Internet & Democracy Blog

- The Internet and Democracy Project
- I&D Tools Database

- ## About Us

INTERNET & DEMOCRACY project

Berkman
The Berkman Center for Internet & Society
at Harvard University

This is the team blog for the Internet & Democracy Project, a research initiative at the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

- ## Recent Posts

  - A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Tweets
  - Twitter sees strong growth in Russia
  - US Set to Relax Internet Restrictions Towards Iran, Syria and Cuba
  - 50 Million Tweets a Day
  - Mobile Subscriber Growth in Africa

- ## I&D Publications

  - Mapping the Arabic Blogosphere: Politics, Culture, and Dissent
  - Three Case Studies from Switzerland: Smartvote, Electronic Voting, and Political Communication
  - Mapping Iran's Online Public: Politics and Culture in the Persian Blogosphere
  - Madison and the Smart Mob: The Promise and Limitations of the Internet for Democracy
  - Digitally Networked Technology in Kenya's 2007-2008 Post-Election Crisis
  - Role of the Internet in Burma's Saffron Revolution
  - The Citizen Journalism Web Site "OhmyNews" and the 2002 Korean Presidential Election
  - The Role of Digital Networked Technologies During the Ukrainian Orange Revolution

- ## H20 Playlists

  - Tech Tools
  - Theoretical Democracy Sources
  - Internet and Democracy Sources
  - Sources from "Madison and the Smart Mob"

Presidential Election in Indonesia

July 2nd, 2009 — Scott Hartley

The summer months of 2009 have already played host to game-changing elections in the world's largest Hindu and Shiite Muslim nations, India and Iran respectively. On July 8, Indonesia – the world's fourth-largest by-population nation, the world's largest Muslim country as well as largest Muslim democracy– will hold its presidential elections.

On July 8, Demokrat party incumbent Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono will face off against the incumbent Vice President Jusuf Kalla, now the Golkar party presidential nominee, and against 2001-2004 Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, also daughter of Indonesia's first President Sukarno. Megawati is the leader of the opposition party known as Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, or PDI-P. Her controversial career soldier running mate, Prabowo Subianto, is the son-in-law of Suharto and the well-heeled founder and former Presidential nominee of the Gerinda party.
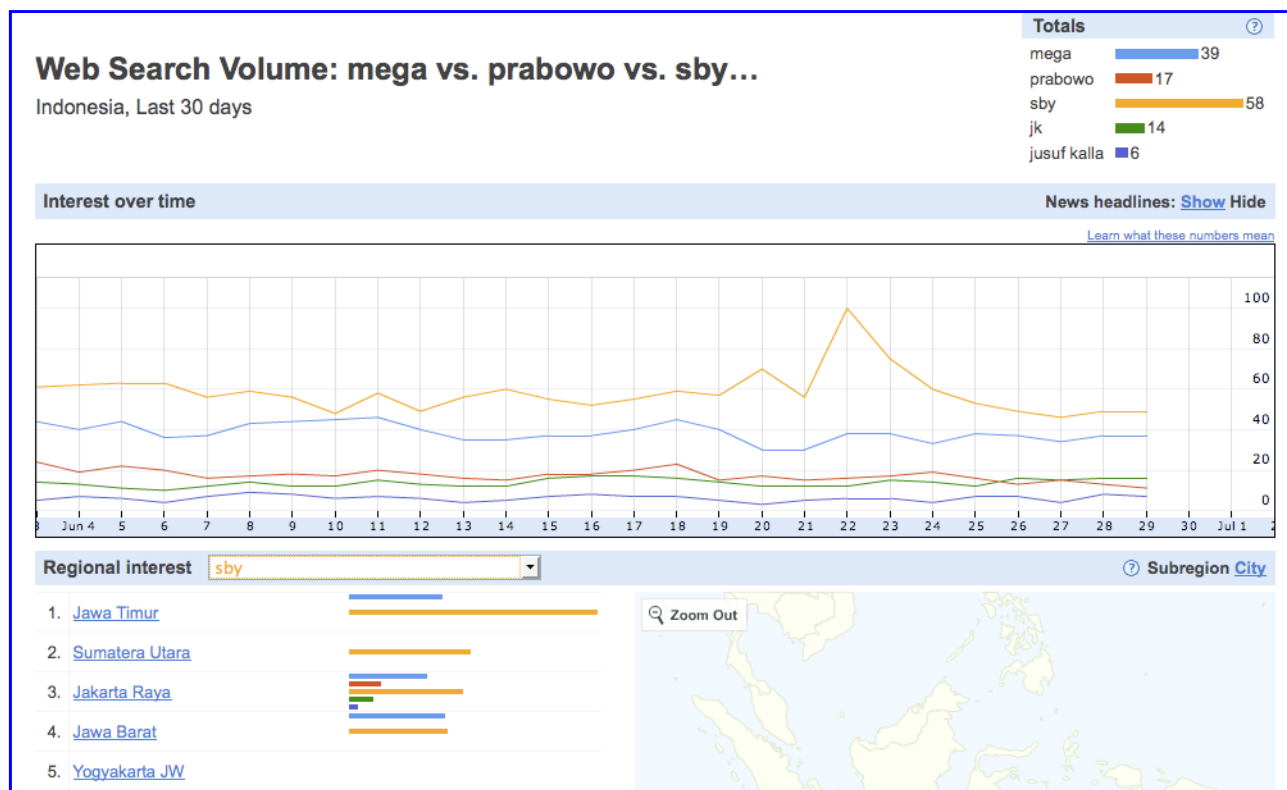
30-day domestic relative data on most popular candidate terms

While the perennial elite continues to vie for Indonesia's top office, political engagement is moving from the streets to the information superhighway. Despite religious differences, the most salient non-domestic interest in the Iranian elections came from Jakarta, where –according to Google Insights for Search– Indonesian (Bahasa) trailed only Persian as the language of choice for entering Google search queries on Iranian presidential candidates. Outside of Iran and its diaspora, Indonesian interest in Iranian politics underscores religious trans-national solidarity, and an increasingly politically active youth demographic.

Within Indonesia, primary interest during the Iranian elections of early June stemmed from Internet users in the Javanese cities of Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya, and in the Sumatran capital of Medan. Prior to the July 8 Indonesian elections, increased online circumspection in these cities could impact domestic voting patterns. Though Internet penetration in Indonesia is low, limited to 13M –or 5.4 percent of its 240M people– its use is strong in young demographics, evidenced not least by the fact that seven of the 90-day Indonesian top-ten growth Google search terms relate to Facebook or Friendster.

Indonesia is an immensely diverse and complex country comprised of a rich history, and 922 inhabited islands, each multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious. Internet penetration is not ubiquitous, its use is not widespread across demographics, and Internet Service Providers are centralized predominately in hub cities.

Even accounting for such gaps, understanding the use of new online media such as search, social networks, and micro-blogging adds a necessary –if not sufficient– layer of analytical firepower for deciphering trends. One week before Indonesian presidential elections, search volume data yields interesting information. While incumbent Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono leads by 10 points according to a June 11 poll, aggregated search on iterations of his name –"sby," "boediono," "budiono," "pd" (after his party)– show him leading by 6:1 over Megawati, and by even wider margins over former Vice Presidential incumbent Jusuf Kalla. Putative opinion in Indonesia is that "Mega" –as she is known– is out of the running. In certain regions such as Jawa Timur (East Java) "SBY" leads both in search and in political stronghold. Online "Mega" appears competitive until one realizes that predominate queries are, by "Breakout" proportions, "say no Megawati."
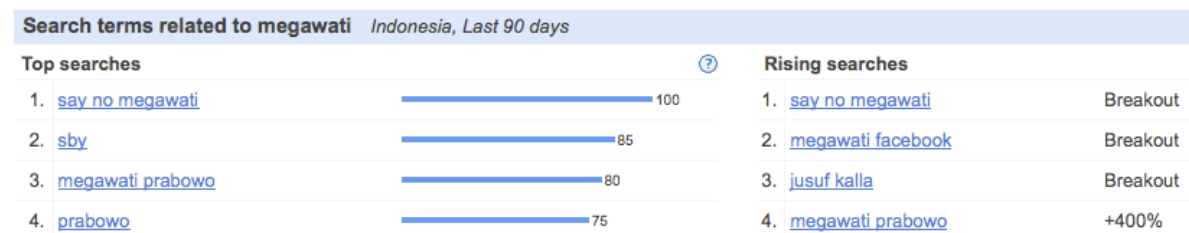
Top Megawati search terms in Indonesia over last 90 days

But illustrative online activity must be conjoined with offline knowledge. Coupled with an understanding of demography, geography, language, religion, and domestic influence, the political application of this data can be at a minimum indicative of desultory intrigue, but potentially a leading indicator of alteration in public opinion. It must be understood in the context of its influence on domestic social and political institutions. Only if being informed translates to being influential, and only if political will moves from router box to ballot box, will those observations made online be indicative of likely political change. With the most recent polls indicating a spread in public opinion of no more than 10 points, should relative online search volume be correlated with votes cast, Presidential incumbent Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono will be re-elected, and the Indonesia of next Wednesday won't look all that different from the Indonesia of today.

Posted in Current Events, Elections. 3 Comments »

3 Responses to "Presidential Election in Indonesia"

1. *Google Products » Blog Archive » Indonesia's search for president* Says:
   July 29th, 2009 at 6:38 pm

   [...] this week Scott Hartley at the Berkman Center shared with me this great post he wrote about the presidential elections in Indonesia. In the post he notes that although only 5.4 [...]

2. *Aurelia Nugroho* Says:
   September 15th, 2009 at 11:00 pm

   Great post. Just one little correction, Indonesia is NOT a Muslim country, it's the country with the largest Muslim population. It does not have syari'a law as the foundation of their constitution.

3. *omid* Says:
   November 2nd, 2009 at 2:04 pm

   If it's the country with the largest Muslim population I Wonder that: Indonesia is NOT a Muslim country?!

« The State of the Internet in Russia

How Russia Can Influence Speech in Iran »
Theme: Garland by Steven Wittens and Stefan Nagtegaal.

- ## Subscribe to the I&D Blog!

  Click Here

- ## I&D Delicious Feed

  - Cashing in on Internet censorship - CNN.com
  - Блоги (сетевые дневники) российских правозащитников | Права человека в России
  - 20 самых популярных чиновников-блогеров. О чем они пишут? Какие делают ошибки? На что жалуются? Кто из них создает посты сам? | Forbes Russia
  - Findings - People Share News Online That Inspires Awe, Researchers Find - NYTimes.com
  - James Fallows

- ## Blogroll

  - Andrew Sullivan
  - Citizen Media Law Project
  - DigiActive
  - Digital Natives
  - Ethan Zuckerman
  - FP Passport
  - George Packer
  - Global Voices

- - GV Iran
  - GV Russia
  - Harvard's Berkman Center
  - John Palfrey
  - Marc Lynch
  - Net.Effect
  - Open Net Initiative
  - Progressive Realist
  - Rebecca MacKinnon
  - Steve Coll
  - TechPresident
  - The Cable

- ## 🔊 **Tech Tools Feed**

  - 'New York' Mag Hooks Up With Foursquare
  - Orchestra seeks audience by SMS
  - Great White Sharks Text Their Whereabouts, For Science and Swimmer Safety
  - Links for 2010-07-21 [del.icio.us]
  - MySpace and Facebook: How Racist Language Frames Social Media (and Why You Should Care)

- # Archives

  - April 2010
  - March 2010
  - February 2010
  - January 2010
  - December 2009
  - November 2009
  - October 2009
  - September 2009
  - August 2009
  - July 2009
  - June 2009
  - May 2009
  - April 2009
  - March 2009
  - February 2009
  - January 2009
  - December 2008
  - November 2008
  - October 2008
  - September 2008
  - August 2008
  - July 2008
  - June 2008
  - May 2008
  - April 2008
  - March 2008
  - February 2008
  - January 2008
  - December 2007
  - November 2007
  - October 2007
  - September 2007