

# Congressional Use of Twitter

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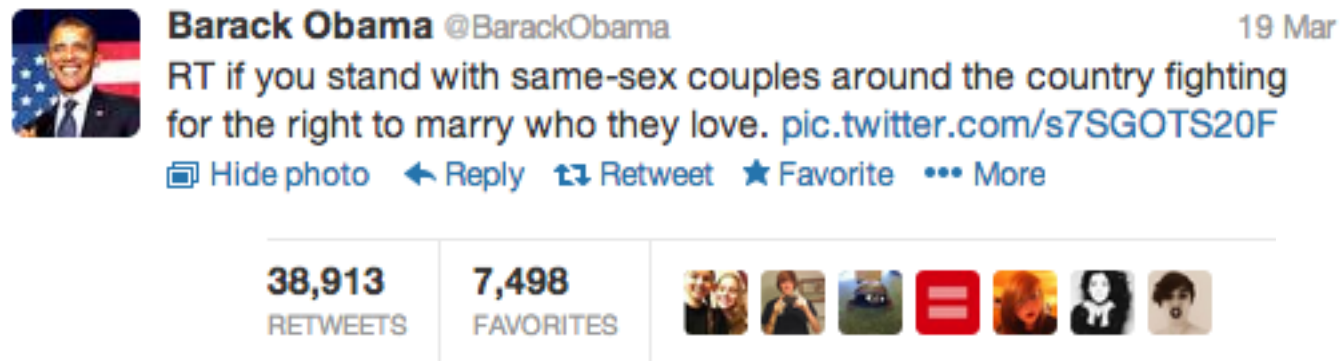
Jessica Su

# Impact of Twitter

- 175 million users [nbcnews.com]
- 471 congresspeople on Twitter
- BarackObama: 29,721,118 followers

# Research question

- How do congresspeople use Twitter?



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# More basic questions

- Does Twitter usage depend on age, sex, party affiliation?
- Does Twitter usage depend on voter demographics?

# Hypotheses

- Congressional Twitter usage may depend on the average age of voters
  - More youth => more tweets
- May depend on voters' race
  - Black people are more likely to use Twitter
    - [Pew Research Center, 2012]

# Previous research

- The advent of social media has brought on a new way of analyzing voting trends
  - Facebook, Twitter, YouTube
  - By October 2012, 98% of Congress use one social media platform to communicate

# Previous studies on Twitter

- Golbeck et al. in 2009 analyzed Twitter use by ~70 Congresspeople (~4500 tweets studied in one month)
  - Types of information contained in tweets
    - 54.7% tweets were informational (like “mini press release”) with 72% containing links pointing to longer posts
  - Congressional calendar impacts content of tweets

# Previous studies on Twitter

- Greenberg et al. in 2012 followed 408 members of Congress on Twitter and studied 30,765 tweets for 3 months
  - Types of information contained in tweets
    - 40.5% were position-taking; 25.6% were district/state issues
    - 71% total tweets made while in-session
  - Evenness of twitter usage
    - Heavy users made fewer “official” posts than bottom 80%
  - Usage of twitter over time



# What is new about our study

- Focus on overall trends, not just during election years
- Incorporate voter demographics

# Data we need

- Average number of tweets per month
- Number of followers/following per capita
- State voter demographics (age, race)
- Data has already been collected

# If we have time

- Which congresspeople are followed by the most congresspeople?
- Do congresspeople disproportionately follow people from their own party?
- Sentiment analysis of tweets
- Correlate Twitter data with percent of people who voted for the congressperson