

Heading for the 'X'-it?

How Congress is Navigating Changes in the Digital Communication Landscape

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Background (1)

- Twitter has been utilized for political communication globally
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- **What are the implications of major changes in ownership, policy, and function?**



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- Information and communication technologies (ICT) cycle and

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 - ▶ 1 Senate, 6 House

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- ② What makes Twitter valuable to Congress and has it lost value?
- ③ How is digital content made in your office?
- ④ Are any new platforms (TikTok, Threads, BlueSky) viable?

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 - ▶ content creation is highly professionalized
 - ▶ video first content requires more resources
 - ▶ other platforms are not currently viable

Quote

“Twitter was used for a lot of different reasons and for a lot of different circumstances. To monitor what members were saying, to diffuse any situations within the caucus, for message discipline, and to micro-target these markets, these seats, that we thought we could win. We used it for all of those things”

- *House Democratic Leadership, Communications Director*

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- Interest groups and other stakeholders

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 - ▶ *"You need a tool that can track the social ecosystem. TikTok and Instagram don't give you that. Twitter has that arena-like feel"*
- Retweets
 - ▶ *"The benefit of the tweets is that they can be retweeted. Remember the ultimate goal is to get this short and sweet message out in front of as many people as possible. You would post and then others would do the work for you."*

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- Established connection with legacy media
 - ▶ *"At some point, it became about, instead of "here is the agenda I am pushing", getting the attention of certain people – Trump himself, Hannity. They care about getting on Fox prime time."*

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- Text works well enough
 - ▶ *"Videos often overperformed, but the biggest performer was text only. No question about it... There's breaking news and you don't have the capacity or time to build a digital asset, some sort of visual asset around it. Speed is of the essence and you can make just as big of an impact with just text."*

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- Encouragement to try short-form video from digital staff
 - ▶ *"The conference is trying to develop a strategy for short-form vertical videos. We encourage them to do it all the time. The tension is that TikTok is where the people are, but Shorts and Reels may be more sustainable over time."*

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- Resistance to TikTok goes beyond national security concerns. Video first platforms War require more resources.
- Shifts from following to algorithmic recommendation are harder to navigate.