


The Social is Political

How New Technology Changes
Policymaking and Elections in 2014

NIAF BIENNIAL

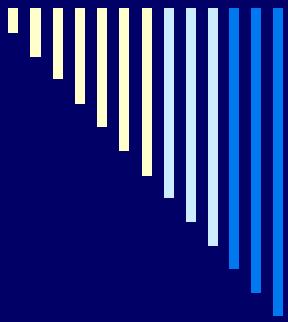
Denver / August 20, 2014

Ron Elving / NPR Senior Washington Editor



Tech, Media, Politics

- Continuing revolution
 - Big data
 - Social media
 - How does it change...
 - Media realm
 - Congress
 - Elections
 - Looking Ahead
 - 2014 and 2016
-



Data Driven

Are we data driven?

Are we engaged with social media?

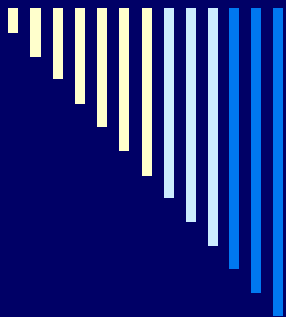
We now have more than 1 million blog posts...

50 million tweets...

60 million Facebook updates...

And 200 billion emails...

Every Day.

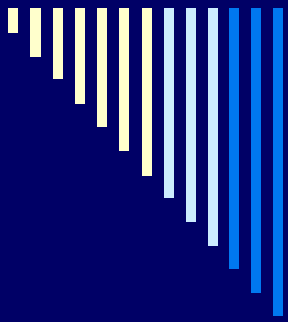


Data Driven

All cultural artifacts / information prior to 2003
could be digitized in 5 billion gigabytes of
storage space.

By 2010, people were creating that much
data every two days.

Estimate by Eric Schmidt, Google



The Producers

By 2012, the amount of video
being uploaded to YouTube
had doubled since 2010.

Equivalent to 180,000 feature-length movies
each week.

...more than Hollywood has produced
in its entire history.



Brave New Virtual World

- The data download
 - Capability becomes dominance
 - Dominance becomes overload
 - Overload leads to “attention crash”

 - Web has been organized to allocate and monetize precious moments of attention
 - Every click you make identifies you
 - Every click prompts another
 - “Filter Bubble” empowers but insulates
-



Brave New Virtual World

- How does all this matter to politics?
 - Social media / big data alter consciousness
 - Fragmented notion of world
 - Insular world of reinforcement
 - Reinforces the Great Divide

 - How does this change media?
 - How does it change Congress?
 - How does it change campaigns?
-



Withdrawing to Own World

- From 2005 to 2010, use of media increased sharply in North America, from 30 hours a week to 37. TV time was up a fraction....nearly all of the increase was accounted for by the **Internet**.
 - The amount of time North Americans reported spending **on line** was up by 120% over those five years. More than double.
-



Media Transformation

Broadcast / Cable TV are on their way out as the dominant media...

...just as newspapers and magazines ceased to be dominant decades ago.

Old guys are still around, but...

Successor media are far less

- Institutional
 - Heirarchical
 - All about authority
-



Media Transformation

- New dimension is constant / omnipresent
- New dimension not a creature of established hierarchies and organizations but a creature of its participants.
- Self-selected individuals drive the content and manipulate the tech and often outstrip their professional counterparts.



Some New Journalists Are Not Journalists At All

- Bloggers and tweeters do not necessarily regard themselves as journalists. They are more like political activists, consultants or even politicians themselves.
 - Objective is not the number of followers or return on investment. It's more about impact and being in the conversation, getting something “out there.”
-



News Cycle Reinvented

Shorter

“Journal-ism” = day cycle

New time frame is constant

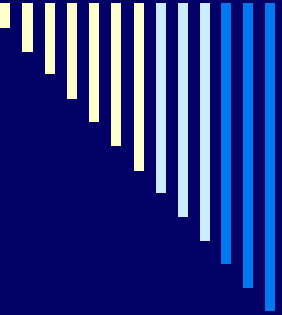
“Conversation cycle”

Sharper

Focus story excludes all else

Intensified

Hyperbole reigns

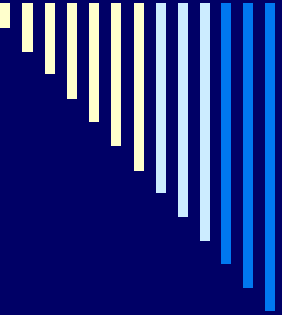


Twitter as “Heat Map”

“As powerful as the press has been through the years of our democracy, social media raise temperature on public officials like never before.”

Ron Mott, NBC Correspondent in Ferguson

- New York Times Columnist David Carr refers to “heat map” of Twitterverse activity in days after shooting
-



It's the *only* story.
Then it's not *the* story.
Then it's not even a story.

“Twas it ever thus?”

Yes. But to say
“more than ever”
is also meaningful.

And it's driven by speed, AADD
and social media.



“Shelf Life” of Crisis 2013-14

- Fiscal Cliff
 - Newtown & guns
 - Immigration compromise
 - Benghazi
 - IRS battles
 - Syria meltdown
 - Government shutdown
 - Obamacare
 - Obamacare redux
 - Ukraine
 - ISIS / Iraq
 - Kids at the border
 - Gaza
 - Sinjar
 - Ebola
 - Ferguson
-



How Big Data / Social Media Remake the Campaign Landscape

- Targeting voters
 - Via digital tracking
 - Reaching targeted voters repeatedly
 - Raising money
 - with minimal overhead
 - Exploiting emergent social media
 - Creating a world of surrogates
-



Political Impact

- Like polling and other forms of technology, social media can be terribly useful...but also terribly misused.
 - Social media are uniquely effective as tools for pressuring others.
 - #Ferguson fast becoming the most salient example.
-



Political Impact

- Use of handheld devices is remarkably constant across age groups...
 - Concentrated among those with more education, income and societal engagement.
 - Same people most likely to vote.
-



7 Ways that Social Media Change What It Means To Be in Congress

- ❑ 535 megaphones
 - ❑ New community of the like-minded
 - ❑ Less need for institutional collegiality
 - ❑ Less dependence on media gatekeepers
 - ❑ Instant/constant link to constituents
 - ❑ Instant/constant link to constituencies
 - ❑ Instant /constant link to donors
-



Fragmentation

“How do you drive a national political conversation when there are 100 voices and sources of information instead of three?”

Geoff Garin

Democratic pollster / strategist

.



7 Profound Challenges Little Changed Since 2008

- Restoring economic confidence
 - Redefining national security
 - Defining America to the World
 - Power relations / Immigration
 - Taking the debt and deficit seriously
 - Grasping the nettle on taxes / spending
 - Tackling Medicare and Social Security
 - Confronting choices on health care
 - Rebalancing energy and environment
-



What Can Congress Still Do?

- VA repairs
 - Border-focus immigration bill
 - Tax extenders
 - Another CR (avoid shutdown)
 - Investigate administration failures
 - Confirm Obama appointees
 - Pursue lawsuit against Obama
 - Anything else one chamber can do
-



New Media and Tech Put to Test in 2014 Midterm Elections

- Social media techniques should be crucial in low-turnout scenario
 - But big historic forces at work in midterms
 - Swing is against the party in the White House
 - Especially strong in sixth year of a presidency (1938, 1958, 1966, 1974, 1986 and 2006)
 - Rare exceptions to midterm swing:
 - 1934 / 1998 / 2004
-



2014 Governors / Mixed Bag

- California & New York stay blue
 - Texas & Ohio stay red

 - 6 other mega-states shaky for incumb party
 - FL / PA / GA / NC / IL / MI

 - Question marks elsewhere

 - Parties may wind up with same ratio
-



Back to 2001

A Senate Oydyssey

Current Senate = 53 D and 45 R and 2 Ind

New Senate = Likeliest scenario a tie

□ Dems defending 22 seats

- Battling 5 retirements MT / SD / IA / MI / WVA
- 5 other D's NC / LA / AR / CO / AK

□ GOP defending 11 seats

- One retirement = uncertainty in GA
 - One incumbent under pressure in KY
-



House: Not Much Change

- Current House = 232 R's
 - Next House = 225-240 R's
 - Fortress Redistricting Prevails
 - Greater efficiency of GOP votes
 - Partisan maps locked in through 2020
-



2016 GOP Race Underway

- Jeb Bush
 - Rand Paul
 - Rick Perry
 - Ted Cruz
 - Chris Christie
 - Scott Walker
 - Rob Portman
 - Marco Rubio
-



2016 Democrats: One Question

- Hillary running? If not then....
 - Joe Biden
 - Elizabeth Warren
 - Bernard Sanders
 - Martin O'Malley
 - Mark Warner
 - Kirsten Gillibrand
 - Amy Klobuchar
-



Tech, Media, Politics

- Continuing revolution
 - Big data
 - Social media
 - How does it change...
 - Media realm
 - Congress
 - Elections
 - Looking Ahead
 - 2014 and 2016
-