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December 2013

Understanding Wisconsin Legislators' Use of Social Media

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UNDERSTANDING WISCONSIN LEGISLATORS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

by

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A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in Media Studies

at

The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

December 2013

ABSTRACT
UNDERSTANDING WISCONSIN LEGISLATORS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

by

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The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, 2013
Under the Supervision of Professor David Pritchard

This thesis used quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the use of social media

by legislative offices of the Wisconsin State Assembly. A survey of legislators and their

staff documented the extent to which each office uses Facebook or Twitter. In addition,

multivariate analysis of the survey data provided an understanding of which kinds of

legislators are more likely to use Facebook or Twitter. There were three important

findings. First, most Wisconsin legislators whose offices use Facebook or Twitter do not

seem to be doing so to reach the news media. Second, overall, the characteristics of a

Wisconsin legislator are stronger predictors on the use of Facebook or Twitter by a

legislative office than the characteristics of a legislator's district. Third, constituent

access to broadband is a significant predictor of whether a legislative office in the

Wisconsin State Assembly uses Facebook.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ask state lawmakers in Wisconsin who use social media why they use online

services like Facebook or Twitter and you will likely get the same response from most of

them: to connect with their constituents. "I find it a really effective way to get out

information to my constituents quickly," said Representative Mandy Wright (D-

Wausau).[1] Or this from Representative Mary Czaja (R-Lima): "I think it's a great way to

connect with constituents and it is the trend. Everyone is on Facebook."[2]

Lawmakers even tout the constituent-connecting potential of social media in their

press releases. In a March 2013 statement announcing the launch of his official

legislative website and social media pages, Representative Rob Hutton (R-Brookfield)

said: "I want to use every option available to me to stay connected with my constituents.

By utilizing these fast paced information centers I can make sure my constituents are

informed on the issues that matter to them. As we continue to move into a more digital

era, these applications will increase the ways in which my constituents can voice their

ideas and concerns."[3]

These lawmakers' sentiments on using newer technology to better connect with

their constituents echo comments two Wisconsin state representatives made almost

twenty years ago when they became the first among their colleagues in the legislature to

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[1] September 3, 2013, interview with Rep. Wright in her State Capitol office.
[2] September 16, 2013, interview with Rep. Czaja in her State Capitol office.
[3] Hutton, Rob. "Rep. Hutton Announces the Launch of his Official Website and Social Media Pages." March 6, 2013, press release, available at http://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/hutton/news/Pages/Rep.%20Hutton%20Announces%20the%20Launch%20of%20his%20Official%20Website%20and%20Social%20Media%20Pages.aspx (last visited November 13, 2013).

establish email accounts for receiving constituent communications in 1994. One of the lawmakers, then-state Representative Scott Jensen of Brookfield, told a reporter for the *Milwaukee Sentinel*: "Internet allows our constituents to let us know their opinion on any issue at any hour from the comfort of their homes or offices. This new advance increases public access to their elected officials."[4]

Legislative offices in the Wisconsin State Legislature receive between 1,000 and 5,000 constituent contacts in a year.[5] For the last 14 years, I have initiated or received many of these contacts as a legislative aide in the Wisconsin State Assembly, the state legislature's lower house. The official job description for my position lists several examples of the work performed, the principal one being to "act as primary advisor, researcher and liaison for a Committee Chairperson or senior State Representative with members of the Assembly, Senate, and other legislative and state agencies, lobbyists, the executive office, and the news media relating to committee business."[6] Another important part of my job is to "make constituent contacts and maintain constituent files with solutions to constituent complaints and problems."[7] In addition to writing formal responses to constituent contacts, I am responsible for writing a weekly e-newsletter that is sent to approximately 3,000 constituents, posting items on the office's Facebook and Twitter sites, and maintaining the office's official website. The electronic communications sent from our office usually cover legislative initiatives my boss is

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[4] Walters, Steve. "Two lawmakers getting E-mail links to constituents," Milwaukee Sentinel, April 23, 1994.

[5] Wisconsin Legislative Council, "A Citizen's Guide to Participation in the Wisconsin State Legislature." Available at http://legis.wisconsin.gov/Pages/cg/contact.aspx (last visited November 27, 2013).

[6] Wisconsin Assembly Chief Clerk. 2013. "Wisconsin State Assembly Manual," available at http://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/acc/Documents/13-14_Assembly_Job_Descriptions.pdf (last visited December 1, 2013).

[7] Ibid.

working on at the moment or other timely topics of interest concerning state government or his district. I also write the content for a traditional legislative newsletter that is mailed to between 12,000 and 15,000 households in the district at least once a year.

On any given day, a state legislative office hears from constituents who need help securing health care benefits, tracking down an unemployment insurance claim, resolving a dispute with state tax auditors, or any number of other issues involving a state agency or other entities. Constituents also contact a legislative office to register an opinion on a pending legislative proposal, suggest a new law, or request information on existing state laws or policies. Most of the methods constituents use to request help, register an opinion or ask a question have been available for quite some time. Constituents still pick up the phone, drop a letter in the mail, schedule a meeting or attend a listening session. By and large, however, more and more constituents are using email to contact their legislators.

The steady increase in the volume of constituent email is attributable in part to a corresponding rise in the use of prewritten emails that originate from the websites of political advocacy organizations. For example, the homepage of the Clean Wisconsin website has a "Take Action" section where visitors can select from a number of prewritten emails on various environmental issues that can be sent to state or federal lawmakers simply by entering a name and address and clicking "submit."[8] Similarly, the "Action Center" page on the website of Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce makes available prewritten emails on various issues important to the state's chamber of

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[8] Clean Wisconsin Homepage, available at http://www.cleanwisconsin.org (last visited December 1, 2013).

commerce that can be sent to legislators or other government officials in a matter of seconds.[9]

Some veteran legislators such as Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester), who was first elected to the Assembly in 2004, have noticed a change in the way constituents are communicating with legislative offices.

> *"(At first), most people didn't even necessarily email in the same way they do today. For a while it was tons of emails. Now you still get emails, but they're almost all form based. It's not Robin sitting down (and) calling his legislator. It's he's a member of Greenpeace or the NRA (National Rifle Association), and they say write your legislator. Well, that's not the same way of communicating. And I've noticed it myself. When I got elected the very first time, my predecessor took every single contact to her office and she would call them back personally. So I started the exact same thing. So every person, whether it's an email, fax or phone call, they (my staff) would look up the phone number and I'd sit in my office and I would dial them back. In the beginning, the vast majority of people who I called knew why they called me; they had a reason and they understood it. Now when I call people back, well over half don't even remember emailing me.   Well, that's because they're part of this form system. So I think now people have morphed into the next phase, which is*

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[9] Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce. 2013. "Legislative Alert: Take Action Now!" available at http://www.wmc.org/issues/take-action/legislative-alerts/
(last visited December 1, 2013).

no longer (communicating) by electronic means (email) but it's the social

media side." [10]

Social media arguably offer promising opportunities for enhanced civic engagement. However, even the two most established and widely used online social networks, Facebook and Twitter, are still in their infancy. As a result, the literature on the use of social media by lawmakers remains relatively small and lacks a strong theoretical grounding. Moreover, even some lawmakers who are active users of social media are starting to question whether these new communication channels add any value to the public commons. "I think social media is the way you have to communicate," said Vos, who has been using Twitter since 2009. "But it's gotten to point where all you do is reinforce what you already believe. It never challenges you on your own beliefs because you're only communicating with your friends."[11]

Most of the research on this topic to date has focused on the use of Twitter and Facebook by members of Congress. In most of these studies, researchers have relied almost exclusively on quantitative methods to examine the extent and nature of Congressional Twitter and Facebook use. This thesis, in contrast, used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the use of social media by legislative offices of the Wisconsin State Assembly. A survey of legislators and their staff documented the extent to which each office uses Facebook or Twitter. In addition, multivariate analysis of the survey data provided an understanding of which kinds of legislators are more likely to

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[10] August 22, 2013, interview with Wisconsin Assembly Speaker Robin Vos in his State Capitol office.
[11] Ibid.

use Facebook or Twitter. The data collected through these two methods were used to help answer my first research question.

R (1): What are the patterns of social media use in the Wisconsin State Assembly? Specifically, are the characteristics of a legislator or a legislator's district more important in predicting social media use?

Four state representatives, including the Republican and Democratic leaders of the Assembly, were interviewed. The data collected from these interviews were used to help answer my second research question.

R (2): Why do state lawmakers use, or not use, social media? Specifically, what do users see as the benefits for themselves, their constituents, the functioning of the legislature and the public at large? Do they see any negatives?

The survey provided a broad view of legislators' social media use. The interviews provided depth.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Elected representatives frequently solicit input from their constituents, saying they want the people back home in the lawmakers' districts to contact them with questions, concerns or suggestions. Despite polling data showing that a majority of the public has an unfavorable view of government, some like Rosenthal, et al., go as far as to suggest "(l)egislators care more about what their constituents think than they care about anything else, save perhaps the dictates of their own consciences."[12]

An opposing view holds that politicians do not respond to public opinion, and but rather create it themselves. In his case study of Wisconsin state officials and the press, Dunn found that the overwhelming majority of legislative leaders he interviewed used the press almost exclusively to build support for their policies and personal publicity.[13] According to Dunn, this finding implies that policy is more often initiated by legislators than by what the public tells them. In other words, instead of registering opinions outside of government, Dunn suggests officials "provide many of the stimuli themselves—they respond less than they are responded to."

In their study of electronic technology use and legislative representation in the Nuevo Leon and Texas legislatures, Aguirre Sala and Jones (2012) succinctly lay out the debate on the "democratic paradox" of legislators who "must consider and respond to the demands of their constituents" versus those who "seek their own goals." Aguirre Sala

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[12] Rosenthal, Alan, Karl T. Kurtz, John Hibbing, and Burdett Loomis. 2001. "The Care for Representative Democracy: What Americans Should Know About Their Legislatures." Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures.
[13] Dunn, Delmer. 1969. *Public Officials and the Press.* Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

and Jones do not give up hope on the promise of legislative representation, but rather suggest a "middle ground" in which "efficient" new media can theoretically facilitate "the provision of solutions to citizens' problems and the representation of their interests in legislatures."

Coleman and Blumler (2010) likewise suggest that the Internet has characteristics which could *potentially* "reinvigorate democracy" by offering new opportunities from "above" or from "below" for a disaffected public to engage in meaningful, two-way civic discourse with their elected representatives. Chadwick (2012) suggests that Facebook, Twitter, blogs and other online social networks provide politicians a more controlled means to engage with citizens that offers less risk than more traditional deliberative models like public forums.[14] Online social networks also afford politicians the opportunity to communicate in less formal, scripted ways that arguably make their message more accessible to the public, according to Chadwick.

Most of the analysis to date on social media use by legislators has centered on Congress. Lawless (2012), for example, analyzed which members of Congress use Twitter and Facebook, broken down by a series of demographic and political variables, and measured the magnitude and intensity of Twitter and Facebook activity by the members. Using demographic and political variables, Lawless also performed a multivariate analysis to predict whether a member of Congress had a Twitter or Facebook account. Finally, Lawless performed a content analysis of 14,711 tweets and Facebook posts transmitted during an eight-week period, coding the messages, including external links or audio and visual components, into six categories: advertising, position taking,

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[14] Chadwick's use of public forums as a prime example of a classic deliberative model may be more applicable in the United Kingdom than the United States, but his general point is still useful for this discussion.

credit claiming, information sharing, personal issue or procedural issue. Lawless' key findings were (1) Republicans are more likely than Democrats to have active Twitter or Facebook accounts, send messages and have broader followings, and (2) generally, the members of Congress who use Twitter and Facebook tend to engage in what Mayhew (1974) first identified as "classic incumbent activities of advertising, position-taking and credit-claiming."

In their quantitative analysis of Twitter use by members in the 111th House of Representatives, and using definitions from Felten (2009), Chi and Yang (2010) conclude that Democrats care more about *transparency* and Republicans care more about *outreach,* where *transparency* means giving citizens the information they want whereas *outreach* means politicians telling people what they want to hear. Chi and Yang suggest that representatives who won their last election by a large margin would have a stronger incentive to be transparent with their constituents so as to maintain their valuable reputation. The authors suggest that representatives more interested in outreach would be those who have sponsored a large number of bills and are trying push their agenda by building grass-roots support for their initiatives.

Glassman, et al., (2010) also conducted a quantitative analysis of Twitter use among members of the 111th Congress during a two- month period, from August to September 2009. The authors found that 166 members (or 38 percent) of the House of Representatives and 39 members (or 39 percent) of the Senate had active Twitter accounts. Of the members who were registered for Twitter during the review period, the average GOP House member sent 38 tweets compared to 27 tweets sent by the average Democratic House member, whereas the average GOP senator sent 39 tweets compared

to 36 tweets sent by the average Democratic senator. In their study of what members of Congress were tweeting about (7,078 total tweets), Glassman, et al., used independent variables similar but not identical to those used by Lawless (2012): position taking, policy statement, media or PR, district or state, official congressional action, personal and campaign. During the days members were in session, the top three things they were tweeting about were: (1) policy statements (29 percent), (2) position taking (18 percent), and (3) media or PR / official congressional action (tied at 14 percent). On recess days, members tweeted most often about: (1) district or state (35 percent), (2) policy statements (18 percent), and (3) media or PR (14 percent).

Shogan (2010) suggests new technology has the potential to weaken the trustee model of democracy, making it more difficult for representatives to vote in opposition to what their constituents are telling them "more loudly and frequently" without suffering electoral consequences. However, in his analysis of Twitter use in the 111th Congress, Peterson (2010) found no constituent effect when predicting Twitter adoption by members of Congress. Peterson hypothesized that members of Congress from districts with more urban and affluent districts would be more likely to adopt Twitter. Using a logistic regression model, Peterson found that district demographics (median income, proportion of college educated constituents, proportion of constituents over age 64, and the proportion of the district categorized as rural) are not significant determinants of adoption by members of Congress. He suggests this finding may indicate one of two things: politicians either assume Internet and social media use is already diffuse throughout their districts, or they are targeting other actors like the media to gain publicity or shape policy debates. Williams and Gulati (2010) likewise found that the

youthfulness of a constituency was a positive but *not significant* variable in predicting

Twitter use by members of Congress.[15]   Using anecdotal evidence gathered through

interviews with Congressional staffers, Williams and Gulati (2010) suggest the

motivation to adopt Twitter is driven less by the age of the "relevant use community"

(i.e., Congressional district) and more by a "desire to augment existing media or extend

their reach."

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[15] Williams and Gulati (2010) analyzed Twitter use by sitting members of Congress during the last week of January 2010.   Their binary logistic regression model measured *age* as the proportion of people in a Congressional district between 18 and 64 years of age.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This study examined the use of social media by the legislative offices of the Wisconsin State Assembly. The Wisconsin State Assembly, the lower house of the Wisconsin State Legislature, is composed of 99 districts, each of which has a population of approximately 57,500 people.

As discussed above, the literature on legislative use of social media has focused almost exclusively on Congress. For the most part, prior research on this topic has relied primarily on quantitative methods to identify or predict which lawmakers use Facebook or Twitter and the frequency with which they use these social networks. Researchers have also used content analysis to examine the substance of Facebook posts or tweets by members of Congress. The strength of quantitative methods is that they facilitate the search for patterns within a large number of cases. The strength of qualitative methods is that they enable depth of understanding of selected cases.

This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the nature and extent of social media use in the Wisconsin State Assembly. The unit of analysis for the study was the legislative offices of the Wisconsin State Assembly. The units of observation were the survey responses and interview comments. Multivariate analysis was used to predict which offices were more likely to use Facebook or Twitter.

Examining social media use in one house of the Wisconsin legislature raises the question of whether the results presented here are useful for drawing conclusions about social media use in other statehouses. When considering this question, one should keep in mind that Wisconsin is a very typical, if not the most typical, state in the nation. In

fact, a 2006 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data found Wisconsin to be the most

representative of all states, based on 12 measures that included race and ethnicity, income

and education, and neighborhood characteristics.[16] Moreover, this study appears to be the

first of its kind on this particular topic to utilize data collected from a survey (with an

82% response rate) and in-depth interviews. The interview data provided rich context for

evaluating the extent and nature of social media use by legislative offices, something that

has been missing from prior research on this topic.

Data Collection

I have worked as a legislative aide in the Wisconsin State Assembly for 14 years.

During my time working in the State Capitol, I have established professional connections

and relationships with many staff and legislators on both sides of the aisle. I capitalized

on this access to build the dataset that was used to prepare this report.

Data were collected through a survey that was completed by 82 out of offices and

interviews with four state representatives, including the Democratic and Republican

leaders. Demographic information for each district was also collected from the 2012

Wisconsin Legislative Almanac.[17] Prior to distributing the survey, I asked the two

legislative party leaders in the Assembly to complete the survey and sign a cover letter

encouraging the members of their respective caucuses to complete the survey as well.

(See Attachment A for a copy of the letter signed by Republican Assembly Speaker

Robin Vos and Democratic Assembly Minority Leader Peter Barca. See Appendix B for

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[16] Preston, Mark. "*The Most 'Representative' State: Wisconsin*," CNN POLITICS, July 27, 2006, available at http://articles.cnn.com/2006-07-27/politics/mg.thu_1_wisconsin-state-by-state-average-state?_s=PM:POLITICS (last visited November 4, 2013).

[17] Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. 2012. "Wisconsin Legislative Almanac." available at http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lrb/pubs/rb/12rb2.pdf (last visited November 14, 2013).

a copy of the survey and Appendix C for a copy of the code book). I also registered

Facebook and Twitter accounts in my name for this project.[18]

The survey was used to identify which offices use Facebook or Twitter, to collect

a series of variables to predict whether an office uses Facebook of Twitter, and to learn

the reasons why some offices choose not to use these social networks.

During August and September 2013, I personally visited 96 of 99 legislative

offices of the Wisconsin State Assembly to discuss my project and leave the survey with

the legislator or staff member. I could not gain entry into one office because it was

locked on the three occasions I stopped by during normal business hours, after the

representative announced during the survey period that he was resigning his seat. An

email sent to a staff member in that office was also not returned. I did not visit the

remaining two offices because on one occasion I provided a copy of the survey to a staff

member during an encounter in a hall of the State Capitol and on the other occasion I

presented the survey to a legislator in my office.

In most instances my initial conversations were with staff, but I had the

opportunity to speak directly with at least two legislators about my research, apart from

the four I interviewed for my case studies. After making personal visits to almost every

office, I sent a follow-up email approximately two weeks later to the staff members of

offices who had not responded. Finally, at my request, the chief of staff of a Republican

office personally contacted most of the remaining Republican offices that had not

responded.

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[18] My Facebook account can be found here: www.facebook.com/christian.moran.3388 My Twitter user name is: @ctmoran

Eighty-two of the 99 Assembly offices completed the survey for a response rate of 82%. The survey was completed by all 39 Democratic offices and 43 of the 60 (72%) Republican offices. To ensure that the 17 non-responsive offices were not markedly different than the 82 responsive offices, I compared the two groups using these variables: (1) average age of the legislators on Aug. 1, 2013, (2) the legislators' average years of service in the Assembly as of Aug. 1, 2013, and (3) the average percentage of the entire vote the legislators received in the last election. The two groups are virtually identical in age and fairly similar in the other two categories. The average age of legislators from responsive offices is 50 years, compared to 49 years for legislators from non-responsive offices. The average number of years of service for legislators from responsive offices is 5 years, compared to 8.6 years for legislators from non-responsive offices. On average, in the last election, legislators from responsive offices received 70% of the total vote, whereas legislators from non-responsive offices received 63% of the total vote. Based on these findings, I felt the 82 survey responses I received provided a representative sample of social media use in the Wisconsin State Assembly.

Case Studies

I conducted formal interviews with four state representatives. Staff members also participated in two of the interviews. The state representatives were Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester), Assembly Democratic Minority Leader Peter Barca (D-Kenosha), Representative Mary Czaja (R-Lima) and Representative Mandy Wright (D-Wausau). The staff members were Melanie Conklin, communications director for Representative Barca, and Emily Loe, legislative assistant for Representative Czaja.

All four of the state representatives I interviewed were most recently re-elected or first elected to the Assembly in the November 6, 2012, general election.

- Four-term incumbent Representative Vos was re-elected with 58 percent of the vote and was subsequently selected by his caucus to serve as Assembly Speaker, the most powerful position in the state Assembly.

- Representative Barca was re-elected with 97% of the vote in an uncontested race and has been the Assembly Minority Leader since January 2011. He returned to the Assembly in 2009, representing the district he first served from 1985 to 1992, after serving in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Small Business Administration as well as working in the private sector.

- Freshman Representative Mary Czaja beat out two opponents in her first bid to the Assembly, winning with 53% of the vote.

- Freshman Representative Mandy Wright earned her seat with 49% of the vote in a three-way race.

Predictors of Facebook and Twitter use by Assembly offices

Finally, multivariate analysis was used to identify which variables significantly predicted whether an Assembly office used a legislative Facebook site or legislative Twitter site. The dependent variables were the existence of a *legislative Facebook site* and a *legislative Twitter site*, as reported by offices in the survey. The predictor variables

measured characteristics of the representative as well as the representative's district. The potential predictor variables were:

- Political party of the representative (Democrat / Republican)

- Gender of the representative (Male / Female)

- Age of the representative (as of August 1, 2013)

- Race of the representative (White / Non-White)

- Does the representative have a college degree? (Yes / No)

- Number of years the representative has held office (below median / above median)

- Percentage of total vote the representative received in last election (below median / above median)

- Distance in road miles from the State Capitol to the largest city in the representative's district (as measured by Mapquest.com)

- Does the representative hold a leadership post (Yes / No)

- Racial composition of the representative's district (percentage of residents who are White, Black and Latino/a)

- Educational attainment of the representative's district (percentage of residents with a college degree or higher)

- Employment status of the representative's district (unemployment rate)

- Household income of the representative's district (percentage of residents earning $50,000 or more)

- Office expenditures on newsletter printing and postage (below median expenditure / above median expenditure)

- Broadband access in the representative's district (percentage of residents who are "well served" by broadband). According to the State of Wisconsin's Broadband Office, someone is "well served" by broadband if they have access to broadband speeds of 6 Mbps or greater—speeds that the National Telecommunications and

Information Administration indicates "will soon be considered a basic requirement for accessing many online services."[19]

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[19] National Telecommunications and Information Administration. 2013. "New Broadband Map Data Shows Progress, But Work Remains." available at http://www.broadbandmap.gov/blog/ (last visited December 2, 2013).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section compares the 82 respondents to the 99 members of the full Assembly as well as the 17 non-respondents, based on some key political and demographic characteristics. The second section provides a general profile of Facebook and Twitter users in the Wisconsin State Assembly, focusing first on the individual characteristics of legislators themselves and then on the characteristics of their districts. The third section discusses the results of a multivariate analysis of the survey data that predicted whether an office of the Assembly uses Facebook or Twitter. The last section adds depth to the first three sections by giving space to legislators to explain in their own words why they use social media.

1. Who is in the sample?

The Wisconsin State Assembly is composed of 99 members. The response rate for the survey was 82%, with 82 of the 99 offices completing the survey. At the time the survey was administered during August 2013 and September 2013, the Wisconsin State Assembly was made up of 60 Republicans and 39 Democrats. Table 4.1 compares political and demographic characteristics of the sample to the full membership of the Assembly. The sample of 82 respondents is split almost evenly along party lines, with 52% being Republicans (43) and 48% Democrats (39). The response rate for Democrats was 100%, with all 39 offices completing the survey. The response rate for Republicans was 72%, with 17 of 60 offices not responding. The 100% response rate by Democrats is likely attributable to the fact that I am a legislative aide in a Democratic office and have

more trusted working relationships with representatives and staff from these offices than

Republican offices. Hyper-partisanship, among Wisconsin Republicans and Democrats

alike, may also help explain to some degree the difference in response rates between the

two parties.[20]

Table 4.1 Profile of Sample Compared to Full Assembly				
	Sample		Full Assembly	
	N	%	N	%
Political Party				
Republican	43	52%	60	61%
Democrat	39	48%	39	39%
Total	82		99	
Member Demographics				
Male	59	72%	75	76%
Female	23	28%	24	24%
White	78	95%	95	96%
Non-white	4	5%	4	4%
College graduate	59	72%	69	70%
No college degree	23	28%	30	30%

The demographics of the sample compared to the full Assembly are strikingly

similar. The percentage of men in the sample is 73%, compared to 76% of the full

Assembly. Likewise, 95% of the sample is white, compared to 96% of the full Assembly.

The percentage of college graduates in both groups is almost identical, with 72% of the

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[20] Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker's approval rating from Republican voters is 92%, compared to an approval rating of 9% from Democratic voters. President Barack Obama, likewise, has an approval rating of 93% from Wisconsin Democrats, compared to 4% from Republicans (Gilbert, 2013).

sample holding a college degree or higher, compared to 70% of the full Assembly. Finally, well over half of the members in both groups have relatively limited state legislative experience, with 60% of the sample serving less than 3 years in the Assembly, compared to 55% of the full Assembly. This finding is to be expected given the recent wave of new blood coming into the Assembly, with 56 new members having been elected to the body from November 2010 through August 2013.

To ensure that non-respondents were not markedly different than respondents, I compared demographic and political characteristics of the 17 non-respondents to the 82 respondents. Table 4.2 shows the results.

Non-respondents and respondents are similar in age, education and electoral popularity. The gender make-up of both groups is also relatively similar. The average age of non-respondents is 49 years, compared to 50 years for non-respondents. Close to 60% of non-respondents hold a college degree or higher, compared to 70% of respondents. On average, non-respondents received 63% of the total vote in their last election, whereas respondents received 70%. When gender is considered, men comprise 88% of non-respondents, compared to 72% of respondents.

Table 4.2 Profile of Non-Respondents to Respondents				
	Non-respondents		Respondents	
	N	%	N	%
Political Factors				
Republican	17	100%	43	52%
Democrat	0	0%	39	48%
Total	*17*	*100%*	*82*	*100%*
Member Demographics				
Male	15	88%	59	72%
Female	2	12%	23	28%
College graduate	10	59%	69	70%

Partisan affiliation and legislative experience distinguish the two groups from one another. The partisan make-up of non-respondents compared to respondents is the most apparent difference. The group of 17 non-respondents is 100% Republican. The respondent group, on the other hand, is split almost evenly with 48% Democrats and 52% Republican.

Respondents tended to have less legislative experience than non-respondents. The average number of years of service for respondents was 5.3 years, compared to 8.6 years for non-respondents. Likewise, 60% of respondents had served less than 3 years, compared to only 29% of non-respondents.

2. *Who uses Facebook and Twitter?*

Overall, 61% (50) of the 82 Assembly offices in the sample have a legislative Facebook site, while 39% (32) of the offices have a legislative Twitter site. The existence or non-existence of a legislative Facebook site or legislative Twitter site was self-reported by each office that completed the survey. I independently verified this information afterwards.

The fact that Assembly offices are significantly more likely to have a legislative Facebook site than a legislative Twitter site mirrors the social media habits of online Americans at large, though the disparity in adoption rates is not as extreme. Close to three of every four adults who use the internet use social media networking sites and, of those who use social media, 67% use Facebook and 18% use Twitter (Brenner, 2013).

The higher rate of adoption of Twitter by Assembly offices (39%), compared to online adults at large (18%), is likely the result of a commonly stated belief by the majority of users in the sample that Twitter is an effective way to reach constituents or the public. In fact, when Twitter users were asked in the survey who they were trying reach with Twitter, 94% of these offices indicated that their intended audience included constituents, the public or their supporters.[21]

Only 13 (41%) of the 32 offices that use Twitter listed media, press or reporters among those in their intended audience. Before administering the survey, I had expected that the offices of both party leaders would list media among those they intend to reach with Twitter, because these offices help craft the political messages for their respective caucuses and disseminate them to the media. However, contrary to what I had expected,

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[21] The survey asked offices that use Twitter to name the "intended audience" of their Twitter site. Responses were entered into a spreadsheet and coded.

the Assembly Speaker's office only listed constituents as its intended audience for Twitter. The Assembly Minority Leader's office, on the other hand, indicated in its survey response that its intended Twitter audience included constituents, media, allies, and engaged residents.

Melanie Conklin, Assembly Minority Leader Peter Barca's communications director, said: "One of the big things for Twitter, in the way we do it, is to get things to reporters without saying 'Hey, here's a press release.' It is a way of actually impacting stories and coverage of an issue."[22] Speaker Vos, in contrast, said he uses his personal Twitter site (@RepVos) primarily for news. "For me it's the way to get news," Vos said. "Facebook is a way to connect with people individually. I don't go to Facebook for news." However, Vos' office also maintains its own Twitter site (@SpeakerVos), which it uses to "connect with people on session days to highlight the governmental process; how legislation will impact people," according to its survey response.

2.1. Characteristics of the legislator

The following section examines the relationship of several individual characteristics of legislators to legislator Facebook or Twitter use.

Table 4.3 presents a political and demographic profile of the members of the Wisconsin State Assembly whose offices use Facebook or Twitter for legislative purposes. Starting first with variation based on political party, Assembly Democratic offices are 23% more likely to use a legislative Facebook site, and nearly twice as likely to use a legislative Twitter site, when compared to their Assembly Republican

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[22] September 11, 2013, interview with Assembly Minority Leader Peter Barca and Melanie Conklin, his communications director, in his State Capitol office

counterparts. This contrasts with the findings of Sala and Jones (2012), who found no

apparent "salient interparty difference in either Twitter or Facebook use" among

members of the Texas House of Representatives.

Table 4.3 Profile of Members of the Wisconsin State Assembly with Legislative Facebook and Twitter Sites		
	Facebook (%)	Twitter (%)
Political Factors		
Republican	53%	26%
Democrat	69%	54%
Member Demographics		
Male	53%	35%
Female	82%	50%

One possible explanation for why Assembly Democratic offices use Facebook

and Twitter more than Assembly Republican offices may be the fact that Democrats are

the minority party in the Assembly by a 21 seat margin. As such, they have no power to

control the legislative agenda and significantly less power to make news. In my

interviews with Democratic offices, representatives and staff suggested that social media

provides an avenue to get a message out to their constituents or the media that might

otherwise get lost.

"I'm the only Dem for a long, long ways," said Representative Mandy Wright (D-

Wausau). "So if I don't get on (social media) and say our perspective, everything else is

pretty slanted. If people really want to know what's happening in Madison they need to get on social media and I can give them my information."

Turning to variation based on gender, the legislative offices of female representatives are 55% more likely to use Facebook and 43% more likely to use Twitter, than the legislative offices of male representatives. This finding mirrors national surveys which have found that the proportion of women who used social media sites between December 2009 and December 2012 was 10 percentage points higher than men on average.[23]

When age is considered, the average Assembly member whose office uses a legislative Facebook site is four years younger (48 years old) than the average member whose office does not (52 years old). The age disparity is even greater when comparing legislative Twitter users to non-users in the Assembly. The average member whose office uses a legislative Twitter site is nine years younger (44 years old) than the average member whose office does not (53 years old).

Figure 4.1 examines the relationship between legislator age and the use of Facebook by his or her legislative office. The age of legislators whose offices use Facebook spans from 25 years old (Representative Katrina Shankland, D-Stevens Point) to 73 years old (Representative Fred Kessler, D-Milwaukee). Six age cohorts were examined: 25 to 29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, and 70 and older. Users of Facebook outnumber nonusers in each age cohort except 60-69. The largest disparity in usage exists in the 30-39 cohort, where Facebook users outnumber nonusers by a three-to-one margin.

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[23] Pew Research Center. 2013. "It's a woman's (social media) world." available at http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/09/12/its-a-womans-social-media-world/ (last visited December 2, 2013).

Figure 4.1: Facebook Use by Age
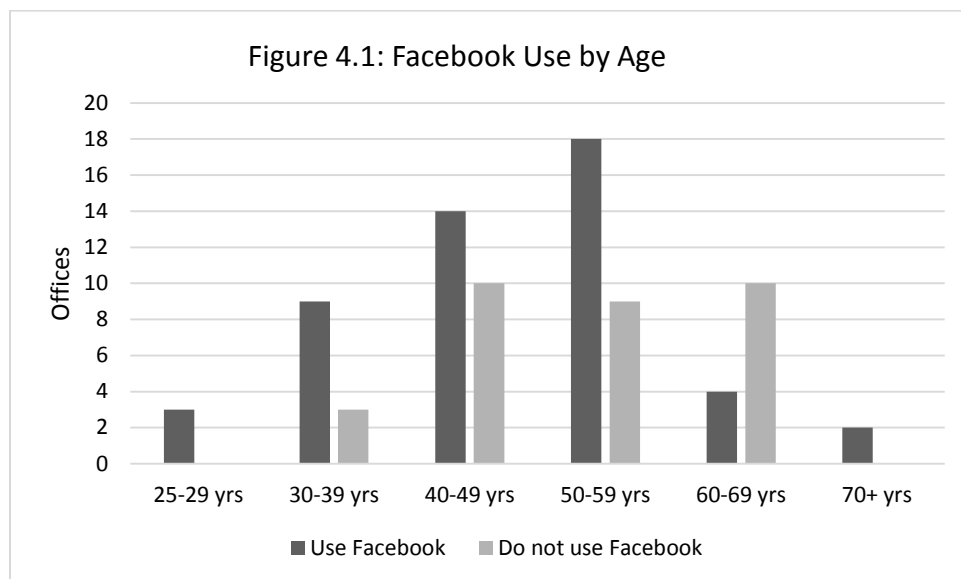
Figure 4.2 examines the relationship between legislator age and the use of Twitter by his or her legislative office, using the same six age cohorts that were examined in the Facebook use analysis above. The usage patterns of Twitter differ from Facebook when legislators' age alone is considered. As indicated above, the number of Facebook users exceeded nonusers in five of the six cohorts. Twitter usage patterns run in the opposite direction, with Twitter nonusers outnumbering users in four of the six cohorts. The age 25-29 and age 30-39 cohorts were the only two cohorts that had more Twitter users than nonusers. The largest disparity in usage patterns can be found in the age 50-59 cohort, where Twitter nonusers outnumber users almost three to two.

Figure 4.2: Twitter Use by Age
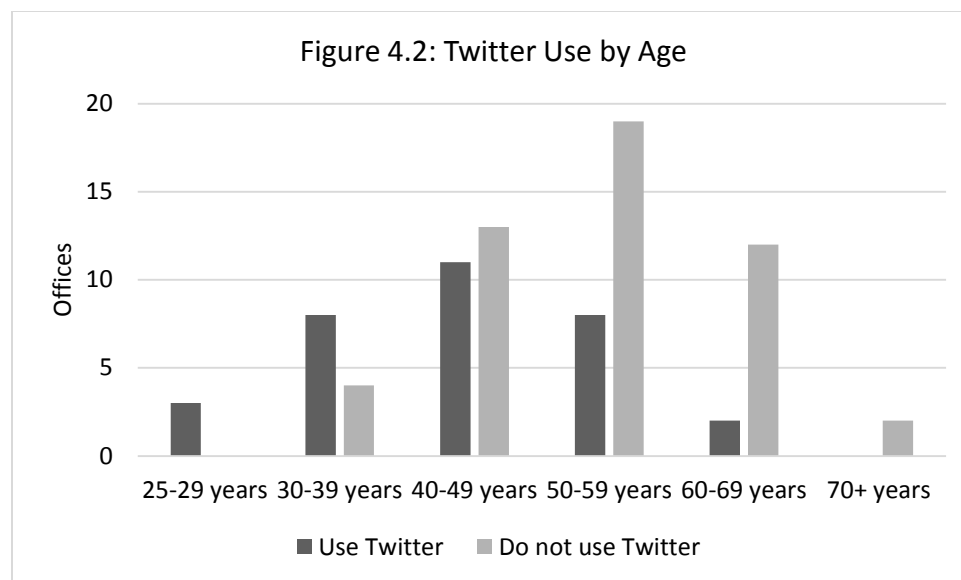
Figure 4.3 examines the relationship between legislator experience and legislator Facebook use. The range of experience in the Assembly spans more than a quarter century. The least senior member, Representative Adam Neylon (R-Pewaukee), had been on the job five months at the time of the survey, after winning an April 2013 special election. The longest serving member, Representative Al Ott (R-Forest Junction), with 27 years of experience, was first elected in 1986. Four legislative experience cohorts were examined: 1 – 3 years, 5 – 9 years, 11 – 15 years, and 19 years and up. The cohorts were measured in odd years because the two-year legislative sessions begin in January of odd numbered years. Therefore, legislators are in the middle of their current two-year term. For measurement purposes, years of legislative service were rounded to whole years.

Figure 4.3: Facebook Use by Years of Service

[Bar chart showing Facebook use by years of service. Y-axis labeled "Offices" ranging from 0 to 35. X-axis categories: "1 - 3 years", "5-9 years", "11-15 years", "19 + years". Legend: "Use Facebook" (dark bars), "Do not use Facebook" (light bars).]
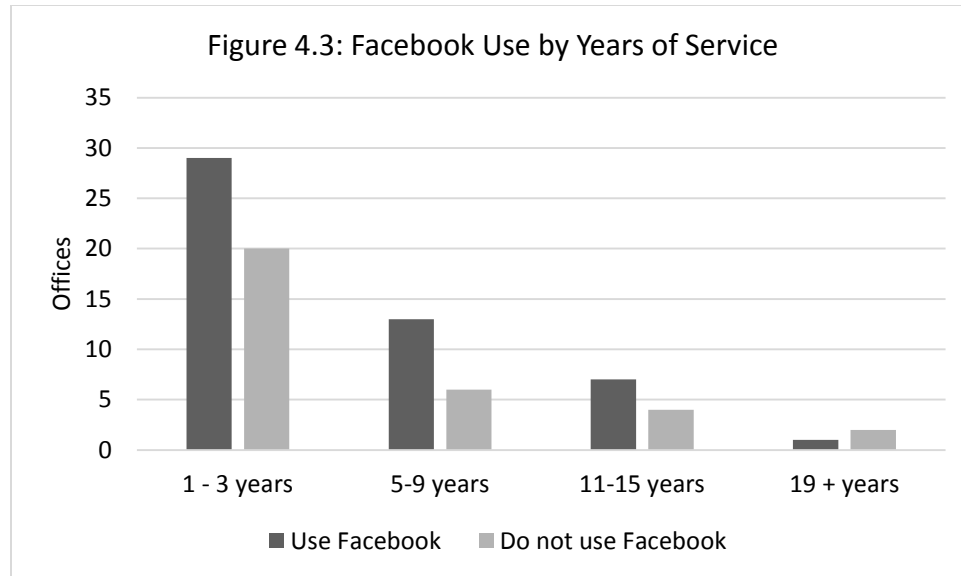
Facebook users outnumber nonusers in three of the four legislative experience cohorts. In the most experienced cohort, one office uses Facebook and two do not. As expected, the largest number of users and nonusers are in the 1 – 3 years cohort, as almost 60% of the members have three years of experience or less in the Assembly.

Figure 4.4 examines the relationship between legislator experience and legislator Twitter use. When legislator experience is isolated, we find that Twitter nonusers outnumber users in three of the four legislative experience cohorts. The only cohort with more Twitter users is the 11-15 years cohort, in which six offices tweet and five do not.

Figure 4.4: Twitter Use by Years of Service

Offices

- Use Twitter
- Do not use Twitter
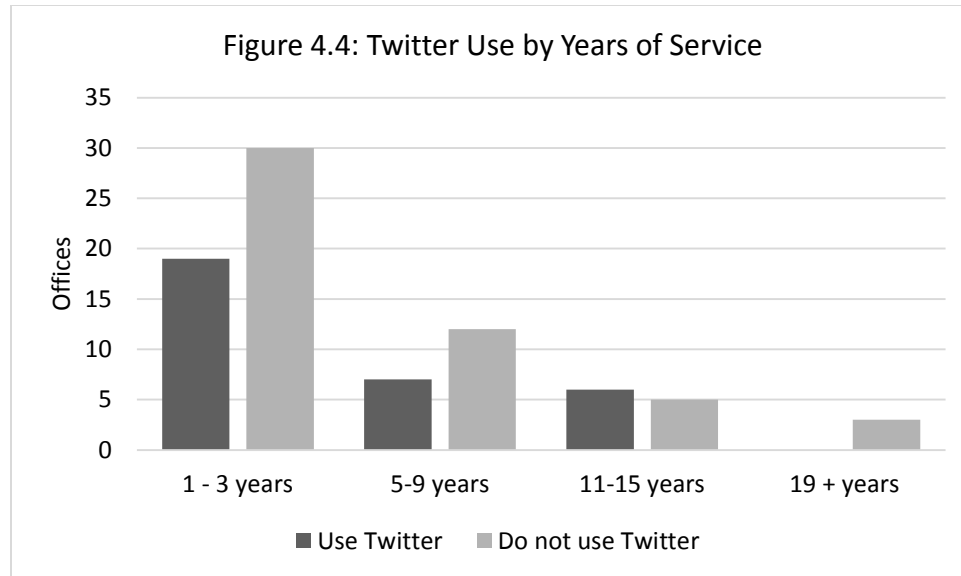
Figure 4.5 examines the relationship between legislator electoral popularity and legislator Facebook use. Legislators were placed in one of four cohorts of roughly equal size. The first three cohorts are based on the percentage of the total vote a legislator received in the last election as follows: 50% to 56%, 57% to 60% and 61% to 88%. The fourth cohort contains legislators who did not have an opponent in the most recent general election.

Figure 4.5: Facebook Use by Size of Electoral Win
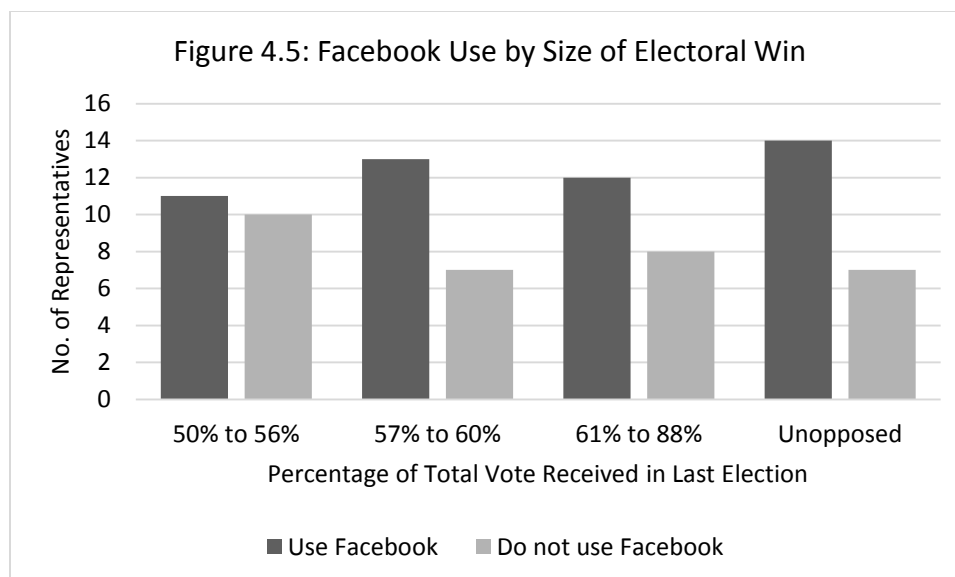
"Uncontested" legislators, or those who had no opponent in the last election, are significantly more likely to use Facebook than the "most vulnerable" legislators, or those who received 50% to 56% of the total vote. In fact, the likelihood of a "most vulnerable" legislator using Facebook is almost equal to the likelihood of them not using it. Conversely, "uncontested" legislators are twice as likely to use Facebook than not. These findings are somewhat surprising, in that one might have reasonably expected legislators who face a bigger challenge at the polls would have a greater incentive to use social media than those who win by wider margins or are unopposed.

Figure 4.6 examines the relationship between legislator electoral popularity and legislator Twitter use. The results here are again surprising when you consider the "most vulnerable" legislators are the least likely to use Twitter. In fact, the "most vulnerable" legislators are more than three times more likely to not use Twitter. "Unopposed" legislators, by comparison, are equally likely to use Twitter than not.

Figure 4.6: Twitter Use by Size of Electoral Win

No. of Representatives (y-axis: 0 to 18)

50% to 56%, 57% to 60%, 61% to 88%, Unopposed

Percentage of Total Vote Received

■ Use Twitter ■ Do not use Twitter
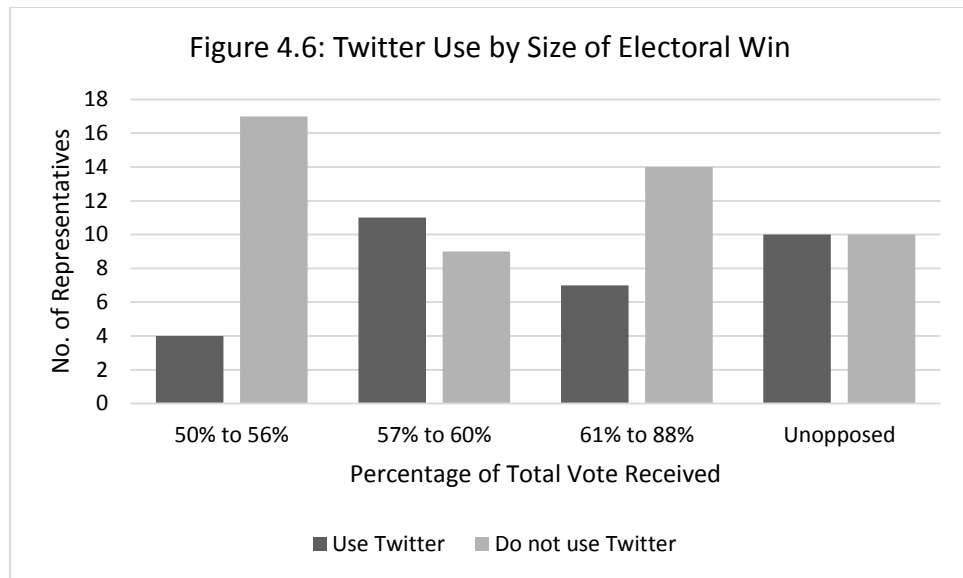
Table 4.4 examines the relationship between legislator college degree attainment and legislator Facebook and Twitter use. Legislators who use Facebook are three times more likely to have a college degree. Likewise, legislators with a college degree are more than four times as likely to use Facebook as those who haven't graduated from college. Legislators who use Twitter are more than five times more likely to have a college degree. However, legislators with a college degree are 19% less likely to use Twitter as those who haven't graduated from college.

Table 4.4			
Facebook/Twitter use by college educated representatives			
		College Degree	No College Degree	Total
Facebook	Yes	40	10	50
		80%	20%	100%
	No	19	13	32
		59%	41%	100%
	Total	59	23	82

Table 4.5 examines legislative Facebook or Twitter use and office expenditures on traditional constituent communication outreach, as measured by the amount of money an office spent on newsletter printing and newsletter postage from January 2013 through July 2013. This information was obtained through an open records request filed with the Assembly Chief Clerk, the custodian of Assembly records. Thirty-six (44%) of the 82 offices in the sample spent money on traditional communication during the first six months of 2013. During this period, office expenditures ranged from $94 to $5,065. As shown below, the number of offices that use Facebook is split almost evenly when it comes to spending money on traditional media: about half of the offices spent money on newsletter printing and postage and about half of them did not. We see a different pattern for Twitter users. In fact, offices that use Twitter are almost twice as likely to *not* spend money on traditional communication.

Table 4.5 Facebook/Twitter use and traditional office expenditures			
		Facebook	Twitter
Spent money on newsletter	Yes	24 48%	11 34%
	No	26 52%	21 66%
	Total	50	32

2.2. Characteristics of the Assembly district

The following section examines the relationship between legislator Facebook or Twitter use and several Assembly district characteristics.

District broadband access

The State of Wisconsin's Broadband Office measures broadband access using four general categories: well-served, served, under served and no access.[24] Someone is "well served" by broadband if they have access to broadband speeds of 6 Mbps or greater—speeds that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) indicates "will soon be considered a basic requirement for accessing many online

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[24] Chattopadhyay, Tithi, Wisconsin State Broadband Director. November 14, 2013, email communication with the author.

services."[25] Someone is "served" by broadband if they have access to broadband speeds of 3 Mbps to 6 Mbps download/1 Mbps upload—speeds that the NTIA indicates provide users access to a basic set of applications such as downloading webpages, photos, and videos, sending or receiving email, and simple video conferencing.[26] The State of Wisconsin's Broadband Office defines "underserved" as access to broadband speeds of 768kbps to 3 Mbps/1 Mbps and "unserved" as access to broadband speeds of less than 768 kbps/200 kbps.

Using county-level broadband access data as well as county and Assembly district population data, I estimated broadband access for each of the 82 districts in the sample.[27] Overall, a vast majority of Wisconsin residents live in Assembly districts that are either well-served or served by broadband. However, as shown in Chart 4.1, more than 20% of the residents in five of the 82 districts sampled are not well-served by broadband. These five districts are located in central and northern Wisconsin. Of the five legislators who represent these districts, three offices do not use Facebook or Twitter, one office (Representative Czaja) uses only Facebook, and one office (Representative Wright) uses both Facebook and Twitter.

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[25] National Telecommunications and Information Administration. 2013."New Broadband Map Data Shows Progress, But Work Remains." Available at http://www.broadbandmap.gov/blog/ (last visited December 2, 2013)

[26] National Telecommunications and Information Administration. 2013. "U.S. Broadband Availability: June 2010-June 2012. Available at:
http://www.ntia.doc.gov/files/ntia/publications/usbb_avail_report_05102013.pdf (last visited December 2, 2013).

[27] Attachment H provides an explanation of the methodology I used to estimate broadband access in each of the 82 Assembly districts in the sample.

Chart 4.1: Assembly District Broadband Access
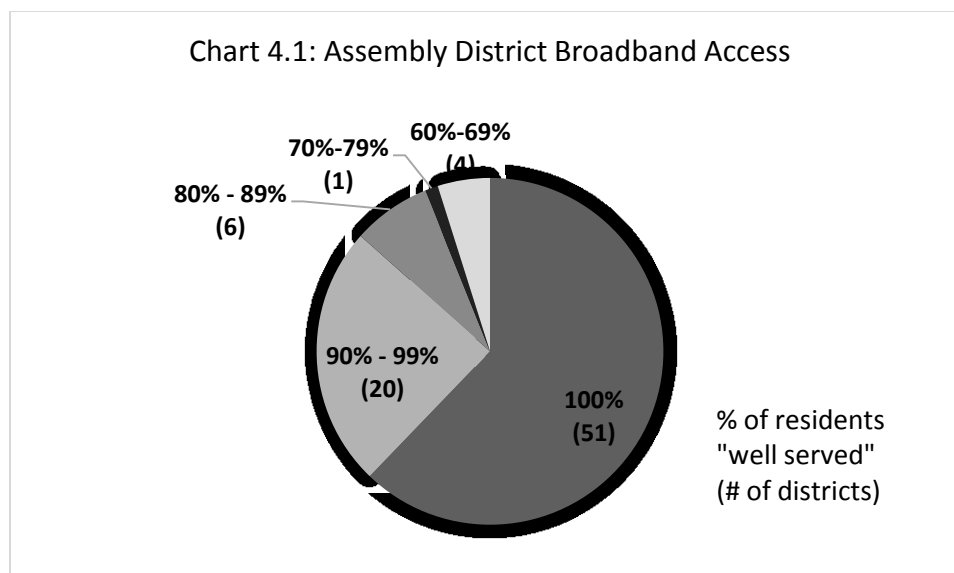
District racial composition

Wisconsin has approximately 5.7 million residents, 88.2% of whom are white, 6.5% African American and 6.2% Latino/a (U.S. Census 2012).[28] Nearly 90% of the state's African American population lives in six counties located in either Southeastern or Southern Wisconsin.[29] Almost 40% of the state's Latino/as live in Milwaukee County.[30]

Table 4.6 examines legislator Facebook/Twitter use and Assembly district racial composition. In 73 of the 82 Assembly districts sampled, the majority of residents are white. The remaining nine districts are "minority majority" districts, in which 53% to 78% of the residents are racial minorities. These nine districts are all located in Milwaukee County.

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[28] U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts and Figures (Wisconsin), available at http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/55000.html (last visited November 12, 2013).

[29] Wisconsin Department of Health Services: African Americans in Wisconsin, available at http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/minorityhealth/mhpop/africanameripop2009.htm (last visited November 12, 2013).

[30] Wisconsin Department of Health Services: Hispanics/Latinos in Wisconsin, available at http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/minorityhealth/mhpop/hispaniclatinopop.htm (last visited November 12, 2013).

Table 4.6 Facebook/Twitter use and district racial characteristics			
		Facebook	Twitter
< 50% Non-White		45 62%	29 40%
> 50% Non-White		5 56%	3 33%
	Total	50	32

Legislators who represent the nine "minority majority" districts are more likely to use Facebook, but not to the same extent as the 82 legislators in the sample. The sample at large is 36% more likely to use Facebook, whereas the subgroup of nine legislators is 20% more likely to use Facebook. Moreover, legislators who represent the nine "minority majority" districts are less likely to use Twitter, but to an even lesser extent than the 82 legislators in the sample. The sample at large is 56% less likely to use Twitter, whereas the "minority majority" subgroup is two times less likely to use Twitter.

District college degree attainment

Approximately 26% of Wisconsin residents age 25 or older have a bachelor's degree or higher.[31] Table 4.7 examines legislator Facebook/Twitter use and Assembly district college degree attainment, as measured by the percentage of residents in a district who have earned a college degree or higher. As shown below, on average, the percentage

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[31] U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts and Figures (Wisconsin), available at http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/55000.html (last visited November 12, 2013).

of college educated constituents in any given Assembly district aligns closely to the

statewide average regardless of whether or not a legislator uses Facebook or Twitter.

This data suggests that legislators are no more or less likely to use Facebook or Twitter

based on how many of their constituents have graduated from college.

Table 4.7 Facebook/Twitter use and % of college educated constituents		
	Facebook	Twitter
Constituents with college degree (average)	27%	28%

District unemployment

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Wisconsin in August 2013 was

6.7%, according to preliminary estimates.[32] The data on district unemployment rate and

legislator Facebook/Twitter use tells the same story as the data on district college degree

attainment and legislator Facebook/Twitter use discussed above. When districts are

grouped together based on legislator Facebook or Twitter use, the average unemployment

rate for each of the four groups (Yes Facebook or No Facebook and Yes Twitter or No

Twitter) is approximately 7%, or .03% higher than the statewide average. This data

suggests legislators are no more or less likely to use Facebook or Twitter based on the

economic conditions in their districts.

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[32] Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, *Wisconsin Employment and Unemployment Estimates Announced: July Revised, August Preliminary*, September 19, 2013, DWD COMMUNICATIONS, available at http://worknet.wisconsin.gov/worknet_info/Publications/PressRelease/state.pdf
(last viewed November 12, 2013).

3. *Quantitative Analysis*

Table 4.9 presents the results of a multivariate analysis of member demographics

that predicts whether an Assembly office uses a legislative Facebook site. The model has

an adjusted R-squared of 0.179, which means that the combination of predictors explains

17.9% of the variance in whether an office has a legislative Facebook site. The five

independent variables used in the model were a member's gender, age and seniority, the

amount of money an office spent on traditional constituent outreach, and the percentage

of residents in a district who are well-served by broadband.[33]

	Standardized Coefficient	t	
Table 4.8 Multivariate Analysis: Member Demographics and District Broadband Access as Predictors of Facebook Activity			
Sex (Female)	0.374	3.436	**
Age	-0.304	-2.765	**
Seniority	0.223	2.016	*
Money Spent on Traditional Communication	0.316	2.799	*
% Excellent Broadband Access	.207	2.00	*
Constant		-.301	

*Note: Significance level: ** p < .01, *p<.05*

R²= .179

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[33] Traditional communication is measured using a dichotomous dummy variable. Offices were coded 1 if they spent any amount of money to print or mail a legislative newsletter from January 2013 through July 2013 (the first six months of the 2013-2014 legislative session). Offices were coded 0 if they spent $0 to print or mail newsletters during this period.

The model demonstrates that all five independent variables have a statistically significant effect on the likelihood that an office will use a legislative Facebook site. All else equal, offices served by younger female representatives who have more legislative experience, spend more money on traditional communication and serve districts with good broadband access are more likely to use Facebook. Other characteristics of a representative (e.g., political party) and the representative's district (e.g., a district's unemployment rate, educational attainment or distance from the State Capitol) were not statistically significant predictors of whether an office uses Facebook.

Table 4.10 presents the results of a multivariate analysis of member demographics and political party that predicts whether an Assembly office uses a legislative Twitter site. The model has an adjusted R-squared of .269 which means that the combination of predictors explains 26.9% of the variance in whether an office has a legislative Twitter site. The model tests whether three demographic measures of a representative (political party, age and educational attainment) and one district demographic measure (affluence of a district) predict Twitter uses by Assembly offices.

Table 4.9
Multivariate Analysis: Member Demographics and Political
Party as Predictors of Twitter Activity

	Standardized Coefficient	t	
Political Party (Republican)	-0.370	-3.268	**
Age	-.452	-4.531	**
Percentage of district with income > $50,000	.247	2.194	*
College Graduate	-.202	-2.053	*
Constant		3.834	

*Note: Significance level: ** p < .01, *p<.05*
R^2= .269

The model demonstrates that all four independent variables have a statistically significant effect on the likelihood that an office will use a legislative Twitter site. All else equal, offices served by younger Democratic representatives who have no college degree and represent more affluent districts are more likely to use Twitter.

4. Why do Assembly offices use Facebook or Twitter?

When asked in the survey to indicate the intended audience of their Facebook site, 43 of the 50 offices (86%) that use Facebook listed constituents among the individuals they intended to reach. Of those offices, over half identified constituents as their only intended audience. "Everyone is on Facebook," said Representative Mary Czaja (R-Lima). "It's feel-good marketing. It gives your constituents an idea of who you are as a person, not just a legislator."

As expected, the offices of the Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and Assembly Minority Leader Peter Barca, as leading voices in their respective parties, said they use Facebook not only to communicate with constituents but also with audiences outside their districts.[34] In its survey response, the office of Speaker Vos wrote "advancing caucus goals and highlighting conservative ideas" were the primary reasons it uses Facebook. Vos elaborated on this point during an interview:

I guess probably more than anything we are self-promoters.
Politicians have to be. So we look for every avenue possible to get our
message out. The traditional media have always been good, but of course
having a filter kind of stinks because you don't get to tell your own
message. So the ability to use social media, from beginning to end, where
we get to craft our message, we get to send it out and it goes to people
who have a natural inclination to listen, I guess makes it a pretty powerful
way to communicate. Now on the flip side, I think sometimes it's almost
like being addicted to a drug, where you feel like it has huge impact, but
the impact is pretty limited.

When asked in the survey for the primary reason why it used Facebook, the office of Assembly Minority Leader Barca responded "communicating our message in hopes it will spread (and) dispensing information that is not widely circulating." During my

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[34] Facebook pages have a feature called "page insights" that lists, among other things, the *most popular city* from where most of the people talking about the page are from. For example, visitors to the Facebook page of Representative Mandy Wright of Wausau can see that her page's most popular city is Wausau. By comparison, the most popular city for the Facebook pages of Speaker Vos of Rochester and Representative Barca of Kenosha is the same: Madison, the state capital of Wisconsin.

interview with Barca, his communications director raised points similar to those of Vos above.

> *A short time ago you were counting on a third party to take your words and move them on. Now you're able to actually craft your message and send it directly to people. (However), the people who are on social media will say anything and there does not seem to be the same standard as held by professional journalists of libel and accuracy. So you know, it's good in that the message is unfiltered but the negative is that people feel free to say anything.*

Representative Mandy Wright said her constituents in central Wisconsin cannot get well informed about what is going on in state government through traditional media alone. She said social media fills that media void.

> *Sometimes I feel like Madison and Milwaukee people don't quite understand how limited the information is in my district. Because what actually trickles up to Wausau in our paper and on our television stations is so limited compared to what you guys get down here. So I actually really learned a lot about state politics in 2011, what was actually happening, through social media. So I really value that as a legitimate way to communicate with people.*

All four of the legislators I interviewed mentioned the positive feedback they have gotten back in their districts as a result of using Facebook. The following comment from Representative Czaja illustrates this point well.

> *There's times when I go back to events and people are reluctant, they look at me like are you still Mary? Or are you Representative Czaja? So it does…it kind of breaks the ice, and lets them know you're still working in the garden or doing whatever, you're just a person.*

When asked in the survey to cite the most important reason why they used Twitter, Republican and Democratic offices largely provided very similar responses, such as "to keep in contact with constituents," or for "constituent outreach and keeping citizens informed of what is going on in Madison."

The survey responses alone seem to generally suggest that Assembly offices that use social media find Facebook and Twitter to be interchangeable channels for communicating with constituents. However, during the course of my interviews it became apparent that Facebook and Twitter may, in fact, not serve the same purpose, or even have the same perceived level of efficacy, for every office that uses them. For example, when asked if she used Facebook or Twitter differently, Representative Wright said:

> *I don't see Twitter as being as valuable (as Facebook). I think when things are happening really fast and if we're in the middle of a*

debate or something and something kind of crazy happens and I can come

up with a good one liner, and sometimes I put it on Twitter and it gets

taken viral. But for the most part people don't pay much attention to

Twitter. It's not as reliable.

5. Why don't Assembly offices use Facebook or Twitter?

Offices that do not use Facebook or Twitter were asked in the survey to explain the primary reasoning behind their decisions. The responses provided by the 32 offices that do not use Facebook fell into six general categories. Almost half of the offices said either the member uses a personal Facebook account instead (25%) or their current communication methods (e.g., legislative websites, electronic and traditional newsletters, press releases) were sufficient (22%). Almost one-third of the offices said they either had no interest (16%) or offered no reason (16%). The remainder of the offices said they didn't have the capacity to manage or properly vet a site (16%) or cited the rural characteristics of their districts as an impediment (6%). (The sum of the percentages exceeds 100% due to rounding).

The 50 Assembly offices that do not use Twitter offered several different reasons for making this decision. In general, the reason most cited by offices for not using Twitter was a perceived lack of utility. A plurality of the offices (44%) indicated that they saw no need to use Twitter only because they believe their current methods of communicating with constituents are sufficient or more effective. For example, one Democratic office indicated that "we get better traction with e-news, press releases, legislative website and local press coverage." Other offices said their decision to not use

Twitter was due more to the network's inherent space limitations and focus on immediacy. For example, one Democratic office said Twitter was "more focused on speed of posting, (and offers) less opportunity to provide substantive posts with (the 140) character limit. Seems more prone to missteps and misunderstanding." A Republican office offered a similar explanation, writing: "For Twitter to be effective you have to post frequently and our communications wouldn't benefit from that style at this time."

Other reasons offices cited for not using a legislative Twitter site included a general lack of interest by some legislators, unfamiliarity with how to use it or a preference of some legislators to use Twitter for personal or campaign purposes. One office that serves an Assembly district in far northern Wisconsin indicated that it did not use Twitter due to limited access to high speed internet and spotty cell phone reception in the district. Representative Mary Czaja echoed this concern during her interview when she said: "Being in a rural district, broadband is not as available. Some communities don't have it. You still have people who don't have smart phones. So, in my district, access can be limited because of technology."

Only one member, Representative Chris Taylor (D-Madison), has a legislative Twitter site but not a legislative Facebook site. Taylor does, however, use her personal Facebook page to post legislative information. Her office indicated in its survey response that it did not have legislative Facebook site due to a lack of staff, time and resources to maintain the site and the fact that her personal account had yet to reach its cap on friends. Taylor's office also noted that the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board, the

state's elections and government ethics agency, had not found any problems with her use of her personal Facebook page.[35]

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[35] State guidelines on legislative use of social media define "mixed content" social media pages are those that contain a mix of legislative and personal materials, including business and campaign materials. These guidelines prohibit the use of state resources to create a "mixed content site" or to post business or campaign information on such a site. Legislative staff are permitted to post business or campaign information on a "mixed content" site, but it must be done on their own personal time. These guidelines can be accessed here: http://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/acc/Documents/Social_Media.pdf

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Prior research on legislative use of social media has tried to answer the question by examining political and demographic information about lawmakers and their districts as well as the content of what they post on Facebook or Twitter. Almost all of these studies have focused on Congress. Overall, these studies have found Republicans tend to use social media more than Democrats, lawmakers generally use social media more to promote themselves and social media augment rather than replace lawmakers' existing communication methods.

This thesis dug deeper into the issue by asking legislative offices in the Wisconsin State Assembly, through a survey and in-person interviews with state representatives and their staff members, why they use or do not use Facebook or Twitter. Providing legislators the opportunity to explain the reasoning behind their social media decisions added depth to this relatively new field of research.

The three most important findings of this thesis are the following:

1. Most Wisconsin legislators whose offices use Facebook or Twitter do not seem to be doing so to reach the news media.

2. Overall, the characteristics of a Wisconsin legislator are stronger predictors on the use of Facebook or Twitter by a legislative office than the characteristics of a legislator's district.

3. Constituent access to broadband is a significant predictor of whether a legislative office in the Wisconsin State Assembly uses Facebook.

Constituents are the prime audience, not the media

As expected, when asked in the survey to identify who they were trying to reach through Facebook or Twitter, almost every user identified *constituents* as an intended target. However, the results of the study also provide evidence that Wisconsin state lawmakers generally do not believe Twitter is as effective for reaching constituents (at least not directly) as Facebook. Usage patterns alone show that they are 36% more likely to use Facebook than Twitter.

When Twitter users, in particular, were asked in the survey to name their intended audience, only 13 (41%) of the 32 offices identified media, press or reporters. Nine of those 13 offices were Democratic. This finding suggests that most offices that use Twitter are not interested in using it to communicate with the news media, but rather may be using it to bypass the media altogether to communicate messages directly to their constituents. It should be noted that the three legislators I interviewed whose offices use Twitter do so primarily to obtain or disseminate news. Two of those legislators, however, were the party leaders, whose offices are primarily responsible for political messaging and media communications for their respective party caucuses. For example, Assembly Minority Leader Peter Barca's communications director said his Twitter audience primarily consists of "the reporters, the bloggers and the highly connected." She compared that to what she sees on his personal and legislative Facebook pages.

> *(On Barca's) Facebook pages I see a lot of posting, commenting,*
>
> *discussing, which is something that doesn't happen on Twitter and, in*
>
> *general, those are not necessarily names I know. They are your (Barca's)*

constituents, people who are interested in politics, but they are not

familiar names.

The reasons for why party leaders would use Twitter cannot be generalized to apply to other legislators. Rank-and-file members are more concerned about attending to the needs of their respective districts than the needs of the entire caucus. An obvious next step to gain a better understanding of this issue would be to examine the Twitter feeds of legislators to identify who they are communicating with and what they are communicating about.

Characteristics of the legislator, not the district, drive social media use

Overall, the results of the multivariate analysis provide statistically significant evidence that the characteristics of a legislator are stronger determinants on the use of Facebook or Twitter than the characteristics of a legislator's district. This finding is unexpected if you accept that legislators' primary motivation for using social media is to connect with their constituents. If that was indeed the case, one would expect the characteristics of a legislator's district (i.e., the constituents who live there) to be a stronger determinant overall on their office's use of Facebook or Twitter. This finding is not unexpected, however, if you agree with a position held by Speaker Vos that social media, as it is currently being used, serves more to isolate people than bring them together.

Social media does nothing more than rile up people who already agree with you, same as what these Tea Party rallies do, same as the Solidarity Singers…I think we're at this pinnacle where we need to figure out how do we utilize it (social media) in a way that's productive to helping people get to answers as opposed to using it as a mechanism to just throw crap out and never get the feedback in to say, "is it good or bad or is it a solution or is it not?" I guess that's the next phase. I think social media needs to show it can be a problem solver…If this is the only way we're going to communicate, then we're certainly not going to be more thoughtful in the future, because you can't do it in 140 characters or with a Facebook post.

If for no other reason, this finding is important, and deserves further study, because it highlights a potential discrepancy between what the data tells us compared to what legislators are saying.

Broadband access significant predictor of social media use

While most of Wisconsin is generally well served by broadband, there are regions, particularly in the central and northern parts of the state, where residents do not have reliable access to an Internet connection or cell phone coverage. The results of the survey and my interviews show that legislators who represent these regions are clearly aware of the broadband access problems in their districts. Moreover, the results of the multivariate analysis provide statistically significant

evidence that legislators who represent districts with good access to broadband are more likely to use Facebook. Findings like this are important to keep in mind as scholars begin to examine whether social media truly provide new opportunities for citizens to engage with their elected representatives.

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APPENDIX A

Wisconsin State Assembly
P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

August 1, 2013

Dear Members/Staff,

We write to encourage you to complete the attached survey on your office's use of social media for legislative purposes.

This survey was prepared by Christian Moran of Representative Jon Richards' office. He will use the results for a master's thesis he is writing on the use of Facebook and Twitter by legislative offices in the Wisconsin State Assembly.

This research project is strictly nonpartisan and is being overseen by a committee of professors at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Department of Journalism, Advertising and Media Studies.

Both of our offices have completed this survey and we encourage your offices to do so as well. We expect Christian's research to provide valuable insights into legislative use of social media. We are pleased that he is willing to provide a summary of his results to any legislator or legislative staffer who would like one.

Thanks in advance for helping Christian with his important project.

Sincerely,

Speaker Robin Vos
State Representative
63rd Assembly District

Minority Leader Peter Barca
State Representative
64th Assembly District

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE

Research Contact:
Christian Moran, Graduate Student
Department of Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies
ctmoran@uwm.edu
(608) 712-4402

Survey Questions for State of Wisconsin Assembly Members/Staff on Office Use of Facebook and Twitter for Legislative Purposes

ASSEMBLY OFFICE:

Section 1: Legislative Facebook Use

1. Is this survey being completed by the legislator or staff?   Legislator   Staff

2. Does your office have a legislative Facebook site?   Yes   No

    a) If you answered No, please answer question 3 and then skip directly to Section 2
    b) If you answered Yes, please answer questions 4 through 20 and then go to Section 2

3. Why does your office <u>not</u> have a legislative Facebook site?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

4. What is the web address for your office's Facebook site?_____

5. Is your office's Facebook site a Facebook Personal Account?   Yes   No

    a) If you answered Yes, please answer question 6
    b) If you answered No, please skip question 6 and go to question 7

6. How many "Friends" does your office's Facebook
Personal Account have?_____

7. Is your office's Facebook site a Facebook Page?   Yes   No

    a) If you answered Yes, please answer questions 8 and 9
    b) If you answered No, please skip questions 8 and 9 and go to question 10

8. How many "Likes" does your office's Facebook Page have?
_____

9. How many times has your office paid for a Facebook Ad
or a Sponsored Story to boost the number of "Likes" for
its Facebook site?   0   1-5   6-10   > 10

10. When did your office establish its Facebook site? _____

11. Can any member of the public access your office's
Facebook site?   Yes   No

12. Can any member of the public view all of the posts on
your office's Facebook site?   Yes   No

13. Who posts information on your office's Facebook site? Legislator   Staff   Both

14. Are staff allowed to post information on your office's Facebook
site without the legislator's prior approval?   Yes   No

15. How many times per week does your office typically post on
its Facebook site?   0   1-5   6-10   > 10

16. Does your office respond to constituent inquiries via
its Facebook site?   Yes   No

17. Who is the intended audience of your office's Facebook site?
_____

_____

18. What is the most important reason why your office has a Facebook site?

_____

_____

_____

19. How much did your office spend on district newsletters
and surveys during the 2011-13 session? -

_____

20. Has your office's use of its Facebook site affected its use of traditional constituent
communication (newsletters, mail-in surveys, town hall meetings etc.)?

           Yes   No

  a) If you answered Yes, please answer question 21 and then go to Section 2
  b) If you answered No, please skip question 21 and go directly to Section 2

21. In what specific ways has your office's use of Facebook affected its use of traditional
communication?

_____

_____

_____

Section 2: Legislative Twitter Use

22. Does your office have a legislative Twitter site?   Yes   No

  a) If you answered No, please answer question 23 and then you are done!

  b) If you answered Yes, please skip question 23 and answer questions 24 through 34

23. Why does your office <u>not</u> have a legislative Twitter site?

_____

_____

_____

24. What is the user name for your office's Twitter site? _____

25. When did your office establish its Twitter site?_____

26. How many "Followers" does your office's Twitter site have?
    _____

27. Who posts information on your office's Twitter site?   Legislator   Staff   Both

28. Are staff allowed to post information on your office's Twitter
    site without the legislator's prior approval?   Yes   No

29. How many times per week does your office typically post on
    its Twitter site?   0   1-5   6-10   > 10

30. Does your office respond to constituent inquiries via its Twitter site?   Yes   No

31. Who is the intended audience of your office's
    Twitter site?_____

32. What is the most important reason why your office has a Twitter site?

    _____

    _____

    _____

33. Has your office's use of Twitter affected its use of traditional constituent
    communication (newsletters, surveys, standard mail, town halls etc.)?   Yes   No

    a) If you answered Yes, please answer question 34
    b) If you answered No, you are done!

34. In what specific ways has your office's use of Twitter affected its use of traditional
    communication?

    _____

APPENDIX C

<u>Code Book</u>

Wisconsin State

Representative_____

PARTY Political party of the representative? 0=Dem, 1=GOP, 2=Independent   _____

SEX Gender of the representative? 0=male, 1=female   _____

AGE   Age of the representative in years as of August 1, 2013?

Enter number of years   _____

RACE   Race of the representative? 0=white, 1=non-white   _____

COLLEGE   Does the representative have a college degree?   0=no, 1=yes   _____

YRSSERV   How many whole years has the representative served in the Assembly
as of January 2014?   Enter number of years   _____

PERCVOTE   What percentage of the entire vote did the representative
get in the last election? Enter percentage of entire vote   _____

DISTANCE   What is the distance in road miles from the Capitol to the
largest city in the representative's district?
Enter number of road miles   _____

LEADER   Does the representative serve in a leadership post? 0=no, 1=yes   _____

WHITEDIS   What percentage of the representative's district is White?
Enter percentage White   _____

BLACKDIS   What percentage of the representative's district is Black?
Enter percentage Black   _____

HISPDIS   What percentage of the representative's district is Hispanic?
Enter percentage Hispanic   _____

COLLGDIS   What percentage of the representative's district graduated from college?
Enter percentage college graduate   _____

EMPLODIS   What is the unemployment rate in the representative's district
as of August 1, 2013? Enter unemployment rate   _____

INCOMDIS   What percentage of households in the representative's district earn
more than $50,000 annually? Enter percentage > $50,000   _____

TRADCOMM How much did the representative's office spend on traditional
communication (newsletters and surveys) in the 2011-13 session?
Enter $$ amount   _____

FBPRSNAL   Does the representative's office have a Facebook personal account?
0=no, 1=yes   _____

FBFRIEND   How many people "friend" the office's Facebook personal account?
Enter 0 or the number of "friends"   _____

FBPAGE   Does the representative's office have a legislative Facebook page?
0=no, 1=yes   _____

FBLIKES   How many people "like" the office's legislative Facebook page?
Enter 0 or the number of "likes"   _____

FBPOSTS   How many times per week does the representative's office typically
post on its Facebook site?
Enter 0 or 1 = 1 to 5, 2 = 6 to 10, 3 = greater than 10   _____

TWTR   Does the representative's office have a legislative Twitter site?
0=no, 1=yes   _____

TWTRFOLO   How many people follow the office's legislative Twitter site?
Enter 0 or the number of followers   _____

TWTRPOST   How many times per week does the representative's office
typically post on its Twitter site?
Enter 0 or 1 = 1 to 5, 2 = 6 to 10, 3 = greater than 10   _____

APPENDIX D

Interview with Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester)
Wisconsin State Capitol, August 22, 2013

CM: Your office was kind enough to fill out the survey. So part of this is doing a survey

of all 99 offices, but also doing a few case studies to flesh it out with one-on-one

interviews. Obviously with your position as speaker and you've actually been at the

forefront of social media…

RV: Right.

CM: I remember when you were on Finance you were one of the first ones out there.

RV: Yeah, they did a big story about it. It was funny, I read something in the paper about

this thing called Twitter. I don't know if it was in the Wall Street Journal or in some blog

or something, but there was this congressman who started tweeting and I thought 'oh

that's the kind of interesting, get your message out and that's the way it started. And

you're right, I did it in finance—which I got in trouble for it.

CM: If you don't mind, I have a couple questions for you. So generally, big picture, what

would be the reason your office uses social media?

RV: Well, for good or bad social media is the way of the world. It's interesting that when

I started as a staffer we didn't have email, so people would literally call. Fax was kind of

new technology of the time, or newer. So we would take messages. And people were connected to the legislature but not in the way that they are today. We would do our survey and all those kinds of things but it just wasn't the same. Came here as a legislator in '04, and of course the Internet was in full bloom. So at the time people weren't even necessarily doing an e-newsletter. I was just using it as way to get information out. But even email at the time, it's been so exponential, it's just different. I guess it's just a natural way, I guess probably more than anything we are self-promoters, politicians have to be. So we look for every avenue possible to get our message out. The traditional media have always been good, but of course having a filter kind of stinks because you don't get to tell your own message. So the ability to use social media, from beginning to end, where we get to craft our message, we get to send it out and it goes to people who have a natural inclination to listen, I guess makes it a pretty powerful way to communicate. Now on the flip side, I think sometimes it's almost like being addicted to a drug, where you feel like it has huge impact, but the impact is pretty limited. Facebook is a good example. I had a Facebook site a long time ago and we did it for our office and now we're trying to get every office to do it just because once again it's the medium lots of folks use to communicate. I get comments on a pretty regular basis from Facebook, I get comments and like actual constituent work from Facebook. I would have never thought that'd be eight years ago. You know the fact that most people didn't even necessarily email in the same way they do today, we've kind of gone through this blip where for a while I would get tons of email, communications, now how long have you been in the legislature?

CM: Since 2000.

RV: Oh so you're about the same as me, so you've seen the blip up and down. So for a while it was tons of emails. Now you still get emails, but there almost all form based. It's not Robin sitting down, calling his legislator, it's he's a member of Greenpeace or the NRA and they say write your legislator. Well, that's not the same way of communicating. And I've noticed it myself, because when I got elected the very first time, my predecessor took every single contact to her office and she would call them back personally. So I started the exact same thing, so every person, whether it's an email, fax or phone call, they'd look up the phone number and I'd sit in my office and I would dial them back. In the beginning, the vast majority of people who I called knew why they called me, they had a reason and they understood it. Now when I call people back, well over half don't even remember emailing me. Well, that's because there part of this form system. So I think now people have morphed into the next phase which is no longer using communication by electronic means but it's the social media side. It's the social media side. They follow me on Facebook and they *follow* me on Facebook. You know, they say 'geez I saw you at an Eagle Scout ceremony.' It's kind of creepy, you know, because I don't even know the people, but because they're my Facebook friends people develop this relationship that's so much more intense than I ever realized before. Part of it is, Paul Ryan in this whole immigration debate, it's interesting that Facebook has a way to convince people of things that I don't think they would have naturally have believed. So on the left, people say I suck. So that without ever knowing me, talking to me or listening to my voice, they think I suck. Same thing with people and Paul Ryan on the

other side, people who have voted for him, given him money, whatever, they get

Facebook information or social media information that says he did x, y or z. Rather than

saying I trust this person, I've known him for 10 years, they take this Facebook

information as if it's totally fact-based. Most of the time it isn't. So how do you

overcome that? It's really hard, because they feel like they have these relationships with

you that are so much more intimate. But at the same time they're not deep enough, so

they switch just like that when they get new information. So it's a real challenge,

because you have to use the social media side, but I don't know if it's necessarily for

better or for worse.

CM: So you're talking about two sides of the same coin. You have people who are your

followers, who are your arch supporters of you, and you're able to break through without

a filter. But then there's the other side who may not like what you're doing

RV: And they have no idea. And that's the problem. We get our e-update and I don't

know it goes out to 10,000--20,000 people, I don't know how many people, a lot. So we

try to get a broader means of communication out, but for the most part what we've

realized, and I always tell people I don't know what TV stations you watch, I don't watch

much TV, but if I watch TV at night it is usually MSNBC. Now people say why aren't

you watching Fox? You got to watch Hannity and Bill O'Reilly and Greta's at 9 and

people know the whole calendar on Fox News. Well I already know what I think. I like

to be challenged. I like to be told you're wrong and let my mind work and say why.

Most people don't do that anymore. So it's frustrating to me when I try to communicate

to folks, they kind of dropped this idea of having a reasonable conversation, people fall

back into the platitudes where they are. So in Racine County I became friend with, he's

kind of disgraced now, his name is Gary Becker, he was the mayor who had the sex

charges. We knew each other before he ran for mayor, and we started this thing on

Fridays, the first Fridays where all the elected officials from Racine County would get

together and have a beer. Democrats, Republicans, local elected officials, city council,

county board, we got to know each other. And it actually was really positive. I got to

know people who didn't know who I was, I didn't know who they were, and you became

almost friends, friendly, because we had similar interests. You know, you're wrong, I'm

wrong, whatever. And then a blogger started to come. And the blogger began to report

on this group and what people would say and literally within a month we never met again

because the opportunity for people to get together and maybe challenge each other, or

have somebody say "you know, I really hadn't thought about that, about gay marriage,

maybe that's something I should look at." Now all your supporters believe you've been

infected, that you can't be pure, and that's what's frustrating to me. Because like I said,

I'm not right on every issue, nobody is, but people think they are. That's why I think

social media is the way you have to communicate. But it's gotten to the point where all

you do is reinforce what you already believe. It never challenges you on your own

beliefs because you're only communicating with your friends. I'm sure you've read the

book *Bowling Alone*, that exact concept, I see it every day. This is like the pinnacle of

Bowling Alone. It's bad enough you live in the neighborhood and you only have friends

there. Well now you only communicate with people on same side, with same TV station,

watching the same You Tube link, you know, all the way down. So I think it's just

isolated our country more, which I think is so ironic because Facebook is supposed to be bringing people together and I think it does. You know I see stuff about my cousins in Texas that would have never known about them because of Facebook. But on the political side I think it does the exact opposite, which is to drives wedges between people where you pick who to listen to and you never even know what the other side thinks. And it's sad because I thought about myself, "Should I like all the Facebook pages of the Democrats, Should I ask them to be my friends?" I wouldn't have a problem with that, but people judge you by who your friends are too. Even this whole thing with Steve Krieser, who I think is not, I've known Steve, he was a staffer, you know, he was an intern when I was a staffer in the late 80s. He should have never gotten into a debate on Facebook, number one. Number two, probably not doing it with a Democrat. And saying something stupid, number three.   So you've kind of done three deadly sins. The fact that he was debating with them, people look and say you're stupid. That's kind of the world we're living in. You're only supposed to talk to people who agree with you, and that's what's reinforced all the time.

CM: OK, that's interesting. You just walked through my second question which was benefits and negatives…

RV: Like I say, for a primary voter, which obviously as you know we have a fair map, which is good for the legislature, but at the same time people are worried about their primary as much as their general so it allows you to communicate with half, well, with one portion, of the electorate who is important, who is going to win you your primary,

but then you don't use it as much for the general, that is the interesting part. So it helps you with part of your job but not all of it.

CM: Do you see Facebook and Twitter differently, or do they kind of serve the same purpose? And so your office, one of the questions was: "What is the most important reason your office has a Twitter site?" It was "Connect with people on session days to highlight the governance process and how legislation will impact people."

RV: Yup.

CM: And then for Facebook, it was a similar response but it was "Advancing caucus goals and highlighting conservative ideas"

RV: Yup.

CM: So it seems a little different, so do you know what's driving that? Why Facebook is more about driving your message and…

RV: (Inaudible) friends, so I basically allow people to be a follower, so let's look at my Twitter feed, here you can see it. If you look at who, and let me bring this up here, I do @RepVos and the staff do @SpeakerVos…

CM: That was one of my other questions…

RV: So you look at people here. Almost all of the things that mention me on this site are Democrats attacking me. So here's BlueCheddar, here's the Girl1, whoever these people are, Cognitive Dissonance, you know, Chris Liebenthal, you kind of look at all these, so these are all the people who mention me on Twitter, it's all Democrats bashing me. They have the ability to do that because you can just list my Twitter handle or whatever you call it, you know, my Twitter name. You can't do that on Facebook. So this allows for much more of the potential to have people bash you than on Facebook. They probably do on Facebook but not nearly as much because you can't tag people. So it's just a different way to use it and think that's why, you know, I think it's a shame. I use Twitter myself for news. (Scrolling through his Twitter feed) I follow Politico, I follow Roll Call, I mean these are the sites I follow, you know they're almost all news, Jessica Arp, whatever, for me it's the way to get news, which I think is very useful, Drudge. Facebook is a way to connect with people individually. I don't go to Facebook for news. I don't go to Facebook for information, I shouldn't say information because that's too vague, but you know that general feed, it's more for what's my family doing? What's my college roommate doing? What are people who I know through politics, what's happening in their life when I see them so I feel more connected? Then the only time you see my name on your phone is when I'm calling for money or when I see you at the one political event a year ago to. So it's like, oh I see your daughter got married, you know it's way to stay more personally connected. Twitter's not for that, at least not for me.

CM: OK. Do you use social media differently now that you're speaker?

RV: Um, yeah, I'm much more cautious. Because even today, so I read this article about how somebody rented their house out for Section 8 and these people just totally trashed it, ruined the house. And this guy made the case that they couldn't get them out of there, and they trashed the house by the time, because the government wouldn't let them do it. That's what I sent out today. So here are the responses, right. "Both parties are beyond the pale, we need to do things to change are redistricting process." I have no idea why that's out there. This BlueCheddar, "(inaudible) usually shares videos of sexy women and fast cars, need I say more." You know, that's not the point. But here it gets down to the point where instead of saying "I wonder if this is something we should look at as a policy discussion?" It almost 100% of the time becomes personal. That's counterproductive. I try to never be personal. Even before I had this, I never was personal. But the one thing I realized is I try to be cautious because I realized whatever I say, people on the other side are going to take it and extrapolate it into, like that. I didn't know what the guy posted on other days because I'm interested in this one story I put out there where maybe we should change the way we do government housing. The fact that he put sexy cars, fast women, whatever. Do I care? I don't care. But that's the world we are living in where instead of debating the topic and saying should we change housing policy, should we deal with Medicaid this way? It almost always becomes personal because somebody can sit in their pajamas, never see me, never talk to me, never have to answer to anybody and just put out crap. So that frustrates me. So I guess that's why I'm so much more cautious, because I know we're a target more than ever before. The other side, part of me thinks should I care that there's one person in Eau Claire who puts that out there? But you can't help it. You just can't help it.

CM: OK. On kind of a related note, do you use social media, did you use social media differently when you were in the minority?

RV: Yeah, I mean it's so weird to say because everything changed so much after Act 10 and the whole melee. It's kind of hard to remember. We used social media, but I really think, I don't know the numbers for Facebook but it seems like Facebook wasn't that big a deal when we were in the minority even, doesn't it?

CM: I remember Twitter being big.

RV: I started that. That was '09. But really it was just me and a couple people and even then after that I think it became bigger after that and it seems like Facebook was kind of on a similar trajectory. I don't even remember even having a Facebook page during that whole thing. Am I sure I would have put a whole lot more stuff out? I don't think so. At least I don't think we used it the same way. Because I'm pretty sure, I didn't have a press secretary when I was in the minority. I only had Jenny and Janine. I'm sure we didn't use it as much, just because we only had two staff people. You know when you're in the minority you have to be jack of all trades versus now when we have one person who does just that. I use it a lot less now. Now if I were in the minority today, would use it more? Probably. But once again, all I'm doing is communicating with people who already agree with me, so I'm reinforcing the accurate or inaccurate stereotypes that are already out there. So I guess that's where I look at it, social media does nothing more than rile up

people who already agree with you, same as what these Tea Party rallies do, same as the Solidarity Singers. They're kind of parallels. All you are doing is going to an event to look at other people who agree with you, not hitting any new people, convincing them to join you. I think a lot of times that's what social media does. We've got to work harder to get people to join. Now I went to theses social media classes at one point, somebody said and the Obama administration, the campaign was really successful at this, getting people who do the seven minutes a week of politics and getting them to care because Robin cares. They join me in caring because of the whole ability to have the social contract of acceptance. That's true. That's true. But I think we're not very good at reaching out. What we do is we reinforce. And that's where I think sometimes social media hurts the political process because we forget we're supposed to convert not just preach.

CM: OK. Have you encouraged other members of your caucus to use social media?

RV: Oh yeah. We have tried to get everyone to have a Facebook page. We have tried to get them to do YouTube videos on occasion, stuff like that. Some naturally want to do it. Some have no interest whatsoever and they just don't get it. But everyone communicates in their districts in different ways. But we try. We have focused on Facebook. I don't know if everyone has a Twitter feed. What have you found, most people have a Twitter feed?

CM: Facebook is more prevalent.

RV: Yeah, that's what I'd think.

CM: It seems that members have more personal pages and not necessarily legislative pages.

RV: Yeah, and the hard thing is, even for me, you know, the way Facebook runs it, you have to like a page and it doesn't automatically appear in your news feed. Kind of defeats the purpose, right? So I don't do much, actually I should do more. But on my personal Robin Vos page, because we have the policy now where they can't go to it post things, it's only me. And you have your official page, where they can post stuff too. But I look at the reach, it's 700 or 800, versus I know I have 4,000 friends who will see it on the other side, but (inaudible). But I think more people aren't using it the way it should be, even the people who have a Facebook page. It's like our own caucus. I don't know how you guys do it, but I try to convince everybody you have to send out an update every week. Some people do it once a month, well what do you get if you get it once a month? Nothing. People have to see your name and have it front of them all the time. So we're trying to get people to do the Facebook page but it's not been as easy as I would have thought.

CM: Do you think some members might have concerns, as to what you said, what you put out there can be manipulated and…

RV: Yeah, it's possible. Yeah maybe they don't have the complexity to understand the difference that on a page like a "like" page, you can't manipulate it. You're putting your own stuff out there they can look at it as they choose. I'm assuming it's nothing more than you're putting out in your press release and your e-updates so people can get to it. But yeah I've heard that and have had that discussion with people. It's just they don't get it. But that's alright.

CM: Just going back really quickly on what you decide to Tweet or post, I mean is it just kind of the news of the day or do you have an overall…

RV: There's no grand strategy. They (his staff) might, they might have that. But for me it's mostly, you know I've been a Republican activist since I was 10. My first campaign was 1978. I worked at a county fair every summer. I'm kind of a political geek. For me I like to read all that stuff anyways so when I Tweet something out it's usually because I think it's interesting enough that I'd want other people to read it. I don't do it more than a half dozen times a week. You know because I don't want to be bombarded by other people's crap. So I try to limit myself to say this is actually worthwhile. Other than the strategy of, you know, I have made a decision, though, that I don't necessarily try to challenge people's perceptions. So for a while I would treat things that, you know, maybe the Republican party should look at this or they should look at that and then right away I get people coming back saying, 'geez it sounds like you're a RINO.' All I'm saying is maybe it's something you should look at or consider. So people can take that single Tweet and try to turn it into something that's nefarious. So I'm just more cautious

to not, in a social media context at 140 characters it's pretty hard to convince your… to convey your entire thought process, so I try not to…which is sad but it's the way it is.

CM: What kind of feedback have you gotten from constituents or lobbyists or interest groups about social media? I mean you kind of touched upon that…

RV: Kit, my press secretary, is constantly telling me to do more pictures because that's what people look at. I guess that's true because I do the same thing on Facebook. So I try to do that. So I have, it's weird that, when I was a kid I will never forget that I was so excited because I got (inaudible) autograph. Now remember that's how geeky I am. I look at it now and think that everybody is so connected that that level of specialness. Well that's not a word. But I mean that level of feeling something is important has diminished because people are so connected they see what you're doing all the time that they…it almost becomes, you know, old hat I guess. I don't know how to put it. That's the challenge I think we have. I want people to know what I'm doing. And my supporters know. They're good. They know exactly what I'm up to, but they know that from a lot of sources…not just me. They know it from talk radio, they know it from bloggers, you know, the newspaper. So more than anything it's, if you're politically interested you are so educated, you know, rightly or wrongly, you get to have an opinion on everything and you get to judge everything. So that's the one difference I've really found.

CM: In wrapping up, is there anything else you'd like to add?

RV: No, not really, other than the fact that it's interesting how there are probably other websites and there are probably other avenues like Instagram. Okay, I never use Instagram. There's a million different political tools people could utilize, but for the most part it's just Twitter and Facebook and I wonder if they hit where that's just the accepted means like email is or will there be new technology that come out where some brand new (inaudible) that I don't even know yet will start doing x, y, z and that will be the new way everybody communicates and I don't know. It seems like, I don't know how much more intrusive social media could get besides these videos, like YouTube. I think we're at this pinnacle where we need to figure out how do we utilize it in a way that's productive to helping people get to answers as opposed to using it as a mechanism to just throw crap out and never get the feedback in to say, is it god or bad or is it a solution or is it not? I guess that's the next phase. I think social media needs to go to show it can be a problem solver. It seems like the Obama administration allows people to get so many people to sign a petition they're forced to address an issue or problem. I don't know, just getting 50,000 people to say they want you to talk about something does that mean you should? I don't know, that's why I think we want to go in a way where we involve folks but I worry that it's all so superficial that it doesn't result in anything more than a press story, a media contact, a very meaningless interaction and I want things to be deeper, I want them to be more thoughtful. If this is the only way we're going to communicate then we're certainly not going to be more thoughtful in the future, because you can't do it in 140 characters or with a Facebook post. So that's what I'd say and I don't know how we get there but we'll see. A maybe your paper will show that.

APPENDIX E

**Interview with Assembly Democratic Minority Leader Peter Barca (D-Kenosha)
and Melanie Conklin, his Communications Director
Wisconsin State Capitol, September 11, 2013**

CM: Generally, big picture why does your office use social media?

PB: As a means to enhance our communication. We know that not all young people pick

up a newspaper anymore. We know that people get their news and their information from

a wide variety of sources. And increasingly people of all ages are getting their

information from social media, but particularly younger people disproportionately get

more information from social media. So it's too reach out to all groups, but in particular

you get the younger demographics because we know that senior citizens tend to read the

newspaper and aren't on social media. My mom would be Exhibit A.

CM: What do you see as the positives of using social media, and the counter to that, what

would you see as the negatives?

PB: Well, the positives are that you can get a message far and wide through using social

media. In fact, I gave a speech to journalism students in Whitewater about a year ago, and

I was telling them about how fortunate they were to be in this era. Because if you work

for, say, the Racine Journal Times, years ago only the 25,000 people who subscribe to the

Racine Journal Times will ever see your story and other people sharing it with their

neighbors or something. But now, because it can be picked up and put on social media,

your story in the Racine Journal Times can reach hundreds of thousands of people across

America and maybe an equal number across the world. So I was saying how much more powerful information is today because of social media. And that's the upside that we can help people to understand. In a time when transparency in government can never be more important, we can achieve that transparency and help people understand they have a stake in what we do on their behalf in public policy. Detriment? Then only detriment I can see to social media is that it's much easier for people to bastardize the message, misquote things, repost information with leaving out parts of the information. That would be the only downside. I could see that you have to more cautious and monitor it. Be aware when you bring things up that that could actually happen.

CM: OK. Next one is do Facebook and Twitter serve the same purpose for your office or so you use these differently?

PB: I would say that more extensively, well I can't say this. Personally, I more extensively use Facebook. Now Mel Twitters for me so I don't even look at what she Twitters. Look at the confidence I have in her. I have no idea even what I say on Twitter. To be frank, I think there's a different purpose to the degree that Twitter is much more immediate. It's more like whet people's appetite for a more detailed information that we can put out on Facebook and press releases and follow-up stories. So if you're just trying to get my reaction, that's what it would be. She can probably give you a more sophisticated answer. Am I roughly on board?

MC: No, absolutely. I think we do use them differently. One of the big things for Twitter, in the way we do it, is to get things to reporters without saying, "hey, here's press release," where they feel like they're being fed something. Because all the reporters follow you and follow me, it is a way of actually impacting stories and coverage of an issue. And not that Facebook can't do that, but Twitter is the most immediate way to do that. We also do the same things we do on Facebook on Twitter, written differently with the links. So there is overlap.

CM: How do you decide what to post? Is there some grand strategy or is it day to day what happens to be in the news that fits…

PB: I would say it's a little of both. I'd say what's in the news, what's hot, is part of what we put forward. But, of course, the other side of it is that we've got a certain theme we're looking for. So we're looking for things, specific items in the news, to enhance that broad message. So it's not just happenstance. There's hundreds of stories in the news every day and we're not posting all of them. We're posting specific ones that sort of fit our overall themes and message…that we're trying to help the public understand about what their state government is doing and why they have a stake in paying attention and being involved and being active citizens.

CM: Who is the intended audience or are there a number of audiences that you're shooting for?

PB: I would say that you know, you're trying to, there's a number of audiences let's start with that. You're trying to get connectors, I think is that what they call them. I'm trying to remember what book that is, maybe the Tipping Point. People that connect with other people. And obviously you're trying to get people who care about public policy and care about their state and the direction we're going in, so, and then, of course, people who are influencers. So they are the media and they are the people who are helping to move public policy.

CM: Just touching on quickly what you said earlier is the audience different for Facebook as opposed to Twitter? You (Melanie) said Twitter is useful for reaching out to reporters.

MC: Primarily it seems our Twitter audience is more connected and a lot of stuff gets retweeted, and I don't know exactly who that goes to, but a lot of the people I see, between the reporters, the bloggers and the highly connected insiders, people whose names most of us probably see and know. And then when I'm on either one of the Facebook pages I see a lot of posting, commenting, discussing, which is something that doesn't happen on Twitter and, in general, those are not necessarily names I know. They are your constituents, people who are interested in politics, but they are not familiar names. So there I think it's more (inaudible) and interested parties.

CM: I know the answer to this one, but I'll ask it. Have you encouraged other Dem offices to use social media?

PB: Yes, very much so.

CM: Do you have any thoughts on why some members might use social media as opposed to others?

PB: Well, I think one is, depending on how social media savvy they are, obviously people who are more savvy to it and understand it are much more inclined to utilize it than those that really are not. That's why we've done some training and are doing more training coming up, with the idea of helping people understand the power and the value of it and understand how to appropriately utilize it. Even people who have their staff do it and don't do it themselves. Now Twitter would be a perfect example for me. I really don't know how to Twitter. I don't follow it. I probably should. I probably will in time to come. Just with time being short, there's only so much you can do. As a consequence, part of it is your own comfort level. I at least understand the value to ask my staff to do it. I think it can be more effective if the members themselves understood that.

CM: Have you gotten any feedback on social media use from constituents, lobbyists, media?

PB: I regularly get feedback from people. I can't go anywhere without people saying I read your posts all the time and thanks so much for keeping us posted and aware of what's going on. So yes, tremendous feedback that way. And, you know, they're pretty

extensive in that we have 5,000 followers for each of my pages so there's a pretty broad range. I'm sure there's some overlap, not completely so.

CM: Lastly, open ended, is there anything you want to add about the topic in general?

PB: No not really.

MC: One thing I think would be interesting, and I would be curious in what you (Peter) have to say about this, too, is the difference between the job I do now versus when I did it for (Madison) Mayor Dave (Cieslewicz). Not having anything to do with the office, city versus state, but there wasn't really Twitter or really Facebook. That was early 2000. A short time ago you were counting on a third party to take your words and move them on. Now you're able to actually craft your message and send it directly to people. It's interesting for me as a former reporter to watch that reporters become part of a mix. But it's no longer from Peter Barca to (Wisconsin State Journal reporter) Mary Spicuzza to Citizen X. Sometimes now it's Peter Barca straight to Citizen X. Or sometimes it's through there or all over the place. It's creating a very different pattern of communication and it also allows you to be very straightforward, but that ties back to what you (Peter) said. But sometimes the message, the people who are on social media will say anything and there does not seem to be the same standard as held by professional journalists of libel and accuracy. So you know, it's good in that the message is unfiltered and the negative is that people feel free to say anything and there's some kind of anonymity, even though there's not.

PB: Very few people are like (Sen) Glenn Grothman, who is willing to say the same

publicly just the same as they are on social media. Most people have a lot more restraint.

MC: It's whole different conversation. I like it, but it's interesting.

APPENDIX F

**Interview with Rep. Mary Czaja (R-Lima) and Emily Loe, her Legislative Aide
Wisconsin State Capitol, September 16, 2013**

CM: Generally why does your office use social media?

MC: I think it's a great way to connect with constituents and it is the trend. Everyone is on Facebook, demographically from young people all the way up to, I have cousins that are in their seventies and eighties that have Facebook accounts. And that it gets the word out that way. It's kind of feel good marketing, you know where it's not always about all the issues, where you're at, what you're doing. It gives your constituents an idea of who you are as a person, not just a legislator.

CM: What would you see as the positives of using social media and then the other side, the negatives?

MC: The positives, again, would be letting people see who you are as a legislator when you interact with family, friends, constituents back in the district. Your activities, your hobbies, whether you're a golfer, a hunter, a fisherman, it makes you more of a person. The negatives are you never have down time. I mean you don't get to have a personal life. You know if you've got a birthday with the grandkids and cake, everybody's, you know, you're always, if you post your personal family things you're also, you've never got time to be just a grandma. You're still a legislator. So it kind of takes away the personal side of your life, but the positive is it's very humanizing.

CM: You mentioned (before the interview started) that you're just learning how to Twitter. So I Know you don't have a legislative Twitter account for your office, so the question was do Facebook and Twitter serve the same purpose or do you use them differently? But I think you're only using Facebook right now.

MC: For the legislative office we're just giving Facebook. I do have a campaign Twitter account. I think Twitter is blurbs about issues. Where Facebook is the person as a whole, who you are, what you're doing. And Twitter is more like keeping in touch with what bills you're following, issues you're watching. Not so much the personal, more the business, if I relate it to the business world.

CM: Do you think the audiences are different for Facebook as opposed to Twitter? Or do you think the people who follow Twitter are the same as the people who follow Facebook?

EL: I personally think Twitter is more news-driven or more issue of the day driven. As Mary mentioned, with maybe more elderly constituents, or friends of the family, Facebook has more of the photo interaction, things like that. I thinks that's been helpful, them seeing Mary at a groundbreaking ceremony or here's Mary in a committee hearing, things like that I think has the visual impact.

MC: Or on weekends at a snowmobile event or Boy Scout event. I agree. Where Twitter is…

EL: I think it would be worthwhile to expand into that (inaudible) kind of a different medium.

MC: And it is a learning curve. I'm 50. You know the whole Facebook issue and social media. I do use it in my insurance agency to a certain extent, but it's still a learning curve. It's very generational to a certain extent.

CM: How do you decide what to post? Is it issues of the day or do you have some kind of grand strategy where you think about "we're going to post certain thing about certain issues?"

EL: I will say there have been times when Mary attended a specific event in the district and she'll say please make sure you put that photo or mention I was there or say congratulations again to that constituent. Other times items of interest to the office. And I actually do try to vary it where sometimes serious on points and here's a piece of legislation that's relevant. Or other times, Joe and Sally were named maple syrup producers of the year, congratulations. (The point is) to have some kind of variety to attract a wider audience

MC: That's kind of a good question, maybe we should have an outline. But it's kind of a fly by the seat of our pants strategy.

CM: Who would you say, and I think you kind of answered this in your first question, but who would you say is the intended audience for your social media use?

MC: It's the constituents and potential constituents, other legislators. I think one of the things, you know when you're in the private sector and networking is huge amongst your colleagues. Sometimes party politics takes, you don't really learn who a person is. Their party lines get driven, or events happen separately. This allows not only your constituents to see what you are, who you are, but also maybe colleagues and narrows that gap of, it humanizes us and not just makes us Rs and Ds.

EL: I would say, too, like Mary mentioned about the (inaudible), having lived in the same community she was born in her whole life, worked there, it's 3,000 people, fairly close knit. I think still being accessible once you're elected. They don't get the misconception that, well, she's gone to Madison and she's a separate (inaudible). It shows there's still an open door and another avenue of communication.

MC: That's a very good point, because there's times when I go back to events and people are reluctant, they look at me like are you still Mary? Or are you Representative Czaja? So it does, that's a very good point. It kind of breaks the ice, and lets them know you're still working in the garden or doing whatever, you're just a person.

CM: Do you have any thoughts on why some legislators would use social media and some would not? I have found that roughly half, maybe a little more than a half, of Assembly members use Facebook.

MC: I think it's a comfort zone, like than anything else. It's what you're comfortable with. I do think that some people feel that Facebook is way too personal, way too much information is out there so they do shy away from it. Like some people advertise on the radio and some like newspaper and others use direct mail. I think it's whatever that comfort level is. Because basically that's what you're doing. You're advertising who you are.

EL: I wonder too, and probably you're data would bore (sic) this out, it might depend not just on the chronological age of the legislator, but how long they've been here, their term in the building. Maybe if they've been one way since 1994, it's hard to adjust now and say, well, they all know me and I see them down on main street, why do I need to race to that new thing?

CM: Actually part of my study is taking different variables to see if you can predict whether a legislator would have a Facebook page or not. One of them is how long they've been in office. So we'll see how that turns outs.

MC: Because no matter what your background is, walking into his building, leadership

really does agood job of directing you and trying to make you successful. The newer you are, look at (Rep) Dean Kaufert and myself. Dean's been here forever, he knows what he's doing, he's got his ways of doing things. I'm clueless, so I'm going to defer more to leadership and they're saying do this, this, this and this is very good. You're right. That has a lot to do with it.

CM: What kind of feedback have you gotten from constituents or even interest groups about your social media use?

MC: I don't think we have.

EL: I think given the little more rural district it doesn't have as many followers per se as someone like Speaker Vos. But I know people comment on it. Of course, there's the feedback (on Facebook). How many people see the photos, spread them around amongst themselves and the people who know Mary. There was a community event where AT&T presented a grant to a local school, so she posted the photo and they said thanks and shared it on their page. So it kind of has that ripple effect of giving it a wider readership.

MC: And you know that's a huge variable. Being in a rural district broadband is not as available. Some communities don't have it. You still have people who don't have smart phones. So in my district access can be limited because of technology. Where you not going to see that, like (Rep) Mandy (Wright's) district, Wausau, it's there. Or Speaker Vos, or even Rep. Peter Barca, they're not going to have a loss of technology where

people can't get it. But in the northern districts, like Rep Bewley, her and I would be in the same boat. There's just areas that are dead zones.

CM: It's interesting, I didn't even know we had a state broadband director, but we do, over at PSC.

MC: A State broadband director?

CM: They are looking at broadband access throughout the state. That was one of the things I've been…

MC: At PSC?

CM: At PSC.

MC: Did you know that Emma? We have a state broadband director.

EL: I guess no, I didn't. I know they had a symposium at Inn on the Park and things six months ago, probably somewhat their focus is, but I didn't know there was an official title.

CM: I was trying to get data on broadband access. I was able to get data by assembly district. I didn't know we had a broadband director.

MC: I think it would interesting for the Rural Schools Taskforce.

CM: I'm happy to send you the contact information if it's helpful.

MC: Yeah, that'd be great.

CM: Lastly, if there's anything we didn't touch upon or that you'd like to add about the topic in general?

MC: I think as time marches forward and it becomes more and more accessible, it's going to be a greater use for communication. Letting your constituents know a lot of the different issues and it will be interesting which ones. Because what was before Facebook? MySpace.

EL: MySpace.

MC: MySpace. We'll see if Facebook is around or if we'll have an upgrade to that and Twitter. It's going to be interesting to watch them emerge. It will become the form of communication. I do believe that.

EL: I think too it does have crossover between legislative and personal. Say, when I started Facebook I was in college, probably better part of ten years ago now. You'd go

on trips and just upload every single photo you took, and you wouldn't think twice about it. That was the album of your trip, online. Now I'm a little older and Facebook is a little different, so maybe I put up half a dozen images I took. But I'm sort of selective and you think it through. Maybe it's true for the legislature too. That you don't, to have that line somewhere between personal and political. And maybe you don't put a picture of your two-year old granddaughter or maybe you, it's not that it's negative or nefarious in anyway, you just give it a little more due diligence, I guess, than at the advent of when it was first popular.

MC: Yeah, that's a very good point. Because there is no line between personal and legislative right now.

CM: Great, thank you, appreciate it.

MC: Absolutely, good luck.

APPENDIX G

Interview with Representative Mandy Wright (D-Wausau)
Wisconsin State Capitol, September 3, 2013

CM: Generally, why does your office use social media? And this is just social media use by legislative offices not person use, not campaign use. So generally what would be then reason why?

MW: Sure, I find it a really effective way to get out information to my constituents quickly. In terms of media, so if you do the research and look on, mostly I use Facebook. For Twitter I mostly repost once and a while when I think of it. It's not a main source of information for my constituents. That's mostly reaching, I think, a few media people and some of the really hard core Dems that aren't necessarily in my district for the most part. So I don't worry about Twitter too much. But I do a lot on Facebook because I think it's a really valuable way to get out information. I pull in information around the state and then I redistribute it. I have about 850 people on my Facebook page. It's not a ton but I know I'm getting them information they would not find other places. And so when I want to make an argument about "I strongly disagree with public funding going to private schools"—it's one of my base things—I'm constantly providing reinforcement of information and articles from around the state and other voices through this medium if people want to know about it, they'll know about it if they follow me on Facebook and actually pay attention.

CM: What do you see as the positives and then the negatives of using social media? I mean you kind of touched upon the reason why using it would be a positive, but if maybe you could flesh that out with the pros and cons.

MW: Sure, so mostly the positive is that I can reinforce my positions and show greater support than me just saying it. Basically to also cite my sources. People feel personally connected. I go to an event or something and I show a picture of me and a friend, or me and my mom, or me and my kids doing something fun, and those are some of the most popular posts. People love those. People just want that personal connection. They want to feel they really know you. Some of the negatives, you know obviously it opens it up to people saying negative things, sometimes attacking you. But I've had very little of that especially as a legislator, very little and sometimes it's actually very great because there are some strong conservatives who follow me. They don't speak up about much, so I assume that's somewhat complicit. I know they're not reading everything. But I have a strong argument that they don't have a good counterargument that they want to put out there. And then when they do put out their counterargument a lot of times I can quickly refute it. Or sometimes I just leave it out there and don't worry about it. And I've also actually had some really strong conservatives start to agree with me and start to give me information from their side that support what I'm saying. Like I've had a very strong conservative send me information about Common Core in support of Common Core written by Jeb Bush. So I used that and it sent it out to the Common Core task force, and said "hey there's two sides to this issue." Some conservatives agree too. I find it really valuable. Pretty cool, pretty cool exchange of information.

CM: Alright, that's interesting.

MW: I have a couple really strong conservatives that are actually pretty loyal to me in my district, because they like how I phrase things and that I really look for information. Yeah, I take a strong stand but not if there's not good information to back it.

CM: Sure, okay. You also touched upon this, but maybe just flesh it out a little bit in terms of Facebook and Twitter, do they serve the same purpose? You mentioned that not really and does your office use them differently? So you've already answered that, but…

MW: Yeah, I mostly am the one who posts everything. I don't see Twitter as being as valuable. I think when things are happening really fast and if were in the middle of a debate or something and something kind of crazy happens and I can come up with a good one liner, and sometimes I put it on Twitter and it gets taken viral. But for the most part people don't pay much attention to Twitter. It's not as reliable. What I do like to use Twitter for is almost as a research tool to hear what other people are saying an then sometimes I take their postings (inaudible) and then repost on Facebook because I find interesting stuff people of Twitter have dug up that I want to say in a more public way that I know will get better following on Facebook, that's mostly hat I use twitter for.

CM: How do you decide what to post? Is there a kind of, do you have some kind of grand, I don't want to say strategy, or is it kind of what happens to come across that day

that catches your eye? Or obviously there are issues you're really engaged in—education issues—or if you're always keeping an eye out for that?

MW: I do usually really get drawn to education issues. I don't post anything I don't read. I don't randomly repost it because it had a good title. I'm pretty much always filtering it through the lense of my district. I know my district really well. I worked really hard on messaging in my district. I had really good local people help me with that. And I'm constantly thinking what's, ok well people are just out and out complaining about the governor here. I don't see a lot of data to support it. I can't post that. But there's some really interesting data that doesn't badmouth the governor but talks about the job gains that he is saying. That I can repost, right? Or Sportsmen United. Boy, that was interesting. And I wanted people to know, and I mean that was incredible, right? It was really jaw-dropping. So I talked about that. The open records request, open transparent government. You know. I try really hard so I don't just do hard core political stuff. I put some soft stuff in there. Pictures of my kids, beautiful day in the district. Those kind of things. Repost a night's event. United Way is having a big…you know, general community information. I try to keep it about 50/50. What people really like are the pictures of the family and then what gets reposted is that really hard hitting stuff, like if I'm one of the first people to post about Sportsmen United and how we're paying half million dollars in perpetuity for a political (inaudible) organization basically. That got reposted a lot. That got like 20 shares or something. But I can't do that all the time because that can't be my only voice. Need to be careful to balance.

CM: You're answering a lot of these as we go along, so sorry about the repetition. Who is the intended audience for your social media?

MW: for social media, (inaudible) Twitter I don't worry about it too much, in my opinion, I'm sure there's more people. And then with Facebook most of these people are in my district but there also some strong Dems who are especially focused on education, so they know I'm the source for information on education and they follow me just for that. They're not necessarily from my district.

CM: Do you have any thoughts on why some legislators would use social media compared to others (who don't)?

MW: Good question. I think part of it is the age. Although I don't see that it's just age. I guess part of it may be the media world you live in. Sometimes I feel like Madison and Milwaukee people don't quite understand how limited the information is in my district. Because what actually trickles up to Wausau in our paper and on our television stations is so limited compared to what you guys get down here. So I actually really learned a lot about state politics in 2011, what was actually happening, through social media. So I really value that as a legitimate way to communicate with people. And just because that's my background, I think I rely on it pretty heavily because I realize that people in my district can't get it again from, well, we've got public radio is the best established source of media, where they're getting real information, but you know that's like a half-an-hour in the morning (in audible). And I swear the television stations, it's limited. I'm the only

Dem for a long, long ways. So if I don't get on and say our perspective everything else is pretty slanted. And then the paper too. They print some good things, but they certainly don't get everything. They haven't even covered the Leah Vukmir thing, and I think that's a huge deal. There's just a lot of stuff they just don't cover. So if people really want to know what's happening in Madison they need to get on social media and I can give them my information. I do repost a lot of what my colleagues post too. (Rep) Genrich just had a really good article. (Rep) Barca gets good stuff out. (Rep) Jon (Richards) had some good stuff about health care. (Sen) Kathleen Vinehout's newsletters. I'll repost those quite often, especially when I think they're really good for my district.

CM: What kind of feedback have you gotten from constituents or interest groups or lobbyists about your social media use?

MW: Mostly constituents, people actually stop me in the street and say "I know more about Madison than I did before." Mean people really gush about, "holy cow, Mandy, you're putting out so much good information. I don't know how I'd know about what's happening in Madison. Lobbyists, I don't hear a lot from. I don't even think I'm connected to that many of them. Interest groups, mostly that'd be education for me, and, you know, we connect there, but it's not as huge a deal.

CM: Lastly, open ended, is there anything you'd like to add about then topic in general?

MW: For me, in my district, it's critical. It's probably not necessary everywhere. But with my 50/50 district, if people are going to know why I'm voting the way I'm voting, they're going to know why I voted against the mine. It gives the opportunity to narrate a story. I'm an English teacher, right? I really, really believe in the idea of a narrative. And that I introduce myself to people. And now here I am in the middle of the story. And they need meat. It just can't be cute pictures of my kids either, or they won't keep voting for me. They need to know what I think and why I think it. And this is the body and I'm defending my thesis. I wrote my thesis in the campaign: this is what I'm going to do. And now I'm fulfilling that thesis. I send out emails and we've knocked on thousands of doors and I do my best getting out to as many groups as possible. And I give speeches and meet people on the street. And social media is a huge part of fulfilling that thesis and letting people know how I'm following through on what I said I'd do.

Using county-level broadband access data as well as county and Assembly district population data, I estimated broadband access for each of the 82 districts in the sample. Table A.1 summarizes the data I used to calculate the percentage of people in each Assembly district who had assess to broadband, using Assembly District 70 as an example. Assembly District 70 includes parts of four counties: Jackson, Monroe, Portage and Wood. One of the spreadsheets you sent me last week listed the number of individuals in each of the 72 counties who have access to wired or wireless broadband. For this example, I combined those four categories into two: (1) no access or underserved and (2) served or well-served.[36] To calculate the percentage of individuals in each county who are served/well-served, I divided the number of those individuals in each county by the total population of that county. For example, to calculate the percentage of people in Jackson County who are served/well-served (90.26%), I divided 18,458 by 20,449 (the total population of Jackson County). To calculate the number of people in each county who have no access/are underserved, I simply subtracted the percentage of people who are served/well-served from 100%. These numbers are all represented in columns 1, 2 and 3. Column 4 breaks out the residents of each county who live in Assembly District 70. I multiplied these numbers by the corresponding percentages in columns 1 and 2 to calculate the number of Assembly District 70 constituents in each county who either have no

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[36] Unserved (Less than 768/200 kbps); Underserved (768kbps to 3 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload); Served (3 Mbps to 6 Mbps and 1 Mbps upload); Well Served (Greater than 6 Mbps download). Source: E-mail communication between author and Wisconsin State Broadband Director **Tithi** Chattopadhyay.

access/are underserved or are served/well-served. I then added the numbers in both of these columns and divided the sums by the total number of residents in the district (column 4).

Table A.1: Broadband Access in Assembly District 70							
	1		**2**		**3**	**4**	**5**
	No Access or Underserved by County		Served or Well-Served by County		County Residents	County Residents	AD 70 Residents
	Individuals	Percentage	Individuals	Percentage	Total	in AD 70	No Access or Underserved	Served or Well-Served
Jackson	1991	9.74%	18458	90.26%	20449	1,482	144	1338
Monroe	2780	6.22%	41893	93.78%	44673	30,930	1925	29005
Portage	41	0.06%	69978	99.94%	70019	8,930	5	8925
Wood	18	0.02%	74731	99.98%	74749	16,210	4	16206
						Total 57,552	2078	55474
						Percentage	**4%**	**96%**