Social Media: Transformative tool or whybother?

Steve Wise
House of Commons Library
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Why use social media?

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3. Drive traffic to other channels
4. It’s just better at some things
5. What would people think if you didn’t?
#WhyBother?

1. So many channels
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1. So many channels
2. So much work
#WhyBother?

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2. So much work
3. So many opinions
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4. In addition to, not instead of…
#WhyBother?

1. So many channels
2. So much work
3. So many opinions
4. In addition to, not instead of…
5. You’ll never get as many views as Gangnam Style!
Transformative tool – YES!

- Transforms how we engage with citizens and the hard-to-reach
- Provides ready-made resources for Members (and others) to use
- Provides access to authoritative information in a world of ‘fake news’
- Makes us think about our content and writing style
- Promotes political dialogue & informing citizens
#whybother – sometimes?

- You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink
- Twittersphere is a world of opinions – be prepared to be challenged
- Tweet in haste, repent at leisure
- Difficult to measure impact
- Value for money – not always
My questions to you are…

- How could social media transform my service?
- How would social media help my customers?
Thank you

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More information, resources & examples
What have we learned from our experience?
Lessons learned – 1

- Train staff
- Develop guidance / protocols / standards
- Be selective about the channels you use
- Look for opportunities to re-use, link & cross-promote content
- Co-ordinate messages across channels / teams
Lessons learned – 2

- Be clear about what you want to achieve
- Post regularly
- Be authentic & authoritative, not too chatty
- Tailor your content to channel you are using
- Be relevant, interesting and shareable
- Avoid being formulaic; avoid jargon
Lessons learned – 3

• Get advice from others who understand the channels you use (potential partners)
• Use specialists in areas where you don’t have expertise yourself
• Be prepared to experiment and learn from your failures
Practical Examples (1) –
How does the UK Parliament use Social Media
Transformative tool or #whybother?

You decide: **UK Parliament**

1. [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ukparliament/)
2. [Twitter](https://twitter.com/UKParliament)
3. [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/UKParliament)
4. [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ukparliament)
5. [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/uk_parliament/)
6. [Commons Library](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/)
7. [Digital Service Social Media Blog](https://www.digitalservicesocialmedia.blog/)

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Practical Examples (2) – VOTE100 Anniversary
What is VOTE100?

2018 marks 100 years since the UK Parliament passed a law which allowed some women, and all men, to vote for the first time: the 1918 Representation of the People Act.

Throughout 2018 the UK Parliament is celebrating this important milestone in the UK’s democratic history.

The digital element of VOTE100 is an important part of this as it enables us to engage with the citizens, students and the wider community.
Vote 100

2018 marks 100 years since Parliament passed a law which allowed the first women, and all men, to vote for the first time. Celebrate this milestone by getting involved with Vote 100. Lots of exciting activities are happening, including a major exhibition, talks and tours, plus events around the UK. Follow #Vote100 on Twitter to keep up to date.

What Is Vote 100?

It’s 100 years since Parliament passed the Act which allowed some women, and all men, to vote for the first time. Find out how we’re celebrating this and other milestones in the UK’s democratic history.

Online learning

Beyond the Ballot: Women’s Rights and Suffrage from 1866 to Today

Take this online course and explore the campaign for women’s right to vote and its impact on women’s rights.

EqualiTees

Register for EqualiTees, your opportunity to share, debate and celebrate our right to vote, over a cup of tea and slice of cake! It’s a UK-wide celebration of our democratic equality, with tea parties taking place all over the

www.parliament.uk/vote100
The website acts as a central hub for activities, resources & social media

- Promotes exhibition, events, talks & tours
- Resources for community activities
- Educational materials for teachers & students
- Links to social media channels
YouTube videos featuring women who share their personal stories of how laws passed by Parliament have changed their lives for the better, with Twitter hashtag for the public to share their own stories.

Parliament’s Facebook page features posts and photos promoting events & activities along with hashtags, and links back to the website and other social media channels.
Parliament’s Instagram channel also features photos and videos from VOTE100 events and encourages participants to post their own images.

**UK Parliament** We’d love to see your pictures of the Houses of Parliament. Share them by using #UKParliament.

parliament.uk
While Parliament’s Twitter account re-uses the same photos and videos to promote events, publicise #hashtags, and drive traffic back to the main VOTE100 website for more information and resources that schools and communities can use themselves.
All of Parliament’s social media channels are used to cross-promote VOTE100 activities and events, encourage community engagement, share individual experiences, and drive traffic back to the website for more information and resources.
Strategy

But at the same time it also promotes engagement with Parliament:

• Encouraging citizens to register to vote
• Explaining how citizens can contact their MP
• Public and school visits to Parliament
• Submitting evidence to Select Committees
• Stressing the importance of public debate in shaping government policy and legislation to the benefit of citizens and society
Other resources
Transformative tool or #whybother?
Some useful resources:

1. Social Media Guidelines for Parliaments
2. World e-Parliament Report
3. Open Government Partnership
4. Speaker’s Commission on Digital Democracy