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Title: Digital citizenship: Social media and civic engagement

Abstract

Social Media has had a profound impact on how society creates, consumes and communicates information. Social Media and Social Networks have touched everything from interpersonal communications, to product marketing, to sustained community organizing. Nowhere is this more evident than with Millennials, especially those in college. It is now accepted that millennials are more comfortable using technology as a primary source of engagement with the world around them than any other generation. College students are using social media as one of their primary methods of communication, surpassing more traditional forms of communication. This method of communication has the potential to influence their worldview as it pertains to civic engagement. Using survey data from students (n=466), this cross-sectional study focuses on a subset of factors that influence their choices of civic engagement as a function of their digital citizenship. More specifically, this paper uses a proportional odds model to examine factors associated with civic engagement among college students. It is expected that time spent on some social media platforms (such as google plus) use of certain hashtags (such as #alllivesmatter), will be positively associated with whether a college student will become involved with community issues or politics as a result of something read on a social media platform. This research contributes to larger scholarly discourses on civic uses of social media among millennials to promote civic engagement. Understanding digital citizenship, how social networking sites contributes to civic engagement will help scholars identify if social media platforms can be used as ‘levers’ to increase civic and political participation in local communities and among millennials.

Keywords: Digital Citizenship, Social Media, Civic Engagement, Students, Big Data