Political Science

G. R. Boynton's New Media and Politics

University of Iowa 11-19-2010

MPs on Twitter

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This paper is posted at Iowa Research Online.
http://ir.uiowa.edu/polisci_nmp/192

MP's on Twitter

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Question: How many MP's are using Twitter to communicate with constituents?

In democratic societies more political leaders are implementing new ways in order to reach their constituents. With the increase of technology more leaders are using means such as Twitter as a quick and effective way to send messages. In Great Britain Twitter is used by several MPs in order to reach out to these people as it is quicker and easier than other means of communication, such as announcements in the form of newspapers and speeches. The message is sent out to constituents that choose to follow the MP instantly, some even with the option of having the messages sent directly to their cell phones. Citizens may also send messages directly to their MPs easier, something that is not easily done through other means of communication. Along with being able to send messages MPs also have the option to following their constituent's tweets. This allows politicians to directly communicate with the people, see what issues arise in their district, if there is any critique on the current political situation, as well as other messages their constituents might send.

Procedure:

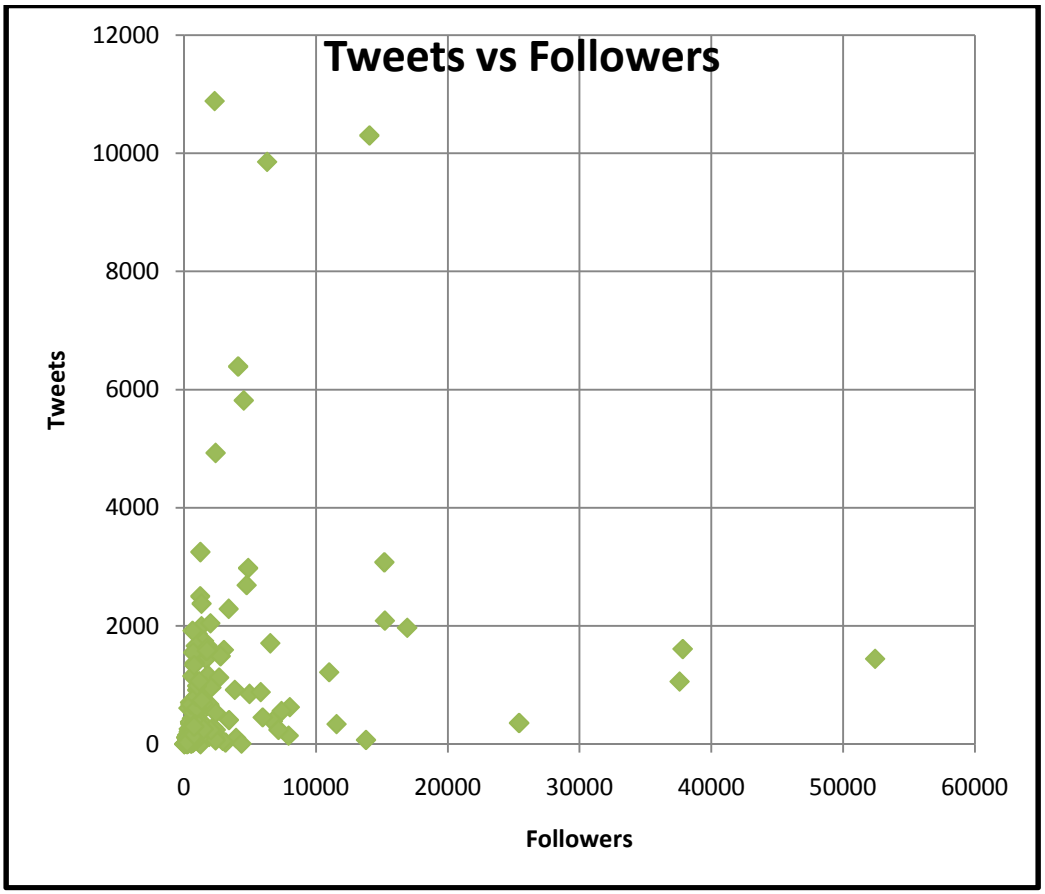
We took inventory of off the website *www.tweetminster.co.uk/mps/party.* There, we found the number of followers, following, and the number of updates (tweets) the members of parliament had. We documented the data in Excel and made a spreadsheet totaling the number of followers, following, and updates. Our group collected data on the overall MP's on Twitter instead of analyzing a single party, this allowed us to do a broader search and document all of the MP's that we found. We found that of the overall number of MP's using Twitter compared to their other party members 26.14% were Conservatives, 50.88% Liberal Democrats, 34.88% Labour, and 37.93% Other. This leads us to believe that there still are a lot of party members that aren't using Twitter, the Liberal Democrat party had only 57 members.

Findings:

Based on our data we found that there was a total of 210 MP's using Twitter, all parties, out of a total 650 members. 80 Conservative, 29 Liberal Democrat, 90 Labour, and 11 Other, this leads us to believe that there are still a lot of MP's that aren't using Twitter, maybe they are following their party members and observing whether or not Twitter is helping them gain a larger following. We were able to find the number of MP followers on *www.tweetminster.co.uk/mps/party* and that showed who and what party had the most followers based on a twitter sample. If someone has a high amount of twitter followers they are most likely a well known figure. We also found that the Labour party had by far the most updates which isn't surprising because they have the largest number of MP's using Twitter. The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats had about the same number which is interesting because the Conservatives have a lot more MP's using Twitter than do the Liberal Democrats.

Mean # of Tweets	
Conservative MPs	546.0875
Liberal Democrat MPs	516.6552
Labour	1053.167
Other MPs	379.5455

Total MPs	Total	On Twitter	Percent %
Conservative MPs	306	80	26.14379
Liberal Democrat MPs	57	29	50.87719
Labour	258	90	34.88372
Other MPs	29	11	37.93103



Conclusion:

With the increased use of Twitter in the institutional realm it allows users to read information and announcements sent directly from the MP in their district. The quick and effective way that Twitter relays these messages allows for large groups of people to receive almost instant information, therefore allowing the population to be more knowledgeable on the actions of their MP. The use of Twitter allows for easier communication between the political leaders and regular citizens that more and more MPs are using. Although the graph shows that there is not really any correlation between the amount of tweets an MP sends to the amount of people that follow them, it is still important to MPs to use this tool. The fact that there is this forum for which citizens can communicate with their MPs closes the gap between time and space that allows MPs to understand their constituents easier, and be able to act quicker to constituent's issues.