

MPC MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

Social media and democracy: How the Facebook usage patterns of Toronto city
councilors influence political engagement

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Abstract

In the early days of the Internet, many political communication theorists held the utopian belief that political actors would use online tools to communicate directly with members of the public, and thereby bolster political engagement and enrich democracy. Unfortunately, studies over the past two decades found that political websites were not usually used to interact directly with the public, but instead were used to simply disseminate information in a one-way information-sharing model. However, the emergence of social media sites presents political actors with the opportunity to interact with the public far more easily than websites had previously allowed. Given the widespread adoption and high usage rates of social media sites, these online resources could potentially open up a space for public discussion about politics and allow political actors to interact directly with members of the public. Literature indicates that this type of shared space is conducive to the kind of civic mindset that leads to higher rates of political engagement. Research on political uses of social media tends to focus on the use of social media within elections, such as the 2008 U.S presidential election, and on the use of social media by national governments. I have chosen instead to examine how a group of municipal councilors in Toronto, Ontario uses social media. These politicians have the greatest need to interact directly with individuals throughout their term of service because municipal councilors are expected to know the members of their ward far more intimately than federal, or even provincial, politicians. My study focuses on the use of Facebook because literature indicates that it is the most political social media platform and that it presents politicians with the greatest opportunity to foster political engagement online. Through analysis of the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors this study examines the degree to which councilors use Facebook to engage their followers, whether certain citizens are consistently engaged in ongoing political discussions, and whether small communities of politically engaged citizens develop around the Facebook profiles of councilors.

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Introduction

At the onset of the Internet age, both academics and laypeople held high hopes for the way the online realm would transform and restore the world around us. One such vision for the transformative power of the Internet was articulated in Howard Rheingold's (1993) book *The Virtual Community*, which was one of the earliest and most widely read studies of the relationship between the Internet and democracy. Rheingold describes several ways in which the rise of online communities could potentially enrich and revitalize the democratic system. First, he notes that citizens who interact with and inform each other within the political public sphere are the foundation of a representative democracy. Benefits of the Internet include new opportunities for disparate citizens to engage with each other and greater access to political information absent in the elite-dominated mass media. According to Rheingold, these features of online media have the potential to revitalize citizen-based democracy.

Furthermore, according to Rheingold, the Internet has the potential to not only inform citizens, but also to empower them directly by allowing politicians to go directly to the people for decisions. This could decentralize power and offer citizens more influence and involvement in matters of governance. While the author acknowledges that there are inherent dangers attached to such possibilities, it does not disqualify them as opportunities that could put society on the path to more direct democracy. In short, the Internet could become a modern-day Greek agora, or an "electronic Athens", as the author puts it.

The idea that the Internet could allow citizens to meet and discuss political issues online and thereby revitalize our democratic system brings to mind Jurgen Habermas'

(1989) discussion of the discursive arenas, such as Britain's coffee houses, France's salons and Germany's *Tischgesellschaften*, which bolstered and enlivened the respective public spheres in which they were enmeshed. The Internet could potentially provide the public with online forums that could re-create these discursive arenas in the modern era and thereby re-invigorate the current political sphere. These online spaces could also maintain the institutional criteria that made Habermas' arenas such vital political spaces, including disregard for status, a concern with the common good, and a commitment to inclusivity. Moreover, they would transcend the barriers of time and space. All members of the public could potentially meet online and contribute to the on-going conversation at any time, and from wherever they might be.

Rheingold's work represents all the utopian hopes that have existed, and continue to exist, regarding the Internet's possible influence on democracy. However, as time went on, this major utopian dream was not fulfilled and new voices emerged warning that the Internet would do little more than maintain the political status quo. In *Politics As Usual: The Cyberspace Revolution*, Michael Margolis and David Resnick (2000) argued that the Internet would not revolutionize democracy, but instead government actors would use the Internet to spread information and provide services, rather than to encourage political participation. This means that politicians would use the Internet to share their own ideas and impose their own views on the audience, with little interest in encouraging or gathering feedback. In this way, the public is positioned as a passive audience to be acted upon, rather than to be engaged with. And while an improved ability to share information is beneficial to the citizenry, the Internet would not enrich the democratic system itself if it were not used to give citizens a greater voice in the political sphere.

In addition, Margolis and Resnick noted that while the Internet would increase the opportunities for already engaged citizens to enhance the effectiveness of their participation by providing more access to politically relevant information and allowing them to give direct feedback, this would simply increase the gap between engaged and more apathetic citizens. It would not have the net effect of raising the overall level of political participation, as more access does not necessarily lead to more interest. This would make it unlikely that governments would increase their responsiveness to online initiatives. In Margolis and Resnick's view, the dream of online direct democracy and increased participation was simply that, a dream.

It is important to note that the assumptions underlying these contrasting visions of the Internet's impact on democracy are part of an enduring social framework that attempts to describe and predict how technology will impact our world. These visions can be situated within the competing viewpoints of technological utopianism and a more skeptical perspective that views techno-utopianism with suspicion. Technological utopianism is a perspective that is espoused by those who believe that improvements in technology will improve the human predicament and inevitably bring about a more coherent social order (Segal, 1986). Rheingold's belief that the Internet will enrich democracy is supported by this ideology.

Proponents of the counter-perspective point out that there is little evidence to support the beliefs of the utopian faction. Writing from this perspective in "System Failure: Oil, Futurity, and the Anticipation of Disaster", Imre Szeman (2007) claims that the utopian narrative that technology will overcome all obstacles is unsubstantiated. He points to the belief that technology will prevent the environmental degradation caused by

locating and extracting oil as a prime example. Margolis and Resnick's skepticism regarding the Internet's revolutionary impact on democracy clearly echoes this mindset.

While this MRP will deal specifically with the Internet's impact on democracy, it will also engage with this larger discussion about whether or not technology can and will positively impact our world. The primary goal of this research, however, is to determine which of the aforementioned visions of the Internet's influence on a representative democracy – whether the utopian hopes of Rheingold or the more grounded expectations of Margolis and Resnick – has come to fruition.

MRP Research Direction

Because it would be impossible to search the entire Internet for signs that the political sphere is being bolstered online, a specific online forum will be examined in order to determine whether it is being used by a specific group of Canadian politicians to bolster political engagement, or whether it is simply being used to spread information (if it is being used at all). Based on its popularity, its interactivity features, and literature which indicates that it is one of the most political of social media sites, Facebook was chosen as the site of examination for this research.

One question that arises from this choice is whether there are any ethical limitations or conflicts inherent in a public official's use of a private, for-profit online forum such as Facebook for their communication. The concern would be that citizens might be forced to provide private information to a corporate entity in order to access political information. This could be a major barrier to access that would prevent Facebook from truly enriching the political sphere. However, while this is certainly a

concern, this research conceptualizes a political actor's use of Facebook for political purposes as merely taking the necessary steps to reach people where they are gathering anyway. The popularity of Facebook allows politicians to engage a great many citizens, which is beneficial for the political sphere. Furthermore, those citizens who choose not to use Facebook can access political information in other forums. Facebook is viewed herein as merely another political tool, albeit a powerful one, for engaging the citizenry.

After choosing Facebook, it was also necessary to narrow down the list of political actors whose use of Facebook will be examined in this research project. The group chosen for this project consists of the 44 current members of City Council in Toronto, Ontario. This choice was made because politicians at the provincial and federal levels of government represent constituencies that are too large for politicians to realistically be expected to remain connected with constituents. City councilors on the other hand are expected to know their wards quite intimately. Thus, if any group of politicians is in fact using Facebook to foster engagement and enrich the political sphere, it is likely municipal representatives. Toronto was chosen as the geographic location because it has the largest population in Canada and thus social media is a tool that would be very useful to Toronto councilors if they were trying to remain connected with their relatively large constituency bases. This group would certainly not represent city councilors everywhere, but would demonstrate whether city councilors in this specific metropolitan area are using Facebook as a political tool.

The widespread popularity of Facebook has presented Toronto councilors with an unparalleled opportunity to engage with citizens. Unfortunately, we do not know how many of these politicians have taken advantage of this opportunity by creating public

Facebook accounts, nor do we know how the existing accounts are being used. For this reason, a useful first level of inquiry involves examining the Facebook adoption and usage rates of Toronto city councilors. This would indicate whether Facebook is valued as a political tool by this group of politicians, which they could use to share important information and engage directly with their constituents.

A second level of inquiry explores the validity of Margolis and Resnick's argument that politicians tend to use the Internet to spread information rather than to foster engagement. If Toronto city councilors are indeed using Facebook, it is important to determine whether they are using their accounts as information delivery vehicles or as tools for fostering engagement. This would indicate whether Facebook is contributing to more direct political participation or whether it is simply an online platform being used to disseminate information. Additionally, analyzing the manner in which councilors use Facebook will provide insight into how they value the platform as a communications tool and how they conceptualize Facebook users. If Facebook is primarily used to spread information and rarely used to foster engagement, then clearly Facebook is not valued as a tool for connecting with constituents. Furthermore, if councilors do not try to foster engagement with their followers, then this group is conceptualized as a passive audience to be acted upon rather than as a dynamic political public whose input and feedback is valued.

Disseminating information and fostering engagement are not expected to be mutually exclusive phenomenon, but rather it is expected that different councilors will use these communication methods to varying degrees. This study does not suggest that political actors should choose one method over the other, but instead that the methods

should be used in tandem. Ideally, a politician would present new and informative information and then seek input and feedback. Thus, both methods could be used simultaneously.

A third level of inquiry evaluates the content of the information that councilors and public users post on councilor Facebook pages. If posts and comments are political, this content could attract politically interested “citizen-experts.” These individuals share political information with members of their personal networks and encourage those people to participate more fully in the democratic process (Huckfeldt, Pietryka & Reilly, 2014). Thus, if any councilor Facebook accounts are attracting and informing politically interested users, this could be indirectly contributing to a rise in overall levels of political participation. It is also important to determine whether content is political because further literature indicates that, in the era of “massive communication,” politicians are more interested in disseminating entertaining information in order to seduce the masses (Marian, 2013). It could well be that Toronto city councilors are using Facebook regularly but that their Facebook posts are unrelated to political matters. This would indicate that the pages are not contributing to increased political engagement and are instead simply promoting the politician as an entertaining public figure.

A fourth level of inquiry focuses on whether certain users engage repeatedly with the councilor account holder and enter into dialogue with other followers of the account. The presence of such repeat users could indicate that a community of sorts has formed or is forming around the Facebook page of a Toronto city councilor. Such communities often give their members a sense of civic belonging and responsibility, and these feelings are often at the heart of political participation (Dahlgren, 2005). The presence of repeat

users on councilor Facebook pages could also indicate that these pages may be enriching the political sphere in a very real way. In addition, if users converse with other users on councilor Facebook pages, this could enrich the experience of all involved (Tian, 2011).

The fifth and final level of inquiry examines what kind of atmosphere these political actors face online. If councilors frequently face attacks by their followers, this could discourage councilors from maintaining a consistent presence on Facebook. The attitude of users could help explain patterns of usage by all city councilors

The literature review in the following section will describe why Facebook is a political medium and how political actors could use Facebook to enrich the public sphere. The methods section will then explain how exactly this research was conducted. This paper will then lead into the results section, where the findings of this research will be discussed, and conclusions will be drawn regarding how Facebook is currently being used by Toronto city councilors, and how their usage patterns are impacting the political sphere. The research paper will conclude by highlighting major findings of this study and by providing a brief discussion about how political actors can best use Facebook to benefit the political sphere. Suggestions for further research will be the last point discussed.

Literature Review

In comparison to Rheingold's utopian predictions and Margolis and Resnick's very skeptical perspective, most theorists have taken a more measured, middle ground position, and have suggested that certain aspects of Internet use by political figures have benefited democracy, while certain limitations have prevented the Internet from having the revolutionary impact predicted by Rheingold. One such middle-ground position is presented in Pippa Norris' (2001) *Digital Divide*, which notes that if used correctly, the Internet has the potential to spread important political information about the operation of government, facilitate public feedback, and allow citizens to contribute more directly to political decision-making. Furthermore, the Internet could help improve public opinion about government and public officials by making the political sphere more open, transparent and efficient.

However, the political websites examined in Norris' study were not entirely living up to their potential. Her analysis suggests that political websites were often used simply to disseminate information rather than to create opportunities for citizens to engage in un-moderated public discussion. Will J. Grant, Brenda Moon and Janie Busby Grant (2010) came to a similar conclusion in their examination of how Australian politicians use Twitter. Their findings suggest that while some politicians were in fact using Twitter for political engagement, the majority used Twitter to broadcast information rather than to generate political conversations. Comparable findings were produced in a study of the 2006 Dutch general elections, which found that the candidates did not take advantage of the interactive features of social networking sites (Utz, 2009, 238).

In *Preaching to the Converted*, Norris (2003) again examined the relationship between the Internet and politics, this time by studying how the online presence of political parties influenced democratic proceedings in Europe. Norris discovered that in the case of some European parties, political websites were used to disseminate information but they were also used as platforms where conversations between citizens and party officials could occur. However, only a small percentage of Internet users actually visited these sites. Overall, the findings indicate that access to interactive political websites does not necessarily lead to increased levels of political participation. Instead, the benefit of these websites is that they give already engaged citizens the opportunity to learn more and participate more directly in political discourse.

Calin Gurau and Nawel Ayadi (2011) presented similar findings in their examination of the communication strategies of the two main candidates during the 2007 French presidential elections. The findings indicate that while both candidates engaged in online campaigning, using such tools as political blogs, online discussion forums, and e-mails, candidates only reached a small percentage of the population using these methods (e.g., only 13 percent of French people participated in an online political forum). The Internet proved to be a useful political tool for some citizens but it did not encourage a high number of people to participate in the political process online.

Sara Bentivegna's (2006) examination of how information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as the Internet influence the relationship between citizens and political figures produced similar findings. Bentivegna acknowledges that ICTs could potentially allow citizens to be consulted directly through tools such as electronic surveys and may give citizens more control over governing bodies by providing the former more

access to new and diverse information. However, the article also recognizes that increased opportunity to interact directly with politicians does not necessarily lead to an increased desire to be an active citizen and to become engaged in the political system. This position is supported by further research that indicated that while Internet usage positively influences overall levels political knowledge, it does not positively influence political participation (Xenos & Moy, 2007). Indeed, according to Bruce Bimber (2001), the only form of participation that is demonstrably connected to Internet use is donating money.

Like Norris (2001), Bentivegna found that political parties often use ICTs as simple tools for information dissemination rather than as tools for public engagement. Echoing previous studies, Bentivegna found that political figures tend to be more interested in a top-down, information-sharing online model than in fostering increased engagement. While Bentivegna recognizes that this improved-information sharing ability is certainly beneficial since it creates a space for more diversity within the public sphere and helps citizens become more informed, there is no evidence that such information sharing contributes to increased public engagement.

There are two important themes in the literature discussed thus far. The first is that according to previous studies, political actors are more interested in using the Internet to share information than to engage directly with citizens. The second is that the Internet will not increase political participation overall but will allow already-engaged citizens to participate more fully in the democratic process. Let us examine both of these propositions more fully, beginning with how political actors use the Internet.

Purposes of Internet Use

A common finding in the literature is that political actors have traditionally used the Internet to share information rather than to foster increased engagement. This is not necessarily a negative outcome since, as Rheingold (1993) points out, information sharing is an essential component of a representative democracy. Jerry L. Miller & Raymie E. McKerrow (2010) concur, having written that the Internet can shed light on important topics not covered by the mass media and may in this way broaden citizen's political knowledge. However, online information sharing seems to occur far more frequently than online interaction with citizens. This is concerning because most theorists reviewed for this MRP agree that increasing the levels of interaction between political figures and citizens is one of the primary ways that the Internet could enrich democracy. This raises the question as to why a significant rise in online engagement by political actors has not been observed even though the online presence of these actors, and their ability to communicate directly with citizens, has increased significantly. It is to this question that I now turn.

According to Gurprit Kindra, Frederick Staphenurst and Ricardo Pellizo (2013), this lack of sustained and effective engagement on the part of political actors may be due to an overall dearth of computer literacy. Many political parties in long-established democracies have, according to Kindra et al., become unable to communicate effectively with the entirety of their large constituency bases, and as a result, they now struggle to attract members, recognize voter needs, or explain policy decisions. In response to this problem there was a significant rise in the number of parliamentary websites, which suggests that politicians believed that they had found a new channel for more direct

communication with citizens in websites and other ICTs. However, these websites have not been very effective communication platforms because officials lack the computer literacy to do more than post information, notwithstanding their evident desire to engage with the electorate.

Stephen Ward, Rachel Gibson and Wainer Lusoli (2003) presented a second potential reason for why politicians are more likely to focus on information sharing rather than direct engagement with citizens. They write that the Internet could contribute positively to democracy by allowing individuals to contact politicians, to air grievances more publicly, and to access and participate in protest networks and single-issue campaigns. However, if the primary use of online political spaces is to complain or protest, then politicians may become wary of interacting directly with members of the public in such spaces. This wariness is also described by Kirsten A. Foot and Steven M. Schneider (2002), who argue that the web is reshaping the way that citizens and politicians interact by decreasing the degree of control that message producers hold and allowing far more dissident voices to thrust themselves into the conversation. Combined with the ever-growing number of Internet users, this has made political figures think long and hard about how to enter and use the web strategically.

Marian (2013) presented a final explanation for the focus on information dissemination over direct engagement. In the era of “massive communication,” political communicators have adopted the rhetoric of seducing the masses and tend to communicate as entertainers rather than as informers, with their primary focus being image and entertainment. Politicians now communicate as if they are continuously in the midst of campaigning, meaning they are always looking to entice voters rather than to

inform the citizenry. Marian terms this phenomenon the “permanent campaign”. The campaign mindset means that political figures are less concerned with communicating directly with citizens and hearing about their issues, and more concerned with protecting their image and presenting pleasing information to the public.

All of these reasons may indeed be causing politicians to disregard, misuse or undervalue the Internet as a tool through which they could engage directly with citizens. However, a gap in the literature is that most researchers up until this point have focused on the way political actors communicate with the electorate using political websites. The problem with this approach is that websites are generally not intended to be interactive in the first place, but rather are meant to act as one-way information dissemination channels. Political actors could in fact be using the Internet to foster engagement, however they might be using different online resources.

Social Media and Political Communication

In recent years, social media platforms have become important sites for interpersonal communication. Unfortunately, researchers have largely overlooked the way that politicians are using social media to communicate with their constituents. One exception is a study by Gunn Sara Enli and Eli Skogerbø (2013), which revealed that politicians in Norway “report higher and more idealistic motivations for democratic dialogue for their social media use than they actually manage to maneuver in practice” (p.770). Additionally, Grant et al. examined how Australian politicians used Twitter and Utz analyzed social networking site usage during the 2006 elections in the Netherlands. However, such analyses are rare. Even more rare have been studies of the social media

usage tendencies of Canadian politicians. This represents an important gap in the North American political communication literature.

Of particular importance is the lack of research into Canadian politicians' use of Facebook. This is because users who have Facebook connections with political figures and who are exposed to shared political information by these means have proven to be more likely to participate in political activities (Tang & Lee, 2013). There is also a positive relationship between the use of Facebook for political purposes and political participation more generally (Vitak et al., 2011). Another study found that there is a further positive relationship between the intensity of engagement with Facebook groups and levels of civic and political participation among post-secondary students (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Additionally, in a study comparing Facebook and MySpace, Facebook users were found to be more politically knowledgeable than their MySpace counterparts (Pasek, More & Romer, 2009). According to this accumulated literature, Facebook is clearly a political forum. Examining whether politicians in Canada recognize that Facebook is a valuable political tool and how they have chosen to use that tool thus far would be an informative contribution to the annals of political communication research.

It is important to examine how political actors are using Facebook, and not simply whether or not they have profiles, because merely maintaining a profile is insufficient for facilitating dialogue and engagement on social networking sites (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009). It is certainly possible that the factors that have prevented political actors from directly engaging citizens online in the past may now be influencing how they use Facebook. Politicians may not know how to use the medium properly; they may be wary

of the dangers that can accompany its use; or they could simply be using Facebook to share entertaining information rather than taking advantage of opportunities to interact with constituents. Furthermore, even if politicians are using Facebook to interact with citizens on a regular basis, this may not increase political participation. The interaction may benefit the citizens who are already politically engaged and widen the gap between the informed and the uninformed.

Engaging Citizen Experts

There is reason to hope, however, that if politicians are in fact using Facebook to communicate even with a small group of politically engaged citizens, this could indirectly increase overall levels of political participation. Robert Huckfeldt, Matthew T. Pietryka and Jack Reilly (2014) wrote that average people often play a large part in the process of diffusing political information by taking upon themselves the role of expert in citizen politics. Unlike people who are disinterested in politics, citizen experts care very deeply about political issues and often relish the opportunity to search for and engage with new opinions and information. Citizen experts then become a source of political information for the people in their personal networks, and perhaps more importantly “they inject political content into the everyday patterns of communication and interdependence that exist among citizens in democratic politics” (p.120). Providing opportunities for interested citizens to engage directly with political actors on Facebook could thus indirectly raise overall levels of political knowledge and engagement.

The notion of the “citizen-expert” and the role that these individuals play in the process of diffusing political information harkens back to the “two-step flow of

communications” theory (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1968). This theory posits that during political campaigns, ideas flow from the mass media to individuals who can be characterized as “opinion leaders” within their communities or personal networks. These individuals then share the information with those people around them who have more limited political knowledge and thereby draw this second, larger group of individuals into the political sphere. These people were termed “opinion followers”. The “two-step flow” theory supports the assertion that if councilors were able to use Facebook to enrich the political experience of even a small group of individuals, it could indirectly raise overall levels of political engagement.

Dahlgren (2005) pointed to another potential benefit of politicians using Facebook to communicate even with small groups of citizens. He wrote that when the Internet is used to provide interested citizens with the opportunity to engage with politicians and other citizens, the result can be the further development of the public sphere. For Dahlgren, “a functioning public sphere is understood as a constellation of communicative spaces in society that permit the circulation of information, ideas, debates— ideally in an unfettered manner—and also the formation of political will” (p.148). This description is clearly informed by Habermas’ (1989) conception of the public sphere. Online spaces, such as Facebook pages, can become communicative spaces that enlarge and enrich the public sphere by fostering dialogue and engagement. Continued participation in such online spaces generates feelings of cooperation and reciprocity amongst group members, which encourages further political and civic engagement. While discussion within these groups may not always take the form of political deliberation, simply having a space such as a politician’s Facebook page where diverse citizens can meet and communicate often

fosters the kind of civic culture that is at the heart of a functioning democracy. As these groups evolve, they may attract citizens who have less interest in politics but who are drawn to the community itself, and who can be integrated into the civic-minded culture that exists therein.

Similarly, Tian (2011) demonstrated how a public space where citizens can both absorb and discuss political information, such as a public Facebook page, could greatly benefit citizens. According to Tian, interpersonal discussion helps people understand and engage more easily with political media, which in turn encourages and facilitates political participation. Discussion can act as a mediator between the consumption of political media and participation in the political process through voting. Thus, an online space where engaged political citizens could access political media and discuss it with other engaged citizens could enrich the political participation of all involved. This idea is supported by previous research that demonstrated that “any form of association, including the networked relationships that are typical of the Facebook environment, helps political participation” (Vitak et al., 2011, p.107). It is clear then that a political Facebook page that hosts interpersonal discussion could positively influence political participation.

Literature Review Summary

Several trends emerged from the literature pertaining to online political communication discussed above. One is that while many political communication researchers believe that the Internet has the potential to enhance democracy, this potential has not been actualized thus far. A second trend in the literature is that although the Internet has enriched democracy by providing greater access to political information and,

in some cases, to political actors themselves, this has not raised the overall levels of political engagement, as many believed it would in the early days of the Internet. Nevertheless, researchers are still hopeful that the Internet will contribute to a rise in political participation by allowing politicians to engage directly with interested citizens, who may in turn spread information and increase political interest within their personal networks.

This online interaction between political figures and citizens has not been observed consistently in the Canadian context. However, due to the focus on traditional websites and the lack of attention to social media in the literature, scholars may overlook this type of politician-citizen interaction on Facebook. Analysis of such interactions on Facebook would be beneficial to the political system for the reasons previously discussed, including the enhancement of political discussions and fostering online political communities. However, one important factor that has prevented such interaction is the tendency of politicians to be more interested in using the Internet for information sharing rather than for direct engagement with citizens. This tendency may be preventing widespread Facebook usage on the part of politicians today.

Examining how politicians use Facebook to interact with citizens would be a useful contribution to online political communication research. This MRP looks closely at the degree to which politicians are using Facebook to interact directly with citizens, whether politicians have avoided using it, and whether they are using it primarily to disseminate information. It would not be practical to expect Facebook usage to create more direct democracy or to directly raise the overall level of political participation because the Internet has not been able to accomplish this in the past due to the previously

discussed problems with the techno-utopian visions. However, if politicians are effectively using Facebook to engage citizens, it would be reasonable to expect small communities made up of politically engaged citizens to have formed around the pages of political figures. This would enrich democracy and bolster participation in an indirect fashion.

Methods

Research Questions

This exploration of the use of Facebook as a mode of political communication was guided by the five research questions discussed below.

RQ1: Are Toronto city councilors consistently active on Facebook?

The widespread popularity of Facebook has presented Toronto city councilors with an unparalleled opportunity to engage with citizens. Unfortunately, we do not know how many of these politicians have taken advantage of this opportunity by creating public Facebook accounts, nor do we know how the existing accounts are being used. For this reason, RQ1 was developed to examine Facebook adoption and usage rates of Toronto councilors. The results will provide insight into whether or not these politicians view public Facebook pages as useful political communication tools.

RQ2: Are Toronto city councilors using Facebook to create and engage in dialogue, or simply to disseminate information in a one-way information sharing model?

RQ2 speaks to previous studies that found that political figures are more interested in information dissemination than in undertaking the more arduous task of engaging with citizens online. If Toronto city councilors are on Facebook, it is important to determine how they are using their accounts. They could be using them in the same way they have used websites in the past, to share information, rather than to engage with citizens in ongoing conversations. RQ2 focuses on how Toronto city councilors are using their Facebook accounts and will indicate whether Facebook is contributing to more

direct political engagement or whether it is simply another platform being used to share information.

RQ3: Are certain public users consistently engaging with the councilor, as well as fellow users, or are posts primarily one-time contributions?

As indicated in the literature, even small numbers of politically engaged citizens can encourage people in their own networks to participate more fully in the democratic process by discussing and sharing issues with them. RQ3 focuses on whether or not citizens are engaging consistently with politicians on their Facebook accounts. If they are engaging with politicians on Facebook, this may mean that Facebook can encourage increased political participation, albeit in an indirect fashion. It would also be important to determine whether those consistently engaged citizens are interacting with each other, and perhaps creating and maintaining an active communicative space within the public sphere.

RQ4: Are Toronto city councilors primarily posting information on their Facebook pages that can be considered politically relevant, or are posts primarily promotional or entertainment based?

It is also necessary to determine whether or not Toronto city councilors are using Facebook to disseminate relevant political and civic information. Literature indicates that, in the era of “massive communication”, politicians are more interested in disseminating entertaining information in order to seduce the masses. While Toronto city councilors may be using Facebook consistently to engage with followers, their Facebook posts could

potentially be unrelated to politics. This would indicate that the pages are not contributing to increased political engagement, but are instead simply promoting the politician as an entertaining public figure.

RQ5: What percentage of citizen posts and comments on the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors can be deemed attacks?

Finally, it is important to determine whether citizens are interested in creating healthy, constructive discussions, or whether citizens use Facebook primarily as a platform to attack the councilor. This could help explain patterns of usage by all city councilors. If the councilors who are active on Facebook are forced to spend time dealing with personal attacks and aggressive language, this could help explain why other councilors have not adopted Facebook or increased their usage rates.

Councilor Facebook accounts

In order to effectively answer the research questions discussed above, the following methods were applied to the examination of the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors. First, it was necessary to determine the Facebook adoption rates within this group of councilors. The method used to discover this information was simply to search Google using each councilor's name paired with the term "Facebook" (e.g. "Paul Ainslie Facebook".) A second Google search combined each councilor's name with the terms "Councilor" and "Facebook." For example, "Councilor Paul Ainslie Facebook." Finally, the third and fourth searches consisted of entering these same combinations into the search function within Facebook itself to discover any accounts that the first and

second searches may have missed. These four combined searches were used as the basis for determining whether each councilor maintained an active Facebook account.

If a councilor's account was discovered, then the account was tracked and examined using a fabricated research account. If the councilor maintained a fan page, then the research account would "like" and "follow" it. If the councilor maintained a personal account, then the research account would send a friend request to that account. The research account was never used to post information or comment anywhere, and generic Internet pictures were used for both the profile picture and cover photo. This was done to ensure that the councilor could not possibly think that this account was someone they knew. Thus, if councilors did accept friendship requests from the research account, it would indicate that they accept friendship requests from anyone who asks, and that their Facebook accounts are open to all members of the public. If no account that was active between January 2014 and April 2014 was discovered after using the aforementioned searches, then the councilor in question was deemed to have no account. It is important to note that this study recognizes that the councilor in question may not be the one actually using the account; it could very well be a member of his or her office. However, this study assumes that whoever operates the account does so at the behest of the councilor, and bases their actions on the councilor's wishes and policies. In short, this study assumes that any currently active Facebook account in the councilor's name is being operated how they would like it to be operated.

Account requirements

Each councilor Facebook page discovered through the searches described above was subject to a screening process in order to determine its suitability for this research project. Each account must have been active at the onset of the year 2014. This requirement was necessary because this project aims to determine how councilors are currently using their Facebook accounts, whether as political tools to foster engagement or as one-way information distribution vehicles. Accounts that have been inactive during the current year do not aid in the understanding of existing usage tendencies. In order to be classified as active, a councilor Facebook page needed only to have shown evidence that either the account holder, or another Facebook user, had posted at least once on the councilor's wall between the periods of January 1st, 2014, and April 30th, 2014. This 17-week period represents this research's examination period. The councilor account holder need not have shown any evidence of activity for the account to be classified as active, as long as a user or users took advantage of the existence of the councilor's Facebook page to post on their wall.

A second requirement for inclusion in this data set is that the Facebook page must not specifically have been a re-election account. This was determined by viewing the profile name of the account. Accounts whose profile names included the words "Re-Elect," "for Councilor," or similar election prompts, were not included in this research. Using the Internet to campaign has traditionally impacted both the content of communicated messages and the manner in which the candidate uses the online platform. The communication techniques evidenced in a re-election forum tend to be promotional and entertainment based. This behavior aims to increase short-term popularity and is not

necessarily representative of a larger pattern of online political behavior. A goal of this study is to examine the habitual behavior of Toronto city councilors on Facebook, and the actions undertaken within a re-election account are not dependable representations of a councilor's tendencies or habits. Furthermore, this research will not examine how politicians use social media to campaign because this topic has been thoroughly examined in academic studies, as evidenced by the literature review herein. The fact that the City of Toronto is having an election in October 2014 is a variable that will necessarily impact the behavior of all councilors who may be seeking re-election. However, removing all accounts designed specifically to promote candidates from this data set will lessen its impact. One such account that was excluded from this research was the page entitled "Elect Raymond Cho."

A third and final requirement for inclusion in this study is that the account holder must not hold the office of Mayor of Toronto, or be involved in the mayoral race. A goal of this study is to determine whether the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors have become hubs of user engagement due to the activity of the account holder. To this end, this study examined the number of user posts, user comments, and repeat users that appeared on each councilor's wall. Given the fact that the office of mayor carries with it a much higher public profile than the office of city councilor, the Facebook pages of councilors directly affiliated with that office would necessarily exhibit much more traffic and be the focus of much more public interest than other councilors. This would skew the results of this research, as the numbers could possibly be more directly related to the higher public profile than any difference in Facebook usage techniques. The councilors directly affected by this requirement are Norm Kelly, who is currently the acting mayor,

and Karen Stintz, who declared for the mayoral race. While these councilors have active accounts, they were excluded from this study due to the increased public scrutiny and interest that accompanies their mayoral affiliations.

Councilor account usage

If the Facebook account of a Toronto city councilor proved to be active during the time period noted, was not specifically a re-election account, and was not the account of a councilor acting as mayor or contending for the mayoralship, the account was included in the data set. In order to determine how each account holder used their Facebook page, each instance of account holder activity was recorded and analyzed. For the purposes of this study, “account holder activity” refers to either a post made by the councilor or a councilor response to a user. A post could mean sharing a message, a photo, a video, a link to an external website, a Facebook event, or another user’s status. Excluded from the data set were posts which originated on another platform, such as Twitter or Instagram, and which were shared automatically on Facebook. This research is concerned only with how councilors use Facebook specifically. Such posts were identified based on a Facebook indication that the message was posted “via Twitter” or “via Instagram.” Posts that were not in one of the two official Canadian languages, English and French, were also excluded from this research. This researcher does not have the resources necessary to effectively translate every possible language. Finally, completely identical posts that occurred on the same day were only counted once, as duplicate posts are often the result of technological malfunctions or human errors, and may not have been the result of purposeful user decisions.

A councilor account “response” refers to responses by account holders to user posts or to comments on a post on the councilor’s wall. Each such response was counted as an individual account holder action. However, instances wherein councilors commented on their own posts without being prompted by user comments or questions were not recorded as separate instances of activity. These comments were categorized instead as part of the original post. All councilor account posts and comments were recorded, and each councilor who was active on Facebook was evaluated and classified based on the frequency with which they were active on Facebook. Politicians were classified according to the following categories: “inactive Facebook user” (no activity since the beginning of 2014), “infrequent user” (if they averaged 0-2 total actions per week), “occasional user” (if they averaged 3-5 actions per week), “consistent user” (if they averaged 6-10 posts per week), and “frequent user” (if they averaged 11+ posts per week). It was expected that more users would engage with an account they viewed as frequently active.

In addition to posts and comments, this study also recorded instances where the councilor overtly attempted to foster engagement on Facebook (e.g., the councilor posed a question, encouraged users to reach out to the councilor on Facebook, or encouraged users to join a Facebook group that focused on a particular issue). Such instances are suggestive of the degree to which the councilor valued Facebook as a tool for fostering user engagement. Determining how often the councilor responded to user comments and attempted to develop further engagement provides insight into whether Facebook is valued as tool with which councilors can interact with the public, or whether it is valued

more so as a tool through which councilors can disseminate information in a one-way information sharing model.

Councilor account users

In order to determine the level of user engagement and participation on the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors, each external user contribution to such a page was noted and analyzed. User posts on the councilor's wall could include a written message, a photo, a video, a link to an external website, a Facebook event, or a post wherein the councilor account was tagged. Each user comment on a post by the councilor and each post by a user on the councilor's wall were recorded and analyzed.

To ensure that the size of the data set remained manageable, certain types of Facebook activity were excluded. Comments on posts wherein the councilor was tagged were excluded. A goal of this study is to examine the activity that occurs solely on the councilor's Facebook page, and posts that tag the councilor account can be commented upon the followers of the user who tagged the councilor in their post, or by followers of other users who may have been tagged in the same post. Thus, the comments on such a post could originate from users who are completely unaffiliated with the councilor account, and thus cannot be included in this data set. Only councilor responses to tagged posts were categorized. Such responses were noted as an instance where the councilor responded to a user action. Also, excluded from the data set were "Happy Birthday" related posts because not all councilors will have birthdays during the time period being examined, and thus the high number of birthday-related comments on the pages of only a few councilors may skew the data. User posts and comments written in a language other

than English or French were excluded for the same reasons noted above. Finally, duplicate posts on the same day were only counted once, as discussed above.

Dialogue

It was necessary to examine the contributions of users on the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors to determine the extent to which users engage in dialogue with each other. This type of behavior could indicate that these Facebook pages are being used as online “coffeehouses”, and may also point to the existence of small communities of engaged citizens that have formed around the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors. For the purposes of this study, “dialogue” is defined as an exchange of ideas between two or more people. To gauge the amount of dialogue occurring on councilor Facebook pages, the study counted each instance in which two or more users had exchanged their thoughts. Instances wherein users acknowledged, contributed to, or challenged each other’s posts were categorized as dialogue. Acknowledging another user could mean tagging them in a response or referencing a specific part of a pre-existing post or comment. When multiple users commented on the same subject, there needed to be clear acknowledgement of another user, user statement, or user idea for these actions to have been categorized as dialogue. User responses to councilor posts and councilor responses to user posts were not counted as instances of dialogue because the area of interest here is whether users congregate and converse amongst themselves.

Repeat users

If the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors were being used to enrich the political system, they would not only play host to public dialogue, but they would also act as a meeting place for consistently engaged, political citizen-experts. In order to determine whether the user contributions to the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors were more than one-time offerings, each user action was recorded and the lists of total user actions on each councilor Facebook account were searched for evidence of repeat users. If a user was found to have contributed to the Facebook page of a Toronto city councilor on at least two separate dates in the form of a post or a comment, that user was classified as a repeat user. The existence of repeat users may point to the presence of a community of citizen experts that has developed around the account of a councilor and which monitors the activity therein. According to the literature, the members of these groups may spread political information within their personal networks and thereby raise overall levels of political engagement. Such a group also often embodies the kind of civic-minded association that encourages members to participate in political processes.

Political posts

In order to discover whether councilor account holders tend to use their profile as a tool to share political information or to disseminate entertainment-related information, each councilor post was analyzed and classified as either “political” or “other.” A councilor post that met at least one of the following criteria was categorized as political.

- i. Relates to government decision-making, or an act of municipal, provincial, federal, or international governance.

- ii. Informs the audience about a current political issue, or about the state of the current political environment.

This research project recognizes that the definition of a “political” post is fluid and could vary widely across different studies. The most personal of posts, such as a photo posted by a councilor of his or her child, could be coded as political if the councilor is attempting to provide a glimpse into their personal life to make themselves more attractive to voters. After all, the image of a politician with a smiling family is a familiar trope in political advertising. Furthermore, depending on the context and intent of the broader message, entertainment posts can also be coded as political. For example, a message about a local sports team may seem to be unrelated to matters of governance, yet if the councilor’s intent was to encourage voters to identify with him or her, it could certainly be categorized as a “political.” However, one of the objectives of this study is to determine whether councilors purposefully use Facebook as a political tool, and it is difficult to determine what the intent was behind posts that are not expressly political. Councilors could have posted a personal or entertainment message simply because they wished to share an aspect of their life with friends and family who may have been following their accounts. Because it would be very difficult to accurately determine the intent behind each post, only posts that fulfill one of the above stipulations were classified as political for the purposes of this research project.

It must also be noted that posts on the same topic were classified differently depending on the content and specific framing of the message. For example, several councilors posted information about Toronto’s new Home Energy Loan Program (HELP) and these were placed in different categories due to differences in content and framing. Posts that simply advised users about how to apply for the program were not categorized

as “political” because the message did not relate to government decision-making. Posts that explained why Toronto had implemented the program and how the program would impact the city as a whole were categorized as “political” since the message referenced government decision-making. Many posts regarding city programs and projects were analyzed in this manner. Posts about the technical details of a government program were often classified differently than posts about the citywide benefits of the same program, or the governmental decision-making process that surrounded its implementation. User posts were analyzed in the same fashion in order to determine whether they were posting about political topics.

Both councilor and user comments on existing posts were analyzed in a more nuanced fashion than councilor and user posts. Comments were evaluated based on the aforementioned criteria for determining whether the content of a message was political, however they were also interpreted in relation to the context of the original post. For example, if the councilor account holder posted that he or she had undertaken some specific political action and a user commented “Thank you,” this was deemed to be a political statement since it implies agreement with the political action. However, the same comment on a post where the account holder voiced that he or she would be attending a community Easter parade, for example, would not be classified as political because it voices agreement with an action that would not be defined as “political” in this study. While some comments or responses on existing posts may not in themselves have met the criteria to be categorized as political, they may still have been recorded as such based on the political content to which they were responding or commenting on.

Online Facebook environment

Finally, it was necessary to assess whether Toronto city councilors faced an environment on Facebook that could negatively impact their usage rates or the adoption rates of their inactive colleagues. The literature indicates that some obstacles that may prevent political figures from venturing online include a lack of computer literacy and a negative online atmosphere created by frequent attacks made by members of the public. While the scope of this research project does not include an assessment of each councilor's technological proficiency, it was possible to assess the tone and quality of the comments and posts that political figures face online. User comments and posts were assessed based on the content and tone of the message, and classified as either "critical" or "other." Posts were categorized as "critical" if they contained either very offensive and derogatory terminology, such as "hate," "terrible," "awful," etc., or personal attacks. Posts that were strongly critical of a councilor's policies or decisions were not categorized as "critical" unless they contained strong language. The categorization of critical in this case refers more to personal attacks than to strong critiques of the councilor's politics. This differentiation is based on the assumption that councilors likely face strong critiques in all forums, but that an online forum might allow some users to go beyond socially accepted boundaries of political critiques. Evidence of this behavior may partially explain Facebook adoption and usage rates.

Results and Discussion

Councilor Facebook adoption & account accessibility

Using the methods described above, the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors were examined in order to determine whether these councilors had adopted Facebook, how they used the platform, and whether users engaged with these Facebook pages. The first set of results relates to the Facebook adoption rates among Toronto city councilors, and the level of access that existing pages offered to the average Facebook user. Figure 1 depicts these findings. The results indicate that of the 44 Toronto city councilors, 30 maintained profiles that met the requirements for inclusion in this research study. Councilors Raymond Cho (re-election account), Kristyn Wong-Tam (re-election account), Norm Kelly (acting mayor), and Karen Stintz (mayoral candidate) maintained active Facebook profiles at the time of this study, but these pages were not included in this study for the reasons noted in the previous section.

Of the 30 councilors who managed active Facebook accounts that met the requirements for inclusion in this study, three maintained both a personal account and a fan page (Ana Bailao, Mike Del Grande, and Mark Grimes). A personal account is a Facebook account that one cannot fully access without being “Facebook Friends” with the account holder. A fan page is a Facebook account that any member of the public can access, although the account holder may still delimit the level of accessibility. These extra accounts brought the total number of accounts included in this study to 33.

The first level of analysis involved determining the extent to which each account was accessible to members of the public who did not know the account holder personally and who likely only wished to follow the councilor on Facebook because of political

interest. Accounts categorized as “total access” allowed their followers to post on the account holder’s wall and to view all posts and comments by the account holder and users. Accounts that denied some or all of these abilities to their followers were categorized as “limited access”. Figure 1 outlines which councilors have adopted Facebook pages and indicates the level of access granted to the researcher account.

Figure 1
Councilor adoption rates and account accessibility

Councilor - Ward	Facebook Account(s)	Access
Paul Ainslie – Ward 43	Paul Ainslie. Personal account.	Friends. Total access.
Maria Augimeri – Ward 9	Maria Augimeri. Personal account.	Friends. Total access.
Vincent Crisanti – Ward 1	Vincent Crisanti. Personal account.	Friends. Total access.
Janet Davis – Ward 31	Janet Davis. Personal account.	Friends. Total access.
Chin Lee – Ward 41	Chin Lee. Personal account.	Friends. Total access.
Josh Matlow – Ward 22	Josh Matlow. Personal account.	Friends. Total access.
Mary-Margaret McMahon – Ward 32	Mary-Margaret McMahon. Personal account.	Friends. Total access.
Mike Del Grande – Ward 39	<i>Account 1:</i> Mike Del Grande. Personal account. <i>Account 2:</i> Councillor Mike Del Grande. Fan page.	<i>Personal Account:</i> Friends. Total access. <i>Fan Page:</i> Liked, Followed. Total access.
Mark Grimes – Ward 6	<i>Account 1:</i> Mark Grimes. Personal account. <i>Account 2:</i> Councillor Mark Grimes. Fan page.	<i>Personal Account:</i> Friends. Total access. <i>Fan Page:</i> Liked, Followed. Total access.
Ana Bailao – Ward 18	<i>Account 1:</i> Ana Bailao. Personal account. <i>Account 2:</i> Councillor Ana Bailao. Fan page.	<i>Personal Account:</i> FR not accepted. Limited access. External users cannot post on the page. <i>Fan Page:</i> Liked, Followed. Total access.
Josh Colle – Ward 15	Josh Colle. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Total access.
Gary Crawford – Ward 36	Councillor Gary Crawford. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Total access.
Sarah Doucette – Ward 13	Sarah Doucette. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Total access.
John Fillion – Ward 23	John Fillion. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Total access.
Paula Fletcher – Ward 30	Paula Fletcher. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Total access.
Joe Mihevc – Ward 21	Joe Mihevc. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Total access.
James Pasternak – Ward 10	James Pasternak, Toronto City Councillor, Ward 10 - York Centre. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Total access.
Jaye Robinson – Ward 25	Jaye Robinson. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Total access.
Michelle Berardinetti – Ward 35	Councillor Michelle Berardinetti, Ward 35. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Limited access. Users cannot post on the page.
Mary Fragedakis – Ward 29	Mary Fragedakis. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Limited access. Cannot post on the page.
Mike Layton – Ward 19	Mike Layton. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Limited access. Cannot post on the page.
John Parker – Ward 26	Councillor John Parker. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Limited access. Users cannot post on the page.
Gord Perks – Ward 14	Gord Perks. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Limited access. Users cannot post on the page.
Anthony Perruzza – Ward 8	Anthony Perruzza. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Limited access. Users cannot post on the page.
Adam Vaughan – Ward 20	Councillor Adam Vaughan. Fan page.	Liked, Followed. Limited access. Users cannot post on the page.
Glenn De Baeremaeker – Ward 38	Glenn De Baeremaeker. Personal account.	FR not accepted. Limited access. External users cannot post on the page.
Pam McConnell – Ward 28	Pam McConnell. Personal account.	FR not accepted. Limited access. External users cannot post on the page.

Shelley Carroll – <i>Ward 33</i>	Shelley Carroll. Personal account.	FR not accepted. Limited access. External users cannot post or comment on the page.
Gloria Lindsay Luby – <i>Ward 4</i>	Gloria Lindsay Luby. Personal account.	FR not accepted. Limited access. External users cannot post or comment on the page.
Frances Nunziata – <i>Ward 11</i>	Frances Nunziata. Personal account.	FR not accepted. Limited access. External users cannot post or comment on the page.
Raymond Cho – <i>Ward 42</i>	Account not included in study.	---
Norm Kelly – <i>Ward 40</i>	Account not included in study.	---
Kristyn Wong-Tam – <i>Ward 27</i>	Account not included in study.	---
Karen Stintz – <i>Ward 16</i>	Account not included in study.	---
Peter Leon – <i>Ward 3</i>	No account.	---
Giorgio Mammoliti – <i>Ward 7</i>	No account.	---
Peter Milczyn – <i>Ward 5</i>	No account.	---
Denzil Minnan-Wong – <i>Ward 34</i>	No account.	---
Ron Moeser – <i>Ward 44</i>	No account.	---
Cesar Palacio – <i>Ward 17</i>	No account.	---
David Shiner – <i>Ward 24</i>	No account.	---
Frank Di Giorgio – <i>Ward 12</i>	No account.	---
Michael Thompson – <i>Ward 37</i>	No account.	---
Doug Ford – <i>Ward 2</i>	No account.	---

*FR- Friend Request

Of the 33 accounts studied, 15 were personal accounts, of which nine accepted friendship requests from the research account. This granted the research account complete access to those accounts. The remaining six accounts allowed public users only limited access to their accounts. Public users could view certain posts, but in all six cases public users were denied the ability to post new messages on the councilor's wall. Furthermore, three of the six accounts denied public users the ability to even comment on the posts they were allowed to view. This means that three of the 15 personal councilor accounts completely denied public users the ability to contribute or engage in any way on that councilor's Facebook wall.

The remaining 18 accounts analyzed in the study were councilor fan pages. While any member of the public could view the page, in some cases users were still denied complete access to the account. While all 18 accounts allowed users to contribute comments to existing posts, seven of the 18 fan pages denied users the ability to post on the councilor account's wall. Combined with the evidence gathered from the personal councilor accounts, the data indicates that, of the 33 accounts included in this study, only

20 seemed to value all user input, as they allowed users to both post and comment on their walls. The remaining 13 accounts included in this study limited the abilities of users to contribute to the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors, which suggests that these accounts function primarily as tools for disseminating information.

While 10 of these 13 accounts allowed users to comment on councilor account posts, users could not proactively post messages directly to the councilor account or to other councilor followers, which maintains the top-down, information-sharing model that political actors have favored in online forums in the past. The role of users was limited to receiving and reacting to the information posted by the councilor account holder, which allowed that account holder to determine when they received feedback and on what topic. The remaining three accounts, those of Councilors Shelley Carroll, Gloria Lindsay Luby, and Frances Nunziata, did not allow users to contribute to their Facebook pages in any way, which suggests that these three councilors value Facebook solely as a tool to disseminate information and not as a tool for fostering public engagement.

The 20 Facebook profiles that provided the research account with complete access to their walls represent 18 councilors (Mike Del Grande and Mark Grimes both own two accounts that granted total access to the researcher account). This suggests that the majority of the councilors who have both adopted Facebook and been included in this study do value the fact that Facebook provides public users with the opportunity to engage directly with councilors and other users in an online forum, as they have not limited user access to these features. However, in terms of overall numbers, less than half of Toronto city councilors have both adopted Facebook and created an account that is completely accessible to the public. Similar to the political actors examined in the

academic literature, the majority of Toronto City Council chose to either avoid Facebook altogether or use it primarily as a tool with which to disseminate information. Based on Margolis and Resnick's work, the data suggests that these councilors may view their Facebook followers as a passive audience to be acted upon, and that input and feedback from followers may be undervalued or even unwanted by councilors.

Councilor Facebook usage patterns

Data regarding the number of Facebook users in City Council and level of access granted to their followers offers insights into how Facebook is viewed and valued by Toronto city councilors. Additionally, this study also analyzed the manner in which account holders use their Facebook pages. Posting information consistently and responding to user activity suggest that the councilor account holder values Facebook as both a tool for engaging with the public and encouraging further engagement. Councilor account posts inform the public and offer users the opportunity to engage with the councilor. Councilor responses indicate to their followers that their opinions and thoughts are heard and valued, which could encourage further engagement. Figure 2 shows the number of actions of each councilor account holder during the 17-week study period.

Figure 2
Councilor actions

Councilor	Classification	Posts	Responses	Total Actions	Actions Per Week
Mary-Margaret McMahon	Frequent User	561	146	707	41.6
Paul Ainslie	Consistent User	160	7	167	9.8
Sarah Doucette	Consistent User	73	38	111	6.5
Mark Grimes – Personal Acc.	Consistent User	92	14	106	6.2
Chin Lee	Occasional User	82	0	82	4.8
Janet Davis	Occasional User	69	8	77	4.5
Joe Mihevc	Occasional User	70	5	75	4.4
Jaye Robinson	Occasional User	71	3	74	4.4
James Pasternak	Occasional User	70	3	73	4.3
Michelle Berardinetti	Occasional User	69	0	69	4.1

Mark Grimes – Fan Page.	Occasional User	67	0	67	3.9
Gord Perks	Occasional User	48	1	49	2.9
Anthony Perruzza	Occasional User	46	1	47	2.8
Mike Layton	Occasional User	41	1	42	2.5
Mary Fragedakis	Infrequent User	37	0	37	2.2
Gary Crawford	Infrequent User	28	6	34	2
John Filion	Infrequent User	17	3	20	1.2
Maria Augimeri	Infrequent User	18	1	19	1.1
Ana Bailao – Personal Acc.	Infrequent User	17	0	17	1
Ana Bailao – Fan Page	Infrequent User	10	4	14	0.8
Josh Colle	Infrequent User	12	0	12	0.7
Adam Vaughan	Infrequent User	10	0	10	0.6
Mike Del Grande – Fan Page	Infrequent User	9	1	10	0.6
Josh Matlow	Infrequent User	9	0	9	0.5
John Parker	Infrequent User	9	0	9	0.5
Paula Fletcher	Infrequent User	8	0	8	0.5
Mike Del Grande – Personal Acc.	Infrequent User	3	0	3	0.2
Vincent Crisanti	Infrequent User	2	0	2	0.1
Pam McConnell	Inactive	0	0	0	-
Shelley Carroll	Inactive	0	0	0	-
Frances Nunziata	Inactive	0	0	0	-
Glenn De Baeremaeker	Inactive	0	0	0	-
Gloria Lindsay Luby	Inactive	0	0	0	-

The most noteworthy result in this analysis is that one councilor used Facebook far more than any other. Councilor Mary-Margaret McMahon averaged 41.6 combined posts and responses per week (or almost 6 actions per day) over the 17-week period. She was over four times more active than the second most active councilor, Councilor Paul Ainslie, who posted and responded 167 times. Another significant result of this analysis is that the second, third, and fourth most active Facebook accounts in this study have very different Facebook usage patterns. Councilor Ainslie used his account primarily as a tool to disseminate information. Of his 167 user actions, 160 were posts, while he responded to his followers a mere 7 times. While posting frequently can certainly engage followers, the fact that the account holder rarely responded to followers suggests that his account is for disseminating information rather than for engaging users directly. Similarly, the fourth most active account, the personal account of Councilor Mark Grimes, was also far

more likely to disseminate information than to respond to followers, though the difference between the number of posts and responses was less drastic. On the other hand, Councilor Sarah Doucette was far more likely to use Facebook to respond to her followers. While Councilor Doucette's total actions fell short of Councilor Ainslie's, her number of responses was far greater than any councilor account except Councilor McMahon's. Councilor Doucette demonstrated a commitment to communicating directly with her followers and did not merely use Facebook to disseminate information, which indicates that, like McMahon, she values Facebook as a tool for fostering public engagement.

Beyond the four most active councilors, many councilors had similar Facebook usage rates. There were six councilor accounts clustered between 67-82 total actions, five councilors accounts clustered between 34-49 actions, and 12 councilor accounts that evidenced between 2-20 actions. Finally, five councilor accounts did not post or respond at all. Their accounts were only used by their followers. Of the 32 accounts examined, 14 accounts were classified as infrequent users, 10 as occasional users, 5 as inactive, 2 as consistent users, and 1 as a frequent user. This data suggests that very few councilors value Facebook enough to use it consistently. Furthermore, when Facebook is used, it is most often used to disseminate information rather than to respond to followers.

User activity and engagement

While the majority of Toronto city councilors are not very active on Facebook, the popularity of Facebook could very well mean that users are still attracted to these sites and are using these councilor pages to engage politically both with councilors and

other citizens. Regardless of the degree of involvement of the account holder, the pages may be of value to the political sphere. Figure 3 lists each instance of user activity on the pages of each councilor. It also lists the number of repeat users that visited each councilor's page and the number of times that users engaged other users in dialogue. Finally, it indicates whether or not users posted and commented about political matters on the councilor page.

Figure 3
User activity and engagement

Councilor	Repeat Users	Instances of Dialogue	User Posts	Political Posts	User Comments	Political comments
Mary-Margaret McMahon	237	63	145	57	1674	606
Mark Grimes – Personal Acc.	65	8	29	5	296	29
Sarah Doucette	19	5	16	10	137	79
Maria Augimeri	16	1	0	0	111	5
Josh Matlow	15	9	31	19	99	23
Paul Ainslie	15	5	25	6	147	53
Janet Davis	14	5	6	2	103	51
Joe Mihevc	10	0	30	13	59	41
Gary Crawford	4	0	8	7	20	11
Ana Bailao – Personal Acc.	4	1	0	0	64	5
James Pasternak	3	0	11	5	13	5
Vincent Crisanti	3	0	9	0	2	0
Chin Lee	2	0	10	1	4	0
Jaye Robinson	2	0	9	4	5	3
Mike Layton	2	0	0	0	9	6
John Filion	2	0	7	6	5	4
Mike Del Grande – Personal Acc.	2	0	3	3	28	27
Ana Bailao – Fan Page	1	0	14	10	2	1
Glenn De Baeremaeker	1	0	7	3	0	0
Shelley Carroll	1	0	5	3	0	0
Pam McConnell	1	0	5	0	0	0
Anthony Perruzza	1	0	0	0	5	3
Adam Vaughan	0	1	0	0	12	11
Gloria Lindsay Luby	0	0	2	2	0	0
Frances Nunziata	0	0	1	0	0	0
Mark Grimes – Fan Page.	0	0	0	0	14	2
Paula Fletcher	0	0	0	0	5	0
Mike Del Grande – Fan Page	0	0	0	0	4	0

Gord Perks	0	0	0	0	4	0
Michelle Berardinetti	0	0	0	0	3	1
Mary Fragedakis	0	0	0	0	1	0
John Parker	0	0	0	0	1	0
Josh Colle	0	0	0	0	0	0

There are several noteworthy aspects of this data set. First, and most obviously, the high rate of councilor account activity on the Facebook page of Councilor McMahon seems to have encouraged a relatively large number of users to post, comment, engage in dialogue, and repeatedly return to her page. This could be beneficial for the political sphere in several ways. First, the fact that 237 users engaged multiple times with Councilor McMahon's account could suggest that a community is developing or has developed around this account, where users recognize and have some knowledge of other followers of the account. The high level of user activity, combined with the fact that 63 instances of dialogue were observed on Councilor McMahon's page, suggests that the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors can indeed function as modern-day coffeehouses, where a community of civic-minded citizens can engage in dialogue. According to the literature, such forums often foster a sense of community and civic engagement, which encourages political participation. Thus, such a Facebook page could enrich the political sphere in a very real way. The findings regarding Councilor McMahon's page also suggest that the more active that a councilor account holder is, the more that users feel encouraged to post their own messages, comment on existing posts, and engage with both the account holder and other users. This suggests that there is a certain usage pattern that councilor account holders could duplicate in the future if they wished to use their Facebook page to bolster political engagement.

Beyond the findings related to Councilor McMahon's page, the data in Figure 3 shows that dialogue between users was uncommon on the Facebook pages of Toronto councilors. Only two accounts, besides Councilor McMahon's page, showed evidence of more than 5 instances of dialogue over the 17-week span. Furthermore, only Councilor McMahon and Councilor Mark Grimes' personal pages hosted more than 19 repeat visitors. This indicates that unless the account holder is very active on Facebook, their Facebook page is unlikely to attract a community of users who repeatedly visit and discuss issues that are important to them.

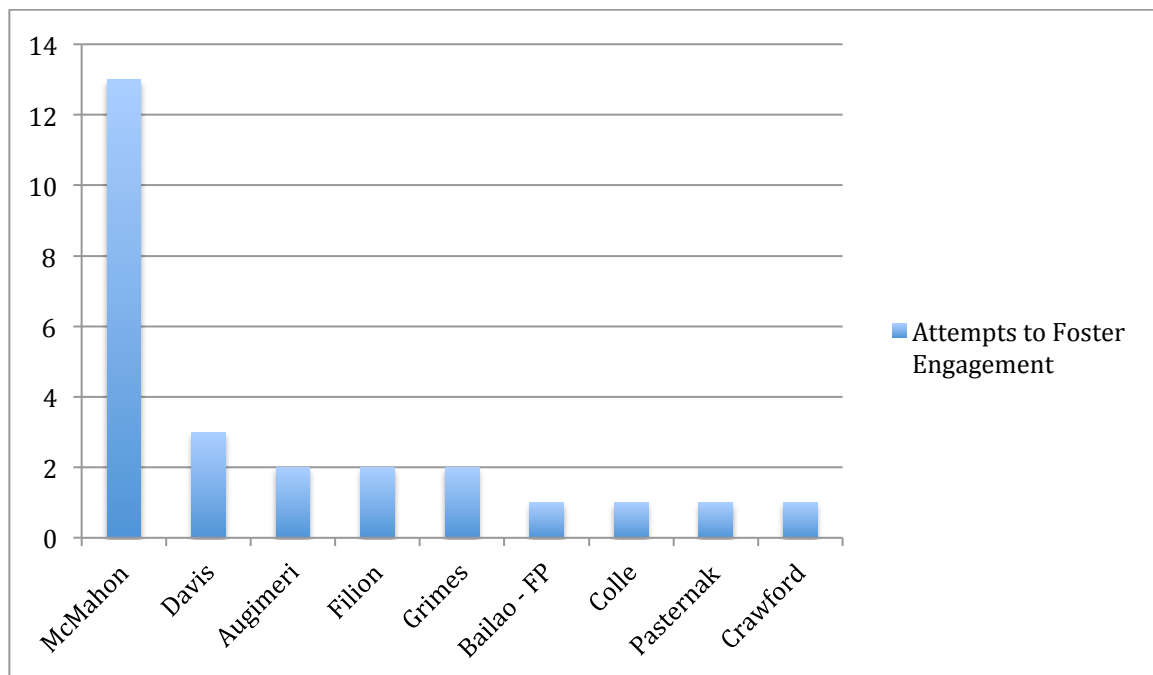
While some accounts did show evidence of high levels of user activity, there was not a clear correlation between the number of councilor account actions and the number of user actions that might explain why some councilor accounts played host to more user activity than did others. Some of the most active councilors, such as Councilors Doucette, Grimes and Ainslie, understandably had some of the highest numbers of user actions occur on their walls. However, some of the least active councilors on Facebook, such as Councilor Josh Matlow, also had relatively high numbers of users actions occur on their page. This could indicate that only very high or very low levels of account holder activity correlate directly with levels of user engagement with the pages of Toronto city councilors. Occasional users and even consistent users seem to foster uneven levels of user engagement. This inconsistency could point to the existence of external factors that may be impacting how users engage with the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors, such as the Councilor's standing in the community and demographics within the wards they represent.

Fostering engagement

Another factor that might have influenced users to engage with the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors could have been specific attempts by the councilor account holder to foster that engagement. As described in the methods section, this would involve the councilor account encouraging users to post and comment on their walls.

Figure 4 indicates which councilor Facebook pages attempted to foster engagement and how many attempts were made over the 17-week span.

Figure 4
Fostering Engagement



This graphic indicates that, perhaps unsurprisingly, Councilor McMahon made many more attempts to foster engagement than any other councilor. Along with her high rate of activity on Facebook, this could help explain why so many users post, comment, engage in dialogue, and contribute repeatedly to her page. Beyond Councilor McMahon's activity, this graphic indicates that very few other councilors attempted to foster engagement. Those who did make an attempt did so infrequently. Clearly the majority of

active Toronto City Council Facebook users do not use the platform to encourage users to engage with them. Even the councilors who are very active on Facebook, and who have shown themselves willing to respond to their followers, such as Councilor Doucette, rarely attempt to foster more engagement. This could indicate that Facebook is valued more as a means to share information and that the interactive nature of the medium is regarded as something to be endured rather than to be cherished.

The fact that some councilors attempted to foster engagement while others did not does not help explain the different levels of user activity that occurred on the pages of councilors who are similarly active on Facebook. Some councilor accounts were not very active and did not attempt to foster engagement, yet users were relatively active on their pages. Councilor Matlow's account exemplifies this pattern. Councilor Ana Bailao's personal account also hosted a fairly high total of user activity considering the fact that the account holder was relatively inactive and never attempted to foster engagement. These two aforementioned account holders also offered different levels of access to their accounts, so access does not seem to explain this difference. Generally speaking, a councilor account holder who was at least occasionally active and gave users complete access to their pages did see higher levels of user activity on their walls. However, user activity was not strongly linked to account holder action or inaction. External variables, such as a councilor's reputation in their community, or their activity on other social media platforms such as Twitter, likely also plays a role in determining how many user actions occur on their walls. External variables likely also explain why Councilor Mark Grimes' personal Facebook account hosted far more repeat visits than the accounts of councilors with similar levels of account holder activity.

Political activity

Another question that was central to this research was whether the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors were catering to a small group of politically interested citizen experts. The academic literature indicates that these citizen experts seek out political information and share it with their personal networks, which raises the levels of political knowledge and participation within those networks. If councilor Facebook pages were attracting these individuals, then these Facebook pages could indirectly raise overall levels of political engagement. It is clear from Figure 3 that when users post or comment on the pages of Toronto city councilors, these contributions are often political. And while instances of dialogue do not have to be overtly political for them to enrich the political sphere, it was observed that the liveliest discussions, in which many users participated, were often political. The comments in these more lengthy political discussions were often nuanced and well supported, which indicates that some users who visit councilor Facebook pages could in fact be citizen experts. In order to determine whether the councilor account holders are posting politically relevant information that could be attracting these individuals, Figure 5, which indicates how many times councilor account holders have posted political information, is useful for determining whether the councilor account holders posted politically relevant information that may have attracted citizen experts.

Figure 5
Political posts by councilor accounts

Councilor	Political Posts	Total Posts	% Of Total Posts That Are Political
Mary-Margaret McMahon	120	561	21.4
Jaye Robinson	29	71	40.8
Mike Layton	29	41	70.7
Chin Lee	28	82	34.1
Joe Mihevc	28	70	40
Sarah Doucette	25	73	34.2

Janet Davis	24	69	34.8
Mark Grimes Fan Page.	24	67	35.8
James Pasternak	18	70	25.7
Paul Ainslie	16	160	10
Gary Crawford	15	28	53.6
Gord Perks	12	48	25
Michelle Berardinetti	11	69	15.9
Mark Grimes – Personal Acc.	9	92	9.8
Anthony Perruzza	9	46	46
Mary Fragedakis	9	37	34.3
John Fillion	8	17	47.1
Maria Augimeri	7	18	38.9
Adam Vaughan	6	10	60
Mike Del Grande – Fan Page	5	9	55.6
John Parker	5	9	55.6
Josh Matlow	4	9	44.4
Ana Bailao – Personal Acc.	3	17	17.6
Paula Fletcher	2	8	25
Mike Del Grande	2	3	66.7
Vincent Crisanti	1	2	50
Pam McConnell	0	0	-
Shelley Carroll	0	0	-
Frances Nunziata	0	0	-
Glenn De Baeremaeker	0	0	-
Gloria Lindsay Luby	0	0	-

The results reveal that when councilors do posted information on Facebook, a significant number of their messages were explicitly political. On average, approximately 30% of all councilor account holder posts were political. This shows that councilors used Facebook as a tool to spread political information even though they rarely attempted to foster engagement and their responses to user actions on their wall were infrequent. The majority of Toronto city councilors appear to be using Facebook for purposes beyond entertainment. Notable exceptions are found within the personal accounts of Councilors Ainslie and Grimes. While these councilors were among the most active account holders, only 10 percent of their posts were political. Combined with the fact that each proved very unlikely to respond to users and never specifically attempted to foster engagement, this low number of political posts suggests that both councilors value their personal Facebook accounts as tools for disseminating entertaining information. Also interesting

in this regard is that only 21% of Councilor McMahon's posts were political, which was lower than the average. However, the sheer volume of her posts meant that her followers received far more political information than the followers of any other councilor account.

Critical user activity

A final goal of this research project was to determine whether city councilors might avoid adopting Facebook or using it frequently because they may be facing critical backlash from their users. The literature indicates that political actors have avoided using the Internet in the past because they sometimes face attacks from other Internet users. If Toronto city councilors were met with attacks on Facebook, this could help explain why some councilors have not created pages, why some councilors have limited the ability of the public to post on their pages, and why some councilors are not very active on Facebook. Furthermore, critical user activity would also prevent these Facebook pages from becoming the type of Habermasian discursive spaces where rational discussion strengthens the public sphere. However, even after examining each user action on the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors for evidence of attacks, no instances of what this research termed "critical" comments were discovered.

While there were certainly many cases where users voiced disapproval of the councilor's decisions or dissatisfaction with their choices, no user went beyond the boundaries of acceptable critique. This suggests that councilors are not being discouraged from using Facebook by user attacks on their character or office. It must be noted however that there were instances where councilors had obviously removed comments from their pages. Many posts on the page of Councilor Gord Perks indicated that there

were several comments to be viewed, and yet several could not be found. If one councilor was comfortable removing user contributions from his wall, this could help explain why no critical user posts or comments could be found elsewhere, as other councilors may take similar actions. In addition, in response to a user post on January 16th, Councilor Doucette indicated that she blocked a certain user and removed his comments because he made other users feel uncomfortable. Since some councilors seem to remove user actions from their walls, the possibility that councilors may be facing personal attacks and derogatory comments on Facebook cannot be ruled out. The fact that councilors can remove such posts would not necessarily reduce the impact of a negative atmosphere (after all the councilor still sees the messages) but it makes it difficult to evaluate the atmosphere that political actors may be facing on Facebook.

The willingness of some councilors to remove posts and comments does raise its own set of questions. One of the defining features of the discursive spaces that Habermas believed supported healthy public spheres was a lack of censorship and a freedom to speak openly. It is clear that councilors can not only prevent citizens from contributing to their Facebook pages, but they can also selectively decide which contributions are legitimate and which must be removed. While a critical environment might discourage politicians from using Facebook, and thus prevent Facebook from enriching the political sphere, the amount of control that Facebook gives account holders may also prevent Facebook from achieving that goal. Facebook cannot enrich the political sphere if citizens cannot express themselves freely therein. It is certainly true that not all councilors censor their pages, and furthermore this research has found that at least one councilor has indeed turned her account into a discursive space that may be enriching the

public sphere. However, this final set of findings suggests that the amount of control that Facebook account holders wield may impede the use of Facebook pages as discursive spaces that enrich the political sphere.

Conclusion

The primary goal of this research project was to determine whether Toronto city councilors are using Facebook pages to enrich the political sphere. Early academic researchers believed that the Internet could enrich the democratic system by giving the public more opportunity to interact directly with political actors and engage with fellow members of the public. While these hopes have thus far gone largely unfulfilled, the interactivity and widespread popularity of Facebook has afforded political actors with the opportunity to create political spaces online where users can become informed about political matters, engage in political dialogue with fellow users, and interact with politicians directly.

Used in this way, social media could enrich the political sphere in several ways. First, social media would be a space where the public could become informed about political matters that are not always covered by the mass media. Secondly, it could host small communities of interested citizens, which, according to the literature, support the type of civic-mindedness that can lead to increased levels of political participation. Finally, it would very likely attract politically interested citizen-experts, who spread political information throughout their personal networks and thereby raise the level of political engagement. However, the formation of these political spaces around the Facebook pages of Toronto city councilors would depend on the prerogative of the account holders. Thus, the manner in which Toronto councilors use their Facebook pages was examined, as was the manner in which their followers have begun to use their pages in response to councilor usage patterns.

Some of the findings of this study support the argument that Facebook pages could in fact be used as influential political spaces. The Facebook account of one councilor in particular, Councilor Mary-Margaret McMahon, was acted upon by 237 repeat users, hosted 63 instances of dialogue, and encouraged users to post 145 messages and comment 1674 times on the page. These numbers are far greater than the numbers in evidence on any other Councilor Facebook account. Clearly Councilor McMahon's page is a political forum visited and engaged with by a great many Facebook users. It also seems to play host to a community of users who engage consistently both with each other and with the councilor account holder. From the evidence gathered herein, it appears as if the Facebook account of Councilor Mary-Margaret McMahon enriches the political sphere by informing the public and fostering political engagement, and may indirectly raise overall levels of political participation by attracting political citizen-experts, though further study is of course needed to substantiate this last claim.

Councilor McMahon was able to turn her Facebook page into this type of politically beneficial environment due to her high Facebook usage rates. She posted, responded, and attempted to foster user engagement far more than any other Toronto city councilor. Her Facebook usage strategy indicates that it is possible for the account holder of a councilor Facebook account to foster engagement with their page if the account holder is committed to being frequently active on Facebook. However, no other Toronto city councilor displayed the desire or ability to successfully replicate this strategy.

Most of the councilor account holders evaluated did not use the platform at all, used it infrequently, or used it only occasionally. This indicates that Facebook is not highly valued among this group of political actors as a platform for engaging consistently

with the public. In addition, even when councilor Facebook accounts were used, they seemed to be valued primarily as a tool for disseminating information along the lines of the one-way information sharing model that political actors have so often favored in the past when using online platforms. As described in the literature, when this occurs the audience is treated as passive consumers of information, whose input is neither encouraged nor seemingly desired. While there was certainly variation between councilor account holders in terms of Facebook usage strategies (e.g. variations in frequency of posting and responding to comments), the differences between strategies did not result in dramatically different levels of user engagement between accounts. The notion that the majority of Toronto city councilors value and use Facebook primarily as a tool for disseminating information is supported by the fact that, with the exception of Councilor McMahon, very few Councilors attempted to foster engagement by directly asking their followers for feedback on Facebook. Even when such efforts were made, they were very infrequent.

While the Facebook pages of the majority of Toronto city councilors tend to be used primarily as one-way information sharing tools, the information that is shared on these pages is often political. This is beneficial for all followers, as these city councilor accounts often share political information that would be unlikely to appear in mass media publications, (e.g. decisions made in small community councils). This raises the overall level of political knowledge. Furthermore, sharing political information is especially desirable because this effort can attract political citizen-experts, who often share the information they glean with the members of their personal networks. According to academic literature, this action often results in increased political knowledge, which is

directly correlated with higher levels of political participation. This means that by maintaining a Facebook account and using it to share political information, Toronto city councilors could be attracting political citizen-experts, which may in turn help to raise overall levels of political participation.

The findings herein indicate that a specific group of political actors (Toronto city councilors) are currently using an online forum (their Facebook pages) to enrich the political sphere by sharing political information with the public. However, only one councilor is currently using her page to create an online space in which users have formed something like a community, where members engage consistently both with each other and the councilor account holder. While most Toronto city councilors do not take advantage of the interactive nature of Facebook and use it instead primarily to disseminate information, Councilor McMahon demonstrates that Facebook pages can in fact be used to foster engagement and possibly bolster political participation. Councilor McMahon's Facebook usage provides hope that other councilors may follow suit and also provides an example that other political actors could mimic should they ever recognize the value Facebook to the political sphere. The hope that other councilors will follow this example derives from the fact that members of the public have demonstrated a strong interest in engaging in political discussion via her Facebook. If more councilors encouraged this interest using their own pages, the political realm could be further enriched.

The findings discussed seem to largely support the position taken by authors such as Margolis and Resnick, rather than the utopian outlook held by authors such as Rheingold. As predicted by Margolis and Resnick, the majority of Toronto city

councilors use Facebook to spread information rather than to encourage political participation and engagement. Thus, most councilor Facebook pages do not foster a great deal of interaction between the councilor and citizens or between citizens. The findings of this study do not align with Rheingold and Dahlgren's predictions that the Internet will enrich democracy by allowing members of the public to interact with politicians and each other in an online political arena. Furthermore, the lack of sustained interaction and engagement by members of the public has meant that the majority of the Facebook pages examined in this project do not function as the type of Habermasian discursive spaces that make up a healthy public sphere. While councilor Facebook pages do enrich the political sphere by sharing political information, the findings of this study conflict with the utopian hopes that the Internet will revolutionize democracy.

Further research into how political actors are currently using the Internet to enrich the public sphere could look at the manner in which political actors in different cities are using their Facebook accounts. Perhaps politicians in smaller cities or towns are using their accounts differently than are the municipal representatives of the largest city in Canada. Similar research could also examine the Facebook activity of political actors from different levels of government, such as federal and provincial. Additional research could examine how political actors use other social media sites, as this study found that many Toronto city councilors are very active on Twitter. Determining what features political actors value in a social media platform (e.g. the interactivity of Facebook or the brevity of Twitter) could improve understanding of how and why politicians value online forums. Further research could also compare the political news that politicians post on Facebook with the political news shared by the mass media, in order to determine

whether Facebook is benefiting the citizenry by providing access to new information.

Finally, qualitative research using interviews could attempt to determine why councilors have adopted or have chosen not to adopt Facebook, and why councilors use Facebook the way they do.

Appendix – Councilor Facebook Accounts

Paul Ainslie – “Paul Ainslie”. <https://www.facebook.com/councillorpaulainslie>

Maria Augimeri – “Maria Augimeri”. <https://www.facebook.com/MariaAugimeri>

Ana Bailao – “Ana Bailao”. Personal Account.

<https://www.facebook.com/councillorana.bailao>

Ana Bailao – “Ana Bailao – Politician”. Fan page. <https://www.facebook.com/Bailao>

Michelle Berardinetti – “Councillor Michelle Berardinetti, Ward 35 – Politician”.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Councillor-Michelle-Berardinetti-Ward-35/203398386337720>

Shelley Carroll – “Shelley Carroll”.

https://www.facebook.com/33ShelleyCarroll?fref=browse_search

Josh Colle – “Josh Colle – Politician”. <https://www.facebook.com/josh.colle.9>

Gary Crawford – “Councillor Gary Crawford – Government Official”.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Councillor-Gary-Crawford/226933110655693>

Vincent Crisanti – “Vincent Crisanti”.

https://www.facebook.com/councillor.crisanti?fref=browse_search

Janet Davis – “Janet Davis”.

https://www.facebook.com/Janet.Davis.TO?fref=browse_search

Glenn De Baeremaeker – “Glenn De Baeremaeker”.

<https://www.facebook.com/glenn.debaeremaeker>

Mike Del Grande – “Mike Del Grande”. <https://www.facebook.com/mdelgra>

Mike Del Grande – “Councillor Mike Del Grande – Politician”.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Councillor-Mike-Del-Grande/37690916593>

Sarah Doucette – “Sarah Doucette”. <https://www.facebook.com/CouncillorDoucette>

John Filion – “John Filion”. <https://www.facebook.com/johnmfilion>

Paula Fletcher – “Paula Fletcher - Politician”.

<https://www.facebook.com/paulafletcher30>

Mary Fragedakis – “Mary Fragedakis - Politician”.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mary-Fragedakis/246104732076585>

Mark Grimes – “Councillor Mark Grimes”.

<https://www.facebook.com/councillor.grimes>

Mike Layton – “Mike Layton - Politician”. <https://www.facebook.com/layton.mike>

Chin Lee – “Chin Lee”.

https://www.facebook.com/councillorchinlee?ref=br_rs&fref=browse_search

Gloria Lindsay Luby – “Gloria Lindsay Luby”.

https://www.facebook.com/gloria.lindsayluby?fref=browse_search

Josh Matlow – “Josh Matlow”. <https://www.facebook.com/joshmatlow>

Pam McConnell – “Pam McConnell”. <https://www.facebook.com/pam.mcconnell>

Mary-Margaret McMahon – “Mary-Margaret McMahon”.

<https://www.facebook.com/McMahon.MaryMargaret>

Joe Mihevc – “Joe Mihevc – Politician”. <https://www.facebook.com/joemihevc>

Frances Nunziata – “Frances Nunziata”.

https://www.facebook.com/frances.nunziata?fref=browse_search

John Parker – “Councillor John parker – Public Figure”.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Councillor-John-Parker/108257069250299>

James Pasternak – “James Pasternak, Toronto City Councillor, Ward 10 - York Centre -

Politician”. <https://www.facebook.com/CouncillorJamesPasternak>

Gord Perks – “Gord Perks - Politician”. <https://www.facebook.com/Gord.Perks>

Anthony Perruzza – “Anthony Perruzza”. <https://www.facebook.com/AnthonyPerruzza>

Jaye Robinson – “Jaye Robinson”. <https://www.facebook.com/robinsonward25>

Adam Vaughan – “Councillor Adam Vaughan”.

<https://www.facebook.com/CouncillorAdamVaughan>

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