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EXAMINING HOW SOCIAL MEDIA HAS IMPACTED POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS
IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

This Honors Thesis explores the impact of social media on recent political campaigns in order to gauge the status of electoral culture in the early digital age. This topic is important because our democracy, like any other complex system, is adapting to the digital realities of the 21st century. The thesis explores how advancements in social media have shaped how candidates campaign for political office and how campaigns have changed in recent years because of social media. Historical analysis has helped to define what social media is in the 21st century and how its continued development will continue to impact political campaigns. The original research has shown that communication surrounding political campaigns has engaged and involved more citizens because of the two-way nature of new media and will likely continue in this direction with the growth of social media mobile technology.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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INTRODUCTION

How has American government and politics evolved since its inception? In what ways do candidates, campaigns, and those in office inform and involve constituents? How does social media improve participation, communication, and engagement in the political process? Many possible answers to these questions may come to mind as the legislative process, scope of government relations, and the role of government has changed as a result of new technologies and new priorities among the American people and elected leaders. New amendments have been added to the Constitution that have changed the identity and character of the nation over the course of more than two centuries.

One priority among elected leaders has not changed: the need to effectively communicate while campaigning for office remains a top priority for candidates and decision makers once the campaign comes to a close.   The research I present in this project should be of particular importance to elected leaders, campaign officials, and government relations staff and all others who help shape campaigns and public policy. This thesis investigates the role of social media in political campaigns and explores long-term consequences. Social media's ability to mobilize supporters to action may be its most significant contribution to date. Social media has transformed information delivery and processing, news coverage, and campaign communication operations. As illustrated by recent campaigns, these digital tools represent a new frontier of voter mobilization and

the ultimate result of elections. Using social networking outreach tools such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, candidates can raise money, identify and engage supporters, and build networks of volunteers.

Social media has helped to revitalize the way candidates and elected officials communicate and connect with voters. The new communication style shapes the policy direction of the Presidency, Congress, and state legislatures. Some government relations experts have used social media as a tool to rally support for various initiatives. Many candidates have used social media in an effort to reach a more diverse group of voters. Social media platforms allow citizens to build personal networks. These networks help to shape the viewpoints and perceptions of citizens while influencing the priorities and topics in a campaign. New technologies like smart phones that use social media have created a new opportunity for campaigns to reach a diverse audience. Social media helps to make the flow of campaign information like advertisements and local volunteer opportunities more easily accessible to voters. This convenience helps to engage more people with the political process. More than at any point in history, social media has helped to give ordinary citizens unique resources and the ability to make a significant impact in a campaign. This increased level of information and opinion sharing serves to engage the public at all levels of government. These new media platforms allow the public to connect with their public officials on a more direct level, allow our elected officials to provide a more in-depth rationale for their viewpoints on policy, and create a more dynamic discussion of current affairs among the American people.

In my research, I will explore how advancements in social media have impacted how candidates campaign for political offices in the United States and give an insight to

how these offices have changed in recent years because of social media. Existing

research has indicated that social media has impacted political campaigns at the national

level. However, the scholarly material that explores the impact of social media at the state

and local level is still evolving. In my thesis, I will attempt to discover what impact social

media has made on political campaigns and the political process at the local and state

level.

This thesis employs a three-chapter structure to explore the impact of social

media. In Chapter 1, I will trace the evolution of technology and politics throughout

political history. I will use a historical analysis to define social media and understand the

full context of the reach of social media on political campaigns and elections at the

federal, state, and local level. In Chapter 2, the research will investigate the rise of social

media and the emergence of evolving use patterns. I will use a variety of contemporary

examples in Chapter 3 to illustrate the influence new media has had on public affairs.

Through a series of expert interviews with a variety of elected officials and

campaign/government relations experts who have extensive experience with state and

local politics, I will examine the impact of social media on local campaigns. I will then

project my findings into the coming decades, offering speculation as to what future

political campaigns will look like.

But before we address the future, we must first understand the past. We head back

more than two hundred years to the first presidential elections when, believe it or not,

technology was already playing an important role in politics.

Chapter 1

Technology and Politics: Evolution throughout American History

In the 220 years since the United States held its first Presidential election, campaigning for the American Presidency, Congress, Governorships, and a plethora of state and local office have been transformed. Significant demographic changes among the American people, advancements in communications, and innovations in technology have helped the country evolve and grow. The likes of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Lincoln would not be able to imagine the state of American campaigns and elections or contemporary policy formulation at the beginning of the 21st Century. From what used to be a small gathering of members of the electoral college to what is now almost a never ending 24 hour a day campaign, running for the American Presidency, Congress, and other political offices has changed and become an elaborate, arduous, and grueling fight for candidates, families of candidates, staffers, and armies of volunteers.

Media coverage of presidential campaigns has become a 24 hour, 365 day a year process. Tons of mainstream journalists and reporters from major news organizations like CNN and the *New York Times,* along with local newspaper reporters, TV personalities and Internet writers and bloggers travel with the candidates everywhere they go. Almost every word that a candidate says is caught on film and can be used or twisted by opponents. Media and communication experts and political strategists have taken on considerable roles in modern campaigns. Almost every public speech and statement from a candidate is well vetted before it is delivered to media outlets. Along with changes in

what the American people want and expect in candidates, a substantial proliferation in political advertisements through television, Internet, and recently social media have changed the way candidates run for office. Many campaigns now feature slogans and catchphrases as central campaign messages, poll tested language in speeches made for television audiences, laborious fundraising efforts, opposition research, strategy, turnout, and communications. This extensive process only continues and intensifies once a candidate for the Presidency among other political offices is sworn into office and begins the process of governing.

When some people express the concern that social media could mean the end of traditional political communication as we know it, they are likely referring to the transformation in human interaction because of new media. Throughout history new media forms have been developed that have changed the world. Radio, television, and the telephone all impacted the world in much of the same ways as contemporary media forms. However, the society that multiple generations of Americans and global citizens have grown up with and been a part of has forever been changed because of the two-way communication and engagement that smart phones and social media have created.

Before examining the significance and impact of social media within public affairs, it is important to explore the broader context of the developments within new media by tracing its definition and historical evolution. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines social media as "forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)." No discussion of media is complete without considering the concept of social networking. Webster

defines networking as "the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business." Social networking and using social media has become a part of everyday life for the nearly billion people around the globe who use at least one social networking website.

In September 2012, *Business Week* reported that Facebook had registered almost one billion users. Nearly one in seven people around the world use social media, which has made it an incredible phenomenon worthy of serious research and exploration. Social media, in its earliest and most rudimentary form dates back to the 1700s with the invention of the telegraph. It truly was the first form of two-way communication that allowed messages to be transmitted between people in different locations. It was designed with the purpose of making communication easier and more efficient among people. For the first time in human history, the telegraph allowed instant communication over significant distances. After Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, communication for hundreds of years relied on printed materials. It could take days, weeks, or months for messages to be sent from one location to another. Before the development of the telegraph, political campaigns, cultural advancements, and business were determined by location. The world functioned as independent regions that did not depend on one another. People in one region had few resources or access to events happening in other parts of the country of world.

After the telegraph, the world was transformed and began its journey into a globalized and connected community. Authors Charles F. Briggs and Augustus Maverick wrote in their 1858 book "The Story of the Telegraph, "The whole earth will be belted

with the electric current, palpitating with human thoughts and emotions … How potent a power, then, is the telegraphic destined to become in the civilization of the world! This binds together by a vital cord all the nations of the earth. It is impossible that old prejudices and hostilities should longer exist" (Briggs & Maverick, 1858). The telegraph made a tremendous impact on business and policy. The telegraph planted the seed for the growth and development of communication technologies that would promulgate the creation of television, the Internet, and other contemporary social media platforms.

The invention of the telephone transformed communication between Americans and people around the world in the early 1900's. The telephone could be used to connect people in their homes, businesses, and schools. The telephone contributed to a transformation in the way social relationships and social interaction took place.   The telephone made communication among people more efficient and expanded the network with which people could communicate regardless of geographic proximity.

The inventions of radio in the early years of the 20th Century brought people together to share information and common ideas. Franklin Roosevelt was the first candidate to use radio to speak to voters. Roosevelt's campaigns changed the expectations and perceptions among American voters of how candidates should communicate with them. President Franklin Roosevelt made use of the new technology of the time to directly speak with Americans on the radio in addresses known as "fireside chats." He was able to personally communicate his message with the American people and share his vision and ideas. His use of this new technology helped to build unity among the American people. He effectively used that sense of unity to advocate for his policies. According to an analysis from the Miller Center at the University of Virginia,

"Through his "fireside chats," delivered to an audience via the new technology of radio, FDR built a bond between himself and the public—doing much to shape the image of the President as the caretaker of the American people (American President, 2013). The bond that Roosevelt built with Americans, through radio, reflects the most powerful result of modern social media. Regardless of location, radio in the 1930's or Facebook communities in 2014 both serve the same function to unite people and build common networks of people with common interests, fears, and aspirations.

The phenomenon of candidates speaking directly to voters would forever define and shape the scope of political communication. Roosevelt's use of the radio highlighted the potential impact that technological breakthroughs in society would have on political communication and the ability to engage voters. It would ultimately set the standard for future developments that support the very foundation of "new media" forms in the 21st Century.

In the 1960s when television became a significant factor in American culture and political campaigns, it further developed the impact of media on American culture and the American people. As Americans recovered from World War II and the lasting effects of the Great Depression, Americans began to look to the future. Soldiers returned home and began to start families. Between 1945 and 1964, the number of American births boomed. Americans began to feel a sense of relief and optimism compared with what they had felt over the course of the last two decades. Many Americans had a home, goods, and access to an education. This economic and personal growth is illustrated in how the percentage of Americans with a TV grew exponentially over a thirty-year period.

For example according to the Library of Congress, in 1950 only 9% of Americans had a television set. By 1970, however, 96% of households had a television set (Library of Congress). Because of its widespread availability and access for so many people, television had the ability to impact the national dialogue and reflect issues happening in society. Just as television's influence was felt and reflected in in popular culture, television became a transformational medium that would forever impact American politics. One apparent example of the impact of the new media of the time occurred with the first televised Presidential debate between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy in 1960. Kayla Webley writes in *Time*:

> It's now common knowledge that without the nation's first televised debate…Kennedy would never have been president. But beyond securing his presidential career, the 60-minute duel between the handsome Irish-American senator and Vice President Richard Nixon fundamentally altered political campaigns, television media and America's political history.

Nixon, who came across as pale, nervous, and generally uncomfortable, could not recover from his poor television performance and it spelled defeat for his campaign. Kennedy appeared calm and confident. Historians like Alan Schroeder, a media historian and associate professor at Northeastern University believe that those who listened to the debate on the radio thought Nixon had actually won while those who saw it on television believed Kennedy had won. According to *Time,* "by 1960, 88% of American households had televisions. This was up from just 11% the decade before. The number of viewers

who tuned in to the debate has been estimated as high as 74 million, by the Nielsen of the

day, *Broadcast Magazine*." Just as radio had allowed for decades earlier, television

allowed political candidates to directly reach voters. Television involvement in political

campaigns was certainly not limited to coverage of debates or candidate speeches.

Political candidates began buying advertising time to reach prospective voters. Television

forever transformed the role of media in American political campaigns. However,

television offered a one-way form of communication. Starting in the late 1990s and into

today, the expansion of the Internet has forever changed American campaigns and

elections just like radio and television had done decades earlier.

In order to understand the state of social media today within American politics, it

is vital to understand its full historical context and development. According to Dr.

Anthony Curtis of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, "Social media are

Internet sites where people interact freely, sharing and discussing information about each

other and their lives, using a multimedia mix of personal words, pictures, videos and

audio." Individuals and groups are able to engage in discussion and take action. Social

media in its most current form can be traced back to the establishment of the Internet in

the late 1960's. "Dial-up" Internet used telephone lines to connect people to the modern

Internet and remained as the only method available for connection through the mid

1990's. In 1971, the first email was successfully delivered. In the late 1980's and into

the 1990's Internet service providers like America Online and EarthLink grew

substantially and offered Internet access to millions of people. In 1994, more than 1,500

Web servers were online. In 1997, the Internet reached one million websites. In 1998,

major Internet search engine company Google was founded, which allowed web users to

perform searches for virtually any topic ranging from a political candidate's personal background to research on a piece of legislation.

At the turn of the century in the year 2000, 70 million computers were connected to the Internet. In 2001, the online encyclopedia Wikipedia was started. It has increased access to knowledge and current events for anybody with computer access. By 2003, there were over 3 billion Web pages publically available. In 2004, Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard University, it would later grow into one of the world's most visited websites. In 2005, YouTube began offering a database of videos to consumers. The advent of Facebook and YouTube among other social networking sites and products like Myspace and cell phones would forever change the course of political communication (Curtis, 2013). In less than a decade, these new services would dramatically impact political campaigns and how candidates reach and engage voters.

The Presidential campaigns and elections of the 21st century thus far offer a stark contrast in campaigning styles and communication strategies than in many contests of the past two centuries. Dennis Johnson, professor of political management at the Graduate School of Political Management at George Washington University, writes in *Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century*, "So much has changed during the past decade in political campaigning that we can almost say 'it's a whole new ballgame'" (Johnson, 2011). Just as the world has evolved with advancements in technology and social media, campaigns have grown and developed along with these innovations. As interpersonal communication has changed with advancements in instant messaging, email, social media, and cell phones, recent campaigns at the local, state, and Presidential level have developed new systems and methods of political communication with voters.

It was only eighteen years ago in the Presidential race of 1996, for the first time, that candidates even had websites for voters to visit. Johnson goes on to write, "In the 1990s, the term "new media" was just coming into our vocabulary. Blogging, social networking, RSS feeds, vlogs, Web 2.0...all of these terms were unknown a decade ago." As recently as the 2004 Presidential election between President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry, infamous sites today like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter were still being created or did not even exist at all. All of these technological breakthroughs have enabled people to help frame the debate and, therefore, the outcome of campaigns and pieces of public policy.

Major candidates for their party's nomination for President must go through countless interviews and media background investigations in order to remain a serious contender. Candidates must answer questions about statements made in the past about public policy and a seemingly endless range of personal questions. Clips of speeches made decades earlier can now be found on YouTube with ease. Reporters often bring up these statements, or comments made by those close to the candidate, which can put candidates in uncomfortable situations. In March 2008, videos surfaced of Barack Obama's one time pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright in Chicago. The videos featured the pastor making incendiary, racist, and anti-Semitic remarks during services. These videos went viral across the Internet. Senator Obama's campaign faced a serious challenge in dealing with the videos and the issue of whether Obama had ever heard provocative comments made in person. The campaign handled the situation well and Obama received much regard for his speech about the tapes and the broader topic of race relations in America. However, this example illustrates the impact that YouTube and similar sites can

have on Presidential elections. The story remained a headline for weeks among national media organizations and helped frame the agenda for national discussion. It also contributed to nasty Email campaigns of people calling Obama "un-American" and contributing to unfounded rumors about his birth location.

As social media has grown over the past decade, so have the amount of rumors spread about candidates and pieces of public policy. Websites and blogs like the Drudge Report on the right and the Daily Kos on the left do not follow traditional journalistic standards. These sites and others like them will often post stories of scandals or other unfavorable reports without relying on objective facts. Voters are bombarded with so much information that these stories often appear to be real stories from credible sources. Unfortunately, this avalanche of information has made some voters less informed of accurate campaign or policy details. These websites and information from them conveyed through social media websites allowed rumors such as Obama being a Muslim to seem legitimate to some voters. For example, data from the Pew Research Center from July 2008 indicated that 12% of Americans thought Obama was a Muslim (Pew 2008). These websites and the massive amounts of information available can harm the process and change the national dialogue away from more valuable topics such as policy positions. For instance, unsubstantiated rumors about "death panels" as part of the Affordable Care Act were allowed to flourish especially in right leaning media because of the power of social media and blogs. It is important that voters use reliable and trusted information from a variety of sources to make informed decisions. As social media continues to grow, campaigns and officeholders will need to work even harder to ensure that voters receive credible information.

One individual with a video camera or today even a cell phone can record a candidate saying something unfavorable and make it a national headline. Facebook and Twitter can "inform" millions of people of a "news" event essentially as it happens. For example, during a private fundraiser, then Senator Obama was recorded calling people in certain rural areas and small towns "bitter" and "clinging to guns and religion". These comments were headline stories across the country and, once again, influenced the national conversation regardless of the context. As another example of the power of new media and how Presidential campaigns and communication has changed, in 2006, Senator George Allen of Virginia was at a campaign rally when he called on a volunteer from his opponent's campaign who had been given the task of following Allen's campaign and filming public comments. Allen called the man, "macaca", which many perceived as a horribly racist comment. Because the scene was recorded and posted online, it derailed Allen's campaign and resulted in his once-unexpected defeat in the election to Democrat Jim Webb. Before this election, many Republican activists viewed Allen as a prospective Presidential candidate in future years. Although it would have still been a very competitive race and he may have still lost the election, this moment, and the Senator's reaction to it, virtually ensured his loss for the Senate seat, and along with it, his chances for the Presidency.

As a result of these new developments in communication, candidates are often shielded from the press for questions. Campaigns try to develop a clear and consistent message and try vigorously to avoid being taken off that message. Just as television started in the 1960s, these advancements in technology and social media in the 21st century have made Presidential campaigns more focused on communications. Major

national campaigns employee dozens of political communication strategists and new media advisors to try to find the most efficient and ways to reach voters with the campaign message. These strategists work to help the campaign avoid being taken off that message by other issues or topics. Campaigns and candidates, therefore, have become more focused and structured in dealing with the news media and the public.

"New media" forms that have emerged in the beginning of the 21st century have transformed the world and forever impacted our political, economic, and social system. New media can be defined as communication mediums that offer a two-way system of interaction and utilize modern technology to connect people whether they are sitting in the same room or separated by a vast ocean. These media forms have encouraged a greater sense of engagement among personal interactions and interactions with the consumer, political, and cultural world. Interpersonal communication has changed with advancements in instant messaging, email, social media including Facebook and Twitter, and cell phones. Interpersonal interaction has changed as a result of new media. As hard as it is to believe, a mere 10 years ago, nobody used Facebook or Twitter to communicate. Cell phones were primarily only able to send and receive calls and were not nearly as widespread as today. Ten years later, most major corporations, political leaders, and business leaders all utilize these new media tools to connect with and engage others. These new media tools have become a key part of all integrated marketing communications. According to research done by Socialmediatoday.com that used data provided by Facebook, the social networking site is the most visited site on the Internet. As of February 2014, Facebook registered 1.15 billion monthly active users around the world. The average user spends more than 15 hours on Facebook per month on 40

separate site visits (Romeri, 2014). A citizen's interaction with the world has become significantly less linear because of new media forms. Social media has certainly worked to give people around the world the resources to be able to connect with each other in real time whether it's for personal reason or to streamline communications between campaign offices and staff, legislative offices, and volunteers thousands of miles apart.

The existing research has shown that there have been both positive and negative results as a consequence of new media that indirectly and directly have implications on the political world. From a positive perspective, Americans are more connected today than at any point in history with both their fellow citizens, and with the international community. New media has helped to facilitate a more globalized and interconnected world. We have experienced a more diverse world because of new media. Major corporations like Wal-Mart have expanded operations overseas with the help of new media. This has created millions of new jobs in some of the most impoverished areas of the world, and raised the quality of life for millions more. Political leaders have used social media to reach and engage citizens during the campaign phase to inform, involve, and engage potential voters and supporters. The technological advancements and application of new media has certainly had a significant role in these developments and advancements.

Throughout history, the United States has witnessed profound developments in the area of communications technologies and how they relate to political campaigns. In the early days of the Republic, there were few communication mediums, primarily newspapers and letters. The development of the telegraph represented the first opportunity for rapid communication of information, regardless of geographic location.

This was the first step towards connecting the people of the United States, and ultimately people around the world. The telephone assisted in linking people to communicate campaign and political information by voice. Radio allowed political campaigns and other entities to spread viewpoints and policies with a wide, diverse audience. Television was revolutionary in that it allowed people to receive information in a visual format rather than a strictly audio one. Outside of television, there is perhaps no communication medium of greater impact to society than that of the Internet. Email has allowed campaigns to share policy positions, campaign news, and announcements to a vast list of people with the click of a button. Sites like YouTube have allowed campaigns to share video clips of campaign rallies and other marketing materials to anyone with an Internet connection. Finally, social media has offered campaigns the unique opportunity to reach people in a concise and unique format. Twitter allows candidates to share brief quotes and updates with supporters, while Facebook permits campaigns to provide even richer content. Mobile phones have allowed candidates to reach citizens wherever they may be, both through social media applications and through SMS text messaging. In summary, "new media" technologies have established a two-way form of communication that has revolutionized how campaigns and their supporters communicate. The implications of these technologies are still developing, and further research will determine to just what extent society has been impacted.
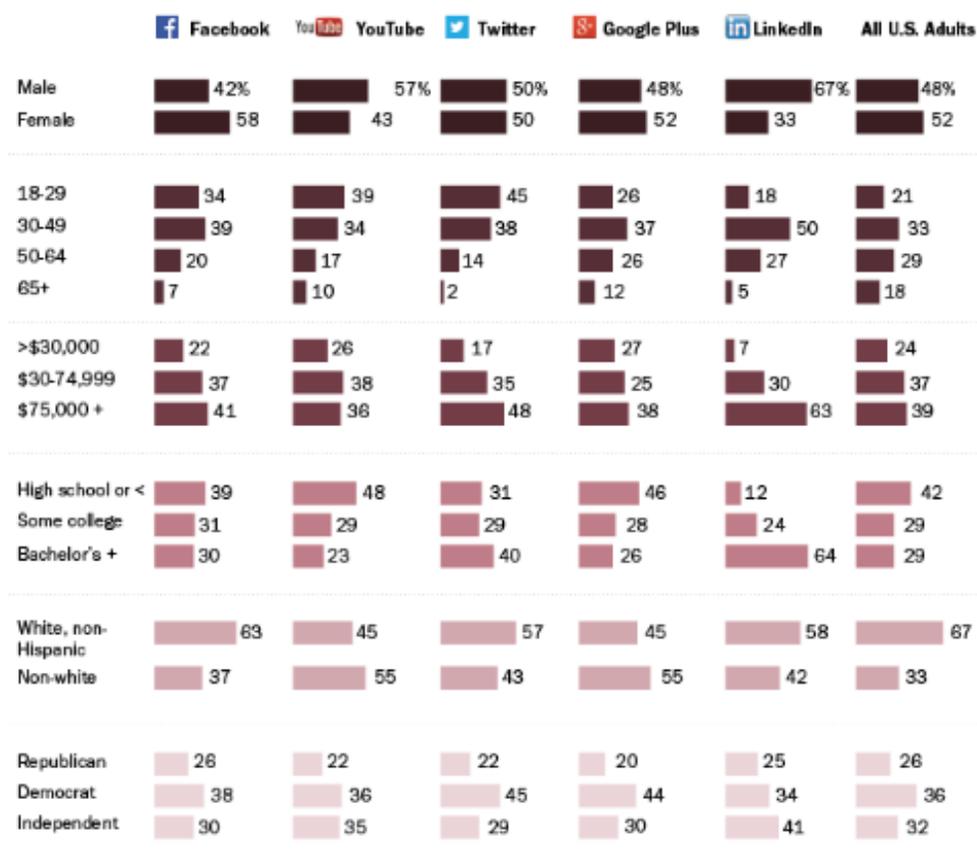
Chapter 2

The Rise of Social Media: Emergence, Evolving Use Patterns, and Impact

In order to understand the impact that social media has had on campaigns in the 21st century, it is critical to examine the data that illustrates the usage of social networking sites among Americans. More Americans are getting news from social networking sites than ever before. Data from Pew Research Journalism Project by Jesse Holcomb, Jeffrey Gottfried, and Amy Mitchell shows that Facebook is the largest social networking site among U.S. adults with 64% of adults using it. Over half of those users get news from the site that amounts to over 30% of the entire population of the United States. YouTube reaches nearly 51% of American adults with 10% of its users getting news from the site, which represents 10% of the entire U.S. adult population. In addition, Twitter reaches 16% of adults and half of them use it to get news. The research from Pew shows that 65% of news consumers on the top five social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google Plus, and LinkedIn), get news from just one of these sites and for 85% of them it is Facebook. 26% of adults who get news from a social networking site get news from two sites and 9% got news from three or more sites (Holcomb, Gottfried & Mitchell, 2013). The Pew research study also examined the demographics of those who get news from social media sources. The results of this demographic analysis are shown below (See Figure 1).

Profile of the Social Media News Consumer   Figure 1

Percent of U.S. adults who consume news on...

	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter	Google Plus	LinkedIn	All U.S. Adults
Male	42%	57%	50%	48%	67%	48%
Female	58	43	50	52	33	52
18-29	34	39	45	26	18	21
30-49	39	34	38	37	50	33
50-64	20	17	14	26	27	29
65+	7	10	2	12	5	18
>$30,000	22	26	17	27	7	24
$30-74,999	37	38	35	25	30	37
$75,000 +	41	36	48	38	63	39
High school or <	39	48	31	46	12	42
Some college	31	29	29	28	24	29
Bachelor's +	30	23	40	26	64	29
White, non-Hispanic	63	45	57	45	58	67
Non-white	37	55	43	55	42	33
Republican	26	22	22	20	25	26
Democrat	38	36	45	44	34	36
Independent	30	35	29	30	41	32

Note: Based on Facebook news consumers (N=1,429); Twitter news consumers (N=359); Google Plus news consumers (N=194); LinkedIn news consumers (N=144); YouTube news consumers (N=456); and U.S adults (N=5,173).

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As part of the Pew Research Journalism Project, the analysis above detailing demographic information of Americans who get news from social media shows that generally each site appeals to a somewhat different group. This helps to explain why many sites have been able to flourish and why campaigns must pay attention to the potential target audience and potential impact of each site. Twitter news consumers are significantly younger than news consumers on Facebook, Google Plus and LinkedIn.

Facebook news consumers are significantly more likely to be female than news consumers on YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn. Democrats are generally larger consumers of news across most major social media platforms than both Republicans and Independents. Additionally, American adults who consume news through social media sites generally have higher income levels. Political campaigns must pay particular attention to this demographic data if they are to effectively reach many Americans. Many social media news consumers, however, still access news on other more traditional platforms including print newspapers, cable and local TV, and radio. Moreover, it is important for campaigns to consider the medium through which social media consumers are getting news. The Pew research suggests that nearly 21% of all adults who get news on a social networking site often get news on a mobile device. As the availability of easy to use mobile devices increases, campaigns must understand that many voters get news on their mobile devices. Campaigns must develop websites and applications that voters can conveniently access through their mobile devices to reach a significant portion of Americans.

Although Americans of all ages use social media, it is most prevalent among younger Americans. In order to understand the impact that social media has played on youth political participation and engagement, political strategists and scholars must understand the demographics of youth voters. The table below organized by Pew's 2008 youth voter analysis (Keeter, Horowitz & Tyson, 2008), use exit poll data by NBC News, to summarize characteristics of youth voters. The table illustrates a diverse set of voters (See figure 2).

Who Are the Young Voters?

Race/Ethnicity	Total %	18-29 %	30-44 %	45-64 %	65+ %
White	74	62	71	79	84
Black	13	18	14	11	7
Hispanic	8	14	10	6	6
Men	47	45	45	48	49
Women	53	55	55	52	51
Less than $50,000	38	56	29	29	52
$50,000-$99,999	36	30	39	39	32
$100,000 & higher	26	14	31	32	16
Married	66	31	73	77	70
Not married	34	69	27	23	30
Protestant/Christian	54	50	52	56	60
White Evangelical Prot.	23	20	20	25	26
White Mainline Prot.	19	13	18	21	26
Black Protestants	9	12	10	7	6
Catholic	26	24	28	25	28
White non-Hisp	19	13	20	20	21
Jewish	2	2	2	2	2
Something else	6	8	6	6	2
None	12	16	13	11	8
Attend religious services					
Weekly	40	33	36	40	52
Occasional	43	47	48	42	30
Never	16	19	15	16	15

Source: National exit poll conducted by NBC News.

Figure 2

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press conducted an analysis of youth

voter turnout in the 2008 Presidential Election, with data from NBC News national exit

polls. Scott Keeter, Director Survey Research, Juliana Horowitz, Research Associate and

Alec Tyson, Research Analyst used exit poll data to study youth voter turnout in the

election. Nationally, youth voter turnout increased one percentage point as a total share of

the electorate from 2004 to 2008 from 17% to 18% and to 19% in 2012. This would

suggest that youth did not play a significantly larger role in the 2008 election than in the

previous election. However, looking closer at the data shows that in several states particularly Indiana, Virginia, and North Carolina youth turnout, defined as voters aged 18-29, increased 5, 4, and 4 percentage points respectively in those states. The *New York Times* reported that Barack Obama won North Carolina by 0.4 points or 13, 692 votes. Youth voters made up 18% of the total electorate in North Carolina. Exit poll data showed that among voters aged 18-29, Obama won 74% of the vote (Election Results 2008). Obama's wide margin of victory among younger voters suggests his support among youth played a significant factor in his success winning the state.

Beyond directly contributing to increased votes, one must consider the full impact that more youth political participation had on the 2008 election and subsequent elections. Pew reported that 28% of young voters in battleground states said they had attended a campaign event, more than any other age group. Exit poll data reported by Pew showed that young voters in swing states were far more likely to have been contacted by the Obama campaign than by the McCain campaign. 25% of young voters reported that they were contacted by the Obama campaign compared with 13% by McCain. In 2004, Senator John Kerry's campaign reached 22% of young voters and President Bush's campaign reached 19% of youth voters (Keeter, Horowitz & Tyson, 2008). Young voters offered general volunteer support, went door to door, made phone calls, and talked to family members and friends during the 2008 campaign. Social media undoubtedly opened up new opportunities for people to get involved and get connected to like-minded voters.

What is the relationship between youth political participation and social networking? The Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project surveyed Americans to help answer that question (See figure 3).

Political social networking activities by age group

Figure 3

% within each age group who...

	18-29	30-49	50+
Use a social networking site	74%	54%	24%
% of SNS users who used the sites to...			
Discover which candidates your friends voted for	23	17	12
Post political content	17	9	12
Get candidate or campaign info	16	11	18
Friend a candidate or cause	12	10	12
Join a political group/cause	12	9	10
Start a political group/cause	2	2	2

Source: The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 3-24, 2010 Post-Election Tracking Survey. N=2,257 national adults ages 18 and older, including 755 cell phone interviews; n=925 based on social networking site users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

The results indicate that nearly three quarters of all Americans aged 18-29 use a social networking site and 16% get candidate or campaign information from a social media platform. Although social media's influence is not fully known and future trends of youth political participation will help determine the long-term impact of social media, Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks are clearly a major part of the media landscape that campaigns must use to reach voters.

The results of the 2012 Presidential election indicate that youth voter participation actually increased over 2008. "The role young people would play during this election has been a major question in American politics for over a year, and it seems the answer is that

they have been as big a force at the polls in 2012 as in 2008," said Peter Levine, director of the youth research organization CIRCLE at Tufts University (Kingkade, 2012). In an article published the day after the 2012 election, Kevin Robillard of the online political news site Politico reported, Mitt Romney would have cruised to the White House had he managed to split the youth vote with Barack Obama. According to Levine's analysis.

> Obama easily won the youth vote nationally, 67 percent to 30 percent, with young voters proving the decisive difference in Florida, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio, according to an analysis by the Center for Research and Information on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University. Obama won at least 61 percent of the youth vote in four of those states, and if Romney had achieved a 50-50 split, he could have flipped those states to his column, the study said.

Robillard's article goes on to make the point that increased youth political participation has become a consistent phenomenon in recent elections. He writes, "Levine and Rock the Vote President Heather Smith both said…that increased turnout over presidential elections in 2004, 2008 and 2012 shows high voter turnout is a "new normal" with the millennial generation" (Robillard, 2012). With increased participation among younger voters, campaigns must find ways to reach these new votes. Social media has become a cost effective and efficient tool to reach youth voters.

Facebook, YouTube, Email, Twitter, and campaign-specific social networks have changed the expectations, norms, and daily campaign activity for candidates. On the legislative side, social media has also impacted elected officials. Facebook has compiled data about usage among members of Congress. According to information from the

Congressional Management Foundation, "most Members of Congress have integrated

Facebook into their communications operations, and are using the technology to gauge

public opinion, communicate with constituents, and reach new people." The chart below

with data from the Foundation illustrates key finding about the role of social media

among the communication activities of members of Congress (See figure 4).

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* Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Capitol Hill senior managers and social media managers surveyed think Facebook is a somewhat or very important tool for understanding constituents' views and opinions.   Figure 4

* Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the senior managers and social media managers we surveyed think Facebook is somewhat or very important for communicating their Members' views.

* Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the staffers think social media enables their offices to reach people they were not reaching before. A majority also feels the benefits of social media outweigh the risks.

* Nearly 60% of Hill staffers feel social media is worth the time their offices spend on it. Only 10% feel it is not. The younger an office staff is, the more likely they are to integrate more office outreach through social media services like Facebook and Twitter.

* Nearly three-quarters (68%) of social media managers believe email and the Internet have made Senators and Representatives more accountable to their constituents.

* Nearly one-third of congressional offices (31%) said their staff did not spend enough time cultivating a Facebook and Twitter presence – almost equal to concerns over not utilizing traditional media outreach.

Source: Congress Management Foundation - http://www.congressfoundation.org/projects/communicating-with-congress/social-congress

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Social media has had a fascinating historical evolution with serious implications

for campaigns and elected officials. It is likely that as social media continues to develop,

its role within the public affairs will only become more impactful.In the past few years,

average citizens have earned a great amount of influence in campaigns and have been

able to organize and create grassroots movements through social media. The race of

2008 between Senator Barack Obama and Senator John McCain was the first national

election that saw the full use and the power of social media to organize voters and

volunteers. In fact, on Election Day 2008, 2,397,253 people were friends with Obama

and 622,860 with McCain on Facebook. Andy Kessler writes in the *Wall Street Journal*,

"In November 2008, Twitter had about four million users, and 100,000 followed

candidate Obama. During the primary elections of the 2012 campaign, President Obama

had more than 12.5 million followers (while Mitt Romney had about 350,000 and Rick

Santorum about 150,000). In 2008, Facebook had roughly 50 million users—nowhere

near today's billion users—and Google+ didn't exist." Social media has helped changed

the way campaigns target prospective voters, fundraise, and turnout supporters to vote.

Facebook, Twitter, texting on cell phones, and specific campaign social networks

have given average people more influence and power in campaigns. Kessler goes on to

write in the *Wall Street* Journal, "Online, one's political affiliation—Democrat,

Republican or, most important, independent—can be easily ascertained. Campaigns can

read your tweets and your Facebook "likes," plus those of your friends. Campaigns build

new databases of independents every election because converting them to one side or the

other is the name of the game (Kessler, 2012). Campaigns have become more about

turning out supporters and enhancing one's base of support through very targeted

measures involving psychographic and consumer data about individual voters. Because

of social media, voters have also been able to become more involved with campaigns.

Voters no longer need to go to a regional campaign office to volunteer. Campaign

websites give people the individual power to call their neighbors, friends, and other

people right at home from targeted voter lists available through campaign volunteer

pages. During the 2008 campaign and the time since, individuals could create campaign

events on Facebook or personalized local campaign website pages with little advance notice and turnout hundreds of other new activists to organize voter registration drives, run phone banks, and canvass door to door in local neighborhoods. Multitudes of people in states across the country registered to vote for the first time. The energy that the campaigns, in part through social media, brought to the election encouraged thousands of volunteers to both campaigns.

Senator Obama's and Senator McCain's campaign websites featured networking options for people in nearby communities to come together and volunteer. The *Los Angeles Times* described the impact of these pages, "Obama's best-known tech bona fide is the social network his campaign designed. My.barackobama.com (or MyBo, as its users call it) took social networking -- until then, little more than an amusing way to stay in touch with far-flung friends or chat with colleagues -- and developed it into a powerful tool for fundraising, community building and voter turnout" (Nicholas, 2012).

In addition, both campaigns, especially Senator Obama's, made successful use of text messaging. During mid-summer when speculation was growing over who the Senator would chose as his Vice-Presidential nominee, the Obama campaign announced that the Vice-Presidential selection would be announced through text message to supporters. This strategic decision encouraged many new people to register their phone numbers with the Obama campaign as supporters. These supporters received the Vice-Presidential announcement of Joe Biden personally through their mobile phones. Volunteers were also able to receive information about local events, and reminders of when and where to vote before and on Election Day right to their cell phones.

A decade ago, this type of personal, direct communication was not possible with voters. The campaign's effort achieved remarkable and unprecedented success signing-up more than 2 million supporters and undecided voters just in the time leading up to the announcement. Over the course of the Presidential race, the Obama campaign gathered an Email list that was estimated to have over 13 million names on it. These volunteers helped both candidates raise hundreds of millions of dollars. Both campaigns made use of new fundraising tools that websites and social media made possible. The Obama campaign, which had a significant technological advantage over the McCain campaign, was estimated to have risen over $500 million just through online donations. Social networking sites and Email gave the campaigns the opportunity to both raise money and regularly communicate with voters. The Atlantic reported from an Obama campaign official as saying, "It's about treating a person as a person no matter what they're doing," says someone knowledgeable about the Dashboard project" (Obama Campaign Organizing Platform) (Scola, 2012). This statement illustrates the profound impact that social media has had on modern Presidential campaigns.

New forms of media have changed the way campaigns fundraise, communicate with voters, and organize supporters. Some of the Republican Primary debates held earlier in the year featured questions from average viewers posted on YouTube or Facebook. The level of near personal interaction between candidates and the public has been made possible because of new social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The 2012 Presidential election may have been the most technologically advanced ever in American history with both the President's re-election campaign and the campaign of former Governor Romney making full use of campaign websites, Email,

Facebook pages, YouTube, Microblogging networks like Twitter, cell phone applications and text messaging notification for campaign activity. According to statistics by Yahoo! News, there were over 1.11 billion monthly active users who used Facebook as of May 2013. Campaign and policy oriented mobile apps for cell phones and tablets are likely to have a significant impact on the future of new media and its continued influence on the American Presidency. CNBC reports that Facebook accesses 76% of all smartphone users. This number, and the trend it represents across other social media platforms including Twitter, Pinterest, and other pages, indicates significant growth in mobile technology available to Presidential campaigns and elected leaders in future years.

In the 2012, Presidential Election, both Governor Romney's and President Obama's campaigns introduced campaign mobile applications. This moment represented the first campaign where mobile applications were utilized. The Obama Campaign App included election information, organizational tools, and campaign news all in one location. The *New York Times* reported that Deputy Campaign Manager Stephanie Cutter told reporters:

> As we push through the last 100 days of this election, our focus remains on helping make grassroots organizing as easy and accessible as possible for the volunteers and supporters that are the heart and soul of this campaign. That's why we designed our new app to help break down the distinction between online and offline organizing, giving every supporter the same opportunities to get involved that they would find in a field office (Shear, 2012).

The application allowed supporters to access lists of potential voters on the basis of a user's location. Volunteers could also access information such as age and political party

affiliation. Supporters could then submit responses directly into the application, which would provide more data for the campaign. The real-time data collected through use of the campaign application streamlined the work of campaign volunteers and saved valuable time and resources. The application gave the campaign the resources to effectively micro-target voters in part because of the data collected from volunteers using the application. In addition, Governor Romney's campaign offered an application that promised to alert supporters when the Governor selected a vice-presidential running mate in a similar manner as Obama did in 2008 with text messaging.

The introduction of mobile applications for cell phones and tablets like the iPad in the 2012 Presidential election likely reflects the direction new media will take in future years. Presidential campaigns must consider the full impact and potential consequences of mobile technology that will undoubtedly continue to grow and develop in future years. The impact of mobile applications may in fact expand to officeholders. For example, a White House mobile application available to Americans with information from the White House blog and press briefing room, photos, video archives, and alerts when the President is about to make public comments, and Presidential responses to news developments are all available on White House mobile applications. Americans now have 24 hour a day, 7 days a week/ 365 days a year access to information.

The developments in new mobile technology have certainly impacted the 2012 Presidential election. The Presidency itself has also been impacted through the introduction of White House apps. Because of quickly changing developments in new technology and social media, the full impact of social media on the American Presidency will not be known for some time. Social scientists must continue to conduct research to

explore the consequences of social media on the Presidency. Future research will be needed to effectively measure what the consequences and results are of the growth and advancements in new two-way media platforms. However, one can be sure that social media will continue to influence the scope and reach of the American Presidency.

Social media advancements have impacted how candidates campaign for the Presidency of the United States and how elected Presidents fulfill the duties of their office. Media coverage of campaigns and the policy making process have become 24/7 events particularly in the last decade. Candidates and officeholders must now be aware that essentially any comment made in public will be recorded and could be a potential issue. Advancements in new media over the past few years have transformed campaigns and made a lasting impact on policy. In 2012, the amount of information available to an average voter with a computer or Smartphone, although much of it unsubstantiated, is staggering and can contribute to perceptions of candidates and proposed legislation.

Although all less than a decade old, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, among other social networks have greatly impacted the national dialogue in our country especially in regard to political races and legislative policy debate. In the past few years, the influence of average citizens in campaigns has grown because of the way social media has allowed people in nearby communities to organize and create grassroots movements. Campaigns that take advantage of the opportunities presented by new media have a substantial advantage over opponents as seen in the 2008 contest between Senator John McCain and Senator Barack Obama and the 2012 contest between Governor Mitt Romney and President Obama. President Obama and his Administration have also made significant gains in governmental department use of social media. Although there is still

much room to grow, the White House has successfully used Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to host virtual town hall meetings with voters across the country.

The White House has also introduced the use of mobile applications in an effort to better connect with the American people. Many executive departments and agencies are beginning to use the resources of social media to communicate with citizens. The open and personal communication helps to engage the public to take a more active role in elections and the formation and debate of public policy. This new communication medium gives constituents the opportunity to provide feedback and voice their opinions to candidates and elected officials. Social media has provided new ways to re-connect the American people with leaders, and promotes a sense of public awareness and accountability. It has had a tremendous effect on candidates and officeholders. Ultimately, further research will be needed to continue to explore the full impact of social media on campaigning for the highest office in the land among many other political offices.

Chapter 3

Future Implications: Interviews with Experts

Social media has gone beyond influencing elections and has begun to shape political dialogue, public policy, and the future of American politics. The open communication that social media helps facilitate captures the spirit of the founders in a way they never would have imagined. America's founding fathers believed that distance between government leaders and the people was a danger to democracy. Many of these early leaders' thoughts were shaped by their experiences with the British Parliament. The relationship was highlighted by a disconnection between government and the people. Communication has been an area where the public perception of government is often negative. Therefore, social media holds a valuable role because it helps build openness, transparency, and accountability between candidates and the public. This openness is important to the policy making process. As social media continues to grow and develop, its impact on American politics will also continue to expand.

The role of social media in political campaigns is in a state of constant evolution, as is the state of social media in our society at large. This research project seeks to capture a snapshot of the current application of social media in politics in the United States. In order to do so, it was essential to seek the perspectives and input of actual practitioners in the government and government relations fields. This chapter will analyze the numerous interviews conducted with those working for and with government. This chapter will serve to indicate to what extent social media has infused the organizational

functions of campaigns, government, and the organizations with which it works on a regular basis.

Looking ahead to what technological breakthroughs will develop over the course of the next few years represents a major challenge when ten years ago, most Americans have never even heard the words Facebook or Twitter. It is important to note that my research is largely qualitative in nature. It is meant to give an important and needed insight into the quickly developing world of social media and its impact on contemporary political campaigns and elections. The research reveals a clearer picture of the relationship between new media forms and their respective roles in campaigns and organizations at multiple levels of government. Although more research and more data is needed to fully understand the comprehensive impact of social media on political campaigns, this work presents a clearer idea of what the effects have been to date. After an extensive set of interviews involving both government officials and government relations experts, the results give an important but not fully yet developed understanding of the role of social media in political campaigns and elections.

The prior analysis of the use of social networks in national level political campaigns and research into state level and local campaigns suggest a dichotomy between the impacts on both. At the national level as evidenced by the successful use of the Obama Presidential campaigns of 2008 and 2012, the historical evolution of media, the data from the Pew Research Center, and national exit poll data illustrate that social media has in fact made a clear impact on national political campaigns. It is clear that campaigns that effectively understand and use social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, have an advantage communicating with voters across the country

and a unique ability to engage supporters and mobilize them to volunteer to work on the campaigns and to influence others. Traditional media forms including television and newspapers still plays an essential role in national campaigns but it is clear that of all media forms utilized by campaign communication efforts, social media is on a course to have the strongest growth in both impact and reach in the near future.

At the state and local level of political efforts, there is more ambiguity as to the effect of social media. Some campaigns have used social media extensively while others have not yet embraced its use in political communication. In an effort to better gauge the usage and importance of social media on state and local campaigns, a series of interviews were conducted with both Republican and Democratic members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly including State Representative Rob Kauffman, Chief Operating Officer of Penn Strategies Government Relations and Campaign organization Jason Fitzgerald, State Senator Rob Teplitz, Former Lt. Governor and Acting Governor of Pennsylvania Mark Singel who also serves as President of the Winter Group, registered lobbyist and Senior Associate with Penn Strategies Phillip Trometter, and Mayor Darren Brown of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. The group represents a set of diverse viewpoints and perceptions on the impact of social media on state level and local campaigns for political office. Each has a unique perspective and point of view on the role of social media in campaigns that can be used to reflect the broader implications across geographic borders. (See Figure 5)

Figure 5: A Snapshot of the Use of Social Media by Interview Participants as Seen on Public Pages					
	State Rep. Rob Kauffman	**Mayor Darren Brown**	**State Sen. Rob Teplitz**	**Penn Strategies**	**Winter Group**
Facebook Page	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Number of Likes	782	395	781	192	N/A
Date pages started	July 4, 2008	October 14, 2012	December 21, 2012	November 7, 2011	N/A
Twitter Page	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Pages as candidates	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A
*As of March 29, 2014					

Mayor Brown, State Representative Kauffman, State Senator Teplitz, and Penn Strategies all have active Facebook pages while Twitter is not used across the board. Each of the interview participants agreed that social media does have an impact at varying levels for local and state political campaigns. Singel summarized his perceptions of the impact and reach of social media: "It has revolutionized politics in recent years. Every credible campaign for President, Senate, House, Governor, and certain state races has to have technology and social media experts to move your cause forward." He feels that Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean's 2004 Presidential campaign was in many ways the leader and helped to introduce the idea of the potential impact of interactive online content in a campaign with the goal at the time of connecting younger people when older people had not yet caught on to the impact. A common message among those interviewed was that Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube can be used to effectively engage voters and constituents. According to Trometter, Penn Strategies has used social media effectively to build grassroots support for an issue. He says, "It is about having a

conversation with constituents. Social media helps to build a story and humanize people and subjects."

Singel agrees that social media has become an effective tool for government relations. He says that clients have become dependent on the need for immediate information that cannot always be delivered with traditional forms of media. Social media, he says, allows his organization to deliver quicker results and updates on the status of legislative bills and votes while also being used effectively to promote issues that are important for clients. As a result, the Winter Group is on the verge of a major investment to make their Internet presence significantly more robust. Singel says that social media including the organization website is important enough that he is willing and prepared to invest "thousands of dollars to bridge into the 21st century." Singel expressed that he believes social media is less meaningful in local races for offices such as a seat in Pennsylvania state House of Representatives where in many districts a candidate going door-to-door talking with voters can obtain the number of votes needed to win.

However, at the State Senate, Congressional, and statewide campaigns, the scope and character of a political campaign changes from more "retail" style or more "wholesale" style of meeting voters. He used Democratic Gubernatorial candidate Tom Wolf as an example of a candidate who has effectively utilized social media to build support. "Tom Wolf has used social media effectively to support his full campaign communications. He recently had a huge media buy on TV where he was able to share his persuasive message repeatedly, and with social media, it has helped his campaign identify and reach likely voters." (See Figure 6)

Figure 6: An Analysis of Social Media Platforms of Candidates for Governor of Pennsylvania					
	Rob McCord	**Kathleen McGinty**	**Allyson Schwartz**	**Tom Wolf**	**Tom Corbett**
Facebook Pages	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Likes	6,777	5,088	50,921	55, 413	25,425
Date pages started	January 26, 2012	August 23, 2013	April 4, 2013	March 31, 2013	September 14, 2009 **From 2010 Campaign
Twitter Page	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Followers	1,803	1,389	3,240	2,336	4,502
*As of March 29, 2014					

Singel makes the important point that every candidate for Governor of Pennsylvania now has an interactive webpage and social media platform including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other networks like Instagram. Singel says, "The Internet and social media has offered brand new tools to campaigns. If a candidate is trying to run a traditional campaign without using these tools, he or she is going to get crushed in the election." These online websites are helping to attract people to the candidates. Besides the ability to connect with voters, these social networks also help to discover important data that can be used within a campaign. Analytics of campaign Facebook pages, for example, show valuable information such as demographics of supporters and varying levels of support in different locations of the state. These metrics can be helpful in generating voter lists, poll workers, and engaging volunteers.

Penn Strategies Facebook page contains mostly pictures with captions and information promoting upcoming events. There is also a significant amount of content dedicated to sharing information about internal staff members, recent legislative or political accomplishments, and links to relevant stories within the governmental realm. This information sharing helps to build trust with clients and helps start a dialogue on an issue. Fitzgerald says that Penn Strategies usage of social media helps the organization stand out to clients. Trometter and Fitzgerald highlight the importance of social media when they said that the firm pays an outside consultant to maintain the official Facebook page and website. Trometter illustrates the potential importance of social media when he described that a candidate for Mayor of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, ran a successful write in campaign and was victorious in large part because of the ability to leverage Facebook and other social networks to reach voters. Years ago, it was nearly impossible to win a political race with a write-in campaign. This example demonstrates that people notice social media and it can be used to drive support and to mobilize supporters.

Fitzgerald says that social media has been extraordinarily helpful to campaigns because of its relatively inexpensive cost and ability to reach many potential voters. He says he is "constantly amazed" about the responses he sees of social media and the potential reach is has with voters. For campaigns he has worked on including Rep. Tom Marino's successful 2010 campaign for Congress and Tom Corbett's campaigns for Governor, he says he encourages the use of Facebook. "As recently as a few years ago, I would not have pushed for a strong web presence but today it is extraordinarily important for campaigns to have social media. As it becomes more commonplace among an older demographic, its impact in local races is increasing."

Mayor Brown used Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube both on his mayoral campaign and now in office. He uses YouTube extensively in an effort to reach and engage constituents. Now in office, he utilizes various video styles including talks with citizens about important issues in the Chambersburg community. He also features a video series called "Sit Down with Mayor Brown" where he discusses issues with other local officials in addition to "Around Town with Mayor Brown" where he showcases important events and projects within the town. Mayor Brown's usage of social media as a candidate and elected official confirms the perspectives of campaign staff members and lobbyists Fitzgerald and Trometter. Social media helps to reach voters and constituents who may not be paying as much, if any, attention to traditional media. Mayor Brown shared a story about a controversial issue in the Chambersburg community. The development of a SWAT style team for the smaller community became a debated issue among citizens. Mayor Brown, in an effort to engage constituents with the issue, conducted an interview with the chief of police that was posted to his YouTube page. He said his goal was to make the issue accessible so that more people could learn about the issue. He shared his belief that it is important for people to be informed so that they can understand issues. Governmental accountability is a top priority for Brown. He says that usage of social media makes government officials and candidates more accountable and accessible because of the sharing of information. He says that a sense of trust can be built through social media.

In many places and for many candidates, social media has become a convenient, cost-effective, and efficient way for candidates and elected leaders to connect citizens with information. Each person interviewed contributed that social media can help build

familiarity among voters and constituents. Representative Kauffman suggested that the use of social media is more common among younger members of the legislature. He says that he has learned what type of content is more effective on his Facebook page. Kauffman says that visual content like pictures are most effective. His page shows various pictures of multiple constituent groups at the Capitol Building meeting with Representative Kauffman. When he used to post significant content about legislative bills or actions, he was less successful in building a dialogue with constituents. He says that the page is helpful showing citizens his involvement with the community.

Although Kauffman does use his Facebook page regularly, he believes that traditional media like television, radio, and direct mail are still most effective in reaching voters in smaller electoral contests. He cautions that although social media is becoming more effective at engaging voters and constituents, he still believes that traditional outreach within his district is most effective. "There is something about direct voter to voter, eye to eye contact that cannot be replicated through Facebook or other social networks," said Kauffman. Mayor Brown agrees that traditional media is still currently most effective at reaching voters. But he believes that social media still plays a crucial role in helping him reach a diverse set of people as a supplemental source of information.

According to Senator Rob Teplitz, he believes that social media complements traditional media and is another avenue to reach voters and constituents. He says his campaign and office uses social media to hear directly from constituents and his office can respond in a timely manner. He believes that social media has not replaced traditional media, but it is another important way to reach the people he represents. He says, "We will always utilize traditional forms of media like newspapers, and television.

Social media, however, is an important new forum to reach people particularly those voters and constituents who are receiving most of their information online."

Fitzgerald makes a fundamental point that may be the topic of research in the near future. He says that social media, particularly Facebook, is very effective at mobilizing people to action. He says it is effective at motivating and organizing supporters of a campaign or a piece of legislation to send emails and calling other voters or legislators. He shares the sentiment that social media has not replaced more traditional media forms especially in local elections. He says that a candidate cannot win an election just using social media and that traditional media is still critical, but that social media helps and that in statewide campaigns, it "undoubtedly has an impact." Although it has not become an absolutely critical component of a local campaign, social media has grown in just over a decade to become an important mechanism to communicate with supporters. It helps to build grassroots support for an issue or a campaign and allows candidates, legislators, and organizations to easily communicate with people in real time. He says, "I am not convinced it can be used to significantly move undecided voters, but social media makes mobilizing people significantly easier and that has been its biggest impact."

Trometter agrees that many local elections for less publicized offices are successful without using social media in a significant manner but that for many there is still an expectation that candidates should have an active page and if a candidate does not have one, it can create uncertainty that contributes to a sense of dishonesty about particular candidates. Singel offers an important context for the quickly growing and evolving realm of social media's place in campaigns, "Five years ago I would say who

needs it, but today it has become an important reality, without it I am missing information." He agrees that at the most local level races, its impact is less significant. He believes that social media has not replaced traditional media particularly in local election, but that is has become "essential tool in the toolbox for campaigns." Mayor Brown says that he "would not be as successful without it" and that it is "important for leaders to be seen by constituents." His sentiment reflects a trend that social media is likely to continue to grow and gain more impact in local campaigns and elections. Local newspapers that remain a significant source of information in smaller communities are building online content. In Chambersburg, the Public Opinion newspaper has over 23,000 "likes" on its official Facebook page and over 2,300 "followers" on its Twitter page that both highlight news stories and breaking developments. This suggests that the influence of social media on local political campaigns will also be impacted by the evolution of traditional media forms.

What are the takeaways from my research? Undoubtedly, political campaigns have evolved as a result of social media. It is critical to understand the impact and long-term policy consequences of social media as it impacts campaigns, elections, and the policymaking process. Just as the invention of the printing press enabled the rapid spread of information over 500 years ago, social media in the 21st century has made a lasting impact on political campaigns and elections at all levels of government. Prior to its invention all publications had to written by hand which made the spread of information arduous and time consuming. However when Johannes Gutenberg began using the printing press in Europe during the 15th century, it enabled the massive spread of information throughout the known world. Books became cheaper and more readily

available. This spread of information enabled the Renaissance to mature into the Enlightenment, which gave birth to the American Revolution. As of this moment, it is still too early to be able to predict what the future holds for social media and its relationship to the political world. It is clear, however, that social media has made a significant impact on national elections. Starting with Howard Dean's Presidential campaign in 2004 to now President Barack Obama's 2008 and 2012 campaigns, social media has made a lasting impact on Presidential elections.

Although it is a challenge to accurately predict the future of technology, the ability of social media to quickly reach voters and mobilize supporters to action is an incredible phenomenon that is worthy of continue academic research. Representative Kauffman, Senator Teplitz, former Lieutenant Governor Mark Singel, Mayor Darren Brown, Phillip Trometter, and Jason Fitzgerald each offered a unique insight and perspective on how they see social media's impact in modern local campaigns for political office. The general consensus one can take away from these interviews is that social media has in fact made an impact in local campaigns and that this is a relatively new development within the political world. They all suggested that social media has not replaced traditional media such as direct mail, newspapers, and television. On the other hand, each interview participant agreed that social media is an important tool for local campaigns to utilize in reaching, and particularly, mobilizing supporters to volunteer and organize while promoting the interests of a campaign. Social media's ability to mobilize supporters to action may be its most significant contribution to date. Each elected official that was interviewed also suggested that the reach of social media does not end with conclusion of a political campaign. Mayor Brown, Representative Kauffman, and

Senator Teplitz all maintain active webpages and social media accounts in an effort to connect and engage constituents. They all use their respective social media platforms to share developments with constituents, while to a certain extent, starting a dialogue and sharing information with a diverse audience. In future years, further exploration will be needed to examine how social media has evolved along with its relationship to government and politics.

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