



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.



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Local Government in 140 Characters

Jonathan Schwabish
@jschwabish

**Do governments
use social media to
communicate with
citizens?**

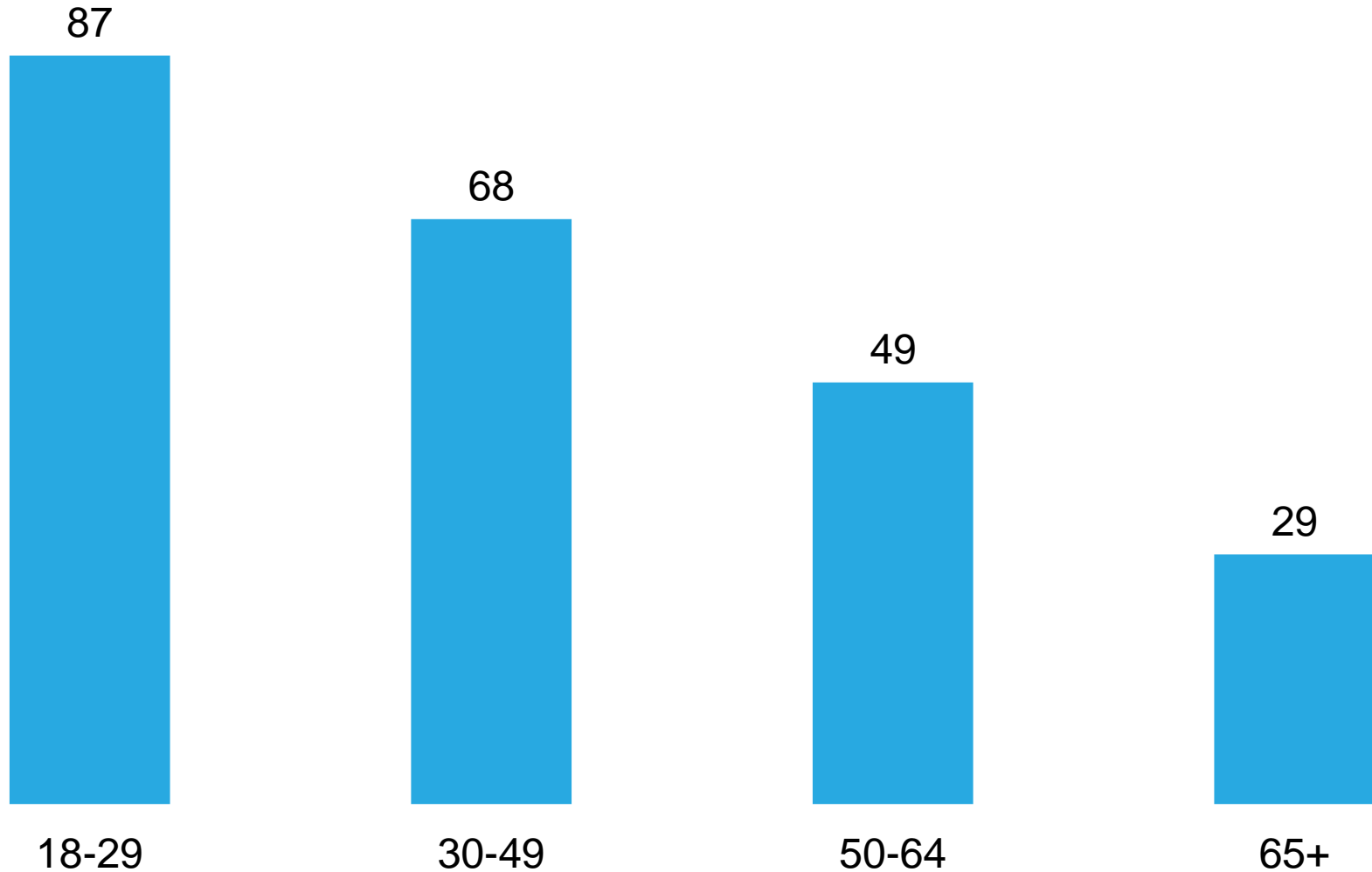


Why leverage social media?

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

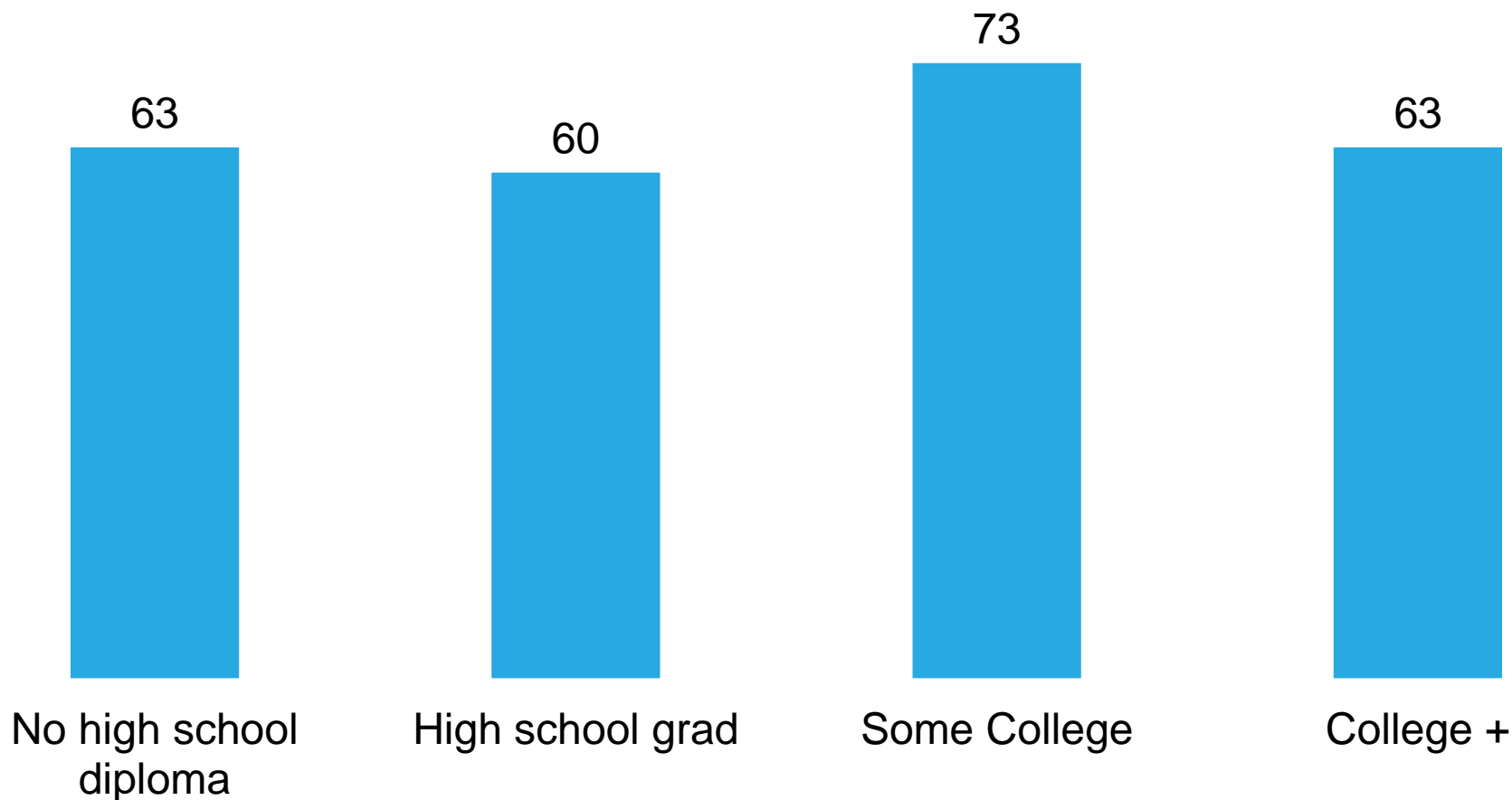
Demographics of social media users: Age Groups

(August 2011)



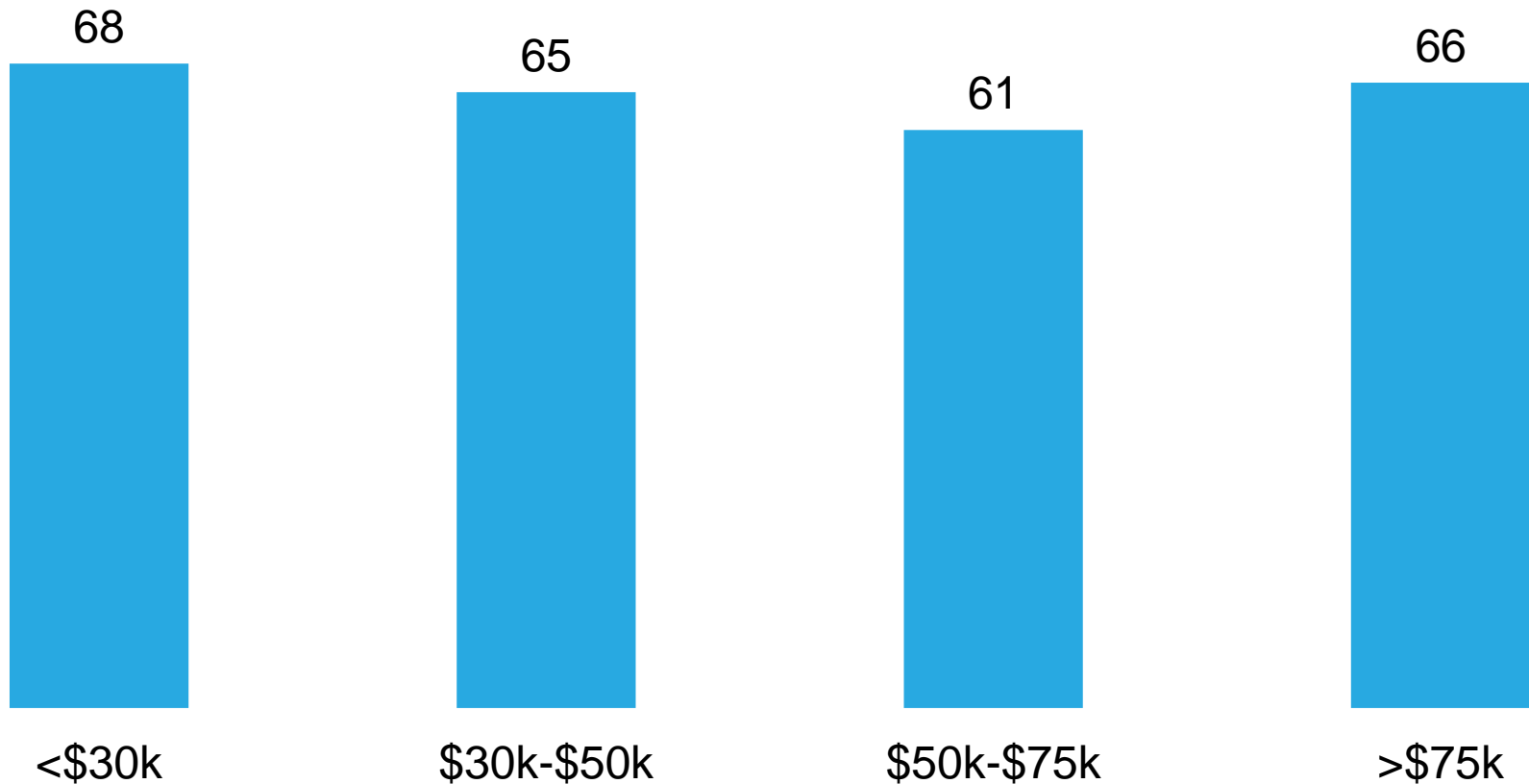
Demographics of social media users: Educational Attainment

(August 2011)



Demographics of social media users: Household Income

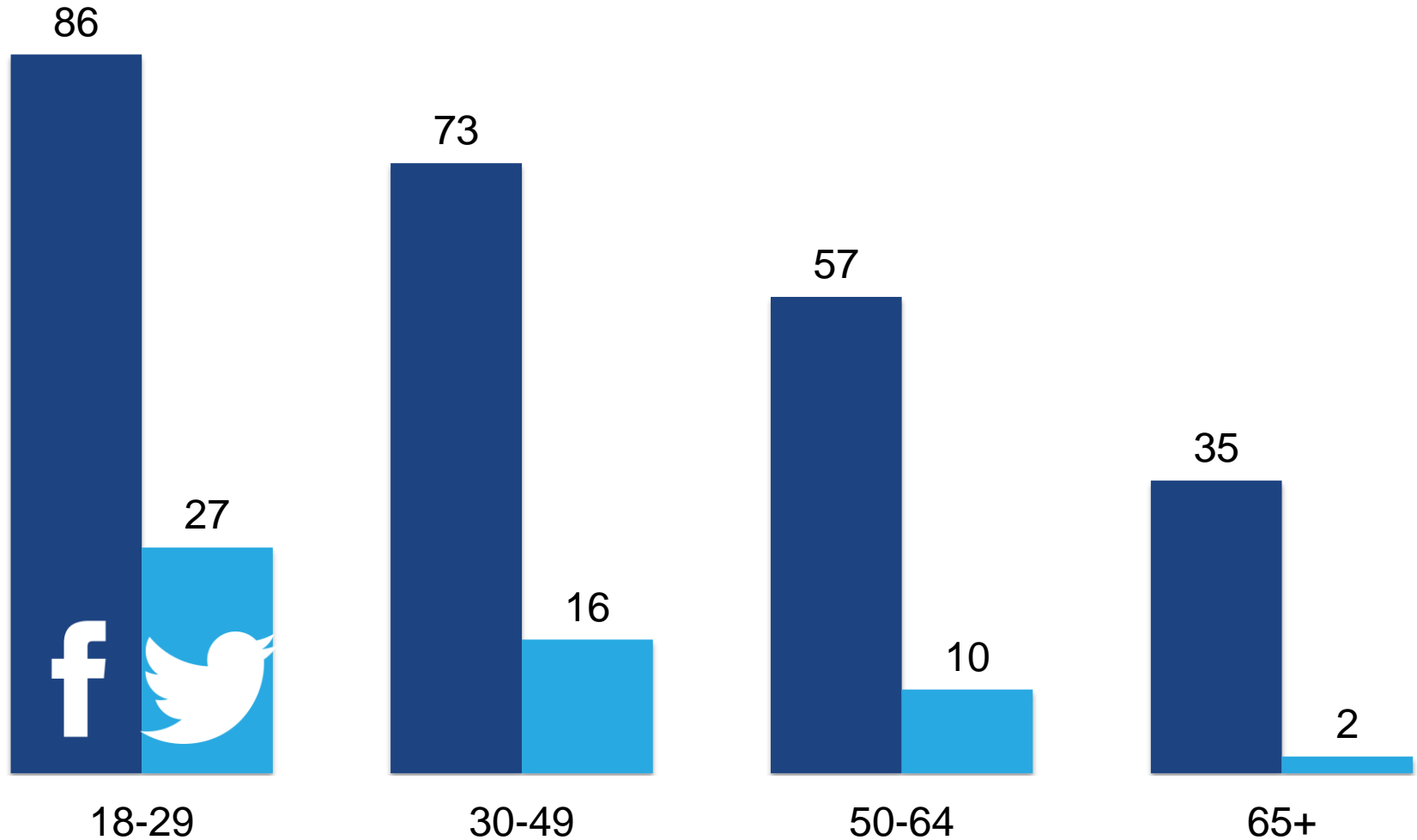
(August 2011)



Twitter & Facebook users:

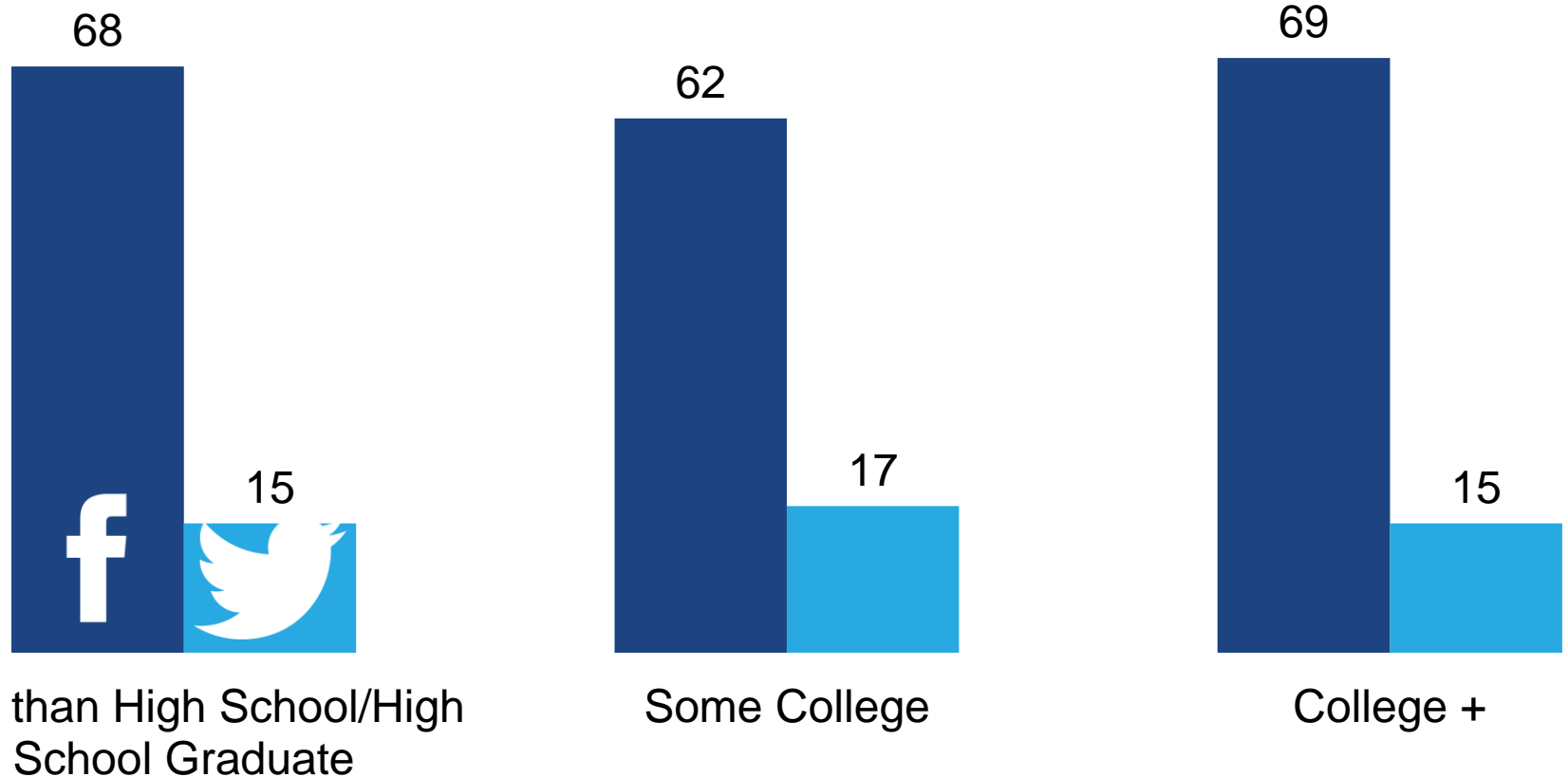
Age Group

(February 2013)



Twitter & Facebook users: Educational Attainment

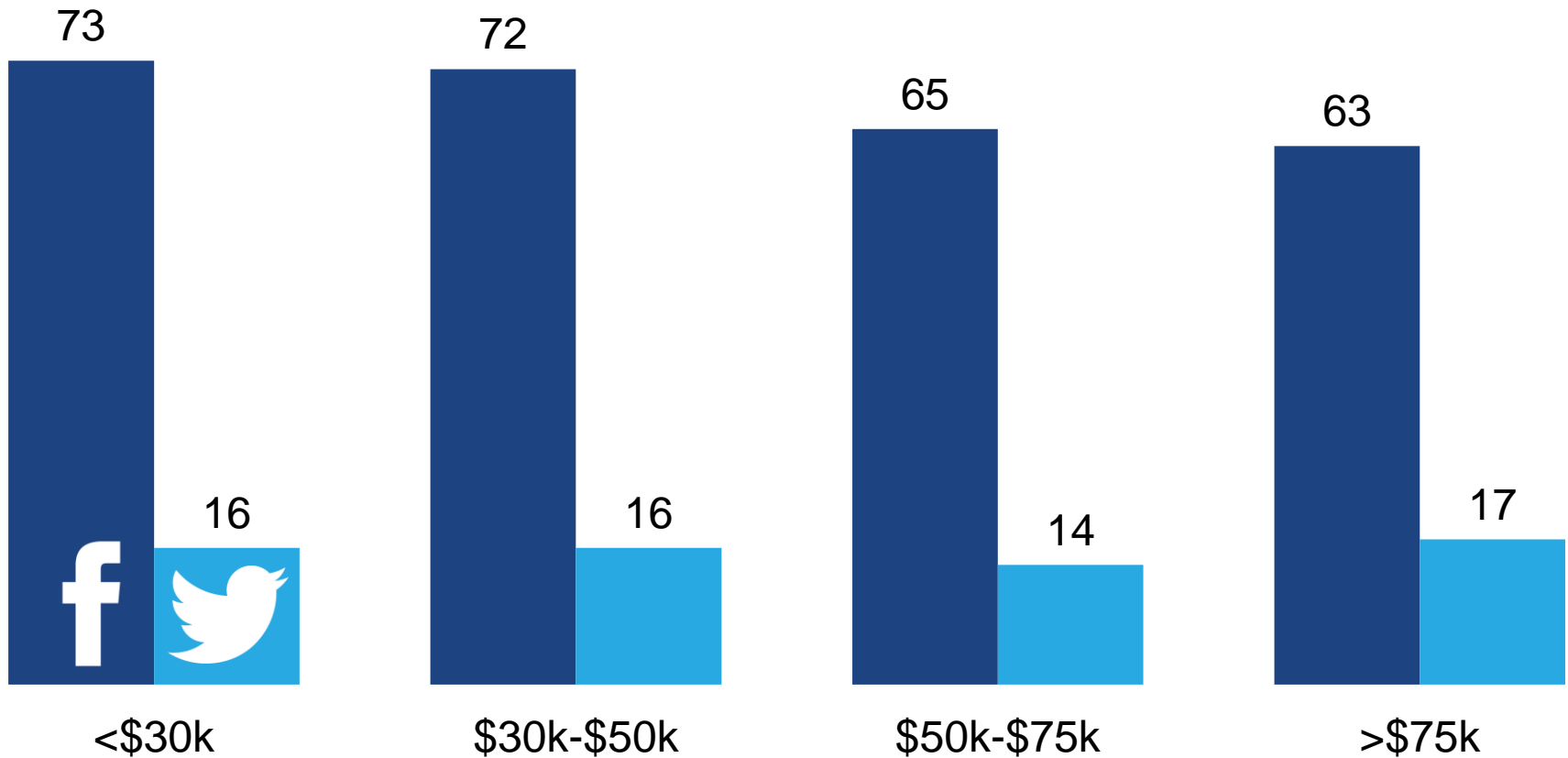
(February 2013)



Source: Pew Research Center, February 2013

Twitter & Facebook users: Household Income

(February 2013)



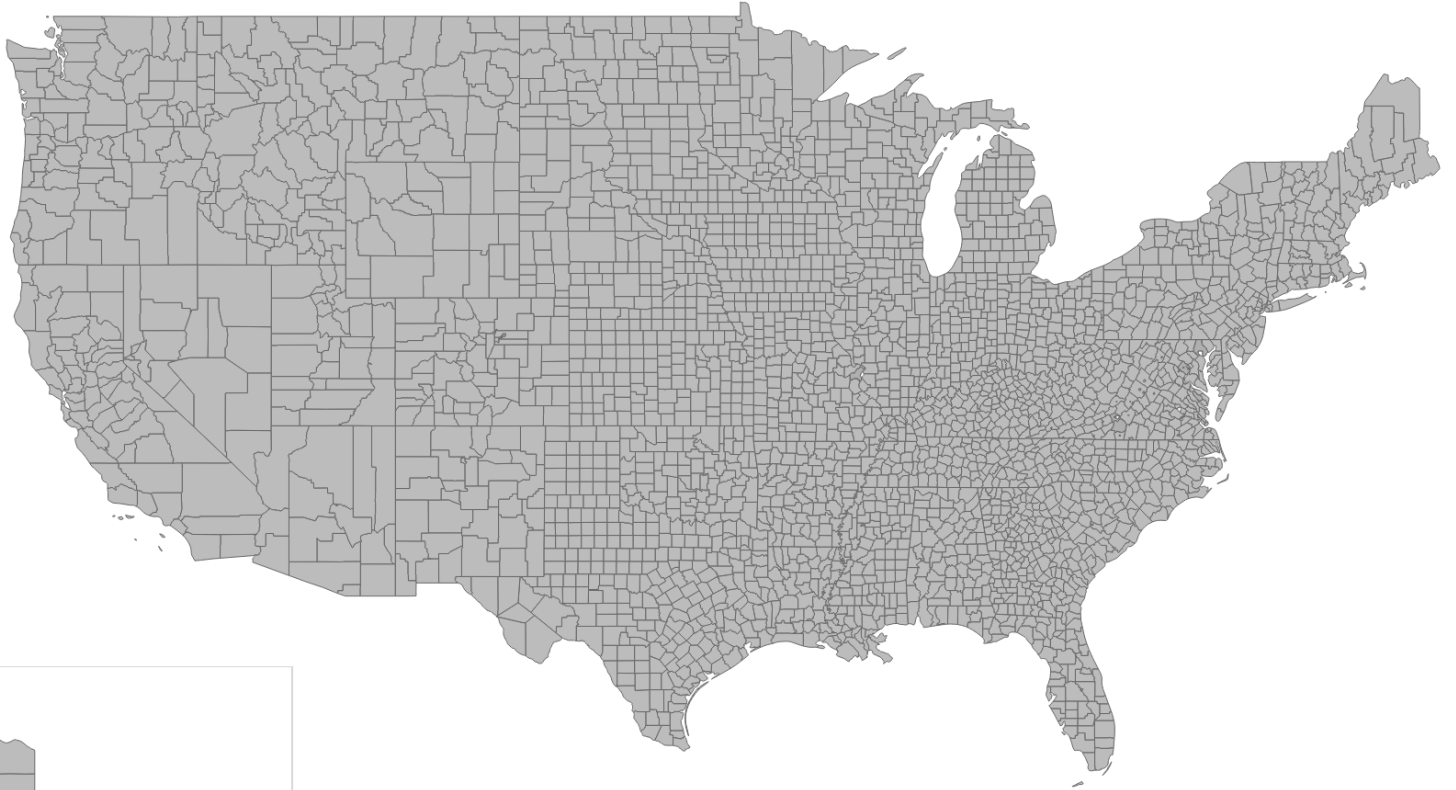
Source: Pew Research Center, February 2013

**Local Government
in 140 Characters**

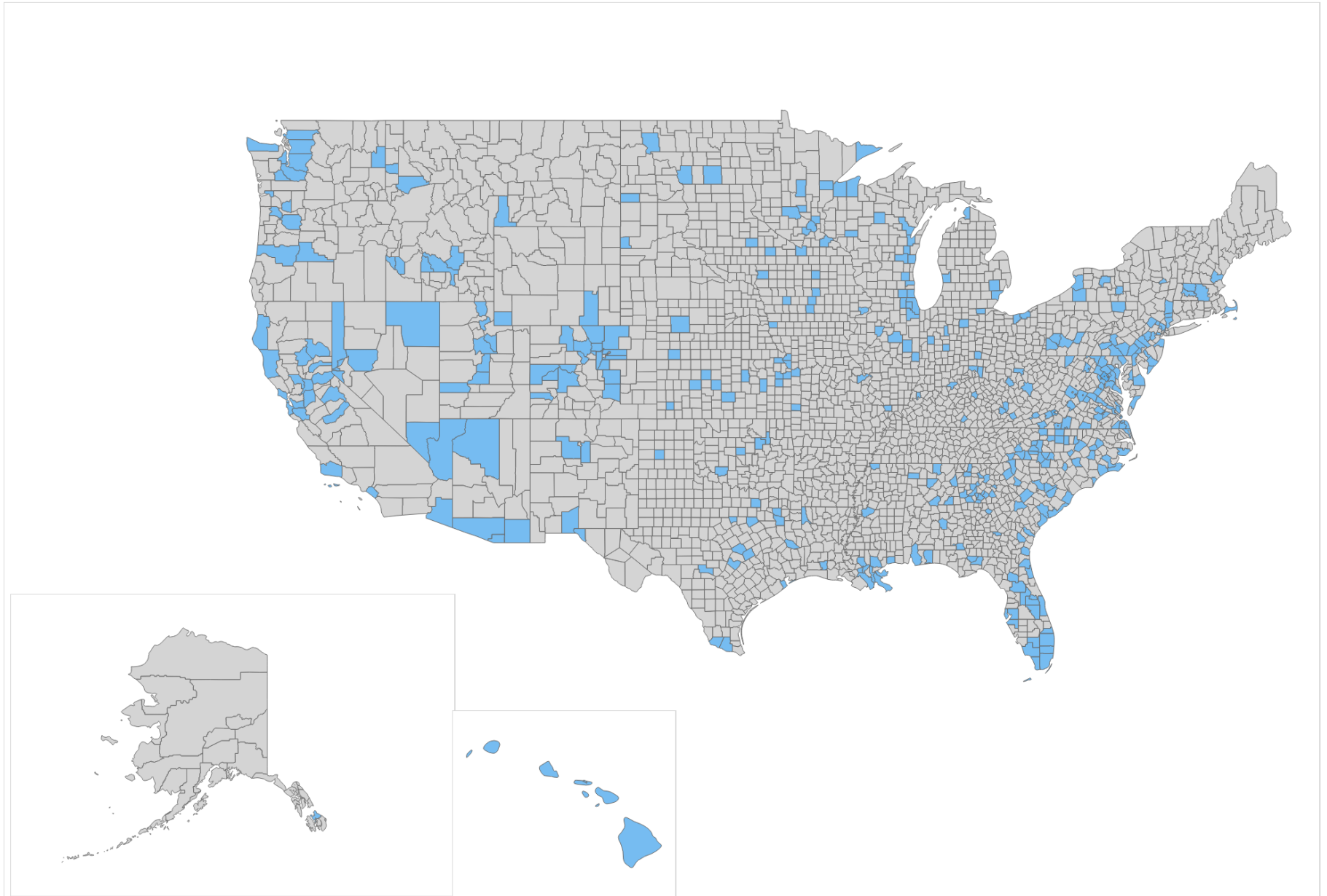
Let's talk Data

Everything here is
very preliminary

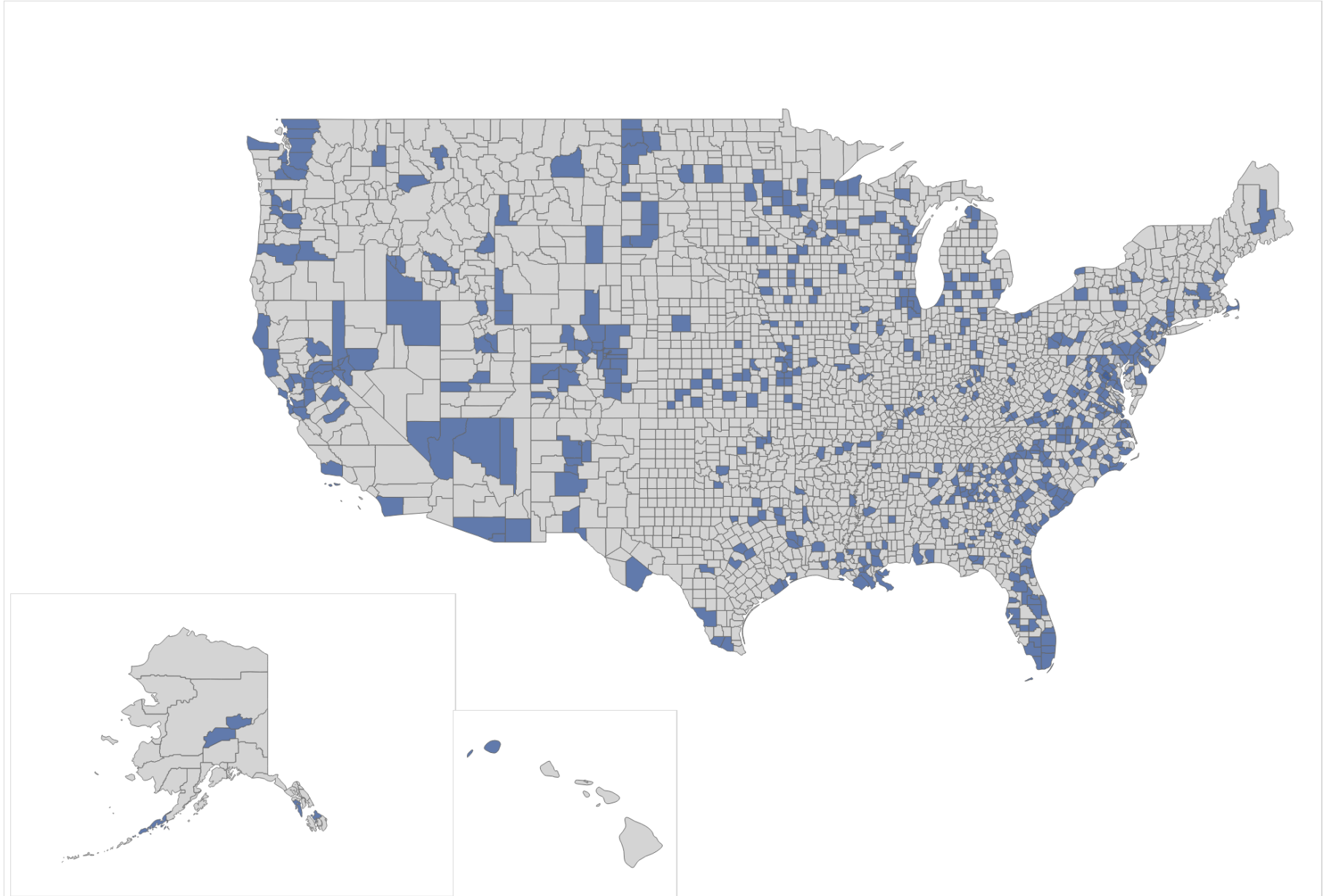
There are 3,142 counties in the U.S.



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

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2. Recorded website, Twitter, and Facebook addresses

Obtaining the data

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

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



lacounty.gov

DID YOU KNOW? LA County is the largest employer in Southern California, with over 105,000 employees.



GOVERNMENT



RESIDENTS



BUSINESS



THINGS TO DO



EMERGENCY

Good Afternoon

How can we help you?

Newsroom

Visit the Natural History Museum's Nature Lab
Wednesday, November 19

Past Revealed: Opening a 90-Year-Old Time Capsule
Thursday, November 13

Building the Budget: 26 Billion Reasons to Click
Wednesday, November 12

Popular Services +

Find a Service +



Board of Supervisors Information

Share a link on Twitter

Twitter, Inc. [US] <https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Los+Angeles+C...>

Share a link with your followers

Los Angeles County <http://www.lacounty.gov/#.VGz7VljvrQo.twitter>

99 [Tweet](#)



Los Angeles County

@CountyofLA

Official Twitter Account of Los Angeles County To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service

Los Angeles County

lacounty.gov

Joined January 2011

[Tweet to Los Angeles County](#)

12 Photos and videos



TWEETS
205

FOLLOWING
427

FOLLOWERS
2,436

LISTS
1

Tweets

Tweets & replies

Photos & videos



Los Angeles County @CountyofLA · 22 Sep 2011

Get the latest and greatest from LA County by following [@LACountyCEO](#)



Los Angeles County retweeted



Bill Fujioka @LACountyCEO · 22 Sep 2011

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



Los Angeles County @CountyofLA · 22 Sep 2011

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/2sesTOIDk 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....



Leon County, FL @LeonCounty · Nov 13

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



📍 ↻ 🍷 1 🔄 ⋮ [View more photos and videos](#)



Wayne County @waynecoga · Aug 27

GDOT officials conducting the final field plan review for SR 169 rail overpass project funded by #TSPLOST.



↻ ↺ 🍷 1 🔄 ⋮ [View more photos and videos](#)

The Bad....



Uinta County, WY
@UintaCountyWY

TWEETS **209** FOLLOWING **3** FOLLOWERS **36**

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....



Creek County

@creekcounty

Joined May 2010

Tweet to Creek County

TWEETS **1** FOLLOWING **5** FOLLOWERS **37**



Follow

Tweets **Tweets & replies**



Creek County @creekcounty · 27 May 2010

Follow Creek County for relevant events happening within the county!



Who to follow · Refresh · View all



Alex Lundry @alexlundry

Followed by Anita Lillie and ...

Follow



NCWIT @NCWIT

Follow



Codecademy @Codecademy

Follow

Popular accounts · Find friends

The Ugly....



Creek County
@creekcounty

Joined May 2010

Tweet to Creek County

TWEETS 1 FOLLOWING 5 FOLLOWERS 37

Follow

Tweets Tweets & replies

Creek County @creekcounty · 27 May 2010
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Who to follow · Refresh · View all

Alex Lundry @alexlundry ×
Followed by Anita Lillie and ...
 Follow

NCWIT @NCWIT ×
 Follow

Codecademy @Codecademy ×
 Follow

Popular accounts · Find friends

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 F
Do you know what the problem might be? Drive works f



Josh Sullivan
@jaysche_
Software developer, music dork.
📍 Sterling, VA
🔗 github.com/jpsullivan
🕒 Joined April 2011

The profile card for Josh Sullivan on Twitter. It features a pixelated profile picture of a man with brown hair and glasses. The text below the picture includes his name, handle, bio, location, GitHub link, and join date.

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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Sumter County @SumterCountyGov · 11 May 2012

Sumter County SC. has a Twitter page! Did you know was have
Facebook and Google+ to?



The Ugly....



Lawrence County @lawrencecosd · 11 Apr 2013

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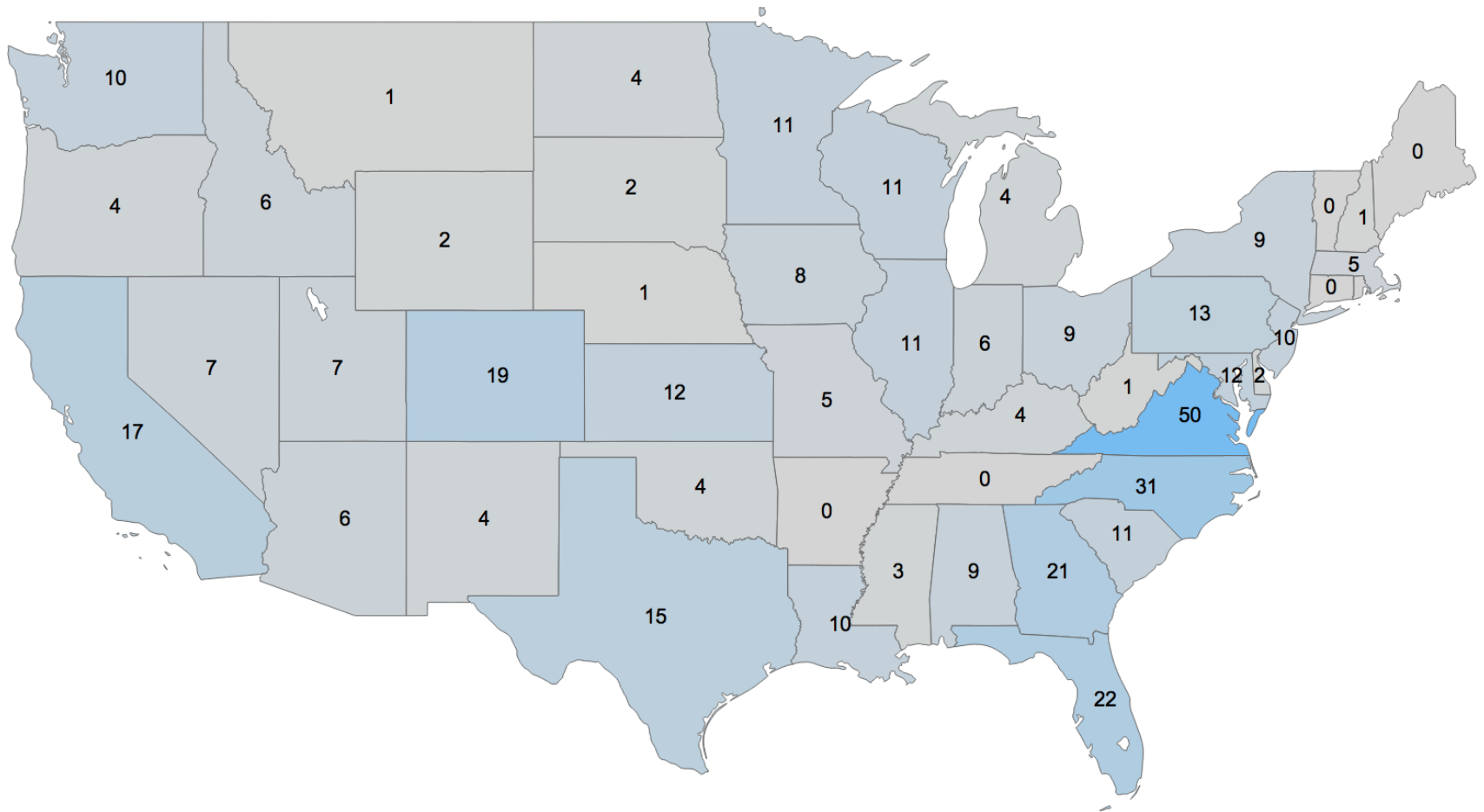
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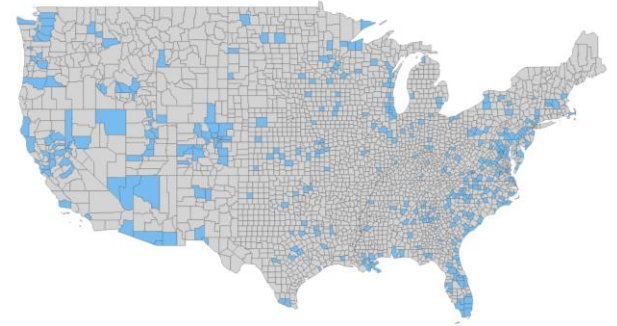
(Preliminary)
Findings

Variation in number of counties with Twitter Feeds



Characteristics

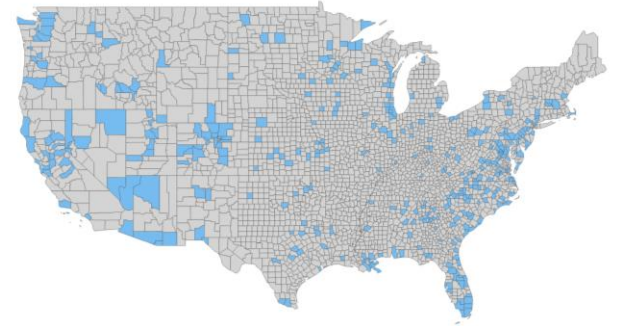
(2014)



	Counties
#Obs.	402
Avg. #Tweets	1,500
Avg. #Followers	2,700
Avg. #Hashtags	220
Avg.	390

Characteristics

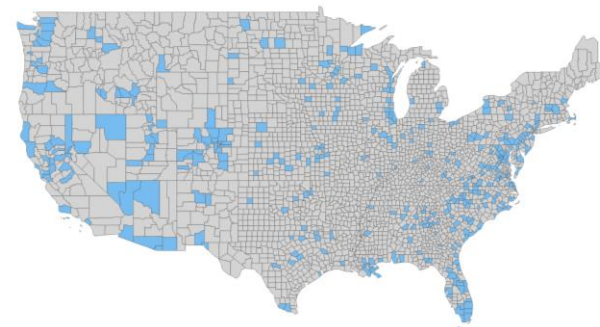
(2014)



	Counties	States
#Obs.	402	30
Avg. #Tweets	1,500	3,800
Avg. #Followers	2,700	18,700
Avg. #Hashtags	220	840
Avg.	390	1,600

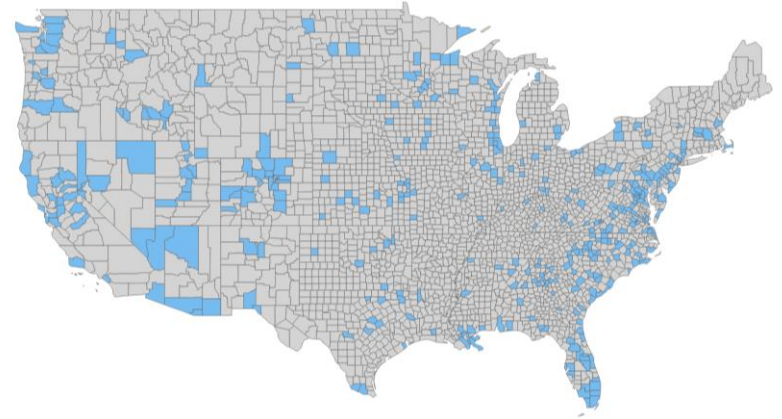
Characteristics

(2014)



	Counties	States	NonProfits
#Obs.	402	30	92
Avg. #Tweets	1,500	3,800	14,000
Avg. #Followers	2,700	18,700	449,000
Avg. #Hashtags	220	840	1,670
Avg.	390	1,600	2,570

County-level Correlations

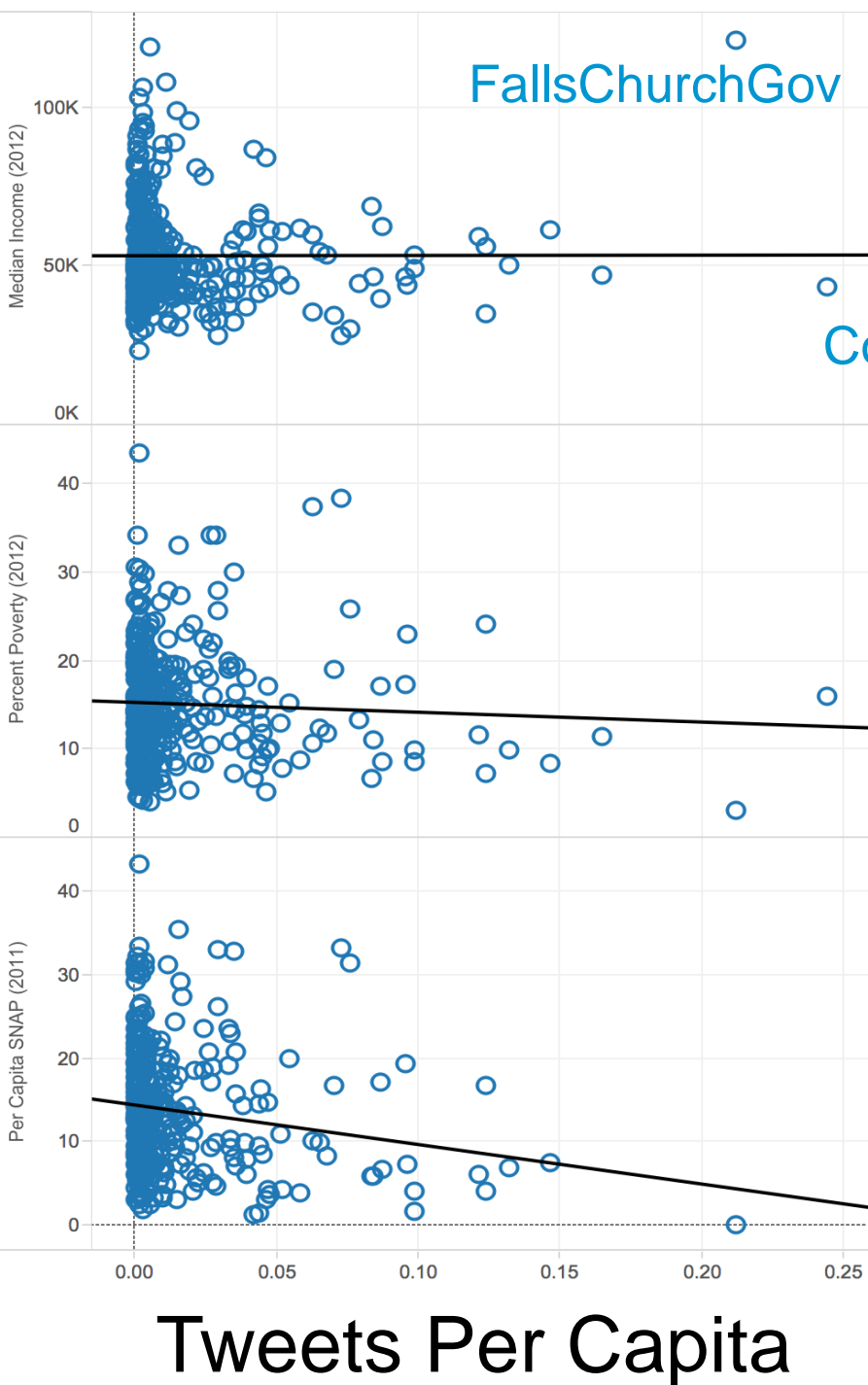


Social Media

#Tweets, #Followers, #Mentions

County Characteristics

Median Income, %Poverty, Per Capita
SNAP, Employment Shares

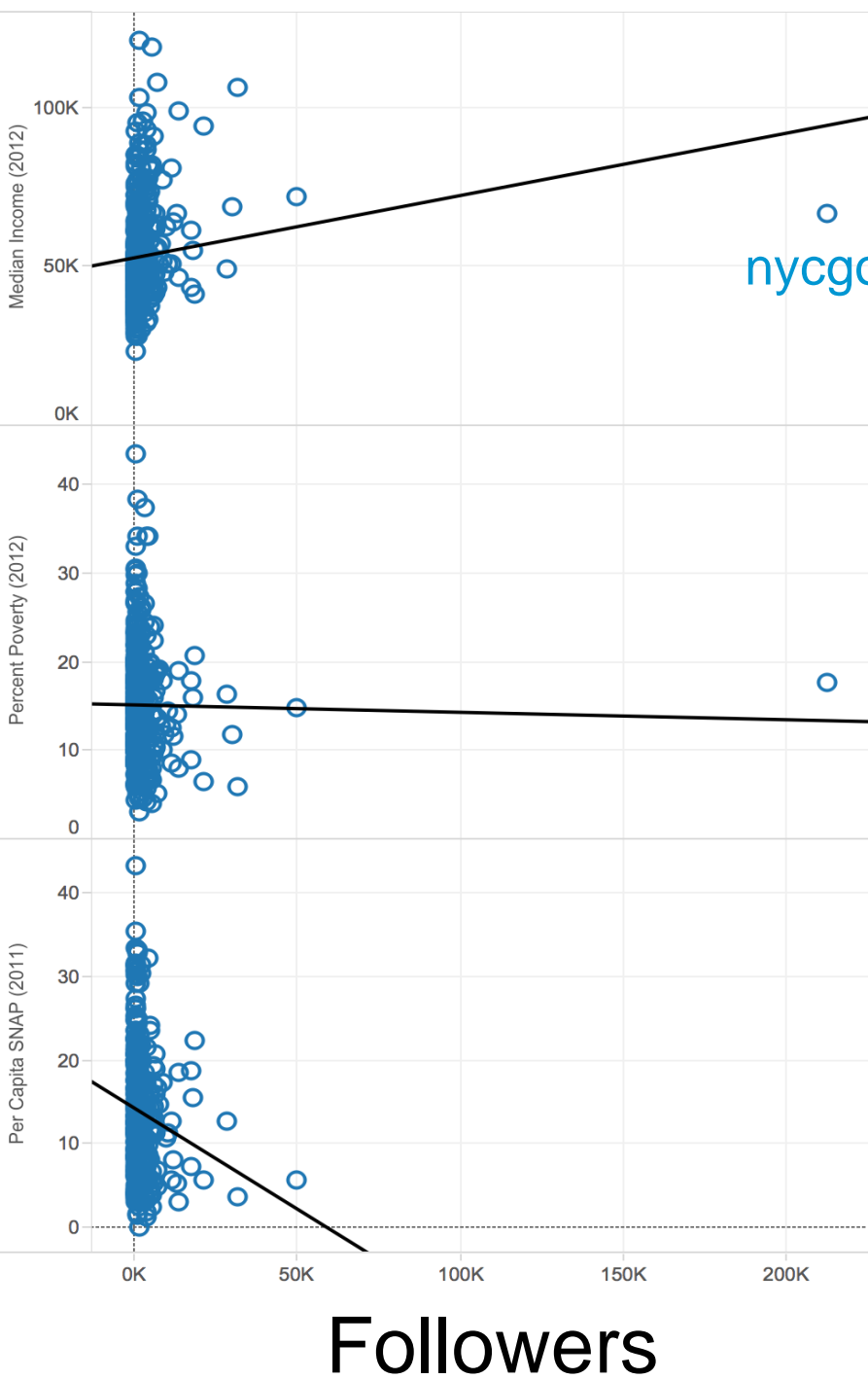


Median Income (2012)

Percent Poverty (2012)

Per Capita SNAP (2011)

Tweets Per Capita



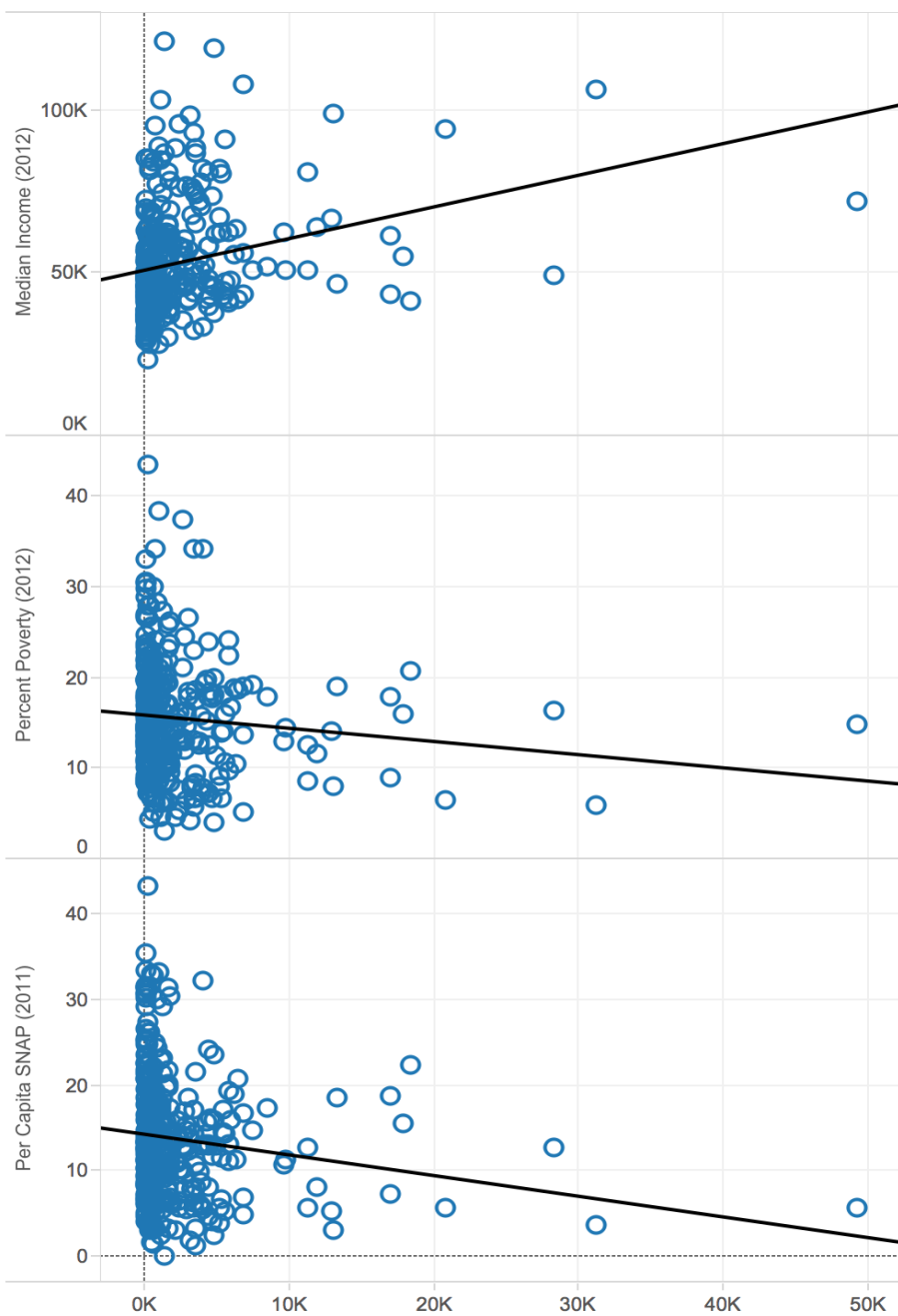
Median Income (2012)

Percent Poverty (2012)

Per Capita SNAP (2011)

nycgov

Followers



Median Income (2012)

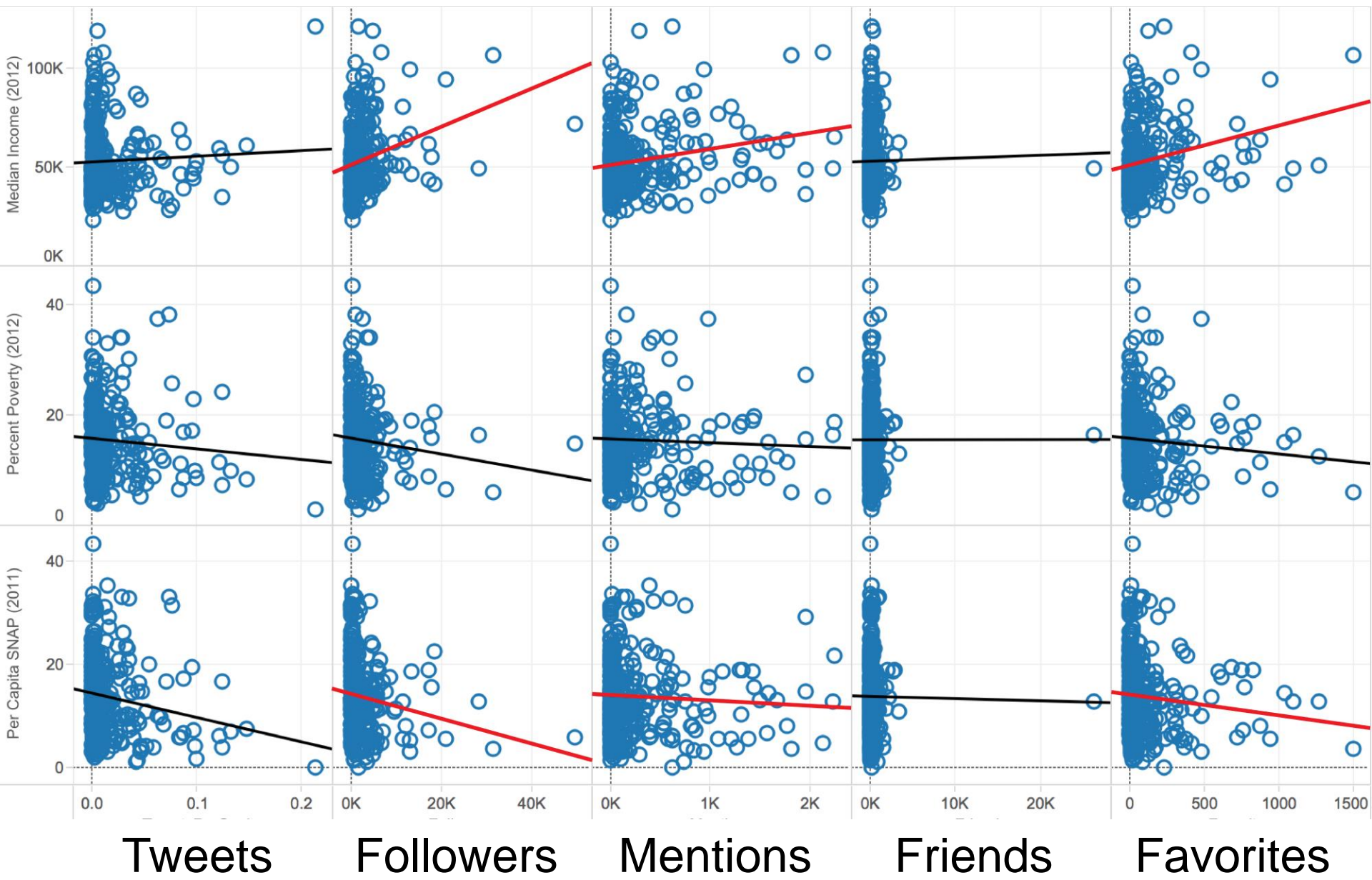
Percent Poverty (2012)

Per Capita SNAP (2011)

Followers

Exclude Missings &

Some correlations with median income

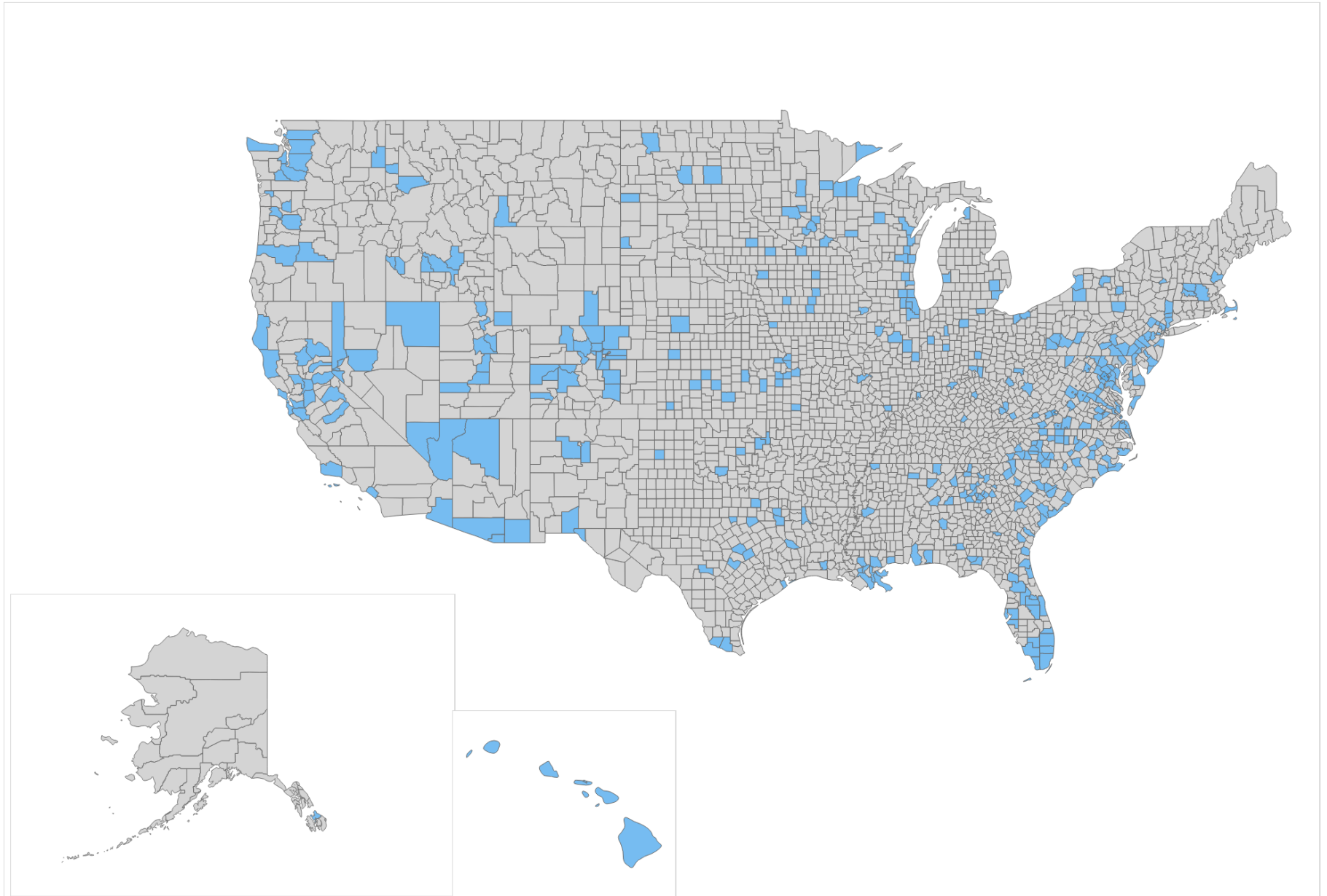


Employment Shares

	#Favorites	#Followers	#Friends	#Tweets
Retail Trade	-	-	-	
Information	+	+		
FIRE	+	+		
Management			+	
Health Care				+
Arts/Entertainment			-	
Accommodations			+	+

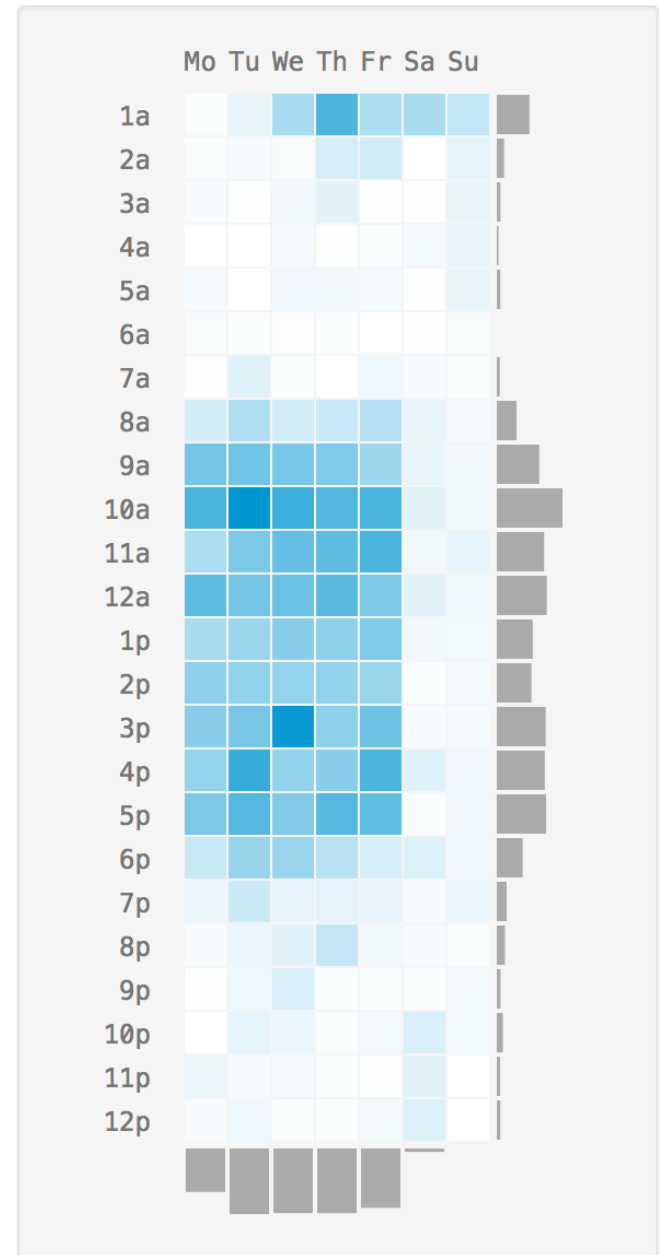
Source: Tobit regressions including: %poverty, median income, %men, %employed in each of 18 industries.

402 of them have Twitter feeds



When do governments Tweet?

Date and Time



State-Wide vs. County Level

Tweet time gaussian kernel density estimate

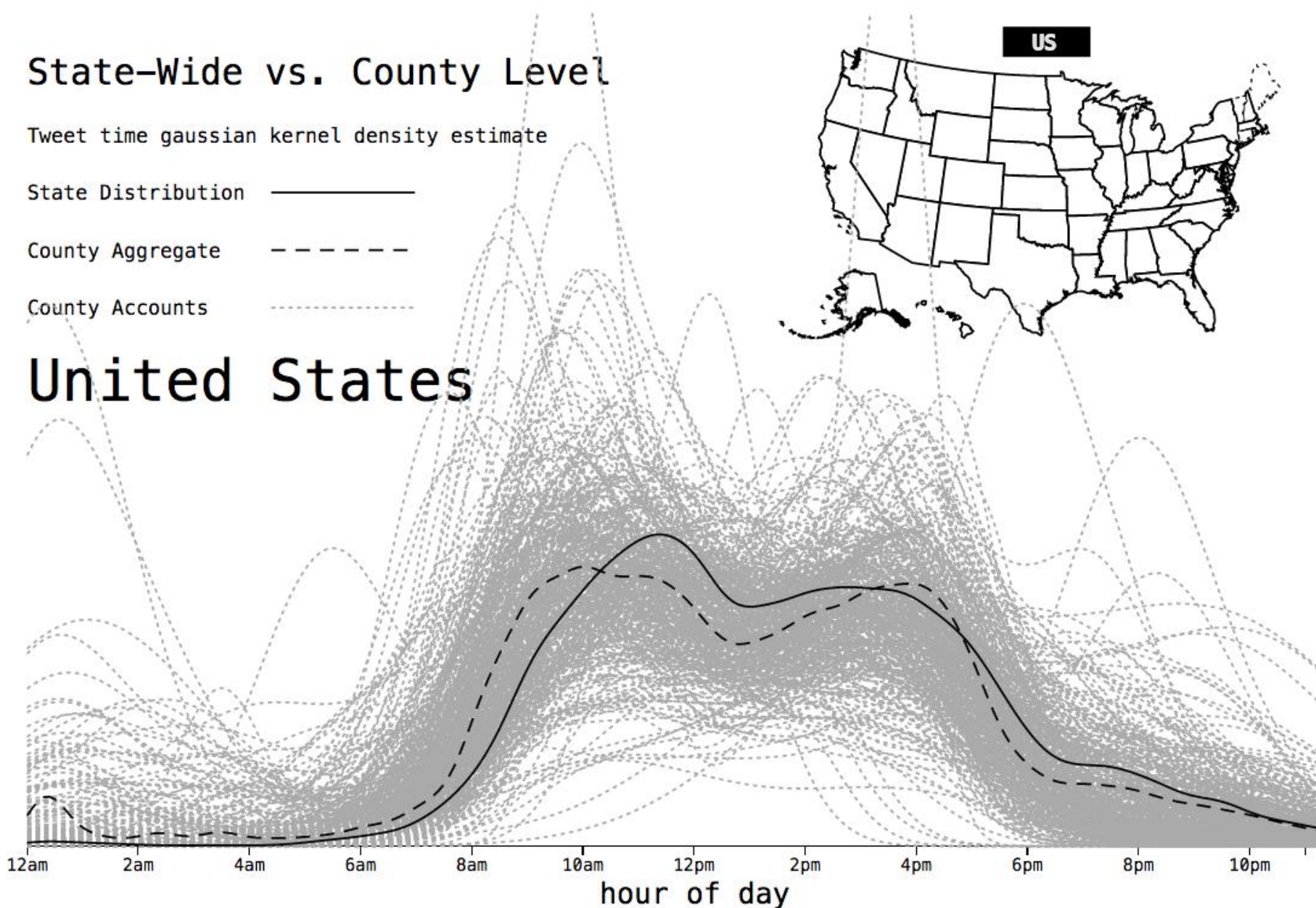
State Distribution —————

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



City of Falls Church @FallsChurchGov · 4h

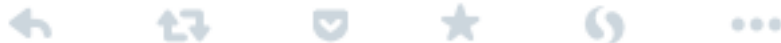
We need your input! Help build upon and improve the park system. Please complete this survey: svy.mk/116D6vx





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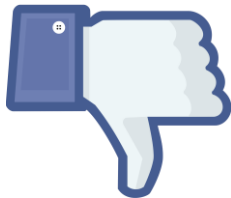
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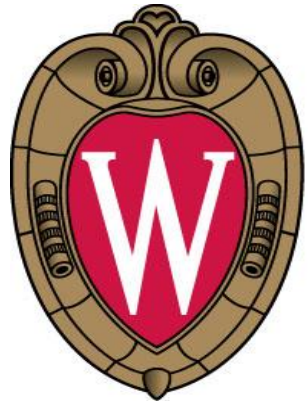
In Los Angeles? Check out Mardy's Munchies cupcakes. For summer they have Margarita cupcakes. Yum and Yum.

<http://twurl.nl/gv48a4>



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

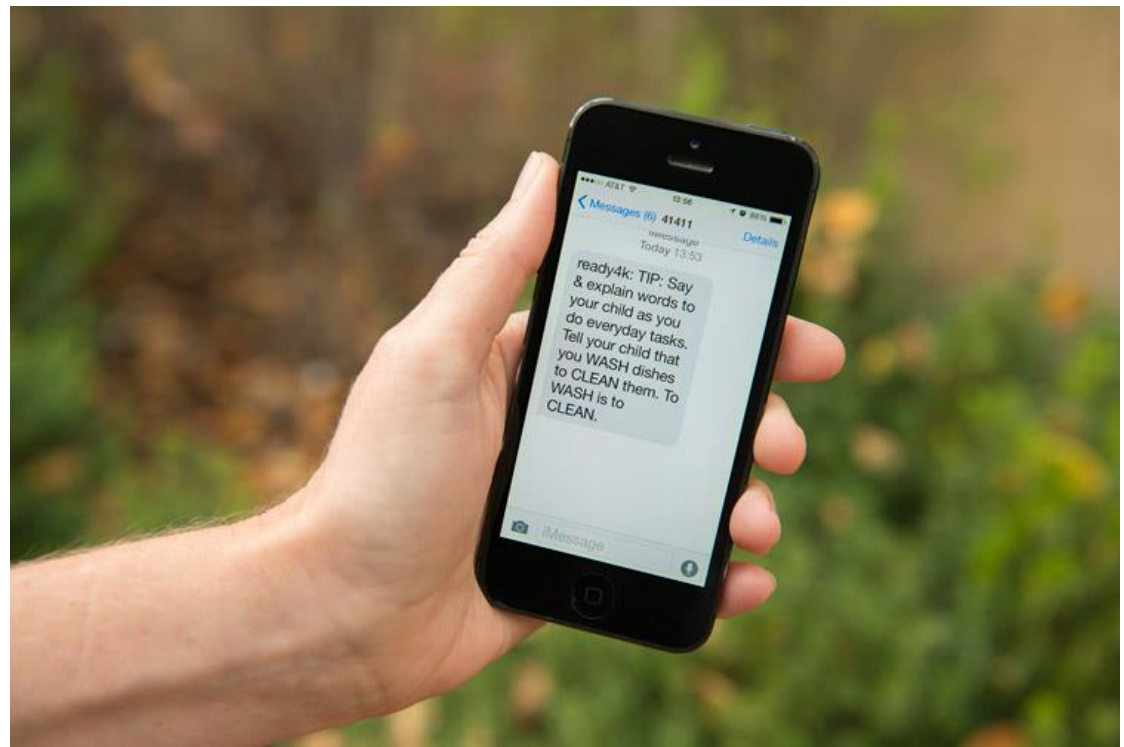
- Social media

- 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

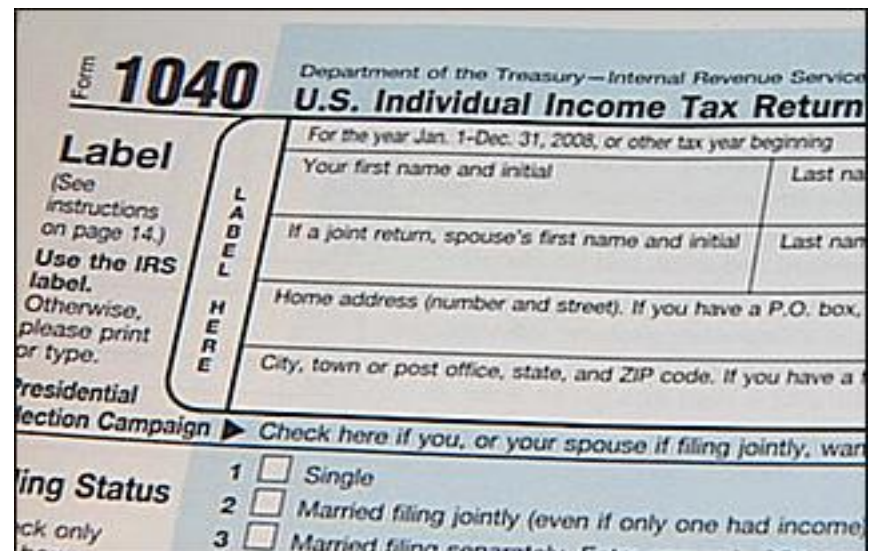
Single form for multiple programs

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



Form **1040** Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service
U.S. Individual Income Tax Return
For the year Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2008, or other tax year beginning

Label (See instructions on page 14.) Use the IRS label. Otherwise, please print or type.	L A B E L H E R E	Your first name and initial	Last name
		If a joint return, spouse's first name and initial	Last name
		Home address (number and street). If you have a P.O. box,	

City, town or post office, state, and ZIP code. If you have a

Residential Election Campaign ▶ Check here if you, or your spouse if filing jointly, want

Filing Status

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Married filing jointly (even if only one had income)
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Married filing separately. Enter on separate return.

Fafsa Follies: To Gain a Student, Eliminate a Form

AUG. 21, 2015



Eleanor Davis

Economic View

By SUSAN DYNARSKI

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:

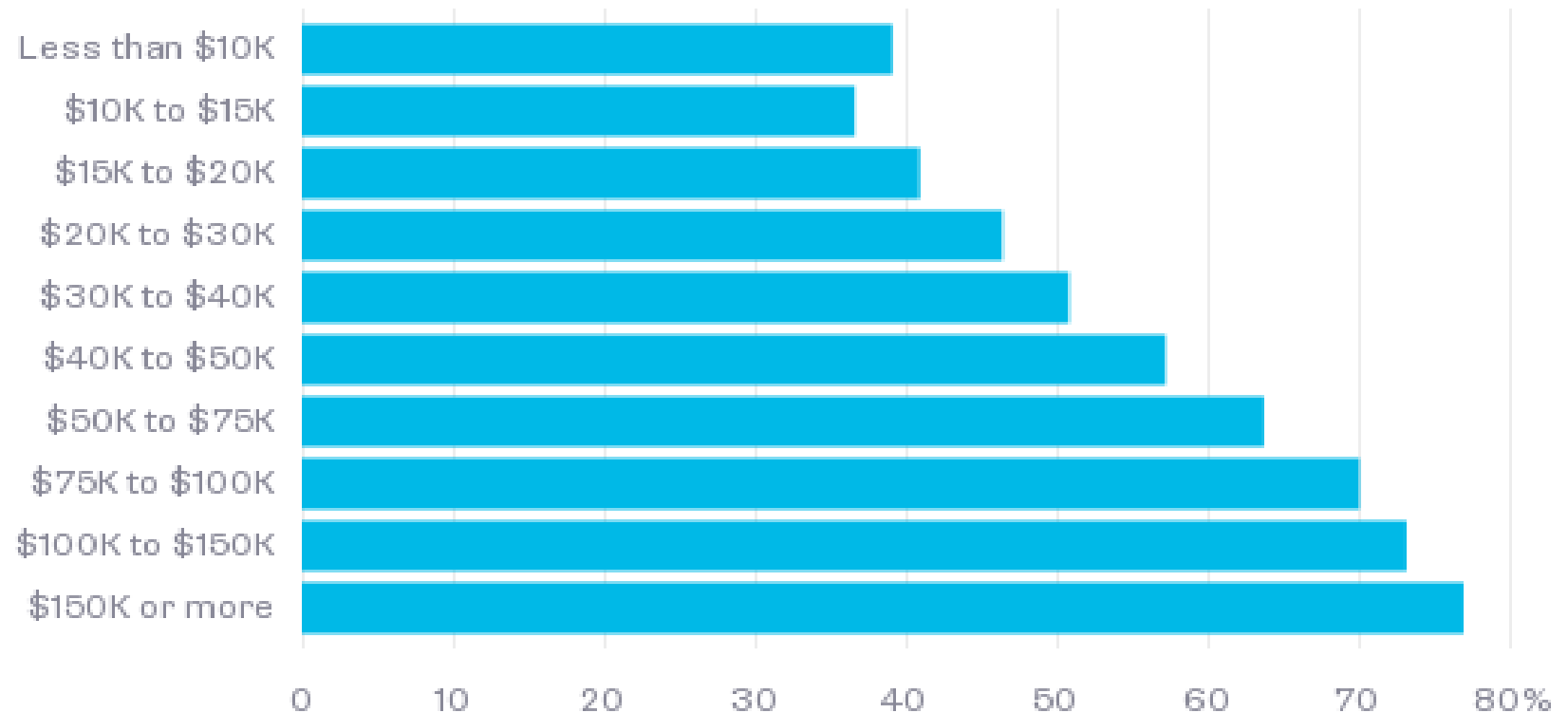
Massachusetts and others have used this technique to expand health insurance coverage

Louisiana auto-enrolls children for Medicaid & CHIP

Auto-enrollment in voting

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

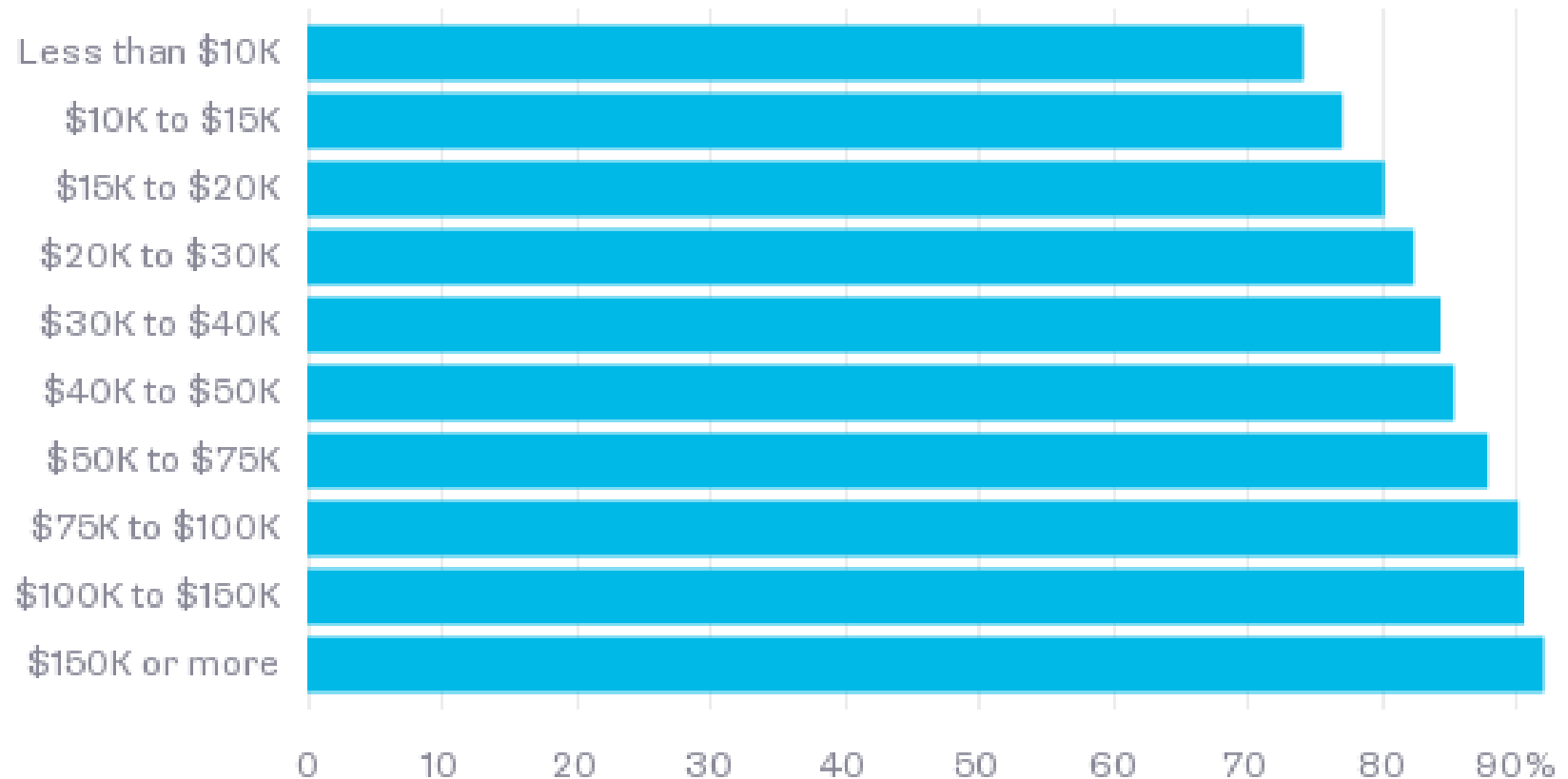
Share of people who said they voted in 2012, by income group



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



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

BloombergView

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

dmoynih@lafollette.wisc.edu



@donmoyn

Q & A, Discussion

Please submit your questions in the Q & A box at the bottom of the screen



INSTITUTE *for*
RESEARCH *on*
POVERTY

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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*