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INVESTING IN SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AND DIGITAL MARKETING TO CAPTURE THE POLITICAL AUDIENCE'S (VOTERS)

Prof. Dr. Haridas Jogdankar
Asst. Professor in Commerce and HOD Business Economics
JASC College, Affiliated to Dr. BAMU .

ABSTRACT

The present examination contends that political correspondence via web-based networking media is intervened by a stage's advanced engineering the specialized conventions that empower, oblige, and shape client conduct in a virtual space. A structure for understanding computerized models is presented, and four stages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat) are thought about along the typology. Utilizing the 2016 U.S. race as a case, interviews with three Republican computerized strategists are joined with online networking information to qualify the investigation's hypothetical case that a stage's system structure, usefulness, algorithmic sifting, and datafication model influence political battle methodology via web-based networking media.

The basic structure of a situation its engineering personally influences human conduct. This interchange among structure and office isn't restricted to physical environs; it likewise applies to how clients connect with, and inside, online spaces. Researchers have contended already that an advanced stage's design can impact, for instance, the standards of collaboration among clients, the deliberative nature of their correspondence, or their probability to establish popularity based beliefs. Be that as it may, in spite of the rising enthusiasm for political crusading via web-based networking media, few investigations have addressed how a stage's structure highlights impact political on-screen characters' correspondence methodologies. This oversight is likely inferable from researchers' inclination for regarding web based life as a solitary media kind when, indeed, these stages display huge contrasts in their system structures, functionalities, calculations, and datafication models. The present examination looks at four online networking stages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat) along their advanced models, with the point of giving another hypothetical structure to contemplating political correspondence crosswise over web based life.

KEY WORDS: *political correspondence , system structures, functionalities, calculations.*

INTRODUCTION

The insightful carelessness to the structure highlights of online life is dangerous for two reasons. To begin with, political on-screen characters progressively use internet based life as crusading instruments during decisions. In the United States, political promoting on advanced media crosswise over neighborhood, state, and national decisions ascended from 1.7% of advertisement spending in the 2012 race cycle to a

14.4% offer in 2016. Also, a developing assortment of writing from nations outside the United States shows that appointive battling via web-based networking media is genuinely a worldwide marvel.These and other contextual investigations help clarify how political entertainers utilize online life to propel their political plan in a given social, social, or constituent setting. Taken together, however, they come up short on a binding together hypothetical structure for contemplating political correspondence on various internet based life stages. This investigation gives such a model through its attention on computerized structures.

The second reason that researchers' negligence to the job of advanced models is tricky concerns the expanding pluralization and fracture of the web based life scene. More up to date stages like Snapchat and Instagram strive for clients' consideration and infringe upon the piece of the overall industry recently held by stages like Facebook and Twitter. Accordingly, settled suppliers either forcefully tear up the highlights of market challengers or, on the other hand, endeavor to get them out completely. Both Instagram and Facebook's fuse of Snapchat-explicit highlights, for example, vanishing messages and self-recording "stories," represent the previous technique. The last system, in the interim, is confirm by Facebook's procurement of Instagram and WhatsApp, just as Twitter's fruitful offer for Periscope (a live spilling administration). The ongoing changes in the web based life scene urge political on-screen characters to embrace new stages and highlights to achieve various parts of the electorate. The current pattern among researchers to direct single stage thinks about, or to subsume various stages under a solitary "internet based life use" variable, is consequently no longer adequate to survey the unpredictability of contemporary "cross breed political correspondence frameworks".

Planning to help future cross-stage investigate, this examination is a hypothetical piece offering another heuristic for moving toward political correspondence via web-based networking media. To begin with, I propose a system for conceptualizing computerized models by exhibiting a typology that comprises of four sections: arrange structure, usefulness, algorithmic separating, and datafication. The computerized models of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat (as per how they were organized in mid 2016) are then looked at along the typology. To support the correlation, two information types are joined in the examination. The principal is subjective bits of knowledge from meetings with three advanced strategists working for Republican applicants in the 2016 U.S. decision. The second is quantitative web based life information from three stages (Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat). These exact components don't unequivocally test the causal impact of advanced designs on crusade system; such an investigation is outside the extent of this article. Or maybe, the experimental information are expected to help spur new pathways for similar cross-stage examine that can, piece-by-piece, further our comprehension of contemporary political battling.

DIGITAL ARCHITECTURES AND AFFORDANCES

Regardless of whether a mysterious web discussion like Reddit or 4Chan, a locally electronic interpersonal interaction website like Facebook or Twitter, or a solely versatile application like Snapchat or WhatsApp, web based life suppliers are looked with the test to create advanced specialized apparatuses that are anything but difficult to utilize and utilitarian to the requests of fluctuating client socioeconomics. In the meantime, these suppliers are contenders available and endeavor to create various profiles that draw in clients, request publicists, and continue financial suitability. Obviously, at that point, internet based life stages show huge contrasts in their computerized models: the specialized conventions that empower, compel, and shape client conduct in a virtual space. In accordance with what van Dijck and Poell allude to as the rationale of "programmability," a web based life's advanced design is written in code, impacted by calculations, and always changed by engineers to keep up an aggressive market advantage.

Past insightful work has contended successfully that computerized correspondence advances give auxiliary affordances to specialists. In any case, the idea of affordances is hypothetically dubious, and its systematic utility is faulty. Extensively comprehended as "conceivable outcomes for activity", affordances does not have a settled upon definition, and the exceptionally conflicting use of the term has been broadly investigated somewhere else. As researchers work to refine the idea, there remains a need to "portray how

affordances work" by analyzing the basic components of an innovation and researching how they shape client conduct. The contention here is that the design of an innovation supports its affordances, while offering an all the more exactly discernible object of examination.

Take, for instance, stairs as an innovation. Stairs manage the cost of climbing, however it is the engineering plan of stairs that impacts their apparent and real "climbability". An affordance approach should think about the degree to which stairs empower climbing, while a building approach would look at how climbability is legitimately affected by explicit properties of the innovation: the separation between steps, the point of the ascent, and different viewpoints identifying with the's structure. The two methodologies are not really at chances, yet the compositional methodology is apparently increasingly helpful for contrasting climbability crosswise over various kinds of stairs.

Applying the affordances idea to online life, Kreiss, Lawrence, and McGregor have as of late characterized affordances as "what stages are really fit for doing and view of what they empower, alongside the real practices that develop as individuals communicate with them". One could likewise contend that the abilities, recognitions, and works on identifying with a stage get fundamentally from its engineering. In spite of the fact that the idea of affordances alludes to what properties of correspondence are empowered by a stage (e.g., secrecy, diligence, or perceivability), the computerized structures heuristic drills into how a stage's particular plan highlights influence specific correspondence rehearses. Put compactly, computerized structures shape affordances and, thus, client conduct.

Aside from Kreiss think about, the use of the affordances idea to legislators' online life use is uncommon (see Stier, Bleier, Lietz, and Strohmaier, 2018, for an ongoing special case from Germany). This is no doubt because of the way that the vast larger part of concentrates via web-based networking media crusading are single stage considers. The greater part of the current cross-stage examinations will in general cast their exact look on natives' exchange organizes about political issues. This last strand of research exhibits that residents' online correspondence about governmental issues is impacted by how stages are coded and planned. for instance, demonstrate that the namelessness gave to client accounts on YouTube negatively affects the obligingness of talk in remark fields versus the more customized records required by Facebook. Dutceac Segesten and Bossetta, in the interim, find that in the web based life discourses following the 2014 European Parliament races, the Twitter publics of Sweden and Denmark were all the more firmly adjusted in their assessments of Eurosceptic parties than clients remarking on the Facebook pages of predominant press outlets. They decipher their discoveries by contending that comparative client socioeconomics are attracted to Twitter's particular highlights and news-situated substance profile, making a client base whose mutual frames of mind toward Euroscepticism supersede national varieties between the two nations. Both of these examinations propose that the imbued structural highlights of a stage have direct ramifications for the sorts of political data and correspondence that stream crosswise over it.

Absolutely, advanced designs alone can't completely clarify how or why political on-screen characters battle via web-based networking media; the setting of each race is basic in such manner. In any case, addressing how a stage's computerized engineering impacts battle practices may give understanding into its procedure and, also, fill in as a hypothetical structure to educate similar, cross-stage research plans. Furthermore, the computerized designs heuristic isn't constrained to investigations of political battling; it can likewise be connected to about any aspect of online political correspondence: political discussions among residents, challenge preparations, or journalistic answering to give some examples.

In the accompanying segments, four parts of a web based life's advanced engineering are laid out: organize structure, usefulness, algorithmic sifting, and datafication. These classes have been picked on the grounds that each is contended to influence either the political substance issued by legislators or natives' entrance to political messages. System structure impacts how clients distinguish and interface with political records. Usefulness oversees the principles of media generation and dissemination over a stage. Algorithmic separating figures out what substance clients are presented to, and datafication gives the way to legislators to target voters outside of their current endorsers. These classes are not stage explicit and can in this way be

utilized as bases for looking at legislators' advanced system crosswise over various online networking channels.

NETWORK STRUCTURE

The system structure of a web based life stage alludes to the in-assembled criteria overseeing associations between records. Nearly by definition, "social" media enable individual clients to interface and collaborate with companions: "Companions" on Facebook and Snapchat, "Devotees" on Twitter and Instagram, or "Associations" on LinkedIn. Moreover, most online life enable clients to build up associations with open figures, brands, or associations (counting ideological groups and government officials). Such high-asset entertainers normally keep up records with an alternate interface and suite of apparatuses contrasted with the normal client (e.g., Public Pages on Facebook or Business Profiles on Instagram).

Contrasts in the conventions supporting a stage's system structure influence three parts of client associations. The first is accessibility, which alludes to how clients can recognize new records and buy in to their substance. The second is availability, alluding here to how associations between records are started and set up. Facebook's dyadic Friend structure, for instance, expects companions to affirm connections and has the impact of making on the web organizes that to a great extent reflect a client's disconnected connections. Then again, Twitter's availability is unidirectional naturally and does not require a client to affirm a mentioned association. This auxiliary component urges one's Twitter system to be overall made out of ties with no genuine association.

The third part of system structure is protection, which relates to the capacity of clients to impact who can recognize them through ventures (accessibility) just as how associations cooperate (network). In spite of the fact that Snapchat will in general support a progressively private system of close ties contrasted with Instagram or Twitter's default open protection settings, every stage enables clients to redo in the case of approaching association solicitations should be affirmed by the client. Independently and together, the three components of system structure accessibility, availability, and protection impact the system geography framed on a stage, the quality of ties among clients, and, in this manner, the kind of substance prone to be produced on the stage.

FUNCTIONALITY

Functionality is the typology's broadest category and governs how content is mediated, accessed, and distributed across platforms. The first element of functionality is the *hardware* from which the platform is accessible: mobile, tablet, desktop, or wearable accessories like smartwatches and eyewear. Previous research suggests that hardware has direct effects on political content. Groshek and Cutino, for example, find that differences in levels of civility and politeness in tweets correlate to whether they are issued from a desktop computer or mobile device. The second component of functionality is the layout of the *graphical user interface* (GUI): the visual portal through which users access and interact with the platform's features. The GUI dictates the look of the social medium's home page, how a user navigates across different spaces within the platform (e.g., from a group page to an individual profile), and the available "social buttons" that simplify processes of content diffusion across networks (e.g., Twitter Retweets or Facebook Shares).

Related to the GUI is the third category of functionality the *broadcast feed*. The broadcast feed aggregates, ranks, and displays content on a platform in a streamlined manner. Social media vary in terms of whether or not the platform maintains a centralized broadcast feed (such as the "News Feed" format popularized by Facebook), what types of accounts can contribute to the feed, and how content on the feed is accessed (i.e., scrolling down vs. "click-to-open"). The fourth component of functionality is *supported media*. This refers to the multimedia formats the platform supports technically (e.g., text, images, video, GIFs), the size and length constraints placed on acceptable media (text character limits or video lengths), and the rules governing hyperlinking (both in terms of incorporating links from outside the platform as well as intra-platform linking via hashtags). Finally, the fifth element of functionality is *cross-platform integration*: users' ability to share the same media across several platforms simultaneously.

These five components set the structural parameters for content creation and distribution across a platform. Moreover, they are also mechanisms that give rise to user-generated norms of behavior that influence network structures (i.e., how ties are maintained) and the content posted by users (what is customary and acceptable on the platform). A platform's functionality can "dispose networked publics toward particular behaviors", and Vaterlaus, Barnett, Roche, and Young have found that transgressing the "unwritten rules" of Snapchat can adversely affect interpersonal relationships among youths. To avoid similar negative effects with potential voters, political actors must be sensitive to the norms of appropriate content and interaction across different social media platforms. If they fail in their online performances through social media, political actors risk being perceived as out-of-touch, inauthentic, and less electable to voters.

ALGORITHMIC FILTERING

Algorithmic sifting alludes to how designers organize the choice, grouping, and perceivability of posts. For the typology's emphasis here on political battling, a refinement is made among reach and supersede. Reach portrays how far a post falls over a communicate feed or set of systems, and algorithmic separating can either advance or restrain a post's scope. To drive income, numerous social suppliers enable clients to abrogate algorithmic sifting and further the scope of a post by offering pay-to-advance administrations, for example, "boosting" on Facebook. Both reach and supersede are most important for web based life stages with one-to-many communicate channels (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). Other internet based life keeping up a dominatingly coordinated informing profile, for example, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Telegram, Kik, and Wickr are less impacted by algorithmic sifting since messages are sent legitimately between clients. Whenever, however, the circulation and perceivability of substance is chosen by algorithmic positioning, the coded tasks executed by designers have the ability to shape clients' shared view of culture, news, and legislative issues.

DATAFICATION

Datafication, a term authored by Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier, alludes to the measurement of clients' exercises on an internet based life stage. At whatever point clients practice the usefulness of a stage, they leave advanced follows that can be gathered for an assortment of purposes: corporate publicizing, statistical surveying, or inside refinement of a stage's calculations by designers. As per the datafication rationale, keeping up a web-based social networking profile during efforts has less to do with building up availability among government officials and natives. By and large, dimensions of intelligence between these two on-screen characters via web-based networking media is low. The potential advantage for crusades to take up online life electioneering is that they can screen and collect clients' computerized follows and proper them for choices identifying with influence or preparation activities. The 2012 Obama battle, for instance, successfully used information from Facebook through an application that urged supporters to send messages to companions who were determined, in view of numerous datapoints, to be persuadable.

The computerized models typology recognizes three components of datafication: coordinating, focusing on, and examination. Coordinating is the way toward distinguishing clients in a targetable crowd through joining different types of information. For political battles, computerized strategists work related to surveying firms to display crowds who are anticipated to be good to a specific hopeful or persuadable along a specific strategy issue. Information from these models are then converged with gathering gathered information (i.e., voter documents), information gathered by the crusade, and outsider information bought from business information distribution centers that sell by and by recognizable data, (for example, data from Mastercard organizations). These information are utilized to construct crowds of people who are first coordinated to their online networking profiles and after that focused by means of the publicizing administrations offered by the stage. Vitally for crusades, examination from these messages are deciphered continuously to "split-test" substance, and battles can run a large number of randomized trials to more readily specialty and sharpen their messages for influential impact.

DATA COLLECTION AND METHOD

With the four key highlights of the typology presented, the advanced structures of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat are efficiently looked at along every class in the accompanying segment. The examination is educated by both subjective and quantitative information. The previous is essentially made out of meetings with three driving advanced experts from four Republican battles in the 2016 U.S. presidential race (Scott Walker, Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, and Donald Trump). Noting the call of Barnard and Kreiss, interviews with crusade strategists were picked to increase firsthand knowledge into how online life and various stages specifically were used in connection to the general battle device.

The meeting members incorporated into the investigation are Chasen Campbell, Vice President of Client Strategy at the Harris Media, the firm heading Rand Paul's advanced system; Eric Wilson, Digital Director for Marco Rubio's battle; and Matthew Oczkowski, Chief Digital Officer for Scott Walker's essential crusade and Head of Product at Cambridge Analytica, the computerized counseling firm that helped Donald Trump's general decision battle. The semi-organized meetings were directed as a feature of the Social Media and Politics Podcast and are transparently available for download by means of any web recording application.

To help represent the announcements of the advanced specialists, online life information from three of the four stages (Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat) are specifically introduced. Twitter information were not gathered during the time span examined, and impediments in Twitter's application programming interface (API) rendered accomplishing similar datasets for every lawmaker unfeasible retroactively. The information that are incorporated were posted between February 22 and March 15, 2016, a time period involving multi week prior and 2 weeks after the string of essential races known as Super Tuesday. This period has been guaranteed an abnormal state of battle movement via web-based networking media. The information come from five battles' internet based life profiles: the three most noteworthy surveying Republican competitors (Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, and Marco Rubio) and top two Democrats (Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders).

Facebook information from the government officials' open pages were gathered utilizing the rFacebook bundle for the programming R. Instagram information, despite what might be expected, are hard to gather computationally in light of the fact that a client must get exceptional authorizations from Instagram to collect open information. To meet this confinement, Instagram information were gathered by means of getting to stage's web form through the creator's close to home record. Government officials' Snapchat "stories" aggregations of client produced messages that are available for 24 hr. were gathered by using Android copying and screen catching programming. Initially, BlueStacks App Player was introduced onto a Macintosh PC, empowering the creator to get to Android applications from the PC. In the wake of downloading Snapchat, the legislators' records were distinguished and pursued, except for Donald Trump. As clarified in the passages beneath, newcomers to Snapchat were hard to distinguish, and hence, Trump's record is excluded in the examination. Notwithstanding, another examination finds that over a similar timeframe, the Trump crusade seldom posted Snapchat stories.Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat Compared

NETWORK STRUCTURE

For a platform to be characterized as a social medium, it must support interactions among users. As argued above, network structure the criteria governing connections between accounts is a key component of a social media’s digital architecture. Table 1 outlines the network structure characteristics of the four platforms.

Click to view tal Table 1. Network Structure.

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	Network structure		
	Searchability	Connectivity	Privacy
Facebook	High	Personal: Dyadic Public page: Unidirectional	Personal: Closed Public page: Open
Twitter	High-medium	Unidirectional by default Dyadic (by changing privacy)	Open by default
Instagram	Medium	Unidirectional by default Dyadic (by changing privacy)	Open by default
Snapchat	Low	Dyadic by default Unidirectional (by changing privacy)	Closed by default

View larger version

A precondition for client cooperation and system arrangement is accessibility—how records are distinguished and their substance got to. On every one of the stages included here, political on-screen characters keep up freely accessible profiles with straightforwardly open substance. In any case, the accessibility of political records fluctuates crosswise over stages and is affected by the record's username and components of the GUI. On Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the open pages of government officials are ordinarily recognizable by basically looking through their names, and the genuineness of a page is frequently indicated by means of a blue confirmation checkmark on the GUI by the record's username. For Instagram and to a lesser degree Twitter, accessibility can be constrained in light of the fact that various outcomes (counting farce accounts) are returned in the wake of looking through a government official's name, and political records share a similar design as the normal client. On Facebook, government officials can build up open pages that set them apart outwardly (and practically) from private records, and these pages include conspicuously in query items. Political records on Snapchat have the least accessibility and were incredibly hard to distinguish through direct hunt in the 2016 primaries. To pursue a legislator, clients had to know the careful username of a lawmaker's record, which did not pursue a uniform example (e.g., "GovernorOMalley," "CarlyforAmerica," and "Christie"). The stage did not reveal a confirmation highlight until November 2015, and most lawmakers did not have a checked record during the time period under investigation.

To broadcast their Snapchat accounts, battles concentrated on cross-stage advancement to their current supporters on other internet based life. Wilson expressed that the Rubio crusade advanced product giveaways on Facebook and Twitter, where the battle previously had a solid nearness. To be qualified, clients were required to record that they pursued Rubio on Snapchat by transferring screen captures from the stage to their other informal organizations. Oczkowski referenced that Scott Walker, who had assembled a sizable web-based social networking finishing his Wisconsin review race in 2012, advanced his Snapchat account crosswise over Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram however would likewise "plug it at occasions and revitalizes face to face." Although battles attempted to promote their lesser-known social records on other online stages and at disconnected occasions, these messages would be principally unmistakable to the crusade's as of now existing supporters (since they are the ones well on the way to pursue the applicant).

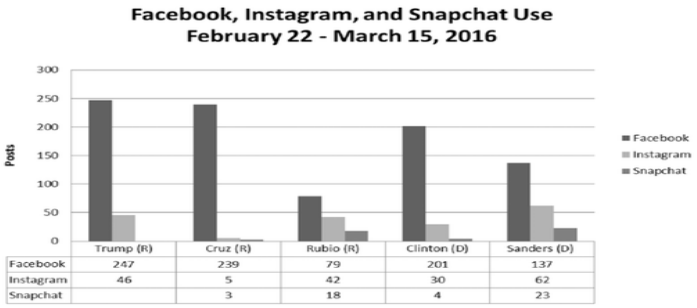
Different parts of system structure availability and protection are less important for political crusading than they would be for investigations of individual client systems. Via web-based networking media, natives set up associations with political records in a unidirectional way (i.e., clients buy in to government officials' substance without requiring endorsement), as the security settings for these records

are commonly adjusted to be straightforwardly open. Along these lines, the crusades did not display huge contrasts in practices of network or security crosswise over stages.

As contended above, be that as it may, network and security can influence the standards of correspondence among individual clients. We can in this way expect crusades would be insightful of these standards when creating their correspondence methodology crosswise over various stages. The low accessibility, dyadic availability, and prohibitive default protection settings of Snapchat set it apart from increasingly open stages, for example, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Likely, these highlights influence why Snapchat energizes a progressively casual method of correspondence among close ties. Oczkowski appears to affirm the casualness and uniqueness of Snapchat correspondence when he expresses that the Walker crusade utilized the stage to "simply give [followers] news and updates from the street on what we were doing, and ensuring that we were utilizing Snapchat suitably and not simply utilizing it with the equivalent accurate substance from each other channel."

In spite of the diverse sort of correspondence showed on Snapchat, the obstructions to accessibility restricted the stage's utility for crusades. Crowds were little, with Oczkowski evaluating the Walker crusade's Snapchat following to be upward of 10,000 and Wilson guaranteeing the Rubio channel would get view rates of a "couple of thousand every day." interestingly, legislators on Twitter, Instagram, and especially Facebook have an a lot bigger client base, boosting efforts to effectively utilize the stage to achieve voters. Contrasting the view checks of similar recordings posted over the stages can give a marker of the crowd sizes that crusades reach. A 30-s video posted by the Rubio battle on March 5, demonstrating Rubio welcoming supporters before a discourse in front of the Kansas councils, yielded 30,000 perspectives on Instagram, 43,000 on Twitter, and 66,000 on Facebook all essentially higher than the Wilson's estimation of the viewership on Snapchat. The quantity of Facebook video perspectives enlisting most elevated is a steady pattern over the battles. For instance, a video issued by the Trump crusade on March 13 ‘s video of Carly Fiorina reproving Ted Cruz earned 676,000 perspectives on Instagram, 778,000 on Twitter, and over 1.5 million on Facebook.

The massive user base of Facebook, whose platform allowed users to easily search and subscribe to politicians’ accounts, renders the platform an attractive medium for campaigns to broadcast their message to a wide audience. At the time of the data collection, Facebook (2016) had 1.1 billion daily active users, Instagram (2016) had approximately 300 million, and Snapchat had around 120 million (Snap Inc., 2017). Twitter did not report daily active users at the time but claimed 310 monthly active users (Twitter, 2016). Although these are global figures and not limited to the United States, Facebook clearly holds the pole position in regard to audience size (according to Campbell, 90% of American eligible voters). Figure 1 below depicts the number of posts issued on Facebook and Instagram, as well as the number of Snapchat stories.[1]



	Trump (R)	Cruz (R)	Rubio (R)	Clinton (D)	Sanders (D)
Facebook	247	239	79	201	137
Instagram	46	5	42	30	62
Snapchat		3	18	4	23

Figure 1. Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat use per campaign.

Unsurprisingly, of the three platforms included in Figure 1, campaigns posted the most content on Facebook. Figure 1 also shows that campaigns’ propensity to use newer platforms like Instagram and Snapchat varied. Lower polling underdog candidates, like Rubio and Sanders, showed high adoption rates for

Instagram and Snapchat. However, the trend is not consistent as evidenced by the Cruz campaign's low adoption rate of these newer platforms.

Functionality

Although network structure is one factor influencing Facebook adoption, the second part of the typology functionality also helps explain why campaigns take to Facebook. Table 2 outlines the differences in functionality across the three platforms.

Table 2. Functionality.

Table 2. Functionality.

	Functionality				
	Hardware	GUI	Supported media	Broadcast feed	Cross-platform integration
Facebook	Desktop, smartphone, tablet, smartwatch	High complexity (e.g., News Feed, public pages, groups, events)	Text (63,206 characters) Images Video (45 min) Hyperlinks Hashtags	News Feed	None supported
Twitter	Desktop, smartphone, tablet, smartwatch	Medium complexity (can be broadened with dashboards)	Text (140 characters) Images Video (30-s) Hyperlinks Hashtags	Home timeline and Highlights (opt-in)	None supported
Instagram	Same as Facebook	Medium complexity	Text (2,200 characters) Images Video (60-s) Hyperlinks (in bio) Hashtags	Friend feed and Explore feed	Posting allowed to Facebook and Twitter
Snapchat	Smartphone exclusively	Low complexity, simple layout	Text (31 characters) Images Video (10-s)	Story feed and Discover feed	None supported

Note. GUI = graphical user interface.

View larger version

The first aspect of functionality is hardware. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are accessible from multiple types of hardware: desktop computers, tablets, smartphones, and smartwatches. Snapchat, on the contrary, is *exclusively* mobile and cannot be accessed from any other type of device. This hardware-specific feature of Snapchat has two direct implications for content creation on the platform. First, to post content featuring a political candidate, the person filming snaps from a smartphone must be in close physical proximity to the candidate. The digital directors stated that a candidate's "body man," or personal assistant who travels with the candidate, was usually responsible for the Snapchat account. The second implication of Snapchat's mobile exclusivity is that content needs to be uploaded directly from the mobile device, and therefore little editing or consultation with the campaign occurs before publishing content to a story. On the other platforms, by contrast, campaigns have the ability to upload edited content at scheduled, strategic time points. Wilson hints at how Snapchat's digital architecture generates a type of content different than on other platforms:

The unique thing about Snapchat is it *has* to be done right there. You can't upload a photo, you can't edit a video; it has to be physically from that device. So, you were seeing stuff that was coming right from, you know, where Marco was at that exact moment. It wasn't coming back to headquarters and getting filtered or edited in any way.

Because Facebook, Twitter, and particularly Instagram provide several functions to edit content prior to publishing, the type of visual content on these platforms is generally more polished and complex (e.g., infographics or memes). Figure 2 below illustrates how Snapchat's hardware restrictions encourage a more raw type of footage, versus Instagram's more artistic, edited shots. Both posts were published on February 26 and cover the same rally. On the left is a screenshot of a Snapchat video, while the right screenshot depicts the campaign's Instagram representation of the event through a still image.

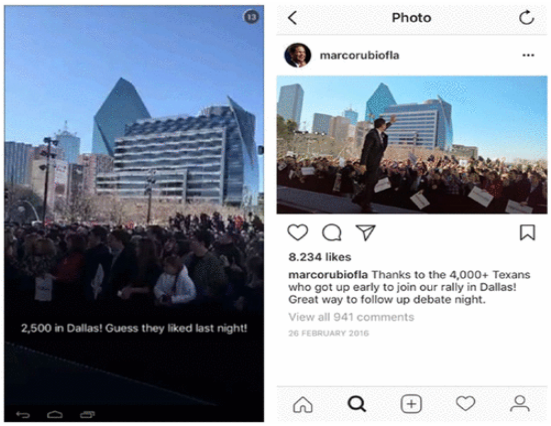


Figure 2. Snapchat/Instagram comparison.

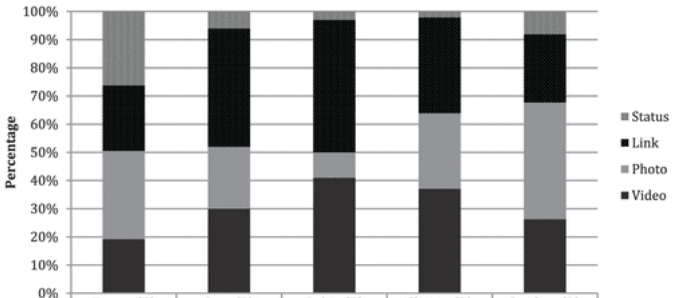
Clearly, the Instagram photo has been edited (i.e., "filtered") for artistic effect. Moreover, the picture has been strategically chosen to show both the candidate and a band of enthusiastic supporters. On Snapchat, the audience is depicted in real time and appears much more mundane. Interestingly, the two representations also differ in the number of reported attendants at the rally (2,500 on Snapchat vs. 4,000 on Instagram). This difference may signal that the ability to control and schedule content allows campaigns more time to validate or correct information.

Snapchat's less filtered glimpses into the campaign, compared with the other platforms' more polished visual content, is thus not only attributable to hardware but also its *supported media*, outlined above in Table 2. All four platforms supported text, images, and video, but they placed different constraints on the length of these media at the time of the campaign. Concerning text, Facebook capped posts at 63,206 characters, Twitter its notorious 140, Instagram limited captions to 2,200 characters, and Snapchat only allowed 31 characters to be overlaid to an image or video "snap." Regarding video, Facebook supported content up to 45 min, Twitter and Instagram a much lesser 30 and 60 s, respectively, and Snapchat only 10 s per snap. Uploaded images are supported on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, although the optimal pixel size and level of compression varies across them. This means that if a campaign wants to share the same image across different platforms, creative teams may be enlisted to alter the image to meet the requirements ingrained in the platform's architecture.

The types of multimedia the platform supports, and the limitations placed on them, directly affects the content campaigns can communicate. Although Instagram and Twitter supported video, their limitations on length do not allow for substantial, long-form content from debates or media appearances. Video content on Instagram was scant, with videos comprising a proportionately low percentage of posts compared with images. The percentage of video content on Instagram, by campaign and in descending order, was Trump (15%), Rubio (10%), Sanders (4%), Clinton (3%), and Cruz (0%). Facebook had a much higher percentage of video content, with most running more than 60 s.

Supported media also refers to the rules governing hyperlinking, and Figure 3 shows that between 23% and 47% of campaign's Facebook content comprised of links. By-and-large, links were aimed at redirecting users to the campaign's website or to a media article about the candidate. Although limitations in

the data do not support a strict comparison, similar usage of links can also be expected on Twitter. On Instagram and Snapchat, campaigns could include web addresses to their posts in text, but they were not actionable (i.e., users could not click on them to be directed off the platform). One exception is that on Instagram, an actionable link can be included only in a user's profile description. This led the Clinton and Rubio campaigns to encourage users to "check out the link in bio for more info." The purpose of driving users off the platform and onto the candidate's site is to sign them up for email lists. Oczkowski described emails as "the lifeblood of fundraising" because "over 70% of all money raised online comes from email programs," and they are also "very helpful in turning people out to events and rallies."



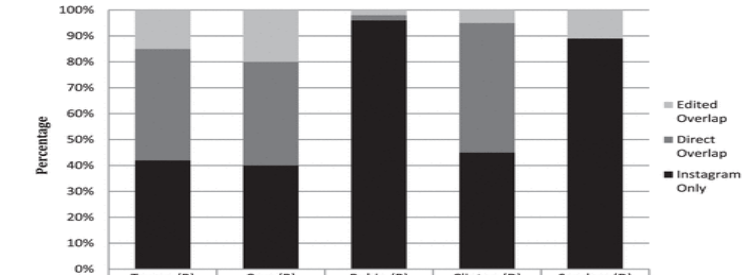
	Trump (R)	Cruz (R)	Rubio (R)	Clinton (D)	Sanders (D)
Status	26%	6%	3%	2%	8%
Link	23%	42%	47%	33%	24%
Photo	31%	22%	9%	26%	41%
Video	19%	30%	41%	36%	26%

Figure 3. Facebook content by media type.

How users access media content within these platforms, though, is influenced by two aspects of functionality: the *broadcast feed* and the *GUI*. Whereas the former structures content, the latter governs how it is displayed. Facebook's centralized broadcast feed (i.e., the "News Feed") provides the user with a series of algorithmically filtered content published by peers, subscribed pages, advertisers, and other sources appearing on the feed as a result of algorithmic contagion. Twitter's centralized feed ("Home timeline") presents users with chronologically ordered posts based on their subscriptions. On mobile devices, users also can opt-in to the Highlights feed, which presents users with more algorithmically filtered content based on relevance. Instagram has two broadcast feeds: one for subscribed connections (and advertisers), and the "Explore" feature that provides content suggestions to users. Snapchat's digital architecture, by contrast, includes almost no algorithmic filtering; the platform sorts content chronologically according to when a connection posted a message. Snapchat does, however, have a mass broadcast feed in the form of "Live Stories": series of user-generated content that are curated by the platform and typically focused around an event or geographical location.

So far, the functionality of the platforms has been compared according to how elements of their digital architecture influence content production and diffusion *within* a platform. The last component of functionality relates to *cross-platform integration*: whether users can share the same content across different platforms simultaneously. Neither Facebook nor Twitter allows posting to different platforms, but Instagram allows users to share posts across Facebook and Twitter simultaneously. On Snapchat, users can only save content taken in the app's camera and repurpose it to other platforms. Because the same content can be shared across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and content taken via Snapchat can be uploaded to these platforms as well, it cannot be assumed that political campaign's content is specific to any one particular platform. For example, both the Trump and Rubio campaign uploaded Snapchat Videos (1 and 2, respectively) onto their Instagram accounts. Hillary Clinton uploaded a picture of one of her tweets to Instagram. The high percentage (26%) of text only statuses making up Donald Trump's Facebook content, as shown in Figure 3, were largely comprised of the same messages he posted on Twitter.

Thus, although a platform's architecture might encourage or necessitate a certain type of content, scholars should not assume that political content issued on a social media platform is necessarily specific to it. To illustrate this point empirically, Figure 4 presents the percentage of Instagram content that was also present on Facebook. The "Direct Overlap" category represents when the visual content *and* caption were the exact same across both platforms. "Edited Overlap" refers to when the visual content was the same but the caption was changed (for example, to incorporate a hashtag, change a hyperlink, or slightly modify phrasing). "Instagram Only" is the percentage of content that was not posted to Facebook.



	Trump (R)	Cruz (R)	Rubio (R)	Clinton (D)	Sanders (D)
Edited Overlap	15%	20%	2%	5%	11%
Direct Overlap	43%	40%	2%	50%	0%
Instagram Only	42%	40%	96%	45%	89%

Figure 4. Facebook/Instagram cross-platform integration.

Figure 4 reveals that for three out of the five politicians (Trump, Cruz, and Clinton), over half of the content posted to their Instagram profiles was also made available on Facebook. For Rubio and Sanders, on the contrary, content posted on Instagram was typically not uploaded to Facebook. These two underdog campaigns were also the most active on Snapchat, suggesting that newer, image-based platforms may be more attractive to low-polling campaigns.

Algorithmic Filtering

The remaining two categories of the digital architectures typology *algorithmic filtering* and *datafication* are difficult to assess with public social media data, but they are presented briefly here to round off the comparative platform analysis. Table 3 presents an overview of the similarities and differences across platforms.

Click to view tal Table 3. Algorithmic Filtering.

Table 3. Algorithmic Filtering.

	Algorithmic filtering	
	Reach	Override
Facebook	Heavily filtered (relevance)	Pay to promote User-diffusion (sharing)
Twitter	Moderately filtered (chronology)	Pay to promote Index via hashtags User-diffusion (retweeting)
Instagram	Moderately filtered (chronology)	Pay to promote Index via hashtags
Snapchat	None	No algorithm to override

View larger version

As alluded to previously, Facebook's broadcast feed exhibits heavy algorithmic filtering based on calculated relevance, while Instagram's and Twitter's algorithms place more emphasis on the chronological order of posts. Snapchat has little to no filtering, granting the user a high level of autonomy in selecting content.

Algorithmic filtering directly influences the organic (i.e., nonpaid) *reach* of a post. Facebook page posts, for example, typically reach less than 10% of subscribers organically, a number that continues to decline over time. The algorithms of Twitter and Instagram, favoring chronology over relevance, grant campaigns a more direct line to subscribers. However, filtering by chronology also makes the reach of the post sensitive to the overall activity on the platform. During times of heightened political activity (e.g., around an election or debate), posts can be easily "drowned out" by higher levels of posting by other users. Snapchat's virtually nonexistent filtering allows users the most direct access to campaign content, with the important caveat that these broadcasts disappear after 24 hr.

To counter these limitations and extend reach, each platform offers mechanisms to *override* algorithmic filtering. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer pay-to-promote services to extend the reach of an existing post such "boosting" to a wider audience based on demographics or interests. Apart from this market-driven feature, campaigns can enlist the help of supporters to diffuse messages across their own networks on Facebook and Twitter (via sharing and retweeting). On Twitter and Instagram, hashtags are an effective means to index posts outside of one's immediate follower network (Facebook has also incorporated hashtag functionality, although it remains largely ineffective for increasing reach due to Facebook's less open network structure). Although Snapchat lacks a curating algorithm to be overridden, being featured in a Snapchat "Live Story" can drastically increase the reach of their content. Wilson mentioned that Snapchat worked with campaigns to promote candidacy announcements, debate days, and election days. When the Rubio campaign was featured in a Live Story, which were broadcast either nationally or in a specific state, view counts would go from the average "few thousand per day" to "definitely get[ing] up into the higher five figures of views." Whereas campaigns can utilize override mechanisms to *extend* the reach of a post, they generally rely on datafication techniques to *control* the audiences of specific posts.

DATAFICATION

Datafication, in a campaign context, implies the process of quantifying users' activity for strategic electoral purposes. On one hand, data are utilized for *matching* and *targeting* specific audiences with the intent of persuasion or mobilization. On the other hand, datafication allows campaigns to monitor and collect *analytics* that help inform future strategies. Datafication is a complex, expensive, and iterative process in contemporary digital campaigning. Oczkowski describes the process as, first, using a combination of data from voter files, commercial warehouses, and polling from a small part of the electorate (around 1,500 people) to then, second, extrapolating these data to build "look-alike" audiences of larger portions of the electorate. Targeted messages are subsequently issued to persuade voters, and *analytics* (often monitored in real time) help measure their effectiveness. Oczkowski describes the process while hinting at the iterative character of datification:

So I say, these are Trump supporters, these are people who love to reduce taxes, these are gun supporters, these are the religious rights—all based on survey data and database data that I have and that I've brought in. From there, we're then segmenting audiences for the purposes of our media teams to buy digital ads or to buy television, but also for creative teams to be able to craft messages: the ads, the types of things we're saying to people. Those two things then come together, we spend money to do paid media, and then we go back in the field and we're consistently polling to see if what we're doing is working and how effective it is.

The above quote highlights how datafication has both offline (traditional polling and television) and online (digital databases and ads) dimensions. Regarding the present study's focus, the digital architectures of each platform offer varying types and degrees of datafication, which are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Datafication.

Table 4. Datafication.

	Datafication		
	Matching	Targeting	Analytics
Facebook	Highly developed "Custom" and "Lookalike" audiences	Extremely sophisticated Several ad formats	Complex, real-time analytics (walled-garden)
Twitter	Moderately developed "Tailored Audiences"	Moderately sophisticated Few ad formats Tagging journalists	Open API Dashboards
Instagram	Same as Facebook	Same as Facebook	Same as Facebook
Snapchat	Least developed "Snap Audience Match" (opt-out)	Least sophisticated Ads in stories (opt-out)	Rudimentary in primary, improved in general election

Note. API = application programming interface.

View larger version

Matching, or the process of linking data to online social media profiles, differs across platforms. Campbell describes the high sophistication of Facebook's matching service, "Custom Audiences," as being able to match 70% to 80% of users in a database within 30 min based solely on their names and home mailing addresses. Once a custom audience is built, Facebook can recommend other users who are outside of the custom audience, but calculated to share similar datapoints, through the "Lookalike Audience" feature. Matched or look-alike audiences can then be targeted via a plethora of ad formats customizable by multimedia, placement on the GUI, and hardware (mobile vs. desktop). Owned by Facebook, Instagram offers the same suite of tools. Twitter has a similar matching and look-alike service called "Tailored Audiences." However, in comparison with Facebook, Twitter's matching is less sophisticated (e.g., it does not support home mailing addresses) and offers few ad formats outside of promoted tweets, accounts, and trends. According to Campbell, though, Twitter is used to target lists of known journalists so that "the people who are writing the [mainstream media] stories at the end of the day are the ones seeing your ad, and you're encouraging earned media responses." Snapchat, as the newest platform with the least developed datafication features, only began offering audience matching ("Snap Audience Match") in September 2016, 1 month before the general election. Targeted ads on Snapchat are inserted between stories, and the platform offers users the option to opt-out of matching and targeting in their privacy settings.

Both matching and targeting are resource-intensive processes involving extensive knowledge and monetary capabilities. As highlighted by Kreiss and McGregor (2017), technology firms offer consulting services to high-profile campaigns to assist them in crafting their targeting strategy. Campbell highlights the importance of these services when he states:

We value those relationships and there are some very, very smart people working at these companies that are helping us to execute the strategy that we're coming up with, and in some cases even help us form the strategy that we're coming up with, because they understand their platforms better than anyone does . . . almost daily, we're speaking to our teams [at Google, Facebook, and Twitter] that actually help to facilitate all of the advertising.

Although tech companies have partisan teams that assist campaigns in their targeting strategies, this relationship is ultimately symbiotic: Companies raise revenue, and campaigns raise electoral support. For campaign consultants, analytics become crucial for assessing the effectiveness of a communication strategy and necessary for acquiring more resources for digital advertising. As Wilson remarks, "It's hard to make the case for resources when you don't have the analytics to back it up." Analytics help measure return on investment (ROI), but the availability and type of analytics differs across platforms.

Facebook has increasingly taken steps to limit access to both Facebook and Instagram data; the platform's "walled-garden" approach requires payment (via advertising) in exchange for data. According to the interviewees, Snapchat as a start-up was largely unable to inform campaigns about their view rates, and the purpose of advertising on the platform was simply to better get a sense of engagement. Twitter, according to Oczkowski, "is really the only open Firehouse left," and Wilson mentioned using Twitter to monitor mentions of certain initiatives the Rubio campaign was running, such as a "Vote Early Day" initiative aimed to increase turnout in Florida. Dashboard applications like TweetDeck or Hootsuite can help campaigns monitor and measure specific initiatives. However, Oczkowski also stated the limitations of Twitter data: "Twitter data's great but it doesn't represent most voters in America; it's a minority of very vocal people." To understand and reach a larger portion of the electorate, campaigns must invest significant resources into both online and offline data acquisition. Moreover, it must be stated that from a data collection and targeting standpoint, social media platforms comprise only a part but an increasingly important part of the contemporary campaign apparatus.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Although the social media landscape remains dominated by early market entrants like Facebook and Twitter, scholars need new approaches to not only meet but also anticipate rapid changes in this ever-evolving digital space. The present study has put forth the argument that scholarly attention to a platform's digital architecture provides a valuable and flexible heuristic to approach cross-platform research of social media. Ultimately, the study's aim has been to illuminate new pathways for comparative social media research in the context of political campaigning, but the framework can also be applied to studies of citizens' discussions, social movements, or journalistic reporting.

Theoretically, the study posits that four aspects of a platform's digital architecture influence political communication on social media network structure, functionality, algorithmic filtering, and datafication. Respectively, these four infrastructural elements of platform design affect the decisions that political campaigns make in terms of the audiences they try to reach, the form and content of messages they produce, the diffusion patterns of these messages, and how financial resources are allocated for digital campaigning on social media.

The study's exploratory operationalization of the digital architectures framework, applied to the case of the 2016 U.S. elections, yields three interesting results. First and foremost, campaigns shared much of the same content in text, images, and video across different social media platforms. Basing their study on interviews with U.S. campaigners, argue that "campaigns must produce their own creative content for very different platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat". While certainly true to an extent, this study even with its limitations finds an overlap in campaign messages across all of the platforms studied. Although one platform may encourage (or even necessitate) a certain type of content, other platforms with similar functionalities can support the re-appropriation of content across multiple channels. Scholars should therefore exert caution in assuming that the content posted to a particular social media is unique to that

platform. Cross-platform analysis, with rigorous attention to digital architectures, can help ascertain whether and why content is specific to a given platform.

Second, both the interviews and social media data point to the dominance of Facebook in the 2016 election cycle. The platform was the most attractive social media for political campaigns on account of several architectural design features. Facebook's public pages, providing an open network structure with easily searchable accounts, supported large social media followerships (demonstrated here, for example, by differences in video view rates across platforms). The functionality of hyperlinking, meanwhile, was heavily utilized by campaigns to drive traffic to their websites (for fundraising) and to collect emails (for audience matching). Nonrestrictive rules regarding video lengths rendered the platform a key medium for long-form visual telecommunication. Algorithmic filtering, and the ability to override it via paid advertising, allowed campaigns to reach potential voters outside of their organic follower bases. Moreover, Facebook's sophisticated matching, targeting, and analytics suites enabled high-resource campaigns to split-test messages to voters in strategic geographical locations.

Third, even though campaigns invested less heavily in newer platforms like Instagram and Snapchat, the study finds that all of the candidates analyzed here were active on these platforms. A standard trend observable across the campaigns is that Instagram was used more often than Snapchat. This is likely due to the functionality differences between the two platforms: Instagram allows campaigns to control the image of their candidate via uploading polished content at scheduled times. Snapchat, while carving its niche in the social media marketplace through its live and disappearing broadcast features, was arguably more risky (and less useful) for campaigns to adopt than Instagram. Crucially, Snapchat lacked a comprehensive datafication incentive to reward politicians' who invested in the platform. Future work can dive deeper into investigating the content (and timing) of messages on these and other emerging platforms, to investigate whether they reveal patterns of communication that help elucidate a campaign's wider strategy.

The empirical analysis is, certainly, limited by several factors. Twitter data were not attainable, and the data from other platforms comprise solely that which was publicly available. Targeted advertisements are often unpublished, rendering their collection via traditional computational means difficult. Such targeted posts likely differ in content to public ones, and their inclusion in the study would affect the descriptive results reported here.

In concluding the study, an important note must be made regarding the digital architectures framework: *Digital architectures are subject to rapid and transformative change*. Even though Snapchat's architecture, for example, offered only rudimentary analytics to campaigns during the primaries, the platform was updated by the general election to provide campaigns with a sophisticated means of acquiring users' emails. The Trump campaign, says Oczkowski, gathered "hundreds of thousands of emails off the Snapchat platform" by presenting users with advertisements encouraging them to "swipe up" and enter their email addresses. Even in the interim between the 2016 primaries and the writing of this article, all of the platforms included here have undergone significant transformations in their digital architectures. Nevertheless, the study purpose has been to elucidate how the digital architectures of social media platforms can be compared, systematically, at a particular point in time.

Future scholars may wish to engage with the question of how changes in a platform's digital architecture influences campaign practices longitudinally, as well as how the digital architectures of platforms not analyzed here (e.g., YouTube or WhatsApp) influence campaigns' communication strategies. Moreover, data from other sources such as voter turnout, donation, or polling figures should be incorporated in future research designs, to corroborate how digital communication is affected by offline dynamics critical for campaigns and their strategies.

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