

Global Tides

Volume 5

Article 11

1-1-2011

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Recommended Citation

Nguyen, Timothy (2011) "Twitter: a Platform for Political Discourse or Social Networking," *Global Tides*: Vol. 5, Article 11.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/globaltides/vol5/iss1/11>

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“Twitter: a Platform for Political Discourse or Social Networking?”

By Timothy Nguyen

ABSTRACT

Previous research on new media has largely focused on the potential media effects of alternative news sources on their viewers. The effects of these studies have been limited, however, to the narrow audiences targeted by the increasingly polarizing alternative news sources. The advent and popularization of social networks has provided a reason to suspect that, for the first time, alternative news sources are making their way to the mainstream general public. In this study, I examine a new political and media environment that encourages the interaction between the politically inattentive public and polarized and alternative news sources – a link that contains numerous implications of previously inapplicable studies. I elaborate on previous literature pertaining to social networking’s capacity to operate as both a social networking vehicle and as a platform for further political debate by incorporating previous research that suggests an inherent polarization in alternative news sources with other studies that have highlighted the majority of society’s political inattentiveness. The results of my study suggest that Twitter users – the majority of them being politically inattentive – are more likely to be exposed to polarizing alternative news sources as opposed to mainstream news coverage when seeking out issue-based news items. By discovering a previously undetected link between polarized alternative news sources and the politically inattentive, this paper opens the door for future studies to study the effects of polarized reportage on the politically inattentive and the relationship between social networking and the traditional mainstream media. *Keywords:* social networking, Twitter, political discourse, alternative news sources, soft news, polarization, new media, politically inattentive.

Introduction

The recent technological developments in the last decade have resulted in a staggering number of new media devices that can mediate information between individuals and groups, which were unrealizable in the past (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008; Yzer & Southwell, 2008). And as the internet permeates throughout society at an exponential rate – by January 2007, the total number of internet users in the world had already reached more than 1.2 billion, a growth of almost 250

percent since 2000 (Kim & Johnson, 2009) – new media, or in the case of this study, the blogosphere, continues to find further avenues of influence on not only the institution of journalism but also on the political complexion of their user groups.

In addition to the blogosphere, micro-blogging platforms such as Twitter invite users to further personalize their publications, publicize more often, and publicize on a larger variety of topics. As a result, users often use micro-blogging to serve a duality of purposes: for social networking (entertainment) and as a platform to both share and learn new information (Java, Finin, Song, & Tseng, 2007) – essentially combining the once dichotomous planes of 1) blogging as a means of social networking and 2) blogging as an alternative news source. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, approximately 19% of all internet users use Twitter as a micro-blogging platform, propelling Twitter to the 12th most visited website on the internet in the United States and the world (Fox, Zickuhr, & Smith, 2009). Furthermore, Fox et al. (2009) note that internet users who already use social networks such as Facebook, MySpace or LinkedIn are also more likely to use Twitter: 35%, compared to 6% of internet users who do not use such social networking sites. As a component of new media, micro-blogging, and more specifically, Twitter, is unique in the sense that it can effectively amalgamate users of social networking sites and users of the traditional blogosphere.

Thus, Twitter provides an interesting case study behind the convergence of two types of user groups. Is Twitter a social networking platform that provides a hospitable venue for those to be virtually among people who are similar to them (McKenna & Green, 2002) and to keep in touch with friends (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008)? Or does Twitter provide rich and fast information sources to ultimately serve as a discussion platform for political discourse (Hermes, 2006)? In this study, I contend that Twitter serves both of these primary functions by acting as a social networking platform and a discussion platform. Twitter has the capacity to join two separate audiences into one cohesive group, by merging audiences that use the internet to seek entertainment with audiences that use the internet to seek, among other things, exposure to further lines of political discourse.

Due to the increased perceived credibility of blogs as an alternative news source (Kim & Johnson, 2009) and the internet user's tendency to selectively expose themselves to otherwise polarizing media (Sunstein, 2001; Prior 2005; Kim & Johnson, 2009), it would be interesting to note if the strong relationship between inherent political attentiveness and alternative news source viewership translates to Twitter. And while there is no data to suggest a strong evidence of politically attentive or inattentive individuals on Twitter, Matthew A. Baum (2002) holds that "the [traditional] mass public is woefully ignorant about politics and foreign affairs (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Converse, 1964; Almond, 1950), and hence, with rare exceptions, only relatively narrow segments of the public – the so-called "attentive public" or "issue publics" – pay attention to public policy or wield any meaningful influence on policymakers" (Graebner, 1983; Cohen, 1973; Rosenau, 1961; Key, 1961). Thus while there is little to no evidence to suggest a strong representation of the politically attentive on Twitter, it is the consensus of past literature that the majority of online users who use Twitter as a means to seek entertainment would otherwise tend to be politically inattentive. For those that are politically attentive, however, previous research suggests they will choose media they are ultimately interested in (Prior, 2005) by choosing based on perceived credibility (Greer, 2003), which is often based on shared political affiliation (Friedkin, 1999). My proposed research question, therefore, notes the integration of these two seemingly dichotomous groups and tests for an interaction between the politically inattentive and the politically attentive users:

RQ1: Are Twitter users more likely to be exposed to alternative news sources as opposed to mainstream news sources when using Twitter for either a discussion or social networking platform?

Thus, by analyzing Twitter and the assemblage of the once separate spectrums of the politically inattentive and politically attentive, this study aims to further shed light on a new media phenomenon that may hold significant implications for further investigation.

The Blogosphere and Mainstream News Media

Blogging is, as one researcher notes, the antithesis of the apparent normalization and homogenization of news journalism (Gill, 2004). While journalism has always had a wide margin and range of appeal, journalists have had a rather "static core set of news practices" that defined all facets of their journalistic publications (Matheson, 2004; Hartley, 1996). Blogging,

therefore, differentiates itself from the school of journalism by drawing from a culture not dependent on the journalistic norms and practices that characterize mainstream news media. And while the pooling of resources through the cost-cutting methods of newswires and shared video feeds has contributed to the homogenization of news, the blogosphere further differentiates itself by presenting itself as the primary source of expertise on substantive issues – surpassing or circumventing the mainstream media journalists’ talking points that suffer a deficit of specialized, detailed knowledge (Drezner, 2004).

The Blogosphere’s Capacity to Facilitate Polarized Partisan Sources

While past studies (Schweiger, 2000; Rimmer, 1987; Greer, 2003) examined the credibility of the Internet as a whole, we can pay special attention to Kim and Johnson’s (2009) study which focused on the credibility of newly emerging interactive news sites as alternative news sources. In particular, Kim examined whether politically interested online users perceive political information from Internet sources as more credible than their traditional media counterparts and, to an extent, which factors could predict these credibility ratings (Kim & Johnson, 2009). Kim’s study is supported by Markus Prior’s (2005) research that suggests politically attentive online users would, because of a greater horizontal diversity or availability of options, find content that ultimately matches much, if not all, of their partisan preferences. This, coupled with Prior’s interpretation of Sunstein’s (2001) study where he predicted that “people’s increasing ability to customize their political information will have a polarizing impact on democracy,” contributes to the general notion that the recent increases and new availability of high-choice media environments can influence not only how individuals choose what they want but also reinforce and further polarize their initial beliefs (Jones, 2002). Politically attentive online users find alternative news media as more credible and more important sources for political information than the traditional news media despite the alternative news source’s lack of journalistic norms of objectivity due to the blogosphere’s capacity to invite selective exposure (Kim & Johnson, 2009; Jones, 2002).

In regards to political information seeking, previous research suggests that people can use today’s media to avoid politics altogether (Stroud, 2007; Atri & Katz, 2005; Baum & Kernell, 1999; Prior 2005) or to seek out information on personally relevant and particular issues

(Sunstein, 2001). As Jones (2002) showed through his study of the narrowcasted media markets, people's media options are multiplying and the potential for selective exposure has arguably increased. As the number of news sources increases, consumers must choose among them – an exercise of choice that may ultimately lead to less diversity of political exposure (Mutz & Martin, 2001). While several studies demonstrate a relationship between people's beliefs and the information to which they are exposed, it is unclear whether politically attentive individuals' beliefs are motivated by their exposure (Stroud, 2007; Freedman & Sears, 1965). In any case, recent research documents a correlation between those with strong political leanings and their likelihood to engage in selective exposure that reflects their personally relevant political beliefs, thus illustrating the extent of partisan selective exposure in the contemporary media environment (Stroud, 2007; Prior, 2005; Greer, 2003; Adamic & Glance, 2005; Johnson, 2005; Kim & Johnson, 2009; Jones, 2002). Unbridled by journalistic norms characteristic of mainstream news, the blogosphere as an alternative news source, therefore, accentuates their viewership's beliefs, reflecting the blogosphere's marketplace tendency to reflect a strong partisan exposure as opposed to the mainstream media's marketplace tendency to reflect an objective and autonomous stance.

Twitter as a Contiguous Platform

Although it may be unfair to label the blogosphere as indicative of soft news, Twitter serves as a unique platform that has the capacity to unify coverage of breaking events or major issues with politically inattentive consumers who would otherwise use Twitter for entertainment purposes. Through this function, Twitter mediates political information to low-awareness consumers as soft news mediates political information through sensationalized presentation, dramatic subject matter, and human-interest themes (Patterson, 2000; Baum & Jamison, 2006). Twitter, however, is unique in its syndication of otherwise polarizing and politically partisan based alternative news sources as the incidental by-product of its politically inattentive consumers. While Baum (2006) attributed the incidental by-product model of consumption (Popkin 1994) to the repackaging of select political issues into entertainment, I contend that the interpersonal influence of one's social network (Mutz & Martin, 2001) and minimal expected costs (Salomon, 1984) work in tandem with alternative news sources' ability to reflect and reinforce even the most minute of partisan ideologies through its relatively accessible (and unique) framing (Krugman & Hartley, 1970).

And while testing media effects lies beyond the scope of this research article, the support of this paper's hypotheses would provide a scenario that would encourage such further research.

While previous literature proposes that politically inattentive individuals are likely to be affected by soft news (Patterson, 2000; Baum, 2002), there is scarce data documenting the effects of polarized political coverage on politically inattentive individuals. A recent article has studied the effects of newspapers' editorials on voting populations – citing that since local newspapers serve as the primary source of information during a Senate campaign, “there is good reason to expect that the type of coverage will impact voters' candidate perceptions, and ultimately, their vote choices” (Druckman & Parkin, 2005). Baum (2002) proposes that soft news is, in fact, influential in that low-attention individuals do vote in significant numbers. It is interesting to note, however, that Baum tested for soft news' coverage of foreign affairs in its relation to breaking news. The implications of politically inattentive users being exposed to, and maybe influenced by, polarized media are therefore two-fold: minimal attention to politics increases partisan stability in voting (Baum, 2002; Zukin, 1977) and the polarized nature of the political information individuals receive may influence the substance of opinions they express. In this case, issue-based polarized reporting on health care legislation may be much more influential than sensationalized reports of deaths in a Middle Eastern conflict.

This paper aims to ask whether politically inattentive users are being exposed to polarizing alternative news sources through the contiguous platform of Twitter. Due to the increased perceived credibility of alternative news sources and Twitter's capacity to serve as a discussion platform for sharing and finding new information, I postulate that:

H1: Individuals that use Twitter as a micro-blogging platform are more likely to be exposed to alternative news sources as opposed to traditional mainstream news sources through the interaction and information sharing processes made possible by Twitter's online application.

I arrive at this hypothesis with the assumption that politically attentive users – who may prefer alternative news sources over traditional news sources (Kim & Johnson, 2009) – are perhaps more likely to share polarizing alternative news sources to their social network that may include politically inattentive members. In addition to this, I propose that particular subjects or issues that resonate strongly throughout the blogosphere will proportionately be represented on Twitter,

which can serve as an aggregate news feed of the blogosphere. Assuming H1 is supported, this trend will be much more pronounced in issue-centric coverage rather than coverage that invites less polarizing debate. Using key coverage topics that are relevant to the media at the time of writing, I propose that:

H2: Cross-cutting exposure to polarized alternative news sources will be more pronounced through issue-based coverage. In the case of this study, exposure to polarized alternative news sources will therefore be more pronounced in the coverage of the health care legislation and the US economy .

H3: Cross-cutting exposure to polarized alternative news sources will be less pronounced in event-based coverage such as the coverage of Pope Benedict XVI's apology for a Catholic sex scandal and particular Gaza airstrikes during the weekend of March 19 to 21.

These hypotheses are characteristic of the unique tendency of the blogosphere to forgo journalistic norms coupled with the polarizing potential of issue-based topics that more-or-less are championed by alternative news sources.

Method

As little to no data exists outside common statistical observations of Twitter's demographic population, the focus of this study rests in the simple production of a data set that could potentially show a relationship between the number of alternative news sources and the number of all news sources made available through Twitter.

Twitter has made available to programmers an Application Programming Interface (API) which includes, among other things, an advanced search function contingent on a variety of different search operators. Twitter's advanced searching capability allows researchers to search for and collect "tweets" (or micro-blog updates) based on a number of search parameters that can include date, location, attitude, and source. In the case of this study, every micro-blog update was collected depending on its relevant match of a specific key word or phrase (e.g. "health care" or "Iran") and its inclusion of a hyperlink. Since this study tests for the probability of an alternative news source to be shared through Twitter, I also included repeated micro-blog posts or "retweets" in the search parameters in order to better represent the entirety of the link-anchored tweet population.

Twitter's search API does come with its limitations – most notably the inability to deliver more than 1500 tweets per search. While this is not a limitation for most key word searches (1500 tweets, in most cases, can encapsulate a full 3 days of tweets), for trending topics such as the passing of healthcare legislation, a total of 1500 tweets accounted for just 30 minutes of tweeting during its peak. Tweets that did not contain a link reached upwards of 160 tweets a minute producing what is known as a trending topic (most popular buzz word or phrase) on Twitter.

In order to properly account for and index all tweets given this particular time allotment, I used a desktop client based off of Twitter's API known as 'The Archivist' (<http://flotzam.com/archivist/>). 'The Archivist' can routinely perform given search strings, archiving tweets as they arrive in real time and automatically saving every matching tweet that contains a specified key word and a hyperlink on to an external Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

In this study, I conducted a series of searches and later archived a whole population of matching tweets during the weekend of March 19 – 21, 2010. While a more exhaustive study would include multiple waves of extraction to control for what could be temporal confounding variables, in order to control for what may have been isolated approaches to treating particular issues and in order to test for a pronounced effect on particular issues when compared to others, I searched multiple key words instead of performing a one variable single test. If H1 is to be supported, the data analysis must suggest that alternative news sources are more likely to be shared as opposed to traditional news sources across every issue. H2 will find support, therefore, in a more pronounced effect of H1 on issues that invite partisan polarization.

I employed 4 search data strings and ran them through 'The Archivist' during the weekend of March 19 – 21, 2010 (starting and ending on 00:00 GMT):

"health care" since:2010-03-19 until:2010-03-21 filter:links include:retweets

"US economy" since:2010-03-19 until:2010-03-21 filter:links include:retweets

Obama Iran since:2010-03-19 until:2010-03-21 filter:links include:retweets

"Pope Benedict" since:2010-03-19 until:2010-03-21 filter:links include:retweets

The weekend of March 19 – 21, 2010 was a historic weekend for the legislation of President Barack Obama's health care reform bill. It was announced during this weekend that the needed

216 votes to pass the legislation were obtained. Understandably, this topic trended on Twitter – collecting a total of 10,500 tweets over 3 days. Pope Benedict’s apology over an Irish Catholic church sex scandal received approximately 1500 tweets while the US economy also recorded 3000 tweets. On March 20, 2010, President Obama reiterated his offer of dialogue with Tehran and the key word search that included Obama and Iran retrieved 900 tweets during the weekend.

In total, 16,014 tweets were collected during this single wave of data retrieval. From this total population, a sample was derived through the sequence of simple random sampling gauged with a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5.

Coders then retrieved links from the sample population and determined whether the webpage was from a traditional news media outlet, from an alternative news source (a blog as defined in the literature review), or from a politically irrelevant website.

Although the random sample is largely representative of the total population of tweets, it is important to note that the sample of tweets was collected during only a single wave of data retrieval. Given such a short data collection wave, it is possible that users who would normally contribute during the week instead of the weekend were ignored by this study. While other issues are tracked and analyzed by this research, the particular nature of health care legislation during the March 19 – 21 weekend may have influenced the aggregation of alternative news sources in other coverage topics as well (e.g. health care legislation affecting the US economy).

Though the raw data can show whether a particular tweet shared an alternative news source or a traditional news source, the raw data cannot show the direct influence of any particular tweet. In addition to this, a polarization-index is not employed, making it impossible to tell how polarizing the alternative news sources are (if at all) – forcing the study to rely on the literature review without testing for consistency.

While the implications of politically inattentive users being exposed to polarized alternative news sources has the potential to influence voting patterns in a statistically significant manner, it is important to note the demographic population that comprises Twitter before attempting to

apply the results of this information on other users of new media. Young users on Twitter, according to a recent study released by Pew Internet, account for 19% of the Twitter population – a number that, in fact, underrepresents the Internet’s under-25 population which amounts to a quarter of total online users. Although under-25 users are underrepresented on Twitter, 33% of all online 18 – 29 year olds are on Twitter as opposed to only 22% of the 30 – 49 year old bracket and 9% of the 50 – 64 year old bracket. In addition to this, 26% of the total African American online user community also uses Twitter as opposed to 19% of the White online user community and 18% of the Hispanic user community. Intriguingly, the similarities shared with another social networking site, Facebook, are quite visible, if not statistically significant (Lenhart, 2009; Fox, 2009). Further research into the similarity of Twitter and Facebook as platforms for both social networking and discussion may yield the interchangeable application of this study’s research on to other elements of new media.

Data Analysis

In order to keep each sample representative of its total population, the sample populations were randomly selected and pooled to achieve a 95% confidence level and a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error. In this study, only one variable was monitored: the type of link. As a result, the provided data table (see: Table 1) contains raw data suggesting the amount of times a tweet linked to either a blog (as an alternative news source), to a traditional source, or to a politically irrelevant web page (spam or self-promotion). Due to the nature of its simplified random sampling and the statistical ease of producing the data it may be safe to assume that the collected data is, in fact, statistically significant and representative of its total population. The legitimacy of the retrieved total population, however, will find further questioning after a thorough examination of the data.

Table 1

Key Word	Blogs	As % of Sample Size (.50 = 50%)	Traditional Sources	As % of Sample Size (.50 = 50%)	Politically Irrelevant	As % of Sample Size (.50 = 50%)
“Health Care”	229 of 371	.61	112 of 371	.30	30 of 371	.08
“US Economy”	192 of 341	.56	138 of 371	.40	11 of 341	.03

Obama Iran	124 of 275	.45	146 of 275	.53	5 of 275	.02
“Pope Benedict”	82 of 398	.27	188 of 308	.61	30 of 308	.09

As Table 1 clearly suggests, there is a strong relationship between the prevalence of alternative news sources and the issue-centric topics of “Health Care” and the “US Economy.” Statistically, in coverage concerning both health care and the economy, alternative news sources averaged a statistically significant +24% advantage in media prevalence over the traditional sources of media, providing strong support for H2. While health care and the economy may have necessitated issue-based coverage, both the “Obama Iran” and “Pope Benedict” searches tested for the coverage of a very particular event. Both cases warranted immediate media attention, the first followed the personal appeal of Obama to reinstate dialogue with Iran and the latter an apology by Pope Benedict over an Irish Catholic sex scandal. A further analysis of the “Pope Benedict” data found that, of the 188 traditional news source links, 55 of them originated from the exact same CNN article and 42 originated likewise from a similar BBC article. Thus, 52% of the links originated from traditional breaking news sources that shed immediate light on a developing situation – a finding which may have confounded the results of this study given the narrow window of data extraction performed. This data, unfortunately, fails to test for the ‘shelf life’ of particular breaking news coverage links. If the data set spanned a longer period of days, perhaps including particular days as independent variables, the result may ultimately have been different depending on the salience of breaking news links days or even weeks after initial coverage. In any case, H1 fails to find any support from these two data entries, although the data does tend to support H3 in that breaking news coverage is much more reliant on traditional news sources rather than the issue-based coverage of alternative news sources.

The data therefore sparingly provides support for H1 dependent largely on the type of coverage – in the case of the March 19 – 21, 2010 weekend, Obama and his mediated statement to Iran more or less necessitated developing news coverage as opposed to the gradual discussion of Iran’s and the United States’ issue-based foreign affairs policy. Although the data supporting H1 is largely inconclusive, this data tends to support H2 and H3 by providing strong statistically significant evidence. It would seem, given this data set, the type of coverage has a much larger effect on the

prevalence of links on Twitter than the dual components of partisan polarization and perceived credibility.

Discussion

Although the data is scientifically handled and statistically significant in multiple respects, the data is nevertheless limiting in both its origin and application. An analysis of the data suggests that H2 and H3 are largely contingent on type of coverage and, because of the presence of only four coverage categories, H1 can only gather inconclusive evidence to support its claim. Instead of choosing a period of three days with four topics, a more exhaustive and representative test would collect data from a period of weeks, if not months, from a variety of different topics ranging from issue-polarizing texts to breaking news coverage. This proposed research design would control for a variety of different moderating variables, most notably on what type of topic necessitates either alternative news source coverage or traditional news media coverage. The total population would be further analyzed, perhaps suggesting that although breaking news coverage is predominately shared with traditional news media, issue-based topics ultimately received more twitter attention overall (in regards to trending topics versus less popular topics). Although the research design of this study did find that a particular topic (health care legislation) received more Twitter-attention than a breaking-news coverage topic of “Obama Iran,” the data set provides little information on the proportion and overall Twitter-attention of each individual topic versus another. In addition to a more comprehensive and longer testing wave, an improved study would also test for multiple variables beyond the type of links available on Twitter. Additionally, a polarization index may be employed to test the particular polarization of alternative news sources made available through Twitter. An improved research design, therefore, would not only test if a particular micro-blog post linked to an alternative news source but furthermore analyze the polarization of the particular news source. This type of content analysis can shed light on the types of polarizing data shared, how polarizing the data is, and – combined with data documenting the particular influence of each individual tweet (how many followers does this user have) – how far and influential is its reach. If future research – based on the retrieval of a more extensive data set comprised of multiple variables – does indeed yield significant results, a further survey panel can be conducted to test the media effects of Twitter on politically inattentive users who may have just joined the social networking platform.

This acquired data, however, does carry several important implications. The heavy support for H2 suggests that issue-based coverage is inclined to get the most alternative news coverage. Thus, with issue-based coverage, H1 also finds narrow support which can potentially provide Twitter with the capacity to expose the politically inattentive to partisan and polarized alternative news sources. Whereas studies have shown that exposure to soft news may encourage partisan consistency in voting patterns (Patterson, 2000; Baum, 2002), this scenario is unique in its direct address to issue-based topics, topics the journalistic norms of the mainstream media tend to ignore in favor of a more autonomous and objective stance of reporting (Iyengar & McGrady, 2006).

Previous studies have suggested that any editorial slant could influence voting choice when there is a lack of available information (Druckman & Parkin, 2005) and that the cheap framing of alternative news sources can hook otherwise politically inattentive consumers due to the cognitive ease of assimilating affiliated partisan information (Mutz & Martin, 2001; Zukin, 1977; Baum, 2002). The implications of Twitter as a platform for both political discourse and social networking easily open further avenues of research, namely the media effects of alternative news sources on politically inattentive consumers and the implications of politically attentive and politically inattentive users seeking issue-based coverage primarily through alternative news sources alone. The results of this study suggest that Twitter's tendency to increase exposure to alternative news sources may polarize the inattentive public in ways never before seen. This study exacerbates all the problems of media polarization that the previous literature has alluded to by extending media polarization beyond alternative news sources to the social networking sphere (Sunstein, 2002; Prior, 2005; Jones, 2002; Salomon, 2004). Whereas narrowcasted media polarization used to be isolated to niche audiences of extremely politically attentive individuals (Jones, 2002), the advent of Twitter and the convergence of two seemingly dichotomous groups has created a situation wherein a politically inattentive user during the weekend of March 19 – 21, 2010, for example, was more likely to come across a narrowcasted and polarized alternative news source than a traditional mainstream media source. Politically inattentive individuals are being exposed to polarizing media sources. Previous studies have focused on the effects of 'soft news' on the politically inattentive public (Baum, 2002; Patterson, 2000). This study suggests

that it is now time to study the effects of a polarized and alternative news source on the politically inattentive.

Serving as both a platform for political discourse and social networking, Twitter provides its users with a cohesive venue that combines elements of social networking and entertainment with strong political discourse that may evidently be of an alternative news source or a traditional news source depending on its coverage. This study has concluded that Twitter has the potential or the capacity to expose alternative news sources to an otherwise politically inattentive public. This link has never been discussed in the previous literature and today presents to us a variety of new questions. As the implications of this preliminary study abound, further research, therefore, is rather warranted and invited.

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