New Media and Political Marketing in Kenya: The Case of 2013 General Elections

John O. Ndavula, *
Lecturer, St. Paul's University, Kenya

Joy Mueni,
Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya

(John O. Ndavula is the corresponding author: email address:*obwavoj@yahoo.com*)*

Abstract

The paper examines the role of new media in political marketing during the 2013 general elections in Kenya.The ways in which politicians market themselves in the political realm have changed dramatically since the emergence of new media. Politicians in Kenya found innovative ways of reaching the masses with their campaign messages through new media platforms. It is however interesting to note that despite the high energy in the new media scene, there is little literature on the role that new media plays in political marketing in Kenya. Thus, the study aims at finding out the relevance of new media in Kenyan elections. Kenya has a national policy framework that supports access to ICTs. The creation of the backbone infrastructure for ICT in Kenya has potentially opened up space for new ways of engaging with the masses through new media. The paper argues that there is a link between these developments in technological infrastructure, and ultimately improved access of the Internet, to increased online political marketing. The framing theory and technological determinism theory were used to formulate a theoretical framework for the study. The paper seeks to determine whether going forward, political parties in Kenya should give due attention to the use of new media for political marketing. The paper argues that a stronger ICT –based political campaign platform will entrench a deeper participatory, democratic culture which is in line with achieving vision 2030 for the country.

Key Words: political marketing, communication, new media, ICT

Introduction

Political advertising has become part of the political culture of most democracies including Kenya. The use of new media as a means of political communication is not new in Kenya, having been used in the December 2007 elections. Even in the preceding election in 2002, the major political parties and some individual politicians had an online presence. This paper therefore examines the online political marketing activities among the main presidential contenders in the 2013 general elections.

Political advertising is a marketing function similar in intent and purpose to product marketing (Nwosu, 1992). Political campaigns involve canvassing for votes, which is a kind of political salesmanship.

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

Political parties and candidates use different media to reach their audiences, including new media. New media is a broad term that emerged in the later part of the 20th Century to encompass the amalgamation of traditional media such as film, images, music, spoken and written words, with the interactive power of computer and communications technology, computer-enabled consumer devices and most importantly, the Internet (Asema&Edegoh, 2012). This paper narrows down to the use of Facebook and Twitter as new media tools and how they were used in the 2013 Kenyan elections.

Social media tools, which include Facebook and Twitter, have opened up new possibilities for politicians to engage with citizens with a view of winning more votes and this has facilitated fresh modes of civic engagement (McKinney & Rill, 2009; Tyron, 2008; Xenos and Moy, 2007). Mobile phone technology has ensured that citizens are more connected to each other, to the events in their country, and thus closer to the politicians. However, this proximity means little if communication remains one-way. Thus, the creation of social media, which creates a forum for two-waycommunication, initiates a paradigm shift that allows citizens and politicians to communicate. This has many consequences for democracy. Ideally, social media tools could increase transparency in politics and enhance citizens' participation through enabling people to follow decision-making processes and hold discussions about election concerns. Although the use of new media was witnessed in 2007 and all the political parties used the opportunity to present themselves, their engagement did not provide deeper insights and interactive discussions (Windeck, 2010). It is against this backdrop therefore, that we investigate the nature of online political marketing in the 2013 Kenyan elections and whether it has changed significantly from past practices.

Asemah (2011) notes that in their media search, politicians are best advised to consider forms of interactive media, such as the Internet and mobile phones. Success in politics is characterised by the most number of votes and supporters. To obtain this, politicians must not only be able to communicate their platforms and manifestos clearly across the target population but must also be able to provide exactly what the people need. Interactive media allows politicians to gain insight about the reactions of the masses, regarding their platforms and make known to the politician, the pressing needs and concerns of the people that should be addressed. Interactive media in the form of polls and surveys is also a great means of determining the popularity of a politician among the masses and predetermining the success of a politician in an upcoming election.

The development of advertising in Kenya reflects increasing adoption of campaign styles and techniques from Europe and the US, among them the use of new media for political advertising. In the run up to the 2013 elections, Uhuru Kenyatta's team hired two UK based public relations firms, with one of them BTP Advisers, being associated with his March 4th win after the services of the other PR firm being terminated in November 2012. Kenyatta had many campaign teams with one being an online team - which had three offices around Nairobi.The main group led by NjeeMuturi and AlfredGetonga operating from Lavington (Star team, 2013). Mathenge (2013) notes that the BTP media campaign also engaged in an elaborate campaign to monitor online media, especially social media with particular interest in Twitter as well as gathering information on the CORD presidential candidate RailaOdinga.

Previous elections in Kenya were dominated by rallies and speeches, and spending by contenders was largely on direct gifts of various kinds to the electorate. During the 2007 campaign, there was an unprecedented investment in printing and in buying advertising time and space. A survey done in 2007 by Coalition for Accountable Political Financing (CAPF) showed that the 2007 general election was the most expensive, by the time, in the country's history, where close to Ksh6 billion ($75 million) was spent. However, with the 2013 elections requiring that six leaders be chosen, the amount was bound to rise to between Kshs 8.5 – 12.7 billion ($100 – 150 million) (The East African, 2012). It might be argued, as Throup and Hornsby (as cited in Willis, 2008) have hinted of the 1992 campaign, that the poster and press

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

campaigns were not particularly effective in terms of influencing voters but spending on these activities has continued to grow.

Theoretical framework

The technological determinism theory and the framing theory were used to provide a theoretical framework for the study.The major tenet of the framing theory is that the media can focus attention on a certain event and then place it within a field of meaning with the aim of influencing decision making. Chong and Druckman (2007) define framing as the process by which people develop a particularconceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue. This process is spearheaded by the media and gatekeepers who present an issue based on desired goals and the way the audience perceive the communicated message. In politics, by employing the skills of public relations practitioners, the politicians craft messages that portray them and their ideals (presented in manifestos) as the better choice.

Technological determinism theorywas formulated by Marshal McLuhan in 1964. The basic premise of the technological determinism theory is that the media shapes human interaction. The media bring new perceptual habits while their technologies create new environments. The theory states that technology, especially new media, decisively shapes how individuals think, feel and act and how societies organise themselves and operate. The paper argues that new media are shaping the way politicians carry out their marketing activities online. The media have been relatively more influential in shaping the emerging but still fledgling, democratic culture in Africa.

Methodology

The study utilized content analysis. According to Berg (2001) content analysis allows a scholar to explore the themes, topics, and symbols revealed in an artefact such as advertising. Krippendorf (as cited in Merrigan& Huston, 2004) states that content analysis is a method of describing communication messages in specific contexts. In the past 10 years, computer mediated communication has been considered as a new population of messages suitable for content analysis (Merrigan& Huston, 2004).

Two new media tools were chosen to be investigated to obtain information on how they were utilized for political marketing. These tools were Facebook and Twitter. Posts by political candidates on these sites that fell between 4th December, 2012 and31st May, 2013 were examined. December 4th was chosen because that was the deadline for the formation of political alliances as per the Kenyan constitution timelines. The study was limited to the presidential candidates as declared by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission. These were Uhuru Kenyatta, RailaOdinga, MusaliaMudavadi, Peter Kenneth, Martha Karua, Mohammed Dida, James Ole Kiyapi and Paul Muite.

To gain comprehensive knowledge of the current role of new media in political marketing, key informants drawn from the main political parties were interviewed. Campaign strategists for the top four candidates were engaged. Key informant interviews were utilized to elicit their responses. The informants were selected because they would have the most accurate firsthand information on the campaign strategies the various candidates utilized. Each participant was interviewed only on the strategies that their party employed.The focus of the interview questions was threefold:

1. What factors shaped new media use for political marketing?
2. What marketing strategies were used for online political marketing?
3. What impact did online marketing have on politics?

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

New Media and democracy in Kenya

After years of one party rule, the early 1990's witnessed a dramatic return of multi-party democracy to Kenya. This period of democratization in Kenya coincided with the development and spread of new information technology, notably the use of computers for communication purposes (Bourgault, 1995). Kenya's media liberalization process that began in 1999, encouraged competition and moved Internet services from a state controlled monopoly to the private sector. The private sector immediately identified ICT as a critical economic growth sector and started investing in various infrastructure projects especially in the mobile sector that ended up lowering entry barriers. Efficient policies and good costing of products have been major contributing factors to growing Internet usage in Kenya. The private sector together with civil society played an important role in pushing for proper ICT policies. This ensured a sector where there is not only sufficient infrastructure and policies but also a strong private sector to provide services to customers. The cost of Internet was reduced significantly and young people increasingly started more cyber cafes (Rensburg, 2012).

Kenya has in the last decade showed marked interest in improving ICT access and skills. The political pillar of the Vision 2030 envisages Kenya as an issue-based, people-centred, and accountable, democratic, political system (Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2007). To achieve an accountable, democratic, political system, civic participation is necessary. This paper argues that ICT has been an important force in achieving this goal especially through political marketing activities.

Kenya has anational policy framework that supports access to ICTs. In 2006, Kenya's ICT Board launched an extensive programme to bring ICT access to all rural villages. The government also recently (2013) announced that a strategy is being put in place to stimulate local content and applications (apps) development. On the skills development front, the government is also taking dynamic measures: a recent budget promised 300 computers for schools in every Kenyan constituency, one million laptops initially targeting university students, and various skills development programmes on these fronts (Twinomugisha, 2010). Even more ambitious is the government's promise of issuing every class one student with a laptop in January 2014; plans are already underway to launch pilot projects.The state's commitment to e-government and the relative success experienced with their initiatives was an important consideration as it could provide insight into the opportunities for using the Internet for democratic practices (Kenya ICT Board, 2011). Such an environment has provided a backdrop for robust online activities on the political scene especially during campaign periods.

Internet access in Kenya

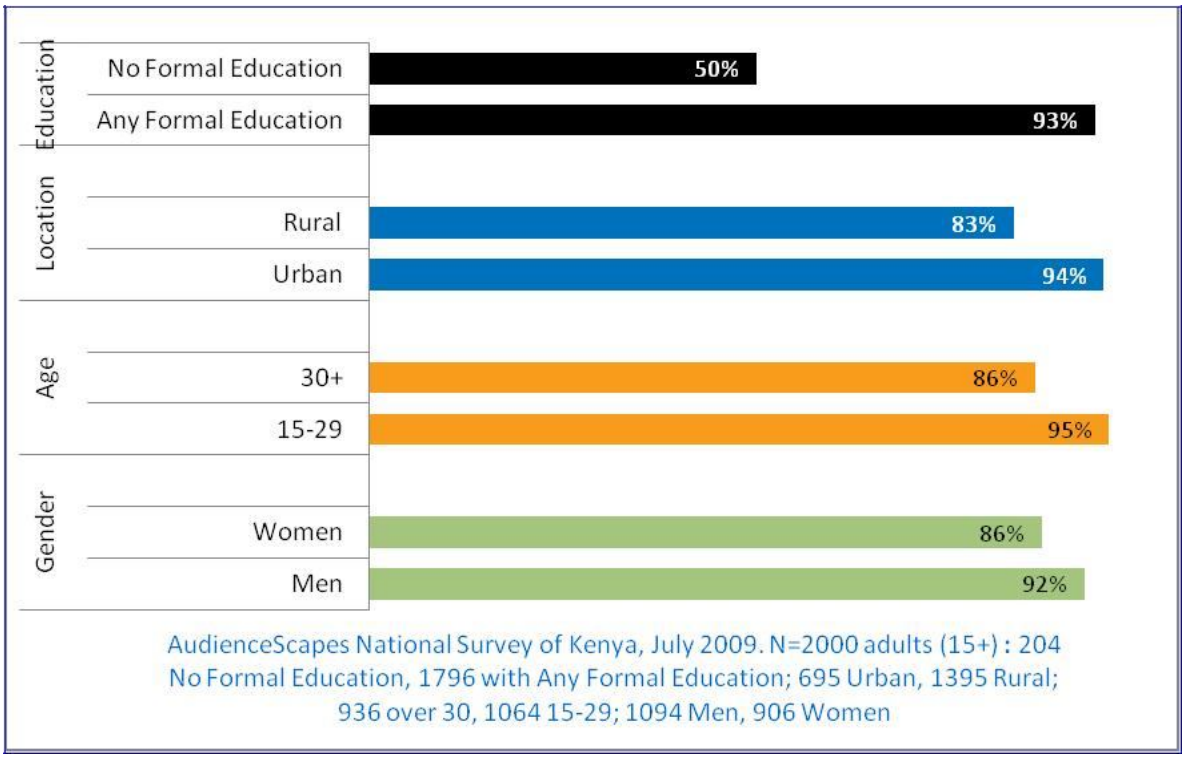
A 2008 study, which compared Nairobi to 15 other capital cities in Africa, found that Kenyans had the highest rate of using computers for browsing the Internet (Ministry of Education & USAID, 2005).In another study, Kemibaro (2010) noted that Kenya had over four million Internet users. This figure has drastically grown and according to the *Julisha* survey conducted by International Data Corporation, Internet usage rose from 10.99 million to 17.38 million users for the period between 2010 and 2011 (Agina, 2013). The increased Internet use coincides with increased online political marketing that was witnessed ahead of the 2013 elections in Kenya.

Even more telling is the increased access to the Internet using mobile phone technology. In their second quarter of the financial year 2012/13 sector statistics report, the Communications Commission of Kenya noted that 30.7 million Kenyans were registered to a mobile network indicating a 78 per cent mobile penetration up from 77.2 per cent in the previous quarter. Most of the Internet access is via mobile phones as they are cheaper, hence more accessible compared to personal computers or cyber cafes. A survey conducted by Audience Scapes on mobile phone use by demographics indicated that even among the

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

disadvantaged demographic groups, mobile penetration was high (see figure 1). This implies that even in marginalized populations, access to the Internet is probable due to high mobile phone penetration.

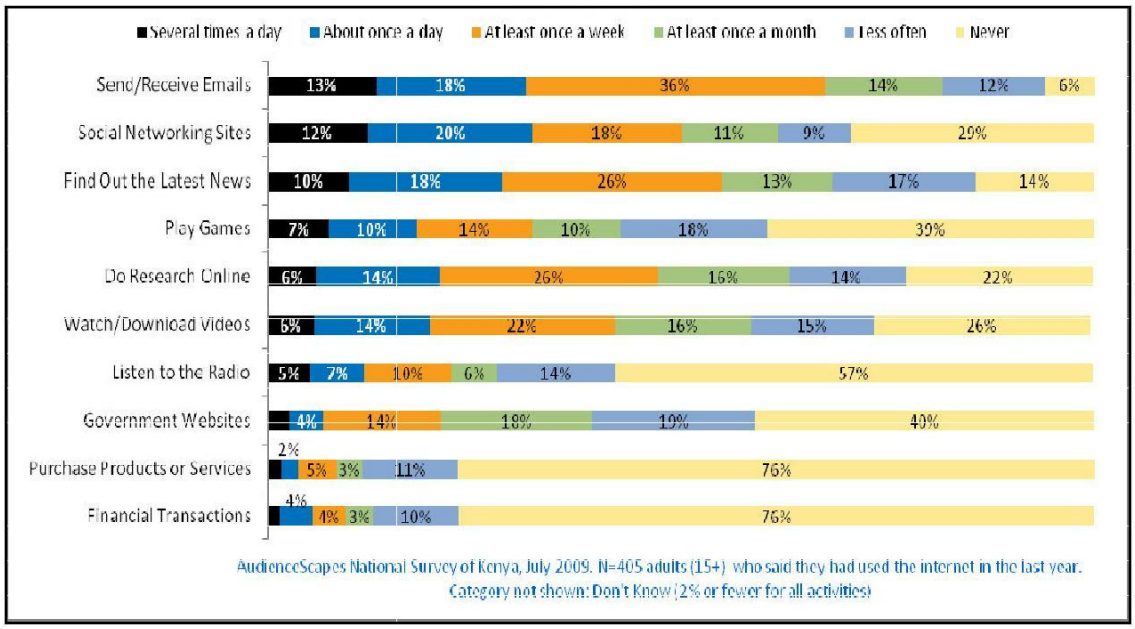
Figure 1: Mobile phone use by demographic groups % of each group who had used a mobile phone in the last week



The mobile phone looks well set as the new driver of Internet access as opposed to computers, thus the form of the hardware (mobile phone) is critical to the success of higher Internet penetration making access to a mobile phone the key to full membership of the future society. This includes political awareness and participation. This has led to an unprecedented demand for mobile phones. The mobile phone has many uses but key among the uses is accessing the Internet (see figure 2). While on the Internet, sending or receiving Emails is the preferred activity while use of the social networking sites is the next. The interest and use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) is across all demographics.

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

Figure 2: Internet users' activities % of Internet users



Synovate (2009) states that access to th e Internet on mobile phone is growing at the e xpense of the public access routes. Rural Internet access an d usage is more driven by mobile phones com pared to urban areas (see Figure 3). This guarantees participa tion even in the most remote regions of Kenya. This has implications for political marketing. That all presi dential candidates used Facebook and Twitter to engage with the voters, is an indicator that they perceive that a large constituent can readily access these online sites.

Figure 3: Where Internet is accessed

Source: Synovate (2009). *A Long Way Down the Digital Divide!Starts to Narrow*. Retrieved March 17, 2012 from www.rich.co.ke/r cfrbs/downloads/TheDigitalDivide.ppt

Access to Facebook and Twitter sites

According to *quintly* and *social bakers* which are both online social media anal ytics platforms, there are about two million Facebook use rs in Kenya making it the most visited w eb page in Kenya. Kenyatweets.com indicates that there are over 250,000 Twitter accounts operated in Kenya. The growing

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

popularity of Facebook and Twitterhas ensured a paradigm shift in as far as political m arketing is concerned (see figure 4). The two main SNS in Kenya were a significant part of the 2013 ele ctions with all eight presidential candidates having both Fac book and Twitter pages.

Figure 4: Most visited social sites

Source: Synovate (2009). *A Long Way D own the Digital Divide!Starts to Narrow*. Retrieved March 17, 2012 from www.rich.co.ke/rcfrbs/dow nloads/TheDigitalDivide.ppt

During the 2007 electioneering p eriod, the eight main political parties employed new media as a tool for political advertising. The official websites created by these parties were not intereste d in any form of real communication with the electorate (Win deck, 2010). None of those involved provided interactive functions. Only half had an e-mail feature and o nly two published their e-mail addresses; five of the sites stated a contact phone number. Evidently, thos e responsible were not entirely convinced of t he benefits of online communication (Nyabuga&Mudhai, 20 09). Compared to the 2013 elections, the on line campaign tools selected by the presidential candidates for political marketing were quite interactive. The Facebook pages and Twitter handles were quite intera ctive with some posts attracting numerous *lik es*and comments on Facebook and retweets on Twitter. Fo r example, on February 19, Uhuru Kenyatta the TNA presidential candidate posted on his Facebook pa ge the message "On March 4th, Vote for m e and Hon. William SamoeiRuto because you believe in Transforming Kenya. Kindly Share..." this mess age attracted 10, 687 likes, 8,291 comments and 8,299 shar es. Another illustration is in the conversations witnessed on social media around key campaign issues. So me of the key issues were on land and ethnicit y. The Nation Media Group's elections sentiment tracker sho wed that the Jubilee Coalition presidential cand idate Uhuru Kenyatta drew the largest number of social med ia conversations about land and ethnicity in the month of February 2013. Mr Kenyatta's statements on l and between January 15 and February 14 h ave generated 5,311 comments on social media, with 1,048 being negative and 4,099 neutral. Mr. RailaOd inga's statements on the same subject generated 4,993 conver sations, 1,049 negative and 3,649 neutral (Nati on Reporters, 2013).

According to Cary (2010), the fi ve new ways the media are changing politics in the world are:

a) Choice – in tandem with the uses and gratification theory, media consumers will use what meets their needs and ignore what is not releva nt to them.

b) Through the 'share' buttons, n ews distribution becomes easier and faster.

c) Like – by clicking on a 'thu mbs up' or 'thumbs down' icon, fans can gi ve politicians instant feedback.

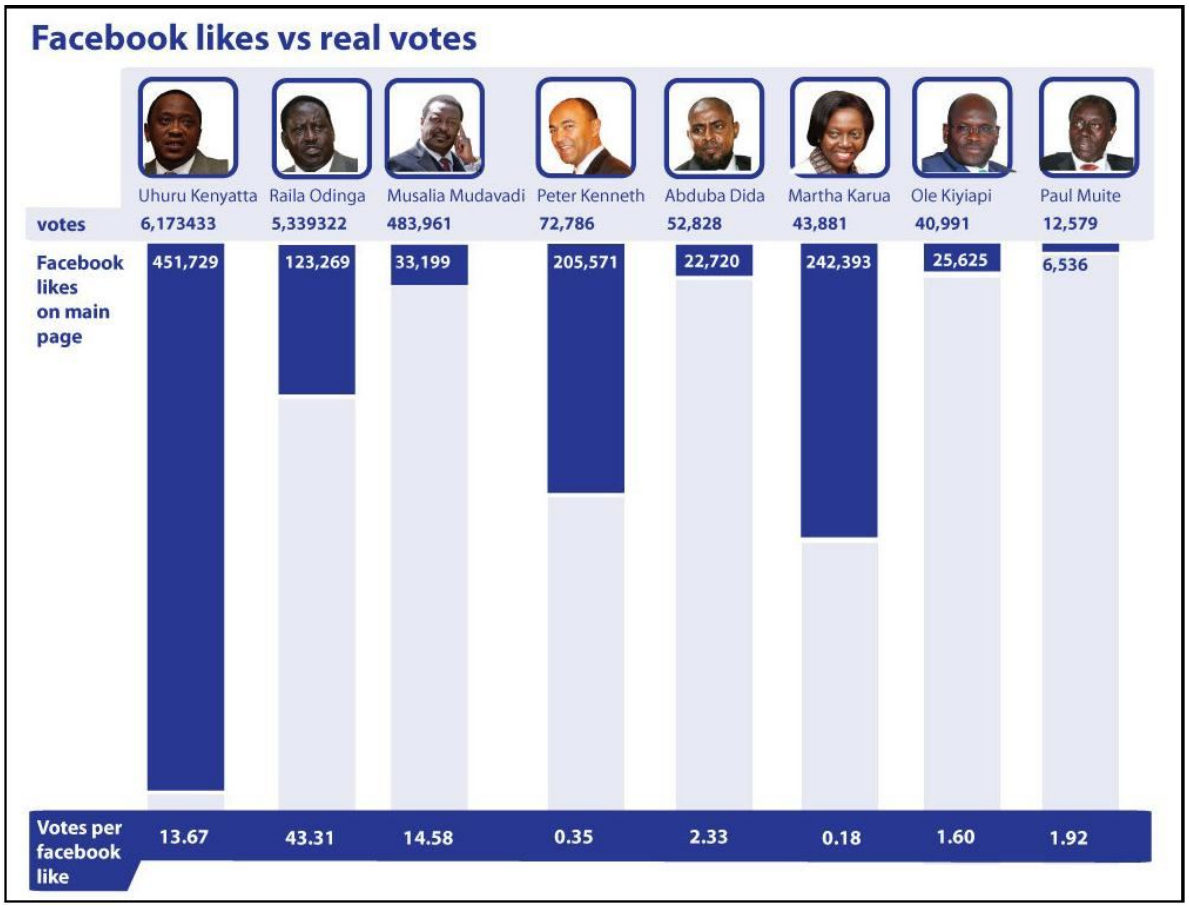
Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

d) The Internet provides accessibility to people who are far. For instance, the politicians have access to the Diaspora vote unlike before.

e) Donations are made easier. In the Kenyan scenario though, this is yet to be witnessed.

As of March 4th, the election day, the most liked page on Facebook was that of Uhuru Kenyatta. With 451,729 likes on Facebook, Uhuru Kenyatta led the presidential contenders and was followed by Martha Karua, Peter Kenneth, RailaOdinga, MusaliaMudavadi, James Ole Kiyiapi, AbdubaDidaand last was Paul Muite with 6,536 likes. While the likes were significant, unfortunately, for most candidates, they did not translate to actual votes. In fact, for Martha Karua and Peter Kenneth, the Facebook likes were significantly higher than the ballot votes (see figure 5).

Figure 5: Facebook likes vs real votes

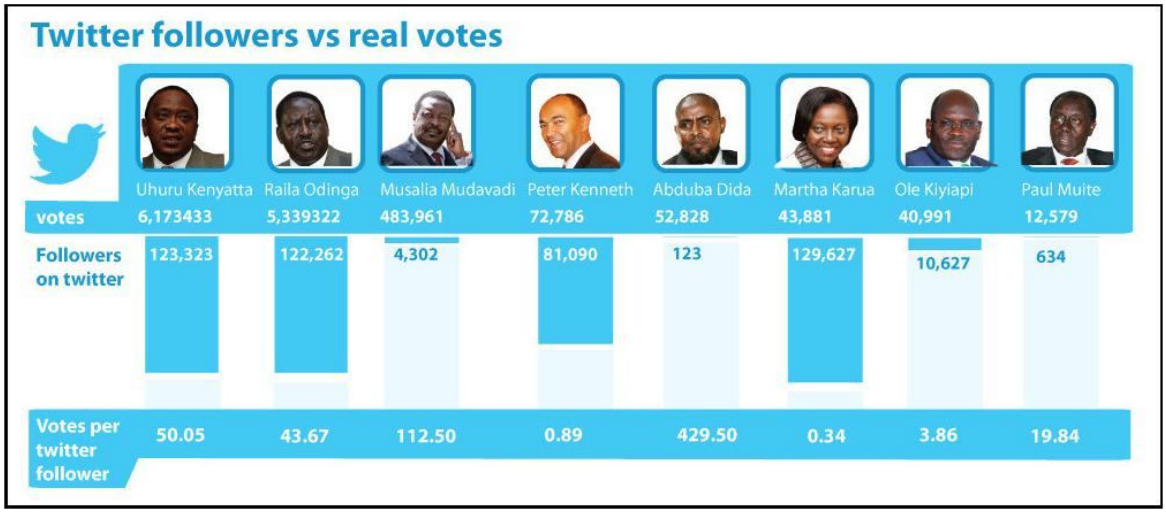


Source: Gathigi, G. (2013). *Likes and votes: social media following is a terrible way to judge political contest.* Retrieved May 31, 2013, from http://internewskenya.org/blog/?p=143

The same trend was seen on Twitter. The candidates who most followed were not necessarily the candidates who won the election (see figure 6). Gathigi (2013) has observed that liking and following on Facebook and Twitter respectively does not seem to have any bearing on actual popularity. It is also important to note that some of these followers on both sites included people from the diaspora, most of whom had not registered as voters.

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

Figure 6: Twitterfollowers vs real votes



Source: Gathigi, G. (2013). *Likes and votes: social media following is a terrible way to judge political contest.* Retrieved May 31, 2013, from http://internewskenya.org/blog/?p=143

Branding

There was a major consistency for all political candidates in their online marketing strategy in terms of foregrounding. All the candidates had fore grounded themselves as characters in the 2013 elections. They had profile photos of themselves both on their Facebook pages and on Twitter. Seven of the male presidential candidates had an image of themselves on Facebook. Only one of them, RailaOdinga included his running mate's (KalonzoMusyoka) photo in the cover photo. This inclusion of a non-smiling Musyoka could have been negatively perceived by keen observers. Muluka (personal communication, June 17,2013) noted that, that needed to have been properly thought out, as it did not portray harmony. The only female candidate had a profile photo of herself while her cover photo was of herself cuddling an infant. This implied that much of campaign rhetoric in the 2013 elections, as in the 2007 and 2002 elections was based on the character narrative as opposed to wider campaign issues.

Colour scheme advertising was also employed in online marketing. Kenyatta's campaign used official party colours on their pages. Kenyatta's page had a background image of the Nairobi State House with him on the fore ground. Across was a sash of the Kenyan flag and the words 'Transforming Kenya' on the top left hand corner. This same design is repeated in his running mates, William SamoeiRuto's page, and the State House Kenya page.

RailaOdinga used the CORD campaign colours, as did Uhuru Kenyatta and other presidential candidates. All candidates maintained established party colour schemes and strap lines, which were maintained on the sites throughout the campaign period. The predominant colour used by CORD was orange, TNA used red, while AMANI Coalition used green and yellow.

Red is a catchy colour and attractive to the eye. "By the JubileeCoalition adopting red as their colour ensured that they were highly visible", said the head of communications at the Amani coalition MundiaMuchiri(personal communication, June 18, 2013).

The orange colour used by CORD could have worked against the coalition. Orange had been used by the 'NO' campaign during the 2005 Kenyan referendum which Kenyans voted against. Unfortunately, the members of the Pentagon, the governing arm of the then Orange Democratic Movement, had all de-camped leaving Odinga on his own. The idea of a sinking ship could have been perceived.

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

Campaign messages

The Facebook and Twitter pages had very diverse messages but they were similar in nature. Most politicians were using the two sites to announce every move they made – be it a planned political rally or expressing their opinion on an issue. Uhuru Kenyatta presented himself as a candidate who represented change and a digital-edge school of thought. Uhuru Kenyatta's page was the most active and he used it to get and stay in touch with his supporters. From wishing his supporters, a merry Christmas to thanking them for wishing him a happy birthday, to rallying his supporters to vote during the party nominations, Uhuru optimized the pages with daily updates. Kenyatta's page uploaded short videos of almost all campaign rallies they attended.Unlike the CORD message, the Jubilee messages were urging Kenyans to vote for them because they believed in Jubilee. One poster said, "UhuRuto 2013 –Because you believe in transforming Kenya – Vote". On 19th February, Kenyatta uploaded a one and a half hour video of what a Jubilee Government would do in the first 100 days. In the narrative, was William Ruto, NajibBalala and Charity Ngilu. The often used slogan '*Kusemanakutenda'* (doing what we say) is mentioned severally in the videos and posts. On their pages, there were posters highlighting the manifesto messages. One such poster stated, "JUBILEE works for you. Make your vote count". They also used the online platform to declare their policies on different issues like transport, infrastructure, agriculture, sports among others. The photos used show a jovial and youthful Kenyatta either with his running mate or other political leaders and his supporters. The photos of Kenyatta and Ruto show a happy team that is in harmony and well connected with people from all lifestyles.

The Jubilee Coalition sent messages about their campaign manifesto on Facebook. Messages on security, solar powered lap-tops with relevant content for every class one child in Kenya, were posted on social media. Facebook provided a chance to give elaborate messages on these campaign issues. For instance, on security, Uhuru Kenyatta made the following post: "The Jubilee Government will equip and modernize the security forces, especially through increased motorization, which will dramatically enhance the ability to tackle crime in a more efficient and focused manner. We will also provide Government funded life insurance cover for our disciplined forces personnel, so as to secure their livelihoods and their families' health." There was also use of multi-media messages to spread campaign messages. In one post, Uhuru encouraged supporters to find an audio link to what the Jubilee Government will do in its first 100 days in office. They were encouraged to download it, use it as ringtones and share widely (February 19th)

The Jubilee Pamoja anthem sang by Visita and Elsie was also uploaded on the online platforms. The audio attracted 2,525 likes, 844 comments and 287 shares while the video attracted 2,463 likes, 826 comments and 1,500 shares on Facebook. This was a few days to the election day and hence demonstrated a keen following on the frequent updates.

The only female presidential candidate, Martha Karua presented herself as the reformer who should be trusted to bring real change to the country and especially to women, the youth and other marginalised groups. With slogans like 'equitable distribution of resources' and 'youth empowerment and job creation,' she made sure that she addressed both the socio-economic issues and the perennial unemployment problem. Using Kiswahili in some of the slogans was beneficial as they attracted the same number of likes as the posters in English. As a woman,'*simamana mama'* was her clarion call. Most of the pictures on her pages depict her being in a jovial mood among women. A good catch line posted towards the elections was "Get4 to vote for Martha on March 4th. *Simamana mama*".

On the other hand, RailaOdinga portrayed himself as a visionary and reformist. RailaOdinga also portrayed himself as a dependable politician who had a proven leadership and reform record of accomplishment. The coalition name, Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD) said it all. Odinga has been in the political arena since the 1980's and was very instrumental in the clamour for the repeal of

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

Section 2A of the Independence Constitution that had turned Kenya into a one-party state after the attempted coup de tat of 1982. He positioned himself as a person who would help in seeing a devolved government as the 2010 Constitution stated. For this to happen, the country needed(s) a reformist.

He also presented himself as someone who could inspire hope, was trust worthy and connected to the people. His cover photo on Facebook shows a smiling Odingaexuding warmth. In the background, is his running mate – KalonzoMusyoka. The choice of language portrayed victory right from the onset. Instead of the traditional urges to a community to vote for him, the updates and posts were crafted in such a way that the message was a foregone acceptance. For instance: "Bungoma is ready to vote for RailaOdinga on March 4th", "Keiyo Marakwet was ready!" "Nakuru is CORDed", "Busia is CORDed" and so on. According to Barack Muluka (personal communication, June 17, 2013), the national director of communications for Mr. Odinga, (he resigned from this position in October 2012), this kind of messages could have costRaila victory. "The overall messaging was weak. It was not as good as TNA's and later Jubilee's", he said. RailaOdingaalso uploaded short adverts on his page. Borrowing from a Population Services International/Kenya (PSI) ad campaign *"… anayake, je wewe?"* (has his own, what about you?), he changed the catch phrase to *"akotayari"* (I am ready) and included videos of Kenyan celebrities saying they were ready to vote for Raila on election day. The celebrities were drawn from all fields including musicians (Prezzo, RedSan), comedians (Mongolo), footballers (Kevin Oliech), media personalities (Teacher Kulinda, Jolene, Joshua Sang). By having the celebrities endorse him, he was identifying himself with their supporters. Even after the elections, he has continued to stay connected with his supporters. In his tweets, he still invites his supporters to join him in many social events like sporting activities, sending his condolences to the bereaved but above all, he has continued to present himself as a political leader. On 20thMay, he tweeted, "I continue to serve Kenya with a humble heart and a dedicated spirit. This is my life's purpose". On Facebook, he posted, "Injustice anywhere in this world is a threat to justice everywhere in this world. We all have a duty and responsibility to speak out against any form of injustice, discrimination or oppression that others may face even when it seems not to affect us. This is the only way to develop a free, just and fair society that is equitable for all," to which he got 2,368 likes and 161 shares.

The use of #tags was also present. *"tayari"* (ready) was Raila's catch phrase and he had several # tags with the word *tayari. Some included* #Tayari, #TukoTayari (we are ready) implying himself and his running mate, KalonzoMusyoka. Others included #Peace, #Reforms & #Stability, #CORDed. Muluka (personal communication, June 17,2013) noted that the *tukotayari*slogan picked up especially just before the election day.

MusaliaMudavadi presented himself as a "safe pair hands" that would be trusted with taking care of Kenya. In his Twitter handle cover, he wrote, "Calm, unassuming patriot with an unbridled love for God and Country and my family. Dear Kenyans, I am ready to serve you". He was the Christian servant leader – a role that has been played by KalonzoMusyoka – a family man. Of interest, is that he did not use TwitternorFacebook consistently. The updates and tweets were far in between and there was no message or clarion call asking for votes. It is also not clear as to whether he is the one who managed the pages. On Facebook, his official page 'MusasliaMudavadi Beyond 2012' was also as ambiguous. Muchiri noted that, "The enthusiasm on social networking sites could not withstand traditional campaign methods like rallies". He indicated that campaign variables like tribe could still not be underplayed (personal communication, June 18, 2013).

With 219,000 likes on Facebook as of May, 2013, Peter Kenneth proved to be quite popular though this did not translate to actual votes at the ballot. His Facebook page had been up and running since 2009. The cover photo is of him in a formal suit and seated in what you would refer to as an ultra-modern office, working. The profile photo is of him in yet another suit in what can appear to be a cocktail, with his

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

campaign slogan *'Tunawesmake'*. He presents himself as a tech-savvy politician who can make it happen *(Tunawesmake)* for Kenya. On October 1st he uploaded his six and a half minutes profile video that had been narrated by veteran journalist, Willy Mwangi. Most of the pictures are of his campaign rallies, in various parts of the country like his home turf, Kiambu County, NarokCounty, KerichoCounty among others. During his manifesto launch, his son Andrew Kenneth delivered a speech, which trended in Kenya for days to come and had an amazing following on Facebook. However, this did not translate to ballots on election day. After the elections, Peter Kenneth continues to actively run his Facebook page and Twitter handle with updates on his life and engagements.

Paul Muite, James Ole Kiyiapi and Mohammed AbdubaDida did not register a noteworthy presence on either Twitter or Facebook.

Use of condolence messages were employed to show the candidates as being in touch with issues that interested ordinary voters. All politicians were quick to express their sympathy to the families of the deceased prominent people within the country, in the East African region and the rest of the world. For instance, RailaOdinga sent a condolence message to Uganda's president Yoweri Museveni for the passing on of his father.

Multimedia messages

The presidential candidates used multimedia messages as a campaign tool. Some short text messages were sometimes accompanied by either audio or video links. These links ranged from their own campaignspeeches, manifesto launches to endorsements by various personalities. One strategy used by the leading political candidates was to use Kenyan entertainers, both musicians and actors,to publicly endorse their preferred presidential hopefuls. Musicians like Redsan, CMB Prezzo and *Tahidi High* actress Jolene endorsed RailaOdinga while the musicians Jaguar, Ringtone and DNA endorsed Uhuru Kenyatta. Their endorsement videos were posted on Facebook. The Jubilee Secretariat invested heavily in entertainers, as they believed media influence would certainly play a big role in determining how Kenyans vote.

Candidates posted various photos with captions that gave an account of their activities at various rallies across the Counties. These photos mostly portrayed huge turnouts to convince followers of massive support on the ground. Some portrayed prominent politicians who supported them while some depicted popular musicians who supported their campaign. Martha Karua's campaign slogan "*simamana mama*" meaning vote for a mother, had some of her pictures showing her holding babies on the campaign trail.

Tone

In 2007, political marketing took on an aggressive and combative tone and this in return helped to fuel the post-election violence that was witnessed in the country. Although in 2013, TNA was portrayed as anti-reform while ODM was portrayed as pro-reform, these narratives were not significantly explored in the social media posts. Further, Mr. Kenyatta and Mr.Rutopresented themselves as victims of a Western conspiracy, and portrayed Mr.Odinga as a stooge of the West and architect of their indictment. However, such a line of attack and defence did not feature on the Facebook and Twitter posts. In essence, all candidates made an effort to tone down their rhetoric in the messages posted on social media. In fact, candidates used social media to pass the messages of peace during and after the electioneering period. For example, RailaOdinga posted the following comment on February 25th "Morning all. As March 4thdraws near, I remind my fellow Kenyans to maintain peace all through & after the elections. Vote2013. Vote Cord!" This illustrates how deliberately peace messages were infused in campaign rhetoric. For instance, after the emotive presidential debates, the leading candidates avoided sentimentalism in their posts. RailaOdinga made the following post on February 25th 2013 immediately after the second presidential

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

debate "It was a pleasure participating in #kedebate2013. On March 4th the Kenyan people will voice their choice. #Vote2013 #VoteCord." On the same day,Uhuru Kenyatta stated on his page, "Hope you all enjoyed the debate as much as I did. A Jubilee Government is one that will be focused on solutions. On March 4th come out in large numbers and vote in a Jubilee Government. God Bless you all." All other candidates called on the voters to shun violence and embrace peace during the electioneering period.

Mainstream media channels contributed to online political marketing by engaging with content generated from Facebook and Twitter. Some stations incorporated in the news programs a selection of posts made by various politicians on their sites. For example, NTV had a news segment entitled 'The Conversation' where comments posted on Facebook and Twitter were incorporated in the news (Ndavula&Mberia, 2012).

Short term vs Long term marketing strategy

Windeck (2010) notes that after the 2007 elections, none of the eight Kenyan candidates websites was maintained except for just one candidate. This implies that short-term political marketing was given priority over long-term political marketing. Compared to the 2013 election scenario, long-term political marketing strategy was incorporated into online marketing. The Facebook sites and Twitter handles of all presidential candidates remain active to date. Uhuru Kenyatta, the candidate who was elected as the fourth president of Kenya continued his online presence in his personal page and by further creating a State House Kenya page as a way of engaging with constituents. RailaOdinga and Peter Kenneth continue using their pages to inform their fans of their plans, opinion on issues, and inviting them to join them in one or two functions. Martha Karua is still very active and her fan base has continued to grow even after she came in sixth in the 2013 elections. This is the same for all with an exception of MusaliaMudavadi who came third in the 2013 elections.

Discussion of findings

Findings indicate that new media play a crucial role in political advertising. The study reveals that new media have increasingly gained significance in carrying out political advertising. Therefore, political parties in Kenya need to employ new media in the practice of political advertising and execution of political activities.

This study also reveals that most political parties use new media only for short-term political advertising especially during the electioneering period and soon abandon the project after elections. However, this trend may change in the near future.

In the face of parties being criticized of over spending on political advertising on mainstream media channels, it should be noted that political marketing on new media would provide a relatively cheaper means compared to traditional media. Compared to traditional media, new media offers options that are very inexpensive or in some cases, free. Politicians can create free pages on social networking sites that users can connect to for information about political activities and have conversations with the electorate.

The interactive capabilities offered by new media gives the politicians and the electorate a forum where they can chat and thereby create relationships. Examples include the "Raila TV platform" and "Martha Karua's Thursday question and answer forums".

New media offers politicians and political parties a chance to reach a broad and diverse audience. Unlike traditional media, which reach only a small portion of a potential market, new media advertising is available instantly and around the world. Users can share information on products, promotions and special events with one another on Facebook and Twitter.Users can also browse one another's stated interests and link to party websites.

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

New media supply politicians and political parties with demographic data and feedback that helps them improve their online political communication and target specific groups of potential audience. For example, websites cater for different types of users; hence, politicians can choose to advertise where they expect to find the highest percentage of interested readers. A political party with a social-networking presence can examine its roster of followers or connected users to identify the average age, gender and geographic location of users.

New media can be used to mobilize support for a party or a candidate, during elections, this is because they are persuasive, informative and educative. Political parties and candidates need to use new media to carry out their political activities. New media is useful because it can be used to reach a very large group of people.

The study identified two challenges in the use of new media for political marketing. One is the lack of technology. It cannot be ignored that some parts of Kenya remain under developed, implying that some sections of the population may not be in a position to access gadgets let alone the skill to use the equipment. The second set back could be the somewhat painful realization that thousands of “likes” and “followers” may not always translate to actual votes.

Recommendations

This study has revealed that the use of new media is a new phenomenon in political marketing in Kenya, given its myriad benefits and limitless opportunities.Therefore, new media is a marketing strategy that any communications secretariat worth its salt cannot fail to explore.The key to reaping maximum benefits from use of new media lies in seeing it not only as a short-term engagement, but rather, as a long-term online presence.

Since there is no guarantee that new media use for political marketing can guarantee votes, there is the need to combine new media with other means of communication, especially interpersonal communication. This is because, interpersonal communication brings the communicator and the audience together, thereby making communication be more effective.

The extent to which using SNS tools can be considered less demanding in terms of time, commitment, risk or energy needs to be investigated.

It is recommended that SNS be considered for use by political parties as a way to engage with citizens. Political parties can enhance institutionalization of democratic participation by allowing online participation party policy making and decision making.

The question of the digital divide is a major cause of concern. It has the potential of slowing down ICT usage. The rural areas of Africa continue to lack electricity and it will take a long time before the majority of the population will be able to use ICTs in their homes. The best that may be expected in the short to medium run is the establishment of telecenters, in commercial establishments, to enable people to make use of the SNS for democratic participation.

In Kenya, SNS may foster a sense of negative ethnicity where people maintain and extend ethnic hatred in a variety of ways. The use of SNS can spew out hatred, foster misunderstanding and perpetuate animosity. They can foster a sense of collective identity that reassures such people that they are not alone. They can use SNS to develop networks of support in which ideas and information are shared to achieve greater social harm. Therefore, the extent to which SNS may perpetuate negative ethnicity in Kenya needs to be investigated.

It should be investigated whether SNS have the potential to facilitate significantly greater political knowledge, engagement or participation. For instance whether active SNS users’ political knowledge about presidential candidates and or the election increase significantly.

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

REFERENCES

Agina, A. (Reporter). (2013). *NTV News* [News feature]. Nairobi: Nation Media Group

AudienceScapes Kenya Survey Research (2009). Steadman Group. Nairobi: Kenya

Asemah, Ezekiel S. &Edegoh, Leonard Onyeka (2012).*New Media and Political Advertising in Nigeria*: *Prospects and Challenges*. Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia, 6 (4), 248-265

Berg, B. (2001). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn& Bacon.

Bourgault, L. (1995). *Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Campaign finance: *Price tag of Kenya 2012 presidential race likely to hit $130 million.* (2012). The East African. Retrieved 27 May, 2013, from http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Campaign-finance-- Price-tag-of-Kenya-2012-presidential-race/-/2558/1320582/-/view/printVersion/-/v2whalz/-/index.html

Cary, M.K.(2010, February). *Five Ways The New Media Are Changing Politics*. Retrieved From http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2010/02/04/5-ways-newmedia-are-changing-politics.

Chong, D. &Druckman, J. (2007).*Framing theory.Annual Reviews of Political Science. 10, 103-126*

Gathigi, G. (2013). *Likes and votes: social media following is a terrible way to judge political contest.* Retrieved May 31, 2013, from http://internewskenya.org/blog/?p=143

Government of the Republic of Kenya (2007).*Kenya Vision 2030*: The Popular Version. Retrieved March 17, 2012 from http://www.communication.go.ke/documents/Vision_2030_Popular_Version.pdf.

Kemibaro, M. (2010).*Technology and Digital Media in Kenya and Africa*. Retrieved on March 17 2012 from http://www.moseskemibaro.com/2010/02/12/synovates-research-on-Internet-usage-in-kenya/

Kenya ICT Board (2010).*Digital Kenya: A study to understand the on-line life of Kenyans Key findings*. Retrieved on March 17, 2012 from http://www.ict.go.ke/oldsite/images/pdfs/Digital%20KenyaKeyFindingsMarch%202010.pdf

Mathenge, O. (2013, April 16). *How British PR firm helped Jubilee win*. The Star, 6.

McKinney M.S and Rill L.A (2009).*Not your parents' presidential debates*: Examining the effects of the CNN/YouTube debates on young citizens' civic engagement. Communication Studies 60(4): 392–406.

Merrigan, G. & Huston, C. L. (2004).*Communication Research Methods*. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Ministry of Education & USAID (2005).*ICT in Education Options Paper*.

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

Nation Reporters (February 14, 2013). *Uhuru, Raila lead in social media chatter*. Retrieved on June 6, 2013 from http://elections.nation.co.ke/news/Uhuru-Raila-lead-in-social-media-chatter-/-/1631868/1694432/-/sin0p4z/-/index.html

Ndavula, J. O. &Mberia H. K. (2012).*Social Networking Sites in Kenya: Trigger for Non-Institutionalized Democratic Participation*. International Journal of Business and Social Science, 3(13), 300-306

Nwosu, I. (1992). *Speech, Media Writing and Copy.*Enugu: ACENA Ventures Limited.

Nyabuga, G. &Mudhai, F. (2007).Misclick on Democracy: *New Media Use by Key Political Parties in Kenya's Disputed December 2007 Presidential Election*. In Okoth Fred Mudhai, et al. (eds.), African Media and the Digital Public Sphere (New York: 2009), 41 - 57.

Rensburg, A. H. (2012). *Using the Internet for Democracy: A Study of South Africa, Kenya and Zambia*.Global Media Journal African Edition, 6 (1), 93-117

Star Team. (2013, March 11). *The team that made Uhuru*.The Star. Retrieved 27 May, 2013, from http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-111379/team-made-uhuru

Synovate (2009).*A Long Way Down the Digital Divide!Starts to Narrow*. Retrieved March 17, 2012 from www.rich.co.ke/rcfrbs/downloads/TheDigitalDivide.ppt

Tryon C. (2008) Pop politics: *Online parody videos, intertextuality, and political participation*. PopularCommunication 6(4): 209–213.

Willis, J. (2008). *What Has He Got up His Sleeve? Advertising the Kenyan Presidential Candidates in 2007*.Journal of Eastern African Studies, 2:2, 264-271

Wimmer, R. and Dominick, J. (2000).*Mass Media Research: An Introduction.* (6th ed.). Belmont C. A: Wads Worth Publishing Company.

Windeck, F. (2010).*Political communication in Sub-Saharan Africa and the role of new media*.Retrieved on 31/5/2013 from *www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_19703-544-2-30.pdf?100526134006*

Xenos M. and Moy P. (2007).*Direct and Differential Effects of the Internet on Political and Civic Engagement*.Journal of Communication 57(4): 704–718.

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)

Print to PDF without this message by purchasing novaPDF (http://www.novapdf.com/)