



# Franchising through Facebook

Social Media's effect on Electoral Campaigns

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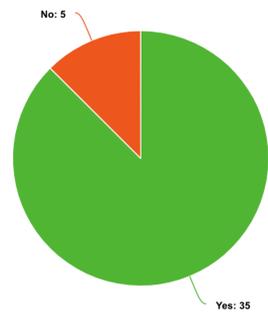


## Introduction

We interact with social media on a daily basis. According to data from DataReportal, the average American spends 7 hours and 4 minutes looking at a screen every day. Almost a third of that time is spent on social media. As Judge Wallace's term comes to a close, I was able to work alongside her during her re-election process. Seeing the inner workings of a campaign was an eye-opening experience that will continue to shape the way I see all future elections - from smaller local ones to large national ones, such as for the presidency. In examining Judge's campaign work, I noticed the large emphasis placed on social media. While I was aware of how large of an influence social media and the internet has on our lives, I wasn't aware that almost one-third of the time spent of the 7 hours we spend on the internet daily was spent browsing Instagram and updating Facebook. I wondered how large of a part the information about electoral candidates on social media - sponsored posts, opinion-based editorial, and unbiased news - plays into the average citizen's opinion of their candidates. This inspired my original research endeavor as to whether social media makes the average citizen more likely to research and vote for a candidate

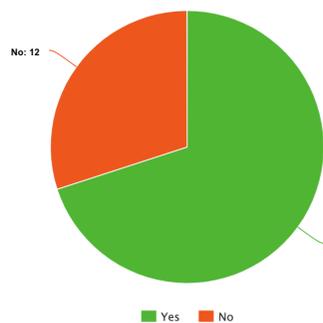
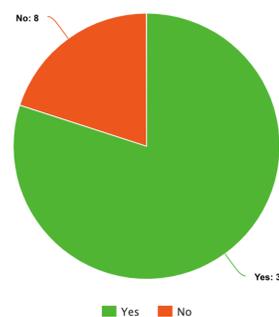
## Methodology

The investigation will consist of surveying a group of 40 adults of voting age (18+). The short and anonymous survey will be available online through Google Forms and will be used to collect quantitative and qualitative data by asking a series of multiple-choice questions and following up with open-ended short answer questions for elaboration. I believe that this will allow for information about voting practices to be gathered as well as the reasoning behind these actions



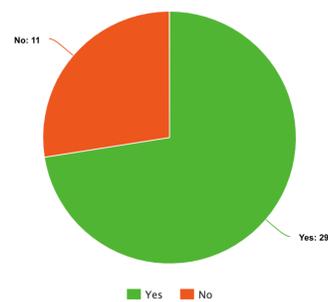
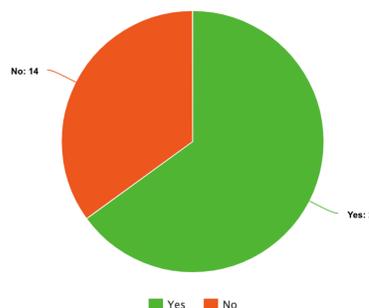
Asked if the participant felt more encouraged to vote when seeing celebrities and peers alike partake in the practice on social media.

Asked if the participant uses social media to gain information about election candidates



Asked if the participant was more likely to vote for/do research on a candidate if they saw information or an advertisement about them online

Asked the participant if they were more likely to vote for/do research on a candidate if saw others participate in discourse about them online.



Asked the participant if seeing a candidates face on social media (through any vehicle - ads, news, etc) made them more inclined to research /gain interest in the candidate

## Takeaways

I overall had huge success in proving my hypothesis. It seems as if social media has made an irreversible impact on how we gain information, especially when deciding which candidates to research and endorse during election season. It seems as though most voters feel as if social media has an impact on elections and utilize social media as a tool to learn about different candidates.

- 87.5% of participants feel encouraged to vote through social media
- 80% of participants use social media to gain information about election candidates
- 65% of participants are more likely to vote for/do research on a candidate if saw others
- 72.5% of participants are more likely to research /gain interest in the candidate after seeing their face on social media (through any vehicle - ads, news, etc)
- 100% of participants think that social media influences elections.**

## Future Research

I think there is definitely a case for further research on this particular question. In response to question 8, a follow-up question asking " Why do you think social media influences elections", many responded by talking about the echo chamber and herd mentality cultivated by the algorithm of these social media sites. With algorithms such as the one on TikTok gaining popularity, users of social media sites can be stuck in a positive feedback loop of never hearing opposing viewpoints and only receiving validation for their beliefs. This is harmful, as it won't allow others to make informed decisions as they will blindly believe the material spoonfed to them through the algorithm. Question 9 of my research corroborates this claim with 57.7% of responders citing that they DON'T fact-check information online participating in electoral candidates. This could be extremely detrimental to the future of our democracy, and further research should definitely be pursued!

## Speaking of Social Media...

Scan the QR code to view Judge Wallace's Campaign  
Remember to vote in November!

