instagram have existed longer than emerging platforms such as Snapchat and Medium.

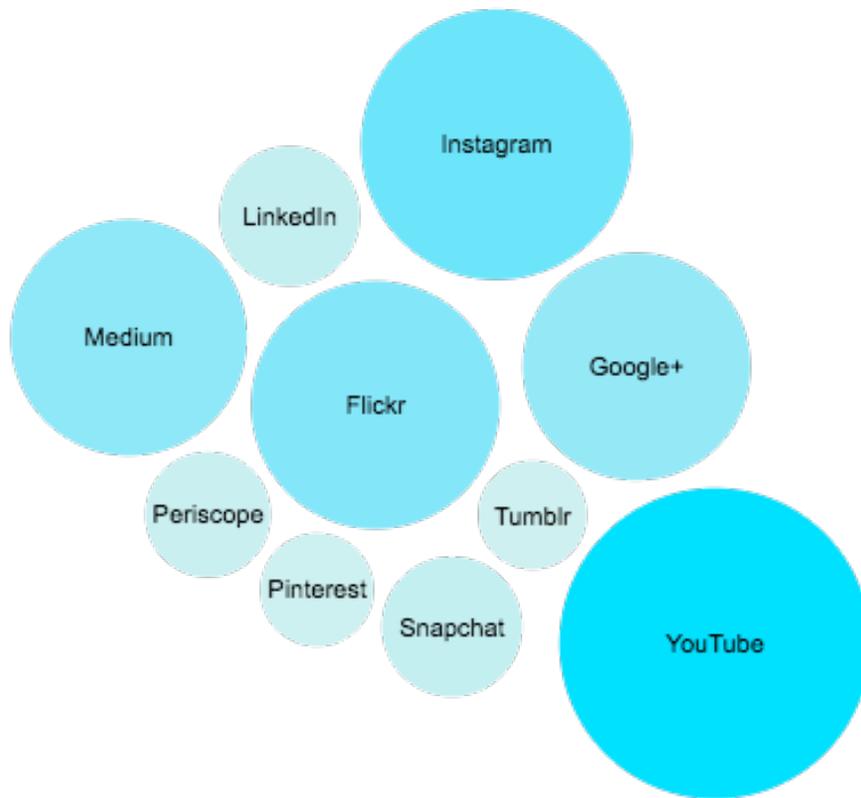
Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have nearly 100% saturation in Congress (see **Figure 16**). Beyond Facebook and Twitter, YouTube and Instagram were the most-adopted platforms in both the House and the Senate. In the House, Google+ was the next most-adopted, followed by Flickr and Medium. In the Senate, Flickr and Medium outranked Google+.

Figure 14: Platform Adoption Beyond Facebook and Twitter, House of Representatives



The size of the bubble indicates the number of Members who have adopted the platform.

Figure 15: Platform Adoption Beyond Facebook and Twitter, Senate



The size of the bubble indicates the number of Members who have adopted the platform.

Figure 16: Adoption by Platform, 114th Congress

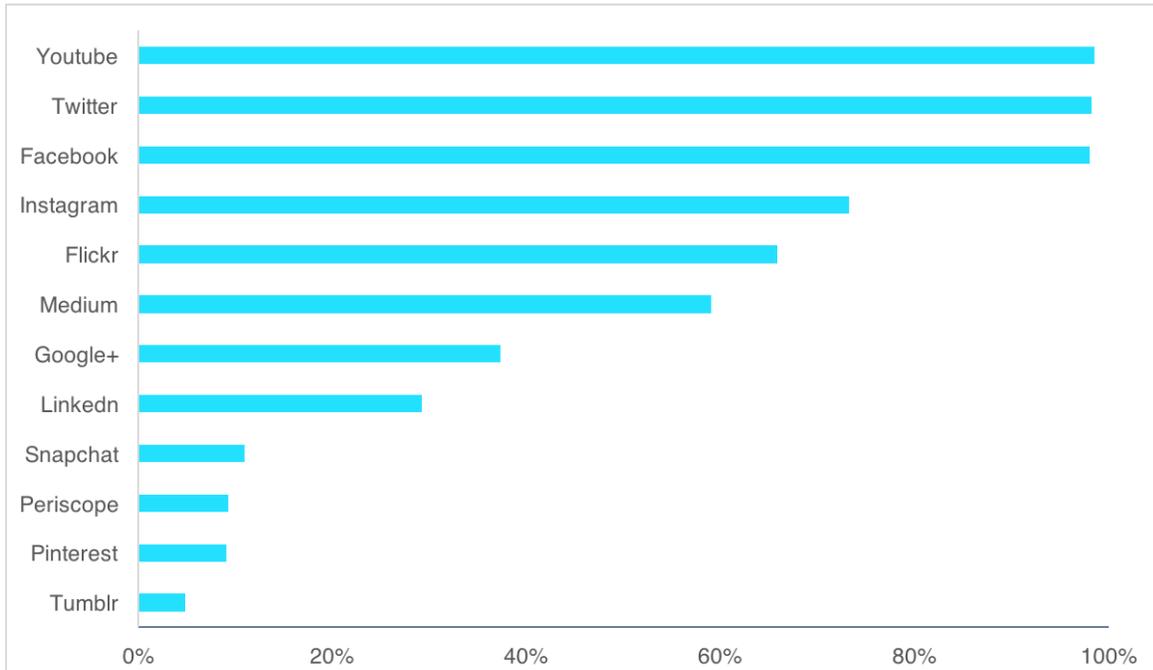
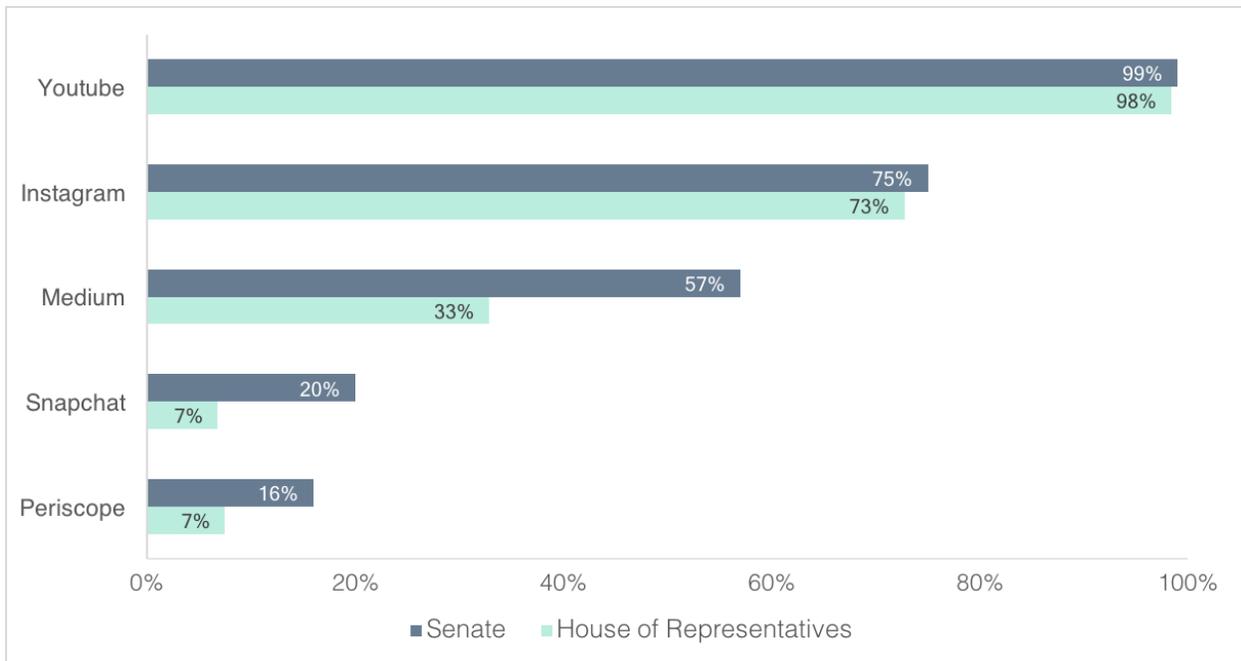


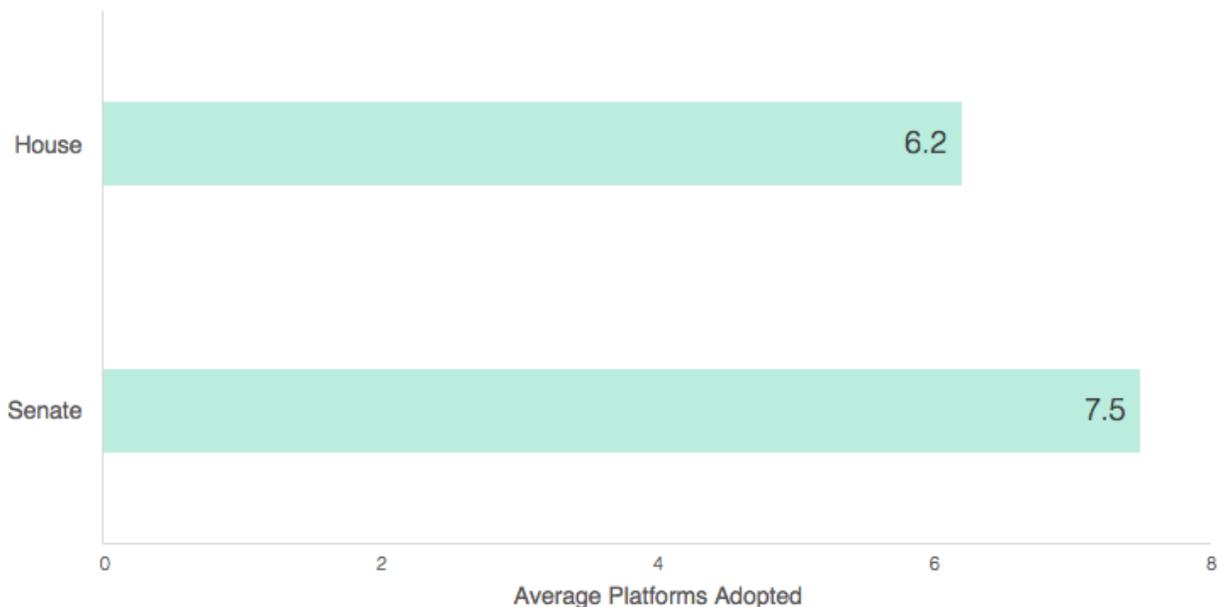
Figure 17: Adoption of Select Platforms, 114th Congress



The biggest difference between the two chambers' rate of platform adoption is with Medium and smaller platforms. Adoption of YouTube and Instagram are nearly identical across chambers.

Senators also adopt more platforms than House Members on average (**Figure 18**).

Figure 18: Average Platforms Adopted by Chamber, 114th Congress



Member of Congress Usage Case Study Findings

Our case study data showed a wide variety of social media users and adopters. We consistently found that Members of Congress adopted a larger number of social media platforms than they actually used. On average, Members adopted six platforms, but, of the emerging platforms studied, they only used Instagram and YouTube. However, the usage varied between Members. Being a ranking member or serving in a leadership position had little impact on how frequently a Member used a platform. For example, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi adopted twelve platforms but only used four. On the other hand, Speaker Paul Ryan posted weekly Speaker Press Briefings on YouTube. The Instagram and YouTube usage rate for the Republican Party was higher than that for the Democratic Party. Based on our usage data summary, the Republicans and Democrats had 384 and 157 Instagram posts respectively, while the YouTube posts were 162 versus 83 for our selected period. Moreover, Medium and Snapchat were less popular compared to other surveyed platforms. Over half of the Members in our case studies did not have a Medium account and posted nothing on their Snapchat. Regarding posting content, Members were more inclined to share events and their personal lives on Instagram. By contrast, most YouTube posts were related to issue positions and the legislative process.

Instagram Analysis

Instagram is the fourth most widely adopted platform

Instagram is the fourth most widely adopted platform by Members of Congress behind YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. It is an emerging platform, and in the 114th Congress, 73.2% of Members

had accounts and 41.4% of Members linked their accounts to their official websites (see **Appendix C, Map 3**). We found that older Members are less likely to adopt Instagram than younger Members. Similarly, longer serving Members also tend to adopt Instagram slightly less than newer Members (see **Appendix B, Table 3**).

Members use Instagram in a more personal fashion than Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube. Instagram is a smart device application and only allows users to post photos and videos with captions from mobile devices. The use of a mobile device is reflected in the types of posts in Instagram: most are of events, personal interactions, and family gatherings. Though they are undoubtedly curated by the Member, posts to Instagram often appear candid.

Instagram posts are usually personal or district related

As a platform, Instagram primarily uses photographs or short videos to tell the larger story, unlike Facebook or Twitter which rely on the narrative. Usually, Members use Instagram to curate a relatable and approachable public personality. Heavy users tend to be better-known members, with the exception of Speaker Ryan, who is a light user among our case studies (see **Appendix D, Tables 1 to 3**).

Medium Analysis

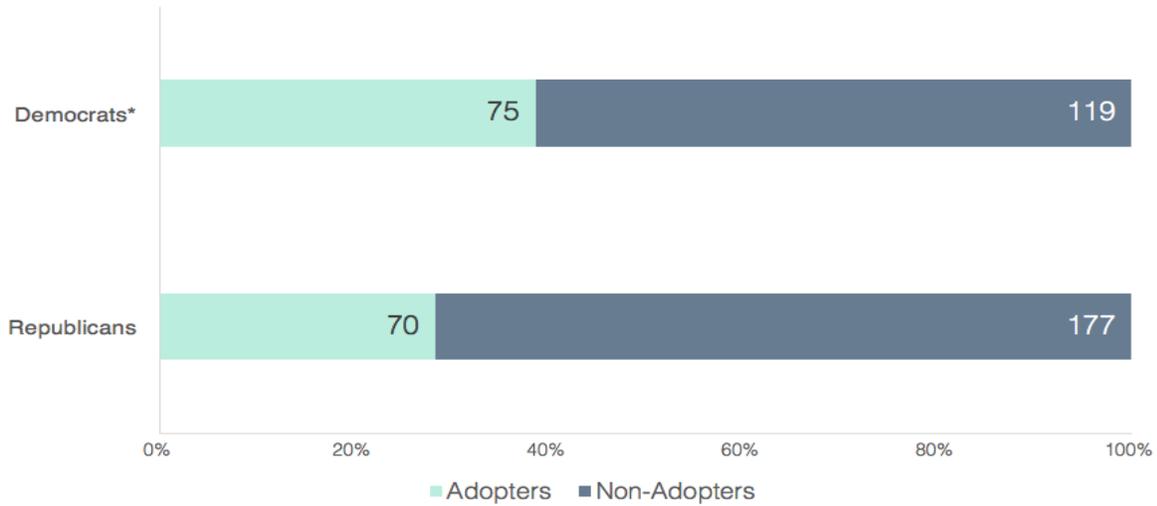
Senators, Democrats, and Leadership adopted Medium more.

Of Members in the 114th Congress, 37.3% have adopted Medium. Medium adoption is significantly higher among Senators, Democrats, and chamber leadership (see **Appendix B, Table 3**). Adoption also tends to increase with higher median income and more urbanized districts that Members represent (see **Appendix C, Map 3**).

Medium posts are mostly policy positions and vote explanations.

Medium is a platform Member's use to post short form articles, blog posts, or policy positions. Members often use Medium to explain their votes on specific pieces of legislation or their policy positions in an accessible language. Some Members use Medium to distribute their press releases to followers.

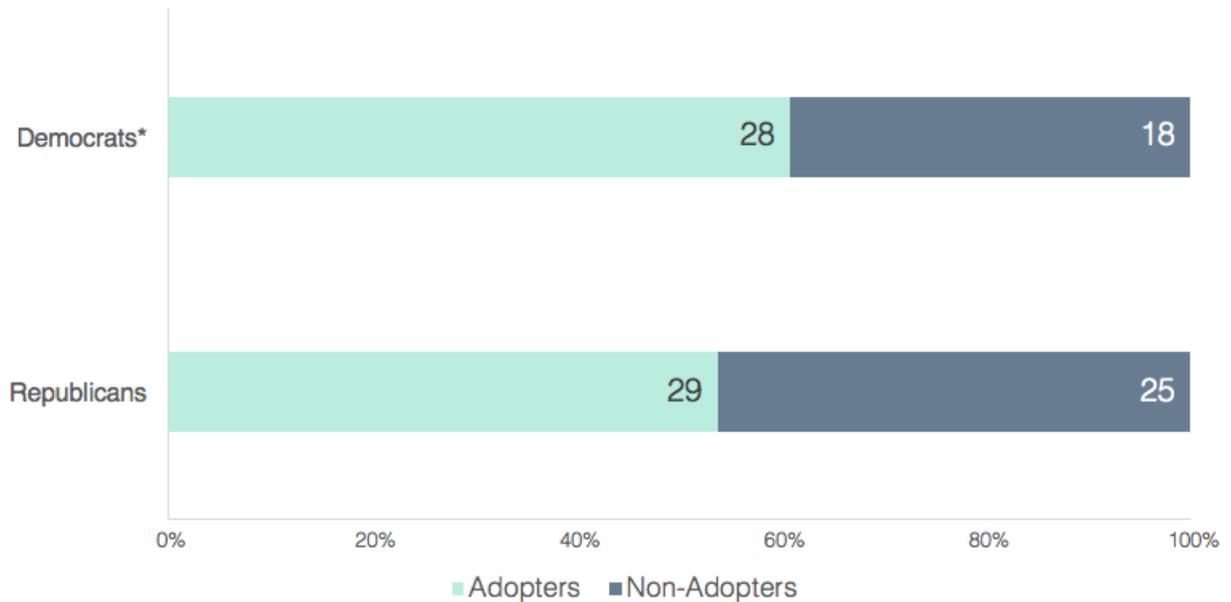
Figure 19: Medium Adoption by Party, House of Representatives



**Independents are included with Democrats; House Independent is a delegate, not a voting member.*

Fewer than one-third of the Members of the House of Representatives have adopted Medium, though adoption is higher among Democrats.

Figure 20: Medium Adoption by Party, Senate



**Independents are included with Democrats.*

Over half of Senators have adopted Medium, though Democrats are more likely than Republicans to adopt the platforms.

YouTube Analysis

Most Members are on YouTube

Almost every Member of Congress has adopted YouTube (see **Appendix B, Table 3**). This is not surprising since YouTube emerged in 2005 and continues to be among the most popular social media platforms. YouTube is the platform of choice for video distribution, especially in strategic communications.

Members use YouTube to Convey Policy Positions

Our data analysis revealed that YouTube usage is greater than Twitter usage and suggests several reasons for this preference. Members and their staff use YouTube as a vehicle for distributing video content on the platform itself, through embedding the video on their congressional webpages, and for posting on social media platforms. YouTube content primarily consists of legislative speeches from the Capitol floor and clips from traditional news media. YouTube allows staff to select speeches and traditional media interviews that cast the Member in a favorable light.

A Member's staff uses YouTube as part of a broader social media strategy. The staff members craft a public statement on YouTube as part of a legislative effort to show whether the Member either strongly supports or opposes legislation. Prior to social media, Members either would present their positions to the public, through journalists, or make a statements on the chamber floor for the official record and C-SPAN. Production costs are limited to staff time involved in crafting the Member's statement. Social media still costs staff time, but it brings several advantages. Members leveraging YouTube allow traditional media outlets to record, produce, and distribute their strategic communications as content. The media outlets then post that final content through their company social media accounts, which allows the Member's staff to share the finished product through the Member's YouTube page. This may explain why much of the YouTube content from our research reflected Members' policy positions, official chamber speeches, and committee service.

One clear advantage of social media is that it focuses video products toward a Member's followers. Members have gained control over their presence which formerly was owned by editors and producers in traditional journalism. A video-based platforms, such as YouTube, provide Members two clear advantages: first, it gives them the ability to direct their public appearances to their followers and political adversaries; second, it gives them the ability to do so without competing for time in the daily news cycle. Members can leverage the power of video-based social media to speak directly to their supportive audiences.

With YouTube, Members almost entirely mitigate their costs and risks. Members limit costs of crafting strategic communication to their available staff who write and edit the communication prior to a public speaking event. Parliamentary procedure and decorum inherently provide an orderly venue in which to be recorded speaking.

A clearly defined, well-executed YouTube strategy has the additional benefit of archiving a Member's record. Public appearances can be collated on the Member's YouTube account. This practice may be implemented in the interest of transparency or other reasons, but the result is the same: to view a Member's history, an individual is limited only by an internet connection, the amount of content available, and time in which to view it.

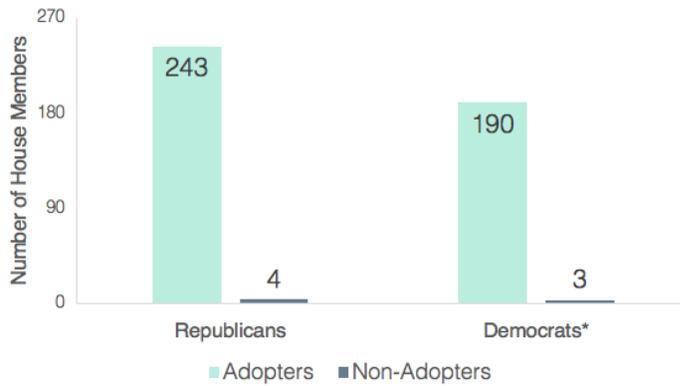
This combination of low or externalized production costs, minimal risk, ease of use, controlled speaking environments, and distribution directly to supporters without news cycle competition, indicate that YouTube will remain a highly attractive platform. Additionally, YouTube has emerged as a *de facto* political standard in social media strategic communications. Failure to leverage YouTube can cede this segment of social media to competing narratives.

The specific characteristics of YouTube may explain why Members use YouTube more than Twitter. YouTube is a traditional visual media platform distributed through the novel means of the internet. There is no way to overstate the comfort Americans have with visual media. The popularity of YouTube over Twitter suggests that Americans have yet to attain the same level of comfort with Twitter's 140-character format. Soon, we may see YouTube's visual media format boost the platform further in response to the changing political-journalistic landscape. As some Americans cast doubt on journalistic institutions and ethics, YouTube allows the primary sources—Members in this case—to speak for themselves directly to the public.

While Members control their own social media presence, they also may want to consider responses to the social media efforts of others as part of their strategic communications. Only Members may decide among themselves what is normal and acceptable in their own social media practices.

The overwhelming majority of House Members from each party have adopted YouTube (**Figure 21**).

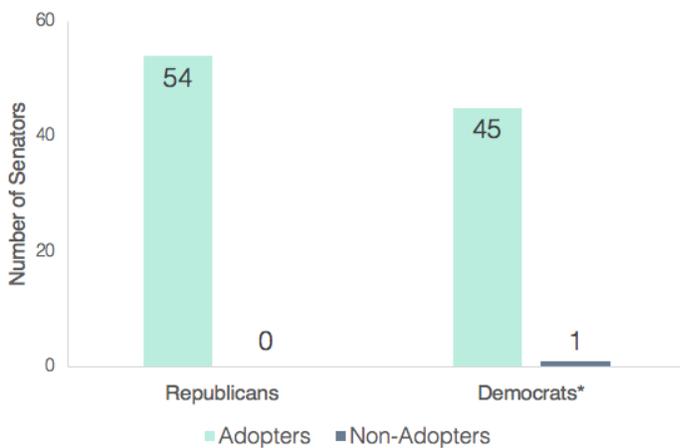
Figure 21: YouTube Adoption by Party, House of Representatives



**Independents are included with Democrats; House Independent is a delegate, not a voting member.*

Like the Members of the House, Senators have also overwhelmingly adopted YouTube (**Figure 22**).

Figure 22: YouTube Adoption by Party, Senate



**Independent senators are included with Democrats; House Independent is a delegate, not a voting member.*

Snapchat Analysis

Congressional Adoption of Snapchat

With our statistical analyses, the Team found a significant trend of Senators adopting Snapchat more than House Members. Senators are nearly three times more likely to adopt Snapchat than House Members (see **Appendix B, Table 3**). The Team also found a significant trend of younger and shorter-serving Members adopting Snapchat more than older and longer-serving Members. Finally, the Team found that House Members who adopt Snapchat represent districts concentrated among the Midwest and the Ohio River Valley, especially among the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin and Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis metropolitan areas (see **Appendix C, Map 5**).

Congressional Use of Snapchat

Collecting data on Snapchat usage is challenging, since snaps are available for only 24 hours and cannot be recovered easily if missed. Very few members have their Snapchat accounts linked to their congressional webpages. Due to the fleeting nature of snaps and the difficulty of collecting Member data without an external research tool, we conducted a special study on the use of Snapchat among Members of Congress. The objective of this study was to determine how Members are using Snapchat and whether there might be unique usage of Snapchat for Members of Congress.

The Public Affairs Council (PAC) published a list of 52 Members of Congress with Snapchat accounts.²⁴ Based on the list from the PAC and the data collected from our study, we found that 16 of 52 Members of Congress posted to and actively used Snapchat. These Members include seven Republicans, eight Democrats, and one Independent. Nine members are in the House and seven are in the Senate.

Snapchat users can save images by taking screenshots, but they cannot download video posts. Screenshots often do not capture the full content of the video post. Finding users is not as simple as other social media platforms, and if users do not have a picture of themselves in their profile, it is difficult to confirm their identity until they post a snap. Furthermore, when looking at posts on Snapchat, there is no way to determine how many people have seen or have reacted to the snap. Finally, users can see how many people have viewed their snap, but this information is not publicly available.

We utilized *Snaplytics.io* to gather useful analytical information about each member's usage patterns. On this tool, data and charts are available on how many times a Member posts per day, the type of post (e.g. picture or video), and his or her hourly posting habits. One of the more helpful uses of this tool is identifying infrequent users. The nature of Snapchat's disappearing posts makes it challenging to determine who actually is using the platform on a regular basis.

²⁴ Public Affairs Council, "Members of the 115th United States Congress with a Snapchat Account," <http://pac.org/members-114th-united-states-congress-snapchat-account/>.

Moreover, *Snaplytics.io* is unable to provide information on Members who have Snapchat but do not post regularly on the platform.

For our case study analysis, we selected a sample of Members who use Snapchat based on the frequency of their posts and demographics to gather data outputs from *Snaplytics.io*. However, a limitation to our analysis of Snapchat usage is that our case studies do not represent a complete list of Members who use the platform, since there are Members who post infrequently making them difficult to find and observe.

Based on our case study data from *Snaplytics.io*, Members use Snapchat in different ways. Some examples of Snapchat use are to document travel from a Member's home district to Washington DC and back again, to praise staff members, to announce interviews and appearances on television news shows, to highlight local organizations and office visits, and to share family or personal moments.

Some Members of Congress post to Snapchat frequently to the extent that researchers were able to make observations of the Member's content. In collecting our data, we found that Steve Daines (R-MT), Eric Swalwell (D-CA), and Beto O'Rourke (D-TX) are frequent users of Snapchat. The majority of their posts convey information about upcoming interviews or interview preparation, meetings with other Members, visits to different cities, meetings with constituents, seasonal events (e.g. "Valentine's Day Cards for Veterans"), and travel between districts/states and Washington DC (see **Appendix D, Figures 1 to 5**).

According to the posting content we found in our case studies, Snapchat appears to provide Members with a channel to express their personal feelings and their posts appear to be more casual. Based on the list from the PAC and *Snaplytics.io*, we were able to determine that congressional use of Snapchat has not reached the frequency of use of other new platforms such as Instagram. Although Snapchat is not as widely adopted and used among Members of Congress as other platforms, our data suggests that Snapchat is an emerging platform because of the number of younger Members who continue to adopt and use the platform.

While Snapchat is neither widely adopted nor easily monitored, it allows Members ready access to their constituents and followers.. Members might also find it a useful social media outlet if analytic tools like *Snaplytics.io* become more widely available. *Snaplytics.io* was originally made for brands and companies to track their competitors to determine who gets more views and replays. Members of Congress might find this analysis useful especially during campaign season.

Texas Legislature Findings and Analysis

The primary focus of the interviews with consultants, staff, and Texas elected officials was to understand how and why social media decisions are made. In addition to interviews, we created a database of 35 Texas State Legislators, tracking their social media use beyond Facebook and Twitter.

The first finding is that Twitter and Facebook are the primary vehicles for social media engagement because of the audience size. According to the social media consultants, the primary focus of Member social media use is to communicate with voters on issues, activity in the district, and to “remind voters [the Member is] working for them.”²⁵ Facebook comprises the largest voting age population on social media, with users trending towards older populations who are more likely to vote.²⁶ Thus, Members and staff focus their time where the constituents spend time online.

“The legislative staff believes that that social media should be a way to quickly inform constituents about the Senator’s activities and the work of the Legislature. The best way to do this is through Facebook.” – Texas Legislator Staff Interview 2²⁷

The second finding is that Instagram continues to increase in popularity and use because the Instagram audience continues to grow. The staff and elected officials who use Instagram display information visually to elicit a response from users to engage on issues. According to staff and consultants, the Instagram’s primary uses are to promote activity and personal opinions in the district and to engage voters on issues. More legislators are adopting Instagram because they can also easily link it to Facebook and Twitter to quickly disseminate posts across all three platforms simultaneously. However, some Texas lawmakers question whether a creative presence on Instagram is worth the investment.

“Based on meetings with constituents, our legislative staff believes Instagram to be used by younger non-voting Texans. This is why we do not use the use Instagram as part of our social media strategy.” -Texas Legislator Staff Interview 2²⁸

The third finding is that the size of a campaign’s or official office's budget determines whether a candidate or elected official is engaged on emerging social media platforms. Members and/or their Chiefs of Staff make the strategic decision not to adopt multiple platforms due to time, budget, staffing, or other constraints.²⁹ Political social media consultants said the size of the campaign, population of the district, campaign funding, and candidate’s willingness to engage in new media are key determinants for predicting platform adoption and usage.

“Members are not always open to adopting new platforms. Some members don’t want to put the effort in to build a base on a particular platform only to have the platform shut down for financial reasons (e.g. Vine). Members also make the strategic decision not to

²⁵ Political Social Media Consultant 1. Interview by Katie Naranjo, Jennifer Rice, and Estevan Delgado. Face-to-face interview. Austin, Texas, October 19, 2016.

²⁶ Greenwood, Shannon, Andrew Perrin, and Maeve Duggan. "Social Media Update 2016." Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech. Nember 11, 2016. Accessed May 08, 2017. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016>.

²⁷ Texas Legislator Staff Interview 2. Interview by Estevan Delgado. Face-to-face interview, Austin, Texas, January 31, 2017.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Texas Legislator Staff Interview 3. Interview by Estevan Delgado. Face-to-face interview, Austin, Texas, January 31, 2017.

be on multiple platforms due to time, budget, and staffing constraints.” – Political Social Media Consultant 1³⁰

“If a person is a communications director for a Congressman in Iowa with less than 50% of the district having reliable cell and data coverage, it will affect the frequency and number of platforms staff can post to easily.” – Political Social Media Consultant 2³¹

Why Members Adopt Platforms

The consultants explained that members prefer platforms such as Twitter and Instagram due to their immediacy, their hashtags, and their ability to show chronology. Twitter is used more for debates and conversations with constituents and political opponents, while Instagram is used more for online visibility since it is harder to track conversations on the platform.³²

However, according to our consultant interviews, Instagram is a relatively intuitive platform to use, and more legislators are adopting the platform because they can easily link it to Facebook and Twitter to quickly disseminate posts across all three platforms. The consultants stated that there are two types of Instagram users: 1) Those showcasing event attendance to maintain an online presence and 2) those who have already mastered the former and are learning to organize constituents around a policy issued from the platform.^{33,34}

Legislative staff use Snapchat mainly to give followers an inside look at the legislative process through their personal and campaign accounts, and give them a sense of inclusion.³⁵

Why Members Do Not Adopt Platforms

The consultants noted that legislators are less willing to adopt new platforms because content strategies do not always transfer seamlessly from platform to platform. Specifically they noted Snapchat’s limitations in building audiences and creating a space for dialogue on issues.

“The purpose of social media accounts is to engage with voters and constituents, depending on the time of year. Snapchat’s audience is younger than other popular platforms; there are many users not old enough to be eligible voters or interested in voting, which limits the attraction for elected officials to use the platform. In addition to the young audience, the functionality of the platform as it relates to facilitating communication with constituents and voters is limited.” – Political Social Media Consultant 2

³⁰ Political Social Media Consultant 1. Interview by Katie Naranjo, Jennifer Rice, and Estevan Delgado. Face-to-face interview. Austin, Texas, October 19, 2016.

³¹ Political Social Media Consultant 2. Interview by Katie Naranjo and Jennifer Rice. Face-to-face. Austin, Texas, November 30, 2016.

³² Political Social Media Consultant 2. Interview by Katie Naranjo and Jennifer Rice. Face-to-face. Austin, Texas, November 30, 2016.

³³ Political Social Media Consultant 1. Interview by Katie Naranjo, Jennifer Rice, and Estevan Delgado. Face-to-face interview. Austin, Texas, October 19, 2016.

³⁴ Political Social Media Consultant 2. Interview by Katie Naranjo and Jennifer Rice. Face-to-face. Austin, Texas, November 30, 2016.

³⁵ Political Social Media Consultant 2. Interview by Katie Naranjo and Jennifer Rice. Face-to-face. Austin, Texas, November 30, 2016.

Like Snapchat, other emerging platforms potentially fall into the category of “not useful” due to few active users compared to Facebook and Twitter. When deciding which platforms to use, consultants said they consider the number of constituents on a platform, ease of use, functionality, and resources available to facilitate consistent communication.³⁶⁻³⁷⁻³⁸

Novel Social Media Usage

https://docs.google.com/a/utexas.edu/document/d/1fTk83mAPqEJXZ8oeKaLmQRbefMkn-qiy4U4OEB_YBYo/edit?disco=AAAABKDol4IA A recent remarkable use of Facebook Live grabbed national attention in March 2017. Two Texas Congressmen, Beto O’Rourke and Will Hurd, used Facebook Live to broadcast their bipartisan road trip from Texas to Washington DC. They took questions from viewers and answered them in real time, effectively using the platform to host a virtual town hall. Viewers around the country followed their journey, earning the Representatives exposure well beyond their own constituencies.

Facebook Live also played a novel role in February 2017. Senator Elizabeth Warren spoke critically about Attorney General nominee Senator Jeff Sessions during his confirmation hearings. Her speech ended abruptly when she violated a Senate rule that prohibits a Senator from impugning another Senator.³⁹ Warren’s speech had been airing on C-SPAN and the decision to stop her sparked controversy instantly. Later, she delivered the remainder of her speech by broadcasting it on the Facebook Live platform. Millions of viewers tuned in, possibly reaching more viewers than if she had completed her speech on the Senate floor. The Senator’s office used Facebook Live as a tool to circumvent traditional broadcasting and finish a speech that, in the past, would not have been completed.

In June 2016, House Democrats found a novel use for Periscope when they held a dramatic sit-in on the House floor to demand a vote on gun control legislation. Democratic Representative Scott Peters was able to broadcast the sit-in from his phone directly to viewers, which was effective because C-SPAN cameras had been turned off. The Periscope stream violated House mobile device rules, but C-SPAN decided to air the representative’s Periscope coverage on television. The sit-in was a focusing event that received tremendous attention, partly because of the novelty of the Periscope platform itself.

Campaigns have had success using Snapchat’s unique features. Social Media Consultants experimented with using Snapchat to reach a younger base of constituents. During Senator Rob Portman’s campaign, consultants created a trolling geofilter allowing users within a limited geographic area to share photos customized with a message criticizing Portman’s opponent.⁴⁰

³⁶ Political Social Media Consultant 1. Interview by Katie Naranjo, Jennifer Rice, and Estevan Delgado. Face-to-face interview. Austin, Texas, October 19, 2016.

³⁷ Political Social Media Consultant 2. Interview by Katie Naranjo and Jennifer Rice. Face-to-face. Austin, Texas, November 30, 2016.

³⁸ Texas Legislator Staff Interview 1. Interview by Jennifer Rice. Telephone interview. Austin, Texas, December 6, 2016.

³⁹ U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. <https://www.rules.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=RuleXIX>.

⁴⁰ Political Social Media Consultant 2. Interview by Katie Naranjo and Jennifer Rice. Face-to-face. Austin, Texas, November 30, 2016.

This novel Snapchat use is remarkable because the firm attracted attention by effectively using Snapchat's signature engagement tools.

Novel social media platform uses are not limited to federal lawmakers. State legislators also have experimented with different information dissemination modes on Instagram. Texas State Representative Jonathan Stickland uses Instagram to upload one minute video clips to his permanent feed to feature what he calls the "Bad Bill of the Week." Stickland singles out a specific piece of legislation and issues a call to action to his followers to contact the bill's author voicing their opposition to the legislation. Stickland's videos use animated clips from the 1970s educational shorts *Schoolhouse Rock!* to draw in viewers, specifically with clips from the program's segment called "I'm Just a Bill." It depicts a cartoon bill falling down the steps of our nation's capitol. Stickland then uses the availability for video captioning on Instagram to link the follower to a longer video on the issue housed on YouTube.

While Stickland uses humor to nudge information dissemination and to elicit issue campaigns, Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick uses storytelling to propel issue campaigns forward. Recently, Patrick posted three back-to-back photos of a woman mourning the loss of her husband to gun violence while serving his community as a law enforcement officer. The photo montage ends with the Texan woman urging Patrick's followers to support legislation to fund purchasing protective body armor for law enforcement agencies.

While there was limited usage of the Instagram story feature by Texas Legislators, we documented that some legislators shared their QR Snapcodes allowing followers to obtain content posted to the legislator's Snapchat account. During a recent budget debate in the Texas House, Texas State Representative Mary Gonzalez (D-El Paso) posted her QR Snapcode to her Twitter and Instagram accounts to give her followers and constituents an intimate view and perspective of the proceedings.

Another Texas House Member, Victoria Neave (D-Dallas) also uses Snapchat in her official capacity to highlight framing events of the 85th Texas Legislative Session, such as the Austin Women's March, the Dallas Mega March, and the House public hearings on Senate Bill 4 regarding sanctuary cities in Texas. Neave highlights the actions, protests, and comments of her constituents at these events, rather than sharing her own comments. The use of Snapchat by Neave and Gonzalez, who also maintain a presence on their Instagram accounts, show that legislators tend to use emerging social media platforms for their primary functionality, rather than secondary or tertiary functionality that the platform is not known for.

Open Seats Findings and Analysis

Our Open Seats research tracked congressional candidates' use of social media in their campaigns for vacant congressional seats. Our study's purpose was to examine platform adoption and usage to compare trends to the Members of Congress dataset. According to our

dataset and case studies, we found that Facebook and Twitter dominate social media usage, similar to Members of Congress. In our case studies, Instagram was used less than in Congress.

Our research allowed us to look for novel social media uses in a political setting outside of Congress. We found there were fewer instances of novel uses among campaigns compared to Members. For example, Todd Young was our only case study campaign to use Snapchat.

We collected data on adoption for every candidate running for an open seats that polled at over 15 percent. Then, we selected specific campaigns for case studies and tracked their social media usage. We sent every case study a survey regarding social media strategy and usage, and we received feedback from several campaigns. Our data collection period was from October 17 to November 8, 2016, and our dataset lends itself to a qualitative analysis.

Facebook and Twitter dominated candidates' social media presence across all of the campaigns. According to our Open Seats dataset, Out of 95 campaigns, 92 adopted Facebook and 84 adopted Twitter. Candidates used Facebook and Twitter to reach the greatest number of followers with their message. These two platforms have the largest number of users and, because they are the oldest, candidates have the most followers on these platforms. According to our case studies, the Facebook and Twitter usage rates are far higher than any other platform. In our case studies, there were 439 total posts to Facebook and 900 total posts to Twitter. **Our campaign case studies posted to social media 1454 times between October 17 and November 8. Of these posts, 1,339 were to Facebook and Twitter.**

Campaigns adopted YouTube at a much lower rate compared to Members of Congress. In our study, 39 campaigns had a YouTube account. In our Members of Congress key findings, we analysed YouTube usage and concluded that Members use the platform to curate their own media channel, often with official content from Congress. Campaigns have less official content to share, particularly if the candidate is a newcomer to politics. Candidates typically used YouTube to post campaign ads. For example, Kim Myers, a Democrat running for New York's 22nd District, posted four times to YouTube between October 17th and November 8th. All four posts were campaign ads. It is worth noting that Myers' campaign responded to our survey and did not list YouTube as an adopted platform, signaling little strategy regarding the platform past making campaign ads available in one place.

Todd Young, a three-term Representative who won the Senate seat vacated by Dan Coates (R-IN), was the primary user of YouTube among our case studies. Of the 30 total posts to YouTube, Young's campaign accounted for 20 posts. **Young's background as a three term Member of the House reinforces the conclusion that YouTube is a platform Members adopt after being elected to office.**

Only 33 campaigns adopted Instagram, and they used it significantly less than Facebook and Twitter. Between October 17th and November 8th, our case studies posted to Instagram 61 times. Bao Nguyen, a Democrat running for California's 46th Congressional District accounted for 39 of these posts to Instagram. He was a heavy user of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and posted 58 times to Facebook, 53 times to Twitter, and 39 times to Instagram. **Our case studies**

suggest that Instagram is not yet an emerging platform for campaigns, and it is not being used by campaigns in a serious way.

A concern with using emerging platforms is the effort it takes to attract new followers and the low number of voters who will be reached without dedicating scarce resources. Jamie Raskin, a Democrat who won the 2016 election for Maryland's 8th Congressional District, focused his social media strategy on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. His campaign responded to our survey and explained:

“Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become pretty normalized in campaigns, and they make the most sense for our voter demographic and available resources. [The campaign] would love to branch out to other platforms like Snapchat, but I don't have the time to invest in it.”

Between October 17 and November 8, Raskin posted 12 times on Facebook, 156 times on Twitter, and three times on Instagram.

Campaigns rarely used Snapchat. Out of the 95 campaigns we tracked for platform adoption, Todd Young, a three-term Representative who won the Senate seat vacated by Dan Coates (R-IN), was the only adopter. His six years as a House Member likely familiarized him with the platform and its use in a political setting. He used Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Snapchat at a high rate, and did not use Instagram. He posted 69 times to Facebook, 348 times to Twitter, 20 times to YouTube, and 24 times on Snapchat. Many of Young's posts on Snapchat captured campaign events and appearances with fellow elected representatives at the state and federal level.

When asked about adopting Snapchat, Lou Correa's campaign responded:

“No we haven't really, as I did research on Snapchat it seemed like it might [not] be as useful for our campaign. It seems like it might be better to establish once we are already in office.”

Snapchat is an inherently personal platform and its nature prohibits candidates or Members from designating a staff member to manage the account. Sharing uncurated content is risky for candidates, particularly in the months leading up to an election. **It is not surprising that Todd Young, a former Member, was the only candidate comfortable with using Snapchat while campaigning.** Other campaigns' lack of adoption may signal risk aversion by the candidates or that the costs outweighed the benefits of adopting a new platform.

If the typical Snapchat user is under 25 and is unlikely to vote in an election, a candidate has little motivation to adopt the platform. Roger Marshall, a Republican who won Kansas's 1st Congressional District, is not on Snapchat. When we asked his campaign if it would consider using Snapchat in the future, the responded:

“[We] considered Snapchat, and [are] still considering it. It wouldn't have a huge following, but could be a fun way to connect Dr. Marshall to younger folks.”

Our Members of Congress research concluded that Members curate their persona using social media platforms. Campaigns also attempt to curate a persona for their candidate using social media, but they have months rather than years to do so. Our research shows that the primary use of social media on campaigns is to reach their voters and to rally supporters. This conclusion is reinforced by the dominant use of Facebook and Twitter over emerging platforms.

All of the successful campaigns we tracked in our case studies had a social media presence. We saw several unique uses of social media in our case studies, but Facebook and Twitter dominated the typical campaign.

CONCLUSIONS

Members' Social Media Platform Adoption

Members of Congress adopted six platforms on average, but case study data indicates they primarily used Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. This means that of our emerging platforms, Instagram and YouTube are the only ones being adopted and used at significant rates. Facebook and Twitter remain the primary social media platforms Members of Congress use to engage with the public, while YouTube has become equally ubiquitous as an online video archive. Members' social media is primarily a mode of broadcast with the added benefit of distributing content unfiltered by media directly to the public. The people most likely reached by a Member's social media presence are those who have chosen to follow that Member, creating additional value: one communicates on social media directly with a self-selecting audience. More than three quarters of the the Members have adopted Instagram, which has become the primary photo sharing platform. Additionally, the case studies indicate that Instagram is becoming increasingly popular with Members of Congress.

Based on the statistical analysis, we identified the trends associated with the Members of Congress who have adopted more platforms than average. Heavier adoption significantly correlated to a number of demographic factors. An above-average adopter tends to be a younger, non-white, Democrat with fewer years of service, and is more likely to be in the Senate than the House. Members who represent districts that are wealthier, younger, and more urban tend to adopt more platforms.

The choice of whether or not to adopt new platforms can be viewed in a Member's intent to communicate to a specific audience. For instance, older Members who are primarily interested in reaching their supporters tend to stay with more traditional platforms, such as Facebook. The choice to adopt an emerging platform can be viewed as an attempt to reach out to a larger constituency, particularly younger voters and constituents, who may not be as familiar with the Member.

Beyond the four heavily adopted and used platforms, there is a divergence between adoption and usage. Based on the difference between the adoption rates obtained from the data and the

snapshots of usage obtained through the case studies, we can conclude that many of the older platforms that have higher adoption rates have essentially been abandoned. A platform adopted but not used by a Member is labeled a zombie platform—this includes Flickr, Google+, and LinkedIn. We observed that some Members maintain profiles on certain platforms without using them and invest greater efforts to communicate with the public on the more established platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. From the case studies, we infer that some profiles exist solely as a point of contact for Members rather than as a communication tool. According to a national social media consultant, Members should preserve their accounts on as many platforms as possible for search engine optimization purposes and to claim their an account with their brand (ie. name, image, official MOC marking).

Members' Social Media Platform Usage

Similar trends that predict a Member's adoption of multiple social media platforms also indicate their likeliness to increase usage of the platform. Members' adoption and usage of social media is strategically design to communicate with their constituents in their districts. The demographic characteristics of Members' districts is a factor that determine their adoption or usage of platforms. District age and income are two factors that affect the platform adoption and usage. Our finding shows that Members' adoption tends to increase as district median income increases. Members tend to adopt more platforms as their constituents are younger. Also, Members tend to use the platforms more to communicate to constituents when their constituents are younger. Overall, Members tend to adopt and use more social media as a medium to communicate with their younger, urban, more affluent constituents.

We found a disparity between the number of platforms adopted and the number of platforms used for all three groups we studied: Members of Congress, Members of the Texas Legislature and Open seat candidates. Among Open Seats candidates, we see higher rates of adoption than usage, but Facebook and Twitter dominated candidates' social media presence and emerging platforms were rarely used. Campaigns that we tracked from October 17 to November 8 posted to social media 1,454 times in that time period. Of these posts, 1,339 were to Facebook and Twitter. The typical Texas Legislator primarily used Facebook and Twitter and did not invest time or resources in emerging platforms. However, the number of legislators adopting and using Instagram is growing, and it is becoming an important outlet on social media in Texas.

In Congress, usage varied between Members which reinforces the conclusion that social media presence is a personal decision made by an office about how to communicate with the public. We see the same trend in Texas and in congressional campaigns. A major factor in this decision is the official's office budget or candidate's campaign budget. Engaging on emerging social media platforms takes more time and money than many offices can afford. Members of Congress who invest in emerging platforms often see dividends in the long run, measured in their number of followers or their unique persona as displayed in the novel uses findings. On campaigns, time is a more scarce resource, and they do not have the ability to build the following it takes to see returns on their time and resource investment. A major concern with using emerging platforms across all groups is the effort it takes to attract new followers and the low number of voters who will be reached without dedicating scarce resources.

A distinction can be made between posts directed towards the Member's supporters (people who voted for the Member) and the Member's overall constituency. Posts that are directed to the Member's supporters tend to be focused on demonstrating that the Member is working to advance the political agenda of supporters. These posts include statements on current legislation or political issues and are in a sense "preaching to the choir." Posts directed to the overall constituency may involve a more general branding element and feature more lifestyle- and family-related content which helps promote the Member as part of the local community, rather than being overtly political.

Members' characteristics influence their social media adoption. The main factors that influence platform adoption and usage are Members' party affiliation, age, and tenure. Our findings show that there is a difference of adoption tendency among Democrats and Independent Members who adopt more platforms than Republicans. They are more likely to be heavy adopters, which means that they adopt eight or more platforms. Members' age also shows that is a factor influencing adoption. On average, the data revealed that younger Members tend to adopt more platforms than older Members, and they also are more likely to be heavy adopters. Lastly, Members' tenure influences adoption of platforms. Newer member on average adopt more platforms. Hence, younger members, newer members, and Democrats and Independents tend to adopt more platforms on average and are more likely to be heavy adopters.

The choice of a given social media platform as a regular conduit for messaging is largely a function of a Member's personal brand. The decision to become a regular user of less ubiquitous platforms such as Snapchat is a deliberate effort to distinguish oneself from other Members of Congress. These individuals are cultivating a persona which is technologically savvy and in touch with younger voters.

The Team's findings suggest that Instagram and Snapchat are emerging platforms among Members of Congress. This is supported by our finding that younger Members with fewer years of service adopt and embrace these platforms more strongly. As older and longer serving Members leave Congress, they likely will be replaced with younger Members who tend to adopt a greater diversity of platforms—particularly Instagram and Snapchat based on adoption statistics. Additionally, usage of these platforms is relatively high in comparison with other platforms according to case study findings and *Snaplytics.io*. Growth in the use of Instagram and Snapchat is also expected in the foreseeable future among U.S. population, since more young adults continue to adopt these two platforms.

Beto O'Rourke is a prime example of a Member of Congress who has embraced an emerging platform as part of his personal brand. O'Rourke's use of live broadcasting platforms such as Snapchat and Facebook Live, as well as his social media use in general, is an essential part of his image as a young, savvy politician who is doing things differently than his peers. O'Rourke's decision (along with Will Hurd) to turn his March 2017 cross-country road trip into a live-streamed town hall is indicative of how social media adoption and usage can be advantageously directed towards building and reinforcing one's personal brand.

Novel Uses

We can conclude three trends from the novel uses of social media that amplify a Member's post. First, the content must be timely and either act as the newsworthy content, or react to newsworthy content in a timely manner. Second, the content is primarily generated by the Members themselves or requires the Members to use their smart devices to post the content. Finally, the content needs to contain humor or humanizing content from the Member, so constituents feel they are engaging with the Member directly.

Platform Functionality

In addition to trends observed in Members' district demographics and personal demographics influencing social media use, the functionality of a platform influences Member usage. Newer platforms, as demonstrated through the Snapchat analytics and Instagram case studies, often are used more regularly than older, more adopted platforms. These platforms require Members to download their application onto their smart device to post content. Platforms that require an application on a smart device to post updates create barriers for staff who would otherwise post content on behalf of the Member. Consequently, we see more Members using Instagram and Snapchat for personal and district posts because the content generation falls directly on the Member. Application-based social media platforms can constrain a Member's ability to delegate those platforms to their staff.

From the data, we observed a trend between usage and a platform's ease of functionality, including ability to post from multiple devices, push technology to multiple platforms, and ease of use by staff and Members. Video content consists primarily of commercial media produced under optimum conditions; policy content is written, edited, and posted as a finished product, and photographs with constituents tended to reflect a personal touch and interest.

Platform Dominance

While the Team's initial effort explicitly was to evaluate Members' social media use apart from Facebook and Twitter, their dominance of the domain is so great that it is the standard by which all other platforms are measured. Our observations and analysis suggested trends in the social media sphere that may shape future platform adoption and usage trends.

The reason Facebook is the largest platform and most adopted is it continues to adapt to the changing market and trends in social media. Periscope launched in March 2015 after being acquired by Twitter. Facebook began limited deployment of live-video streaming capabilities in August of the same year. By June 2016, Periscope was the preferred platform for live-streaming video. Shortly after the House sit-in in June 2016, Facebook launched its Facebook Live capability to mobile users, adding live-streaming video to its platform. During our data collection

period, we observed marked decline in Periscope usage. From this observation we can draw three inferences: first, that Facebook will either acquire emerging, competitive social media platforms or mimic their novel capability; second, that novel capabilities can benefit from focusing events; and lastly, that social media strategies poised to exploit emerging capabilities under favorable conditions can rapidly gain narrative control.

The primary reason Facebook and Twitter have near universal adoption by Members is because they are the largest platforms with the most voters and constituents as an audience. According to interviews with Texas elected officials and staff, the second reason Members use Facebook and Twitter is ease of use by staff and the Member to generate and distribute content.

Future Research Topics

The following topics are beyond the scope of our study but they warrant future research.

Social Media Usage Patterns: Further statistical analysis of all Members' social media content would add to our understanding of usage.

Social Media Use in Legislative Proceedings: Recently Members used social media during a committee hearing. Does social media have a newfound ability to influence the proceedings of a legislative committee in session? Was the committee's employment of social media in real time appropriate?

Snapchat Use: Further research on how and why Members decide to adopt the platform, or why they might use Snapchat over Facebook Live or Instagram Live should be conducted. The interactive and personal quality of Snapchat makes it a potential up-and-coming social media platform for congressional use.

Campaign vs. Congressional Use: Does campaign social media usage ever foreshadow social media usage in Congress? Do unique users indicate the usefulness of emerging platforms? Do Members of Congress carry over their campaign social media adoption and usage into office?

Winning Congressional Candidates: How do winning candidates change or maintain their social media presence after being elected to Congress? Do they work to reinforce their persona with different platforms?

Snapchat Demographics: How do the demographics of Snapchat users align with the demographics of congressional districts? If the typical Snapchat user is under 25 and is unlikely to vote in an election, a candidate has little motivation to adopt the platform.

APPENDIX A: CASE STUDIES

Members of Congress Case Studies

Cory Booker

Chamber:	Senate	State:	New Jersey
Party:	Democrat	Composition:	73% white
Leadership:	No		15% black
Tenure:	4 years		10% Asian
Race:	Black		20% Hispanic
Gender:	Male	Urban:	95%

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Medium, Flickr, Google+, LinkedIn

Summary:

Cory Booker is a heavy adopter with varying usage. He is active on Instagram and YouTube and lightly active on Medium. His accounts on Flickr, Google+, and LinkedIn are not active. On Instagram, Booker has 1,181 posts and 174,000 followers, and he is following 295 accounts. He typically posts several times per week and receives approximately 5,500 likes and 190 comments per post.

He frequently posts videos that appear to be original content recorded specifically for Instagram. He often posts inspirational quotes, photos with colleagues, and photos of food. He occasionally reuses content from his Twitter and Snapchat accounts on Instagram. Booker has 952 subscribers on YouTube, and he posts videos multiple times each week. The videos are typically *legislative process* posts, depicting the Senator speaking on the Senate Floor or during committee hearings. A recent video had more than 7,000 views, though a typical video has far fewer views. Booker previously used LinkedIn to publish and share articles, but the account has been inactive since 2013.

John Conyers

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	MI-13
Party:	Democrat	Composition:	33.4% white
Leadership:	No		56.3% black
Tenure:	52 years		1.1% Asian
Race:	Black		6.7% Hispanic
Gender:	Male		0.3% Native American
		Urban:	100%

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, Google+, Medium

Summary:

Compared to other Members, Conyers is an average social media adopter, but with very low usage—in most cases, zero activity. He has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, Google+, and Medium but has ceased using most of them. His last post on Flickr was in 2013, and his last posts on YouTube and Medium were in 2015. Conyers has never used Google+. He is active on Facebook and Twitter and uses Instagram to replicate some of this content.

Instagram is essentially the only platform that he used during the case study period with three posts in the May 1-June 30 period. He did not post anything during the November 15-December 13 period. All three posts were *calls to action*. Interestingly, Conyers uses Instagram—a primarily imaged-based platform—to post text.

John Cornyn

Chamber:	Senate	State:	Texas
Party:	Republican	Composition:	44.3% white
Leadership:	Yes, Senate Majority Whip		11.9% black
Tenure:	14 years		3.8% Asian
Race:	White		38.2% Hispanic
Gender:	Male		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Medium, Pinterest, Flickr

Summary:

Cornyn has accounts on seven platforms, making him an average adopter of social media. He is, however, a light user, and the only emerging platform he is active on is Instagram. His social media presence is one of an established officeholder with a secure seat. Cornyn does not post controversial or confrontational material, and he does not interact with followers. Instead, the Senator highlights his routine policy platform and events with constituents. Typically, his posts reinforce his positions and service rather than present new information or challenge opponents.

Cornyn uses Instagram infrequently, only posting about twice per week for a total of 23 posts over the data collection period. His posts are usually related to the *legislative process* (7), *events* (7), and *local/district* posts (5). Cornyn posts most frequently on YouTube: around three times a week for a total of 32 posts. The overwhelming majority of these posts are related to the *legislative process* (28).

Joe Courtney

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	CT-2
Party:	Democrat	Composition:	84.2% white
Leadership:	No		3.6% black

Tenure:	10 years	2.9% Asian
Race:	White	6.8% Hispanic
Gender:	Male	Urban: 66.7%

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Medium, Google+

Summary:

Courtney posts about once a week on Instagram and YouTube. His posts typically range from his local district visits to committee hearings. Very few posts show his personal life.

Courtney is a light user of Medium. He only had seven posts in the studied time period—most of which were related to *events* or his views on *issue positions*. Courtney also has an account on Google+, but his last posts were in early 2016. Of all his platforms, Courtney has the most followers on Medium with about 729 people, and he has only four followers on Google+.

Courtney’s posts mostly fall into the *event* and *local/district* categories. Courtney does not interact with his followers, and he does not post any controversial views on his social media accounts. Courtney’s posts aim to reinforce his own positions and publicize his service activities.

Ted Cruz

Chamber:	Senate	State:	Texas
Party:	Republican	Composition:	44.3% white
Leadership:	No		11.9% black
Tenure:	4 years		3.8% Asian
Race:	Hispanic		38.2% Hispanic
Gender:	Male		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Snapchat, Google+, Medium

Summary:

Ted Cruz is a Republican member of the U.S. Senate who has served as the junior senator from Texas since 2013. Prior to being elected to the Senate, Cruz served as the Solicitor General of Texas from 2003 to 2008.

Cruz primarily posts on YouTube and Instagram. He consistently uses YouTube to post videos of congressional hearings, interviews on Fox News, and audio from interviews on the Glenn Beck Program. The majority of his posts were *issue positions* (20), *press* (19), and *legislative process* (18).

Cruz used Instagram to post photos covering a diverse range of categories. His posts fell into four main categories: *personal* (6), *events* (5), *issue positions* (5), and *local/district* (4). He is also an average user on Snapchat. He posted approximately 20 snaps over a three-month period. Cruz’s Flickr, LinkedIn, Google+, and Medium accounts were inactive during our research period.

Tulsi Gabbard

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	HI-2
Party:	Democrat	Composition:	29.8% white
Leadership:	No		1.6% black
Tenure:	4 years		28.8% Asian
Race:	Asian and white		9% Hispanic
Gender:	Female	Urban:	80%

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Google+, Periscope, Medium

Summary:

Tulsi Gabbard is a heavy adopter with accounts on nine social media platforms. Gabbard posted 31 times on Instagram, 18 times on YouTube, 26 times on Flickr, and four times on Medium. Gabbard has never posted on Periscope, and she is not active on Google+ or LinkedIn.

The majority of the Instagram posts were *personal* (13), *events* (8), *local/district* (5), and *issue positions* (7). Four of the posts were related to Veterans Day, and five were posts of Gabbard protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline with fellow veterans and members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Nearly all of Gabbard's YouTube videos were coded as *press* (5), *issue positions* (7), or *legislative process* (10) posts. Gabbard frequently posted clips of media appearances and floor speeches, related specifically to her bill to stop arming terrorists. Most of the Flickr posts show Gabbard's speaking engagements and interactions with constituents and veterans. Gabbard typically posts one to two times per month on Medium. These posts mostly reflect Gabbard's *issue positions*.

Amy Klobuchar

Chamber:	Senate	State:	Minnesota
Party:	Democrat	Composition:	74.6% white
Leadership:	Yes		11.6% black
Tenure:	10 years		7.9% Asian
Race:	White		6.9% Hispanic
Gender:	Female		1.9% Native American
		Urban:	73.3%

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Medium

Summary:

Amy Klobuchar is a senator from the state of Minnesota. The 56-year-old, who was the first woman elected to represent Minnesota in the Senate and is in her second term, has served for 10 years. Klobuchar serves in a leadership position as the Chair of the Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee. Her state is 73.3% urban with a population of roughly 5.5 million.

Klobuchar is an average adopter and has accounts on five platforms. She has not posted on YouTube since 2012. Klobuchar only started using Instagram recently, posting for the first time in July 2016. She posted only four times over our observation period, but most of the Instagram posts are photos of Klobuchar at events or in her home state. Klobuchar occasionally publishes content on Medium with four posts (all *issue positions*) since August 2015.

Mia Love

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	UT-4
Party:	Republican	Composition:	83.7% white
Leadership:	No		1.7% black
Tenure:	2 years		3% Asian
Race:	Black		16.5% Hispanic
Gender:	Female		0.8% Native American

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Medium.

Summary:

Mia Love is an average adopter and has accounts on six social media platforms. She only posts on Instagram and YouTube though. Her LinkedIn account has not been updated in several years.

Love posts on Instagram approximately two to four times a month and on YouTube one to two times a month. In both cases, the majority of her posts are related to *issue positions*, *press/media coverage*, and *events*.

Blaine Luetkemeyer

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	MO-3
Party:	Republican		
Leadership:	No		
Tenure:	4 years		
Race:	White		
Gender:	Male		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Google+, Medium.

Summary:

Luetkemeyer is an average adopter with accounts on six social media platforms. He is not active on Medium, YouTube, or Google+. Luetkemeyer posts on Instagram between one and five times per week on average. He often posts about the work of his staff and volunteers, or highlights visits from local unions and coalitions. He uses Instagram to post pictures of his district, Missouri farms, and nature scenes.

Beto O'Rourke

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	TX-16
Party:	Democrat	Composition:	4.5% white
Leadership:	No		4.2% black
Tenure:	4 years		1.4% Asian
Race:	White		79.5% Hispanic
Gender:	Male		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Snapchat, Medium, Google+, Periscope, LinkedIn

Summary:

O'Rourke posts on Snapchat as often as two to three times per week. We monitored O'Rourke's Snapchat story posts from January 15-February 15, 2017. During this period, he posted as many as five Snapchat stories in one week—showing everything from his morning walk to work, visits to the district, family hikes in El Paso, and a visit to Austin, Texas.

O'Rourke primarily uses YouTube to post clips of speeches on the House Floor regarding military, immigration, and border security issues. O'Rourke's district borders Mexico and includes part of Fort Bliss, a U.S. Army installation, and his posts seem to reflect this. During the May 1-June 30 observation period, O'Rourke posted three videos on YouTube. During the November 15-December 13 observation period, he posted ten videos. The primary content of the posted videos are committee and House Floor speeches.

O'Rourke is also active on Instagram. While in the district, he posted photos of his family, local events, campaign events, and landscapes of the district. While in Washington, DC, he posted inspirational photos, photos from an organized running event, and photos of colleagues after the congressional sit-in. During the summer months, he posted 14 times, and during the winter period, he posted six times with an average of one per week.

Nancy Pelosi

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	CA-12
Party:	Democrat	Composition:	44% white
Leadership:	Yes, House Minority Leader		6.3% black
Tenure:	30 years		33.4% Asian
Race:	White		14.7% Hispanic
Gender:	Female	Urban:	100%

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Google+, Periscope, Pinterest, Tumblr, Medium

Summary:

Nancy Pelosi is a heavy adopter and has social media accounts on 12 platforms. Of these ten

platforms, she is only active on YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, and Medium. Pelosi was most active on Instagram and primarily posted photos supporting issues or of her event appearances. On YouTube, Pelosi shared videos of herself speaking on the House Floor and at issue-based events. Her Flickr account serves as a catalog for her photos from events; most of the photos show Pelosi interacting with constituents or volunteering in her district. She reposted some of her photos from Flickr on Instagram. Pelosi used Medium to post short summaries of her stances on different issues. Pelosi was much more active on social media in May and June 2016. She only posted twice on Instagram between November 15th and December 13th.

Bruce Poliquin

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	ME-2
Party:	Republican	Urban:	28%
Leadership:	No		
Tenure:	2 years		
Race:	White		
Gender:	Male		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Google+, Medium

Summary:

Poliquin is an average adopter and has accounts on six social media platforms. Poliquin posted four videos on YouTube during our observation periods. Three of these were clips of his speeches on the House Floor, and the fourth was a Memorial Day greeting. Poliquin has not posted on YouTube since September 2016.

He has inactive accounts on Flickr, Google+, and Medium. He has not posted on Flickr since October 2015. His official website links to an Instagram account, but he does not in fact have an account. The link is either broken, or Poliquin has since deleted the account. Poliquin has adopted emerging platforms, but he does not use actively them.

Cathy McMorris Rodgers

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	WA-05
Party:	Republican	Composition:	77% white
Leadership:	Yes		7% Asian
Tenure:	12 years		11% Hispanic
Race:	White		
Gender:	Female		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest

Summary:

McMorris Rodgers is widely known for her social media presence: *National Journal* named her

one of the ten Republicans to follow on Twitter. She is an average adopter and has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, and Pinterest. She is most active on YouTube and Instagram, and she has not posted on Flickr since 2013.

McMorris Rodgers' posts most often highlight her public appearances and speeches. Occasionally, she issues general policy statements about a range of issues. McMorris Rodgers' uses Instagram to post personal photos as well. McMorris Rodgers' social media presence is consistent with her position as Chair of the House Republican Conference: she uses social media to highlight policy issues important to House Republican Leadership and to publicize her appearances as Conference Chair.

Harold Rogers

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	KY-05
Party:	Republican	Urban:	23%
Leadership:	Yes, Chairman of House Appropriations Committee		
Tenure:	36 years		
Race:	White		
Gender:	Male		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google+

Summary:

Rogers is an average adopter and has accounts on the following social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Google+. Only Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are linked to his congressional webpage though. Rogers is a light user of Instagram, posting only four times in total over the two observation periods. Two of these posts were *local/district* posts, one was an *issue position* post, and the final was a *colleague* post with then-Vice President-Elect Mike Pence.

Rogers does not appear to have ever used Google+, and he has not posted on YouTube since May 2015. He was a regular user of YouTube from 2010 to 2013 with most of the 90 videos on his channel falling within this time frame. His Google+ account, while not linked on his official website, is linked to his YouTube channel.

Marco Rubio

Chamber:	Senate	State:	Florida
Party:	Republican	Composition:	55.3% white 22.5% Hispanic
Leadership:	No		
Tenure:	6 years		
Race:	Hispanic		
Gender:	Male		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat

Summary:

Rubio is a heavy adopter and has accounts on nine social media platforms. He is very active on Facebook and Twitter, but he is a light user of all other social media platforms. Rubio posts weekly on YouTube and monthly on Instagram. He has an account on Snapchat, but he does not appear to use it. When Rubio was running for president, he was much more active on all of these social media accounts. But once he announced that he was exiting the race, his presence became nonexistent on all but a few platforms. When Rubio does post, he typically posts about *issue positions* or current legislation, such as posting video footage of committee hearings on YouTube.

Paul Ryan

Chamber:	House of Representatives	District:	WI-01
Party:	Republican	Composition:	88.8% white
Leadership:	Yes, Speaker of the House		
Tenure:	18 years		
Race:	White		
Gender:	Male		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Medium, Google+

Summary:

As Speaker of the House, Ryan uses his social media accounts in his capacity as Speaker, rather than as Representative for Wisconsin's 1st Congressional District. He is an average adopter and has accounts on the following six social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Medium, and Google+. Of the emerging social media platforms, Ryan only actively uses Instagram and YouTube.

On Instagram, Ryan logged 23 posts over the course of the 13-week collection period, and 13 of those posts were *personal*, as Ryan used the platform to largely connect with the whole country, not just WI-01, on a personal level. Ryan has 66,800 followers on Instagram, which is not a lot considering his elevated political profile. Ryan created the account in October 2015, and he has 117 total posts since that time.

Ryan uses YouTube to archive video of the Speaker's Weekly Press Briefings, House Republican Leadership News conferences, House Floor speeches, and events. During the data collection period, Ryan posted 41 videos on YouTube. Of those 41 posts, he posted about the *legislative process* the most, logging 15 such videos. The number two and three categories were *press* with 10 posts and *events* with 8 videos, respectively. Ryan largely uses YouTube to highlight the House Republican agenda. As Speaker, Ryan legally crosses the line between political and official, and his YouTube posts reflect this fact.

Bernie Sanders

Chamber:	Senate	State:	Vermont
Party:	Independent	Composition:	94% white
Leadership:	No		
Tenure:	10 years		
Race:	White		
Gender:	Male		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Medium, Google+

Summary:

Sanders' presidential campaign seemed to influence his patterns of social media use in May and June 2016—though only his official accounts were the focus of this study. His post frequency was higher prior to the election than afterwards, though he has continued to use Instagram and YouTube to share his views with his millions of followers. The content of his posts before and after the election differed mostly in that the focus of the former was on his *events* rather than *opponents*. Sanders effectively mobilized millions during the Democratic primaries to donate to his campaign and vote for him, and he relied heavily on social media. He was less active on his official social media accounts during this period, but he was still active compared to other Members. He typically highlighted his public appearances and general messages to his supporters with occasional mobilization requests.

Sanders did not interact with other social media users, though his YouTube account features occasional posts of Vermont voters expressing their opinions on issues. Instagram was Sanders' primary social media platform, particularly during May and June 2016. He regularly posted on Instagram in the month after the presidential election, often criticizing the president-elect's positions and promising accountability. Sanders has a wide presence on social media, including Google+ and Medium—though he has not posted on most accounts in several months or years. Sanders clearly prefers Instagram and YouTube of the platforms examined in this study.

Tim Scott

Chamber:	Senate	State:	South Carolina
Party:	Republican	Composition:	68.4% white 27.9% black
Leadership:	No		
Tenure:	4 years		
Race:	Black		
Gender:	Male		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube

Summary:

Scott is a heavy adopter and has accounts on eight social media platforms. He is only active on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram though. On Instagram, he logged 41 posts over the

course of the 13 weeks used for data collection, and 16 of these posts highlighted local issues. Rounding out the top three categories are *events* attended in official capacity (9) and *personal* posts (8). Though Scott makes an effort to inform his constituents of his work using Instagram, most of the posts are used to connect with them on a personal level or to highlight people or events that will resonate back home.

He uses YouTube for two main purposes: posting clips of media appearances and official business in Washington, D.C. Scott has a fairly even split between posts of floor speeches and committee hearings. Of his 11 YouTube uploads, seven were of the *legislative process*.

Chuck Schumer

Chamber:	Senate	State:	New York
Party:	Democrat	Composition:	70% white
Leadership:	Yes, Senate Minority Leader		17.6% black
Tenure:	18 years		8.8% Asian
Race:	White		18.8% Hispanic
Gender:	Male	Urban:	88%

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Medium, Flickr, Periscope

Summary:

Schumer is an average adopter and has accounts on the following social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Medium, and Periscope. He was most active on Instagram and Flickr, and not active on Medium during our observation periods. Schumer also has inactive accounts on YouTube and Periscope.

On Instagram, Schumer’s account has 503 posts and 19,400 followers. Schumer posts multiple times per week. Notably, he occasionally posts short videos, photos of his family, and photos with visiting celebrities. His account averages 327 likes and 27.2 comments per post. The popularity of his Instagram account has surged since November, when Senate Democrats selected him as the new Minority Leader following the retirement of Harry Reid. The account had an average of 410 engagements per post in November, compared to 1,891 engagements per post in December.

Schumer also has an active account on Flickr with 332 followers. His Flickr content is unique in that it does not overlap with his Instagram content. Schumer primarily uses the account to post photos of local events in his home state. He also has a Periscope account, though it’s unclear how often he has used it, if at all.

Bill Shuster

Chamber:	House	District:	PA-09
Party:	Republican	Composition:	94.5% white
Leadership:	No		
Tenure:	16 years		

Race: White
Gender: Male

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube

Summary:

Shuster is a light adopter of social media. He has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Though active on Facebook and Twitter, Shuster last used YouTube three years ago.

Elise Stefanik

Chamber:	House	District:	NY-21
Party:	Republican	Urban:	35%
Leadership:	No		
Tenure:	2 years		
Race:	White		
Gender:	Female		

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Medium, Google+

Summary:

Stefanik is an average adopter with a total of six platforms—three of which (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) are linked on her official website. She also has accounts on Instagram, Google+, and Medium. Stefanik was a heavy user of Instagram, an average user of YouTube, and a light user of Google+ and Medium during our observed time periods. Stefanik posts more frequently on these platforms at certain times, such as holidays.

Stefanik has different usage patterns among her social media platforms. On YouTube, she uses the platform to mostly post videos about her *issue positions*, the *legislative process*, and *personal* topics. Stefanik uses Instagram to posts pictures of *personal* topics and *local/district* events. Unlike most Members, Stefanik actually interacts with other users on Instagram. She uses Medium to post about *issue positions*, *colleagues*, and the *legislative process*. Her Medium account is synced with her YouTube account, and she uses the Medium posts to provide additional commentary on the topics addressed in her YouTube videos.

Stefanik’s primary use of Instagram is for posting about *events* she attends in her official capacity and about *personal* topics. On the other hand, Stefanik’s primary use for YouTube is for posting videos about her *issue positions* and the *legislative process*. This contrast between Stefanik’s use of her top two most-used platforms illustrates how she is using the two platforms to different ends.

Open Seats Case Studies

Martin Babinec

Chamber:	House of Representatives
Party:	Third party (Upstate Jobs Party)
Electoral Outcome:	Lost
Race:	White
Gender:	Male
District:	NY-22

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

Summary:

Babinec only adopted Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. During the case study analysis period, he posted just once on Instagram about an October 17 event.

Lou Correa

Chamber:	House of Representatives
Party:	Democrat
Electoral Outcome:	Won
Race:	White
Gender:	Male
District:	CA-46

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

Summary:

Correa had accounts on the following platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. He posted only 13 times across all platforms and just once on Instagram. Most of his posts were coded as voter mobilization and coalition support. Lou Correa's campaign staff indicated that they did not use any particular strategy and had no designated staff member focusing on social media.

Roger Marshall

Chamber:	House of Representatives
Party:	Republican
Electoral Outcome:	Won

Race: White
Gender: Male
District: KS-01

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

Summary:

Marshall and his campaign team used three social media platforms while campaigning, of which Instagram was the only emerging platform. Marshall was fairly active on Facebook and Twitter, but he only posted four times on Instagram during the time period studied. The first post was a picture of Marshall’s float in Kansas State University’s homecoming parade (coded as *local*), the second was a picture of him with his grandson and dog at his cabin (coded as *personal*), the third was a picture of Marshall and his grandson handing out candy on Halloween (coded as *personal*), and the fourth was a picture of Marshall and his family reminding voters to vote on Election Day (coded as *personal* and *voter mobilization*).

Eric Pahls, Marshall’s press secretary, responded to our survey. Based on his responses, the campaign’s social media strategy largely focused on Marshall’s travels and endorsements, as well as reactions to current events, such as then-presidential candidate Trump’s comments on the campaign trail. As press secretary, Pahls handled all social media responsibilities, and the campaign allocated \$500-\$1,000 to social media targeting per month. Marshall’s campaign chose to use the three aforementioned social media platforms due to the geographic and rural makeup of Kansas’ 1st Congressional District—which is a large, rural, agricultural district. They found the common platforms valuable, but not those that are less widely used. When asked whether the campaign had considered using Snapchat or Periscope, Pahls responded that “[They] considered Snapchat, and [are] still considering [it]. It wouldn’t have a huge following, but could be a fun way to connect Dr. Marshall to younger folks. We have not used Periscope due to the emergence of Facebook Live.”

Kim Myers

Candidate: House of Representatives
Party: Democrat
Electoral Outcome: Lost
Race: White
Gender: Female
District: NY-22

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr

Summary:

According to Kate Davis, Kim Myers’ campaign manager, the Myers campaign did not have an explicit social media strategy. Usage depended on available staff and intern time, and the campaign calendar. Staff, interns, and a digital consultant all managed the campaign’s social media. In addition to Facebook and Twitter, the campaign also adopted Flickr, Instagram, and

YouTube—though it is worth noting that Davis did not select YouTube in the survey as a platform the campaign was utilizing.

During the October 17th-November 8th analysis period, Myers posted once on Instagram about an event and four YouTube videos, all of which were campaign ads. Two of these videos were *issue position* posts, one was a personal endorsement from her daughter, and one was a *voter mobilization* post. Two of the four posts came in the week preceding the election. Kim Myers lost to Claudia Tenney with only 40.4% of the vote.

Bao Nguyen

Candidate:	House of Representatives
Party:	Democrat
Electoral Outcome:	Lost
Race:	Asian
Gender:	Male
District:	CA-46

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

Summary:

Nguyen was a heavy user of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram during his campaign. He posted a total of 58 times on Facebook, 53 times on Twitter, and 39 times on Instagram between October 17th and November 8th. He posted most often about *events* (7), *voter mobilization* (5), and *coalitions* (4). Nguyen served as the Mayor of Garden Grove, California, prior to his unsuccessful House bid. He continues to serve as Mayor of Garden Grove.

Jamie Raskin

Candidate:	House of Representatives
Party:	Democrat
Electoral Outcome:	Won
Race:	White
Gender:	Male
District:	MD-8

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

Summary:

Samantha Brown, the campaign’s communications director, explained the campaign’s explicit social media strategy with the following goals: gain new followers on their platforms, excite the voting base, reach new supporters, educate voters on the issues, and promote events and increase their visibility. The campaign was active on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Brown provided the following explanation for the campaign’s platform selection: “Facebook, Twitter, and

Instagram have become pretty normalized in campaigns, and they make the most sense for our voter demographic and available resources.”

The campaign focused on organic and free social media posts. They did not pay for likes or clicks, and spent approximately \$300 total on social media throughout the campaign to promote events on Facebook. The number of social media posts by Raskin during his campaign are consistent with his social media plan. Between October 17th and November 8th, the campaign posted 12 times on Facebook, 156 times on Twitter, and three times on Instagram.

Claudia Tenney

Candidate:	House of Representatives
Party:	Republican
Electoral Outcome:	Won
Age:	56
Race:	White
Gender:	Female
District:	NY-22

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter

Summary:

Tenney only adopted Facebook and Twitter as official social media platforms during her campaign, making her a light adopter and the candidate with the fewest platforms in the race to represent New York’s 22nd Congressional District. In marked contrast to her low platform adoption, she had the highest usage of Facebook and Twitter in comparison to the other two candidates. She ramped up usage in the week before the November 8th election, and most of her posts were critical of her opponents.

Shelli Yoder

Candidate:	House of Representatives
Party:	Democrat
Electoral Outcome:	Lost
Age:	48
Race:	White
Gender:	Female
District:	IN-9

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

Summary:

Yoder used three social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Over the course of the data collection period, Yoder posted 24 times on Instagram. She mostly used Instagram to

interact with voters, totaling 10 out of the 24 Instagram posts. Second to *interaction* posts were posts about *events* (5). Interestingly, she used Instagram for the purposes of *voter mobilization*, which accounted for only four of the 24 posts, very little.

Todd Young

Candidate:	Senate
Party:	Republican
Electoral Outcome:	Won
Age:	44
Race:	White
Gender:	Male
State:	Indiana

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat

Summary:

While campaigning, Young and his team used the following four platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Snapchat. Though he would be classified as an average adopter, Young posted frequently on all four platforms over the observed time period: 69 times on Facebook, 348 on Twitter, 20 on YouTube, and 24 on Snapchat.

As the only candidate for an open congressional seat who used Snapchat, Young provided us with a unique opportunity for analysis. Of the 24 Snapchat posts, the majority were coded as *colleagues* (9) and *events* (8). Less common categories include 2 *coalition* posts and 1 post each for *personal*, *issue position*, *volunteers/staff*, and *voter mobilization* categories. Naturally, many of Young's Snaps captured campaign events and appearances with fellow elected representatives at the state and federal level—notably Representative Larry Bucshon (R-IN), Representative Jackie Walorski (R-IN), Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK), Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA), Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR), and Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC), as well as Carly Fiorina.

Texas Legislature Case Studies

Rafael Anchia

Chamber:	Texas House of Representatives
Party:	Democrat
Tenure:	12 years
Race:	Hispanic
Gender:	Male
District:	TX-103

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

Summary:

The State Representative is on Instagram and will occasionally use Instagram and Facebook Live for events that the State Representative attends and press conferences the State Representative participates in. The Representative manages his own Twitter account and will respond to posts on there, but the Chief of Staff manages Anchia’s Instagram and Facebook accounts and, per his own policy, only posts pictures or posts to highlight the Representative’s official work activities and to inform constituents of legislation without taking stances on the bill. The Chief of Staff does not want to give the opposition things to use against them in an online forum. The Chief of Staff also has a policy not to respond to negative posts.

Dustin Burrows

Chamber: Texas House of Representatives
Party: Republican
Tenure: 2 years
Race: White
Gender: Male
District: TX-83

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter

Summary:

One major insight was that the age of the Representative wasn’t as significant as the age of his communications director, Matt Crow, who is much older. Another insight ties into the pattern where more resources lead to more platforms – Crow believes that an office uses more platforms if there is more staff because “people are looking for something to do.” Crow considers their online media strategy to be 90% Facebook/Twitter and 10% website, which he calls “a good, strong foundation.” Crow believes that people like Greg Abbott take social media too far, leading constituents to think, “Oh, it’s another tweet from the governor.” He doesn’t believe that anyone in the Legislature stands out based on his or her social media use, and he’s unaware if different platforms reach different demographics. He sees social media as a continuation of traditional communications, not as a fundamentally different concept. He believes that social media platforms have reached a saturation point, and no one realistically has any more time to spend on them. Lastly, he says that his constituents are mostly “like-minded” so his office doesn’t get much blowback on social media—their posts receive “a lot more Amen(s) and Hallelujahs” than “you’re out of your freaking mind.”

Victoria Neave

Chamber: Texas House of Representatives
Party: Democrat
Tenure: 1 year
Race: Hispanic
Gender: Female
District: TX-107

Noteworthy Platform: Snapchat

Summary:

Rep. Neave first used her Snapchat account during her campaign, but she has transitioned to using the account as a member of the Texas State House. Since mid-November, Rep. Neave has posted 12 times on a variety of topics focused on meetings with constituents in her district, sharing personal information, and serving as a freshman State Representative. Compared to the other two elected officials from Texas on Snapchat, Rep. Neave exceeds in consistency and frequency of posting. Based on only one elected official out of 181 elected officials participating on Snapchat in the last two months, it does not appear that Snapchat is a great source of activity.

Dan Patrick

Chamber: Texas Senate; Lt. Governor
Party: Republican
Tenure: 2 years
Race: White
Gender: Male
District: N/A

Noteworthy Platform: Instagram

Summary:

We highlight Lt. Gov. Patrick for his novel use of Instagram during the 85th Texas Legislative Session. Lt. Gov. Patrick uses Instagram to share personal stories from Texans and personal videos regarding his legislative priorities for the session. Lt. Gov. Patrick not only shares personal stories from Texans but publishes long format stories by posting pictures of the person sharing the story from different angles, posting the story in segments. His most recent story montage centers on a widow, whose husband died while serving as a law enforcement officer, and why she supports proposed legislation on increasing police protection. Patrick's priority statement videos have at most 42 views from his 182 followers. The videos seem cordial and unscripted regarding his priorities and the priorities of his supporters. Based on Patrick's previous Instagram activity from the 84th Legislative Session, this social media content strategy is new for this politician's toolkit.

Jonathan Stickland

Chamber: Texas House of Representatives
Party: Republican
Tenure: 4 years
Race: White
Gender: Male
District: TX-92

Noteworthy Platform: Instagram

Summary:

Stickland’s Instagram account is a case study of novel use during the 85th Texas Legislative Session. Stickland uses parody to call his constituents to lobby against legislation he and his party's base oppose. Stickland accomplishes this by highlighting “Bad Bills of the Week,” which consists of posting a picture or video of the School House Rock Bill falling down the Capitol steps. The text that accompanies these posts reads like an award, congratulating a fellow representative for submitting a bill worthy of this title. Stickland uses this as an opportunity to frame a certain topic in a certain way to his constituents. He also urges his constituents and followers to call the “award winner” to let the legislator know they are “sick of” the lawmaker's attempts of regulation and that the legislator should “stop pushing the bill or anything like it immediately.” The Representative’s last “Bad Bill of the Week” post garnered 52 views over two days, and the number of likes and comments on such a post are 19 and two, respectively. While Stickland only has 207 followers on Instagram, he has 14,642 Facebook followers, and some of his extended “Bad Bill” videos on this platform have had over 48,000 views.

Royce West

Chamber: Texas Senate
Party: Democrat
Tenure: 24 years
Race: Black
Gender: Male
District: TX-23

Platforms: Facebook, Twitter

Summary:

The Senator does not manage his own social media accounts. The Legislative Staff shares possible post ideas with each other to gain consensus on what should be posted to the Member’s social media page. Based on meetings with constituents, the Legislative Staff believes Instagram to be used by younger, non-voting Texans. This is why they do not use Instagram as part of their social media strategy. The Legislative Staff believes that social media should be a way to quickly inform constituents about the Senator’s activities and the work of the Legislature. Staff also believes the Senator’s posts should be positive, and they do not participate in online debates.

Open Seats Survey Responses

Lou Correa

Survey Respondent: Andrew Scibetta, “internet stuff”

Does your campaign have an explicit social media strategy? No

If you answered yes, what are your strategy goals (If you answered “no” to the previous question, please respond with “n/a.”)?

How is your social media strategy adjusted throughout the campaign (ex: according to polls, opponents' usage, etc.)? We haven't used as much social media as we could have, it's a fairly small town with a small base. Lou's followers are a little older and we really stick to traditional press releases.

What social media platforms does your campaign currently use? Instagram, Facebook

Why has the congressional candidate and/or campaign team chosen to use or not to use certain platforms? We really haven't expanded much into social media use, press release use

Has your campaign considered using Snapchat or Periscope as a tool for campaign communications? Why or why not? No we haven't really, as I did research on snapchat it seemed like it might be as useful for our campaign. It seems like it might be better to establish once we are already in office.

What resources do you dedicate to social media (designated staff, financing, time, etc.)? It's really just me.

Roger Marshall

Survey Respondent: Eric Pahls, Media Contact

Does your campaign have an explicit social media strategy? No

If you answered yes, what are your strategy goals (If you answered "no" to the previous question, please respond with "n/a.")? n/a

How is your social media strategy adjusted throughout the campaign (ex: according to polls, opponents' usage, etc.)? Largely focuses around candidate travels & endorsements. Can also pertain to current events (i.e. Trump comments)

What social media platforms does your campaign currently use? Instagram, Facebook, Twitter

Why has the congressional candidate and/or campaign team chosen to use or not to use certain platforms? Our district is a large, rural, ag district. The main forms of social media are valuable, but not the lesser-known or lesser-used

Has your campaign considered using Snapchat or Periscope as a tool for campaign communications? Why or why not? Considered snapchat, and still considering. It wouldn't have a huge following, but could be a fun way to connect Dr. Marshall to younger folks. We have not used Periscope due to the emergence of Facebook Live.

What resources do you dedicate to social media (designated staff, financing, time, etc.)? As press secretary, I include social media in my duties. We don't allow it a huge budget, but probably average about 500-1000/month on social media targeting on special posts.

Kim Myers

Survey Respondent: Kate Davis, Campaign Manager

Does your campaign have an explicit social media strategy? No

If you answered yes, what are your strategy goals (If you answered "no" to the previous question, please respond with "n/a.")? n/a

How is your social media strategy adjusted throughout the campaign (ex: according to polls, opponents' usage, etc.)? Our usage mostly depends on the staff availability and the calendar. Our strategy overall has not significantly changed.

What social media platforms does your campaign currently use? Instagram, Flickr, Facebook, Twitter

Why has the congressional candidate and/or campaign team chosen to use or not to use certain platforms? Staff capacity limits us to only using the most effective outlets.

Has your campaign considered using Snapchat or Periscope as a tool for campaign communications? Why or why not? No.

What resources do you dedicate to social media (designated staff, financing, time, etc.)? We dedicate staff and intern time, and we have a digital consultant.

Jamie Raskin

Survey Respondent: Samantha Brown, Communications Director

Does your campaign have an explicit social media strategy? Yes

If you answered yes, what are your strategy goals (If you answered "no" to the previous question, please respond with "n/a.")? Gain new followers, excite the base, reach new supporters, education on the issues, event visibility

How is your social media strategy adjusted throughout the campaign (ex: according to polls, opponents' usage, etc.)?

What social media platforms does your campaign currently use? Instagram, Facebook, Twitter

Why has the congressional candidate and/or campaign team chosen to use or not to use certain platforms? FB, Twitter, and Insta have become pretty normalized in campaigns and they make the most sense for our voter demographic and available resources. Would love to branch out to other platforms like Snapchat but I don't have the time to invest in it.

Has your campaign considered using Snapchat or Periscope as a tool for campaign communications? Why or why not? Yes. Periscope is used by many MOCs but we rarely post video so it's not critical for us to use.

What resources do you dedicate to social media (designated staff, financing, time, etc.)? Everything is organic so we don't pay for likes or clicks. We've spent maybe \$200/\$300 total throughout the campaign to promote a few of our events on Facebook. I'm the designated staff person who manages all the platforms, takes most of the photos and designs any graphics so I spend most of my time doing this and going to events.

Shelli Yoder

Survey Respondent: Josh Perry, Social Media Coordinator

Does your campaign have an explicit social media strategy? No

If you answered yes, what are your strategy goals (If you answered "no" to the previous question, please respond with "n/a.")? n/a

How is your social media strategy adjusted throughout the campaign (ex: according to polls, opponents' usage, etc.)? ad hoc

What social media platforms does your campaign currently use? Instagram, Facebook, Twitter

Why has the congressional candidate and/or campaign team chosen to use or not to use certain platforms? Limited resources for full scale plan. Only ad hoc use with limited funding provided by in-kind supporters.

Has your campaign considered using Snapchat or Periscope as a tool for campaign communications? Why or why not? Considered, but have not used.

What resources do you dedicate to social media (designated staff, financing, time, etc.)? volunteer and in-kind contribution to underwrite limited paid advertising

APPENDIX B: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS TABLES

Table 1: Members of Congress and Represented Constituencies by Number of Platforms Adopted

Characteristics	Total Platforms	<i>P</i> -Value	Linked Platforms	<i>P</i> -Value
All Members (n = 541)	5.93		3.83	
Chamber		0.08		<0.01
House (n = 441)	5.87		3.75	
Senate (n = 100)	6.20		4.18	
Political Party*		<0.01		0.81
Republican (n = 301)	5.77		3.82	
Democrat & Independent (n = 240)	6.13		3.84	
Independent (n = 3)	6.33		4.67	
Democrat (n = 237)	6.13		3.83	
Gender		0.11		0.78
Female (n = 107)	6.22		3.81	
Male (n = 434)	5.73		3.67	
Ethnicity**		<0.05		0.14
White (n = 448)	5.86		3.80	
Non-white [‡] (n = 93)	6.28		3.98	
Black/African American (n = 47)	6.38		3.85	
Hispanic (n = 32)	6.00		3.88	
Asian Pacific Islander (n = 14)	6.86		4.64	
Alaskan Native (n = 0)	n/a		n/a	
Native American (n = 2)	4.50		4.00	
Age		<0.01 (-.18)		<0.05 (-.09)
30-39 (n = 18)	6.92		3.77	
40-49 (n = 77)	6.10		3.78	
50-59 (n = 160)	6.01		3.88	
60-69 (n = 190)	5.48		3.49	
70-79	5.62		3.76	

Characteristics	Total Platforms	<i>P</i> -Value	Linked Platforms	<i>P</i> -Value
(n = 75)				
≥80	5.70		3.40	
(n = 21)				
Leadership		0.62		0.63
No Leadership	5.83		3.70	
(n = 453)				
Leadership	5.68		3.63	
(n = 88)				
Years of Service		<0.01 (-.13)		<0.01 (-.14)
0-9	6.00		3.82	
(n = 332)				
10-19	5.62		3.58	
(n = 118)				
20-29	5.30		3.27	
(n = 65)				
≥30	5.64		3.55	
(n = 26)				
Urban/Rural [†]		0.05		0.17
≤ 74% Urban	5.59		3.64	
(n = 160)				
>74% Urban	5.96		3.73	
(n = 276)				
District Median Age [†]		0.08		0.30
<30	5.75		4.00	
(n = 12)				
30-34	5.83		3.68	
(n = 53)				
35-39	5.98		3.63	
(n = 192)				
≥40	5.51		3.80	
(n = 102)				
District Median Income [†]		<0.05 (.11)		0.41
<\$35,000	5.69		3.63	
(n = 22)				
\$35,000-\$49,999	5.67		3.70	
(n = 208)				
\$50,000-\$64,999	5.86		3.66	
(n = 136)				
\$65,000-\$79,999	6.16		3.59	
(n = 47)				
≥\$80,000	6.40		4.15	
(n = 23)				

Note: all coefficients are rounded to the nearest two decimals.

Ranges are from 0 to 12.

* Party affiliation shows the means for all factors but the *p*-value only applies to the difference between Republicans and Democrats combined with Independents.

** Ethnicity shows means for all factors but the *p*-value only applies to the difference between the White and Non-white factors since these factors cannot be ranked.

[†] Data for these variables are missing for Senate seats.

[‡] Non-White includes Hispanics of any race.

For two-factor variables, *p*-values (two-tailed) were computed with two sample *z*-test scores.

For multi-factor variables on an ordinal or interval level scale, *p*-values (one-tailed) were computed using Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient (ρ) which are represented in parentheses.

Table 2: Members of Congress and Represented Constituencies by Level of Platform Adoption: Heavy, Average, and Light Adopters

Characteristic	Total Platform Adoption Level				Linked Platform Adoption Level			
	Light	Average	Heavy	P-Value	Light	Average	Heavy	P-Value
Chamber				<0.01				<0.01 (.34)
House	15.9	73.0	11.1		7.9	88.0	4.1	
Senate	19.0	55.0	26.0		8.0	76.0	16.0	
Political Party				<0.05 (.22)				0.35
Republican	19.6	68.8	11.6		7.6	87.4	5.0	
Democrat/ Independent	12.5	70.8	16.7		8.3	83.8	7.9	
Gender				0.15				0.80
Female	12.1	69.2	18.7		3.7	92.5	3.7	
Male	17.5	69.8	12.7		9.0	84.1	6.9	
Ethnicity				<0.05 (.28)				0.31
White	17.7	70.0	12.3		8.7	85.2	6.1	
Non-white [‡]	10.5	68.4	21.1		4.2	88.4	7.4	
Age				0.32* (-.19)				0.84
30-39	11.1	66.7	22.2		5.6	88.9	5.6	
40-49	10.4	70.1	19.5		6.5	88.3	5.2	
50-59	13.1	71.3	15.6		8.1	82.5	9.4	
60-69	20.0	70.0	10.0		9.5	86.3	4.2	
70-79	21.3	65.3	13.3		6.7	86.7	6.7	
≥80	19.0	71.4	9.5		4.8	90.5	4.8	
Leadership				0.05				0.73
No Leadership	15.0	71.7	13.2		8.2	85.9	6.0	
Leadership	23.9	59.1	17.0		6.8	85.2	8.0	
Years of Service				0.09 (-.21)				0.14 (-.22)
0-9	13.0	71.1	16.0		6.0	87.3	6.6	
10-19	22.0	67.8	10.2		7.6	85.6	6.8	
20-29	24.6	66.2	9.2		15.4	81.5	3.1	
≥30	15.4	69.2	15.4		15.4	76.9	7.7	
Urban/Rural [†]				0.30				0.07
≤ 74% Urban	17.5	74.4	8.1		8.1	90.6	1.3	
>74% Urban	14.9	72.5	12.7		8.0	86.2	5.8	
District Medium Age [†]				<0.05 (-.24)				0.10*
>30	25.0	58.3	16.7		0.0	91.7	8.3	
30-34	15.1	73.6	11.3		13.2	83.0	3.8	

Characteristic	Total Platform Adoption Level				Linked Platform Adoption Level			
	Light	Average	Heavy	<i>P</i> -Value	Light	Average	Heavy	<i>P</i> -Value
35-39	13.0	72.4	14.6		9.9	84.9	5.2	
≥40	27.5	67.6	4.9		4.9	94.1	1.0	
District Medium Income [†]				0.29*				0.10*
<\$35,000	13.6	77.3	9.1		9.1	86.4	4.5	
\$35,000- \$49,999	17.8	73.1	9.1		8.2	89.9	1.9	
\$50,000- \$64,999	15.4	73.5	11.0		5.9	89.7	4.4	
\$65,000- \$79,999	14.9	74.5	10.6		14.9	78.7	6.4	
≥\$80,000	4.3	65.2	30.4		4.3	78.3	17.4	

Figures represent percentages within characteristic.

Note: all coefficients are rounded to the nearest decimal with the exception of *p*-values.

Heavy adopters are those with 8 or more platforms (capped at 12 for this study); average adopters are those with between 5 and 7 platforms; and light adopters are those with 4 or fewer platforms.

* Likelihood Ratio statistic was used due to test assumption violations.

[†] Data for these variables are missing for Senate seats.

[‡] Non-White includes Hispanics of any race.

P-values were computed using Chi-Square Test of Independence (two-tailed) and Goodman-Kruskal's gamma (γ) symmetric measure was used to measure magnitude which are shown in parentheses when the coefficient was approximately significant at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Table 3: Members of Congress and Represented Constituencies by Top Four Platforms Adopted beyond Facebook and Twitter

Characteristics	YouTube	<i>P</i> -Value*	Instagram	<i>P</i> -Value	Snapchat	<i>P</i> -Value	Medium	<i>P</i> -Value
Chamber		0.65		0.65		<0.01 (.18)		<0.01 (.19)
House	98.4		72.8		6.8		32.9	
Senate	99.0		75.0		20.0		57.0	
Political Party		0.75		0.36		0.81		<0.05 (.10)
Republican	98.7		74.8		9.0		32.9	
Democrat/ Independent	98.3		71.3		9.6		42.9	
Gender		0.58		0.10		0.68		0.51
Female	99.1		79.4		10.3		34.6	
Male	98.4		71.7		9.0		38.0	
Ethnicity		0.08		0.89		0.21		0.20
White	98.2		73.3		8.5		36.1	
Non-White	100.0		72.6		12.6		43.2	
Age		0.15		0.29 (-.15)		<0.05 (-.34)		0.18
30-39	100.0		77.8		16.7		55.6	
40-49	100.0		79.2		19.5		39.0	
50-59	97.5		77.5		8.1		41.9	
60-69	99.5		67.9		7.9		31.1	
70-79	96.0		70.7		4.0		36.0	
≥80	100.0		71.4		4.8		42.9	
Leadership		0.77		0.53		0.65		<0.01 (.14)
No Leadership	98.5		73.7		9.5		34.4	
Leadership	98.9		70.5		8.0		52.3	
Years of Service		0.60		<0.01 (-.25)		0.16 (-.32)		0.24
0-9	98.9		78.6		11.4		37.3	
10-19	98.3		62.7		5.9		37.3	
20-29	96.9		58.5		4.6		30.8	
≥30	100.0		88.5		7.7		53.8	
Urban/Rural†		0.74		0.41		0.69		<0.05 (.11)
≤ 74% Urban	98.1		70.6		6.3		26.3	
>74% Urban	98.6		74.3		7.2		37.0	
District Medium								
Age†		0.39		0.63		0.19		0.35
>30	100.0		83.3		0.0		25.0	

30-34	100.0		66.0		11.3		24.5
35-39	97.9		72.4		7.3		35.9
≥40	97.1		72.5		3.9		29.4
District Medium Income†		0.47		0.36		0.46	<0.05 (.20)
<\$35,000	100.0		77.3		13.6		36.4
\$35,000- \$49,999	99.0		69.7		6.7		27.4
\$50,000- \$64,999	98.5		72.8		7.4		33.8
\$65,000- \$79,999	95.7		78.7		2.1		48.9
≥\$80,000	95.7		87.0		8.7		43.5

Figures represent percentages within characteristic.

Note: all coefficients are rounded to the nearest decimal with the exception of *p*-values.

† Data for these variables are missing for Senate seats.

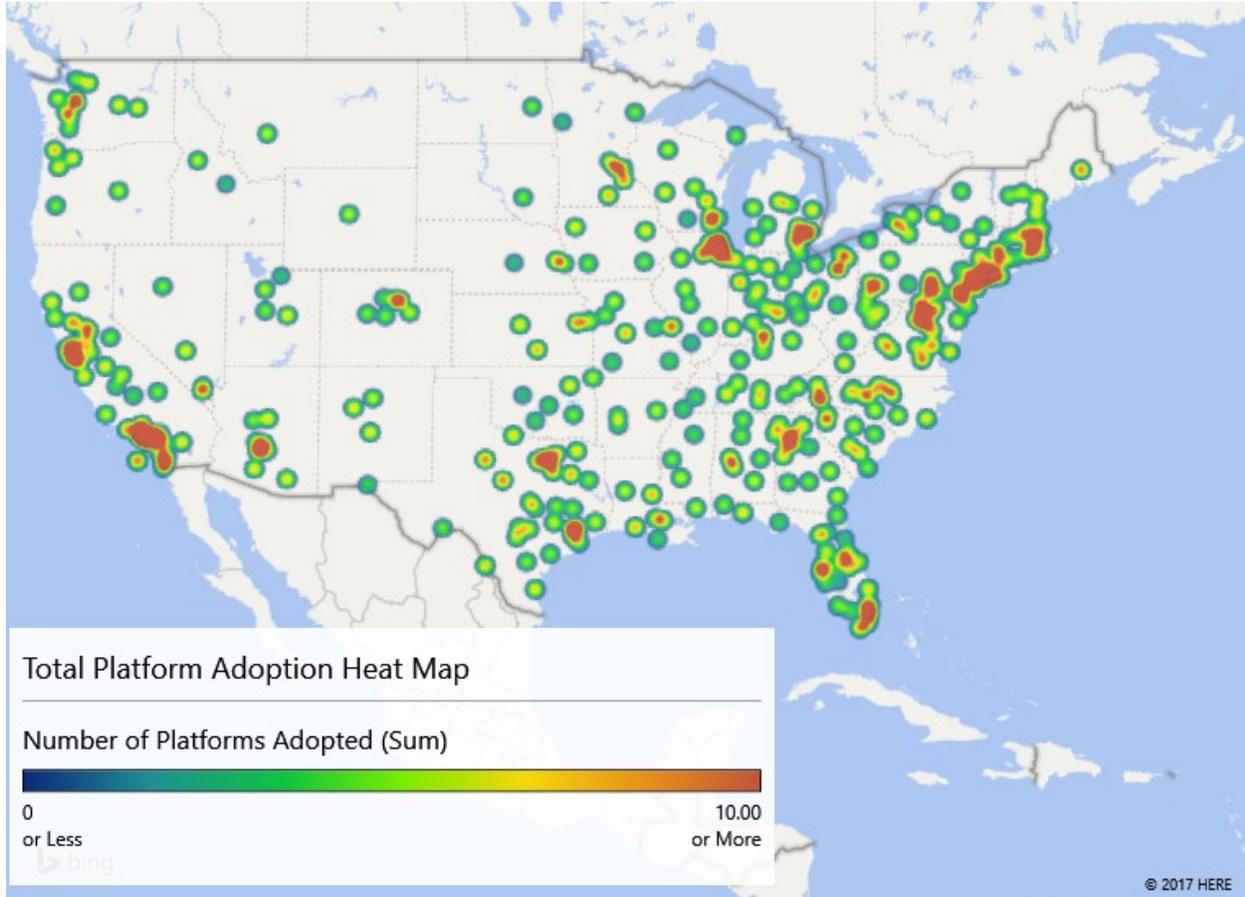
‡ Non-White includes Hispanics of any race.

* *P*-values for YouTube were computed using Likelihood Ratio statistics.

P-values were computed using Chi-Square Test of Independence or Yates' Continuity Correction, for 2-by-2 tables, (two-tailed) and Goodman-Kruskal's gamma (γ) and Phi and Cramer's V (φ_c) measure, for 2-by-2 tables, were used to measure magnitude which are shown in parentheses when the coefficient was approximately significant at $\alpha = 0.05$.

APPENDIX C: GEOGRAPHIC MAPS ON PLATFORM ADOPTION

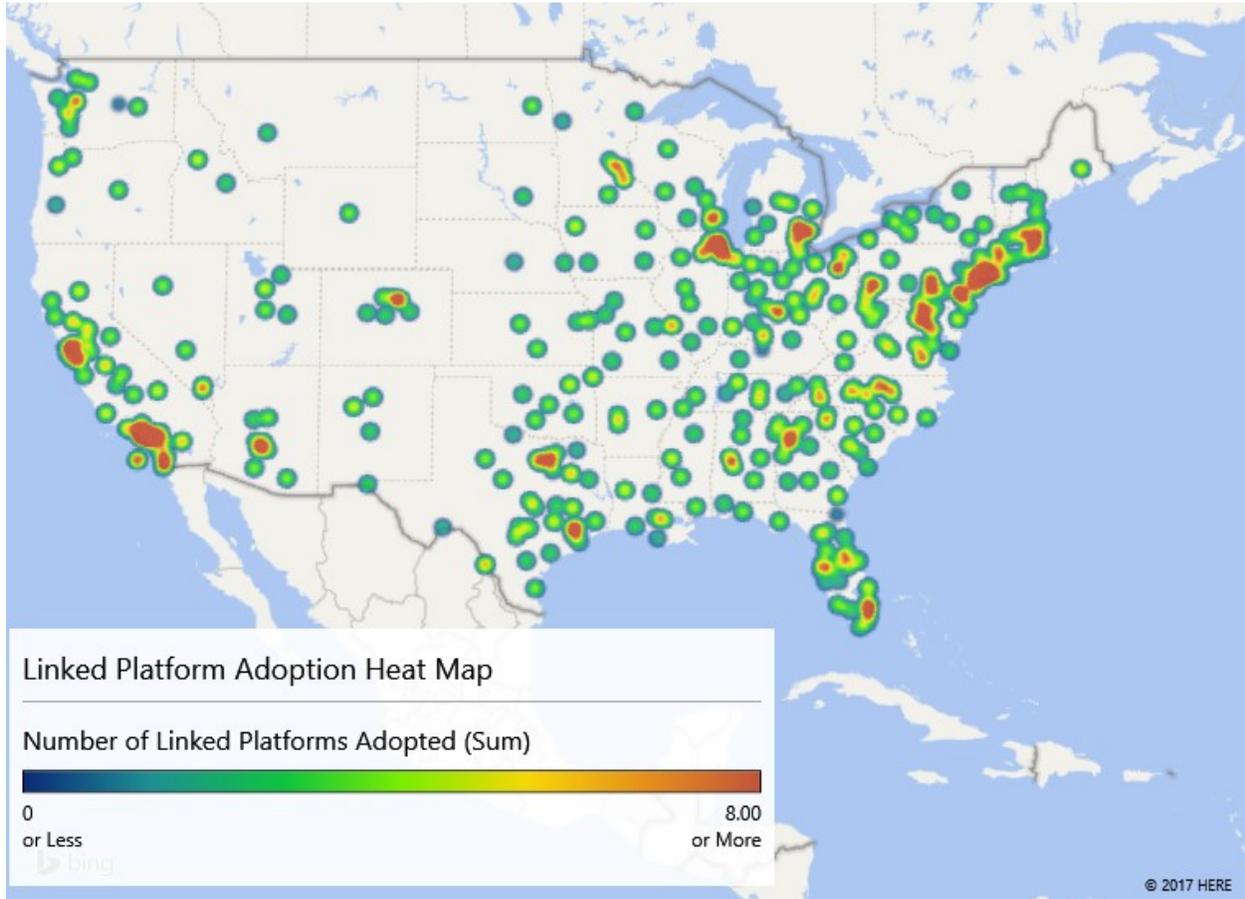
Map 1: Heat Map of Total Platform Adoption by Congressional District⁴¹



Total platforms adopted by Congressional District are typically concentrated among centers of population.

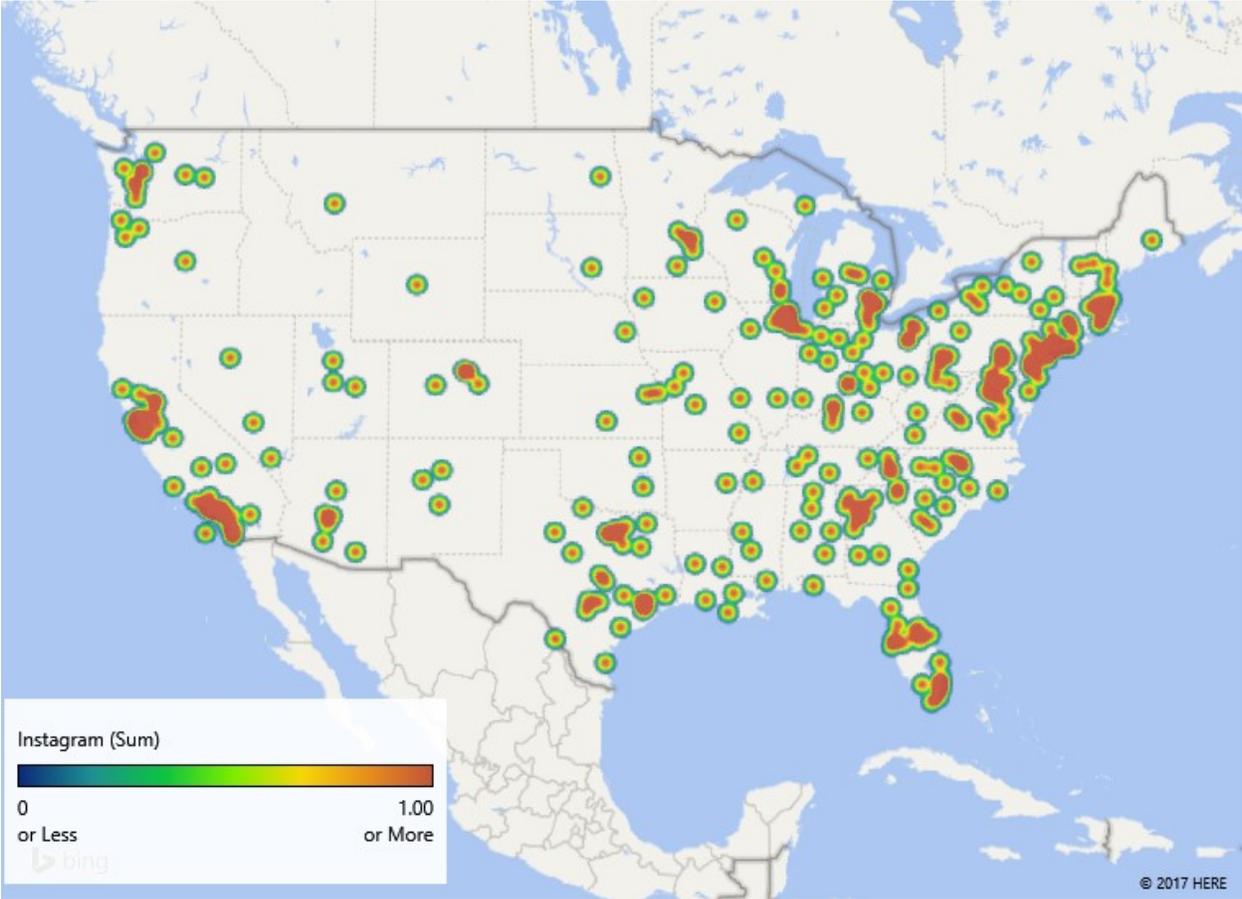
⁴¹ The data used for Congressional districts boundaries is from Jeffrey B. Lewis, Brandon DeVine, Lincoln Pitcher, and Kenneth C. Martis. (2013) *Digital Boundary Definitions of United States Congressional Districts, 1789-2012*. *districts114.zip*. Retrieved from <http://cdmaps.polisci.ucla.edu> on April 3, 2017.

Map 2: Heat Map of Linked Platform Adoption by Congressional District



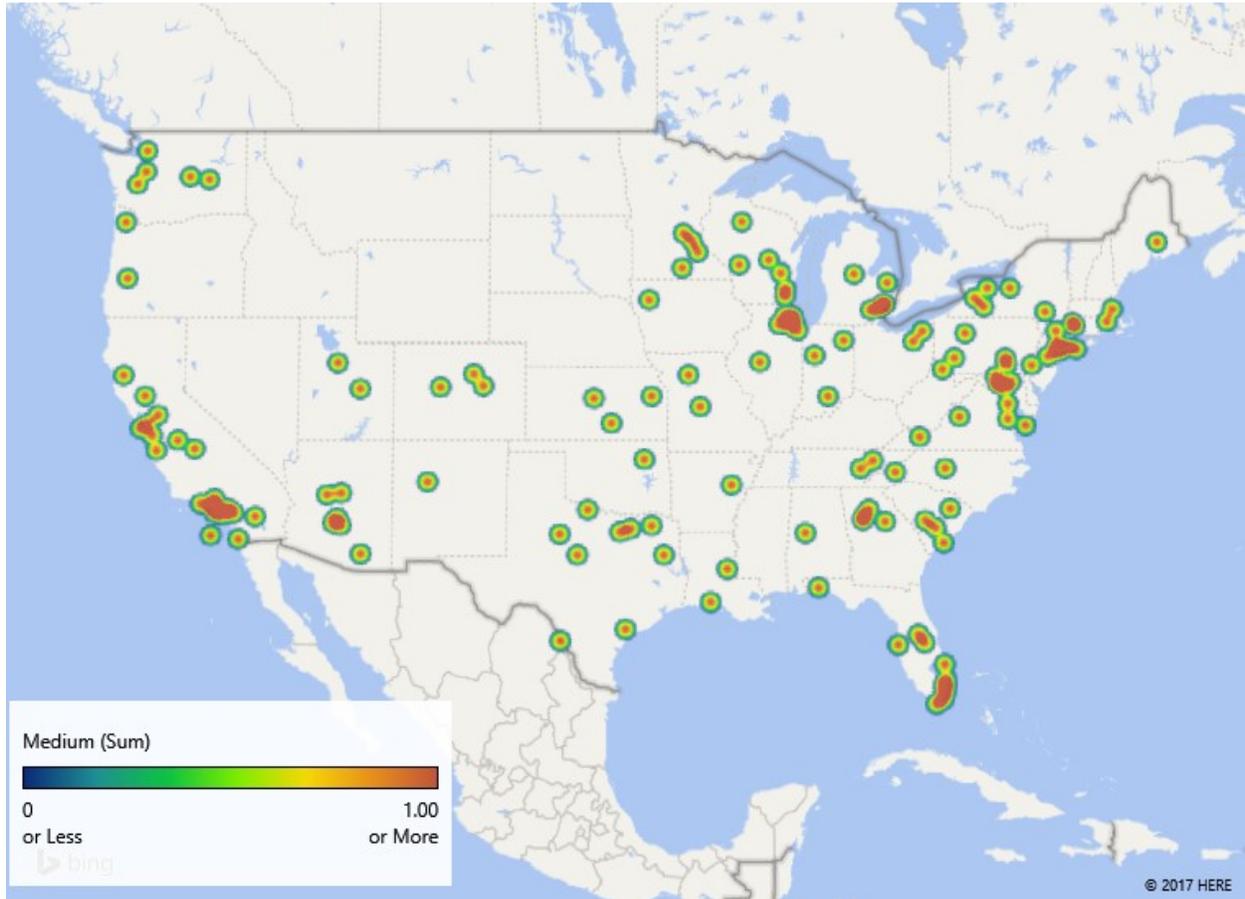
Higher numbers of linked platforms adopted by Congressional District are typically concentrated among centers of population.

Map 3: Heat Map of Instagram Adoption by Congressional District



Instagram adoption by Congressional District appears evenly dispersed among centers of population throughout the contiguous U.S.

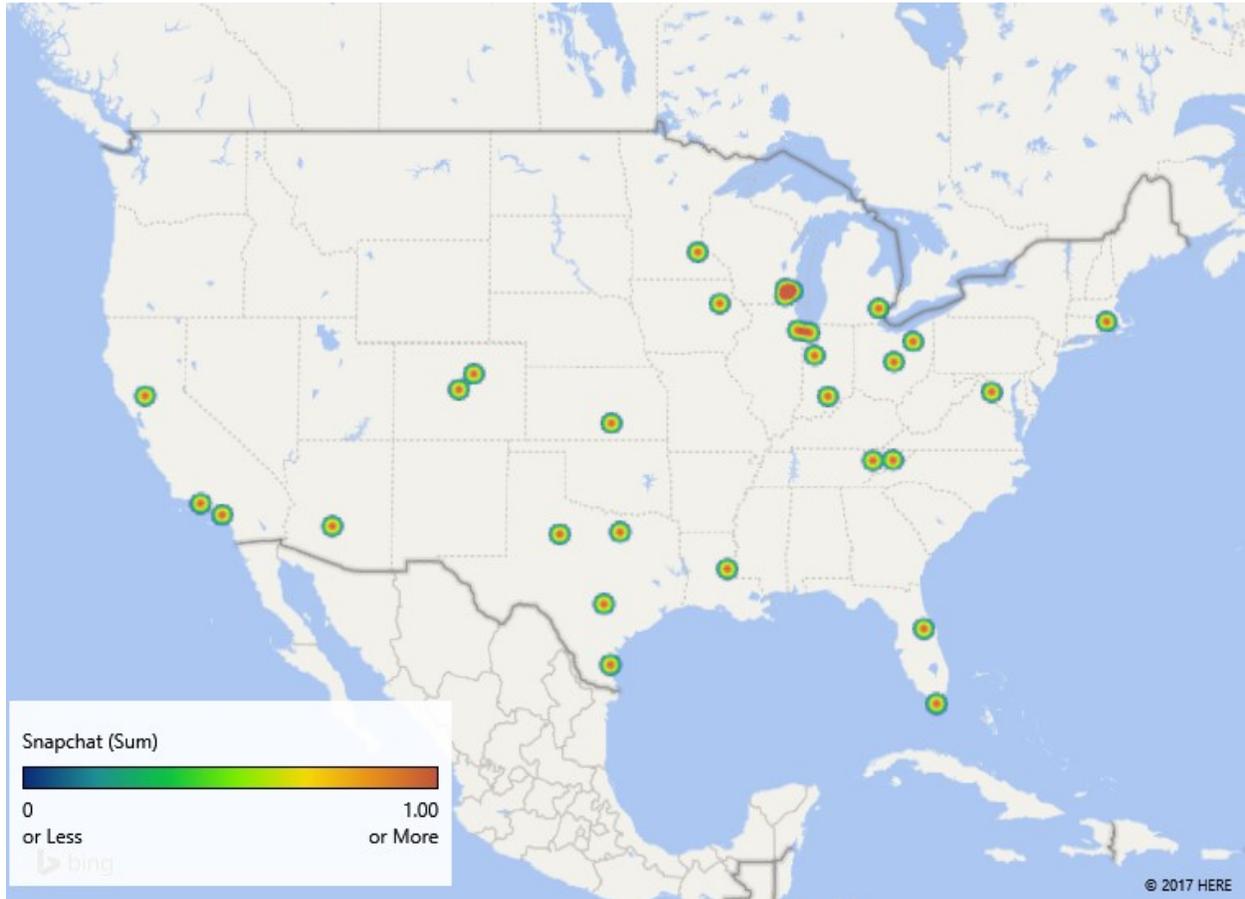
Map 4: Heat Map of Medium Adoption by Congressional District



Medium adoption by Congressional District appears evenly dispersed among centers of population. However, districts with Representatives who have adopted Medium are significantly more likely to be wealthy and urban.⁴²

⁴² See Appendix B, Table 3 for data on Medium adoption.

Map 5: Heat Map of Snapchat Adoption by Congressional District



Snapchat adoption by Congressional District appears to be most heavily concentrated in certain centers of population, especially in the Milwaukee and Chicago metropolitan areas. The most noticeably absent are the New York City, Atlanta, and Seattle metropolitan areas.

APPENDIX D: PLATFORM CASE STUDY DATA

Snapchat Data

The Snapchat case study data collected from *Snaplytics.io* are below.

Snaplytics.io: Overview of Data Outputs

Definitions of Snaplytics.io outputs using Senator Steve Daines’s snapchat data:

Stories: How many full stories were posted within the selected timeframe

Weekly Stories: Average number of stories posted per week

Total Duration: Total time of all weekly videos

Media Distribution: Videos posted versus photos posted

Figure 1: Snaplytics.io: Sen. Daines’ Snapchat Usage

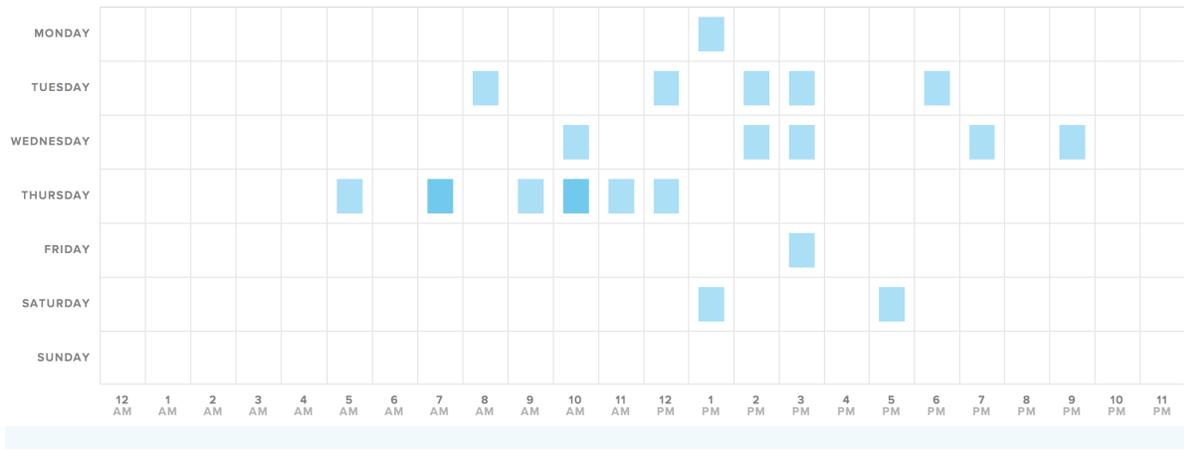


This output allows Snaplytics users to view the timing of posts on particular days.

Figure 2: Snaplytics.io: Sen. Daines’ Post Frequency

POSTING HABITS ?

STORIES SNAPS



This output allows Snaplytics users to view posting habits and frequency in a given week.

Comparative Study

Snapchat data visualizations broken down weekly by user from February 15 to March 8, 2017. This output compares several Members accounts at once, showing what type of media was posted, the number of total Snaps, average weekly stories, and total time duration of Snaps.

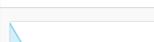
Figure 3: Snapchat Usage: Posts from February 15-21

ACCOUNT	SNAPS & DISTRIBUTION	STORIES	WEEKLY STORIES	TOTAL DURATION	MEDIA DISTRIBUTION
beto.orourke	25	5	5.8	00:02:52	
corybooker	6	1	1.2	00:01:00	
repswalwell	54	13	15	00:07:00	
senatorcruz	7	3	3.5	00:01:04	
stevedaines	1	1	1.2	00:00:09	

Figure 4: Snapchat Usage: Posts from February 22-28

ACCOUNT	SNAPS & DISTRIBUTION	STORIES	WEEKLY STORIES	TOTAL DURATION	MEDIA DISTRIBUTION
beto.orourke	 43	12	14	00:05:30	
corybooker	 9	2	2.3	00:01:28	
repswalwell	 83	14	16	00:10:37	
senatorcruz	 10	1	1.2	00:01:26	
stevedaines	 18	7	8.2	00:02:45	

Figure 5: Snapchat Usage: Posts from March 1-8

ACCOUNT	SNAPS & DISTRIBUTION	STORIES	WEEKLY STORIES	TOTAL DURATION	MEDIA DISTRIBUTION
beto.orourke Remove	 27	8	8	00:02:49	
corybooker	 5	1	1	00:00:45	
repswalwell	 30	11	11	00:03:48	
senatorcruz	 2	2	2	00:00:16	
stevedaines	 8	2	2	00:01:14	

Instagram Data

Shown in Tables 6 through 8, we split our case study users by heavy, average, and light users. Within each of these categories, the total posts and followers, and the average likes and comments vary widely—some of this is because each Member adopted the platform at a different time. The data in **Tables 1 to 3** are compiled from Keyhole data analyzing Instagram posts for the 21 case studies from February 2016 to February 2017.

Table 1: Case Studies, Instagram: Heavy Users

Member	Posts during Case Study Period	Total Posts	Total Followers	Average Likes on Posts	Average Comments on Posts
Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY)	108	2,314	3,129	257	5
Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT)	74	495	1.99 mil.	77,565	2,363

Member	Posts during Case Study Period	Total Posts	Total Followers	Average Likes on Posts	Average Comments on Posts
Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY)	71	515	21,893	416	31
Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ)	62	1,193	183,190	6,308	196
Rep. Tim Scott (R-SC)	41	962	15,683	541	12
Average Number of Posts*	71	1,096			

*Only number of posts are included in averages because Total Followers, Average Likes on Posts, and Average Comments on Posts are skewed toward Members with older accounts.

Table 2: Case Studies, Instagram: Average Users

Member	Posts during Case Study Period	Total Posts	Total Followers	Average Likes on Posts	Average Comments on Posts
Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI)	31	615	21,086	905	27
Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX)	26	243	141,776	4,243	332
Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)	23	233	57,862	840	59
Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)	23	90	2,148	79	4
Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO)	21	336	547	18	0.2
Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA)	16	191	3,191	138	15
Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT)	13	34	100	14	0.3
Rep. Mia Love (R-UT)	9	62	1,373	69	1.6
Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI)	7	126	74,308	4,276	361
Average Number of Posts*	19	214			

*Only number of posts are included in averages because Total Followers, Average Likes on Posts, and Average Comments on Posts are skewed toward Members with older accounts.

Table 3: Case Studies, Instagram: Light Users

Member	Posts during Case Study Period	Total Posts	Total Followers	Average Likes on Posts	Average Comments on Posts
Rep. John Conyers (D-MI)	5	59	814	62	2
Rep. Hal Rogers (R-KY)	4	61	520	28	0.2
Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL)	3	455	118,542	5,243	324
Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)	1	64	1,337	89	3
<i>Rep. Bruce Poliquin (R-ME)</i>	<i>Private Account</i>				
<i>Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-TX)</i>	<i>No official account</i>				
<i>Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA)</i>	<i>No official account</i>				
Average Number of Posts*	3	160			

*Includes only Members with public accounts. Only number of posts are included in averages because Total Followers, Average Likes on Posts, and Average Comments on Posts are skewed toward Members with older accounts.

APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY

Account: A page that identifies a profile on a social media platform, often visible to the public.

Capability: The ability of a particular platform to perform a particular function.

Functionality: The range of particular capabilities of a given platform.

Usage/Use: A measure of how frequently a Member posts content on a platform.

Adoption: Indicates that a Member has created an account on a platform. It does not describe whether the Member is posting content.

Coding: A process used to separate data into distinct categories.

Member: An individual who has been elected or appointed to represent constituents in Congress.

Post: A piece of text, image, video, or other content published on social media.

Comment: A user response to published content on the Internet, typically written below the original post in a designated “Comments” section.

Like: A button that is found below a post, a “like” is an easy way to let people know that you enjoy the content without leaving a comment.

Tweet: A post made on Twitter, limited to no more than 140 characters.

Snap: A post made on Snapchat.

Splash Page: A window that pops up automatically when a user visits a website.

Follower: An individual who has chosen or asked to receive updates from a Member’s social media platform.

Linked: A platform account accessible from a link on a Member’s official web page.

Unlinked: A platform not featured as a link on the Member’s official web page.

Zombie account: An account that has not been used for an extended period of time.