



5-2017

# Presidential Campaigns and Social Networks: How Clinton and Trump Used Facebook and Twitter During the 2016 Election

Jack Davis

*Dominican University of California*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholar.dominican.edu/senior-theses>

 Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), and the [Communication Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Davis, Jack, "Presidential Campaigns and Social Networks: How Clinton and Trump Used Facebook and Twitter During the 2016 Election" (2017). *Senior Theses and Capstone Projects*. 75.

<http://scholar.dominican.edu/senior-theses/75>

This Senior Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Capstone Projects at Dominican Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Theses and Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of Dominican Scholar. For more information, please contact [michael.pujals@dominican.edu](mailto:michael.pujals@dominican.edu).

# Presidential Campaigns and Social Networks: How Clinton and Trump Used Facebook and Twitter During the 2016 Election

Jack Davis

Senior Thesis

Dr. Christian Dean

20 April 2017

## **Abstract**

The advancement in social media technology has greatly improved how people from around the world can communicate with each other. This has been quite apparent during the 2016 presidential election year, as many people have taken to social media to find their news sources and share opinions. This paper examines the use of Facebook and Twitter by the Clinton and Trump campaigns to connect with voters. These two modes of communication have been used by the campaigns to advertise their campaign and take stances on a variety of issues. By using content analysis, data from the two campaigns' social media profiles will be examined and categorized into its respective groupings: mobilize voters, fundraise, take position on issues, encourage participation in the campaign process, attack the opponent, or promote themselves of their campaign. So many more people have access to information but it has become the right information and recognizing how voters interact and comprehend the information. It is vital to understand how social media has impacted this presidential campaign season and the election.

## Introduction

The 2016 election cycle was one that will never be forgotten. It is no secret that the campaigns run by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were ones that had many facets to them. There were so many aspects that contributed to how people voted on Election Day but there was one very important piece to each campaign that has only continued to grow in use and importance in politics. Social media is progressively sky rocketing in campaign use. The Clinton and Trump campaigns both utilized Facebook and Twitter to its fullest extent in order to reach out to voters. The key aspect though, is who were they trying to reach and why. Many people have taken their opinions to social media by commenting on posts and sharing them to try to influence others and get their thoughts out there. The trick is to getting these people to actually participate in the democratic system by getting out the vote.

It is incredibly difficult to understand how a campaign wants to use social media but by analyzing the posts by both the Clinton and Trump campaigns in their Facebook and Twitter profiles, there will become a clearer motive for the use of social media. The millennial vote was thought to be a deciding factor in this election. Therefore, social media is even more important because it is such a large part of the millennial generation, as it has become a significant new channel for voter communication (Aldrich). The millennial generation uses the Internet more than others and these people tend to be the core users of social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. The Internet can be so widely accessed; anyone who has the ability to access the Internet can see what Clinton and Trump said throughout his or her campaign. Political campaigns post on social media to influence voters in one way or another (“Social Media and Politics”). I believe that campaigns post on social media to put their opinions on issues out there and make that connection to voters.

Both Facebook and Twitter were used by both campaigns to post about policy issues and to attack each other in an effort to get voters to the polling stations on Election Day. This paper dives into the history of social media in politics and how it has evolved, leading into the use of Facebook and Twitter by the Clinton and Trump campaigns and analyzing those posts from November 1, 2016 through November 8, 2016 (Election Day). This one-week was filled with postings on social media that will provide a sample of what was most important to these campaigns as Election Day quickly approached. The Clinton and Trump campaigns utilized the Internet and social media more than any campaign ever had (Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media Staff 1). Access to Facebook and Twitter allowed them to get any message out there. As a result, they were able to mobilize voters, fundraise, take positions on issues, encourage participation in the campaign process (attend speeches or rallies, watch debates, sign up for volunteering), attack the opponent and promote themselves or their campaign. The content of messages, along with the timing and sequence of the message has an impact on how voters will react to a post (Chong and Druckman). As a result of this research, I intend to find that Trump posted much more than Clinton on both Facebook and Twitter. With that being said, I think that Twitter will have been used much more than Facebook because Twitter has become a persuasive tool in election campaigns (Jungherr). I also hypothesize that during the last week of campaigning before the election, fundraising was not the main concern for these two candidates. The main concern that Clinton and Trump were posting about on Facebook and Twitter was voter mobilization and attacking the opponent.

### **Social Media Background**

In order to understand how social media can be so influential, there must be an understanding of what social media is and how it can be used. Social media is a newer kind of

media that is more accessible to a wider variety of people for no cost. As a result, that makes social media very attractive to someone who is looking to reach out to mass audiences with a single message. The attraction to this form of message framing and campaigning has a lot to do with the low cost, ease of use and wide range (Price). Social media provides a platform for individuals to express their beliefs, interests, and connect with others around the world.

Facebook and Twitter seem to be the most popular outlets for campaigning in terms of social media largely due to so many people having profiles on those two versions of social media. However, Facebook and Twitter do have many differences that cause for advantages and disadvantages. With Facebook, you have your news feed which gives you access to anything your friends share which can be any post they put up or reposting a post from another profile. Also, Facebook does not have many limits. You can share videos and photos and comment on the posts. You can also initiate interest groups and this is a great source for people with similar interests and beliefs to connect and post about certain issues (Shen 2012). It also allows for those in the group to comment on posts and interact with each other. This creates a foundation for those to share ideas and start conversation over the discussion boards.

However, with Twitter, you are stuck to a 140-character count limit. This makes things more difficult to say therefore, the importance of photos, videos, and links to news stories etc. become critical. Social media experts hired by campaigns thrive in this realm and it then becomes a strategy to how you post, when you post, and whom you post about. Taking it even further, hash tags and tagging other people in your post is a popular way to get the post into a realm that maybe some would never see without it. Hash tags can be a great tool to use so that when someone searches about that hash tag, that post will come up. This can even get a hash tag trending and have it appear in the popular now tab. Social media allows for people to express

views with friends and with strangers via the Internet (Washington). The commenting option in a post also allows for people to interact with each other via the Internet and get conversations started.

Granted, many conversations are not always educated and productive but they do allow for people from around the world to communicate. A lot of social media use is to just get a message out there and start the conversation. That is how so many different videos went viral over this past year and how so many people developed new opinions on issues and ideas put forth by politicians and by social networking individuals. Campaigns and their strategists now get to develop a message and convey it in a way that they want. Social media allows for campaigns to bypass traditional news media and go straight to the Internet where almost anyone can see an unfiltered post (Price). This is an incredibly powerful tool. Being able to bypass the journalists and the press, candidates can now get any idea on the Internet with the swift clicks of a few buttons at any moments notice. Not only does this eliminate the middle man of the media communicating what the candidate said or wants the people to hear but, it also allows for the candidate to set an agenda from the beginning. There are many little tools within social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter that, if used properly, can really come to one's advantage.

### **Literature Review**

Political science is new to the concept of social media use in the campaign process. The influence of online campaigning is only beginning to gain attention from researchers (Bode and Epstein). The increase in social media has led to many researchers looking into to the positive and negative effects of social media in the political process. The social media boom really kicked

off in 2008 during the presidential election as Barack Obama and his campaign began to use Facebook to reach out to voters. In both his campaigns in 2008 and 2012, the use of Facebook was crucial to him getting his messages out there and reaching out to the voters to try and connect with the people of the country that he wanted to lead (Bode 2012, Carlisle and Patton 2013, Gerodimos and Justinussen 2015, Gupta-Carlson 2016, Johnson and Perlmutter 2010, Karlsen and Enjolras 2016). Social media took center stage in campaigning once the 2012 election cycle. Candidates, media outlets and the public began to utilize digital communication platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to strategize, share information and express opinion (Heim). The Internet has become much more accessible. Face-to-face interaction had historically been the way candidates would interact with fellow voters about political issues and opponents. Now, with social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter, that number of potential voters you are able to interact with and access has gone global with just the click of a button (Bode 2012). Carlisle and Patton put forth the idea that researchers suggest that the Internet and that social media have made political information more accessible (Carlisle and Patton 2013). It is more accessible because of the minimal cost it requires to access the information on the Internet and social media. This is a way that people can come together from around the world and have online discussions about campaigns and political issues.

The Internet has been a revolutionary advancement. In the 1990's this technology made one-to-many communication possible. Campaigns could now deliver information directly into the voter's home (Toohey). Voters began to realize that political information was easily accessible over the Internet. Even though the popularity of social media as a digital communication platform was rising in the 2000's, it still was not the most popular platform for political or election information taking the backseat to television, newspapers, and the radio



(Toohey). Presidential candidate Howard Dean began to use blogging as a form of communication in 2004, this is what began to connect people based on common interest. This sparked the revolution of arranging face-to-face and online conversation (Toohey). Soon enough, social media outlets began to be the hub for political information as political organizations began to focus their attention on digital communication platforms.

In the small background of research in social media and politics, there has been a lot of work done on the correlation between social media and its affect on civic engagement. There is little understanding of how campaigns themselves view social media as effective communication tools (Kreiss). This research did not necessarily focus on the correlation during this election cycle but will instead loom at how social media affects the public and how the campaigns utilized Facebook and Twitter in the last week of campaigning. In a recent study done by Pew Research Center during January 2016-February 2016, results showed that 62% of people get their political news and information on social media. Furthermore, 66% of Facebook users get their news from Facebook and 59% of Twitter users get their news from Twitter (Gottfried and Shearer). This displays how much people do in fact use social media during the campaign process and how vital it has become for campaigns.

Bode suggests that research shows that when people engage in online activity having to do with politics, there is a positive correlation with political engagement and how they get their sources of information (Bode 2012). Furthermore, her research displays that there is a positive correlation between social networking and politics. Facebook can create an online situation where people can communicate and engage in the political process. Bode then continues to claim that social media now acts as if, or better than people communicating face-to-face because they are able to communicate and generate norms, promote intimacy and trust, and create social

capital (Bode 2012). This begins to simulate face-to-face conversations that people were once only able to have with a limited amount of people. Now, the sky is the limit in terms of the amount of people one can have discussions with. Understanding how social media can affect the way voters interact and react to posts is vital to what campaigns say on Facebook and Twitter.

The use of Facebook in the 2008 and 2012 election cycles really kicked off the use of social media use during political campaigns. The interplay of the Internet and political campaigns is a whole new game that politicians are learning to play. Carlisle and Patton explore how social media is more accessible to and how it can also affect political engagement. With the easier and lower cost of accessibility, social media can provide voters with much more leisure in accessing political information (Carlisle and Patton 2013). The main issue with accessibility is people still have to have a desire to go out and access this information. Research shows that people who have already been politically engaged remain so at a cheaper cost and those who are not politically engaged do not necessarily access this information (Carlisle and Patton 2013). However, if people can just follow news account and follow the campaigns on social media, whenever going through the news feed, posts from those accounts will show up there. Social media campaigning tends to post about issues and Election Day so one can only assume that campaigns want to try and get engaged with voters and rally people for support. However in a study done by Pew Research Center, it was concluded that both Romney and Obama did not use social media to its abilities in 2012 (Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media Staff 2). Mobilizing voters can be a crucial part to winning an election and this ease of access to political information through Facebook and Twitter.

Another quality that social media provides is the ability for the candidates and campaigns to interact with social media users through comment threads. Once again, the access and ability

for this to occur is there but is determined by whether or not the candidate or campaign utilizes this opportunity to interact with the public. Research conducted by the Pew Research Center; found that this was the case in the 2012 presidential election cycle. Both Barack Obama and Mitt Romney rarely ever commented, replied to, or “retweeted” to someone or something from the public, outside of the campaign circle (Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media Staff 2). The Pew Research Center studied social media use by both campaigns during the 2012 cycle from June 4, 2012 – June 14, 2012. Of Obama’s 404 tweets on twitter, only three percent of the tweets were retweets of citizen posts and ultimately it was discovered that “Neither campaign made much use of the social aspect of social media” (Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media Staff 2). This research supports that social media can only reach its fullest potential when the tools it can be used for are entirely utilized.

More recently, Pew Research Center did a study on the current election cycle studying the Sanders, Clinton, and Trump campaigns in regards to social media use. This research directly relates to my research, as it is very similar much on a more specific note to how these candidates posted on social networks. Pew’s research showed that the three candidates post at fairly similar rates but that the posts were about different issues and received different levels of attention from the public and from the media (Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media Staff 1). This is where the conversation begins amongst voters about Trump’s tweets getting much more media attention. A lot of what can be seen, retweeted, and commented on is also based on the number of people viewing the posts and following the account that posted it. PEW Research shows that at the time of their data collection from May 11, 2016 to May 31, 2016, Trump had about three million more followers than Clinton on Twitter and had about double the number of followers on Facebook (Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media Staff 1). The more followers the better

because that will help you get more retweets and comments. Social media offers so many different kinds of opportunities for followers to connect with the Internet as a whole. That can become an important advantage for campaigns as they can link stories and posts to their campaign websites and they can also link certain headlines and posts to certain articles and news media. PEW's research shows that the Clinton campaign took huge advantage of attempting to get viewers to go to her campaign website by linking it in many of her posts on Facebook and Twitter. Trump was not interested in linking his Twitter and Facebook users to his campaign website. He seemed to be more interested in linking his posts to news media (Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media Staff 1). However, there is an opposite result when Trump retweets. Trump consistently retweets the public as Clinton usually retweets media outlets (Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media Staff 1). During this time period, it is obvious that Clinton and Trump were using social networks in different ways. This could prove to change come November 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Methodology**

This research is quantitative in the sense that the amount of posting will be important but is also qualitative because the framing and the content of the posts on social media are also valuable. It is straightforward to count the amount of posts by each campaign and categorizing the posts to find out what the campaigns were posting most about can also provide interesting information. That is where a gap in the literature exists. There has been a good amount of research done in the field of social media and as it continues to grow in politics and that research will grow as well. However, there has been a shortage of work done in the field of analyzing posts for content and the framing of the message.

This multi-case study uses content analysis to analyze the content and framing of social media posts on Facebook and Twitter by the Trump and Clinton campaigns. By using a code sheet that categorizes posts into groupings, an understanding will emerge on how these campaigns used social media and who was more successful in doing so as the election quickly approached. The quantity of the posts will be calculated in this code sheet but the content will also be coded for and can give some details on what was the most important message from these campaigns and how that could have affected the election and contributed to the results.

Content analysis is generally used to analyze values of social media. In this case, content analysis is the perfect choice to investigate how the Trump and Clinton campaigns used their social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter. Analyzing the content of the posts made by the Trump and Clinton campaigns on Facebook and Twitter will be coded for by looking for six themes of their posts:

Theme 1: Mobilize voters to go to the polls and cast their votes. This is the idea of getting out the vote.

Theme 2: Encourage participation in the campaign process such as attend rallies, listen to speeches, watch debates, and sign up for volunteering.

Theme 3: Take positions on issues. Defined by the post showing direct stances on an issue or an event going on at the time.

Theme 4: Fundraising. A clear motive to ask for donations to the campaign.

Theme 5: Attack the opponent. These posts will show a clear display of attack on the opponent's action, ideology, or any mistake he/she said or did and trying to exploit that.

Theme 6: Self/campaign promotion. This kind of post is a buffer theme that will categorize any post that seems to promote the candidate.

Furthermore, the number of posts will be calculated as a total to also see how often each candidate would post. This will also be divided into text based, picture based, and video based

and how often each candidate used this ability to reach out to voters. Most posts will have text with them therefore; the ones that are only text are the ones that will go in the text-based category. Likewise, if a post contains a photo it is considered photo-based and if a post contains a video it is considered video-based. Also, posts will fit into multiple themes. This means that even though the total number of posts could be 100, the number of posts in the themes could exceed 100. This is done to avoid having to disregard a part of a post because it can only fit in one category. This allows for posts to have multiple parts to them and show that themes can be connected with each other. Also, retweets were included in the total number of tweets and were also recorded in any theme it pertained to just as any other post would be.

There will be no real direct relationship determined between the use of social media and the winner of the election but it will display who was able to use social media in a more successful manner that will help pave the way to understanding the uses and how it could affect the election.

## **Results**

Hypothesis 1: Trump will post more than Clinton on both Facebook and

Twitter. This hypothesis was chosen because Trump is always thought of as posting on social media so much and “tweeting everything.” This popular belief leads me to believe that he will have more postings on social networks.

Hypothesis 2: Twitter will be used more than Facebook by both candidates. Even though Twitter provides more limitations, it seems to be a more popular source of campaign information as I have recently seen before conducting research on this topic.

Hypothesis 3: The main focus for both candidates will be mobilizing voters and attacking the opponent. Fundraising in this last week of campaigning will be the least important. This hypothesis applies to posts on both Facebook and Twitter. I chose this hypothesis because the research is done on the week leading up to Election Day therefore, it would make sense that both campaigns would be focused on reaching out to voters to get out the vote and to make themselves seem like a better candidate than the other by attacking one another.

Table 1: Statistics of Facebook Posts from November 1, 2016 – November 8, 2016

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Total Number of Facebook Posts</b>	<b>Number of Text-based Posts</b>	<b>Number of Photo-based Posts</b>	<b>Number of Video-based Posts</b>
Clinton	114	1 (>1%)	64 (56%)	49 (43%)
Trump	48	0 (0%)	6 (12.5%)	42 (87.5%)

In the week before the election, November 1, 2016 – November 8, 2016, Clinton had 114 Facebook posts. Donald Trump, during that same time period, November 1<sup>st</sup> – November 8<sup>th</sup>, had 48 Facebook posts. Based on this immediate, quantitative information, Hypothesis 1: Trump will post more on Facebook and Twitter was incorrect. Clinton out posted Trump on Facebook by 66 posts. Not only did Clinton post more than Trump on Facebook but they also utilized different contents when posting. Clinton seemed to be more balanced because 56% of her posts were photo-based and 43% were video-based. This isn't the most balanced however; it is much more balanced than Trump. Trump's posts were only 12.5% photo-based but were 87.5% video based. Trump's posts contained interviews of people discussing his campaign, his speeches, and attack ads against Clinton. Many of his videos were of his rallies and speeches and links to "go live" on

Facebook to be able to watch live coverage of his speeches and rallies via Facebook. Clinton only had one text-based post and Trump had none. This displays how both campaigns took advantage of what social media had to offer and utilized the opportunity to attach a photo or video to a post.

Table 2: Statistics of Twitter Posts from November 1, 2016 – November 8, 2016

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Total Number of Twitter Posts</b>	<b>Number of Text-based Posts</b>	<b>Number of Photo-based Posts</b>	<b>Number of Video-based Posts</b>
Clinton	316	92 (29%)	151 (48%)	73 (23%)
Trump	103	30 (29%)	58 (56%)	15 (15%)

In the week before the election, November 1, 2016 – November 8, 2016, Clinton posted 316 tweets while Donald Trump posted only 103 tweets on Twitter. Again, Hypothesis 1: Trump posted more on Facebook and Twitter was incorrect. To the contrary of Facebook, both Clinton and Trump posted more photo-based tweets than video-based tweets. Also, both tweeted text-based posts much more, at the same rate of 29% even though Clinton had 92 posts and Trump had 30 posts. There were many more photo tweets on Twitter but when recording the tweets there weren't as many videos because Twitter posts provided links to Facebook live videos but not actual videos. This may be a main reason as to why there were less video displayed tweets than Facebook posts. Hypothesis 2: Twitter will be used more than Facebook by both candidates was supported. For Clinton, she nearly tripled her rate of posting on Twitter versus Facebook (114 vs. 316). As for Trump, he more than doubled his rate of posting on Twitter versus Facebook (48 vs. 103). The percentage of the types of tweets was quite similar between both Clinton and Trump but the main difference was the rate of posting during that week before the election.



Table 3: Topics of Facebook Posts from November 1, 2016 – November 8, 2016

Candidate	Total Number of Facebook Posts	Mobilize Voters	Encourage Participation	Take Positions on Issues	Fundraise	Attack the Opponent	Self/Campaign Promotion
Clinton	114	74 (67%)	11 (10%)	4 (4%)	1 (>1%)	22 (19%)	14 (12%)
Trump	48	26 (54%)	20 (42%)	2 (4%)	20 (42%)	4 (8%)	15 (31%)

Table 3 shown above, displays the content of what Clinton and Trump posted about on Facebook during the week before the election. Hypothesis 3: The main focus for both candidates will be mobilizing voters and attacking the opponent on Facebook was correct for Clinton but not for Trump. Trump focused heavily on mobilizing voters however, his number of encouraging participation and fundraising was exactly the same (only 12% less than mobilizing voters). For Clinton, her Facebook posts only consisted of one about fundraising. Her two most important themes on Facebook were mobilizing voters and attacking the opponent. It is interesting to see that both candidates hardly felt the need to post about taking a stance on an issue; they both posted at a rate of 4% in that theme for Facebook. Many of Trump’s posts had three parts to them: mobilizing voters, encouraging participation by posting videos of live feeds of rallies and speeches, and a link to his website to make a donation. It is very interesting to see how much Trump focused on fundraising on Facebook during this last week of the campaign. Many could say this had something to do with him funding so much of his own campaign and finally realizing he did need help in order to win this election. Clinton focused on mobilizing voters by a large margin compared to the other five themes. Her posts display her desire and need for citizens to come out and vote in the election. Based on the data, it appears she tried to couple mobilizing voters with attacking Trump in a way to remind people of how “unfit” he was to be president and how she was the better choice for president.

Clinton seemed to have used more aspects of what was available to be utilized on Facebook. She linked to her own campaign website 15 times out of the 114 posts on Facebook. Clinton also shared posts of other people 5 times. One more aspect that she seemed to appeal to voters with was connecting herself and her campaign to celebrities. These celebrities that supported her were Will Ferrell, LeBron James, Beyoncé, Jay-Z, Pharrell Williams, Katy Perry, and Miley Cyrus. These posts contained photos or videos of Clinton meeting with a celebrity or even a celebrity at a rally or event praising Clinton. Trump's posts did not contain links to his website nor to any news articles. He also did not have the celebrity presence and support that Clinton did. However, on the day of the election, Trump posted photos of states that he had won thanking them for the votes whereas Clinton did not. She did post a photo of herself voting but that was all she did besides attempting to mobilize voters and encourage participation. The last post by Clinton on November 8, 2016 was just a notification that she had changed her profile picture to a photo of her face smiling. However, Trump's last post on election day was a video of him and his family on stage accepting the nomination with a caption of just "!" and nothing else. This can resemble the feelings of each candidate. Clinton was trying to display optimism and belief in the American system and that much more is yet to come by posting a photo of herself smiling. On the other hand, Trump was obviously ecstatic that he had won the election.

Table 4: Topics of Twitter Posts from November 1, 2016 – November 8, 2016

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Total Number of Twitter Posts</b>	<b>Mobilize Voters</b>	<b>Encourage Participation</b>	<b>Take Positions on Issues</b>	<b>Fundraise</b>	<b>Attack the Opponent</b>	<b>Self/Campaign Promotion</b>
Clinton	316	136 (43%)	33 (10%)	17 (5%)	0 (0%)	65 (20.5%)	73 (23%)
Trump	103	21 (20%)	29 (28%)	6 (6%)	0 (0%)	26 (25%)	21 (20%)

Table 4 shown above, displays the content of what Clinton and Trump posted about on Twitter during the week before the election. Hypothesis 3: The main focus for both candidates will be mobilizing voters and attacking the opponent on Twitter was not supported. The highest percentage of posts on Twitter for Clinton was in fact mobilizing voters at 43% but the second highest was not attacking the opponent. The second highest was actually self/campaign promotion at 23% and followed closely by attacking the opponent at 20.5%. The highest percentage of posts on Twitter for Trump was encouraging participation at 28% but the second highest did end up being attack the opponent at 25% closely followed by self/campaign promotion and mobilize voters both at 20%. Fundraising was the least posted about, both Clinton and Trump did not post a single tweet about fundraising during the week leading up to Election Day therefore, the last part of Hypothesis 3 was supported. However, it is worth noting the difference in posts between Facebook in Twitter. The perfect example is that 42% of Trump's post on Facebook were fundraising compared absolutely no posts having to do with fundraising on Twitter.

Twitter allows for profiles to post hyperlinks and retweet other profiles. On Twitter, Clinton linked to her own campaign website in 55 of her tweets and retweeted 68 times. Clinton also tweeted once congratulating the Chicago Cubs on breaking the curse and winning the World Series, which was included in the total amount but was not included in a theme, as it did not directly relate to the election. Just as she did on Facebook, Clinton posted many tweets relating to celebrities such as Jay-Z, Beyoncé, Will Ferrell, Chris Paul, LeBron James, and Katy Perry. It is not the same as the ones on Facebook but a few were similar. Jay-Z and Beyoncé were the most prevalent as they both came out and spoke at a rally and both tweeted their love and support for Clinton. Clinton then retweeted their posts to display their support on her own profile. As for

Trump, he never connected any of his posts to his own campaign website or any celebrities like Clinton did. Trump also retweeted other profiles 16 times to add to his count of tweets.

I propose here that the reason Clinton posted so much more than Trump on Facebook and Twitter is because her campaign knew the race was much closer than people thought and that mobilizing the millennials as Obama had done could be the difference between victory or defeat. Social media was used as a way to get people involved in politics and get people to vote, evident in her attempt to mobilize voters. Clinton was trying to market herself as much as possible by posting more on social media and connecting herself to popular celebrities whenever she got the chance.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Social media is only growing in popularity for the campaigning process. It has become so popular because of its ability to reach a wide range of individuals at minimal costs to a campaign. Social networks can act like television and radio ads but the huge difference is the minimal cost and the ability for it to be in writing on a profile for people to view at any time. The 2016 presidential election was something special for those participating in the political process on social media. On the contrary to popular belief, Clinton posted a lot more than Trump on Facebook and Twitter the week before the election. Based on the results found during the week before the election, it is surprising that Clinton posted much more than Trump. As everyone, including myself, was so taken back about Trump's constant presence on social media. It was not an expected outcome that Clinton would be more active on Facebook and Twitter.

According to PEW research earlier in the campaign, the two campaigns had posted at fairly similar rates. Therefore, I wonder that if there were a larger sample size to record data, the results would be different. The amount of research being conducted on social media use in

campaigns and elections will only continue to grow as many people have seen the boost in its popularity. There is still much more research to come in this field of social media and politics.

Further recommendations for this research would be to record all posts from the official kick off of the general election campaign starting at Labor Day all the way until Election Day to get a more accurate set of results. Further research could be done on this election to see if the results would display anything different. With a larger sample size, it could show what people actually believe and display that Trump's social media presence was more active than Clinton's.

## Bibliography

- Aldrich, John, et al. "Getting Out The Vote In The Social Media Era: Are Digital Tools Changing The Extent, Nature And Impact Of Party Contacting In Elections?." *Conference Papers -- American Political Science Association* (2010): 1-24. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Bode, Leticia, and Ben Epstein. "Campaign Klout: Measuring Online Influence During The 2012 Election." *Journal Of Information Technology & Politics* 12.2 (2015): 133-148. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Bode, Leticia. "Facebooking It To The Polls: A Study In Online Social Networking And Political Behavior." *Journal Of Information Technology & Politics* 9.4 (2012): 352-369. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Carlisle, Juliet E., and Robert C. Patton. "Is Social Media Changing How We Understand Political Engagement? An Analysis Of Facebook And The 2008 Presidential Election." *Political Research Quarterly* 66.4 (2013): 883-895. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. "Dynamic Public Opinion: Communication Effects over Time." *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 104, no. 4, 2010, pp. 663–680. [www.jstor.org/stable/40982891](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40982891).
- Gerodimos, Roman, and Jákup Justinussen. "Obama'S 2012 Facebook Campaign: Political Communication In The Age Of The Like Button." *Journal Of Information Technology & Politics* 12.2 (2015): 113-132. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Gottfried, Jeffrey, and Elisa Shearer. "News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2016." *Pew Research Centers Journalism Project RSS*. N.p., 26 May 2016. Web. <http://www.journalism.org/2016/05/26/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2016/>.

- Gupta-Carlson, Himanee. "Re-Imagining The Nation: Storytelling And Social Media In The Obama Campaigns." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49.1 (2016): 71-75. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Heim, Kyle. "Presidential Campaigning And Social Media: An Analysis Of The 2012 Campaign. Edited By John Allen Hendricks And Dan Schill. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 320 Pp." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 45.2 (2015): 410-412. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Johnson, Thomas J., and David D. Perlmutter. "Introduction: The Facebook Election." *Mass Communication & Society* 13.5 (2010): 554-559. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Jungherr, Andreas. "Twitter Use In Election Campaigns: A Systematic Literature Review." *Journal Of Information Technology & Politics* 13.1 (2016): 72-91. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Karlsen, Rune, and Bernard Enjolras. "Styles Of Social Media Campaigning And Influence In A Hybrid Political Communication System." *International Journal Of Press/Politics* 21.3 (2016): 338-357. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Kreiss, Daniel. "Seizing The Moment: The Presidential Campaigns' Use Of Twitter During The 2012 Electoral Cycle." *New Media & Society* 18.8 (2016): 1473-1490. *Political Science Complete*. Web.
- Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media Staff 1. "2. Candidates Differ in Their Use of Social Media to Connect with the Public." *Pew Research Center's Journalism Project*. N.p., 18 July 2016. Web.
- Pew Research Center: Journalism and Media Staff 2. "How the Presidential Candidates Use the Web and Social Media." *Pew Research Center's Journalism Project*. N.p., 14 Aug. 2012.

Web. <<http://www.journalism.org/2012/08/15/how-presidential-candidates-use-web-and-social-media/>>.

Price, Tom. "Social Media And Politics: THE ISSUES." *CQ Researcher* 22.36 (2012): 867-874. *Political Science Complete*. Web.

Shen, Ivy. "Social Media And Presidential Campaign: A Content Analysis Of 2012 Presidential Candidates' Use Of Facebook Public Pages." *Conference Papers -- New England Political Science Association* (2012): 1-32. *Political Science Complete*. Web.

"Social Media And Politics." *CQ Researcher* 22.36 (2012): 865. *Political Science Complete*. Web.

Toohey, Alexandra P., "Presidential Politics: The Social Media Revolution" (2013).

CMC Senior Theses. Paper 773. [http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc\\_theses/773](http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/773)

Washington, Anne L., et al. "What Is The Correlation Between Twitter, Polls And The Popular Vote In The 2012 Presidential Election?." *Conference Papers -- American Political Science Association* (2010): 1-25. *Political Science Complete*. Web.