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**The Mayor of Social Media: On the Intersection of the  
Millennial Generation, Digital Media Technologies, and  
Civic Engagement**

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**The Mayor of Social Media: On the Intersection of the  
Millennial Generation, Digital Media Technologies, and  
Civic Engagement**

**by**

**Autumn Caviness, B.A., M.A.**

**Report**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

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**The University of Texas at Austin**

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## **Dedication**

For Frances Webb, 1932 – 2001;

For Terae Blank, 1955 – 2015;

For RC;

For GC;

For my next-level phenomenal students at Huston-Tillotson University;

For all the educators who nurtured, believed, and supported me—Sugar Loaf Elementary School, Nolan Middle School, Ellison High School, Texas A&M University, KANM AM 1580, WBAP 820 AM, The Salt Institute for Documentary Studies, The Media Sales Institute at Howard University, KUT FM 90.5, and The University of Texas; and

For ADC.

#back2back

# **The Mayor of Social Media: On the Intersection of the Millennial Generation, Digital Media Technologies, and Civic Engagement**

Autumn Caviness, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2016

Supervisor: Wenhong Chen

This Master's Report has two key objectives: (1) Add to the current dialogue, as to how the Millennial Generation defines the intersection of Digital Media Technologies (DMTs) and civic engagement; and (2) Create media content (and subsequently, disseminate this media content via on-air and online broadcasts) theoretically guided by the Academy's work on said intersection of DMTs and civic engagement. Although, the Millennial Generation played an instrumental role in the 2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections, rarely does the Academy inquire directly from this generational cohort their qualitative perspectives on the aforementioned intersection. Thus, this Master's Report ultimately aims to fill-in such glaring literature gaps by crafting media content shaped primarily by the voices of Millennials. Completion of this Master's Report resulted in the media production of five expert audio interviews and three radio features that aired on public radio station KUT FM 90.5 and received placement on KUT's station website, [www.kut.org](http://www.kut.org) and The University of Texas, School of Journalism's *Reporting Texas* website, [www.reportingtexas.com](http://www.reportingtexas.com), during the spring of 2012.

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## Chapter 1: Jack The Cat Is Lost

### NOVEMBER 21, 2011: THE PERRY-CASTAÑEDA LIBRARY

This Master’s Report inception began on the fourth floor of the Perry-Castañeda Library at the University of Texas. The date was November 21, 2011, and with Olympus LS-10 recorder in hand, I began interviewing a Radio-Television-Film (hereinafter, “RTF”) 305 student—a member of the Millennial Generational cohort<sup>1</sup>—for Dr. Wenhong Chen’s *Social Media In Student Life* project (hereinafter, “SMISL”). SMISL’s core research goal remains in contributing to a “better understanding of the implications of social media on college students’ social capital, civic engagement, and psychological wellbeing.” (Chen, 2011). The student respondent—a Latina freshman from a small town in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, majoring in RTF—had already provided perspective on managing privacy in an era of unprecedented social media, as well as insight on using traditional media and social media simultaneously, when we arrived at the second section of our interview guideline.

The second section of SMISL’s interview guideline involved assessing the role of social media, within a college student’s life, along the overarching dimensions of civic engagement and political participation. My dialogue with the student respondent, concerning these aforementioned, overarching dimensions proceeded as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The chronological endpoints for The Millennial Generation remain in flux. During the early 2000’s, researchers situated the initial endpoint for Millennials at births after 1976, “DotNets” are the new kids in town—the 50 million young adults between 15 and 28 years of age, at the writing of this book—born after 1976. They go by many labels—Millennials, Generation NeXt, Generation Y—but calling them a true generation remains premature” (Zukin et al., 2006, p. 15). Currently, researchers situate The Millennial Generation endpoints, as from 1981-1997 (Fry, 2015).

**AUTUMN CAVINESS [AC]:** Can you tell me about some ways that you make your opinion about something known? For example, have you ever contacted a politician or newspaper? Bought or boycotted certain products? Petitioned or protested?

**STUDENT RESPONDENT [SR]:** Ummm... (Sighs). Not really. I've liked a lot like events for cancer, disease or awareness week for recycling, global warning—stuff like that. But I haven't really taken much action in that—I just like it. And that's pretty much it.

**[AC]:** Do you feel like that's action though, by saying that you like something?

**[SR]:** Just by liking it—yes, because eventually a friend sees that I like something, they'll like it, and that other friend will like it—and just keeps adding the likes and it could eventually just...I noticed that if they notice that there's a lot of likes, like a Facebook page is really popular, people will do something about it. In my MIS (Management Information System) class, we discussed how this lady, this airport killed or misplaced the cat, and she made a Facebook page out of it, the airport lost my poor cat or something and a lot of people liked it.

And that airplane company, the airport—they saw that and they actually acted upon it, they sent a letter of apology, they sent her like money. They did a lot of things. They even put an article in the newspaper. It came on TV. It was crazy. They made such a huge thing out of a cat...

**[AC]:** Did they find the cat?

**[SR]:** No, I think it pretty much disappeared or died or something, but they still did something about it. They compensated her. They made an apology, a formal apology...



After our interview concluded, I immediately journeyed to the library's first floor, and conducted an online search of "Jack The Cat". A cursory, online search relayed that in September 2011, Jack The Cat, "had gone missing in the inbound baggage processing area at Terminal 8" of Kennedy International Airport. (Gootman, 2011). Karen Pascoe, Jack's owner, crafted a Facebook (Jack The Cat Is Lost in AA Baggage at JFK) and Twitter (@findjackthecat) page to disseminate location updates about Jack, as well as inform the general, online audience about a greater need for animal activism, within airport environments.

As of November 2015, Jack The Cat's Facebook page has 23,876 likes<sup>2</sup> and his Twitter page has 457 followers.<sup>3</sup> What holds interesting about Jack The Cat and the RTF 305 student's declaration that *liking* Jack The Cat's Facebook page constitutes *action* is that at the definitional core of civic engagement is individuals "...working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make the difference" (Ehrlich, 2000, p. vi).

Thus, by *liking* Jack The Cat's Facebook page and/or *following* Jack The Cat on Twitter, did 24,332 individuals via DMTs coalesce and collectively work together "...to make a difference in the civic life of our communities...?" (Ehrlich, 2000, p. vi). The RTF 305 student whom I interviewed holds this as true. And Zukin et al. (2006) would nod in agreement for:

In contrast to political engagement, civic engagement is defined as organized voluntary activity focused on problem solving and helping others. It includes a

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jack-The-Cat-is-Lost-in-AA-Baggage-at-JFK/143108332445793>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/findjackthecat>.

*wide range* (emphasis added) of work undertaken alone or in concert with others to effect change. (p. 7)

Moreover, Zukin et al. note,

Community involvement goes to the heart of civic engagement, and one of the most telling indicators may be having “worked together informally with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live.” (2006, p. 73)

The operative word in Zukin et al. understanding of *what* constitutes civic engagement is *community*. (2006). Concerning Jack The Cat and the role of DMTs involved in his search, the spirit of community moves beyond the tangible—“a group of people who live in the same area (such as a city, town, or neighborhood)” to the intangible—“a group of people who have the same interests, religion, race, etc.” (Merriam-Webster, 2015).

Recognition of this intangible spirit of community in DMT spaces is key for as Millennials continue to come of age—this generational cohort identified by their digital nativeness—will eventually determine whether or not an organized voluntary activity conducted in a tangible or intangible community constitutes civic engagement. **Although the interviewed RTF 305 student posits that *liking* an issue or cause on Facebook constitutes civic engagement, do members of said student’s Millennial Generation-at-large share this sentiment? Further, how does the Millennial Generation define civic engagement? Does this generational cohort account for DMTs in their ascribed definitions of civic engagement?**

The aforementioned questions are the spirit from which this Master’s Report was conceived and subsequently drafted. Therefore, this Master’s Report has two key objectives: (1) Add to the current dialogue, as to how the Millennial Generation defines

the intersection of Digital Media Technologies (DMTs) and civic engagement; and (2) Create media content (and subsequently, disseminate this media content via on-air and online broadcasts) theoretically guided by the Academy's work on said intersection of DMTs and civic engagement.

### **NOVEMBER 3, 2015: STILL AT THE PERRY-CASTAÑEDA LIBRARY**

#### **Literature Review**

Nearly four years ago, the RTF 305 Student Respondent interviewed for *Social Media In Student Life* maintained that *liking* an issue or cause on Facebook constituted civic engagement. A four-year separation grants space for reconsideration of said student's hypothesis. This student's hypothesis had merit in 2011. In 2015, does this student's hypothesis still ring true? Especially, in an incessantly changing DMTs landscape? I turned to the extant literature, examining the intersection of DMTs and civic engagement for greater insight.

The extant literature examining the intersection of DMTs and civic engagement is voluminous. However, Boulianne's (2015) work provides guiding illumination. Boulianne's meta-analysis evaluated the relationship between an individual's civic participation and social media use via exploring 36 studies with 170 effects (2015, p. 524). Boulianne's study focused on the use of social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, and MySpace. (2015). Additionally, Boulianne's meta-analysis classified studies by sample type (two studies host a *snowball sample of a specific group* sample type; seven studies host a *random sample of youth* sample type;

thirteen studies host a *student* sample type; and fourteen studies host a *random sample of general population* sample type). (2015, p. 527).

The overarching strength of Boulianne's meta-analysis is the defining of three central variables (social network building variable, participation variable, and civic engagement variable). For Boulianne, the social network building variable,

Highlights measures such as friending, *following or liking political candidates* (emphasis added), elected officials or other political actors, membership in Facebook groups, frequency of participation in Facebook groups, size of one's friendship circle and network heterogeneity. (2015, p. 528)

Boulianne then defines the participation variable as combining "some elements of protest activities, civic activities and election campaign activities," while parsing civic engagement as a separate variable that "includes measures of volunteering for and donating to charities, non-profits or other groups." (2015, p. 529). This measure excludes volunteering for and donating to political parties and candidates.

For Boulianne, the participation variable also includes measures about "attendance at community or neighbor meetings and participation in civic groups." (2015, p. 529). Boulianne's meta-analysis suggests "a positive relationship between social media use and participation in civic and political life." (2015, p. 534). Lastly, Boulianne points to her study's random sample of youth for finding transformative effects. (2015, p. 534). Building upon Xenos et al. (2014) Boulianne concludes that a young person's use of social media—not their socioeconomic status—is the single, best indicator of their political engagement. (2015, p. 534).

Working backwards from Boulianne's (2015) list of references, I first identified all studies that employed either a *student sample* or a *random sample of youth*. I then excluded studies from this lot if the studied demographic was based outside of the United States. My overall research goal was to locate studies that would impart insight, specifically into the relationship between DMTs and the civic engagement of Millennials based in the United States. After reviewing these studies, I conducted an online database search to yield any additional studies that although absent from Boulianne's (2015) meta-analysis, would prove fruitful for my understanding of how the Millennial Generation defined the intersection of DMTs and civic engagement. <sup>4</sup>

This process for literature distillation yielded eleven complementing studies. I then evaluated each study along five dimensions: (1) How did the study define the key variables of civic engagement, political engagement, and political participation; (2) What Digital Media Technologies did the study analyze; (3) Did the researcher ask Millennials directly for their personal definition of civic engagement; (4) Did the study address specifically, if *liking* an issue or cause on Facebook and/or *following* an issue or cause on Twitter constituted civic engagement; and (5) In what ways did the study advance the literature? Once the studies were evaluated via my selected attributes, I began to notice a singularly strong emerging theme, from within the extant literature—**no exact, operational definition existed for civic engagement, political engagement, or political participation.**

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<sup>4</sup> This online database search was conducted at [www.lib.utexas.edu](http://www.lib.utexas.edu).

## **Defining the Variables: The Slippery Continuum of Civic Engagement, Political Engagement, and Political Participation**

Unraveling the literature as to how civic engagement, political engagement, and political participation are defined is paramount for meeting this Master's Report initial objective of adding to the current dialogue, as to how the Millennial Generation defines the intersection of DMTs and civic engagement. Chen's *Social Media In Student Life* (2011) project acknowledged this definitional difference—the second section of the project's interview guideline assessed the role of social media, within a college student's life, using the overarching dimensions of civic engagement and political participation. Overwhelmingly, the literature views civic engagement, political engagement, and political participation, as existing on a spectrum. Civic engagement is considered to have a lower threshold than political engagement and political participation. This is the sole juncture where the literature is in agreement.

The difficulty in unraveling the literature as to how the aforementioned three variables are defined resides in recognizing that there exists no common definition for civic engagement, political engagement, or political participation. Essentially, no definitional baseline exists! However, this is not a new epiphany for researchers. Nearly all studies wrestle with this definitional porousness. Zukin et al. (2006) assert,

Yet, despite the importance of the distinction, we also recognize that the boundaries between political and civic engagement are not clear ones. While civic engagement occurs largely outside the domains of elected officials and government action, it can also have important consequences for matters with which the government is also concerned (for example, public safety, homelessness, education, even national security). (p. 52)

And for Earl and Schussman (2008),

There is often only a thin distinction between political engagement and civic engagement, given that the activities that comprise civic engagement are marked by their institutional relationship to government (e.g., voting), or their noninstitutional relationship to government (e.g., protest). (p. 73)

Admittedly, this definitional porousness is difficult to reconcile. For an example of acknowledgment of this definitional porousness at work, Valenzuela et al. (2009) reaffirm that “political and civic participation are slippery concepts” and elect to gauge their respondents’ civic and political participation via an Index of Civic and Political Engagement developed by CIRCLE<sup>5</sup> (p. 885). CIRCLE’s developed Index considers,

Worked or volunteered in a community project; worked or volunteered for nonpolitical groups such as a hobby club, environmental group or minority student association; [and] raised money for charity or ran/walked/biked for charity as activities that constitute civic participation. (Valenzuela et al., 2009, p. 885)

And CIRCLE’s Index views activities that constitute political participation as,

Worked or volunteered for political groups or candidates; voted in a local, state, or national election; tried to persuade others in an election; signed a petition; worn or displayed a badge or sticker related to a political or social causes; [and] deliberately bought certain products for a political, ethical, or environmental reason. (Valenzuela et al., 2009, pp. 885- 886)

In contrast, Pew Research Center’s Civic Engagement in the Digital Age Project considers an action of civic engagement,

Anyone who did one or more of the following six activities: ...worked with a fellow citizen to solve a problem in their community; ...attended a political meeting on local, town, or school affairs; ...have been an active member of a group that tries to influence the public or government; ...have attended a political rally or speech; ...have worked or volunteered for a political party or candidate; [and] ...have attended an organized protest. (2013, p. 2)

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<sup>5</sup> CIRCLE is an acronym for the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, <http://www.civicyouth.org>.

Essentially, Pew’s notion of civic engagement *is* Valenzuela et al., and CIRCLE’s notion of political participation.

Thus, as a researcher focused on exploring the relationship between the Millennial Generation, DMTs, and civic engagement—I began to realize that I had to get comfortable with the slippery definitional porousness of my work’s key concepts—civic engagement, political engagement, and political participation. However, I did not want to become too comfortable in this sticky definitional morass. The lacuna in the existing scholarship of this definitional intersection made it clear to me that if no precise term of art existed for the aforementioned key concepts, then I would need to turn to another source for insight. I elected to turn *directly* to members of the Millennial Generation. For as Earl and Schussman contend,

We are arguing that before certifying a crisis of civic engagement, one must ask whether existing notions of what comprises civic engagement tend to ignore, devalue, or otherwise marginalize ways in which *younger citizens are connecting with one another to collectively make a difference in their own worlds*. (emphasis added) (2008, p. 73)

Extant literature has ignored, devalued, and marginalized the perspectives of the Millennial Generation, as to what constitutes civic engagement, political engagement, and political participation. To lessen this literature gap and meet this Report’s initial objective, I knew that I had to find and to hear the rarely heard voices of Millennials define the intersection of DMTs and civic engagement. And once I found voices of this generational cohort, I had to find a way to satisfy this Report’s second key objective of creating media content (and subsequently, disseminating this media content via on-air



and online broadcasts) theoretically guided by the Academy's work on said intersection of DMTs and civic engagement.

Admittedly, this took time, but eventually, I found a way...

## Chapter 2: The Mayor of Facebook

### KUT FM 90.5 INTERNSHIP

In January 2008, I made the 1,889 miles drive from Grand Prairie, Texas to Portland, Maine. That spring semester, I was enrolled in The Salt Institute for Documentary Studies, radio track. The Salt Institute taught me how to craft provocative, long-form journalism stories for public radio outlets. After my time at Salt ended, I began toying with the idea of creating “smart audio content.” Meaning, creating audio content that was guided and informed by the Academy’s theoretically driven research. I applied to The University of Texas’ M.A. in Media Studies Program so that I could create positive change in the lives of Millennials by crafting media content, steeped in academic theory. Drawing upon my radio background, I reached out to KUT FM 90.5, and inquired about interning with the station during the spring 2012 semester.

For the spring 2012 semester, I enrolled in RTF 384N (Internship in Film & Electronic Media), and began my internship under the supervision of KUT’s News Director, Emily Donahue. Upon hearing my desire to craft journalism stories focused upon the intersection of Millennials, DMTs, and civic engagement, Donahue placed me under the direct supervision of Ben Philpott. Philpott is a KUT Senior Reporter who covers politics and policy for KUT. Philpott and I immediately began to get to work on my dream of creating “smart audio content” that explored my aforementioned intersection. We decided that in addition to my general KUT internship responsibilities, I would create three news features—from conception *to* research *to* pitching the idea to News Director Donahue *to* conducting the interviews *to* writing each news feature’s

script *to* voicing the script *to* editing the script in Avid ProTools *to* filing the script for on-air and online broadcasts. Although, each feature took approximately 150-200 hours to complete from conception *to* filing for broadcast, this internship served as an incredible hands-on practicum for learning how to craft smart audio content.

That semester I crafted three features, which endeavored to add to the current dialogue, as to how the Millennial Generation defines the intersection of DMTs and civic engagement: (1) “Eva Longoria on Latino Issues, a Q&A with Artist and Activist Eva Longoria” that aired on KUT on February 27, 2012; (2) “Local Candidates Go Digital and Social/The Mayor of Facebook,” which had a KUT airdate of April 13, 2012; and (3) “Getting Political On Social Networks” received a May 17, 2012, KUT airdate. All features received placement on KUT’s station website, [www.kut.org](http://www.kut.org) and The University of Texas, School of Journalism’s *Reporting Texas* website, [www.reportingtexas.com](http://www.reportingtexas.com).

**KUT Radio Feature: Eva Longoria on Latino Issues, a Q&A with Artist and Activist Eva Longoria, 02/27/12<sup>6</sup>**

My covering actress, producer, director, and activist Eva Longoria for KUT, transpired due to fortuitous timing. Ericka Aguilar, the reporter originally assigned to this feature, could not make the Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup> date, due to a previously scheduled commitment. Aguilar knew that in addition to my Salt Institute for Documentary Studies training that I had celebrity interview experience from hosting a radio show (Au80) on Texas A&M University’s KANM AM 1580. Aguilar reached out to News Director Emily Donahue for her consent for my covering of Longoria, in her stead. Thankfully, Donahue

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<sup>6</sup> “Eva Longoria on Latino Issues, a Q&A with Artist and Activist Eva Longoria” can be found here online, <https://soundcloud.com/autumn/kut-feature-eva-longoria-on>.

said this was fine, and I began preparing a week in advance for my interview with Longoria. Donahue and I decided that the focus for my Longoria feature would showcase Longoria, as not only an actress and producer, but as an activist for Latino issues in the United States. This focus shaped my interview guideline's structure. I knew that I would have less than ten minutes with Longoria; thus, I only wrote five, tightly written questions revolving around my "Longoria as activist" theme. My preliminary research on Longoria uncovered the following background details.

Longoria, born March 15, 1975, in Corpus Christi, Texas is known primarily for her work as an actress on television. Longoria has received television roles on such programs, as *Beverly Hills, 90210*; *The Young and the Restless*; *Dragnet*; *Desperate Housewives*; and *Telenovela*. In addition to her work, within the television and movie industries, Longoria has also received her Bachelor of Science degree in kinesiology from Texas A&M University at Kingsville and her Master's degree in Chicano Studies from California State University at Northridge. In 2012, Longoria was selected as one of 35 national co-chairs for President Barack Obama's reelection campaign (Hoeffel, 2012). Longoria spoke at the 2012 Democratic National Convention in favor of President Obama's reelection; and has executive produced *The Harvest* and *Food Chains*, documentaries about the working conditions for migrant farmworkers in the United States.

Drawing upon her academic and activist background, Longoria was in Austin on February 25<sup>th</sup> to serve as the keynote speaker for the 2012 Lozano Long Conference. KUT was one of four news outlets granted a five-minute interview with Longoria. On

that Saturday afternoon, I drove to the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center. I then met up with Jeff Heimsath, the videographer for the interview; ensured that my microphone and recorder's levels were functioning correctly; and waited for my moment to interview Longoria.

Although our time was brief, *I got good tape*. Meaning, Longoria was incredibly receptive to our interview's theme of Longoria as activist. Surrounded by her father, mother, and sister, Longoria answered my questions on the biggest issues faced by Latinos in the United States today;<sup>7</sup> her perspective on the role of MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) in Texas redistricting efforts;<sup>8</sup> and if people are surprised by the thoroughness of Longoria's political insight due to her primary employment, as a television soap opera actress.<sup>9</sup> After our interview concluded, I shook hands with Longoria and her surrounding family. I then ran down the steps of the Conference Center's grand staircase, and immediately drove to KUT Studios. In less than twenty-four hours—the script, the audio interview, and the video footage—were all ready for KUT's Monday broadcast.

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<sup>7</sup> Longoria's response, "...there's no specific Latino agenda. The number one issue that Latinos raise in the election coming up is the economy—like every other American..." (Eva Longoria on Latino Issues, a Q&A with Artist and Activist Eva Longoria, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Longoria's response, "When district lines are redrawn, they can be done in an unfair advantage to Latino communities, either by if they're drawn with the constituents that are in those communities or by not appointing the correct representative." (Eva Longoria on Latino Issues, a Q&A with Artist and Activist Eva Longoria, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Longoria's response, "I find that any celebrity who has a political opinion is shunned away or really not taken seriously... The fact that I'm famous, or a celebrity, just gives me a lot of voice. But it doesn't mean that I'm not well-versed or literate in the issues and the policies that I'm passionate about and so I think people are often surprised at how much I know regarding politics." (Eva Longoria on Latino Issues, a Q&A with Artist and Activist Eva Longoria, 2012).

**KUT Radio Feature: Local Candidates Go Digital and Social/The Mayor of Facebook, 04/13/12<sup>10</sup>**

This four-minutes-and-twenty-eight seconds news feature aired on KUT (both on-air and online), Friday, April 13, 2012. Although, this feature aired approximately twelve weeks after my KUT internship start date, I began working on this feature with both News Director Emily Donahue and Senior Reporter Ben Philpott, during my second week at KUT. Donahue and Philpott knew that I wanted to use my internship as a vehicle to help create smart audio content guided theoretically by the Academy for the Millennial Generation—informed by voices of the Millennial Generation—which ultimately added to the current dialogue, as to how the Millennial Generation defined the intersection of DMTs and civic engagement. This goal was no facile feat for I had to find a news story that would satisfy my internship goals, while simultaneously meeting KUT’s organizational mission, “to deliver comprehensive and unique insights in our programming...” (2016).

Every week, I would meet with Donahue and Philpott to pitch my ideas for prospective news features. Donahue and Philpott worked tirelessly in the refinement of my ideas. My news feature needed to strike a delicate balance of coupling academic theory with engaging and accessible tone. And during my sixth week at KUT, after four pitch meetings and over a dozen failed pitches, Donahue and Philpott green-lighted my first news feature concept.

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<sup>10</sup> “Local Candidates Go Digital and Social/The Mayor of Facebook” can be found online here, <https://soundcloud.com/autumn/kut-radio-feature-local>.

The concept was simple: Incumbent Austin Mayor, Shelly “Lee” Leffingwell was running for reelection. In order to launch his re-election bid, his campaign team posted a video on their social media accounts—showing Mayor Leffingwell taking a day off from work—akin to high school senior Ferris Bueller skipping school in the 1986 comedy, *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*. Mayor Leffingwell’s homage to Ferris Bueller received considerable attention on social media; and I began to wonder if the use of social media could transform the reach of political campaigns at the local level.<sup>11</sup>

After analyzing my concept with Philpott, we decided that I would interview the individual who was responsible for each candidate’s social media presence. I interviewed Joe Deshotel, Political Director for Incumbent Mayor Leffingwell’s campaign; Vanessa Crook, Social Media Director for Mayoral Candidate, Brigid Shea; and Clay Dafoe, Austin Mayoral Candidate.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, Deshotel, Crook, and Dafoe were all members of the Millennial Generation. After I interviewed the candidates’ social media coordinator, I then interviewed Josh Berthume, President and CEO of Swash Labs. Swash Labs is a digital media advertising company, which specializes in creating social media campaigns for political hopefuls. Berthume’s role in this news feature was to add greater context, as to why social media has become a key to winning a Presidential campaign *and* municipal races,

What social media allows a campaign manager to do is take that money and rather than say, “I got \$5,000 and I can spend it on a direct mail piece...I can dump a lot of this at a targeted demographic (using social media). I can target it at my district

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<sup>11</sup> Mayor Leffingwell’s “Lee Leffingwell’s Day Off” can be found on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPkiUiWP1jI>.

<sup>12</sup> 2012 Austin Mayoral Candidate, Clay Dafoe ran his campaign’s social media presence.

where I'm running. And I can try to raise my profile. (Local Candidates Go Digital and Social/The Mayor of Facebook, 2012)

After gaining Berthume's perspective, I then reached out to Sam Kookier, Mayor of Rapid City, South Dakota. Kookier was elected in 2011. He credits his victory against a two-term incumbent—by less than 500 votes—to the social media website Facebook,

In a race that close, there are a lot of things that could be credited for the difference, but elections are won in the hearts of people. And what Facebook allowed me to do is connect directly with people...whereas, my opponent spent a tremendous amount of money on retail politics, sending out ads to everybody-at-large, and it wasn't as effective. (Local Candidates Go Digital and Social/The Mayor of Facebook, 2012)

This feature took approximately 200 hours to create—there were quite a few moving parts needed for this feature. Yet, when this feature aired, approximately a month before the Austin Mayoral Election—I knew I had struck audio gold. Donahue and Philpott were both pleased; the feature was well received by the listening audiences of KUT and Reporting Texas; and I was able to create smart audio content revolving around the intersection of DMTs and civic engagement, while guided theoretically by the Academy and informed by the voices of the Millennial Generation. Yet, I knew that I needed my third feature to *do more*. I needed this third feature to ask the question that functioned as the genesis for this Master's Report. This third feature needed to ask of Millennials directly—does *liking* an issue or cause on Facebook constitute civic engagement? “Local Candidates Go Digital and Social/The Mayor of Facebook” aired on Friday. I spent the weekend researching, and come Monday's pitch meeting, I had a new feature idea for Donahue and Philpott.



### **KUT Radio Feature: Getting Political on Social Networks, 05/17/12<sup>13</sup>**

In that mid-morning Monday pitch meeting with Donahue and Philpott, I was incredibly adamant about two elements that had to be present in my third KUT feature: firstly, I had to gain insight from members of the Millennial Generation as to whether or not, *liking* an issue or cause on Facebook constituted civic engagement; and secondly, I had to include more scholarly sources in my crafted audio content. Donahue and Philpott listened to my stipulations; and again helped me devise a way to incorporate my stipulations, within my produced feature.

After our pitch meeting, Philpott relayed that I had one month to produce this piece; and that I would need to find credible *and* engaging scholarly sources. He then suggested that I begin with my Pew Research Center data and find a subject expert on the intersection of the Millennial Generation and civic engagement. I did as Philpott suggested, I found this feature's lede in a 2009 Pew Research Center study on "The Internet and Civic Engagement." (Smith et al.). This 2009 study found that 10% of all Internet users, 18 and older, have used a social networking site for some sort of political or civic engagement. (Smith et al.). And for Internet users situated between the ages of 18 to 29, the aforementioned percentage nearly quadruples from 10% to 37%. After uncovering my lede, I then found my feature's subject expert, Morley Winograd. Winograd is co-author of *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation Is Remaking America* (Winograd & Hais, 2011). Although Winograd is not a Millennial—he is considered a Millennial Generation expert; he is a Senior Fellow at the University of

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<sup>13</sup> "Getting Political on Social Networks" can be found here online, <https://soundcloud.com/autumn/sets/kut-radio-feature-getting>.

Southern California’s Annenberg School’s Center on Communication Leadership and Policy; and he served as Chairman of the Democratic Party from 1973 to 1980. I was interested in hearing Winograd’s perspective on *liking* an issue or cause on Facebook and civic engagement. I wanted to know if Winograd’s perspective was in alignment with perspectives of the Millennials, who I would later interview for this feature.

Ultimately Winograd viewed hitting the *like* button as putting up a traditional political yard sign. So when a friend visits your Facebook page—just like dropping by your house—they will see who and what you support. For Winograd, these initial statements of support online can then lead to a stronger outward showing of support, “certainly there is a level of engagement at that point...but I think real engagement involves translating that online enthusiasm into offline activity.” (Getting Political on Social Networks, 2012). After interviewing Winograd, I decided to reach out to members of the Millennial Generation whom were active in The University of Texas political scene. I interviewed Thor Lund, UT’s Student Body President and Huey Fischer, President of the UT Democrats.

Lund shared, “social media is a huge tool to get [young] people interested in things...[and] the biggest way to create interest—to spur the civic engagement—is numbers.” (Getting Political on Social Networks, 2012). And Fischer relayed,

When we’re [UT Democrats] tabling and flyering, we let folks know, “Hey, like us on Facebook, even if you can’t come at every meeting, even if you can’t be there physically, at least be aware of what we’re doing. So that way, when you do have time, when you can make a commitment, you’ll know what’s up. (Getting Political on Social Networks, 2012)

When this third feature aired on KUT—I was over the moon. I enrolled in graduate school because I *had* to create “smart audio content,” steeped in theoretical underpinnings, yet accessible for a general audience. Execution of this third feature was tangible proof that my lofty audio visions could find solid, pragmatic ground. The summer following my KUT internship, I began asking myself, *what other types of audio could I create that would be akin to my radio features at KUT—theoretically based, smart, and accessible?* I decided that I needed to hear more Millennial voices weigh in on the intersection of DMTs and civic engagement. I created an interview guideline<sup>14</sup> based upon my KUT news features, and began reaching out to Millennials who were experts in one or more of the following content areas: research on civic engagement, research on Millennials, and/or or research on DMTs. From my selected expert interviewees, I was particularly interested in their responses to two questions: **(1) how did the expert personally define civic engagement; and (2) did the expert view hitting the *like* button or posting comments on a social networking website as constituting genuine civic engagement?**

## **EXPERT INTERVIEWS**

### **Aaron Barreiro, Expert Interview**

I reached out to Aaron Barreiro because he was a Millennial and Student Government Association (SGA) President at The University of Texas-Pan American. At the time of our interview, Barreiro was a senior majoring in premedical biology and minoring in chemistry. In addition to serving as the University’s SGA President, Barreiro

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<sup>14</sup> Please see Appendix B of this Master’s Report.

served as UTPA French Club Vice-President, and was a member of the Eta Omicron Nu (HON) and Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Societies.

I considered Barreiro an expert in civic engagement and Millennials. When asked to personally define civic engagement, Barreiro responded,

Something that you would personally like to do and it helps the community as a whole. That's something that we don't see often, not at least here in the Valley. None of the people think about how our community works together. It's a lot of times, just as individuals, and that's one thing I think I would like to see change is that the Valley come together and make things happen as a whole, as a community. (Caviness & Barreiro, 2012)

And when asked if hitting the *like* button or posting comments on a social networking website constituted genuine civic engagement, Barreiro quickly asserted, "...it seems superficial...there are so many things that you can't gauge on the Internet, or online..." Barreiro's responses were significant for two reasons—firstly, his personal definition for civic engagement was reminiscent of my first KUT feature with Eva Longoria. In that news feature, I asked Longoria to name the biggest issues faced by Latinos in the United States, her response was that "...there's no specific Latino agenda." (Eva Longoria on Latino Issues, a Q&A with Artist and Activist Eva Longoria, 2012). Barreiro appears to be in agreement with Longoria for when reflecting upon the Valley community he notes that "none of the people think about how our community works together. It's a lot of times, just as individuals..." (Caviness & Barreiro, 2012). The second reason why I deemed Barreiro's responses as significant was that Barreiro was the *first* Millennial I interviewed who did not consider hitting the *like* button or posting comments via DMTs as civic engagement. Harkening back to my earlier KUT radio features, all Millennials

interviewed considered the aforementioned online activities as constituting civic engagement.

### **Homero Gil de Zuñiga, Expert Interview**

I considered Professor Homero Gil de Zuñiga's expert interview as key to this Master Report's creation. Gil de Zuñiga is a Professor in Political Science at the Universidad Europea de Madrid. He received his Ph.D. in Mass Communication with a minor in Digital Media from The University of Wisconsin at Madison. Gil de Zuñiga has published prolifically on the intersection of civic engagement and DMTs. Boulianne's (2015) meta-analysis on social media use and participation, discussed in the Literature Review section of this Master's Report, analyzed three studies with Gil de Zuñiga as lead author.<sup>15</sup> In short, Gil de Zuñiga is an expert on DMTs and civic engagement. When asked for his personal definition of civic engagement, Gil de Zuñiga elucidated upon the distinction between civic engagement and political engagement, based upon his body of research,

Civic engagement is to some extent different than political engagement. To extend that, political engagement will be related to influencing the core group much more institutionalized and so forth, versus civic engagement, which is the pursuit of creating a better community or changing things in your neighborhood, for instance, things like that. Helping each other and collaborate with each other to create a better society but through different means, not through just the political, institutional, classic, traditional political participation, so it's a little bit

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<sup>15</sup> Boulianne (2015) included the following three studies lead authored by Gil de Zuñiga: (1) Gil de Zúñiga, H., Copeland, L., & Bimber, B. (2013). Political consumerism: Civic engagement and the social media connection. *New Media & Society*, 16(3), 488–506. doi:10.1177/1461444813487960; (2) Gil de Zúñiga, H., Jung, N., & Valenzuela, S. (2012). Social media use for news and individuals' social capital, civic engagement and political participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17, 319–336. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01574.x; and (3) Gil de Zúñiga, H., Molyneux, L., & Zheng, P. (2014). Social media, political expression, and political participation: Panel analysis of lagged and concurrent relationships. *Journal of Communication*, 64(4), 612–634. doi:10.1111/jcom.12103.

different. (Caviness & Gil de Zuñiga, 2012)

And when posed the question, does hitting the *like* button or posting comments on a social networking website constitute civic engagement, Gil de Zuñiga tendered,

I think to some extent, it does. And I think to some extent, they (the Millennial Generation) do understand that, as a way of expressing themselves, civically or politically, and they do it. So, I should say those are one of the few new ways, in which we are attempting to measure how people actually participate...when I post this picture, or when I update my status and I say this. I'm actually expressing myself in a particular way, which it's a notion, it's a level of civic engagement, when they talk about issues that matter for the community, for the neighbors, and for a society at large. (Caviness & Gil de Zuñiga, 2012)

Gil de Zuñiga's response to my first question proved remarkably similar to the response provided by Barreiro. Both responses cited *community*, as an important component of civic engagement. Barreiro mentioned, "...that's one thing I think I would like to see change is that the Valley come together and make thing happen as a whole, as a *community*." (emphasis added) (Caviness & Barreiro, 2012). And in similar fashion, Gil de Zuñiga stated, "...civic engagement, which is the pursuit of creating a better community or changing things in your neighborhood" (Caviness & Gil de Zuñiga, 2012).

### **Surbhi Godsay, Expert Interview**

I contacted CIRCLE (Center for Information and Research on Civic Engagement) for one sole reason—CIRCLE is widely known in academic circles for conducting research on the “civic and political engagement of young Americans.” (2016). Upon calling the CIRCLE office, located in Medford, Massachusetts, I was connected with Surbhi Godsay. Godsay, a Millennial, received her Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Mathematics from the University of Vermont. Godsay joined CIRCLE in 2009, as a

Researcher. Her work at CIRCLE involved researching the intersection of civic engagement and political participation for Millennials from disenfranchised backgrounds.

Godsay's areas of expertise are civic engagement and Millennials. Thus, after our exchange of telephone pleasantries, I eagerly awaited Godsay's perspectives on my designated question set. Drawing upon her research experience at CIRCLE, Godsay defines civic engagement as essentially encompassing,

All the ways we identify and understand common problems in our communities, or you know even state, nation or the world and I think for us, you know, actually doing civic engagement requires certain kinds of civic skills, certain kinds of civic knowledge and disposition. And so, I think that this, you know, civic engagement to some people can just mean political participation for instance. But for us civic engagement could mean political participation either electoral or non-electoral, it can mean service, it could mean activism, it could mean media use... For instance, among low income young people we saw things like working with neighbors on solving a problem or doing favors for neighbors and so these are examples that are less, kind of institutionalized engagement, but rather kind of informal engagement... (Caviness & Godsay, 2012)

Concerning, whether or not Millennials consider hitting the *like* button as civic engagement, Godsay asserts,

Yeah, so I don't want to be too redundant, but I guess I would just emphasize that because young people think about civic engagement in really different ways, I would say yes for some people hitting the like button or posting comments would be their way of engaging in politics or the community. And I think from what we see from research is that some young people are just talking about issues or speaking their mind on the Internet, you know from what we have seen regarding online petition but we have also seen how those online methods can influence policy on the ground. (Caviness & Godsay, 2012)

Again, what proves interesting from my collected experts interviews is that Barreiro, Gil de Zuñiga, and now Godsay, *all* include *community*, within their personal definitions of civic engagement. Adding to Barreiro's and Gil de Zuñiga's concepts of civic

engagement, Godsay considers, “all the ways we identify and understand common problems in our *communities...*” as an element of civic engagement. (emphasis added) (Caviness & Godsay, 2012). Godsay takes a middle ground approach as to whether or not hitting the *like* button or posting comments on a social networking website qualify as civic engagement, “...I would just emphasize that because young people think about civic engagement in really different ways, I would say yes for some people hitting the like button or posting comments would be their way of engaging...” (Caviness & Godsay, 2012).

Yet, in this middle ground approach, Godsay remark, “...some young people are just talking about issues or speaking their mind on the Internet,” bears sharp resemblance to Gil de Zuñiga’s thoughts on this subject, “it’s a level of civic engagement, when they talk about issues that matter for the community...” (Caviness & Godsay, 2012; Caviness & Gil de Zuñiga, 2012). Both researchers appear to get at this idea of Millennials using social media as a vehicle for *talking out* issues of importance in their communities. This *talking out* be it via hitting the *like* button on Facebook or posting comments is a form of engagement, a level of civic engagement.

Lastly, Godsay’s perspective on the impact of an online petition for the Millennial Generation is reminiscent of my 2011 interview with the RTF 305 Student Respondent for Chen’s *Social Media In Student Life* project. In that 2011 interview, the RTF 305 Student Respondent relayed the story of “Jack The Cat,” a cat lost in Terminal 8 of Kennedy International Airport, and how Jack’s owner created a Facebook page to enlist the airport community in finding “Jack The Cat.” For the RTF 305 Student Respondent,



creation of this Facebook page moved beyond online musings, yielding real-world effects, "...a lot of people liked it (Jack's Facebook page). And that airplane company, the airport—they saw that and they actually acted upon it, they sent a letter of apology, they sent her like money." (*Social Media In Student Life*, 2012).

Godsay's perspective is in alignment with the interviewed RTF 305 Student Respondent for Goday asserts, "...some young people are just talking about issues or speaking their mind...from what we have seen regarding online petition but we have also seen how those online methods can influence policy on the ground." (Caviness & Godsay, 2012).

### **Jamilah King, Expert Interview**

I reached out to Jamilah King due to her role as News Editor at Colorlines.com. King is a Millennial who covers the youth vote for Colorlines.com. Prior to her employment at Colorlines.com, King was Associate Editor at WireTap Magazine. She graduated from Pitzer College with degrees in English and Black Studies. During our interview, King identified civic engagement as having two aims,

The most important one I think, I define civic engagement by the ways in which people interact with their elected government. And I think that happens in a number of ways, I think that happens both by young people and old people going to the poll, and that's the sort of engagement that it's looked at and tracked most popularly, but also I'd like to think of the engagement that goes on outside of these traditional spirits of political power, right. And so, specifically when you're talking about communities or colors, and young folks in particular, a lot of the organizing work that is happening today, it had happened for years...[building] up power to advocate for the issue that are important in their communities. (Caviness & King, 2012)

Again, it is worth noting that *all* experts interviewed; thus far, have incorporated *community*, within their ideation of civic engagement. And for King, regarding whether or not the Millennial Generation considers hitting the *like* button as civic engagement, King considers this a complicated question,

...I think whenever you're talking about civic engagement, it's really, really important to look at the different entry points for folks...so you know, with the Oscar Grant situation...people would see that, people would comment on it, right? People would post it, there was a lot of online engagement around it, but then there were these outlets that grew and there were community groups that had already been doing work in Oakland and around the country that then used the energy in the outrage around the Oscar Grant case and his murder, to then mobilize young folks to fight for accountability. And I think that's really important. (Caviness & King, 2012)

King's response, "...I think whenever you're talking about civic engagement, it's really, really important to look at the different entry points for folks..." is incredibly similar to Godsay's sentiment that enumeration of specific criteria for online actions that constitute civic engagement is dependent upon the individual, "...I don't want to be too redundant, but I guess I would just emphasize that because young people think about civic engagement in really different ways..." Perhaps, King's and Godsay's responses to this posed question are largely encompassing for both interviewees research and write about the intersection of civic engagement and Millennials from disenfranchised backgrounds.

### **Caitlin Maguire, Expert Interview**

I selected Maguire for inclusion, within my Master's Report as an Expert Interview due to her expertise with civic engagement and Millennials, due to her role as Marketing & Communications Manager at Rock The Vote. Maguire, a member of the Millennial Generation, graduated from Union College with a B.A. in English. Prior to her

employment at Rock The Vote, Maguire interned for the Senior Vice-President of Marketing and General Manager at Epic Records. For Maguire, civic engagement can be defined as,

Young people just getting involved in their society, and in their democracy and whether that's doing it simply by just voting in November, every election year, or whether it's taking further action in working to make social change, whether they are in their spare time or devoting their life to it... (Caviness & Maguire, 2012)

Echoing Barreiro's earlier sentiments, Maguire contends that when Millennials hit the *like* button on a website, they are simply hitting *like*, they are not,

Consciously checking off a box saying I civically engaged today. I think that because they are so informed because they scroll through their Twitterfeeds and they see eight different pieces of news. That they're just contributing to inform this information, and contributing to spreading this information... (Caviness & Maguire, 2012)

What has proven rather fascinating about the five expert interviews collected for this Master's Report is that all interviewees incorporated community and/or society in their personal definitions of civic engagement. And although, definitional congruence existed for the term civic engagement, concerning whether or not hitting the *like* button or posting comments on a social networking website constituted civic engagement—yielded two types of responses. The expert interviewee either (1) disagreed with this statement (Barreiro and Maguire); or (2) agreed with this statement, yet placed qualifiers on their elicited response (Gil de Zuñiga, Godsay, and King).

## DISCUSSION

The three news features crafted for KUT FM 90.5 and the five expert interviews conducted in 2012, when splayed upon this Master's Report literature review, yielded three insights:

(1) Although the literature revolving around the key concepts of civic engagement, political engagement, and political participation considers these three concepts as porous, slippery, and ill-defined—for the Millennials featured in my KUT news features and my expert interviewees, these concepts were not difficult to grasp—for *all* included community and/or society working together to solve a problem in their personal definitions for civic engagement. It is worth noting that I did not send any interviewees the interview guideline prior to our interview; thus, all expert interviewees considered community essential to civic engagement, on the spot, without any prior consideration;

(2) It remains too early for researchers to enumerate specifically, which online actions constitute civic engagement for the Millennial Generation. Drawing upon the responses of my expert interviewees, I believe that both academics and practitioners will be split along a bright line—either the individual believes that online actions meet the threshold for civic engagement or the individual believes that online actions could never substitute for face-to-face, in-person action. But before the Academy settles upon this bright line, academics and practitioners must interview members of the Millennial Generation from diverse backgrounds for their perspectives on the matter. The Academy can not continue to ignore, devalue; thereby, marginalizing the perspectives of the Millennial Generation, as to what constitutes civic engagement, political engagement, and political participation; and

(3) Both Media and the Academy should endeavor to work more together on a daily basis to craft smart, informed, and engaging content for the public good. The basis for this Master’s Report and my enrollment in Graduate School was to create “smart audio content.” Admittedly, finding this intersection took time. Yet, the crafted content journeyed beyond my initial expectations—I created content featuring oft marginalized voices of the Millennial Generation—steeped in academic theory, while remaining engaging to on-air and online listening audiences. This merger of the theoretical with the practical *must* continue; and I am only beginning...

## **Appendix A KUT Radio Feature Leads and Scripts**

KUT Radio Feature: Eva Longoria on Latino Issues, a Q&A with Artist and Activist Eva

Longoria 02/27/12

KUT Radio Feature: Local Candidates Go Digital and Social/The Mayor of Facebook 04/13/12

KUT Radio Feature: Getting Political on Social Networks 05/17/12

Actress and activist Eva Longoria was in Austin over the weekend as the keynote speaker for Saturday's 2012 Lozano Long Conference held at the Student Activity Center on the UT Campus. She spoke with Autumn Caviness for KUT and Reporting Texas.com about the most important issues she thinks Latinos face in the United States today.

Longoria:

We're the fastest-growing population and we're the youngest-growing population. Without specifically being a monolithic group, there's going to be ways in which we're going to have to come together even though we have different interests and different views depending on the origin of who you are.

There's no specific Latino agenda. The number one issue that Latinos raise in the election coming up is the economy — like every other American. Education — like every other American. Health care — like every other American. I think that as Latinos, we kind of have to aggregate our numbers and stop being a number and start being a market, start

being a voting bloc. Start being the most influential minority, not [just] the largest minority.

When district lines are redrawn, they can be done in an unfair advantage to Latino communities, either by if they're drawn with the constituents that are in those communities or by not appointing the correct representative. If it's a Latino community, it should be a Latino representative.

I find that any celebrity who has a political opinion is shunned away or really not taken seriously. I always say if I was a dentist, if I was a lawyer, I would have the same political view. I would have the same voice that I would want to be heard. The fact that I'm famous, or a celebrity, just gives me a lot of voice. But it doesn't mean that I'm not well-versed or literate in the issues and the policies that I'm passionate about and so I think people are often surprised at how much I know regarding politics.

Originally from Corpus Christi, Eva Longoria founded the non-profit organization Eva's Heroes for intellectually disabled children in 2006. She is an outspoken advocate for the United Farm Workers and recipient of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's 2010 leadership and community service award.

<http://kut.org/2012/02/eva-longoria-on-latino-issues/> Photo Credit: Jeff Heimsath

Caviness/ Local Candidates Go Digital and Social/The Mayor of Facebook LEAD 04/13/12

The Austin city elections are coming up next month. The campaigns, and voter turnout, are generally muted – thanks in part to campaign donation restrictions, which limit how much a person can give. That in turn limits the money candidates have to advertise. But as Autumn Caviness reports for KUT News, the lack of funds has lead candidates to increase use of free media.

Tape: Caviness Local Candidates Go Digital and Social/The Mayor of Facebook MIX (in AV cav041312)

Time: 4:28

SOC

Caviness/ Local Candidates Go Digital and Social/The Mayor of Facebook SCRIPT

04/13/2012

When Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell kicked off his re-election campaign – his campaign posted a video – showing the mayor taking a day off from work – just like from the movie Ferris Bueller’s Day Off.

(SOUND OF VIDEO)

It was a cute and fun way to launch a re-election bid. The 2 minute video was posted to Youtube. And within a few days it had over 10 thousand views. Leffingwell’s political director Joe Deshotel.

**Deshotel CUT 1 “That video is not something that we would have paid to put on TV, but we can make the video, and put it on YouTube, and get 10,000 people.”**



That's just one example of how Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube could play sizable roles in the May 12<sup>th</sup> Austin Mayoral and City Council elections. Social media can help politicians connect directly to voters. It allows them to personally respond to voter feedback. And – perhaps most importantly in an election that limits individual campaign donations to 350, it doesn't cost anything.

**Berthume CUT 2 “If you got \$10,000 to spend on your city council race, social media will be a very powerful ally.**

That's Josh Berthume. He created Swashlabs, a digital media advertising company. He says social media has become a key to winning a Presidential campaign. But the same is true at the other end of the spectrum – in municipal races.

**(11: 50) Berthume CUT 2 “What social media allows a campaign manager to do is take that money and rather than say, “I got \$5,000 and I can spend it on a direct mail piece...or I can at the city council level, I can dump a lot of this at a target demographic. I can target it at my district where I'm running. And I can try to raise my profile.”**

Austin Mayoral candidate Clay Dafoe plans on using this kind of targeted advertising in his own campaign. And not just because it's cheap.

**DAFOE CUT 1: “People these days are very busy with their schedules, and it's hard to peruse over every single community publication, every single newspaper.**

And even every single issue that voters find important.

That's where social media could become more cost effective than other inexpensive forms of campaigning – like walking door-to-door, shaking hands and asking for votes.

Sam Kookier certainly thinks its use turned his political fortunes around. Kookier is mayor of Rapid City South Dakota. He took office after winning a runoff election last year against a two-term incumbent by less than 500 votes.

Kookier credits his victory to the social media website Facebook.

**Kookier CUT 1: “In a race that close there are a lot of things that could be credited for the difference, but elections are won in the hearts of people. And what Facebook allowed me to do is connect directly with people...whereas my opponent spent a tremendous amount of money on retail politics, sending out ads to everybody at large and it wasn’t as effective.”**

Kookier’s Facebook ad strategy was simple: target specific demographics, based upon age and selected Facebook interests. The website also provided him with the tools he needed to gauge reaction to his ads – and get instant feedback.

**Kookier CUT 3: “We ran an ad targeting firefighters. We had had a very difficult dispute here that my opponent had had with the firefighters...so I ran a targeted Facebook ad to people who liked firefighters in various ways in Facebook”**

Did Facebook deliver the upset win? Maybe – maybe not – but in a close election every vote counts. Which makes the use of social media no longer a campaign luxury.

Vanessa Crook, is social media director for Mayoral candidate Brigid Shea.

**CROOK CUT 1 “And we’re constantly hearing from people, ‘do you have a Facebook page, a Twitter?’ And then we connect with them. I think part of it is the public assumes that it is a part of a campaign now.”**

A campaign that knows the city’s low turnout means even the smallest maneuver can win or lose enough votes to affect the outcome.

For KUT News and ReportingTexas dot com, I’m Autumn Caviness.

Caviness/ Getting Political on Social Networks      LEAD      05/17/2012

With this year's Texas primaries just days away - candidates are blanketing the state - speaking to as many voters as they can in an effort to engage and gain support. But while candidate bumper stickers and yards signs mark support for older voters - studies show the younger generation prefers a more subtle approach.

Tape: Caviness Getting Political on Social Networks MIX (in AV LIKE051712)

Time: 2:21

SOC

Caviness/Getting Political on Social Networks      SCRIPT

05/16/2012

A 2009 PEW Research Center study found that 10% of all Internet users, 18 and older, have used a social networking site for some sort of political or civic engagement. Break out younger voters - 18 to 29 and that number jumps to 37 percent. Now that's not exactly a tidal wave of civic engagement. But UT-Austin student body president Thor Lund, says for college students - it feels like marching in the streets.

**Lund CUT 1 “Social media is a huge tool to get people interested in things, and honestly, the biggest way to create interest--to spur the civic engagement--is numbers. People being involved and so, whether or not someone thinks it’s a civic engagement issue--that their starting out and that their trying to do--when people get behind an idea, the power of people is amazing.”**

And when you've got a full semester and an evening job - being able to click "like" before studying can make a student feel engaged - without taking up too much time.

Huey Fischer is president of the UT Democrats.

**Fischer CUT 1 “When we’re tabling and flyerling, we let folks know, ‘Hey, like us on Facebook, even if you can’t come at every meeting, even if you can’t be there physically, at least be aware of what we’re doing. So that way, when you do have time, when you can make a commitment, you’ll know what’s up.’”**

Morley Winograd views hitting the "like" button as putting up a traditional political yard sign. Winograd is co-author of *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation Is Remaking America*. So when a friend visits your facebook page - just like dropping by your house - they'll see who and what your support. Winograd says making these initial statements of support online can then lead to a stronger outward showing of support.

**Winograd CUT 1 “certainly there is that level of engagement at that point...but I think real engagement involves translating that online enthusiasm into offline activity.”**

And with the Texas Primaries just days away - these digital connections can remind people to reach the pinnacle of civic engagement. Presumptive Republican Presidential nominee Mitt Romney has 1.6 million "likes" on Facebook. Texas Congressman Ron Paul has more than 900,000. Supporters in Texas will likely get digital reminders to vote ahead of the May 29<sup>th</sup> primary.

For KUT News and Reporting Texas dot com, I’m Autumn Caviness.

## Appendix B Interview Guideline for Expert Interviewees

Expert Interviewees were all asked the following questions:

- (1) Why are you qualified to speak on Millennials, social media, and civic engagement?
- (2) How do you personally define civic engagement?
- (3) Can civic engagement happen online?
- (4) When we speak of a Millennial Generation. What does that mean? What is the Millennial Generation?
- (5) Does the Millennial Generation, consider hitting the *like* button or posting comments on a social networking website as constituting civic engagement?
- (6) Is being civically engaged online equivalent to being engaged civically offline?
- (7) How does the Millennial Generation define civic engagement?
- (8) In 2012 and now in 2013, we heard multiple conversations about civic engagement, social media and young people. From your perspective, what is missing from this conversation?

## Appendix C Transcripts of Expert Interviews

### Expert Interview with Aaron Barreiro

**CAVINESS:** Aaron, can you hear me?

**BARREIRO:** Yes

**CAVINESS:** Alright beautiful. Alright so lets just start this interview, very quickly, very easily, what is your name and what is your title?

**BARREIRO:** Okay, well my name is Aaron Barreiro, I am a second year student at the University of Texas Pan-American but I'm classified as a senior. And I'm currently-was elected as Student Government Association President.

**CAVINESS:** Okay. And Aaron, why are you qualified to speak on millennial, social media and civic engagements?

**BARREIRO:** I believe that I'm qualified because I think many of-many people, many students of this age are really a part of social media and civic engagement and millennials. Pretty much I know, not too much time is spent, as (inaudible 01:05) civic engagement but I do believe that myself has always been something that I've been taught by my parents and through school and through education. And it's important to always give something back.

**CAVINESS:** Alright, and Aaron how you personally define civic engagement?

**BARREIRO:** For me civic engagement is, has to be, I think it has to be one thing, I think it has to come from yourself, something that you personally would like, you would like to do and it helps the community as a whole. That's something that we don't see often, not at least here in the valley. None of the people think about how our community works together. It's a lot of times, just as individuals and that's one thing that I think would like to see change is that the valley come together and make things happen as a whole as a community.

**CAVINESS:** Now the question, I'm going to ask you more about the valley in a minute. But a question that I'm curious about, because we talk about millennial, and we're talking about social media. Aaron can civic engagement happen online?

**BARREIRO:** Can civic engagement happen online. I believe so, I believe it can be an avenue used to encourage people to learn about what civic engagement is. To get

them involved into, to get information. That's what online is, it's a resource for us to have information and if people don't know how to get involved, that is the avenue in which they should go through.

**CAVINESS:** You have to repeat a little bit and say can happen, it's an avenue. But you know, a little bit of hesitation.

**BARREIRO:** Yeah I believe so. I think the problem is, as of right now, I mean, you have, you start to look for it. And that's the problem, is getting people our age, people who aren't used to being civically engaged, to go out and say "You know what, this is something I want to start doing." It's all there, and it's always going to be there. It's the matter of okay, how can we get students out there, how can we get young-young adults to go out and find the information that they need.

**CAVINESS:** Fair enough. This term millennial generation. What does that mean, Aaron?

**BARREIRO:** I think it provides-I guess a lot of-a lot of questions. I think to me, it's odd to know that a lot of generations, you know, there's usually something that really, really highlights generations from the past, and to know that right now, it's sort of a question. So you know I mean, sometimes we're referred to as generation Y. That question of well, what defines this generation of people. What is it, is it the fact that the internet came up and social media? Is it-I mean, advancement in technology? You know, it really provides a lot of questions.

**CAVINESS:** Now I've been wondering this, because it's something that comes up. How do you believe the millennial generation defines civic engagement?

**BARREIRO:** I am obviously- it's kind of difficult to become [inaudible 00:4:31]. But I think –

**CAVINESS:** The entire generation.

**BARREIRO:** Right. But I think that-I think that there's this idea that it might just be something that is forced upon us. I know myself, last school I went to, is required often to go and do (inaudible 04:51) hours. It's required of students to go and get involved with community. So I think there is a sense that, to be physically engaged is not so much, it's not so much-you know, a privilege of one same thing, but something that's required less than through-it gives us that-that sense that it's not as-not as admirable, I guess, if you think, because of that fact that it's been pushed on us, it's a requirement for most of us.

**CAVINESS:** That's a good interesting point. You gave me something to think about, Aaron, that's a good point. Do you think the millennial generation, and I'm asking you to speak for the millennial generation as a whole again. Well does the millennial generation consider hitting the Like button or posting comments on a social networking website as constituting civic engagement? What do you think?

**BARREIRO:** I think so. And I mean, I personally disagree with that, but I do believe that there is essence of community and, when you're able to get on the social network and be able to link with other people in network and say you know what, this thing that I'm involved in, I like it, and even though to me it may feel a little superficial, it is something that is beginning to unite people and has been uniting people for a while now.

**CAVINESS:** Why do you say no for you personally though?

**BARREIRO:** Personally, I just feel like, like I brought up, to me it seems superficial. You know, because I mean, there's always another, there was always the question with social media and why I get a lot parents and I mean even the government is like questioning, well how do you control it? How do you manage it? There's so many things that you can't gauge on the internet, or online. You can't read people's emotions, you can't read people's behaviors, because it's masked entirely by networks and computers and screens. There's no-noo real way of seeing whether what's being said is superficial and whether it's true or not. And so to me, it may create connections between people, but how real those connections are? How real all 800 friends that some people have, how real those people are?

**CAVINESS:** That's a good point, that's a good point. So for you, being civically engaged online, is that equivalent to being engaged civically offline?

**BARREIRO:** If you define being civically engaged online is pushing a like button, definitely not.

**CAVINESS:** Got it.

**BARREIRO:** There's a big difference to me in helping a person. Whether it's by building a house, or like cleaning up trash around campus, or things like that, I mean, there's a big difference in that. In like I mean, if you create a channel, or that being online, which you can give advice and which you can help young people, like learn more about what it means to be a good person, then there is some equivalent. But as far as I mean, if the find is liking, then no.



**CAVINESS:** That's interesting, okay. So let me ask you this, Aaron. In 2012 we had an election year. And now I believe in 2013 we've had multiple conversations about civic engagement, social media and young people. Aaron, you know this subject matter well, so from your perspective, what is missing from this conversation?

**BARREIRO:** I think the parents, I don't think enough, I mean, the cause, I mean at the end of the day. I mean, whatever happens online, yeah, I guess it's difficult for parents to track and manage and to keep an eye out. But these are the lines from one of my favorite shows called "Suits". When someone is doing something wrong, sure you may not know, but as a parent, it's their job to know. Even if they don't know it, that's their job, that's their responsibility. And there is a lot of factors that come into that, right? I mean as far as why parents may not know, I mean we have children having children, and that could be a factor in but I don't think there's enough responsibility being placed on the parents and their role in all this.

**CAVINESS:** That's interesting. So, what do you think we should address? We should talk to the parents about their role? What do you suggest?

**BARREIRO:** I think so, I think it's just a matter, just, you know. Growing up, to me it was always-well just don't ever talk about it. But more and more, the information's there, as parents don't talk about these things with their children, they're going to find it. So, there needs to be more communication, parents need to say you know what, we need to have these sit down talks and talk about things that are important. Because if not, they're going to find out. They're going-I mean, if they don't want their children to get into social media and they don't give them reasons, they just say no, well they're going to still do it. It's a matter of talking with them and straightening those things out.

**CAVINESS:** So let me match that and understand you. Complete the sentence for me Aaron: when we talk about civic engagement, social media and young people, the blank is missing from this conversation.

**BARREIRO:** Parent involvement.

**CAVINESS:** Parent involvement? Parental involvement? That's interesting, wow. Thank you Aaron, fantastic.

**BARREIRO:** Yes, madam.

**CAVINESS:** Thank you. But I have to ask you, offline, and this will not be included as part of our conversation online.

**BARREIRO:** Okay.

**CAVINESS:** What part are – are you from the valley originally?

**BARREIRO:** I wasn't born here, but I've been raised here for most of my life, yes.

**CAVINESS:** Okay, what part of the valley were you raised in?

**BARREIRO:** Palmview and McAllen, mostly.

**CAVINESS:** Okay, alright. I asked that because I used to live in Weslaco and Rangerville which is my [inaudible 00:11:18]. Nobody ever knows where that is.

**BARREIRO:** Okay.

**CAVINESS:** So, when I lived in Rangerville, me going to the city, like Allen, was like this huge deal Aaron. I be like I'm going to the city, I'm going to go today. I'm going go to the sun harvest and get me something out of the convenience there. Do you see yourself living in the valley once you finish your degree?

**BARREIRO:** Matter of fact is I would never see myself as staying here, honestly. I mean, that could always change, there's still a lot of education to go before I really have to make that decision. So...

**CAVINESS:** What do you want to do?

**BARREIRO:** I'm a pre med major. So, hopefully will go to pediatrics.

**CAVINESS:** Nice, very, very nice. What's your major right now, again?

**BARREIRO:** Pre Medical biology.

**CAVINESS:** Nice, nice, that's really, really cool. Well, congratulations Aaron on your election. That's exciting. Your school is a big, big school. How many students go to your school?

**BARREIRO:** We have around 19,000.

**CAVINESS:** That's a big, big school. I've been on campus a couple of times. You're in Edinburgh, right?

**BARREIRO:** Yes.

**CAVINESS:** Okay, that's a big, big school. Alright, well, congratulations and what's going to happen from here is, I have about 4 more interviews to do so, i've done an interview with Rock the Vote. The Circle which is like this big political organization, and there's a lot of other really fresh people such as yourself. And once this all gets out, it should be done by mid July, I'm trying to get everything wrapped up. I will send you a link, I'll probably ask you for your photo and your quick bio, probably within a month. So I'll ask you for that so I can put it all linked up, on to this site. And we should be good to go.

**BARREIRO:** Right.

**CAVINESS:** Thank you.

**BARREIRO:** Thank you very much.

**CAVINESS:** You are welcome. Thank you and good luck with your finals tomorrow.

**BARREIRO:** Thank you.

**CAVINESS:** Bye Aaron, take care.

**BARREIRO:** Bye bye.

#### **Expert Interview with Dr. Homero Gil de Zuñiga**

**CAVINESS:** We're good, we're going to repeat the first 2 question we got your dry run.

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** Okay, go for it, good.

**CAVINESS:** Alright, what is your name and what is your title.

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** My name is Homero Gil De Zuniga and I am a system professor here at the school of journalism at the university of Texas in Austin.

**CAVINESS:** And why are you qualified to speak on millennials, social media and civic engagement?

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** My area of resource relates to those issues. I usually am interested in learning more about how new technologies and digital media and social media facilitate community involvement or political or civic participation. So I'm always thinking about ways in which digital media explain the way in which people get informed, discuss politics and ultimately participate in the democratic process.

**CAVINESS:** How do you personally define civic engagement?

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** That's a good question. The main difference that I propose in my area or research is, civic engagement is to some extent different than political engagement. To extend that, political engagement will be related to influencing the core men much more institutionalized and so forth, versus civic engagement which is the pursue of creating a better community or changing things in your neighborhood, for instance, things like that. Helping each other and collaborate with each other to create a better society but through different means, not through just the political institutional classic, traditional political participation, so it's a little bit different.

**CAVINESS:** And for me this is almost a \$25000 question. But can civic engagement happen online?

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** Yes, absolutely, certainly. We've been, for the past few years, attempting to measure how civic involvement take place in the virtual arena and of course, it relates to the civic engagement offline, certain things are the same. But we're coming up, I want to say we, academics are coming up with better instruments to actually collect information and empirically address what civic engagement is online and attempting to measure it and have a better idea as for how people collaborate and participate, not only face to face but also digitally.

**CAVINESS:** This term, millennial generation, what does that mean?

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** That's interesting. I think it's the people who were born in the year, early, I'd say lately 80's or early 90's or 90's and they grew up with digital media. And not only they grew up digital natives, but also they are embarked into the use of social media as a you know, daily facilitating their daily lives. So that's the millennials, I guess, from my perspective. I might be wrong though, I don't know, you may want to talk to other professors who might be more aware of the millennials.

**CAVINESS:** Alright, so I'm going to shift you back into that vein now, because I think it's interesting. How do you believe the millennial generation defines civic engagement?

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** That's a great question. I don't have the data to speak about that, from my own research. I have done research dividing young people versus older cohort but I haven't done qualitative analysis to address the question of what civic media or what civic engagement means to them. What is true though, when you pay attention to the data, is that they associate or they participate or they gather or they engage into civic activities a little different than the more tradition or the older counterparts. They may

interpret things in a different way, more related to the social media, digital media at some instances. And I can come up with a perfect example, although is no civic example, but it's the one that's popping up in my mind. For the older cohorts participate politically is very easy through the classic institution, a traditional path, right? That we go, we vote, let's discuss this, we gather. And young generation or young people may see it different. They say okay, I don't think going there and speaking up it's going to influence up much, but if I go ahead and I actually buy certain products or I start to buy certain products instead, I think I'm going to be much more efficient making a difference. So from now on, because I don't like what the social attributes of this particular company, I'm going to start buying a different product. So boycotting or by cutting. They engage in activities in a different way, when you compare to older people. But again I think that's a phenomenal question that you have to address, maybe qualitatively asking them and analyzing their actions to this, when it comes to civic activities.

**CAVINESS:** Now I'm glad you said that, because there is something with the qualitative flavor that would come from talking to that specific group. So I'm going to ask you to do another leap here --

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** Okay.

**CAVINESS:** --in terms of thought, and just from the students that you interact with and who you encounter on a day to day basis, do you think the millennial generation considers hitting the Like button or posting comments on a social networking website as constituting civic engagement?

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** I think to some extent, it does. And I think to some extent, they do understand that, as a way of expressing themselves, civically or politically, and they do it. So I should say those are one of the few new ways in which we are attempting to measure how people actually participate in the public domain, and one of those will be that, the idea that when I like this, or when I post this picture, or when I update my status and I say this, I'm actually expressing myself in a particular way, which it's a notion, it's a level of civic engagement, when they talk about issues that matter for the community, for the neighbors and for a society at large. So I think, again, I don't have the implicative results because I haven't done any focus groups or in [inaudible 00:06:35] interviews, or haven't discussed these issues with them. But I'm convinced that they are aware of their activities online and they know they're taking charge of certain activities that relate to civic outcomes, for sure.

**CAVINESS:** Alright, so let's shift gears a little bit more, and just get more into your perspective. For you is being civically engaged online equivalent to being engaged civically offline?

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** Well, that's a good question. I don't think it's equivalent or 100% equivalent. I think they're differences and [inaudible 00:07:09] but if you run a pierce correlation between these 2 variables, they're going to be highly correlated, right? So for instance, if I want to test what really gets me drunk and I drink whiskey and someone tells me but do you think vodka is different than whiskey? I think vodka may be very different than whiskey, but both of them very likely will obtain the same outcome to me, which is I'm going to get drunk if I keep on drinking those 2 things, right? So I think civic engagement, online and offline, the same as political participation, online and offline, I think they're 2 different dimensions, of an activity that may relate to each other. But there's 2 different dimensions to it. There's certain things that you can do offline, you will never be able to attend online and vice versa. There are few things that you do online that will be very hard to achieve in the offline setting.

**CAVINESS:** So in 2012 and now I believe in 2013 we heard multiple conversations about civic engagement, social media, young people. Now professor, you know this arena, pretty, pretty well. From your vantage point and your perspective, what is missing from this conversation? What are we leaving out? What are we forgetting?

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** Well if we would just starting to learn more about the connection of the internet media, social media and how that saves the way in which young people, in particular, participate of this civic process. I think is not that we're leaving things out, that probably we are not analyzing everything just in depth, I see those happens in the new line of research, you start exploring what's going on and then from there you keep on learning more and more. I think to this point we're able to actually confidently say what mechanisms take place on line the facilitate civic engagement, for young people. So when they learn about public affair uses, when they learn about important issues in their community, they participate. That kind of behavior will predict that they participate civically at a later point. So, if they're using social media, for instance to get involved, that will really, positively and strongly predict that the same people will end up participating civically. As few other behaviors online will not predict that the participatory behavior, so for instance, if they're using social media to follow, I don't know, their entertainment needs, very likely that that will not predict that they participate online. So watching videos and liking and re-forwarding or posting or re-tweeting the latest video from I don't know, Christina Aguilera, may not do much for people to end up participating civically. Unless the video from Christina Aguilera is important in terms of

news and information that relates to civic issues. But my thinking is Christina Aguilera won't do that. I don't know, I'm not familiar with her music, but very likely that that time of behavior, when it relates to entertainment issues, it won't predict that these people participate. So you see, as for now we're learning that, a, when young people use social media and the internet media in a certain way, that behavior will end up predicting that they actually participate in civic activities. So what we are starting to learn now more is, when you're saying what are we leaving out, that mechanism seems so limit simplistic. So it's not only learning and then I participate. They're many more things in there, unknown some subtleties that we're trying to parse out. So is it that when they read information, they discuss about that information, also in an online setting or social media and that facilitates their process to get involved? Is it not only that they discuss is that maybe they actually reflect, elaboration, right? That when I'm reading something though social media, I may step back and reflect on those issues and say you know what, this information that my friend has sent me is very important to me and I think it is an issue that I should take on. And that will spark some civic engagement. So is it not only ready, but what are all the mechanisms, what other things are mediating that process between information and behavior. So I just mentioned one, elaboration. I think there all that's there is discussion and attributes of discussion. That's what I'm working on lately. So is it that when I'm using social media, it provides me or it facilitates my exposure to, genius people, to people who are different than me? So that makes me think about what are the important issues to these people too. Let's say that you and I, we have a different ethnographic background, and we're friends in social media. So when you post something that's important to you, I might not be aware of that information, but it makes me think about issues that I never thought before. So issues that I discuss, issues discuss with people that are different from me, issues that I discuss with people who disagree with me. Issues that I discuss with people who actually provide a more advanced reasoning, as for what they think the way they think. So there are number of things there that we need to pay more attention and I think we're based in very simplistic models, stimuli and behavior reaction, right? Like Pavlov, I whistle and then the dog salivates. I don't think it's that simple, I don't think it's we use this for them, we participate. There are many things in between that mediate that process, yeah, information is huge, but they're all the things and they're taking place in social media and digital media that we'll explain the way I end up participating civically.

**CAVINESS:** Thank you very, very much. That was fantastic.

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** I hope it help you.

**CAVINESS:** No, it definitely help me. And go ahead and tell me your name and your title one more time.

**GIL DE ZUNIGA:** Sure thing, I am Homero Gil De Zuniga and I am an assistant professor at the university of Texas Austin, within the school of journalism.

**CAVINESS:** Thank you so much. Perfect, that was fantastic.

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### **Expert Interview with Surbhi Godsay**

**CAVINESS:** Okay Surbhi, can you hear me?

**GODSAY:** I can.

**CAVINESS:** Alright was have switched and merged calls we are good to go.

**GODSAY:** Perfect.

**CAVINESS:** I am so excited because usually when I do the interviews, I am such a stickler, I love my interviews in person. So I have to learn how to get this where it sounds good and all these amazing apps will record the telephone call and then it is a beautiful MP3, and so I get all excited now.

**GODSAY:** That is awesome.

**CAVINESS:** Alright so let's get started, and, these are basic questions but the first question for you is, what is your name and what is your title?

**GODSAY:** So, my name is Surbhi Godsay and my title is researcher at Circle at Tufts University.

**CAVINESS:** And how long have you been at Circle's Surbhi?

**GODSAY:** I have been at Circle for now, about four years, this coming June so, I cannot believe it has been that long, but yes, it has been about four years.

**CAVINESS:** Wow, and this is not on our questionnaire guideline but, I am curious, what lead you to work Circle, because that seems like an amazing amazing job.



**GODSAY:** Yeah, yeah, so a couple of things that I think one thing that really drew me to Circle is that I love research, so, that was kind of one of the things coming out of college that I knew that I wanted to pursue. So that was one component. The second component is that I went to school in Vermont and I was really engaged myself, in kind of campus life, but in the community as well and I found kind of how transformative that experience could be so, you know, I have used Circle Research in some of my reports and when I saw a job opening I kind of took advantage of it because I knew this was something I was passionate about and that, you know, I wanted to push through and continue throughout my career.

**CAVINESS:** Well, that is amazing. And I will tell you what when I talk to other people (inaudible 01:55), you have to talk to circle, that is who you need to talk to. I was like, "I am working on it. I know." So that just shows you how strong your organization and your research really is.

**GODSAY:** That is really flattering. That is really nice.

**CAVINESS:** So Surbhi, why are you qualified to speak on the millennial social media and civic engagement?

**GODSAY:** So-I mean-you know-at circle-so we are-I guess I will just kind of say the whole title which is, "The center for information and research on civic learning and engagement." We study young people's civic and political engagement and development. So you know, I think that social media plays a huge role in this, because, I think it –you know, it is a semi new phenomenon because we're talking about young people, we look at them longitudinally from you know, say 1972, when there were institutions like unions that were around that young people were a part of. And I think that social media is a really interesting concept because you know, now we do not see as many young people in unions, but we do see a lot of young people engaging online so it is kind of a new arena for this research and so and it is an important one, so we do not focus on social media but it is definitely a component of what we think about when we are thinking about civic engagement.

**CAVINESS:** Which is a perfect segue. How do you personally define civic engagement?

**GODSAY:** Yeah, I mean, it is a- it is a really great question because I think you know, a lot of people define civic engagement in really different ways and you know, I

think when we think about Civic engagement at Circle, we think about it really broadly. So, you know to us Civic engagement essentially encompasses all the ways we identify and understand common problems in our communities, or you know even state, nation or the world and I think for us, you know, actually doing civic engagement requires certain kinds of civic skills, certain kinds of Civic knowledge and disposition. And so, I think that this-you know, civic engagement to some people can just mean political participation for instance. But for us civic engagement could mean political participation either electoral or non-electoral, it can mean service, it could mean activism, it could mean media use, and I think that at circle as well start breaking down you know, who is engaging in these kind of things and who is not we started to uncover that there might be different types of engagement happening. For instance among low income young people we saw things like working with neighbors on solving a problem or doing favors for neighbors and so these are examples that are less, kind of institutionalized engagement, but rather kind of informal engagement and so, when you know like I said when we think about civic engagement, we think about it really really broadly, and not just some kind of form or service that you can do through an institution.

**CAVINESS:** So Surbi, that \$25,000 question, can civic engagement happen online?

**GODSAY:** That is a very good question too. You know I think civic engagement can happen online. You know I think what we have seen from research is how online network can really inspire conventional political participation or kind of participation in other kind of ways. You know one of our friends, researcher, Joe Conge, showed that young people who pursue their interests on the internet are more likely to be engaged in civic and political issues and I think that is a really interesting component and I think that you know, if you think about the 2008 election, for instance, President Obama used a lot of social media and kind of traditional grassroots advocacy in duality to kind of send information out to young people. So yeah, I do think that we have seen some good examples of how engagement can happen online, and I think that another important component, which I will probably reiterate as we go along is, how can online engagement can really influence offline engagement and how both of them can work together hand in hand.

**CAVINESS:** What do you mean by that? That is interesting how online engagement can influence, what are you thinking?

**GODSAY:** Yeah, so I guess what I mean by that is that I think that young people for instance, can be talking message boards or can be liking someone's political status on Facebook and that is one step right? And I think just as a personal example, I like live in West Philadelphia and we have an engaged community online and we have a lot of different message boards a lot of different youth letters that go out. But you don't see, maybe, necessarily the same people who are online that you do working on cleaning on the park, for instance or at community meetings. So there might be different populations, some people are the same but some people are just engaging online and some people are you know, just engaging offline. So I think that for us at Circle it is really important to think about are those young people who are engaging online getting those opportunities to engage offline? Is there enough of a pipeline? You know because, I think that for you know for us, a lot of the young people who are engaging their communities, have had the opportunity, A. and B, a lot of them are being asked to participate and so I think that online engagement is great because it does not necessarily take and opt in, you can kind of just do it. Whereas, offline opportunities, take a little bit more and I think that sometimes it requires people to ask young people to kind of participate. So I think another example of that is, you know, if a young person is interested in an issue online, say they sign an online petition how do we get them to be advocates for that offline?

**CAVINESS:** Okay, so moving from just the online to the offline, the more physical component?

**GODSAY:** Yeah. Exactly.

**CAVINESS:** So we were talking about young people, what exactly does the term millennial generation, what does that mean?

**GODSAY:** Yeah so, you know, I can speak to what we think about in terms of our own research purposes, and for us, when we are talking about millennial, we are generally talking about young people who are 18 to 29 years old. And we are specifically focusing on this age group because it is traditionally out of high school, I mean young people can leave school before that, but I think that it is an age group that is starting adulthood. So, whether that means going on to higher education or getting a job or something else. But I think that you know, as I said in the beginning back in 1972 you would have a lot of unions who would get young people who are just starting out their careers to be engaged, or you have churches who are involving young people in their

programming and I think that as time goes on, young people are participating in these kinds of institutions less and less. And so, when you don't have young people, who are in a say college institution, or in high schools then they are harder to reach. And so I think that, you know, and we have seen from research that young people in certain ways are less engaged, but, are still engaged in certain ways, and so I think that this is an important turning point for a lot of young people when they are starting their adulthood and really starting to solidify, their kind of, stake in their communities

**CAVINESS:** Surbhi, how do you think of generation defines civic engagement?

**GODSAY:** I think what is so interesting about saying "millennial generation", you know, I am a millennial myself and I think what is so fascinating to me is that you know, our cohort is the most diverse in US history and I think that diversity brings a lot to the table and it means that young people have really different experiences with civic engagement. So it means that my experience is completely different from you know, someone who is the exact same age but grew up in a different place and had a completely different life than me. I think that to many young people the term civic engagement and to certain young people it would not honestly wouldn't mean anything and to other you people civic engagement would solely mean voting or solely mean service. And you know, at Circle we did research that showed that young people engaged in their communities and politics in very different ways and so in 2010 we looked at the millennial generation as a whole and we actually found six distinct patterns of engagement using a technique called a cluster analysis. So for instance there was a cluster of young people what just talked about political issues but they didn't vote or they did not take any action otherwise. And then, you know, there was a group that we call broadly engaged, which meant that they were engaged in kind of service and politics and took and they took on leadership roles and then there were people that we called the donors which was there were young people who gave money but didn't really do anything else. So I think that you know when we think about civic engagement, we have to, I mean not only, remember that millennial cohort is really diverse but that they are engaging in really really different ways and so what civic engagement means to them would be very different.

**CAVINESS:** Does the millennial generation consider hitting the Like button, or posting comments on a social networking website as constituting to be civic engagement?

**GODSAY:** Yeah, so I don't want to be too redundant, but I guess I would just emphasize that because young people think about civic engagement in really different ways, I would say yes for some people hitting the like button or posting comments would be their way of engaging in politics or the community. And I think from what we see from research is that some young people are just talking about issues or speaking their mind on the internet, you know from what we have seen regarding online petition but we have also see how those online methods can influence policy on the ground. So I think for a lot of reasons, having that online platform is really really important. But I do think that, like I said earlier, it think it is important that we kind of help connect opportunities online with opportunities offline, and you know, I don't think that it is a problem that people are just you now engaging online because we've seen the power of organizing online, but I think it is important to at least be providing those opportunities if young people want to be you know, working in their communities in a more-in a less-you know-how do I say it-you know, if they want to be working non online, if they want to be working in person.

**CAVINESS:** Well I am just saying because you brought this new dimension survey up not just staying online but being able to connect to online activity. For you, and just speaking as how you think from your own perspective, is being civically online equivalent to being engaged civically offline?

**GODSAY:** You know I think it is definitely an aspect of civic engagement. I guess I would not think of those two things as being mutually exclusive or thinking that maybe one is better than the other. I think of them as being really complimentary of each other actually. So you know, when I think about this kind of online engagement versus offline engagement, I think that together they have a lot of power and I think there are people who are going to be doing both, I think there are going to be people who are doing one or the other, but I think that to kind of make motion and to make things happen I think we have seen that you know, online engagement is a really important component of civic engagement as a whole and so you know that is why we are studying it and that is why I think that it needs to be taken really seriously especially as it relates to millennial.

**CAVINESS:** Now in 2012 and now I am starting to believe in 2013 Surbhi we had all these conversations about civic engagement, social media, young people this is truthfully-out of anyone that I have really talked to, this is what you do, this is what you study. I really am glad to hear your thoughts on this because what do you think, from

your perspective Surbhi is missing from our conversation when we talk about civic engagement, social media, and then bring in young people into the conversation?

**GODSAY:** Yeah, you know, I think that for us at Circle, the most important thing for us to be thinking about is who is getting some of these opportunities and who is not. And who is engaging and who is not. Because at Circle, we're really interested at these gaps and engagement. So for instance, when we see-when we look at young people who do not have college experience versus young people that do, we are seeing major gaps in traditional types of engagement like volunteering and voting. But it is important to us to understand-we know that these people are engaged in other ways, so how are they engaging and how can they connect to other opportunities that might be institutionalized opportunities? What made the barriers that are standing in the way of them, you know either getting those opportunities or you know are there barriers that are kind of self-efficacy? So I think that one thing that we find that is consistently missing and that we kind of try to push the narrative on is that who are the young people who are not participating, and who are the young people that you know, who need to be participating because I think that when you are only having certain groups of young people that are participating with some others that are completely left out that is a problem for democracy honestly and so I think that for us you know, this is kind of the main point. So, even as it relates to social media, you know who are the groups of young people who are engaging online. I think you know I honestly-we-we have not done specific research on that topic, but I think that is something that needs to be explored more and for us to really think about you know- are we still missing certain groups of young people when we are talking about the millennial generation as a whole, and how do we tap that potential, that kind of every single young person kind of has. So I guess I would say that would be our most important thing that-you know I would not say it's necessarily is missing but we would want to push into the conversation a little bit more.

**CAVINESS:** That is interesting because are you thinking the dimensions of whom might be absent from participation is following a long line of race and/or class?

**GODSAY:** Yeah, and I think honestly we have seen that. I think we have seen that low income youth of color who traditionally do not have any higher ed experience or have any college experience or the young people that are kind of being left out of a lot of these opportunities. And so you know, Circle did actually did a pretty large scale

qualitative study recently with young people without college experience who were ninety percent young people of color and I think that one of the things that we have learned from the study is that you know, I think you hear this narrative that these young people are not participating but, you know, I think that is false because these young people actually are participating and you know, we saw things like role modeling. So they wanted to be you know, role models for your men and your women in their communities and that is a really important thing that you know, may not be measured on a survey for instance. But it told us that there is a lot of potential there, and I think that it is important, as I said because we are such a diverse cohort that you know, we are making sure that all voices are being heard, and all perspectives are being heard.

**CAVINESS:** Wow, that is super interesting, now you have opened up another can of thoughts. But (inaudible 18:30) because what I really am concerned with Shirby is that-that is why I study this, is because ultimately I am concerned with where young people go online for news and how does class, and how does race play into what we do online. So it is really interesting to hear you say that in terms of, there is perhaps this disconnect and how do we reach and make sure that everyone is included in the fold.

**GODSAY:** Exactly.

**CAVINESS:** That is very helpful.

**GODSAY:** Is that what your thesis is about?

**CAVINESS:** Well that is what my report is-my report is more along the lines of young people and social media and civic engagement, but in the interim since I last spoke with you, which has been almost a year ago, I was accepted into the (inaudible 19:13) program for journalism.

**GODSAY:** Right right.

**CAVINESS:** So this year my news journalism report is all about the thesis or the dissertation later on will be about young people, millennials of color and where we go for news, how does race and class play into that, so.

**GODSAY:** Interesting and so when you think about, where they go for news are you thinking-are you kind of focusing on online or-because one of the things I just

thought of was you know, a lot of the people that we talk to listen to the radio and that is not something we measure on surveys, like how many- do young people get their news on the radio, so, that is actually something we heard quite frequently.

**CAVINESS:** What I did this year is I created this questionnaire, and, oh my goodness, I have more respect for you guys because it is very difficult to get these things out there. It takes a lot of time, and love, and energy. So I created this questionnaire and I have what I consider nontraditional sources, so I also teach at a HBCU Huston Tillotson which is (inaudible 20:23) and so I work with young people of color every day. And when I talk with my students, a lot of where they go for news sources is not traditional what we hear. So for example, my students would never say, for the most part, "Oh I just watched Colbert last night" (inaudible 20:43), and so what I ended up pursuing which is thinking of all the places that my friends and I go and then the places my students go and then putting that on this big matrix and I have 160 people fill out that matrix.

**GODSAY:** Wow.

**CAVINESS:** I was so excited. So I had to learn all about snowball sampling service. See you can appreciate that...

**GODSAY:** Totally.

**CAVINESS:** When I tell my other girls they be like, you understand that there is a lot love that went into this. And so then I sent it out and I had people tweeted out the survey, x,y,z, and it was interesting to see what came back was local news was popular, radio was popular, which surprised me, and you had some things like media takeout for news and Instagram which surprised me.

**GODSAY:** Really? Wow!

**CAVINESS:** That shocked me, that Instagram? But what I learned for all groups so , be it millennials who were white, black, Latino, Asian, Native American, Indian American, for everyone, Facebook was the number one source of news. And what was interesting is that for all the other groups except young African American, Colbert was in the top ten on their news sources.

**GODSAY:** Wow



**CAVINESS:** For African Americans it was not even in the top twenty.

**GODSAY:** Wow that is interesting. Do you have a sense about kind of why, especially because-I mean, it's not a matter of not watching TV because if they say local news-but is it-so do you have a sense about why?

**CAVINESS:** I think the sense is that-it's just not-so I am African American, I am Black, I think the sense is that it is not in our conversation, and sometimes I don't even realize what is mainstream until I am in graduate classes. Because my nature is very very different.

**GODSAY:** Right, right. That is a really interesting questions yeah.

**CAVINESS:** I didn't even think about that until maybe a couple years ago because my mainstream is very similar to my students' mainstream so I don't think about that and our mainstream African American and Latinos tend to have somewhat similar mainstreams and so it is interesting that when I am in grad classes, and people will say, for example, "Have you seen this?" and I am like no.

**GODSAY:** I have no idea what you are talking about.

**CAVINESS:** Right and then I go online and there is like twenty five million views! And I'm and like "shame" I don't know what this is at all. So that really had me starting to think about what we consider news and information and where we go because you have one mainstream that is predicated a lot of times upon race and is built upon class and race that is totally different from the mainstream that I consume and where I go for my news.

**GODSAY:** That's a really-I mean that's a really great point and it is a really interesting question because I think about this a lot and this is kind of like a side note not related to the Circle but you know I am Indian, and so a lot of the things - I am really interested in kind racial (inaudible 23:54). And so I think that a lot of my newsfeed for instance, is thinking about these issues and so I think about it sometimes and I am like you know, this is what my world and sometimes you get so caught up in that world that I can't even like think other ways you know? It's hard to like think about this-just like you said these blogs that I am reading like colorlines.com is not a mainstream blog but I think of it to be a mainstream blog like everyone is reading it, just because it is what I am reading.

**CAVINESS:** That is so true and you will be happy to know that I am interviewing Jamila tomorrow. Yes you would be happy to know because Colorlines is important to me, so for me I would think oh well don't we all (audible 24:44)for example this all started with Nicole Richie, don't we all go to young black and fabulous and Nicole Ritchie to look at celebrity gossip? No Autumn we don't. Some people like to go to TMZ and some people actually got to Perez Hilton, so people came from and that it where it came from was this curiosity because I mean it is fascinating that we have this multiracial cohort but we still seem very fragmented in our choices.

**GODSAY:** Definitely. That is interesting and so-and so what are you thinking about in terms of your final report like when are you going to have it be finalized, I would love to read it.

**CAVINESS:** Well, so the dissertation report that is going to come out probably two more years from now and I will definitely make sure you get that. This report though should be done by mid July, early-August, so you will definitely have it by September.

**GODSAY:** Awesome Awesome.

**CAVINESS:** One of those cases where let's just finish it Autumn and get done with it. But it has been a busy year Surbhi, my hat goes off to you guys as researches because it is not easy at all.

**GODSAY:** No it is not and I don't know if you heard the census data came out yesterday actually and so we just released our 2012 youth letter turn out, so I was just up all night sort of things, like crunching the numbers and everything. It is exciting sometimes but I think it is really difficult sometimes to kind of collect the information and process it and I think for us at Circle it is really important to kind of tell more of a holistic stories we don't like just putting a statistic out there and calling it a day. I think for us contextualizing it is really important so I think that is the hardest part about kind of being a researcher and then-you probably know, just being researcher and having to be concise too.

**CAVINESS:** Because you want to tell the little part of it. So do you use SPSS too?

**GODSAY:** Yes we use SPSS that is our software of choice.

**CAVINESS:** You know you're a nerd when you're like "I can get SPSS on my Mac Oh My God." You should have seen me. You couldn't hit me with a red apple as my grandma would say.

**GODSAY:** I know, that's such a hassle by the way.

**CAVINESS:** You should have seen me. You couldn't hit me with a red apple as my grandma would say. I was like Oh my God, I got it on my Mac you guys! Look at me!

**GODSAY:** I know sometimes we talk in syntax language, it is really bad. We are like super nerds at Circle.

**CAVINESS:** I love it. Thank you Surbhi I am so so happy and appreciative that you made this happen, Thank you.

**GODSAY:** Of course and let me know if you have any other question. I am always happy to help and I'm excited to read your final product.

**CAVINESS:** You got it. Thank you Surbhi, have a wonderful weekend.

**GODSAY:** Alright, take care Autumn Bye

**CAVINESS:** Bye

### **Expert Interview with Jamilah King**

**CAVINESS:** Okay, Jamilah can you hear me?

**KING:** Yeah I can hear you.

**CAVINESS:** Alright, perfect, we are recording. So, to start our interview off what is your name and what is your title?

**KING:** My name is Jamilah King and I am the news editor and cultural reporter at Colorlines.com

**CAVINESS:** And Jamilah, why are you qualified to speak on millennials, social media and civic engagement?

**KING:** So I mean, first of all I am a young person living in this age, I'm a young black woman who is very involved in social media, and I've always been particularly interested in how ways informed our cultures and the way that our culture operates and specifically

how messages are being, you know, communicated, through society, through different circles. And you know, I am uniquely positioned as a reporter who's been following this stuff for quite a few years. To look at those intersections, I've done a good amount of reporting, media policy as long as looking, as well as looking at sort of the contours of the waves in which our race inform, our cultural discussion. That's interesting because I love how you like, well first of all, I am a young person of color, so --

**CAVINESS:** Right.

**KING:** --I know what's going on within the community. And it's not less important because, I'll show you a little bit later, in terms of my research, how I do follow to that, domain, you might think it's important.

**CAVINESS:** But Jamilah, how do you personally define civic engagement?

**KING:** Uh, I define civic engagement, sort of 2 ways. The most importantly I think I define civic engagement by the ways in which people interact with their elected government. And I think that happens in a number of ways, I think that happens both by young people and old people going to the poll, and that's the sort of engagement that it's looked at and tracked most popularly, but also I'd like to think of the engagement that goes on outside of these traditional spirits of political power, right. And so, specifically when you're talking about communities or colors, and young folks in particular, a lot of the organizing work that is happening today, it had happened for years. Happens sort of outside, of the democratic party or the republican parties. It happens in these arenas where folks are actually asking questions and trying to, you know, build up power to advocate for the issues that are important in their communities. So I've done a good amount of reporting across the country and I remember a few years ago I was actually in Milwaukee. And I was working, on a story, I was talking to a young man who was working with other league of young borders out in Milwaukee. And they had a really interesting approach in that, you know, they were very, very, very invested in the 2010 elections, 2010 congressional elections. The governor race that was going on that year. But they were also concerned about jobs. They were also concerned about what are the ways that we can actually change the material conditions for black folks and working class folks and people of color in the city of Milwaukee. And you know, they had specific ways around organizing for those issues that again, are not necessarily front end center of the democratic party, or the republican party or any of the mainstream sort of political movement that have been going on in the US.

**CAVINESS:** Jamilah, can civic engagement happen online?

**KING:** It can start online. I think that --

**CAVINESS:** You're thinking about that.

**KING:** Yeah, I think that you know, it's really popular, you know, on the same age, when we have a lot of really amazing online organizing going in. It's really easy to say okay, that's all we need to do and we're done. But I think that the folks who've done a lot of tremendous work, and sort of used online platform as one vehicle to get folks involved, right? So it can be part of a campaign, you can maybe get your message out, you can send a video out, you can spread the word, right? But it's really, really, really important to talk to people face to face. It's really, really, really important to get out in the community, because, I mean, not only because a lot of the folks, right, when you're talking about civic engagements and millennials, you cannot talk about inter-generational sort of communication, right? So, young folks care about the issues that impact their lives, which inevitably impacts their parent's life, which inevitably impacts their grandparent's lives. And so, this is an intergenerational conversation, right? And I think it's really important to, you know, make sure that you engage people offline, right? So not everyone's grandmother's online, not everybody can afford to have a home computer. And more importantly than that, it's good to see folks face to face, right? It's good to communicate things, it's still a really, really, really powerful way of building communities, to see folks face to face. To actually see the lived experiences that folks are going through.

**[00:05:00]**

**CAVINESS:** So, this whole term, when we speak of millennial generation. What does that mean? What is the millennial generation, Jamilah?

**KING:** So, the millennial generation are a group of people who probably don't identify with that label but, you know, the millennial generation are folks who were born, I'm kind of blanking on this specific year, but they are folks, right? They're generally folks who are between the ages of 18 to 35. They are people who have, you know, been called a bunch of things, right? So they're young folks, they're the hip hop generation. They are, you know, generation, whatever they're called, right? But I think they are sort of understood, in political fears as the millennial generation, and they've talked about that way, and we're talked about that way, because we have a tremendous amount of power. I think that was kind of on display in the 2008 presidential election. But you know, these are inevitable the folks who will lead this country, not to sound cliché, and we are tremendously, a diverse group of people, we are, you know, ethnically diverse, racially

diverse, socio-economically diverse, and I think that, yes it's all about the ways that our country is changing.

**CAVINESS:** I'll always agree with you because that term always [inaudible 00:06:20] because I'll talk to you, I also teach that age with you, and I often [inaudible 00:06:24]. And I call, even to the stuff of millennial. I mean I left the millennial. But like you are, and they're like, oh okay. But how do you believe that the millennial generation defines civic engagement.

**KING:** I think that a cornerstone of the idea of whatever civic engagement is, is the 2008 presidential election. I think that's gonna be the election, that's gonna be the moment that people go back to, that really helped frame nationally, the division of what millennial power is, right? So I think that millennial, and you know, again, I'm hesitant to use that terms, I'll say young folks. But you know I think, you know, that was a really, the 2008 presidential election, was important. For a number of reasons, but it was important because it was election in which, young folks of color, specifically young black folks came out in huge numbers and voted, and you know, helped elect the first black president. And so I think that's a really, really important milestone.

**CAVINESS:** Do you think that young people, or the millennial generation, do you think young people consider hitting the Like button or posting comments on a social networking website as constituting civic engagement?

**KING:** You know, I think that's a complicated answer. I think that the folks I've talked to, and the folks that are in my own immediate social circle. Like I said, it's part of it and I think back to the beginning of 2009, I was living in Oakland, California. And Oscar Grant who was a young black man who was killed in Oakland. He was killed by a Barclay's officer, he was killed on new year's eve, he was killed while partying with his friends, and he was pulled over by a Barclay's officer and shot in the back. And that moment was actually captured upon video camera, and that was uploaded to Youtube, and what was passed around and it was viral. And I think that that was the moment where I saw that, you know, people would see the video and they would be outraged. And that would then spark them to do something right. So I think whenever you're talking about civic engagement, it's really, really important to look at the different entry points for folks, right? And it's really important to have somewhere that people can go, after they've taken whatever action they're getting to online. So you know, with the Oscar Grant situation, with the offer being case, people would see that, people would comment on it, right? People would post it, there was a lot of online engagement around it, but then they were these outlets that grew and there were community group that had already

longing doing work in Oakland and around the country that then used the energy in the outrage around the Oscar Grant case and his murder, to then mobilize young folks to fight for accountability. And I think that's really important.

**CAVINESS:** So, it is a difficult question in terms of online/offline civic engagement. For you personally Jamilah, is being civically engaged online equivalent to being engaged civically offline?

**KING:** No. I don't think it is. I think that, again, both are, I think online engagement has given us a tremendously powerful platform. You know, never before, in the history of the human kind have you been able to, you know, start, --

**[00:10:00]**

**KING:** --you have a video that can go viral, right? You have campaigns that can spark up and have these commences of really intense operations. That's never happened before in history. And so I think that it's very hard to compare the 2, but I think you can't have one without the other. And that, you know, that just goes back to old-school organizing principles, right? Like you have to go door knocking, you have to be in a community, you have to kind of know who is in your community and what they care about, as organizers. And so, I think they're inter-dependent. I think one, you can't have a successful, in this day and age, I really wonder, if you could have a successful offline campaign, that doesn't use the internet or all that. Haven't seen that happen yet. And I think that, you know, the really poignant stories that we've heard of. In recent years, so I think of Oscar Grant, I think of Trayvon Martin, I think of Jena Six, and I think that those are all moments where you have this really unique interplay between folks organizing offline and then actually spread the word online, gain national support for their issue.

**CAVINESS:** So, the 2 almost have to work in tandem.

**KING:** Yeah, yeah, I think, yeah, they do have to work in tandem, and I say that, having talked to a lot of organizers who were doing tremendous work. And you know, I'm sort of pressed to say that that's the only that I can work because, you know, there was a campaign in San Francisco recently, that was being led by youthful, youth leaders at this organization called Power, which is people organized for unemployment rights. And they were basically fighting to get free mini passes per year. And the mini is the city transportation system and it's incredibly expensive to live in San Francisco. So these young people were saying we're tired of getting kicked off the bus because we don't have the money to be on the bus, so give us free passes. And that was a campaign, you know, it depends on what your campaign goals are, right? Like that was a very specific

campaign, so they were targeting young people in San Francisco, it was not necessarily a national issue, or at least it wasn't framed that way at first. And they didn't have a very strong online presence, but they've won. And so I really think that the type of organizing you do, and the scale that you take it to really depends in large parts on what your goals are. And I think those are very different from case to case.

**CAVINESS:** I understand. Now this is what interests to me in a way. In 2012 and now in 2013, we heard multiple conversations about civic engagement, social media and young people. Now Jamilah, you know this subject matter incredibly well, you know this. So, from your perspective, and you hear tons of conversations about this daily, from your perspective Jamilah, what is missing from this conversation?

**KING:** I think that you know, it's a very attractive topic, right? Anything with young people and online and the internet, it's a very attractive topic, it gets a lot of attention. But I think, what's missing is, the history of it, right? It's not a new thing as much as it's being framed as this sort of new, sexy, appealing way to talk about young folks and political organizing in the US. It actually has a really long history, right? It's sort of the newest incarnation of organizing that thing going on for decades, right? Going back to the black panthers party or the young lords, it's something that has, has its roots in working class communities, that has its roots in very specific sorts of communication, right? Like I think that our community, people of color, young people of color have long been struggling with, and coming up with really creative innovative ways to spread their messages, to spread their organizing messages to their community. I think about, you know, the black panthers parties, a [inaudible 00:14:12] newspaper, right, that they've passed out, across the nation, but specifically started in Oakland. So I think that, you know, this history of it, I think it's really important. I think it's really important to continue to have, or despite to have an intergenerational conversation, so that, you know, we don't make the same mistake that we've made in the past, but that we also make sure that we're building and we're leveraging the attention that we're getting now, for an actual sustainable, sort of political organizing, that can be a force to be reckon with you know, decades to come.

**CAVINESS:** That is interesting in terms of history. That's super interesting. Why do you think the history's absent in the conversation.

**KING:** You know, I think it's one of the things that's very easy to lose when you're talking about, --

**[00:15:00]**



**KING:** --these isolated sort of online experiences, right? Like even as a news editor, I see every day how our stories, how people interact with our stories, at Colorlines.com. And I see that, you know, you see something on Facebook and so stories are often isolated from the site, right, and so, in that same way, stories are, individual moments of outrage are often isolated from the context in which they're from. And so I think it's, that's one of the challenges of online writing. I think, right, how do you leverage a specific incident, and make it a part of a broader conversation, right? How do you do that in a Youtube video? How do you do that in a petition? How do you make sure that that conversation over the history and where something is coming from is relevant, or everything that someone clicks on, or is that, you know, there are, I think, some really creative ways that people have come up with to handle that, right? So it can be simple as you know, having a Youtube video, something that you want folks to pay attention to, and then making sure that there's a link to a website that has more information on history of it. But you know, that's a really simplistic way of looking at it, but you know, I don't know, I think that, I mean there's a lot of reasons, in this country in general, we don't often talk about history. I think history is something is not talked about enough by everybody. And so, you know, I think that's one part of it.

**CAVINESS:** That's interesting. The last question, because I'm just curious. Are you from Oakland originally, Jamilah?

**KING:** I am from San Francisco, this is right across the bay. So I'm a bay area girl.

**CAVINESS:** As soon as someone's coming from the bay, I immediately think of music. When you say you're from the bay area, I'm like okay, okay. Because when I say Texas and Louisiana, I immediately think of my school music.

**KING:** Alright.

**CAVINESS:** So when I think of here music the bay. But what was it like, are there difference between Oakland and San Francisco, for you disclosing in [inaudible 00:17:01] content?

**KING:** That's a huge. Yeah, it's, yeah. I think, you know, musically, so I think, you know, I come from a black community in San Francisco called the Fillmore and --

**CAVINESS:** What is it called again, this community?

**KING:** It's called the Fillmore.

**CAVINESS:** The Philmore? Okay.

**KING:** Yeah, and so, it's, so basically has the skit, a while ago, basically, he was in San Francisco, he was like Oh there's San Francisco and was like where's all the black people? And the black people moved across Oakland. And so that's kind of this traditional idea of what San Francisco is, so, you know, it's a traditionally liberal place. But you know, black folks have been forcedly sort of left or moved away. But yeah, the difference is think are, tremendous, I mean I think, San Francisco is a city right now that has a lot of economic power. Like you know, that's kind of the big city heart of Silicon Valley. That's where you know, there's commuter buses taking folks to Google and Apple and all these things. And in Oakland, you know, Oakland it's called the town, right? San Francisco's called the city, and then Oakland called the town, even though it's bigger than San Francisco. But, you know, there's a lot happening both places, I have left the both places, so yeah.

**CAVINESS:** That's so, I'd love to hear a lot of different places. Because, when I'm looking people's Instagrams, and San Francisco is just stunning. I'm in Austin right now but San Francisco is stunning. And when you see the fields of Oakland and it's beautiful, and I'm always like, I had a couple friends, they went out to San Francisco, and everyone kept that they're black, they kept saying, and they [inaudible 00:18:36] You're not from here, are you? Where are you from? And they kept asking all these questions, and I was like what? Let me pull this, it's since of demographic of San Francisco, and see everyone kept asking where are you from?

**KING:** I know, I mean the bay is a beautiful, beautiful place. And as it's Texas.

**CAVINESS:** Well Jamilah, I am so appreciative. Thank you for making this happen. I really, really appreciate you doing that.

**KING:** No problem, and thank you for including me. I really appreciate speaking with you.

**CAVINESS:** Thank you, I'm happy. What happens next is, all of this gets transcribed over the next month and then I'll do my report, it will probably be an online component, so I'll probably ask you maybe in about a month, for your bio and a photo. And I'll put all this online, so I have to get it from Rock the Vote, Circle, professor, who I've talked about this. If the [inaudible 00:19:29] and I should be done by early August. So --

**KING:** Oh great.

**CAVINESS:** --thank you.

**KING:** [inaudible 00:19:35] and good luck.

**CAVINESS:** Thank you, Jamilah, have a wonderful weekend.

**KING:** You too.

**CAVINESS:** Alright, bye bye.

**KING:** Bye.

### **Expert Interview with Caitlin Maguire**

**CAVINESS:** Alright. Let me turn my volume up. Alright, Caitlin?

**MAGUIRE:** Yeah.

**CAVINESS:** Okay. What happened?

**MAGUIRE:** Hi, hello?

**CAVINESS:** Caitlin, hello?

**MAGUIRE:** Hi, can you hear me?

**CAVINESS:** Yeah, for some reason I can't hear you, on speakerphone. Let's see. That's odd, let's see, let me pull it up one more time. Alright, say something Caitlin. Oh gosh, this doesn't look good.

**MAGUIRE:** Hello?

**CAVINESS:** Hey Caitlin, I had to call you from my cell. I'm not sure what's going on with that speaker phone in my office. Okay.

**MAGUIRE:** Okay, is it working now?

**CAVINESS:** We are working. When in doubt, we'll just go to the cellphone so we're good.

**MAGUIRE:** Okay.

**CAVINESS:** Alright, so the first question that I have for you is very simple. It's what is your name and what is your title?

**MAGUIRE:** My name is Caitlin Maguire and my title is Marketing and Communication manager.

**CAVINESS:** And of what organization, Caitlin?

**MAGUIRE:** Rock the Vote.

**CAVINESS:** And why are you qualified Caitlin, to speak on millennials, social media and civic engagement?

**MAGUIRE:** Well, that is a lot of what we do at Rock the Vote, and practically it's mostly what we do. We strive to engage millennials, so 18 to 29 year olds in the political process, and educate them on political issues and register them to vote. And make sure that they turn out to vote, during their national and local election. We do this using digital pop ons because we know that's what the millennial generation is using to communicate. So they're using Facebook and Twitter and email and mobile. And we use all those pop forms in order to reach them and make sure that they're hearing what we have to say and getting registered to vote in time, and meeting those registration deadlines. And they know where they're polling places, they know what's going on with the issues that matter to them.

**CAVINESS:** Caitlin, how do you personally define civic engagement?

**MAGUIRE:** You know, I define it as young people just getting involved in their society, and in their democracy and whether that's doing it simply by just voting in November, every election year, or whether it's taking further action in working to make social change whether in their spare time or devoting their life to it. So I really think it's done in degrees, and I think even the smallest degree should not be counted out. And I think it's just being aware of what is going on in your society and your government and doing something to have a say - a voice in it.

**CAVINESS:** You brought up something that's really interesting, when you said a small degree. Because it makes me wonder, can civic engagement happen online?

**MAGUIRE:** Oh, I missed that last part.

**CAVINESS:** Sure, can civic engagement happen online?

**MAGUIRE:** Yeah, it can happen online. I think that it mostly happens online now. Instead of people - we still do have people going out in person, protesting. And it's something that we've covered at Rock the Vote recently, we went to the Supreme Court where there were thousands protesting and having their voices heard for marriage equality. But I think what you see nowadays is mostly online and that's how people reach their friends, and if they have something that's important to them, that's how they're going to get it out to them and it's a really efficient way to reach a lot of people at once. So, I think that online petitions and pledges and even just sharing that a graphic or a

video that talks, that creates awareness about an issue, that is a way of engaging people online. If you have one person look at that graphic or that video, then you've informed them about an issue that's important to their well-being. So I do think that there are many levels of engagement and online and the online environment makes it easy and efficient to engage.

**CAVINESS:** And I'm happy that I'm talking with you because Rock the Vote is legendary in terms of being able to combine millennial, social media and civic engagement. So, the next question I would love to hear your answer on: the term millennial generation, what does that mean, Caitlin?

**MAGUIRE:** So, the millennial generation is 18 to 29 year olds. Some define it as the generation after the baby boomers. And it's really interesting, this generation is really interesting. They do care a lot about them and you know, in 2012 there were pegged as what the pundits and critics have seen with former youth generations, which is apathy and being uninformed and it was a bit nerve racking for a group like Rock the Vote who work to engaging people into elections, that everyone was saying they weren't going to - that young people the millennial generation, weren't going to turn out and vote. And they actually defied the odds, and they turned out, and they turned out in margin of numbers than they did in 2008 which was a milestone for young people's participation in elections. So I think that the millennial generation is really a unique generation and that they come from a series of political events that have shaped them to be a really resourceful - a resourceful group that goes online and communicates online and shares their messages online. But also a weary group, they're weary of the economy, they're weary of corporations, so I think that there's a unique combination that goes on in shaping what they do and how they think. And that they have so much information coming at them online, that they can't help but be informed. And they've been shaped by really huge political milestone such as 9/11 and the downturn on the economy that, they know what's going on, they're informed and they care about what's going on in our democracy, in our society.

**CAVINESS:** Caitlin how do you believe the millennial generation defines civic engagement?

**MAGUIRE:** Yeah, I put up what I just said. I think that they have created a new chapter of civic engagement, and that they're engaging all their friends online and that they use these mediums that make it really easy to engage and to be informed and so what we're going to see less of is, is something, if an issue comes up that really is upsetting to the young people and to the millennial generation, they're most likely not

going to protest on the street. And if they do that, it's not going to be sustainable. They're going to do it from the comfort of their homes and their computers and I think that they've created this new chapter of digital civic engagement, that's the result.

**CAVINESS:** So do you think the millennial generation believes, hitting the Like button or posting comments on a social networking website as constituting civic engagement?

**MAGUIRE:** I don't think that they're - when they do it, they're consciously checking off a box saying I civically engaged today. I think that, because they are so informed, because they scroll through their Twitter feeds and they see 8 different pieces of news. That they're just contributing to inform, this information, and contributing to spreading this information. And so, I think that they, when they do it, I think it's just a natural part of them to do it, where young people are part of this generation where they just - they want to share information and they want to be the first to share information. So I think that it's really just a part of it, the need, the feeling, the action in them. Because they're just growing up, and the internet is doing that, reading all these different news pieces.

**CAVINESS:** Okay. Caitlin, for you is being civically engaged online equivalent to being civically engaged offline?

**MAGUIRE:** Both have their pros and cons. I mean at Rock the Vote we do both. We do have this digital engagement and then we also have on the ground engagement with our - that is facilitated by our volunteer network. What I think is that you can't substitute with the on the ground volunteer networks is the peer to peer engagement. It's so easy when they're online, to have a friend send you an article and for you to skim it. Or maybe not even read it. But when you have someone that is registering voters at a music festival that you're at and they're talking to you about how to register to vote and what issues are going on right now, that's something that you can't substitute for. If you pick the time to engage and listen, then you can't help but be informed. So sharing it from another peer face to face is much different than reading it at your own leisure or choosing not to see it. But then again, you can't have the period of your engagement, you can't have in such large quantities, like you have with online engagement. So, with online engagement you take a chance, knowing that not everyone in your network is going to see it, but at least some people will. And then with peer to peer you're not reaching as many people but you know that they're listening.

**CAVINESS:** That's an interesting point. You're making me think about some new things Caitlin, so this is good. I'm like hmm!

**MAGUIRE:** Oh good.

**CAVINESS:** So in 2012 and now in 2013 we have heard a lot of conversations about civic engagement, social media and young people. Caitlin you know this subject matter incredibly well. From your perspective, what is missing from this conversation?

**MAGUIRE:** I think it's really the engagement from the politicians and the people who represent us. So we have young people engaging and whether they're doing it online or offline, they are engaging, they are, and they are listening. And this is proven in the top presidential election. And the stereotype that politicians had usually assign to young people, which is that they're not paying attention, they're not listening. I think that needs to go away now. I think that it's obvious that this generation is informed and they have many mediums to be informed. And that they're going to vote. So what I think is missing is, that politicians pay attention and they value this demographic, as much as they value the senior citizen vote or the hispanic vote. They valued the 18 to 29 year old vote, because they, well, they've realized that they're actually going go out there and vote and make an informed decision.

**CAVINESS:** That's interesting. Well Caitlin, thank you. I tell you I wasn't going to take to too much of your time, but thank you

**MAGUIRE:** Oh yeah, right, it didn't take long at all.

**CAVINESS:** And this is a little bit outside of the interview, per view, but I know you would know. Is there a place that you believe has more research just on young people and civic engagement than anywhere else? Would it be Rock the Vote, in terms of what you all doing?

**MAGUIRE:** Are looking for a statistic?

**CAVINESS:** Statistics, just any additional insight.

**MAGUIRE:** So, circle their website is civicyouth.org.

**CAVINESS:** Okay.

**MAGUIRE:** They have really good polling and research.

**CAVINESS:** Circle, okay. I will definitely. I'm actually going to interview, you probably know, do you know Surbhi? You might have come in contact, she's at Circle, so I --

**MAGUIRE:** Oh, okay.

**CAVINESS:** --let me see feel like I'm in the right direction. Because I said between you --

**MAGUIRE:** Yeah, you definitely are.

**CAVINESS:** Okay, you and Circle I said, I don't know anyone else who knows about young people, in civic engagement, that's it. How long you've been at Rock the Vote, Caitlin?

**MAGUIRE:** Three years.

**CAVINESS:** Three years, okay, okay.

**MAGUIRE:** Yeah.

**CAVINESS:** So, out of curiosity, is the conversation, even is it always an on season or is it more of an off season right now for you guys, or how does that kind of work?

**MAGUIRE:** Yeah, so, an off election here is we focus on our programs that you don't necessarily need an election year to execute. So that includes a civics education program that we have, where we bring - where we educators bring our lesson plan into their classroom and teach their students about the importance of voting, the history of the right to vote and register them to vote also. So we work on promoting that and getting that into as many high-schools as possible. And then we also, there are local elections, pretty major ones in turn off election years, in particular, 2013 so we're actually working on a candidate forum in Los Angeles right now.

**CAVINESS:** Oh wow, wow, alright. Well that's cool, thank you so much Caitlin.

**MAGUIRE:** Yeah, thank you.

**CAVINESS:** Yeah, what's going to happen is, I'm going to have about 5 more interviews to do so --

**MAGUIRE:** Okay



**CAVINESS:** --I'll get these kind of knocked out and then I'll end up putting it online probably early summer. And --

**MAGUIRE:** Okay.

**CAVINESS:** --hopefully they'll accept all of my parts. So hopefully my committee will say Okay Autumn, that's good.

**MAGUIRE:** I'm sure they'll love it. You asked some really good questions.

**CAVINESS:** Thank you very much, it was good. You made me think about the whole peer to peer thing. Because no one had -

**MAGUIRE:** Yeah.

**CAVINESS:** --I done read about that in the literature or even the passing on or seeing the graphic image, that made me --

**MAGUIRE:** Yeah.

**CAVINESS:** --think some things that I haven't heard anyone talk about so.

**MAGUIRE:** Oh well, if you have any other questions, let me know.

**CAVINESS:** Alright, you got it. Thank you, Caitlin.

**MAGUIRE:** Thanks, Autumn. Have a good night.

**CAVINESS:** Have a good night, bye.

**MAGUIRE:** Bye.

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