News Platform Preference as a Predictor of Political and Civic Participation

The Internet has overtaken newspapers as America's preeminent source for political information (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2010). This is the culmination of both explosive growth in online news seeking and historically dire years for print journalism (*New York Times*, 2008). The survival of newspapers is, at this point, a question for academics and economists. Of concern to this study is the preservation of an informed democracy — whether the Internet is an able substitute for effective political communication. But the future of news seems less likely than ever to feature the printed page— especially in an age of extensive wireless Internet access. Today's young adults are the most wired generation of all time (Hargittai and Hinnant, 2008) and the diffusion of smart phone technology, both devices and applications, continues unabated with more than 140 million wireless users in the U.S. alone (Varshney and Vetter, 2002; Jin and Villegas, 2008).

Previous research in this area has begun to suggest that those who embrace digital versus traditional media are, indeed, still involved in public affairs —perhaps in different ways (Shah et al., 2002). Online political engagement now translates to both online and offline participation, including an increased propensity to vote, especially among those with higher educational levels and incomes. And just as there are traditional measures of political participation —voting, volunteering, campaigning, donating to a campaign, writing to an editor or lawmaker, running for office— so, too, are there degrees of involvement online, including posting on blogs, messaging political content online, donating online, contacting candidates via e-mail, volunteering and sharing political beliefs through social networking (Shah et al., 2005). Following political news online has been found to increase both voting and online participation, including discussion and campaigning, which increase enthusiasm and voter turnout (Calenda

and Meijer, 2009; Tolbert and Mcneal, 2003). The Web also eases the process and eliminates the cost of reaching out to elected officials (Stanley and Weare, 2004), further enabling political participation. The particular features of online media also facilitates civic engagement (Smithet al., 2009).

This work, however, is less interested in media at large than it is in the role of news platform preference on citizens' participation —a construct that measures whether one prefers to consume news online or offline in a single index— and how that preference may influence political engagement and civic participation. Given the precipitous decline of traditional media in the sprawling shadow of online news, coupled with the logic that the information they provide may be different in some aspects (i.e., interactivity) this paper contends that this may be an area of vital research in the coming years.

Literature Review

Barack Obama's victory as America's first African-American president wasn't the only historical political milestone reached in 2008. One-quarter of Americans reported acquiring campaign information online during the Presidential race—a proportion which had doubled from 2006; which, in turn, had doubled since 2002 (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2008). The last two election cycles also saw an eruption of online campaign information, which successfully exploited the unique architecture of the Web, especially searchability and hyperlinking (Kaid and Postelnicu, 2005). The Internet as a viable and prolific political news source is now well-established. Other work has shown that political information translates ably to online forums. Online discourse contributes to political engagement and discussions in much

the same way as did the corner store in an earlier time (Shah et al., 2001; Shah et al., 2005), if not replacing, at least moderating the influence of political messages in mainstream media.

Ironically, the seismic changes foisted upon the media landscape in the Internet age have their theoretical roots half a century ago within Marshall McLuhan's iconic concept that "the medium is the message" (McLuhan, 1959; 1964). He discussed how new technologies introduced new languages, so that their predecessors were "utterly changed by the intrusion of another language, as speech was changed by writing, and radio by television" (p. 340). This theoretical framework nicely describes the new voices engaged in political participation online. Further, for two decades, scholars have discussed the uniqueness of digital media (Rafaeli, 1988; Morris and Ogan, 1996; Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1996), identifying interactivity as the core attribute that makes it so different from traditional media's one-way source/receiver model. Eveland (2003) describes six attributes which can more richly describe the predictive nature of some relationships —such as why age serves as a demarcation between traditional and online media preference. They are channel, content, textuality, organization, control, and interactivity (p. 398). Interactivity is a central theoretical distinction to many of these relationships because Internet communication allows for instant, constant feedback loops, as well as it provides an arena in which information is not only consumed but "prosumed." That is, citizens now have a higher degree of interaction and participation on the news production process, consumption and dissemination.

Interactivity and Participation

Online communication offers the unique ability to accommodate interactivity – allowing participants to simultaneously behave as receivers and sources in an endless wave of

communication (Deuze, 2003). Interactivity allows customized elaboration —directed information searches for the information desired in the moment— which has been shown to improve learning (Eveland and Dunwoody, 2002; Evans et al., 2004) and has so altered the online news landscape that the traditional source/receiver relationship is inadequate in the era of personalized news and user generated content (Pryor, 2002; Shao, 2009). The Web throws open the gates to news accessibility and selection, reducing the need for the gatekeeping function of traditional journalists (Gennaro and Dutton, 2006). Communicating online is active, synchronous and engaging, three dimensions which make it inherently more engaging (McMillan and Hwang, 2002) and hyperlinking to multiple sources can increase a reader's level of understanding of an issue (Dalrymple and Scheufele, 2007; Eveland et al., 2004). The nature of the Web also amplifies behaviors previously shown to increase political engagement and participation like news use and discussion with friends (de Vreese, 2007) and exposes participants to discussion with a wider variety of people and ideas (McKenna and Bargh, 2000). Reciprocity —this is, sharing of information through recurring discussions— also increases online (Kobayashi et al., 2006), which may also have a positive impact in the democratic process.

The democratization of the tools of news production (Anderson, 2004) and the digital information landscape have challenged the traditional top-down model of mass media (Russell, 2009; Liu, 2003). More so, Wise, Bolls and Schaefer (2008) describe the act of seeking and viewing information online as being more engaging cognitively than traditional media use, saying that "the underlying mental processes involved fundamentally shape the experience of receiving news online (p. 69)." They found that readers found a broader choice of stories and the interactivity of online news more physically stimulating than the narrower choices offered offline. While an individual's need for news was highly predictive of political participation,

whether they sought information online or offline also predicted just how they chose to participate politically (Kim, 2008).

Although communication research has long established that news and political engagement are closely related (e.g., McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McLeod et al, 1999), news consumption is different in the digital age, with the Internet having multiplied both the amount and variety of content available. The information associated with political participation is no longer an expensive commodity (Bimber, 2000) and thus people can take advantage of a growing number of options for finding information about politics and engaging in public affairs (Tewksbury, 2003, 2006).

A preference for how one acquires news may reveal more about the message than the medium. It may also predict how people participate in both the civic and the political arenas, as tested by Bachmann and colleagues (2010) with young populations. The ubiquity and interactivity of online information offer historic variety in both news sources and networking opportunities, as well as new opportunities to become engaged, whether politically or civically (e.g., Xenos and Moy, 2007). Such participatory consequences are clear especially when addressing the expressive potential of the Internet (Shah, et al., 2005), which in turn promote discussion and participation (Rojas and Puig-i-Abril, 2010).

In this context, the goals of this study are twofold. First, in order to establish a robust foundation for further testing the effect of the platform preference on political participation behaviors, it intends to replicate whether news use online and offline relates to various forms of participation. So, we predict that:

H1: Media use (online and offline) for news will be positively related to online political participation.

H2: Media use (online and offline) for news will be positively related to offline political participation.

H3: Media use (online and offline) for news will be positively related to civic engagement.

Once this premise is established, this research contends that a differential measure of online versus offline media will show a net gain from being exposed to online media over a more traditional version of the same information. This online news differential, or online news preference, is a complementary measure that may predict further political and civic participation beyond total media use.

More recent research has begun to explain how online behaviors contribute to political engagement, especially sharing and commenting on online news (Castells, 2007), and to civic engagement by expanding discussion networks and information acquisition (Shah et al., 2001). Now that research has shown a narrowing of the political knowledge gap between offline and online news users (Rojas et al, 2008), the time has come to seek other variables which further explain the distinction between these two platforms and political participation. More importantly, the ability to seek news and interact with its content has never been more easily accessible and political information is among the largest tributaries feeding the river of information online (Bichard, 2006; Green and Coffey, 2006). Thus, this paper contends that the sheer contrasting preference of one type of news platform over the other may also shed light regarding the levels of engagement in the political participatory realm. People who yield a positive score in the news use platform preference index will gain more form the news than those who report lower scores. Thus, we propose that:

H4: The use preference for an online news media platform over offline will positively predict people's online political participation.

H5: The use preference for an online news media platform over offline will positively predict people's offline political participation.

The degree of which ideas become ascendant in people's networks is the vastness of reach woven by the most active members —those who "bridge" information between networks (Granovetter, 1973; 1983). These active networkers might also be expected to carry the newest or most diverse ideas between networks, which helps community construction .

H6: The preference for an online news media platform over offline will positively predict people' civic engagement.

Methods

Data

This paper relies on an original survey data collected in the U.S. between December 15, 2008, and January 5, 2009 by a research unit hosted by the School of Journalism at University of Texas at Austin.[1] While previous research has noted that online surveys may not constitute the preferred way to conduct survey research —achieving generalizability may be difficult as not all the citizens have Internet access and it is difficult to acquire a sample in which every subject carries an equal chance to be selected (Sheehan, 2001; Smith, 1997; Stanton, 1998; Thompson, Surface, Martin, and Sanders, 2003)— more recent efforts show viability within this kind of methodological framework when matching the drawn sample to key demographic variables of the U.S. National census (Bennett and Iyengar, 2008; Vavreck, 2007). The current study employs this method.

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[1] The selected panel members received the survey's URL through an e-mail invitation. This invitation provided respondents with a time estimate to complete the survey and information about a draw monetary incentive for their participation. The first invitation was sent December 15, 2008 and three reminders were submitted in the following three weeks.

Study participants were randomly selected from a pre-existing pool of respondents. Additionally, in order to assure accurate U.S. national population representation, this particular sample was based on two U.S. census variables: gender —male 50.2% female 49.8%— and age —18-34, 30%; 35-54, 39%; 55+, 31%— and matched 10,000 randomly drawn subjects to these characteristics, following the example of previous research (Bennett and Iyengar, 2008; Vavreck, 2007). A first e-mail invitation was sent December 15, 2008, which included the survey URL and details about a study-specific monetary incentive. A total of 1,432 e-mail addresses were invalid. Of the remaining 8,568 participants, 1,159 responded on all items and 323 had missing values for some of the variables of interest in the analysis. Accordingly, based on the American Association of Public Opinion Research's (AAPOR) RR3 calculation, the response rate was 22.8% (AAPOR, 2008, pp. 34-35).[2] This falls within an acceptable rate for online panel surveys, which, to some degree, enjoy improved response rates due to incentives and lotteries which were employed by this study (Göritz, et al., 2002). The survey dataset addressed media use and political and social attitudes among adults, and for this particular study the final sub-sample included 945 cases, corresponding to those participants who answered all the questions relevant for this study. Compared to U.S. Census data, our sample had more females and was slightly better educated. Nevertheless, the demographic breakdown of our sample was similar to that of surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center and other organizations that employ random digit dialing (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2009), which seems to lend support to how well our sample statistics estimate U.S. population parameters (see Gil de Zúñiga & Valenzuela, 2010 for full datasets comparison).

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[2] The formula for RR3 is (complete interviews) / (complete interviews + eligible nonresponse + e (unknown eligibility)), where e was estimated using the proportional allocation method, i.e., (eligible cases) / (eligible cases + ineligible cases).

Measures

In order to test the relationship between political and civic participation and the respondents' news platform preference a series of zero-order and partial correlations and regressions served to test the hypotheses. This paper included a set of control variables that have been also found in the literature as central in the process of explaining the democratic process (for further details, see Rojas et al., 2005; Bimber, 2001).

Control Variables. The analysis used the five standard demographic control variables and four additional control variables included in the regression models: political knowledge, political efficacy, extreme party identification, and interpersonal discussions.

Demographics included respondents' age (measured with a six-group scale; median group: 40-49), level of education (measured with a five-point scale: Less than high school, high school, some college, college degree, post graduate degree; median group: college degree; $M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.98$); gender (33% male; 67% female); income (measured on a ten-point scale in which the median was \$50,000-\$59,999; $M = 5.54$, $SD = 3.12$); and race/ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Other).

Political Knowledge was measured as a summation of correct answers asking to identify four political leaders: an additional question measured the latency of the responses ($\alpha = .46$, $M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.98$), While the reliability is rather low, all these questions vary in difficulty and are not necessarily equally weighted measurements; thus a summation can be problematic (Shanahan et al., 1997). With this in consideration, the analysis included the knowledge scale as a control variable despite the seemingly low reliability (Valentino et al., 2004).

Political Efficacy was a summation of four items asking participants on a ten-point scale whether they felt they could understand and influence politic affairs ($\alpha = .65$, M = 16.30, SD =6.86).

Extreme Party Identification measured those who identified themselves as extremely partisan in an eleven-point scale that opposed Republicans and Democrats; the variable was ultimately dummy coded (M = 0.32, SD =0.47).

Interpersonal discussion included three items that asked individuals on a ten-point scale how often they engaged in conversation about political issues with family and friends, with co-workers and acquaintances, and with strangers ($\alpha = .71$, M = 14.50, SD = 6.52).

Independent Variables. The hypotheses address the impact of people's preferred news platform for different media outlets. The survey included eight items that asked respondents on a seven-point scale how frequently they had consumed different online and offline news media, and another two items that used a ten-point scale to measure news aggregator use and reading blog about public affairs. Two separate variables were computed: the summation of frequencies for *Offline Media Use* (including print newspapers, print magazines, offline radio news, offline network TV news, offline local TV news, offline cable TV news; $\alpha = .65$, M = 25.23, SD =7.27) and the additive frequency for *Online Media Use* (online newspapers, online magazines, news aggregators, and blogs; $\alpha = .72$, M = 11.53, SD =6.65). Because these media variables did not have the same ranges of scores (given different number of items and different scales), the measures were standardized and then combined into a variable labeled *News Media Use*. Additionally, the variables were opposed and contrasted in a relative continuum scale, named *News Platform Preference*, where negative scores refer to respondents that opt for offline news media, and positive scores designate those who prefer to consume news online platforms (e.g.,

scored the minimum possible offline and the maximum possible online; see Figure 1; M = -0.07, SD =0.77).

Dependent Variables. As the hypotheses suggest, the primary concern of this study is with the impact of platform preference on people's civic and political participation and the analysis used three dependent variables to explore this outcome:

Civic Engagement is an additive scale that measures the respondents' involvement in community affairs and was computed from a series of question asking participants the extent to which they had been involved during the last year in civic activities (worked as a volunteer for a nonpolitical organization, raised money for charity, attended a meeting to discuss neighborhood problems, bought a product because of the values of the company that produces it, or avoided a product because of the values of the company that produces it; α = .81; M = 18.54, SD = 11.69). The answers were measured on a in a ten-point scale (never = 1; all the time = 10).

Offline Political Participation was computed as an additive index of nine items measuring traditional political participation done offline during the last year (attended a public hearing, called or sent a letter to an elected official, spoke to a public official, posted a political sign or banner, attended a political rally, participated in any demonstration or protest, voted in the 2008 election, participated in local groups for political action, or were involved in political action groups; α = .81; M = 2.63, SD = 2.29). The answers were all dichotomous, yes (=1) or no (=0).

Online Political Participation measures the involvement in new alternatives for political action via digital means and was computed as an additive scale of seven items asking on a ten-point scale the extent to which they had done several political activities over the Internet (e-mailed a politician, visited a political or advocacy website, made a campaign contribution online,

subscribed to a political listserv, signed up to volunteer for a campaign, sent a political message via email, posted comments in a political blog; α= .89; M = 18.07, SD =13.57).

Results

As Table 1 shows, the measure of news media use is positively and significantly correlated with all three dependent variables as suggested by our hypothesis, replicating previous research findings. Thus, news consumption correlates with online political participation (r = .52, p < .001), offline political participation (r = .35, p < .001) and civic engagement (r = .47, p < .001).

In terms of overall platform preference, respondents were generally more inclined to prefer offline platforms (M=-0.07). As hypothesized, the preference for online news platforms was positively correlated with online political participation (r = .37, p < .001), and with both measures in the offline realm: offline political participation (r = .19, p < .01) and civic engagement (r = .26, p < .001). The results held even after controlling for demographics (see Table 1), thus supporting all hypotheses.

Additionally, in order to further test the predictive power of the news platform preference variable, a series of hierarchical regressions were performed, further supporting the importance of the preference for the online news platform among respondents, even for offline activities. In a regression predicting online political participation, the first block included the control variables, then several political variables were introduced in the second block (political knowledge, political efficacy, extreme party identification, and interpersonal discussions), media use in the third block, and finally the independent variable (news platform preference) was introduced in the third block. The first model explained 3% of the variance of online political

participation, the political variables accounted for an additional 19% of variance, news media use (offline plus online) explained an additional 12%, and news platform preference explained another 7%, all of them at the p < . 001 level (see Table 2). Results reveal that the more people preferred online news media over offline, the more likely they were to engage in activities like making a campaign contribution online, subscribing to a political listserv or posting comments on a political blog. Preference for news via the online platform contributed positively and significantly to online political participation ($\beta = .28$, p < .001). Other control variables like age ($\beta = .08$, p < .01), education ($\beta = .06$, p < .05), extreme party identification ($\beta = .14$, p < .001), and interpersonal discussions ($\beta = .20$, p < .001), positively and significantly contributed as well, but to a lesser extent. Only the effect of news media use ($\beta = .36$, p < .001) was stronger.

The model about offline political participation yielded similar results. This model also included the control variables in the first block, the political variables in the second block, the additive media use in the third block and the independent variable of our interest in the fourth block. In this case, in line with previous findings in the literature, news media use ($\beta = .20$, p < .001) positively predicted citizens' involvement in participatory activities. Among the control variables, other significant contributors were age ($\beta = .18$, p < .001), education ($\beta = .19$, p < .001), income ($\beta = .10$, p < .01), extreme party identification ($\beta = .10$, p < .001), and interpersonal discussions ($\beta = .17$, p < .001). Furthermore, news platform preference accounted for a rather small but still statistically significant incremental variance (2%) beyond the effect all other blocks. The preference for online news platforms did contribute positively to offline political behavior, such as attending a political rally and voting ($\beta = .14$, p < .001).

Finally, the regression about civic engagement further explicates the importance of news platform preference. In this case the preference for online platforms also proved to make a

positive and significant contribution (β = .17, p < .001), similar to that of education (β = .11, p < .001), and political efficacy (β = .10, p < .001). While interpersonal discussions (β = .27, p < .001 and news media use (β = .28, p < .001) were the most important predictors, the block regarding News Platform Preference explained 2% of incremental variance (at the p <.001 level).

In other words, those who report a predilection for consuming news online in contrast to offline showed higher levels of participation. News platform preference is a predictor of online political participation, offline political participation and civic engagement, therefore supporting all six hypotheses.

Discussion

This paper aims to expand the literature on media use and citizen involvement in civic life and on the democratic scene. Results indicate that, as has been suggested by other scholars and is further replicated in this study, news consumption online and offline relates to both civic and political participation. And this relationship takes place regardless of whether we test online measures of political and civic participation or offline indicators of engagement. That news matter for the democratic process is not new. People seek information and constantly try to understand what is happening around them as it relates to the degree in which they will engage in further political and civic activities. This is a mature premise. This paper borrows from this line of research and moves beyond the continuous measurement of news use to shed light on different activities within the participatory realm. Consequently, the strength of this study resides on the fairly new conceptualization of news platform preference. Unlike most studies where a more conventional measurement of news media use is in place, we build on this by operationalizing a differential measure between conventional and online media use to quantify selective exposure to

one media platform over another. Thus, the relationship tested in this paper is no longer about whether a person is up to date with things that occur in the public affair landscape and how it affects participation, but rather about how individuals' preferred to get informed in a particular way. The consequences of that information acquisition, or preference pattern, are also relevant when it comes to understanding the outcome of public engagement in civic life and in the political arena. And it explains so above and beyond the effect of consuming news online and off. People with a higher contrast of online platform preference will tend to participate more than their counterparts.

This way, there seems to be an effect of media on participatory outcomes beyond the effect of sheer media consumption. Those who consume more news online and offline will tend to participate more than those who pay less attention to public affairs. However, the contrast on news acquisition platform also matters. And this is the case regardless of whether it refers to online or offline means of participation and beyond the effect of demographic factors, social orientations and people's levels of news consumption. These results seem to indicate that the Internet may supply a set of characteristics that print journalism may be unable to provide. Other scholars previously considered and conceptualized online participation to be different from offline participation (for instance, McLeod et al., 2007; Shah et al., 2007); however, little research has been empirically conducted on how online and print media differ when it comes to explaining, independently, the form in which citizens participate civically and politically.

A recent study contended that the preference for the digital platform, in contrast to traditional media, contributed to diminishing the gap among young adults and older Americans in frequency of conventional news use (Bachmann et al., 2010). This paper intended to expand that line of research and tested the effect of this preference on civic engagement and political

participation. Results indicate the more one prefers the virtual platform as an information source, and the larger this gap with respect more traditional means of getting informed; the more likely one will be to contribute to the democratic process.

Previous research has deeply analyzed the strong correlation between consuming news about public affairs and the political socialization process, but has mostly ignored the impact of audiences' platform preference on behaviors associated with civic engagement. The growth of the Internet, both in terms of content and users, has resulted in a growing number of adults -not only the younger generations- embracing online technology to engage in public life and public affairs. Our findings suggest it is not that people are foregoing traditional ways to participate in the democratic process, but that Americans' preference for online media is actually contributing to their overall political participation (offline and online) as well as (offline) civic engagement.

Furthermore, social ties —the multiple individual networks to which people belong— also seem to play a central role in the need for elaboration. They may contribute to foster a two-step flow of news, as those most active and diverse in their networks are often the most informed and also the most influential in "spreading the wealth" by transmitting their informed opinions. This may happen both offline, in organizations, families and workplaces, and online, through blogs, social networking, e-mailing and the like. Despite 60 years having transpired since Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) landmark study on opinion leaders, their theoretical foundation is still strong. News platform preference may also contribute to both democratizing and expanding citizens' knowledge due to its practically zero cost to the audience. An online preference may yield new ways of transmitting the information to the general public as well as broadened channels of influence, perhaps blurring the relationship between elite information gatekeepers, opinion leaders, and the public. Online media facilitate a higher degree of interactivity, as

compared to traditional media, which may help explain online engagement. Interactivity allows personalized news consumption with a historic ease of re-transmission, instantly morphing a receiver into a source. Hence, interactivity also impacts the extent to which people participate in the democratic process.

This study poses a number of interesting findings as well as a number of challenges and limitations that need to be discussed. First, as creative as it may be, the measure of news platform preference is far from perfect. It determines certain characteristics of people's inclination with respect to how they use the media. However, further tests also suggest that although different from the conventional measurement of media use, they share some structural variance when introduced together in a predictive model of political participation. This may suggest that 1) the scale would need refinement and 2) mediating mechanisms may also be at stake. Further research should elaborate in this regard and try to sharpen and perfect this measure. Along these lines, another limitation we encountered in this study dealt with the nature of the causality implied in our model. Although news use and participation are obviously related, it has been somewhat established that news use leads you to participate more so than participation would lead you toward future news consumption (Rojas, 2008). Nevertheless, we need to be cautious when interpreting the causality of this model with the proposed measurement of news platform preference since, although it is intrinsically based on use, it is distinct in its construction and its operationalization. A non-recursive model with panel data would greatly serve to dissipate these concerns. Of course this is another suggestion for future research.

All in all, this paper serves as a new, interesting and worthy avenue that contributes to the extant literature on media use, electronic or digital media transformation and participation in the

democratic realm. It provides a new mechanism to measure today's (digital) democracy as news platform preferences predict the form in which citizens contribute civically and politically.

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Figure 1. Explanation of News Platform Preference as a scale of contrasted media use
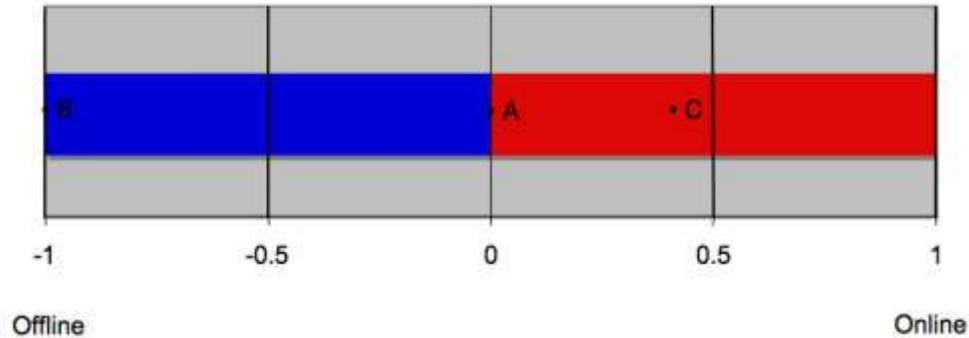
A. Neutral case= 0
B. Hypothetical extreme offline case = -1
C. Hypothetical slightly online case = 0.4

The News Platform Preference scale contrasts the actual use of online (positive scores) and offline (negative scores) news platforms. It measures the overall preference by subtracting the offline scores from the online ones. In this scale a zero designates someone whose preference is completely neutral: those who do not have a relative preference for one platform over the other and use both platforms at equal levels; -1 refers to respondents that opt for only offline news media all the time (this is, scored the maximum possible offline and the minimum possible online), and +1 designates those who use exclusively online platform. Similar measurements have been introduced by scholars in other lines of research. For instance see Prior's (2005) work, and the seminal work of Gunther (1991) or Rojas and colleagues (Rojas, Shah and Faber, 1996) to further understand similar contrasting measurements.

Table 1. Pearson correlations among variables

Table top diagonal: Zero-order Pearson correlations
Table bottom diagonal: Partial-order Pearson correlations (controls included: Age, education, gender, income, and ethnicity).

	News Media Use	News Platform Preference	Online Political Participation	Offline Political Participation	Civic Engagement (Offline)
News Media Use	--	.21***	.52***	.35***	.47***
News Platform Preference	.19***	---	.37***	.19**	.26***
Online Political Participation	.52***	.37***	--	.59***	.54***
Offline Political Participation	.34***	.21**	.59***	--	.58***
Civic Engagement (Offline	.45***	.24***	.52***	.55***	--

N = 945, df = 938 (for partial correlations)
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 2. Hierarchical regressions predicting participation and engagement

	Online Political Participation	Offline Political Participation	Civic Engagement (Offline)
Demographics			
Age	.08**	.18***	.03
Education	.06*	.19***	.11***
Gender (female)	.05#	.05#	.09**
Income	-.02	.10**	.09**
Ethnicity (white)	.03	.02	.05#
R^2	3%***	13%***	7%***
Political Variables			
Political Knowledge	-.03	.03	-.06*
Political Efficacy	.05#	.04	.10***
Extreme Party ID	.14***	.10***	.01
Interpersonal Discussions	.20***	.17***	.27***
R^2 change	19%***	10%***	20%***
News Media Use			
News Media Use	.36***	.20***	.28***
R^2 change	12% ***	4%***	7%***
News Platform Preference			
NPP (contrasted use)	.28***	.14***	.17***
R^2 change	7%***	2%***	2%***
TOTAL R^2	42%	29%	35%

N = 945

Cell entries are standardized Beta coefficients.

# $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$