

Twenty Years of Digital Media Effects on Civic and Political Participation

Supplemental Materials

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Supplemental Methods

Supplemental search strategy description

The studies were originally compiled using searches of academic databases and Google Scholar using a combination of keywords to measure digital media use as well as participation in civic and political engagement (Table 1). Specially, the following databases were used to run queries based on the keywords listed in Table 1: EBSCO: Academic Search Complete, International Political Science Abstracts, Political Science Complete, SocINDEX, and Communication & Mass Media Complete, Proquest (includes Sociological Abstracts and PAIS), JSTOR, and finally, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar.

Table A1

Social Sciences Citation Index number of hits

	Civic engagement	Civic participation	Political engagement	Political participation
Internet	367	336	484	830
Web	79	74	134	232
“Digital media”	35	32	59	68
Online	287	279	426	751
Blog	11	7	20	33
“social media”	175	152	271	376
“social networking sites”	30	26	32	50
Facebook	84	79	129	169
Twitter	32	32	80	112

Google Scholar was used to identify unpublished materials, such as conference papers, as well as books. Omitting books would be a detrimental flaw given the research questions for this

meta-analysis paper. Many relevant pieces were found in edited volumes highlighting a specific region. For example, using Google Scholar, we found chapters from an edited volume on Brazil (see Breuer and Groshek, 2014 in Breuer and Welp, 2014), as well as an edited volume on Asia (see Chan, Lee, and Chen, 2016 in Wei, 2016). Furthermore, the edited book by Anduiza, Jensen and Jorba (2012), titled *Digital media and political engagement worldwide*, proved helpful. There are relevant chapters covering research in the United States, Germany, and Spain. If a conference paper or theses/dissertation and a published version of this work were both available, the published version was retained in the database, replicating an approach used by Yang and Shen (2017). For conference papers, we contacted authors to seek permission to use their presentation in our analysis. In most cases, authors sent us a published version of their paper to cite.

Supplemental analysis description

As one last note, the use of the term “effect” borrows from meta-analysis literature (e.g., Ellis, 2010). Most the studies are based on cross-sectional surveys, which can only assess correlation not causation. However, 26 of the studies included longitudinal analysis, such as surveys of the same respondents across time (e.g., Emmer, Wolling, & Vowe, 2012). Most of the longitudinal studies were conducted in the same calendar year and were coded as such (e.g., Boulianne, 2011; Towner, 2013). In the case of multiple years of data collection, the most contemporary year was coded as the year of data collection. This same practice was used for pooled data (e.g., Shah, McLeod & Yoon, 2001).

Furthermore, the meta-analysis scholarship offers a variety of ways to adjust for publication bias, weight effects based on sample sizes, and other transformations of the original coefficients reported in published papers (see Rains et al., 2018). We do not complete any manipulations of the coefficients for several reasons. First, the most common practice is to report

on standardized regression coefficients and we wanted to replicate the original estimates to maintain reliability and transparency in methodology. Two, we argue that the adjustments based on sample size are not appropriate – the core issue should be about randomness of the sample, after that, representativeness should be considered. The methodological reporting practices for most studies do not allow an assessment for these principles. Furthermore, sample size matters less once a certain threshold has been met. The smallest sample size was 109 (valid sample size from the table of analysis of Pew data, see Hoffman, 2012) and the largest was 50,268 (a study using the European Social Survey, see Geber, Scherer, & Hefner, 2016). Finally, recently published meta-analysis studies offer different effect estimates, after adjustments for sample size and other factors, such as publication bias. For example, Matthes et al. (2018) offer several estimations, but they end up with the same calculated effect ($r = .10$). As such, the adjustments may not be necessary.

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