Government in 140 Characters

Is Social Media a Tool for Greater Access?

Jonathan Schwabish and Donald Moynihan

Hosted by Steve Cook

September 16, 2015

(Webinar begins at 1:00 p.m. CDT, 2:00 p.m. EDT)
New collaborative webinar series between the Urban Institute and IRP

Hosted quarterly, with future webinars to be held on December 16, March 16, and June 15.
Local Government in 140 Characters

Jonathan Schwabish
@jschwabish
Do governments use social media to communicate with citizens?
Why leverage social media?

-improve the quality of government services
-enable greater citizen engagement
-elevate public services
-reduce costs

Source: Social Media in Government: 5 Key Considerations, HootSuite
Demographics of social media users:
Age Groups
(August 2011)

18-29: 87
30-49: 68
50-64: 49
65+: 29

Source: Pew Research Center, April 2012
Demographics of social media users: Educational Attainment
(August 2011)

- No high school diploma: 63
- High school grad: 60
- Some College: 73
- College +: 63

Source: Pew Research Center, April 2012
Demographics of social media users: Household Income
(August 2011)

[Bar chart showing the percentage of social media users by household income level:
- <$30k: 68%
- $30k-$50k: 65%
- $50k-$75k: 61%
- >$75k: 66%
]

Source: Pew Research Center, April 2012
Twitter & Facebook users: Age Group
(February 2013)

Source: Pew Research Center, February 2013
Twitter & Facebook users: Educational Attainment
(February 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Facebook Users</th>
<th>Twitter Users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School/High School Graduate</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College +</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pew Research Center, February 2013
Twitter & Facebook users: Household Income
(February 2013)

- Household Income Categories
  - <$30k: Facebook (73), Twitter (16)
  - $30k-$50k: Facebook (72), Twitter (16)
  - $50k-$75k: Facebook (65), Twitter (14)
  - >$75k: Facebook (63), Twitter (17)

Source: Pew Research Center, February 2013
Local Government in 140 Characters
Let’s talk Data
Everything here is very preliminary
There are 3,142 counties in the U.S.
402 of them have Twitter feeds
452 of them have Facebook pages
Obtaining the data

1. Searched every county website for social media feeds/buttons
Obtaining the data

1. Searched every county website for social media feeds/buttons

2. Recorded website, Twitter, and Facebook addresses
1. Searched every county website for social media feeds/buttons

2. Recorded website, Twitter, and Facebook addresses

3. Used Twitter API to extract Tweet history and basic metrics

Obtaining the data
Data Issues

1. 3,200 max Tweet count
   • 48 county feeds (12%)

2. Multiple feeds, different departments

3. Websites do not always list Twitter and Facebook feeds
Get the latest and greatest from LA County by following @LACountyCEO

People living in Central Los Angeles County and the Santa Clarita Valley with respiratory disease should minimize outdoor activities, today

Today is Book Drive Thursday at the @LACountyFair. Bring in a new or gently used book and get #free admission until 6pm!
Perusing the Data
Government Tweeting...

 Tweets Tweets & replies Photos & videos

IDAHO.gov @IDAHOgov · Nov 12
Flags are half-staff today in honor of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Stien Gearhart. On Friday we will honor Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hartway.

IDAHO.gov @IDAHOgov · Nov 10
Veterans can add their veteran status to their driver's license or ID: fb.me/2sesTOlDk via @IdahoITD

IDAHO.gov @IDAHOgov · Nov 10
If you have business to do with the state, get it done today! State offices will be closed tomorrow to observe Veterans Day.
The Good....

City of Falls Church @FallsChurchGov · 4h
We need your input! Help build upon and improve the park system. Please complete this survey: svy.mk/116D6vx

County of Hyde, NC @HydeNC · Oct 31
Vote early @ the Gov't Center in Swan Quarter today 10/31 8am-7pm & 11/1 8am-1pm.
Tues. Nov 4 is Election Day! Info: hydecountync.gov/departments/el...

Crow Wing County MN @crowwingmn · 5h
Summary of 10/28/14 County Board Minutes (published 11/14/14) bit.ly/11k9RVV
The Good....

Many citizens are getting involved in public safety tonight at our Citizen Engagement Series session!

Wayne County @waynegog · Aug 27
GDOT officials conducting the final field plan review for SR 169 rail overpass project funded by #TSPLOST.
The Bad....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>TWEETS</th>
<th>FOLLOWING</th>
<th>FOLLOWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uinta County, WY</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Uinta County, WY @UintaCountyWY · 20 Oct 2013
There are no recent items to display from Uinta County - Agenda Creator
dlvr.it/49gGSh

Uinta County, WY @UintaCountyWY · 20 Oct 2013
There are no recent items to display from Uinta County - Alert Center
dlvr.it/49gGQp

Uinta County, WY @UintaCountyWY · 20 Oct 2013
There are no recent items to display from Uinta County - Agenda Creator
dlvr.it/49g7PM

Uinta County, WY @UintaCountyWY · 20 Oct 2013
There are no recent items to display from Uinta County - Alert Center
dlvr.it/49g7NJ

Uinta County, WY @UintaCountyWY · 20 Oct 2013
There are no recent items to display from Uinta County - Agenda Creator
dlvr.it/49g0zd

Uinta County, WY @UintaCountyWY · 20 Oct 2013
There are no recent items to display from Uinta County - Alert Center
dlvr.it/49g0yF
The Ugly.... 🙁
The Ugly.... 😞
The Ugly.... 😞

Lawrence County @lawrencecosd · 11 Apr 2013
@jaysche_ Gmail Attachments to Drive - getting a "Not Found Error 404". Do you know what the problem might be? Drive works fine otherwise...
The Ugly.... 😞

Lawrence County @lawrencecosd · 11 Apr 2013
@jaysche_ Gmail Attachments to Drive - getting a "Not Found" error. Do you know what the problem might be? Drive works fine with Google Docs.

Josh Sullivan @jaysche_
Software developer, music dork.
Location Sterling, VA
GitHub github.com/jpsullivan
Joined April 2011
The Ugly.... 😞

Lawrence County @lawrencecosd · 11 Apr 2013
@jaysche_ Gmail Attachments to Drive - getting a "Not Found Error 404". Do you know what the problem might be? Drive works fine otherwise...

Sheboygan County retweeted
Angie Lee Cobbs @angleesoup · 28 Jun 2010
In Los Angeles? Check out Mardy's Munchies cupcakes. For summer they have Margarita cupcakes. Yum and Yum.
http://twurl.nl/gv48a4
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http://twurl.nl/gv48a4

Sumter County @SumterCountyGov · 11 May 2012
Sumter County SC. has a Twitter page! Did you know we have Facebook and Google+ too?
The Ugly.... 😞

Lawrence County @lawrencecosd · 11 Apr 2013
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http://twurl.nl/gv48a4

Sumter County @SumterCountyGov · 11 May 2012
Sumter County SC. has a Twitter page! Did you know was have Facebook and Google+ to?
(Preliminary) Findings
Variation in number of counties with Twitter Feeds
## Characteristics (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#Obs.</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Tweets</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Followers</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Hashtags</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Retweets</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Characteristics (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Counties</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#Obs.</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Tweets</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>3,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Followers</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>18,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Hashtags</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Retweets</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Characteristics (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Counties</th>
<th>States</th>
<th>NonProfits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#Observations</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Tweets</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Followers</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>18,700</td>
<td>449,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Hashtags</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>1,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. #Retweets</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>2,570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
County-level Correlations

Social Media
#Tweets, #Followers, #Mentions

County Characteristics
Median Income, %Poverty, Per Capita SNAP, Employment Shares
Some correlations with median income
## Employment Shares

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>#Favorites</th>
<th>#Followers</th>
<th>#Friends</th>
<th>#Tweets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRE</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts/Entertainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>−</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tobit regressions including: %poverty, median income, %men, %employed in each of 18 industries.
402 of them have Twitter feeds
When do governments Tweet?
State-Wide vs. County Level

Tweet time gaussian kernel density estimate

State Distribution

County Aggregate

County Accounts

United States
Next Steps
1. “Reverse” API to directly search for feeds
2. Facebook metrics
3. Other social media feeds
4. Timing—time of day and year
5. Semantics—Natural Language Processing
Wrapping Up
Fewer than 15% of counties use Twitter or Facebook
There is a weak correlation with income and poverty, and some sectors of the labor force.
Unclear whether they are being strategic with their use of social media
We need your input! Help build upon and improve the park system. Please complete this survey: svy.mk/116D6vx
City of Falls Church @FallsChurchGov · 4h

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CHANGING GOVERNMENT INSIDE & OUT TO PROVIDE GREATER ACCESS FOR THE POOR

Donald P. Moynihan

ROBERT M. LA FOLLETTE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Stepping back…

What does all of this mean for administration? For policy? For citizens?

Optimistic view:

Technology can enhance access to public services
Make public interactions with public services less burdensome
Citizens face administrative burdens

Learning costs: search processes to collect relevant information
Citizens face administrative burdens

Learning costs: search processes to collect relevant information

Psychological costs: sense of stigma, loss of autonomy, stress
Citizens face administrative burdens

Learning costs: search processes to collect relevant information

Psychological costs: sense of stigma, loss of autonomy, stress

Compliance costs: the burdens of following administrative rules and requirements
Citizens face administrative burdens

Learning costs: search processes to collect relevant information

Psychological costs: sense of stigma, loss of autonomy, stress

Compliance costs: the burdens of following administrative rules and requirements

Little barriers can have big effects
The poor and burdens

Less advantaged more likely to be targeted by burdens
May have less capability and resources to overcome burdens

If they are most affected by burdens, use of information technology will help them most
How to reduce impact of burdens?

Individual resources
Help from third parties
Government reduces burdens or shifts them on the state
  Social media
  Website services and design
  Administrative data
Outreach

• Social media can support broader program outreach campaign
• More targeted: emails or texts
Applying for a program

Allowing electronic applications increases take up
Applying for a program

Allowing electronic applications increases take up
Simple checks to determine eligibility and potential benefits
Applying for a program

Allowing electronic applications increases take up
Simple checks to determine eligibility and potential benefits
Single form for multiple programs
Using administrative data

Auto-enrollment

Government often already has data it needs to verify your status - why ask again?
Use administrative data to enroll or re-enroll likely eligible applicants
Many smart students forgo college in the mistaken belief that they cannot afford it. The financial aid system, which is intended to increase opportunities for low-income students, is largely to blame.
Auto-enrollment

Healthcare:

Massachusetts and others have used this technique to expand health insurance coverage.
Louisiana auto-enrolls children for Medicaid & CHIP.
Auto-enrollment in voting

On Average, Low-Income Americans Don't Vote...

Share of people who said they voted in 2012, by income group

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
... Unless They're Registered. Then They Usually Do.

Percent of people who voted in 2012, as a share of those registered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10K</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10K to $15K</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15K to $20K</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20K to $30K</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30K to $40K</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40K to $50K</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50K to $75K</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75K to $100K</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100K to $150K</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150K or more</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Oregon first state to auto-register based on DMV records
Conclusion

Basic governing principle: think about how information technology can reduce administrative burdens
What are models for how to do this?
What are barriers?
Welcome your questions

dmoynihan@lafollette.wisc.edu

@donmoyn
Q & A, Discussion

Please submit your questions in the Q & A box at the bottom of the screen
Upcoming webinars in the IRP-Urban Institute Series

December 16, 2015 – TBA

March 16, 2016 – Linda Blumberg & Pamela Herd

June 15, 2016 - TBA
Upcoming IRP Webinars

November 4, 2015: Lydia Ashton: *Behavioral Economics and Poverty Policy*

December 2, 2015: Judi Bartfeld, Craig Gundersen, Tim Smeeding, and Jim Ziliak on their forthcoming book, *SNAP Matters: How Food Stamps Affect Health and Well-Being*