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Social Media

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SOCIAL MEDIA

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Introduction

General Overviews

Social Media Users

Social Network Sites

Micro-blogging

Blogs and Citizen Journalism

Social Media and Communication

Social Media and Democracy

Future Directions and Interdisciplinary Research

INTRODUCTION

Social Media (SM) research is a relatively new area of academic inquiry; thus, it finds itself in constant flux. Researchers have primarily centered their efforts on learning more about what SM is as a phenomenon, which is showcased below as the *General Overviews*. Researchers have also aimed to understand the specific features and characteristics SM users may have, such as their socioeconomic status or the link between individual personality traits and SM use, covered below within *SM Users*. A growing section of the literature addresses the historic background and definitions of social network sites as well as the specific features of micro-blogging (i.e., Twitter) as a media platform. The last three

sections developed below address particular differences found in the literature dealing with blogs and citizen journalism, SM and various communication theories, and finally, SM and its relationship with modern democracies. Overall, there is a visible paucity of SM literature explaining all its potential and plausible effects. Nevertheless, the proportion of papers published revolving around these issues in the last few years is a fair reflection of their growing importance, as it indicates how well received this type of research has been among academics from different disciplines. Likewise, the growth of literature in this area should be expected to remain steady for quite some time. SM has emerged as a prolific and important area of research that affects many aspects of citizens' daily lives, ranging from citizen-to-citizen communication to the ways people consume products and information, or to larger media effects over citizens (i.e., political and civic behaviors).

GENERAL OVERVIEWS

SM research has been given few rigorous book-length treatments, largely because of its newness as a subject of study. That appears to be changing, with several edited volumes in late 2011 and early 2012 engaging in in-depth examinations of various aspects of the SM environment. Earlier overviews of this area treated SM as a small but emerging part of networked digital media as a whole, rather than examining SM in itself (Boler 2008). But the more recent group of books largely addresses SM as a distinct phenomenon, with applications to several social issues: Papacharissi 2011 examines the relationship between the self and the community on social network sites, touching on issues of privacy and social capital. Fuchs et al. 2011 explore similar issues from a surveillance-oriented perspective with a set of essays, looking at SM particularly through the personal data collected there. Loader and Mercea 2012 and Coleman and Shane 2011 both delve into the role of SM within democracy and networked politics, though at different scales: Loader and Mercea focus on broad, macro-level issues, while Coleman and Shane center on a particular practice in that area, online consultation. Foth et al. 2011 bridge several of these concepts with their collection on social and mobile media's connections with citizen engagement in an urban setting. Of course, with these new technological environments also comes a need for new social research methods, which Hesse-Biber's 2011 work addresses thoroughly. It is also important to note that in addition to the work being cited in this entry, several resources and datasets provide valuable information to readers who are interested in SM research. Just to name a few, it is worth observing the following sources: Pew Internet & American Life Project (<http://pewinternet.org>) or the MacArthur Network on Youth & Participatory Politics (<http://ypp.dmlcentral.net>).

Foth, M., Forlano, L., Satchell, C., & Gibbs, M. (Eds.). 2011 *From Social Butterfly to Engaged Citizen: Urban Informatics, Social Media, Ubiquitous Computing, and Mobile Technology to Support Citizen Engagement*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

This volume explores the relationship between participatory technologies, particularly mobile and SM, and civic engagement. Coming from an urban informatics perspective, it positions these

issues against the backdrop of the city, using studies from a variety of global contexts. The book also delves into other forms of engagement, such as social engagement and engagement with technology design.

Papacharissi, Z. (Ed.). 2011 *A Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites*. New York: Routledge.

The book focuses on self-presentation and identity in relationship with community and connection through social network sites. Its contributors address issues of privacy, social capital, identity construction, and social norms as they relate to use of social network sites, ultimately proposing the construct of the self as a networked phenomenon.

Boler, M. (Ed.). 2008 *Digital Media and Democracy: Tactics in Hard Times*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

This volume centers on the juxtaposition between the democratizing potential of participatory, networked digital media and the increasingly corporate nature of dominant media structures. The book attempts to map out the role of digital media within a global capitalistic structure, focusing on tactics of media use within marginalized groups and activist movements.

Coleman, S., & Shane, P. M. (Eds.). 2011 *Connecting Democracy: Online Consultation and the Flow of Political Communication*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

This book delves into the phenomenon of political online consultation, or the use of government-authorized online forums for input into policymaking. The contributors describe online consultation as a networked communication practice incorporating complex connections between the public, government, technicians, civil organizations, and traditional media sources. They also explore its potential for deepening democratic citizenship.

Hesse-Biber, S. N. (Ed.). 2011 *The Handbook of Emergent Technologies in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hesse-Biber and contributors focus on adapting social research methods and practices to contemporary technological environments, aiming to connect epistemological and methodological concerns with multimedia, mobile media, and networked spaces. Numerous methods, including ethnography, surveys, data mining, focus groups, and textual analysis, are discussed.

Fuchs, C., Boersma, K., Albrechtslund, A., & Sandoval, M. (Eds.). 2011 *Internet and Surveillance: The Challenges of Web 2.0 and Social Media*. New York: Routledge.

The authors address a variety of issues surrounding surveillance on the networked web with a particular interest in the vast amount of personal data being collected online and their use by

corporations, governments, and individuals. Privacy, self-presentation, and data collection are explored from consumer-oriented, transnational, and theoretical perspectives.

Loader, B. D., & Mercea, D. (Eds.). 2012 *Social Media and Democracy: Innovations in Participatory Politics*. New York: Routledge.

This volume explores the role of SM in democratic participation and networked politics, examining connections between online social communication and political engagement in several global contexts. Central themes include the juxtaposition between individualism and networked collective action, interactions between traditional media and SM, and political use of SM among youth.

SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

The users of SM have been a relatively rich area of inquiry within the young field of SM research. Lenhart et al. 2010 form a baseline for user research with a useful overview of who is using SM and how, particularly among younger users. A subset of that user-oriented research has focused on the connection between SM use and its users' personality traits: Correa, Hinsley, and Gil de Zúñiga 2010 find extraversion and openness to new experiences to be significant traits in their study of that connection, and Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitsky 2010 connect those personality traits to particular types of social network use in their study of Facebook. Other researchers have examined users in terms of their motivations for adopting SM. Ekdale et al. 2010 explore the evolution in top bloggers' motivations for blogging, and Hargittai and Litt 2011 look at the role issue interest plays in young people's Twitter adoption. Ancu and Cozma 2009 look deeper at the motivations for a particular type of SM use—visiting political candidates' profiles—and Utz 2010 uses an experiment to determine what factors are important in the way users perceive one another. This research, along with others within the same vein, has provided us with the beginnings of a strong functional understanding of the nature of SM users and how their characteristics connect with various aspects of their use.

Ancu, M., & Cozma, R. 2009. MySpace Politics: Uses and gratifications of befriending candidates. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 53(4), 567-583.

Surveying MySpace users, the authors examined the uses and gratifications of visiting political candidate profiles on SM. Findings show MySpace users visited candidate profiles primarily for social utility reasons, followed by information-seeking and entertainment. These uses and gratifications were not significantly mediated by political efficacy, campaign involvement, or demographics. Social interaction with other supporters was also a stronger motivation than interacting with candidates.

Correa, T., Hinsley, A. W., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. G. 2010. Who interacts on the Web?: The intersection of users' personality and social media use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(2), 247-253.

The authors examine the relationship between personality traits and SM use, particularly in connection with gender and age. Using a nationwide U.S. survey of adults, the study found that SM use was positively associated with extraversion and openness to new experiences, but negatively associated with emotional stability in men. Extraversion played the largest role in SM use among young adults, and openness among older adults.

Ekdale, B., Namkoong, K., Fung, T. K. F., & Perlmutter, D. D. 2010. Why blog? (then and now): Exploring the motivations for blogging by popular American political bloggers. *New Media & Society*, 12(2), 217.

The study uses a survey of 66 influential American political bloggers to look at their motivations for blogging and its change over time. Results indicate that all motivations for blogging increased over time, and external motivations increased more significantly than internal motivations.

External motivations were also found to be associated with bloggers' online and offline political behavior, while internal motivations were not.

Hargittai, E., & Litt, E. 2011. The tweet smell of celebrity success: Explaining variation in Twitter adoption among a diverse group of young adults. *New Media & Society*, 13(5), 824-842.

Using a two-year panel survey of college students, the study explores various factors associated with young adults' Twitter adoption, focusing on demographic variables, technological experience, and interest in specific topics among both users and non-users. Interest in entertainment and celebrity news was found to be strongly related with Twitter adoption, particularly among African Americans, while no significant relationship was found with news interest.

Utz, S. 2010. Show me your friends and I will tell you what type of person you are: How one's profile, number of friends, and type of friends influence impression formation on social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 15(2), 314-335.

The authors use an experiment among young adult users of the Dutch social network site Hyves to determine how self-generated, friends-generated, and system-generated factors in social network site presentation influence perceptions of popularity, communal orientation, and social attractiveness. For the latter two characteristics, friends-generated information (the pictures of users' friends) was more influential and self-generated information (profile pictures).

Amichai-Hamburger, Y., & Vinitzky, G. 2010. Social network use and personality. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(6), 1289-1295.

The study examines the relationship between personality traits and types of Facebook use, combining a survey of students with information from their Facebook profiles. Results indicate

that extraversion and conscientiousness are positively associated with numbers of Facebook friends, while neuroticism is positively associated with posting photos. Openness to experience was associated with broader use of Facebook features.

Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. 2010. Social media & mobile internet use among teens and young adults. *Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.*

The study uses nationwide U.S. surveys to provide a snapshot of the use of SM, mobile technology, and the Internet, particularly among teens and young adults. Results suggest that blogging has dropped among younger users, while SM use has become increasingly heavy, though not on Twitter. Mobile phone and Internet use were found to be nearly ubiquitous among teens and young adults.

Lotan, G., Graeff, E., Ananny, M., Gaffney, D., Pearce, I., & boyd, d. (2011) The revolutions were tweeted: Information flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. *International Journal of Communication, 5*, 1375-1405.

The authors shed light on the production and dissemination of information via Twitter during the uprising in Tunisia and Egypt. Within this context, they clarify patterns of sourcing and routing among journalists, activists, bloggers, and others. The study exemplifies the impact Twitter has in spreading information rapidly and how the platform synergistically works with mainstream media to provide information at a global scale.

SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

While forms such as blogs, micro-blogs, and discussion boards are inherently social online modes of communication, much of the research focusing specifically on SM has centered on social network sites. Boyd and Ellison 2008 authored one of the foundational studies in this area, establishing a definition for social network sites, tracking their history and origins, and laying out several of the primary areas of scholarship. One of the fundamental questions identified by boyd and Ellison regards the relationship between online interaction on social network sites and offline, face-to-face interaction. Kujath's 2011 research suggests that social network site interaction acts as an extension and supplement to offline interaction, rather than a replacement for it. As boyd and Ellison note, there is also a healthy amount of scholarship on self-presentation and identity on social network sites; Dubrofsky 2011 puts forward a conception of those phenomena within the context of surveillance, describing social network sites as an arena in which the self is put under surveillance, with users acting as both masters and performers. Bertot, Jaeger, and Grimes 2010 extend that surveillance function beyond the self to the realm of government, exploring the ways in which a socially networked environment can serve as a tool for government transparency.

boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. 2008. Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230.

The authors summarize both the history of social network sites and the scholarship regarding them, stressing themes of network structure, impression maintenance, online and offline social interaction, and privacy. They also produce a definition of social network sites based on structures that allow public profiles, lists of connections, and the ability to view others' connections.

Kujath, C. 2011. Facebook and MySpace: Complement or Substitute for Face-to-Face Interaction? *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 14(1-2): 75-78.

The author addresses the question of whether SM use acts as a substitute or complement to offline interaction through a survey of students using Facebook and MySpace. Results indicate that users tended to use the sites to maintain relationships begun offline, rather than meeting new people online, supported the concept of SM interaction as an extension to face-to-face interaction.

Dubrofsky, R. E. 2011. Surveillance on Reality Television and Facebook: From Authenticity to Flowing Data. *Communication Theory*, 21(2), 111-129.

The study explores the connection between social network sites and reality television, the author conceives of Facebook as a means by which the self is put under surveillance. On Facebook, users are both masters of their own surveillance and performers under that surveillance, but without the authenticity and consistency functions of surveillance, its purpose is more related to aggregation of personal data.

Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P. T., & Grimes, J. M. 2010. Using ICTs to create a culture of transparency: E-government and social media as openness and anti-corruption tools for societies. *Government Information Quarterly*, 27(3), 264-271.

This study reviews recent literature on new information and communication technologies (ICTs), with a particular emphasis on SM, to determine how they have been used to further government transparency. The authors argue that SM has shown potential as a tool for political participation and government transparency, though they identify access, acceptance, and media literacy as possible obstacles to SM's effectiveness as an anti-corruption tool.

MICRO-BLOGGING

Given that micro-blogging only began seeing significant public adoption in about 2007, the literature in this area quite naturally remains in a nascent stage in its development. Still, the volume of revealing studies on Twitter and other micro-blogging platforms is growing rapidly. Many of those studies have

explored the social aspects of Twitter: Chen 2011 tests this idea from a uses and gratifications perspective, finding that gratification of the need for connection increased over time among Twitter users. Gruzd, Wellman, and Takhteyev 2011 pose the question of whether the connections among Twitter users constitutes community, concluding that it embodies elements of both real and imagined communities. Another major area of Twitter study has been in regard to journalism, as Twitter has moved from primarily a social platform to an information-sharing platform (Kwak et al. 2010; see "Future Directions and Interdisciplinary Research"). Hermida 2010 offers a foundational conception of the information being shared on Twitter as an always-on awareness system called "ambient journalism." Others have focused specifically on traditional journalists' use of micro-blogging: Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss 2010 examine media sources' portrayal of Twitter, Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2011 explore the ways in which journalists are conforming Twitter to their professional norms, and Armstrong and Gao 2011 find that news organizations' gender portrayal on Twitter reflects their offline practices. As practices on Twitter evolve and become more integrated into the flows and practices of newsgathering, we expect this area of research to continue to become a particularly fruitful one for SM scholars.

Armstrong, C. L., & Gao, F. 2011. Gender, Twitter and news content. *Journalism Studies*, 12(4), 490-505.

The authors apply Gans' concept of medium-centered influence on news to the issue of gender representation in news organizations' content on Twitter. Through a content analysis of newspapers' and television stations' Twitter accounts, they find that males are more likely to be mentioned on Twitter (similar to traditional news media). This representativeness disparity is also visible in the organizations' full news stories.

Lasorsa, D. L., Lewis, S. C., & Holton, A. E. 2011. Normalizing Twitter: Journalism practice in an emerging communication space. *Journalism Studies*. DOI:10.1080/1461670X.2011.57182

Using a content analysis of 500 of the most popular journalists on Twitter, the authors explore the ways in which mainstream journalists apply professional norms and practices. Findings suggest that journalists adopted some norms of Twitter, such as expressing opinions and providing accountability and transparency, but also normalized it in other ways to fit their professional norms and practices (i.e., their status as gatekeepers)

Hermida, A., 2010. Twittering the news: The emergence of ambient journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 4(3), 297-308.

Drawing from computer science literature on awareness systems, Hermida argues that micro-blogging platforms such as Twitter allow for ambient journalism, an always-on, asynchronous awareness system that moves from the background to the foreground as users feel the need to communicate. He concludes by noting ambient journalism's potential for both personalization and shared conversation.

Arceneaux, N., & Schmitz Weiss, A. 2010. Seems stupid until you try it: press coverage of Twitter, 2006-9. *New Media & Society*, 12(8), 1262-1279.

The authors study public reaction to Twitter using a content analysis of coverage of Twitter in both online and traditional media sources from 2006 to 2009. Press coverage is found to be largely positive and dominated by the explanation theme, though negative themes such as information overload and unanticipated consequences are also evident. The authors compare these reactions to those responding to previous technologies.

Chen, G. M. 2011. Tweet this: A uses and gratifications perspective on how active Twitter use gratifies a need to connect with others. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(2), 755-762.

Chen uses a survey of Twitter users to test the relationship between Twitter and uses and gratifications, particularly the need for social connection. The gratification of the need for connection increased along with Twitter activity, as well as the length of time as an active Twitter user. This correlation was strongest with use over a series of months, rather than daily use.

Gruzd, A., Wellman, B., & Takhteyev, Y. 2011. Imagining Twitter as an imagined community. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55(10), 1294-1318.

The authors address the question of whether Twitter functions as a community by examining an interconnected set of Wellman's followers on Twitter. They conclude that Twitter is both a real and imagined community, one marked by such aspects as a common language, sustained membership over time, shared emotional connection, and integration and fulfillment of needs.

BLOGS AND CITIZEN JOURNALISM

The study of journalism on Twitter discussed in the *Micro-blogging* section is hardly the only area in which scholars have examined the connections between SM and journalism; the collaborative, participatory nature of other social forms of online media—including blogs and social news sites—have opened up new avenues for a socially driven form of journalism. Goode 2009 provides a useful framework for this type of journalism by defining and exploring the manifestations of citizen journalism and social news. Kaufhold, Valenzuela, and Gil de Zúñiga 2010 connect the consumption of socially distributed, user-generated journalistic content with democratic outcomes such as political knowledge and participation, finding it positively associated with the latter. Several scholars have delved deeper into the journalistic characteristics of one of those SM forms, blogging, particularly as it acts as a socially expressed form of news. Flew and Wilson 2010 provide an example to this trend at an international content. Authors explore an Australian citizen-driven news site to generate a model of journalism as social networking. Gil de Zúñiga et al. 2011 develop a model connecting perception, motivation, topic, and practices in developing a journalistic form of blogging, and Kaye and Johnson 2011 examine the

factors that influence users' perceptions of credibility of those journalistic blogs. As Vos, Craft, and Ashley 2011 find, those journalistic bloggers adopt some of the norms of the traditional press, but also advocate a more accountable, transparent, and distributed form of journalism. And Ampofo, O'Loughlin, and Anstead 2011 demonstrate an example of that type of socially driven, distributed journalism with their findings of social education via Twitter about controversial opinion polls, helping point toward future iterations of these new forms of journalism.

Kaufhold, K., Valenzuela, S., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. 2010. Citizen journalism and democracy: How user-generated news use relates to political knowledge and participation. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 87, 515-529.

This study explores the relationship between consumption of user-generated news content (i.e., citizen journalism) and political knowledge and political participation, comparing it with those outcomes' relationship with professional news use. Using a nationwide U.S. survey, it finds that use of user-generated news was negatively associated with political knowledge, but positively associated with political participation. Media trust is also explored as a mediating factor.

Ampofo, L., O'Loughlin, B., & Anstead, N. 2011. Trust, confidence, credibility: citizen responses on Twitter to opinion polls during the 2010 UK general election. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(6). pp. 850-871.

Drawing from a case study of disparate opinion polls in the 2010 U.K. election, the authors examine the ways in which citizens used Twitter to express their distrust in those polls. They find through an analysis of Twitter messages that users employed it to challenge dominant media analysis, but also to educate one another about the details of polling.

Goode, L. 2009. Social news, citizen journalism and democracy. *New Media & Society*, 11(8), 1287.

Goode argues that the concept of citizen journalism should be expanded to include not simply content creation, but also "metajournalism," the acts of tagging, sharing, publicizing, and rating that content. He uses case studies of Digg, Newsvine, and Guerilla News Network as examples of social news sites that emphasize form and structure over content and use democratic practices to determine news agendas.

Kaye, B. K., & Johnson, T. J. 2011 Hot diggity blog: A cluster analysis examining motivations and other factors for why people judge different types of blogs as credible. *Mass Communication and Society*, 14(2), 236-263.

The study examines credibility of blogs in relation to a variety of factors, including blog topic, demographics, political orientation, and motivations. Using a survey and cluster analysis, the authors found that blog readers make credibility judgments based on differing blog types, and that

those who viewed blogs as more credible were more conservative and showed more political efficacy and trust in government.

Vos, T. P., Craft, S., & Ashley, S. 2011 New media, old criticism: Bloggers' press criticism and the journalistic field. *Journalism*. DOI: 10.1177/1464884911421705

Drawing from Bourdieu's field theory, the study uses a textual analysis of bloggers' media criticism to examine their relation to the journalistic field. The authors found that bloggers adopted a traditional journalistic understanding of the field's norms, practices, and structure, even in their criticism of the actors in that field. They concluded, however, with a suggestion that bloggers may be leading an emerging paradigm shift in the journalistic field.

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Lewis, S. C., Willard, A., Valenzuela, S., Lee, J.K., & Baresch, B. 2011. Blogging as a journalistic practice: A model linking perception, motivation, and behavior. *Journalism*, 12(5), 586-606.

Using data from a nationwide U.S. survey, the authors produce a model explaining journalistic practices within blogging. After testing the model, they find that perception of their blog as a form of journalism influences a motivation to inform and influence, which in turn influences the selection of public affairs as a blog topic and journalistic practices in blogging, such as fact-checking and posting corrections.

Flew, T., & Wilson, J. 2010. Journalism as social networking: The Australian Youdecide project and the 2007 federal election. *Journalism*, 11(2), 131.

The authors examine the case of *youdecide2007*, an Australian citizen-driven news site to generate a model of journalism as social networking. Four dimensions of professional practice are identified as central to networked journalism: Content work, networking, community work, and technical work. The authors conclude by arguing that citizen journalism is at the margins of news consumption, but moving toward the center of how journalistic practices are reshaped.

SOCIAL MEDIA, COMMUNICATION, AND MOBILIZATION

The forms and functions of communication on SM have produced a broad range of scholarship and areas of inquiry, though few of them have reached a similar critical mass to those in SM and democracy or SM and identity. This section aims to give a sample of this broad range of communication issues, one of the more intriguing of which is the growing research on SM's role in mobilization. Rojas and Puig-i-Abril's 2009 study has been a key piece of research in that area, developing a model for mobilization incorporating mobile technology, expressive participation, SM, and offline action. Bekkers et al. 2011 explore an added dimension to the study of mobilization, examining the crossovers between media and mobilization at the micro and meso levels. Another potentially fruitful area of study has been the means and effectiveness of persuasion in SM, which has been tested in relation to the third-person effect by Lim

and Golan 2011 and strategies of ethos, logos, and pathos by English, Sweetser, and Ancu 2011. In other areas, Westerman, Spence, and Van Der Heide 2011 emphasize the connective and social role of information in SM, particularly regarding its effects on credibility, and Jin, Liu, and Austin 2011 apply a model of communication on Twitter to crisis situations, noting that the form in which information is spread can have an effect on the emotions it arouses.

Youmans, W. L. and York, J. C. (2012), Social media and the activist toolkit: User agreements, corporate interests, and the information infrastructure of modern social movements. *Journal of Communication*, 62: 315–329.

Within the context of the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, this study analyzes distinct SM examples to highlight different tactics and SM features that lean against democracy advocates (i.e, restrictions on anonymity). The authors argue these problems "arise from the design and governance challenges facing large-scale, revenue-seeking SM enterprises."

Lim, J. S., & Golan, G. J. 2011. Social Media Activism in Response to the Influence of Political Parody Videos on YouTube. *Communication Research*, 38(5), 710-727.

The study uses an experiment to test the third-person effect in the context of political parody videos posted on YouTube. The authors find that perceived negative influence on others and a perceived persuasive intent on the part of the producer are more likely to produce a willingness to engage in SM activism through posting comments or video responses.

Westerman, D., Spence, P. R., & Van Der Heide, B. 2011. A social network as information: The effect of system generated reports of connectedness on credibility on Twitter. *Computers in Human Behavior*. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2011.09.001

Through an experiment, the study seeks to determine whether a Twitter user's number of followers or ratio of follows to followers affects perceived credibility. Findings indicate that having extremely high or low numbers of followers, or many fewer follows than followers, resulted in lower perceived competence. The authors suggest that such uses may be indicative of user disapproval of SM uses they perceive to be unsocial.

Rojas, H. & Puig-i-Abril, E. 2009. Mobilizers mobilized: Information, expression, mobilization and participation in the digital age. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 14, 902-927.

The authors test relationships between mobile technology and social network site use and online and offline political participation through a nationwide Colombian survey. They develop a model in which the use of mobile technology for information influences expressive participation, which in turn influences mobilization on social network sites, and finally offline civic participation. They

conclude by suggesting that mobile technologies offer an alternative pathway to political engagement.

Bekkers, V., Beunders, H., Edwards, A., & Moody, R. 2011 New media, micromobilization, and political agenda setting: Crossover effects in political mobilization and media usage. *The Information Society*, 27(4), 209-219.

The study focuses on the interaction between mobilization at the macro, micro, and meso levels in a digitally mediated environment. Drawing on a case study of 2007 protests by Dutch students against a new education requirement, the authors argue that collaborative digital technologies help enable a shift from macro- and mesomobilization to micromobilization, with key crossovers between the micro and meso levels.

English, K., Sweetser, K. D., & Ancu, M. 2011. YouTube-ification of political talk: An examination of persuasion appeals in viral video. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55(6), 733-748.

Using an experiment involving videos about the 2009 U.S. health care debate, the authors study the credibility of various types of persuasive strategies in political videos on YouTube. They find that ethos is seen as the most credible form of appeal, while pathos—specifically, humor—is judged least credible. Users' political efficacy and cynicism show no significant relationship with their judgments of the videos' credibility.

Jin, Y., Liu, B. F., & Austin, L. L. 2011. Examining the role of social media in effective crisis management: The effects of crisis origin, information form, and source on publics' crisis responses. *Communication Research*. DOI: 10.1177/0093650211423918

Using an experiment with hypothetical campus crises, the authors test their socially mediated crisis communication model regarding crisis origin and crisis information source and form. The study finds that crisis information spread via SM can lead to stronger negative attributive emotions for internally originated crises. The authors argue that information form and sources should be strategically matched depending on crisis origin.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

The relationship between SM and democratic processes and outcomes such as political participation, civic engagement, and social capital has been one of the most fertile areas of research within SM. Studies from a variety of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches have enriched our understanding of the role SM might play in a more networked, participatory democratic politics. Loader and Mercea 2011 offer a broad conceptual overview of this area, providing a nuanced assessment of SM's potential for democratic enrichment. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007 were among the first to explore SM's connection to social capital, and Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, and Valenzuela 2012 expand that

concept, tightening its focus to use of SM for news and also extending its range to include civic engagement and online and offline political participation. Kushin and Yamamoto 2010 also examine SM's political influence in relationship to online expression and political efficacy, and Hanson et al. 2011 and Towner and Dulio 2011 find mixed results on SM's relationship with political cynicism. Other research has examined SM and democracy at a level beyond individual effects: Bennett and Segerberg 2011 explore the tension between personalization and collective political action, finding that they might not be as incompatible as initially thought. Finally, Kaun and Guyard 2011 offer a competing view to the idea that SM is having a transformative effect on democratic practices, arguing that a significant gap exists between the tool's potential and its use by citizens.

Loader, B. D., & Mercea, D. 2011. Networking democracy? Social media innovations and participatory politics. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(6), 757-769.

Loader and Mercea consider conceptions of SM's implications for democracy, particularly examining the premise that SM offers the potential for a networked, collaborative democratic politics. The authors note that SM attention and activity largely remains centered on institutional actors, but argue that it can be seen to have democratic potential if the concept of political participation is broadened.

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. 2007. The benefits of Facebook "friends": Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), 1143-1168.

This study was the first to substantively explore the connection between social network sites and social capital, using a student survey to find that intensity of Facebook use is positively related to bonding, bridging, and maintained social capital. This relationship was mediated by feelings of well-being. The authors also find that a primary use of Facebook was to maintain relationships with distant connections.

Towner, T. L., & Dulio, D. A. 2011. An experiment of campaign effects during the YouTube election. *New Media & Society*, 13(4), 626-644.

The study uses an experiment with the YouTube election channel "YouChoose'08" and ABCNews.com content to test the influence of user-generated and professional online political videos. Findings indicate that YouChoose'08 influenced increased cynicism, and ABCNews.com led to more trust in Internet sources than YouChoose'08. Neither videos showed any significant influence on candidate perceptions. Selective exposure and level of YouTube use are also considered.

Kushin, M. J., & Yamamoto, M. 2010. Did social media really matter? College students' use of online media and political decision making in the 2008 election. *Mass Communication and Society*, 13(5), 608-630.

In this study, Kushin and Yamamoto explore the relationship between SM use, online expression, political self-efficacy and situational political involvement among young adults leading up to the 2008 U.S. election. Results indicate a relatively strong role for new media in political efficacy and involvement, though traditional Internet sources are more strongly related to those outcomes than use of SM for campaign information.

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Jung, N., and Valenzuela, S. 2012. Social media use for news and individuals' social capital, civic engagement and political participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 17(3).

The authors examine the relationship between SM use and social capital, civic engagement, and online and offline political participation using a nationwide U.S. survey. Results show the use of SM for news is positively associated with each of those four outcomes, though general SM use shows no significant relationship with those factors. A reciprocal causal relationship between social network use for news and political participation is discussed.

Bennett, L., & Segerberg, A. 2011: Digital media and the personalization of collective action. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(6), 770-799.

This case study examines two groups involved in the protests at the 2009 London G20 summit to determine whether allowing personalized political expression within the context of collective action might weaken the organization's engagement, agenda, and network strength. The authors suggest that using networked technology to encourage personalized political action can result in strong, coherent collective action.

Hanson, G., Haridakis, P. M., Cunningham, A. W., Sharma, R., & Ponder, J. D. 2010. The 2008 presidential campaign: Political cynicism in the age of Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube. *Mass Communication & Society*, 13(5), 584-607.

Through a student survey, the authors test the relationships between political cynicism and use of social network sites, YouTube, and blogging. The survey suggests that use of social network sites is negatively associated with cynicism, while blogging and YouTube use has no relationship with cynicism. Political self-efficacy, influence of family and friends, and media use for gainful companionship are also negatively associated with cynicism.

Shirky, C. (2011) The political power of social media. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(1), 28-41.

The author highlights that access to information is not the only benefit citizens of a democracy in today's digital era. This essay elaborates on the potential success and perils of SM for

democracy. The author proposes a set of steps to be taken by the government to use Internet freedom as a "tool of statecraft," gaining stronger support for free speech and autonomous assembly.

Kaun, A., & Guyard, C. 2011. Divergent views: Social media experts and young citizens on politics 2.0. *International Journal of Electronic Governance*, 4(1), 104-120.

The authors address claims that new media has revolutionizing potential for political campaigning and the reshaping of democracy. Through a study of Swedish students, they suggest that a large gap exists between the medium's potential and young voters' actual practices.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

The development of network theory and social network analysis have provided a promising new avenue for social network research, giving SM scholars the technical and theoretical tools to collect and analyze exponentially greater amounts of data on social connections and shared information than in previous generations of research. Much of that scholarship has come from outside the field of communication studies, allowing media researchers to examine the new patterns of behavior and information diffusion in social networks within a fresh light. Götz et al. 2009 provide an apt example of that macro-level perspective with their development of a model that connects the behaviors of individual blogs with the structure of the entire blogosphere. Kwak et al. 2010 do similar work with Twitter, using social network analysis to demonstrate that it displays many characteristics more in common with information-sharing networks than social networks. Cha et al. 2010 apply the method to the question of influence on Twitter, finding that a simple measurement of the number of followers is a poor indicator of social influence there. Finally, Couldry 2009 reflects on what this new, socially oriented online media environment will mean for traditional media forms and institutions, identifying it as a site of struggle between fragmentation and centralization, both based in the rituals and practices of digital media. This basic conflict—between dispersion and social cohesion, between individualism and collaboration—will continue to be a central one as SM continue to evolve, and the source of a continued flow of rich, illuminating research.

Bruns, A. (2011) How long is a tweet? Mapping dynamic conversation networks on twitter using Gawk and Gephi. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1-29.

Based on Twitter's hashtags and @replies, the author showcases different roles Twitter participants may have involving an overall hashtag community. Additionally, the study argues for the possibility of identifying new information through such tools, as well as distinct phases in the overall discussion process as SM users interact with each other.

Götz, M., Leskovec, J., McGlohon, M., & Faloutsos, C. 2009. Modeling blog dynamics. *Proceedings of the Third International ICWSM Conference*.

Using large-scale network analysis of blog posts and links, the authors develop a model that can map both the temporal and structural properties of the blogosphere, accounting for both the power-law dynamics and bursty behaviors in effect. They create a “zero-crossing” model that is based on the human posting patterns of individual blogs but replicates large-scale characteristics of blog networks.

Kwak, H., Lee, C., Park, H., & Moon, S. 2010. What is Twitter, a social network or a news media? *Proceedings of the 19th International Conference on World Wide Web*.

The authors use an entire-network analysis of Twitter that includes more than 100 million tweets in order to model its structural characteristics as a social network and an information-sharing medium. They find a high level of messages sharing news or information, low reciprocity, fast diffusion of information, and many popular topics related to news, all of which are more indicative of an information-diffusion medium than a social network.

Cha, M., Haddadi, H., Benevenuto, F., & Gummadi, K. P. 2010 Measuring user influence in Twitter: The million follower fallacy. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*.

This study explores three means of measuring influence on Twitter: Indegree (i.e., number of followers), retweets, and name mentions. Based on a data set of more than 1 billion tweets, authors find little overlap between the most influential users by these three measurements. News sites show great influence across all three measurements, though ordinary users could gain influence through sustained tweeting on a single subject.

Couldry, N. 2009. Does ‘the media’ have a future? *European Journal of Communication*, 24(4), 437-449.

Couldry addresses the argument that networked online technologies cause fragmentation, dislodging mass media institutions from their place at society’s center. He examines potential technological, social, and political forces of media fragmentation but argues that rather than collapsing, mass media institutions will increasingly become the site of complex interdependencies and struggles over influence and meaning.