LEADERS OF THE DIGITAL AGE

FOOLSCAP

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Table of Contents

Masthead

Editor-in-Chief

Emilie Rose Jones

Associate Editors

Lauren Goncalves
Olivia Anderson-Clarke
Sabrina Daniele

Graphic Designer

Anaïs Trembling

Letter from the Editor

I first started considering what it meant to be a leader in the modern sense while sitting in a special Book and Media Class, "Trump and the Media", taught by guest lecturer Sam Tanenhaus. It was an academic setting, with discussion over prestigious world leaders, and yet we were using tweets as evidence. Then, it was a BuzzFeed documentary about a 14-year-old who found fame on the app Musical.ly. Next, it was Kylie Jenner being the youngest person to make Forbes' Richest Self-Made Women list, as the most successful of the Kardashian-Jenner clan at only 21-years-old. I was left with a pressing question: what is a leader in today's digital age?

As students of media, we are all too aware of how social media has changed the way society functions. Trump being elected the president of the United States is simply an amalgamation of the power of modern technologies, and it has forced all of us to consider the deep impacts that it has on our lives.
These impacts are what contributors of this journal have analyzed. As no field is left unscathed by the influence of media, we opened up this volume of The Foolscap to any University of Toronto student. Trump is a leader, social media is a leading technology, these contributors are leaders. Let this volume be a reminder that anyone can be.

Regards,
Emilie Jones
Editor-in-Chief of the Foolscap 2018/2019

Letter from Sam Tanenhaus

   I can't think of a more timely subject just now than "leaders of the digital age." The phrase itself has undergone a revolution in meaning. Only a few years ago the words were commonly used to describe innovators in the tech world, with a few risk-taking journalists and entrepreneurs thrown in. Today the term also includes some of the most powerful people alive--including heads of state. Some lead well. Some lead badly. Some mislead. The most imaginative digital leaders look to the future. A few would use digital instruments to plunge us into the past. But digital age really belongs to all of us, because in truth most of us are "followers"--in the best sense. In older times, to "follow" meant to obey. Today it means to choose and decide. The true digital leaders are ourselves.

Regards,

Sam Tanenhaus
Former assistant editor of *The New York Times* and Guest Lecturer at the University of Toronto

Hollywood Coded into Politics: A Case Study of the #USMidtermElections2018

by Katrine Czajkowski

4

The U.S Election Projects indicates that the United States' midterm elections of 2018 experienced a 49.4% voter turnout (McDonald)—the highest figures since the 1914 midterms, when voter turnout reached 50.4% (McDonald). These are also the first midterms with incomparable levels of social media activity. During the 2018 midterm elections, social media platforms witnessed a pervasive political theme. The increase in political discourse could stem from the platforms' growth in users. With an overall user increase from last year, more people interacted with social media platforms this year than during any other midterm election (Chaffey). These platforms have created new jurisdictions which has facilitated new forms of leaderships. Hollywood's active political participation was another change in this year midterm season. Countless celebrities took to digital platforms to discourage voter apathy, and some celebrities blended their own ideologies into their messages.

On digital platforms, celebrities often carry more authority than political figures because of their larger followings; for example, Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber both had more Twitter followers than Barrack Obama while he was President (Marshall). This gradual shift of celebrities into politics is not novel, but with digital interfaces a user's influence can be quantitatively measured. In social networking theory, a user that connects to different digital communities, or has a broader network, caries more influence than a user with a bigger population of the same community (Meeyoung).

This digital authority given to users has tremendous influence over the distribution of information. Therefore, celebrities might accumulate more influence because their fan-bases cover a broader scope of demographics compared to politicians. This is the reason that the political discussions in 2018's midterms were often sparked and facilitated by Hollywood's digital media celebrities; leaders of America are shifting from politicians to celebrities.

As digital realms are blurring the lines between politics and entertainment, Emiliano Treré suggests that this is developing a "fifth state" (133). But this state, one without true jurisdiction, is neither democratic, nor does it protect the best interests of people. As a societal apparatus, social media platforms do not function democratically. Mexico's general election in 2012 demonstrates that these platforms orchestrate "techno-authoritarianism" (Treré 131). Treré documents and details "the creation of false universes of followers; the use of software robots to automatically generate tweets; and the hiring of trolls (people who tweet in favour of a candidate, and against their opponent); and ghost followers (empty accounts that boost a candidate's followers)" (131) in swaying Mexican digital discourse. Treré concludes that these actions influenced the results of Mexico's general election in 2012 by disseminating false information, invigorating marginalized opinions, and dominating political conversations.

Italy's political landscape is another case study of digital interfaces interfering with political spheres. Beppe Grillo, an Italian comedian, had

been a "profound connoisseur of the mechanisms of television to capture the audience's attention" (Treré and Barassi). He riled up controversy on mainstream media outlets, so an unrestricted internet provided him with a viable platform. Grillo used a blog to construct his political persona, and the blog's popularity started the Five Star Movement (M5S). Connected by social media interactions, this digital community found support in one another with their populist and anti-establishment beliefs. The M5S began meeting in real life to discuss their collective ideas, and eventually started instigating political demonstrations. The M5S is now Italy's largest independent political party, with 32.7% of the vote in Italy's 2018 election (Henley et al). Instead of interfaces enhancing accessibility or offering healthy public discourse, Mexico and Italy are deconstructing the "mythical understandings of how digital media is supposedly magical, socially transformative and democratically empowering" (Treré and Barassi 12). Digital interfaces provide an abundance of support to radical political groups, and expand their influence across nations. This means a leader can be just about anyone, and gain traction despite their controversial views.

The exponential celebrity endorsements in the 2018 midterm elections are correlated to the substantial increase in voter turnout. But these midterm elections are not the first instance of digital activism spreading from Hollywood into political realms. The #MeToo movement demonstrates Hollywood turning digital activism into political

activism. The hashtag helped uncover generations of sexual assault by inspiring victims to confess online. In an industry that is plagued by toxic masculinity, these digital revelations dominated social media conversations. Users eventually brought the hashtag into the political sphere with the Brett Kavanaugh hearings. Even when their pursuits reap benefits for the general population, Hollywood's firm grasp on the public discourse carries concern.

Similar to the beginning of radio and television, digital media platforms had been operating with very limited government intervention, prior to Trump's presidency. Under Obama's government, the Federal Communications Committee (FCC) developed regulations to ensure net neutrality in 2015 (Wakefield). Most of the major internet providers and tech giants Facebook, Alphabet, and Amazon supported net neutrality but stated that the regulations needed revisions (CBC News). Internet with complete freedom interferes with how these companies conduct their businesses, but it also changes how citizens can access information. As of June 11 2018, Trump's FCC has eradicated net neutrality in the United States (Federal Communications Commission). The FCC believes that internet freedom will aid technological investment, which declined with the introduction of net neutrality, and that this takes precedence over access and control of information on the internet. However, the newly elected House of Representatives and Senate can influence the discussion about government regulations.

Despite the fact that the conglomerates agree with allowing Americans equal internet access, the businesses do not operate to serve the best interests of American citizens. With net neutrality now virtually non-existent, these companies will be facing new financial burdens that they might very well transfer to their consumers, both domestic and international. Media corporations are not blind to bias; several corporations govern the entire entertainment industry. These corporations are conglomerations—often vertically integrated with large technology companies. Since the government oversees their regulations, the entertainment industry will constantly have stakes in which political group has more influence in American politics.

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Join the MVMT: Advertising with Digital Network Technology

BY MICHAEL MANNONE

After dropping out of college, Jake Kassan and Kramer LaPlante wanted to design and sell stylish watches at an affordable price. Believing that the fashion industry needed to be overhauled, the two friends founded MVMT (pronounced movement) watches in 2013. In only five short years, Kassan and LaPlante's company has become the fastest growing watch company in the world with a community of over one and a half million users supporting their product. This success has allowed MVMT to sell more than just watches — sunglasses and bracelets have also been added to their collection. With this in mind, MVMT's advertisements are dominated by digital network technology. They are a company that has fully embraced e-commerce and continues to grow alongside these platforms. The purpose of this essay is to show how MVMT's use of the Internet and social media displays a change in the relationship between consumers and advertising. It will also demonstrate how their use of Facebook and Instagram allows them to be more invasive to consumers, while further establishing themselves as a fashionable brand. Lastly, MVMT's use of "influencer marketing" creates entertaining ads that are more likely to be received positively.

In the early stages of MVMT's creation, Kassan and LaPlante developed a few prototypes and secured a manufacturing company, but lacked the financial means to make their product a reality. To address this issue, the two friends started an ad campaign on the crowdfunding website, Indiegogo. Here, potential consumers are exposed to the

watches before production. If people liked what they saw, they could then make a "pledge" to help fund the product. Furthermore, "if advertising on these platforms made respondents enthusiastic or fascinated or offered them something original, new or unique, it was evaluated more positively" (Voorveld et al. 49). This is exactly what MVMT did. Their campaign featured six different models for consumers to choose from. Those who backed them would be the first people to ever own a MVMT product. For example, each watch was emphasized as having, "a minimalist look that could be worn in a casual or professional setting, the highest quality materials and price[s] less than half... [of the] competitor's cost" (Kassan). From here, people could choose to purchase one, two, or all of the watches in the collection or simply donate a small amount to stay updated on its progress. Their willingness to pay for the product would determine whether or not it would be made. Therefore, their ads put more emphasis on why the product should exist rather than why it is a necessity for consumers.

That said, Gupta et al. state that, "effectiveness of any advertising depends upon the extent to which the advertising message has been received and accepted by the audience" (18559). By looking at the results of their crowdfunding campaign, it is clear that MVMT's audience did accept the product. Though the initial goal for the company was to reach fifteen thousand dollars in pledges from consumers, they successfully raised over two hundred thousand. This shows how the

Internet was used to develop a community around the product. Kassan and LaPlante gave their product an identity that people related to — that is, modern and stylish that can be worn anywhere at anytime and should be affordable for everyone. This is evident on their Indiegogo page where Kassan and LaPlante emphasize that they, "got frustrated paying hundreds of dollars for name brand watches, knowing they only cost a fraction of the price to make" (Kassan). By giving MVMT this identity, people who share these feelings and beliefs can get behind the product as it represents who they are.

MVMT has a strong presence in advertising on social media platforms. "As a result, this form of advertising can offer advertisers unique ways to interact with users and their personal information" (Chen et al. 2127). For example, in 2014, Facebook added the ability to create a "Shop" section on a business page. In doing so, MVMT was more integrated into their consumers' lives. Realizing that people are spending more of their time on social media apps, they set up a Facebook store in order to bring their product to their customers. By having a store imbedded in a social network, consumers can purchase their products without having to leave the app. This creates a presumptuous relationship between consumer and advertisement because the ads are now virtually inescapable. Furthermore, MVMT has a partnership with Adstage, which collects all of MVMT's marketing and advertisement data and stores it in one place. It is a great contributor to their dominating presence in social media ad spaces. Ads can be tailored to an

individual so that they will be more likely to engage with it, meaning two people could receive ads for the same product, but its aesthetic would be different.

Another factor that showcases MVMT's presence on social media platforms is ad diversity and creativity. As Lee and Hong remark, "creative messages grab more attention and lead to positive attitudes about the featured products" (364). Though the watch is typically the central focus, the location in which the photo is taken varies greatly. Looking through their Facebook page, there are photos of someone wearing a MVMT watch on a beach at sunset, on a building rooftop in the evening and in an office holding a puppy. These various places represent the lifestyle that is associated with MVMT. It is presenting the watch in a mixture of luxurious and relaxing scenes, either of which can be attained for affordable prices. "Presumable, ads that can induce positive perceptions and responses among network users would likely... result in greater sales" (Lee and Hong 360). Here, MVMT is using social media sites to establish themselves as a fashionable choice. These photos try to blend in with other photos one might see on the platform so that consumers will miss the primary intention of the photo.

Recognizing their popularity, MVMT is a major player in the use of "Influencer Marketing." This focuses on a particular person who has amassed a large and dedicated following on social media. As their fan base is typically very loyal, these influencers can easily persuade their fans to

purchase certain products. MVMT is known for sponsoring various influencers who produce videos on YouTube or have podcasts. In doing so, they will have an ad read somewhere in the middle of the finished content. With that in mind, "customized advertising can... decrease irritation because messages are... personalized to deal with [the] customer's interest and preference" (Deheghani et al. 168). When an influencer customizes an ad to be incorporated into their content, it then becomes part of the viewing experience and more enjoyable. For example, MVMT sponsored YouTuber Jack Douglas (jacksfilms) on several of the videos in his *Yesterday I Asked You* series. In these videos, ad reads are incorporated into the formula of the show while Douglas tries to make comedic segues from his content to the advert. As a result, consumers are still entertained and exposed to the ad.

Lastly, "regarding source expertise, videos created by consumers were more favourably evaluated than agency-generated videos under both low and high technical quality conditions" (Lee et al. 850) Influencers are not seen as traditional celebrities. Fans often feel that they have a closer relationship with them because there appears to be direct communication through social media. This means that influencers are seen as just another consumer who is sharing what they like with a close friend. Meanwhile, ads directly from the producer do not feel as relatable because they lose a sense of familiarity. For example, on the podcast "Always Open," MVMT requires their ad reads to include a personal story with the product. This is done to

capitalize on the relationship consumers feel they have with the hosts of the show. Since fans feel like they have a close relationship with influencers, buying products from the companies that sponsor them can be seen as showing support. It can feel like a way to help them out so that they may make more content. In conclusion, MVMT's use of the Internet and social media displays a change in the relationship between consumers and advertising. This can be seen in MVMT's initial crowdfunding campaign as it shows the consumer to be depicted as an investor rather than just a customer. Thus, MVMT's strong presence in social media advertising allows it to be invasive in consumers' lives. Though a fashionable brand, they make their ads virtually inescapable with shops built into media platforms. With the use of "Influencer Marketing," a bond exists between influencers and their fan to increase product sales. With all the factors involved in using digital network technologies, the relationship between consumers and advertising has indeed changed greatly.
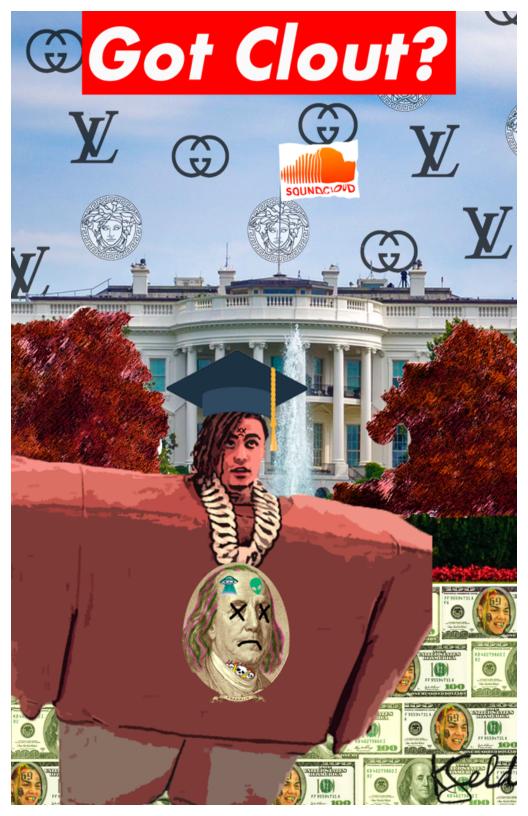
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Soundcloud Killed the Protestant Work Ethic

BY KRISSY SELDA

"At only 19 years old, Lil Pump has a net worth of approximately $9.5 million thanks to finding fame through the music streaming service SoundCloud. Lil Pump is just one of many young "SoundCloud rappers" that hold immense amounts of money, power, and influence in America. The digital age has made it easier for people to find fame and fortune in unconventional ways, which is a departure from Weber's Protestant Work Ethic that Benjamin Franklin embodied and preached to Americans. Gone are the days of hard work, frugality, and asceticism to gain respect – the digital age is all about chasing clout online and showing it off through luxury designer everything."

Got Clout?

The Modern Fireside Chat: How Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is Using Instagram to Make Politics Accessible

BY AMANDA CHEUNG

On November 9th, 2018, then Representative-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez went live on her Instagram feed to cook some mac-n-cheese, dance to Janelle Monáe, and answer questions about her recent win in the American midterm elections. Viewed by an audience of thousands, the representative of New York's 14th district broke down the process of entering Congress and outlined some of her progressive policies, such as the #GreenNewDeal, in a language and context that her followers could understand. While using social media to reach new audiences and create a following is nothing new in the digital age - an era in which Instamodels and YouTube celebrities have become household names– it is only in recent years that we have seen these recipes for internet fame being adapted to the political sphere. From former Congressman Anthony Weiner's online sex scandal in 2011 to the more recent success of Donald Trump's presidential Twitter campaign, social media is reshaping political communication as we know it. This paper will offer a historical comparison of Franklin Roosevelt's alteration of the political landscape through his use of radio, and Ocasio-Cortez's use of Instagram to do the same. Ocasio-Cortez has adapted Roosevelt's communication strategies for a new medium, highlighting the tools that Instagram brings to the realm of political engagement, such as access to large user bases, minimal censorship, and accessibility.

Adam B. Golub, a professor of American Studies at California State Fullerton, was tuned in to

Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez's Instagram feed on November 18th, 2018, tweeting: "I am completely absorbed by @Ocasio2018's live story on Instagram right now. She's cooking dinner, answering questions, and talking policy. Something is happening here that we haven't quite seen before in politics" (Golub). While other users shared Golub's admiration of Ocasio-Cortez's honest and authentic talk, this is far from the first instance of a politician utilizing new communication technologies to attract the attention of a mass audience. One such example comes in the form of a fellow New York politician on the rise in the 1920s: Franklin Roosevelt, whose popular radio broadcasts, nicknamed "fireside chats", allowed the former president to break down complicated political issues to listeners in the comfort of their own homes. Roosevelt took office in what is considered the Golden Age of Radio and recognized the potential of mass media to communicate in a direct and intimate manner with the public. At a time when almost 90% of the U.S. population had access to a radio, he, as President, would give around 30 radio addresses from March 1933 to June 1944, covering topics that ranged from the domestic economic policies of the New Deal to international concerns about Europe's battle with fascism (Biser). While most people in 2019 might tune in to the radio on their morning commute, the medium no longer captures our attention as it once did. With over 1 billion users worldwide on Instagram alone, social media has become the chief means with which we gain access to other people and

communities (Carman). More pressingly, social media has allowed politicians to engage with their supporters in a personal and intimate landscape that mimics the nature of Roosevelt's fireside chats, and, thus, fosters a sense of authenticity that instills trust in politicians.

With the invention of the radio, Franklin Roosevelt was able to speak to the American public without being filtered through the press, and the reaction to this sense of intimacy was overwhelming. For instance, the number of letters and packages received at the White House Mailroom increased from eight hundred items a day to over eight thousand, reflecting an unprecedented rise in political engagement (Biser). The similarities between Roosevelt's approach and Ocasio-Cortez's method of fostering political conversation through Instagram has not gone unnoticed. One Twitter user wrote: "It's kinda like the next generation of FDR's fireside chats. Except with peppers. And two-way chatting" (Hignett). Roosevelt's fireside chats were known for their conversational feel and simplistic language, as 70% of the words he used were among the five hundred most common-occurring terms in the English language (Biser). The informal quality of these chats humanized Roosevelt, just as Ocasio-Cortez's colloquial use of Instagram has humanized her experience as a modern politician in America. Both on the campaign trail and now in her day-to-day life in Congress, she has used her fluency in social media to make politics accessible to the average citizen. Rather than using this new medium to enter the homes of her followers, as Roosevelt

attempted with radio, Ocasio-Cortez is using Instagram to invite viewers into her own life. She has mastered what is known as the politics of "digital intimacy," a term coined by journalist David M. Perry. By utilizing the tools Instagram offers, Ocasio-Cortez allows viewers to participate in her political daily life, sharing the triumphs and downfalls she faces along the way. In her Instagram stories, she echoes Roosevelt's tactics of intimacy, treating her followers as friends rather than an audience. For example, Ocasio-Cortez uses the front-facing camera to speak to her followers to give the impression of a one-on-one conversation, mimicking the conversational atmosphere Roosevelt established in his radio chats by using the greeting "My friends," and referring to himself as "I" and his listeners as "you," as if addressing them personally (History.com). Both politics use the predominant mediums of their age in order to establish a direct dialogue with citizens. This will make them feel personally included in political life, shifting from a "broadcast diffusion model," in which information is simply presented to an audience, to a "social diffusion model," where information is spread through conversations within communities (Perry). Thus, when citizens turn on the radio or tune in to a live video on Instagram, it feels personal, rather than political.

When you click on the circular icon that links to Ocasio-Cortez's Instagram story, a video opens up that will often show the politician in what appears to be her apartment, filming herself in selfie mode, with colourful emojis and hand-drawn

illustrations plastered across the screen. To those of us who frequent the pages of Instagram, this is not an unfamiliar sight – in fact, it looks perfectly ordinary amongst a sea of updates from social media influencers. While Ocasio-Cortez is one of the first major political figures whose popularity was largely established through her online presence, celebrities in the entertainment industries have been fostering digital communities of their own since the development of social media. In mimicking these behaviours, politicians project an image of authenticity, as author Xiao Mina says: "[When] she makes ramen or mac-and-cheese in an instant pot, she's a total Millennial, a busy person. There's an intimacy that's conveyed from that that's different than what a traditional representative would typically do" (Mina and Drainville). Ocasio-Cortez has commented that she does not view social media as a press release—that is, her videos and photos are unpolished and unscripted (Singh-Kurtz). Where Roosevelt relied solely on the simple language and casual tone of his voice to establishing politics as an intimate conversation with the people, Ocasio-Cortez also has a visual aid to help curate this image of authenticity. Holding the camera in her hand as she walks around her apartment, jumping from a discussion about domestic policy to restaurant recommendations, voters are able to imagine Ocasio-Cortez living a life similar to their own and by extension, holding the same values as they do. Moreover, the chat and comment functions on Instagram allow users direct access to Ocasio-Cortez in a way that was not possible with

Roosevelt through the radio. Responding to comments and utilizing live polling features, both tools commonly used by social media stars on Instagram to interact with their audience, gives users the impression that through their interaction with the medium they may have an affect on real decisions on policy. To suggest that this image Ocasio-Cortez portrays in her videos is completely organic and unfiltered would be unrealistic. Despite casual appearances and language, Ocasio-Cortez can still decide which questions to answer, which to ignore, and whether or not to keep a video or post on her page. Similar to the plot on a reality television show, these videos are intended to feel more real than they might otherwise be. In the same way, while Franklin Roosevelt's fireside chats were fact-checked and edited by a well-trained team of speechwriters, Roosevelt would let his voice rise and fall naturally as he spoke on air in order to make the words seem fresh and authentic (Biser).

In a session on social media sponsored by the House Democratic Policy and Communications Committee, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez commented that "it's not the kitchen that's popular, or the cooking that's popular, it's that I'm engaging people doing something I'm already doing" (Singh-Kurtz). What made Franklin Roosevelt a success on the radio, and what appears to be attracting people to Ocasio-Cortez now, is not the medium or platform being used, but the efforts being made to communicate in a media environment that is familiar to the common people. Using mediums initially dominated by the entertainment industry

allows citizens to encounter complex political issues in an environment they are comfortable in, and ultimately fosters a new sense of political community through an online medium.

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Hashtag100

BY DEBBIE ZALAMEA

#love #instagood #photooftheday #fashion
#beautiful #happy #cute #tbt #like4like #followme
#picoftheday #follow #me #selfie #summer #art
#instadaily #friends #repost #nature #girl #fun
#style #smile #food #instalike #likeforlike
#family #travel #fitness #igers #tagsforlikes
#follow4follow #nofilter #life #beauty #amazing
#instamood #instagram #photography #vscocam #sun
#photo #music #beach #followforfollow
#bestoftheday #sky #ootd #sunset #dog #vsco #l4l
#makeup #f4f #foodporn #hair #pretty #swag #cat
#model #motivation #girls #baby #party #cool #lol
#gym #design #instapic #funny #healthy #night
#tflers #yummy #flowers #lifestyle #hot #instafood
#wedding #fit #handmade #black #pink #일상 #blue
#work #workout #blackandwhite #drawing
#inspiration #home #holiday #christmas #nyc
#london #sea #instacool #goodmorning #iphoneonly

"Here's a list of the 100 best Instagram hashtags for likes, according to statistics from websta.me, an Instagram analytics tool…. Bare in mind that these Instagram hashtags are the most popular overall, so you may find that some of these are less useful for your business than other hashtags."

Andrew Roach, "100 Best Instagram Hashtags for Likes" in Oberlo (02 Dec. 2018).

33

The Rise of Women in American Politics

BY ANNA YEE

The November 2018 midterm election in the United States ended with the Republicans gaining control of the Senate and the Democrats gaining majority in the House (Wire Services and Globe Staff). Even though the Republicans lost control of the House, President Donald Trump tweeted that the election was a "tremendous success" (@realDonaldTrump). Beyond the narrative of which party ultimately lost and won, there were other significant outcomes such as the record breaking number of women who won seats (Watkins). Previous numbers show that the record for the greatest number of women in the House and Senate was 107 (Watkins). However, in 2019, it is projected that a minimum of 102 women will have seats in the House alone (Watkins). In terms of the Senate, 12 women, including two who were recently elected, have seats (Watkins). Regardless of whether these women are Democrats or Republicans, this increase in representation is changing the face of leadership in America.

The lack of women in political positions continues to be a concern in many countries, including the United States, but many fail to understand why this is an issue. Research indicates that female and male lawmakers will prioritize different issues, and women are more likely to highlight policies regarding "quality of life" and "priorities of families, women, and ethnic and racial minorities" (Pepera). Furthermore, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), a non-profit organization "[supporting] democratic institutions and practices", found that women are also more

"…responsive to constituent concerns", "encourage citizen confidence in democracy through their own participation", and "prioritize health, education, and other key development indicators" (Pepera; "WHO WE ARE"). This research suggests that electing both women and men allows more concerns to be addressed due to the varying perspectives.

Lack of female representation in politics continues to be a significant issue, but there is evidence of change. When Trump was elected, many women were angered by his "policies and attitudes" and "energized by the Women's March [that occurred] after his inauguration" (Slaughter and Binda; Tackett). Along with the rise of "sexual harassment allegations against powerful men," these factors inspired many women to get involved with politics to varying degrees (Tackett; Alter). Following Trump's election, over 22000 women reached out to Emily's List, "the largest national organization devoted to electing female candidates" (Tackett). These women wanted to learn more about candidacy and ways to engage with politics (Tackett). This number is far greater than the approximately 1000 who reached out during the 2016 election period (Tackett).

The increase of women in politics was caused by the unsettling state of politics in the United States. Women realized that remaining passive was essentially equivalent to agreeing with policies that they were actively trying to fight. Events such as the Women's March only further emphasized the importance of speaking out. In addition, Hillary Clinton, who was "the first woman

to be a major-party candidate for president", encouraged "women to become more active" (Tackett). Despite losing, she created a space for women in politics that many perceived as being unattainable. Ultimately, women were frustrated and felt that there was a place for their views which motivated them to run for office and vote for other women.

Electing women provides an opportunity to thoroughly represent people's concerns. In the recent midterm election, women of various backgrounds were elected. For example, Ilhan Omar was a refugee and state legislator who was not only the first Somali-American elected into Congress, but also one of two Muslim women elected (Levin and Wong). She advocated to raise the minimum wage to $15 and "[subsidized] higher education costs for low-income students" (Levin and Wong). Another example is Sharice Davids who was one of two Native American women elected as well as "the first lesbian congresswoman from Kansas" (Levin and Wong). The varying backgrounds of these women allow them to discuss matters regarding minorities, LGBTQ+ communities, and gender. The increase of women in congress may encourage other women to speak out about certain issues because they recognize their perspectives being acknowledged by leaders they can more fully relate to. This would then inspire conversations about the impact of those issues on the country. Women support women in politics because it has the potential to form a cycle of discussion on topics that

would otherwise be pushed aside or completely silenced.

These conversations often occur through media, specifically social media, where a single tweet or post can reach millions of people at once. In terms of elections, social media is an effective way to connect with voters, and candidates can see people's reactions to certain topics (Newnam). Therefore, in this way, social media is a tool for politics. However, this tool can be used in both positive and negative ways.

Issues about women, whether it is about their rights or how they are treated, are often expressed through social media. For example, the #MeToo movement created a rift not only within the realms of social media, but also in real life. Through this hashtag, people shared sexual assault and harassment stories. However, this hashtag also became a place where people shared false stories which discouraged real victims to speak out. Even though the purpose of #MeToo involves sharing personal experiences, there is a concern of falsity. These issues surrounding women have only become more prevalent with Trump's election and presidency.

Over the past few years, Trump has had a fair amount of controversy regarding his treatment of women. Some notable comments include calling journalist Megyn Kelly a "bimbo" on Twitter after she pressed him about his supposed sexist remarks during the first Republican debate in 2015 and the infamous *Access Hollywood* video where he spoke about groping women (Cohen). More recently, in

September 2018, Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, was accused of sexual assault by Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, a California professor (Abramson). Despite these accusations, Trump expressed support for Kavanaugh calling him "very special" (Abramson). When Kavanaugh was voted into the Supreme Court, the decision was met with outrage as women gathered to protest it (Becker). There were many female senators, mostly Democratic, who voted against Kavanaugh (Merelli). However, the question of whether more females in positions of power would have affected the vote will remain unanswered. I believe if more women were involved in the American government at that time in combination with the strong voices of citizens, it would have at least put more pressure and importance on the issue. Would the FBI have done a more thorough investigation of Kavanaugh? Perhaps. Would the vote be overturned? Perhaps. Would the increase of females speaking out against such a serious issue encourage a conversation about the treatment of women? Most likely.

Donald Trump can continue to support people accused of sexual misconduct and say demeaning things about women, but now, there will be more women around him who may make him think twice.

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Making Identity Work: Performing the Networked Self in the Age of Social Media

BY TAYLOR THOMPSON

Many people would agree that the purpose of participating on social media platforms, like Facebook, Twitter, or Tumblr, is to connect share important moments, and be included in the lives of others without the limitation of physical distances. This convenience has drawn a vast majority of internet users to engage with social media platforms: it's estimated that in December 2011 alone, roughly 82% of the world's internet population had logged into a social media platform (Dijick 4). However, the effect of these platforms on expression and one's sense of self has been significant, changing the ways that users interact with others, share about themselves, ~~and~~ filter and construct the presentation of their lives. Social media encourages interactions between users through its affordances, like the ability to 'retweet', 'like', or 'react' with emojis to circulating content (Bucher & Helmond). This, combined with the emotional, and physical, distance afforded by online communication, creates a series of online spaces in which users are not only ~~just~~ managing their sense of self in relation to others, but ~~are~~ engaging in a series of performances, sometimes precariously, just to maintain the networked self (Davis; Quinn & Papacharissi).With the risk of having one's online participation recorded, archived, and therefore potentially accessible by any interested party, social media platforms have created online spaces where these performances of identity become necessary, requiring young leaders to manage multiple, 'authentic' identities - the online political self, the online professional self, the online presentable self,

and finally, the online playful self - which turns enjoyable identity play into compulsive identity work.

Managing one's identity is a process we all grapple with, whether online or offline. We intuitively understand, through socialization, that we must present ourselves differently in different social contexts. Online, we're required to manage our identities across multiple platforms, as described by anthropologist Dr. Jenny Davis in her paper, "Triangulating the Self": "In short, the identity performances of networked individuals are collaborative, multi-sited, multi-media, and multi-modal" (506). Thanks to media convergence, social media users can (and are therefore expected to) manage multiple identities concurrently across platforms while adhering to the norms and rules of the platform's culture (Jenkins, *Media Convergence*). Davis argues that users maintain these performances of selves through a process referred to as "self-triangulation", or the attempt to situate all online performances as parts of a whole, 'authentic' self. However, the plurality of performances on one or various social media platforms, such as interacting within different Facebook 'groups,' which one researcher makes note of during an interview with a student (Freitas 64), could be better understood as the performance of multiple selves, each tailored to a specific intended audience of followers. This is because these various 'selves' often clash, indicating that no attempt to self-triangulate by the user is being made. For example, socio-cultural anthropologist

and researcher Jay Owens discusses the trend of #Rinstagram and #Finstagram, which is a user strategy on the platform, 'Instagram', to separate the 'authentic', presentable online self, from the 'playful' online self. #Finstagram, or 'Fake Instagram' is one of the newer, shinier strategies for offsetting the stress of the 'authentic' Instagram performance (retroactively hashed as #Rinstagram, or 'Real' Instagram), in which users post their silly 'outtakes', memes, and occasionally vulnerable, and therefore messy, ramblings, to an alternative profile that they've made for just this purpose. Placed side by side in comparison, as Owens does, a user's #Rinstagram account and #Finstagram account will often display opposing characteristics of themselves, for example, appearing 'effortlessly gorgeous' on #Rinstagram, while concurrently posting an unflattering picture on a #Finstagram with a caption bemoaning beauty expectations. These kinds of online expressions also indicate a sense that not every 'self' a user performs adheres to their own sense of 'authenticity', and that the upkeep of at least some of these selves is a compulsive action.

The exploration of identity through different channels can be, and indisputably is, an integral part of establishing a solid sense of self. 'Identity play' is an important means of exploring faucets of the self that can lead to "revelations about the self", while also being "undertaken for fun, sport, or disruption for disruption's sake" (Phillips & Milner 64), sometimes not mutually exclusively. But although 'identity play' can serve as a necessary

function for building the foundation of self, the building of a networked identity can become laborious, as social media users seek to express themselves in the ways they desire, while still adhering to social norms and platform rules (or, 'rules', more abstractly, specifically socio-culturally imposed by surrounding users - as opposed to those imposed directly by the platform). In other words, 'identity play' stops being 'play' and starts being 'work'.

The need to maintain multiple selves online, in some (or, many) cases, selves that feel 'inauthentic' to the users, can take its toll - especially for users that are pursuing leadership positions (for example, in politics). Although there's space to argue that at least in the Western world, professionalism and politics are both suffering blows from the transgressive backlash of a deeply unsatisfied population of people, most aspiring leaders still perform their online professional self (and more social, presentable self) with the intention of adhering to conformity, 'positive' living, and just an heir of general agreeableness. In her book, *The Happiness Effect*, researcher and professor Donna Freitas describes this phenomenon experienced by young users in university, in which her interviewees describe a constant sense that their professional and social, presentable selves must reflect 'positive' living, or general agreeableness. Freita argues this expectation contributes to social media being a point of stress for young users, who are constantly comparing and contrasting their own life with the supposed 'happy'

lives of others (13-14). One of her interviewees, a young student referred to as Margaret, describes the conflicting feelings she has about social media use: "I'm not as involved on Facebook because I compare myself a lot to other people…. You can just click on other people's posts, see everything that everyone's doing, and when I see that on Facebook, I think, "Oh, they're doing all that, they're just so happy' because no one puts anything bad on Facebook" (17). Margaret makes it clear, that she understands that the 'positive' living inspired, agreeable presentations she sees online are a ruse - however, this does not ease the stress she feels about her own sense of self, online and offline. She's internalized that a key to social success is to successfully 'perform' these kinds of online selves, and her inability to do that has left her with residual feelings of being left behind. Another interviewee, an aspiring political leader referred to by the name Aamir, describes his deliberate process of curation: "Most of my tweets are pretty left-leaning, and I don't think that's going to change for a very long time, so I'm not worried about posting things that are honest ideologically…. But I just don't write a post that might make me seem irresponsible" (44). Aamir, who describes himself as a "left-leaning Democrat" (44), is deeply aware of how he represents himself online. He goes on to express how he feels this curation is necessary, even choosing words like 'dangerous' and 'risky' to describe personal social media use, citing an example of a politician who has a record of cyberbullying, which Aamir felt came back to bite

him (44). Aamir, and many other aspiring young leaders see social media use as a tool to build a personal and professional brand, and a potential source of anxiety for when their professional and presentable selves are at risk of being 'marred' by their other, less desirable qualities. However, some aspiring young leaders are not interested in appearing agreeable - instead, the intensity of their political beliefs become another performed self, the online political self.

Social media has increasingly become a space for performing the political self or flagging one's identity and affiliations through expression of politics. Social media, due to its affordances and design, is continually shaped by the participatory online culture that cultivated from them (Jenkins, *Participatory Cultures*). Because social media has come to be largely understood as a public space that accommodates the development of 'echo chambers' which provide a "limited argument pool" (Sunstein 72) of thoughts and ideas that are often reaffirming and refining pre-existing opinions, Harvard Professor Cass Sunstein argues that social media facilitates a kind of online group polarization he calls *cyberpolarization* (86). Sunstein argues that cyberpolarization shapes a user's political stance to become increasingly flattened, homogenized and extreme (68-71). Some influencers and journalists feel that this polarization of online politics has created two radical, inaccessible 'sides' for most social media users, as expressed by Andrea Nagle in her piece, *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right.*

However, these claims are largely sensationalist, and ignore the nuances of political performance online, in particular the ways that certain radically polarized online cultures come to develop in response to each other - specifically, the ways that marginalized groups have radicalized in opposition to displays of bigotry and oppressive behaviour from online influencers who have identified themselves with the 'Alt-Right'. Political performance online, however, continues to be a point of stress for social media users, regardless of whether they choose to actively participate in the online performance. Performances of politics online taken to an extreme can create antagonistic relationships with other users - even if all users actively engaged in online discussion consider themselves part of the same political 'in-group. Local activist Asam Ahmad points this out, in their experiences with *Call-out Culture*, "the tendency among progressives, radicals, activists, and community organizers to publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behaviour and language use by others", that online discourse can enable a kind of performative activism, "a public performance where people can demonstrate their wit or how pure their politics are" (Ahmad). He notes that *Call-out Culture* seems to function as a means of establishing in-groups and determining outsiders within progressive communities he's a part of, in addition to the political performance itself. In this way, users must perform, or at least maintain, an online political self to retain membership within their community, whether or not they feel the

political self they're performing reflects their personal values, or risk becoming rendered an outsider.

Playing with identity through various online selves can be a rewarding, and sometimes necessary, aspect of establishing the self. Users need a means in which they can blow off steam, experiment with new identities, or show off their accomplishments and communicate when they feel proud. However, when maintaining the networked self requires a compulsive upkeep of various identities, each designed to please a different audience, we need to consider the kinds of stresses this puts on the everyday user - and whether or not these performances are facilitating the development of the 'self' that meets their needs. Ultimately, we should be considering the effect that these identity acrobatics have on a user's emotional and mental wellbeing, as well as the relationships they initiate and maintain with others - both online, and out in Meatspace.

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