School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry

Social media and members of the Thirty-eighth (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth (2013–2017) Parliaments in Western Australia: A mixed methods study

Niamh Marie Hopkins

This thesis is presented
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of
Curtin University

2021

[Intentionally blank]

DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number # MCCA 07-2012; HREC RDHU-169-15.

Signature: .... Date: ....

© 2021

Curiosity is the lust of the mind.
— Thomas Hobbes

Awaken your spirit to adventure
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm.
— John O'Donohue, For a New Beginning

ABSTRACT

This longitudinal study explored the everyday information behaviours of members of the Thirty-eighth (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth (2013–2017) Parliaments in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA) by examining their use of social media to communicate with their constituents outside of a formal election campaign. The Theory of Information Worlds (TIW) was the conceptual foundation underpinning the research. TIW focuses on describing information in social contexts, ranging from very small and local contexts to the larger contexts in which those are embedded (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010). It draws upon Chatman's concept of small worlds (Burnett, Besant & Chatman, 2001) and Habermas' (1992) concept of the lifeworld. It contextualises information behaviours within the social worlds that individuals inhabit by exploring five interconnected concepts: Social Norms, Social Types, Information Value, Information Behaviour and Boundaries (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010).

The research used a mixed methods design, comprising two self-administered online questionnaires and face-to-face semi-structured interviews with twenty-four members of the target population as its primary source of data. Findings were triangulated through comparisons between these data sources. The quantitative and qualitative dataset generated by this study was analysed to explore the characteristics of the responses. Relationships between aspects of the data were identified and reported using descriptive statistics and direct quotes from the transcribed interviews using the key components of TIW. The data gathered provided a rich and unique insight into understanding how the participants perceived the social norms, societal types, information value and boundary management which led to certain information behaviours. From this analysis, conclusions are drawn in relation to the broad research question which supported the study.

Key findings contribute to an information studies approach, which emphasises the importance of individual experience and sociocultural contexts in shaping how individuals act toward and

interact with information. The study identified a number of factors that impact the use of social media by members of the PoWA. The research results revealed that while the majority of the survey population were early adopters of social media and had incorporated it into their day-to-day information worlds, not everyone was a devotee. The reasons for this included a number of perceived impediments: workload pressures, limited resources, digital literacies, online incivility, digital connectivity, online access and the representativeness of the platforms. Emanating from the research findings are the recommendations for future researchers of parliamentary information studies.

Research of this nature is necessary because there has been a paucity of scholarly interest in this area to date. Given the lack of research into the information behaviours of Members of the PoWA and their information worlds, this study provided a unique set of empirical findings to add to the limited body of knowledge about the topic through the lens of the TIW. The study contributes to this field of research by providing a snapshot of the prevalence of social media use and practices by the parliamentarians themselves from their point of view and using their voices. This will enable students of parliamentary information studies to better understand the day-to-day information behaviours of parliamentarians, including the value that they place on information exchanged with constituents on social media and its implications for practice. The original findings produce an empirically supported evidence base and a benchmark for future studies. Although based in a small Westminster parliament, the findings of this study may be applicable in other legislatures sharing similar characteristics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No intellectual endeavor, including this one, is ever accomplished alone. This project is no exception and was made possible by the contributions of so many, especially those dear to me. To my Special K, for your unwavering love, constant cajoling and resolute support, I thank you. Your amaranthine patience, understanding and encouragement has taken me to the finish line. Thanks for being tolerant and even forgiving of my absences. And to my girls, yes, mum has finally finished her "uni work". WE did it!

Thanks too to Patrick and Monica, my brave parents, who left Ireland on St Patrick's Day to start a new life in WA. While I didn't think so at the time, I now realise what a courageous and bold move that was. Céad míle fáilte. Thanks for letting me take over you home as my writing pad. Thank you too for not asking too often how the PhD was going after getting short shrift when you "accidently" did so!

Heartfelt thanks to my mentors and friends, Dr Harry Phillips and Dr Sarah Palmer for their sage advice and reassurances. Thanks to Dr Paul Genoni and Dr Kerry Smith for encouraging me to embark on this PhD journey, something I would never have contemplated if it were not for your considerable influence and coaxing.

My immeasurable gratitude to my ever-patient supervisor, Associate Professor Gaby Haddow, for her gentle guidance and for her persistence in her belief in my, even when at times, I questioned my scholarly ability. Thanks for reminding that this was a marathon and not a sprint. I may have limped the final stages…I will always be grateful to you for expanding my academic horizons and introducing me to the Elfreda Chapman. Your patience, understanding and unflappability at missed deadlines and pandemic lockdowns were inspiring. Thanks too to my committee members, Dr Tama Leaver, Professor of Internet Studies and Professor Michele Willson, Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor, for the helpful comments and for sharing your

intellectual expertise. Thanks to longtime support crew, Zalila Abdul Rahman, Senior Graduate Studies Officer who always seemed to know the correct form that I was supposed to complete! The late night lonely and intensive writing process benefitted from my accompanists on the journey: To Starboy, Ludovico Einaudi and Agnes Obel; the music sounds better with you! The early morning stints owe a debt of gratitude to the coffee crew at Little Sisto.

For their professional support and friendship over the years, I am indebted to my colleagues in the "parliamentary information bubble" at the Parliament of Western Australia—too many to mention individually. For supporting my initial request and for endorsing the study, I give thanks to former presiding officers, Hon Grant Woodhams MLA, Hon Michael Sutherland MLA and Hon Barry House MLC.

And finally, to the members of the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) who took the time to participate in my study, I really couldn't have done it without you. Thank you for trusting me to share a glimpse into your information lifeworlds, a complex and captivating place for a student of information behaviours and parliamentary information studies.

Dedicated to Kevin, Ciara, Molly and Kate

Always remember: Knowledge starts in wonder (Swigger, 2018)

Noli timere

[Intentionally blank]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ... iii
ABSTRACT ... vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ... viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS ... xii
LIST OF TABLES ... xvii
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS ... xviii
CHAPTER 1: Introduction ... 1
Introduction ... 1
Purpose ... 2
Research question ... 4
Significance ... 5
Timing of the study ... 6
Definitions ... 7
Study setting ... 13
Outline of thesis ... 18
Chapter conclusion ... 20
CHAPTER 2: Study foundation and framework ... 21
Chapter objectives ... 21
Importance of information to MPs ... 22
Theoretical and conceptual framework ... 25
Theory of information worlds ... 26
Parliamentary information bubbles ... 29
Habermas: The public sphere, information lifeworlds ... 32
Small worlds and information behaviour ... 36
The fusion and fission of Chatman and Habermas ... 38
Today's public sphere, lifeworlds and small worlds ... 40
Lifeworlds and parliamentary representation ... 42
Role and responsibilities ... 44
Lifeworlds and the constituency ... 45
Political communication and parliamentary information ... 50
Chapter conclusion ... 53
CHAPTER 3: The social media phenomenon ... 54
Introduction ... 54
Everyday use of social media by parliamentarians ... 54
Social media and politics ... 57
The politics of disruption ... 59

Everyday use of social media in the constituency 62
Opportunities for MPs to engage on social media 65

Factors influencing adoption practices 68

Barriers and challenges to social media use by MPs 76
Organisational challenges 87

Who influenced adoption? 91

Chapter conclusion 92

CHAPTER 4: Research design and methodology 95

Chapter objectives 95

Introduction 95

Research design 96
Methodological approach 96
Mixed Methods Research 98

Ethical considerations 100
Informed consent, voluntary participation 100
Confidentiality and anonymity 101

Scope of the study 102

Survey target population 103
Recruitment 104

Survey instruments 106
Questionnaires 106
Testing and refinement 109
Interviews 111

Data collection and analysis 113
Quantitative data analysis 113
Qualitative data analysis 114
Data handling and storage 117

Rigour of the research findings 117
Validity of the research findings 118
Reliability of the research findings 119

Chapter conclusion 119

CHAPTER 5: Results 121

Chapter objectives 121

Introduction 121

Analysis of the research questions 122

Response rate 123
Table 1: Survey responses – response rate 123

Demographic characteristics 123
Table 2: Survey responses – by parties in government and opposition 124
Table 3: Comparison of respondents to proportion of all MPs – by party affiliation 125
Table 4: Social media usage – by party affiliation 125

Table 5: Social media usage – by electorate type 126
Table 6: Social media usage – by age 127
Table 7: Social media usage – by gender 128
Table 8: Social media usage – by length of service 128
Table 9: Social media usage – by educational attainment 130

Social media adoption and usage 131
Table 10: Social media usage – by MPs 131
Table 11: Social media – by platforms used 132
Table 12: Bandwagon effect 133
Table 13: Degree to which social media was seen as a passing fad by MPs 133
Table 14: Social media – active users since 2008 135

Motivations for using social media 135
Table 15: Factors motivating use of social media 136
Table 16: Who or what influenced social media adoption? 137

Resourcing and organisational challenges 139
Table 17: Responsibility for updating social media 140
Table 18: Updating frequency 142
Table 19: Updating on a sitting day 143
Table 20: Formal social media strategy 144
Table 21: Social media training 146

Contemporary Correspondence Practices of Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments 147
Table 22: Mailbag composition 147
Table 23: Social media affordances 151

Impediments to social media use 157
Table 24: Impediments to use of social media 157

Chapter conclusion 160

CHAPTER 6: Discussion of findings 161

Introduction 161

Social media and information behaviours 163

MPs' motivations for using social media by Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments 173
Social norms 174
Social types 180
Information value 183
Information behaviour 186
Boundaries 189

Social media and Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments 191
Polymedia approach 192
Platforms of choice 193
Social media and parliamentary proceedings 194

Resourcing and organisational challenges for Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments 197
MPs' homestyles 198
MPs' updating patterns 200
Information overload 203

Contemporary constituency communications of by Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments....205
MPs' modern mailbag....205

Impediments to social media use by Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments....208
Social norms....208
Social types....219
Information behaviour....224
Information value....226
Boundaries....232

Chapter conclusion....233

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion....*235*

Introduction....235

Overview of the study....237

Reflections on the importance of information behaviour research....240

Review of study findings....241

Reflection on process....246

Recommendations for future research....247
Examine the social media use in future parliaments....248
COVID-19 and social media....249
Constituents' perspectives....249
Comparative research....250
Everyday information behaviours....250
Social media impact on MPs' mental health and lifeworlds....251
Social media literacy....252

Contribution to knowledge....252

Limitations of the study....254
Theory of Information Worlds....255
Findings become outdated quickly....255
Salience of the topic....256
Researcher effects....256

Concluding thoughts....257

REFERENCES....*261*

APPENDIX A....*371*

APPENDIX B....*376*

APPENDIX C....*379*

APPENDIX D....*381*

APPENDIX E....*384*

APPENDIX F....*385*

APPENDIX G....*387*

APPENDIX H....*392*

APPENDIX I....*393*

APPENDIX J...*394*
APPENDIX K...*395*

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Survey responses – response rate 123
Table 2: Survey responses – by parties in government and opposition 124
Table 3: Comparison of respondents to proportion of all MPs – by party affiliation 125
Table 4: Social media usage – by party affiliation 125
Table 5: Social media usage – by electorate type 126
Table 6: Social media usage – by age 127
Table 7: Social media usage – by gender 128
Table 8: Social media usage – by length of service 128
Table 9: Social media usage – by educational attainment 130
Table 10: Social media usage – by MPs 131
Table 11: Social media – by platforms used 132
Table 12: Bandwagon effect 133
Table 13: Degree to which social media was seen as a passing fad by MPs 133
Table 14: Social media – active users since 2008 135
Table 15: Factors motivating use of social media 136
Table 16: Who or what influenced social media adoption? 137
Table 17: Responsibility for updating social media 140
Table 18: Updating frequency 142
Table 19: Updating on a sitting day 143
Table 20: Formal social media strategy 144
Table 21: Social media training 146
Table 22: Mailbag composition 147
Table 23: Social media affordances 151
Table 24: Impediments to use of social media 157

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

%	Percentage
ALP	Australian Labor Party
Govt	Government
GWA	Greens Western Australia
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee (Curtin University)
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IND	Independent
LA	Legislative Assembly
LC	Legislative Council
Libs	Liberal Party
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MLC	Member of the Legislative Council
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
'n'	Response count (number of valid responses received)
Nats	National Party
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
Opp	Opposition (non-government) party
PoWA	Parliament of Western Australia
S1	MP comment from Survey 1 (2012)
S2	MP comment from Survey 2 (2016)
TIW	Theory of Information Worlds
WA	Western Australia
WAPD	Western Australian Parliamentary Debates

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

> *Research is about acquiring knowledge and developing understanding, collecting facts and interpreting them to build up a picture of the world around us, and even within us. (Walliman, 2011, p. 16).*

Introduction

Since its very inception, the exchange of information between political actors has been at the heart of parliamentary democracies. Democratic politics is principally about nimble decision-making, that is, making difficult decisions on the basis of imperfect information, and with limited resources (Flinders, 2016). In an oft-cited study of the information behaviours of British parliamentarians, Orton, Marcella and Baxter (2000), established that "the triggers for information seeking amongst MPs, are, in many instances, unpredictable, emanating frequently from constituents' demands and from issues receiving attention in the media" (p. 216). Still relevant today this is worthy of revisitation given that in fulfilling their role, and contributing to an informed democracy, parliamentarians are now obliged to navigate vast and dynamic flows of information.

As Sunstein (2020), observed, MPs' information flows have hit deluge point in the intervening twenty years. At the turn of the twenty-first century the social media phenomenon was yet to emerge. Since then, the relationship between social media and democracy has been widely researched coinciding with the mainstreaming of social media practice in general society (Persily & Tucker, 2020; Young & Åkerström, 2015). Wheeler and Muwanguzi (2021) suggest that "the fusion of politics and information is possibly more pronounced in recent history than ever before" (p. 24). It is timely then, to reconsider our approaches to human information behaviour given the advancements in information and communication technologies, and social media in particular (Spink, 2010).

This study explores how members in the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) in the Parliament of Western Australian (PoWA) used social media to communicate with their constituents outside of an election period. The research carried out for this dissertation goes some way toward addressing the lack of academic consideration of the ordinary everyday lifeworlds and work practices of parliamentarians in a bid to better understand their information behaviours. On social media we perform a dual role: that of being a producer and receiver of information. This has practical implications for human information behaviour research.

There is little scholarly research into the dynamics and the behind-the-scenes processes that go into producing or curating MPs social media content. That is, whether the account is managed solely by the MP or whether others assist. Also, who or what was influential in motivating them to adopt social media in the first place? And, what if any, impact this has on workload and resource allocation? Exploring the topic of MPs' information lifeworlds and social media adoption and use will help to broaden the limited view of this aspect of human information behaviour. Given that the parliamentary setting constitutes a hyper-competitive environment, it may be that MPs are more likely to adopt practices that appear to give them "an edge" over their peers, colleagues and opposition-MPs alike (Tromble, 2016, p. 681).

This chapter presents the background, context and setting for the study. Outlining the purpose of the study, it describes the significance of the study and presents the research question addressed by the study. It also provides an overview of the thesis.

Purpose

This research aimed to examine how the information behaviours of parliamentarians in a subnational Westminster-style legislature were influenced by their use, if any, of social media.

The focus was not on the social media platforms per se, but rather on recording the MPs' social media lifeworld experiences to explain the "what", "why" and "how" of their information behaviours. It is critical to move beyond the "what" questions and focus more on the "how" and "why" when studying a widespread and significant change in information behaviour (Rief (2004, p. 752).

Specifically, the purpose of this mixed methods longitudinal study was to explore how the information behaviours of members of the Thirty-eight Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) in the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australian (PoWA), were influenced by the use of social media in their everyday constituency communication practices. Research of this nature is necessary because there has been a paucity of scholarly interest in the information behaviours of the members of the PoWA to date. Up until now, the voices of these members of Parliament (MPs) have not been heard in relation to their day-to-day experiences of social media in communicating with their electorate.

Information studies can be defined as the "study of the gathering, organising, storing, retrieving, and dissemination of information", (Bates, 1999, p. 1044) and the sub-field of human information behavior has been studied since the 1960s (Katzer 1987; Lievrouw 1998). Researchers in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) have studied the evolving patterns of information behaviour in the form of information seeking, foraging, retrieving, organising and using information for many years (Bates, 2010; Spink & Cole, 2001; Wilson, 1999, 2000). Social media have transformed the way information is consumed and exchanged, yet its impact on human information behaviour is not fully understood. An understanding of the underlying beliefs and motivations that influence social media adoption and use, based on personal insights is therefore beneficial to furthering this area of research. Conceptualising the

complex and interconnectedness of information behaviour deepens our knowledge by allowing us to understand information behaviour more holistically.

This study hopes to contribute to an understanding of MPs' information behaviours. It does this by providing a snapshot of the prevalence of social media use and practices by the MPs themselves, through the lens of the Theory of Information Worlds (TIW). In order to contextualise the analysis of social media in a parliamentary information studies context, this study draws theoretically on the concept of information behaviour theory (Ford, 2015), but specifically, Habermas' public sphere and Chatman's information lifeworlds. In particular, Chatman's (1996) work on information worlds is used to frame how parliamentarians' use of social media aligned with the conception of information-poor and information-rich lifeworlds. The use of the lifeworld as a unit of analysis, allows for a phenomenon to be researched holistically and without reductionism, as opposed to units of analysis such as individual, social group, person-in-situation, etc. (Gorichanaz, Latham & Wood, 2018, p. 880).

Research question

Guiding the research was a multi-part research question, with each facet considered in some detail. The research questions posed by this study were as follows:

> *To what extent did Members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), use social media to communicate with their constituents, and what were their motivations for use or non-use?*

To achieve the stated aim of this study, the objectives were as follows:

Objective One: Assess the extent to which Members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), used social media to communicate with their constituents.

Objective Two: Obtain the views of these MPs relating relating to their motivation to use or not to use social media to communicate with their constituents.

The research gathered data through questionnaires distributed during the parliamentary winter recesses in July 2012, and again in July 2016. Face to face interviews were also carried out to hear firsthand accounts about the lived experiences of the MPs in Western Australia elected during the period 2008 to 2017.

Significance

This study is important for several reasons. For one, it contributes to the literature on how the information behaviours of parliamentarians in a Westminster-style parliament are influenced by their use of social media. Scant academic analysis has meant that very little has been written about MPs' information behaviours and their use of social media to communicate with their constituents in a Western Australian context. Unique to this study is that the findings are informed by the insights gleaned from the parliamentarians themselves. Extensive quotes from the MPs have been transcribed and used to give authentic voice to the findings. This enables a better understanding of the information behaviours of MPs, the phenomenon of social media and its use by MPs.

It will also assist in situating this use in a parliamentary information studies context. Some time ago, Spink and Cole (2001) underscored the need for a deeper understanding of everyday life information-seeking from diverse cultural and social situation perspectives. The study will add

to this understanding. It will also provide the information behaviour research community with information about the value parliamentarians place on social media as a channel with which to communicate with their electorate outside of a formal election campaign. Although based on a small legislature at a specific point in time, the findings presented here may be germane to other Westminster legislatures which share many of the same characteristics.

Timing of the study

The timing of this study is deliberate; a conscious decision was made to situate the study outside of an election campaign. During an election campaign, when MPs are typically electioneering, they are vying for electors' attention and convincing the constituency of the merits of voting for them on election day (Dimitrova & Matthes 2018). This longitudinal study was conducted during the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), in a non-election period. Known as the inter-electoral period, this is a time when in "between-election democracy" is practiced and when "normal", "everyday" political conversations take place (Bennet, 2010; Esaiasson & Narud, 2013).

Parliamentary studies have tended not to feature the everyday life of parliamentarians. Previous legislature research has relied excessively on a traditional institutionalist approach (Hay, 2002). Brabham (2015) observed that research to date has also tended to be fixated on elections. A significant body of work about social media use in an electoral context already exists. See, for example, Anstead & O'Loughlin, 2015; Bossetta, 2018; Stier et al., 2018. As Highfield (2016) noted, elections and their associated campaigns represent a specific high point of interest in politics and have differing logics for political engagement, perhaps because, when compared to the rollercoaster ride of an election campaign the day-to-day working life of MPs may seem a bit pedestrian.

Crewe (2021) observed from her ethnographic and anthropological studies of the Houses of Lords and Commons over many years, just "how thoroughly obscured the full story about our Parliament is from public view" (p. 19). In another ethnographic study of the UK Parliament, Geddes (2019) observed that "ordinariness" does not rate highly in the attention stakes of scholars. As he explained: "We do not notice the everyday as in some way politically significant or relevant for political analysis precisely because it is perceived to be typical, routine, settled — perhaps even boring, unremarkable, mundane." (Geddes, 2019, p. 15). But, the everyday is only ordinary or unremarkable insofar it is interpreted in that way (Geddes, 2019). Perhaps this lack of interest in parliamentarians' everyday work practices can be attributed to the fact that they are usually non-controversial and hidden in plain sight. However, examining this time period does have some advantages. For one, during this everyday period, constituency communication can be more easily distinguished from the party-political campaigning (Auel & Umit, 2018, p. 732). Therefore, the study of everyday social media use is important and should not be disregarded simply because of academia's preoccupation with an electoral and campaign focus (Brabham, 2015; Highfield, 2016; Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014). A sound body of work about social media use in an electoral context already exists—see, for example, Anstead & O'Loughlin, 2015; Bossetta, 2018; Broersma & Graham, 2012; Ross & Bürger, 2014; Ross, Fountaine, & Comrie, 2015; Stier, et al., 2018.

Definitions

In addition to the inclusion of a glossary of parliamentary terms it was felt it was necessary and important to define some of the key terms used throughout the dissertation and provide an explanation as to the rationale in approach to defining the phenomenon of social media. See Appendix A. For clarity, some decisions regarding the disambiguation of key concepts and the stylistics applied have also been documented in this section.

Elites

Throughout this study, reference is made to “elites” and “non-elites”. Non-elites refer to ordinary citizens. Lilleker (2003) defined political elites to mean those with close proximity to power or policy making who are in a position to assert political influence. This accords with usage of the term in other studies, including (Lilleker, 2003; Mikecz, 2012; Petkov & Kaoullas, 2016). Research based on elites studies the characteristics of MPs and other holders of leadership positions in powerful public institutions and private organisations (Dexter, 2006; Higley & Burton 2006; Higley, Deacon, & Smart, 1975). Typically, these individuals are distinguished by their regular participation in, and influence on, the strategic political decision-making that shapes a society (Hoffmann-Lange, 2007, p. 910). The term can be traced back to Habermas who used the term “governing elites” to reference the feudal powers of the past, expressed through the notions of hierarchy, tradition, and respect for authority (McKee, 2005). It also refers to political actors.

Reference will also be made to members of Parliament (MPs), legislators, politicians and parliamentarians. While “member of Parliament” (MP) is the formal descriptor for the profession, the other terms are used interchangeably, although there is a subtle difference between being described as a “parliamentarian” and a “politician” (Western Australia. Legislative Assembly. Public Accounts Committee, 2011, Appendix 1, p. 17).

Information behaviour

Frequent use will also be made of the phrase “information behaviour”, a field of information science research that seeks to understand the way people search for and use information (Neill, 1992; Wilson, 1981). It is an umbrella term used to describe human interaction with information (Bates, 2010). Information behaviour examines and tries to understand how people avoid,

manage, seek, retrieve, use and serendipitously encounter information (Greifeneder, 2014; Pettigrew, Fidel & Bruce, 2001). Wilson (2000) described information behaviour as "the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information-seeking, and information use" (p. 249). Fisher, Erdelez and McKechnie (2005) conceptualised information behaviour as including "how people need, seek, manage, give and use information in different contexts" (p. xix). In this study a broad definition of information behaviour is applied to better understand the way in which participants use and interact with information on social media to communicate with their electorate.

Internet or internet?

The word for the globally interconnected network of computers known as the internet is sometimes written with a capital "I". Throughout this thesis, the word will be used in a non-capitalised way and follows the convention by Lindgren (2017) that the internet is incorporated into the lives of people in a way similar to radio (not Radio) and television (not Television).

Motivations

In this study the term motivations refer to the factors influencing individuals' decisions to adopt (potentially use) or use (continued use) social media. Potential adopters typically evaluate an innovation on its relative advantages (the perceived efficiencies gained relative to current tools or procedures), its compatibility with pre-existing systems, its complexity or difficulty to learn, its trialability or testability, its potential for reinvention (using the tool for initially unintended purposes), and its observed effects. These qualities are subjective and interconnected, but are often judged as a whole. (Rogers, 2003).

Parliament and legislature

Parliament sits at the apex of the Westminster system of government (Arklay & Laurie, 2019). Broadly defined, parliaments are any national, regional or local body in which elected politicians sit and within which people are represented, laws are made and/ or governments are held to account (Crewe, 2021, p. 9). In use in England at least since 1275, the term "parliament" was used by Edward I to describe a council meeting with the most powerful nobles of the kingdom (Phillips, 2014, p. 22). Derived from the old French word *parlement*, the term comes from a Latin word meaning "to discuss" or "speak" (Phillips, 2015).

Following the lead of UK parliamentary scholar, Dr Emma Crewe, the lowercase word "parliaments" is used in a more general sense and as an umbrella term. "Parliament" with a capital is used when it relates to a specific parliament. This accords with the application of the term by Geddes (2019) in a study of the House of Commons. For instance, throughout this thesis, "Parliament" refers to the institution of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), or a specific time period of a parliament, unless stated otherwise. The terms parliament and legislature will be used interchangeably.

In Western Australia, a "parliament" is also the period of parliamentary time between one general election and the next. Each parliament is listed numerically. This study refers to the Thirty-eight Parliament which covered the period 6 November 2008 to 30 January 2013, and subsequent to a state general election on 9 March 2013, the Thirty-ninth Parliament, which was constituted on 11 April 2013 and ran until 30 January 2017.

Difference between parliament and government/executive government

Confusion abounds as to the differences between the parliament and government (Robbins, 2014). Parliament includes not only government members but also the opposition, minor parties and independents, whereas only the ministers could properly be described as the government (also known as cabinet or the executive government). However, in practice, the government is considered to be those cabinet ministers plus their party colleagues on the backbenches. Although the government of the day makes important decisions, these must be approved by the parliament. Throughout this thesis the terms government and executive government will be used interchangeably.

Social media

Oft-cited danah boyd (2015), (the author's name is deliberately styled in lowercase at the request of the author, see http://www.danah.org/name.html) stated that "[s]ocial media is a phenomenon, not the sum of the term's parts. … it refers to a set of tools, practices, and ideologies that emerged after the dot-com crash" (p. n. p.). It has often been used to describe the collection of software that enables individuals and communities to gather, communicate, share, and in some cases collaborate or play (Gauntlett, 2011). Social media is characterised by a "making and doing culture" (p. 4). It represents the convergence of co-creation and "content sharing, public communication and interpersonal connection" (Burgess, Marwick & Poell, 2018, p. 1). Alternatively, as Meikle and Young (2012) put it, typically social media "manifest a convergence between personal communication (to be shared one-to-one) and public media (to be shared with nobody in particular" (p. 68). In other words social media provide a way to "share, to co-operate, with one another, and to take collective action, all outside the framework of traditional institutions and organisations" (Shirky, 2008, pp. 20-1). Throughout this study, the singular is used to refer to social media in general and the plural if the reference is specifically to social media as a range of platforms. The phrase "social media platforms" will

be used to refer to online loci in which users can contribute, inform, be informed, and network with others (such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter). This aligns with the definition used by Klinger and Svensson (2016, p. 24).

It is also worth noting that there is a large body of research into the historical development of the internet Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, however delving into that in detail was outside the remit of this study. See, for example, DiNucci, 1999; Naughton, 2012.

Polymedia approach

Previous studies of social media have tended to concentrate on specific platforms (Fuchs, 2017). This study followed Miller et al., (2016) in adopting a theory of polymedia in its approach to the subject matter. Polymedia shifts the attention to the micro-workings of mediated communication rather than the platforms themselves (Madianou & Miller, 2013; Madianou, 2020, p. 77). It recognises an inability for one social media platform or media type to be fully understood in isolation. According to Fuchs (2021b), it is not a coincidence that the rise of these individualistically designed platforms is commensurate with the demise of publically funded services, spaces and media. As such, Miller et al., (2016) espoused that the platforms should be considered relative to each other.

Even as early as 2007, pioneering work by boyd and Ellison (2007) noted the differentials in the functionality and intentionality of the platforms. More recently, there has been a proliferation of highly protean platforms. These latter platforms do not particularly align with the affordances of earlier ones, in that their content changes rapidly, they are not easily searchable, persistent or even spreadable (Miller et al., 2016, p. 10). For instance, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter are built around individual profiles and are based on the

accumulation of reputations via “likes”, “favourites”, “retweets”, the number of “followers” and “friends”.

Moreover, this study took the view that it was the MPs’ attitudes, perceptions and views about the phenomenon of social media and their information behaviour that was significant, as opposed to the platforms themselves. The focus was not on the social media platforms per se, but rather on recording the MPs’ everyday communication practices with their constituents and their related information behaviours. Given the unpredictable and ever-evolving information ecosystem in which parliamentarians dwell, it was important that research of this nature occurred so these important and overlooked and undocumented insights were captured (Graham & Dutton, 2019).

Study setting

To situate the study, some detail will now be provided about the study setting, including an overview of parliamentary democracy in Western Australia. Expansion of the British Empire resulted in the Westminster system of parliament, or variants of it, being exported all over the world, including to Western Australia (Dunleavy, Park & Taylor, 2018). From its beginnings as the Swan River Colony of free settlers under the Captain James Stirling in 1829, Western Australia transitioned to a parliamentary democracy (Curthoys & Martens, 2013; Murray & Thomson, 2013; Pendal & Black, 2004). Western Australia is a liberal or representative democracy (Summers, Robbins & Fenna, 2014). This means that citizens vote for representatives, who frame legislation and serve to form its government (Phillips et al., 1998; Phillips, 2015).

The Westminster convention of responsible government refers to the process in which the executive and the government are held accountable to the parliament (Galligan & Brenton,

2015). Governments in such a system do not have an indefinite lease on power as elections make governments answerable to voters (Fenna, 2014). Regular elections ensure that any government that has not earned the confidence of voters can be removed by them (Jones, 2020). In Western Australia state general elections are held every four years (Black, 2018).

While the bicameral or two-house system, which includes the lower house and upper house, also originated in Great Britain, it was invariably adapted to suit local circumstances (Phillips, 2015, p. 15). This was legislated for, and taken together, the *Constitution Act* 1889 *(*CA 1889) and *Constitution Acts Amendment Act* 1899 (CAAA 1899) set out the basic elements of parliamentary government for Western Australia. Scant on detail, it follows the tradition in the United Kingdom where the constitutional laws rely on conventions or traditional practice that have evolved over centuries, rather than on written laws (Western Australia. Commission on Government, 1996, p. 35). The CA 1889 vested the legislative power of the state of Western Australia in the legislature to make laws for the "peace, order and good Government of the colony of Western Australia and its dependencies" (s. 2.1). It stipulated that the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA) consist of Her Majesty, the Queen, (represented by the Governor) the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. All three were to work together to execute the work of the parliament. By convention, cabinet members must be elected to the parliament (Fenna, 2014). By tradition, ministers tend to be concentrated in the Legislative Assembly where government is formed. Each of these institutionalist features impact the manner in which individual MPs, and MPs as a collective, execute their role as elected representatives (Black, 1991).

The Legislative Council or "upper house" of the PoWA is also referred to as the "house of review" as it plays an important role in scrutinising and reviewing legislation. It also critically reviews the operations of the government of the day, holding them to account on behalf of the

people of Western Australia (Phillips, 2015, p. 18). A member of the Legislative Council (MLC) is elected for a fixed term of four years beginning on 22 May following a general election. MLCs are elected by proportional representation using the single transferrable vote in multi-member regions (Dunleavy, 2018, pp. 69-70; McAllister & Makkai, 2018; Miragliotta, Murray, & Harbord, 2019). Legislation passed in 2005 (and effective from 22 May 2009) increased the size of the Legislative Council from 34 Members to 36 members. Each of the six multi-member regions returns six MLCs each (Phillips, 2015, p. 21).

The Legislative Assembly or "lower house" determines which party, or coalition of parties, forms government following an election (Fenna, 2014). Through a preferential voting system, eligible voters in Western Australia elect one person to represent them from the electoral district in which they live. A key principle of this system is the need for the successful candidate to secure an absolute majority of the votes for the district (or electorate) after preferences have been distributed (Phillips, 2015, p. 20). The 59 elected members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) form the Legislative Assembly for a maximum of four years (Phillips, 2015, p. 19).

Western Australian electoral system

The electoral system under which representatives are elected to the legislature is a centrally important aspect of any polity (Papp, 2020). Representation of and accountability to the people are acknowledged as the two principles which underpin any democratic government. As noted by the Commission on Government (1996), without a fair and representative electoral system, all aspects of the parliamentary process are undermined, the legitimacy of parliamentary

scrutiny is weakened and the people's ability to pass judgement on their representatives is impaired (p. 58).

A detailed treatise of the evolution of Western Australia's electoral laws and history is outside the remit of this study. For a more detailed treatment of Western Australia's electoral system see, Beckingham (2004); Macphail (2008); Phillips (2013); and Robinson (1998). The aim here is to inform the reader about the process by which members of PoWA are elected, and to contextualise how this may impact their lifeworlds, information behaviours and constituent communications, so it is worth noting some of the nuances of Western Australia's electoral system for context.

For instance, balancing geography and demography has been particularly challenging when drawing electoral boundaries in Western Australia given its sheer vastness (Phillips, 2013, p. 41). Western Australia comprises a land mass of 2 527 013 square kilometres, or about a third of the Australian continent (GeoScience Australia, 2021). For electoral purposes, Western Australia is divided into metropolitan and regional areas. In Western Australia, a metropolitan-MP (city based) is defined as one who represents a seat in the: East Metropolitan Region, the North Metropolitan Region, or the South Metropolitan Region. A regional-MP (country, rural or non-metropolitan-MP) is one that represents a seat in the Agricultural Region, the Mining and Pastoral Region, or the South West Region (Coleman, Broadbent, & Moore, 2017). Copies of the electoral maps illustrating this can be found in Appendix B.

This underscores the controversial differences in the way city and country people are elected and represented Western Australia. Since 1890, a system has endured where rural votes were worth nearly twice as much as metropolitan votes (Appleyard, 1981; Kelly, 2012; Phillips, 1991). Even subsequent to the legislative reforms that came into effect for the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012), country votes are still worth more than their city equivalents. The

electoral laws currently in force (as at June 2021) continue to make allowances for geographically larger electorates on the basis that they play a special role in the economic prosperity of the state (Appleyard, 1981; Davies & Tonts, 2007; Phillips, 2013).

Composition of the Parliament of Western Australia 2008-2017

Parliamentary, electoral and political processes are complex, nuanced and interconnected, and have a profound impact on the role of a parliamentarian and all that that entails, including their information lifeworld. Therefore, the composition of the Parliaments that were the subject of this research are also worthy of comment. The background serves as a basis from which to contextualise the study's findings which follow in some detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

The Thirty-eighth Parliament was formed consequent upon the state general election for Western Australia on 6 September 2008, when 59 members were elected to the Legislative Assembly and 36 members were elected to the Legislative Council. The election was significant for a number of reasons, but importantly it resulted in a "hung parliament". A hung parliament refers to an election result where no one party holds an absolute majority of seats and therefore do not have an automatic mandate to form government in their own right (Griffith, 2010). After lengthy and protracted discussions, ultimately the centre-right opposition, the Liberal Party formed a coalition government with the National Party, with the support of three independent MPs (Griffith, 2010).

The 2008 election was also noteworthy for another reason in that it was the first election held under the principles of what was termed "one vote, one value" in an attempt to overcome the malapportionment entrenched in the Western Australian electoral system (Black, 2018; Kelly, 2006; Rydon, 1968). This was to directly impact the representation role of members elected to the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Parliaments as electoral power shifted for the first time in

more than a century. Not until 2005, when the PoWA enacted its “one vote, one value” legislative reforms was vote weighting removed in the Legislative Assembly (Black, 2018; Phillips, 2006; Phillips, 2013). As at early 2021, some malapportionment still existed in the Legislative Council.

The Thirty-eighth Parliament was prorogued on 14 December 2012, extinguishing the life of the parliament (Black, 2018). It became the second longest continuous parliament in the history of responsible government in Western Australia (Phillips & Kerr, 2013, p. 303). At previous elections, the government was able to choose the date of an election, but in PoWA in 2011, fixed four-year terms were legislated for (Phillips, 2013). Consequently, the 2013 election was the first held following the introduction of fixed date elections. It was conducted on new electoral boundaries, though the number of members and the distribution of electorates between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, remained unchanged (Green, 2013). The election result meant that the Liberal Party no longer had to rely on the National Party for support in order to form government (Green, 2013). The Thirty-ninth Parliament officially opened, and members were sworn-in on 11 April 2013 (Black, 2018). Despite many changes in the state and the role of government since the 1890s, the constitutional structure of Western Australia has remained largely unchanged (Harvey, 2013). Western Australia has benefited from a stable and consistent system of government for more than one hundred years.

Outline of thesis

The thesis comprises seven chapters. In this chapter, the research question and contextual information about the study setting are presented. The chapter also provides an overview of the research methods applied and provides some definitions.

A review of the relevant background and literature pertaining to parliamentarians' information behaviour and social media is contained in Chapter 2. This chapter expands on the focus and context of the research and examines the nature of information in a parliamentary setting, thus providing the basis for a conceptual foundation for this research. Chapter 3 delves further into the academic literature and seeks to explain the social media phenomenon as it relates to political elites and their use and non-use of the medium. Chapter 4 reports on the selected methodology for this study. It specifies the design and implementation of the research and the design of the survey instruments (questionnaires and interviews) used in this study, the selection of the sample, survey procedures and protocols, the collection of data, and the analysis of data. The results are presented in Chapter 5 in tables and interspersed with supporting comments and quotes from the study participants. The tables were created in Microsoft Excel based on the quantitative exported from the two online questionnaires. The qualitative data referred to in this chapter emanated from respondents' comments in the online questionnaires and also from the face to face interviews with the MPs.

In Chapter 6 the findings were considered alongside the theoretical frameworks and previous research. Contexualised by the fusion of the works of Habermas and Chatman, and the TIW, both the quantitative and qualitative data were analysed and organised into broad themes. These themes were guided by the research question and the objectives of the study and underpinned by the review of the literature on the subject. Chapter 7 presents the conclusions and recommendations emanating from the research. This chapter also discusses the challenges and limitations of the research and suggests how further research might contribute to understanding social media use by MPs.

Chapter conclusion

The background to the subject of this research is contained in this chapter. The purpose of this section was to provide an overview of the study. It also provided context for the study. The purpose of the study was outlined, as was the significance of the study. In this chapter, the research was introduced within the context of its setting. The chapter presented the research questions which underpin the study and described the significance of undertaking the research. A brief background comprising current literature on parliamentary representation, social media, and information behaviour was included to explain to what extent MPs use social media to communicate with their constituents on an everyday basis, that is, outside of an election campaign.

CHAPTER 2: Study foundation and framework

There are not two MPs identical in temperaments, background or aspiration and neither are there any two constituencies alike. However, there are two binding threads which run through the lives of all MPs regardless other of other considerations. First, the common experience of running the gauntlet of election and second, the incessant and relentless need for information. (Shephard, 1991, p. 25).

Chapter objectives

This chapter establishes the study's foundation and explains the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning the research. It also describes and situates the study in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA). Some practical issues of MPs' information lifeworlds are also addressed, including introducing the concept of parliamentary representation, explaining the symbiotic and multi-faceted MP-constituent relationship, and the importance of information to MPs in the execution of their parliamentary duties. Particular emphasis is placed on MPs' constituency role.

To contextualise the analysis of social media in a parliamentary information studies context, this study draws theoretically on the concept of the theory of information worlds (TIW). The TIW explores information behaviour in terms of all of the intertwined levels of society—from the small worlds of everyday life, the mediating social institutions, concerns of an entire society, to the political and economic forces that shape society: levels that constantly shape, interact with, and reshape one another (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 162). The TIW draws on works from a wide range of disciplines and ties together elements of many social theories. TIW allows for a richer understanding of the intersections between information and the many different cultural contexts within which it is used, from the macro to the micro. It offers a way

to expand on an understanding of information behaviour in a real world setting (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011).

Importance of information to MPs

Information is what brings "meaning, purpose, order, and predictability to a social world" (Chatman, 1997, Pendleton & Chatman, 1998, p. 749). The chapter's opening quote by Shephard (1991), demonstrates that despite all their differences, what MPs have in common is an "incessant and relentless need for information" (p. 25). An informed electorate is one of the important safeguards of a democracy (Stolle & Hooge, 2005). Without it, a parliament cannot fulfil its responsibilities to monitor and criticise the government of the day (Cowdell, 1998; Warhurst et al., 1992, p. 13). Also, widely acknowledged as beneficial to democracy is having active civic engagement (Dalton, 2019; Milner, 2002; Shaw, 2012). The rationale for the link between the opinions of citizens and the functioning of a democracy is the public sphere (Lutz & Toit, 2014). This will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter, but briefly, the public sphere refers to a physical or virtual space where the public can meet to discuss, debate and deliberate public affairs (Lutz & Toit, 2014). Lying between the state and society, it constitutes an essential component of socio-political organisation. It provides a form of legitimacy and accountability to a government and a space for citizens to participate in public affairs (Lutz & Toit, 2014).

MPs work in what can be best described as an unbounded information environment (Galtrud & Byström, 2019). They have to disseminate information from the parliament to the electorate, as well as acquire information from the constituency. Information flow is non-linear and is both bottom up, and top down (Bruce et al., 2014; Johnson, 2014). Elected representatives need information from citizens (individuals and groups) about the issues they are expected to legislate and regulate (Flew, 2018; Redlawsk, 2019) and information is needed by electors so

that they can make informed choices about who they vote for to represent them in elections (Brett, 2019; Coleman, Taylor & van de Donk, 1999). Thanks in part to digital technology, and in particular the mobile phone, information has become so pervasive that it can be characterised as one of the definitive features of this century (Feng & Agosta, 2017; Kneidinger-Müller, 2017; Sunstein, 2020). Information has been described as:

> … the intellectual equivalent of our food. And just as our eating habits and nutritional intake can be good or bad, with concomitant good and bad effects on our physical health, so can the quality of information we acquire, and the effectiveness with which we process it, affect the quality and effectiveness of our intellectual health (Ford, 2015, p. 11).

Information is especially important as liberal democracies worldwide grapple with ways in which political elites produce information for citizens and citizens consume political information (Stolle & Micheletti, 2013). This has fundamentally changed in the past decade—the period in which this study is set (Karpf, 2020; Persily & Tucker, 2020, p. 8; Pickard, 2020). We reside in an "age of social warming", which refers to the unintended consequences of technological advances where convenience features prominently in our lifeworld (Arthur, 2021). According to Wheeler and Muwanguzi (2021) "[t]hese evolving and compelling circumstances make the need to examine and understand the intersections of politics and information exigent" (p. 26).

A number of studies have examined the everyday information needs of average citizen groups (Agada, 1999), however, the information behaviour literature is scant when it comes to contemporary examples of Australian legislators generally, and Western Australian MPs specifically. Furthermore, the extant literature tends to be dated and disproportionately related to parliamentary libraries or based on overseas parliaments. See, for example, Marcella, Carcary & Baxter (1999); Miskin & Missingham (2008); Missingham (2008); Mostert &

Ocholla (2005); Orton, Marcella & Baxter (2000); Thapisa (1996); and Tillotson (1985, 1991). Yet, how and why, MPs use information is important and is worthy of further research (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). Parliamentarians inhabit a complex information-and-communication environment (Narayan, 2013). It is important then to gain a practical understanding of the inseparable nature of politics and information. The interplay between MPs and information is therefore significant given that, as Taylor (1991) points out, a political decision is often "a compromise among competing interests, ideologies, constituencies and personalities" (p. 240). Consequently, MPs give different weight and assign different values to information depending on political and partisan considerations (Galtrud & Byström, 2019). Their information lifeworld can be competitive between parties but also amongst MPs themselves when jockeying for positions and leadership power plays (Crewe, 2021; Walgrave & Dejaeghere, 2017).

While there is little research pertaining to Western Australian MPs' information behaviour, an early study of information seeking by legislators in the US Congress found that they translated information on societal needs and desires into public policy by evaluating information on potential options (Frantzich, 1982). Also, that political decision making was highly value laden and information dense and tended not to value conventional objectivity (Frantzich, 1982). In their study of the information needs of members of Parliament, Barker and Rush (1970) made the distinction between two types of information: those about situations and facts about people's opinions of those situations (p. 30).

However, since that book was written, over fifty years ago, the information ecology has changed considerably. Ubiquitous social media have become the vehicles through which political elites and non-elites are gaining an understanding of the symbiotic relationship between politics and information (Wheeler and Muwanguzi, 2021, p. 24). Barclay (2018)

reminds of us of a time, in the mid-to-late 1990s when internet adoption was not yet widespread, that the "average person's hunting ground for information was located entirely in the non-digital world and, by the standards of the twenty-first century, was rather limited" (p. x). This generation, including future-parliamentarians, is growing up in a high-choice information environment (Andersen et al., 2020). Digital media are now a part of the taken-for-granted social and cultural fabric of learning, play, and social and political communication (Collin & McCormack, 2019).

Possessing correct information about political matters is a logical prerequisite of electoral and other forms of political participation for a well-informed electorate (Stolle & Hooge, 2005). It is now over 100 years since Lippman (1920) argued that "the health of society depends upon the quality of the information it receives" (p. 48). He pointed out that "[t]he quack, the charlatan, the jingo, and the terrorist, can flourish only where the audience is deprived of independent access to information" (p. 18). A century on, and increasingly, the electorate is served an informational diet comprising sensationalistic news coverage and clickbait instead of informative, evidence-based, fact-checked news (Johnson, 2012; Pickard, 2019).

Theoretical and conceptual framework

Having established that information is integral to MPs, this section outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning the study, that of information behaviour. According to Spink (2010), information behaviour is an evolutionary instinct, noting that for as long as humans have been able to harness their cognitive aptitude to do so, they have used their information behaviour abilities to aid in their survival. Moreover, that information behaviour evolved in response to the need by early humans to benefit from information that was not readily available to them. This involved the development of processes such as information sense making, foraging, seeking, organising and using information which benefited early

humans to such an extent that it emerged as a genetically favoured trait (Spink, 2010, p. 3). To Heinström (2010), "the implicit message of information theories and models appears to be that information behaviour is a rational, planned, problem-solving process, where a gap in knowledge triggers a conscious search for information" (p. 1). Information acquisition is viewed as something purposeful and goal-directed, with an underlying assumption that people act on an information need. This applies in some situations, but in many cases the information-seeking process is spontaneous, dynamic and changeable. It is also highly dependent on the context and the individual performing the task (Cole, 2013; Ellis & Haugan, 1997, p. 399; Heinström, 2010, p. 1).

This study draws on the theory of information worlds (TIW). The TIW serves as a theoretical driver both in Library and Information Science (LIS) and across other disciplines. It allows for a richer understanding of the intersections between information and the many different cultural contexts within which it is used, from the macro to the micro. It offers a way to expand on an understanding of information behaviour (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 162). Theoretical studies of everyday information seeking by Chatman (1992), Dervin, (1976), and Savolainen (1995) have emphasised the need to understand everyday information behaviour from a person-centered perspective and also reflects a shift towards an increased use of qualitative research methods (Bates, 2004).

Theory of information worlds

The Theory of Information Worlds (TIW) explores information behaviour in terms of all of the intertwined levels of society—from the small worlds of everyday life, the mediating social institutions, concerns of an entire society, to the political and economic forces that shape society: levels that constantly shape, interact with, and reshape one another (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 162). TIW draws on works from a wide range of disciplines and ties together elements

of many social theories. Arguably, the largest contributors to the foundation of the theory are Jürgen Habermas (1989) and Elfreda Chatman (1991). Habermas was interested in the largest social structures, while Chatman was most interested in the smallest social units (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 162). Also influencing this study is the work of Reijo Savolainen (1995) with its emphasis on the significance of everyday life and its relationship with information behaviours. Savolainen's (1995) Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) model acknowledges that each individual has a culturally and socially determined and internalised system of perception and evaluation which impacted by "values, conceptions, the current phase of life" and the "material, social and cultural and cognitive capital owned by the individual" (Savolainen, 2005, p. 146). Therefore, information behaviour is intrinsically socially embedded, and the values of information are socially determined (Burnett, 2009, p. 696). Within Chatman's small worlds, the day-to-day information activities are organised and defined by a recognisable set of normative and information behaviours (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010, p. 21). This included the information-rich online environments that are now found in abundance. This meant that the TIW could usefully be applied to the virtual communities active in information-oriented social spaces to explain the place of information and the complexity of information behaviours (Burnett et al., 2001). This study adds to that growing body of scholarship.

The TIW comprises five interconnected concepts: Social Norms, Social Types, Information Value, Information Behaviour, and Boundaries. The concepts of Social Norms, Social Types, Information Value (Worldview) and Information Behaviour are derived directly from the work of Chatman (Burnett et al., 2001). The concept of Boundaries is a new addition to the TIW.

Social Norms refers to those agreed-upon observable behaviours that are common and accepted within a world. These norms may govern behaviours such as dress styles or

appropriate modes of interaction. They may range from highly formalised explicit norms (including laws, acceptable use policies, etc.) to often unspoken norms governing more implicit patterns of behaviour, which must be inferred through observation. (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010).

Social Types refers to perceptions of the roles played by individuals within a world. Like social norms, social types may be explicit, and defined by clearly stated positions an individual hold in a world. Or they could be implicit, emerging from the ways others interact with an individual. For example, an individual may fulfil the social type of a leader either by holding a defined position (e.g. a parliamentary position such as, Leader of the House or Whip) or simply because other members of the world simply tend to defer to that individual for guidance without formal recognition of leadership (e.g. a factional powerbroker) (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010).

Information Value designates an agreed-upon hierarchy of the importance of different types of information within a world. It includes a spectrum from high to low (or no) value and delineates the variety of ways in which value can be measured (e.g. economic vs. artistic value). For example, one world may consider information about politics to be of extremely high value, while another world may care little for political information. Because perceptions about value are often contested, there may be disagreements within a world about degrees of value, and interactions between different worlds can often take the form of conflicts about information value (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010).

Information Behaviour refers to the full range of normative activities and practices related to information within a world. These include information seeking, informal information exchange, information hoarding, sharing, archiving, collecting, avoiding etc. It also refers to practices and beliefs related to appropriate or inappropriate information sources within a world. For example, one world may particularly value libraries as information sources, and thus information seeking within them is a desirable behaviour, while another world may emphasise

interpersonal information sharing as the preferred form of information acquisition (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010).

Boundaries are those places at which information worlds come into contact, across which information may (or may not) cross. Boundaries may be permeable or impermeable, virtual or physical, etc. Worlds may be contiguous (as in two nations that share a border), embedded (as in a state that is embedded within a larger nation), or overlapping. They may also be agreed-upon or contested, or they may be explicitly or implicitly defined. The boundaries may vary across worlds (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010).

Social norms and types are important in identifying certain individuals' social roles within specific information worlds. The lens of the TIW is useful for understanding and explaining how members of different small and information worlds engage in similar or dissimilar information behaviours according to their information values. By considering boundaries, it can also reveal where individuals interact with the different small and information worlds within a larger lifeworld. Taken together they complete the concept of the information world, created from small worlds and lifeworlds (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010).

The findings of the study are discussed through the lens of each of these sometimes, overlapping elements. This will be detailed further in Chapter 6.

Parliamentary information bubbles

In explaining the concept of the TIW, Jaeger and Burnett (2010, p. 37) used the metaphor of a sink full of bubbles. Given that parliament and parliamentary processes are often described as living in a bubble, the explanation was apt. In the description proffered by Jaeger and Burnett (2010), in the sink full of bubbles, each individual bubble represents a small world with its own social norms, social types, information value and information behaviours. Within each bubble,

the members of that small world have established the ways and means from which information is accessed, understood and exchanged. However, the edges of each bubble also touched the edges of many of the other bubbles. These boundaries between the soap bubbles represent points of contact between different small worlds.

Also, few individuals exist only in one small world. It is more likely that they form a part of many other small worlds, such as those including friends, family, co-workers, a political party, a faction, etc. Therefore, where one bubble touches another bubble, exists a boundary between two small worlds. Furthermore, new bubbles are constantly being created as the soap is mixed. As a consequence, information flows through these boundaries via people who are members of these two worlds, through channels of communication, or through interaction between members of two small worlds in a place where members of different small worlds are exposed to other perspectives, such as via social media. As information flows through boundaries between small worlds, the information is valued, treated, understood, and used differently in each of the small worlds according to their respective social norms. Therefore, the same piece of information can play a different role within each bubble (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p. 38).

Collectively the bubbles also constitute a sink full of bubbles. If the sink is thought of as being comparable to the lifeworld, then the way in which the group of bubbles treats information will shape how the information is treated as a whole. As the information moves between bubbles, even more small worlds will likely decide how to treat this information, thus creating an overall perception of the information across the lifeworld. Groups of bubbles building a collectively shared value for the information creates meso-level information worlds (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p. 38).

Also impacting how the lifeworld shapes how the small worlds treat information are a range of influences, including public sphere institutions (such as the Legislative Council or the

Legislative Assembly) which exist specifically to ensure that information continues to move between bubbles and that members of each small world are exposed to other small worlds. According to Jaeger and Burnett (2010) in the sink metaphor, these public sphere organisations act like sides of the sink, keeping the bubbles from floating out of contact with one another. In contrast, certain influential small worlds, such as those possessing political power or those who control the media, for example, can apply their power to push back against the collective small worlds. Akin to turning on the faucet over the sink, in doing so, this enforces a minority perception on the majority. For instance, a study by the Pew Research Center (2020) illustrated this. It found that to be the case globally on Twitter where the "engaged minority" had created an outsized share of the content (Pew Research Center, 2020, p. 1). Finally, like additional soap being added to the sink, technology act as a way for small worlds to connect in new ways and to reach other small worlds that would not otherwise touch their boundaries. The internet and social media represent examples of this (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010).

Small worlds are shaped by all of these larger influences, but they also have the power collectively to define the parameters of the external influences. Therefore, according to Jaeger and Burnett's (2010) explanation, the sink and all its bubbly contents represent an information world in the largest sense. In addition, many smaller and intermediate information worlds also exist within the sink as related clusters of bubbles that are tied together in some familial, community, professional, educational, social, cultural, political, geographical, technological, or other means (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010).

They also used the bubbles in the sink metaphor to distinguish the TIW from its antecedents; Chatman looked exclusively at individual bubbles, disregarding everything else in the sink. Habermas, on the other hand, only was interested in the sink, not its contents. The TIW, however, attempts to account for all of the elements at work and is therefore a useful theoretical

basis from which to explore the concept of parliamentarians' information lifeworlds and their interactions with their constituents via social media (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010).

Habermas: The public sphere, information lifeworlds

In 1962, Jürgen Habermas published "*Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit"*, a critical investigation and analysis of the public sphere in civil society (Habermas, 1989). It was translated to English and has proven to be an influential model for understanding media and communication processes, especially in the area of politics (Bruns & Highfield, 2016, p. 98). Central to Habermas' work is the concept of the public sphere, an idealised "space within a society", essential to the functioning of a democracy, which is "independent both of state power and/or corporate influence, within which information can freely flow and debate on matters of public, civic concern can openly proceed" (Corner, 1995, p. 42).

In a liberal democracy there is clear distinction between the state and society, between the public sphere and the private sphere (Fenna & Manwaring, 2021). According to Habermas (1989) the public sphere refers to the communicative space where citizens can exchange political ideas without interference from the state. In tracing the history of the public sphere from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, Habermas (1989) argued that the ideal public sphere had been subject to corruption by commercialism, especially in terms of corporatised media interests (p. 17). Habermas (2010) was of the view that despite this, the media could continue to serve the public sphere provided that they remained "independent" and the state protected "the quality press" (p. 136).

The concept of the public sphere has been extensively defined and applied in various ways (Ferree et al., 2002). It has also been the subject of scholarly debate and conjecture in light of contemporary journalistic practices (Bennett & Pfetsch, 2018; Calhoun, 1992; Schudson,

2018). Navigating the public sphere is multifaceted, complex and the "cartography of the political sphere is opaque" (Coleman, 2017, p. 89). As such, an exhaustive review of this theoretical construct falls outside the remit of this study. Rather, the intention was to focus only on the particular aspects of the theoretical framework that are relevant to this research.

Habermas (1989) asserted that democracy was not possible without public participation and critique and this had to occur in public forums to be effective (Habermas, 1984, 1989, 1992, 1996). Central to this was the concept of the public sphere. The phrase, "the public sphere" has ballooned into a "God-term of democratic discourse", representing the ideal (Gitlin, 1998, p. 168). At its most basic, the public sphere is conceived of as the "sphere of private people who come together as a public" (Habermas, 1989, p. 27). Or, as Price (1995), posited, the public sphere is "a zone for discourse which serves as a locus for the exploration of ideas and the crystallisation of a public view" (p. 24). Fundamental to the public sphere are a number of elements: open communication, access to information (the ability to be able to reach information that one is searching for) and information exchange (the ability to share information with others) (Burnett & Jaeger, 2008, pp. 3-4; Green, 2001; Murdock & Golding, 1989). It is both independent of state and corporate influence and within which information can flow freely and matters of public and civic concern can be openly debated and discussed (Corner, 1995, p. 42).

Habermas' public sphere was grounded in the public press in eighteenth century England (Burnett, Jaeger, & Thompson, 2008, p. 3). Since that time, the public sphere has evolved and is now considered to be a crucial element in the protection of civil liberties (Nerone, 1994, p. 6). Changes in information and communication technology and government policy—information access, freedom of expression and media regulation—have had a profound impact on the role of the public sphere. As information and communication technologies have become

more pervasive in everyday life, these interventions have become more sophisticated (Islin & Ruppert, 2015). This has meant that limitations are now placed on the access and exchange of social and political information by individuals and social groups (Jaeger, 2007; Rogers, 2004, & Schoenberger, 2018).

The exponential power of the mass media control of communications channels has also had an impact on the public sphere (Starr, 2004). The rise of social media has led some to posit that multiple public spheres now exist (Gibbons, 2021). With social media, citizens can now share both public and private information in new communicative spaces. Information flowing on the social media platforms, regardless of its accuracy, greatly influences political discourse and outcomes (Wheeler & Muwanguzi, 2021, p. 33).

Information lifeworlds

Another of Habermas' concepts, closely related to the public sphere, and applicable to this study, is that of an information lifeworld, which is defined as "the whole ensemble of human relations which is coordinated and reproduced" through communication practices and information exchange (Brand, 1990, p. xii). According to Habermas, a lifeworld "stands behind the back of each participant in communication" (Habermas, 1992, pp. 108-9). As Burnett and Jaeger (2008) observed, a lifeworld is the:

> … collective information and communication environment—the social tapestry—of a society, as information and communication continue to tie everything more closely together in the modern technology-driven environment (p. 4).

In contrast to the confined scale of Chatman's concept of the small world, which will be considered next, Habermas' lifeworld is expansive, and reaches across a broad swath of a

culture. It is usual for members of a "social collective" to inhabit and share a lifeworld (Habermas, 1992, p. 109). Put another way, a lifeworld can be described as:

> … that collective information and social environment that weaves together the diverse information resources, voices and perspectives of all of the members of a society. (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 166).

In stark contrast to its earlier iterations, the contemporary online information landscape with its uniquely diffuse nature enables members of small worlds to connect with one another irrespective of geographical locations and physical state. It also offers members of small worlds new perspectives, from many other small worlds, which then allows specific small worlds a forum in which to articulate their own opinions. This, according to Burnett and Jaeger (2008) "offers perhaps the greatest hope for a public sphere entity that can continue to cultivate access to and exchange of political and social information in the lifeworld, regardless of policy intrusions" (p. 9).

Habermas' vision was that within the public sphere and the lifeworld, discourse would be well reasoned and comprise effectively articulated arguments, with no place for passion and emotion. Or, as Nerone (1994) pointed out within the public sphere, "reason, not passion and not personality, must govern" (p. 5). To Habermas (1984), intrusions by governments and corporations into the public sphere were seen as the "colonisation of the lifeworld" (p. 20). In contrast, the contemporary public sphere is populated by a plethora of political actors, including politicians, political parties, political journalists, representatives from industry organisations, lobbyists, unions, environmental groups, etc. It can sometimes also include non-elites, depending on the form of democracy and the levels of participation that enables (MacNamara, Sakinofsky & Beattie, 2012, pp. 6-7). To Habermas, this has resulted in reduced access and the limited exchange of political and social information that has hindered the efficacy of the public

sphere and led to an erosion of power from the voices of the members of society (Habermas, 1996, p. 361).

Small worlds and information behaviour

Sitting at the opposite end of the information spectrum from Habermas' public sphere are the works of Elfreda Chatman, one of the most influential theoretical scholars in information behaviour (Fisher, Erdelez, & McKechnie, 2005). Chatman devised a theoretical framework to account for the ways in which people use and do not use information from within specific social contexts. Underpinning Chatman's early work was the notion of information poverty and its impact on information behaviour in small-scale social environments, which she termed "small worlds" (Chatman, 1999). To Chatman (1999), the small world is a social group in which "mutual opinions and concerns are reflected by its members" and in which the interests and activities of individual members are largely determined by the normative influences of the small world as a whole (Chatman, 1999, p. 213). Burnett and Jaeger (2008) posit that "small worlds are the social environments where individuals live and work, bonded together by shared interests, expectations and information behaviour and often economic status and geographic proximity as well" (p. [5]). Small worlds are, therefore, social constructions whose meanings and interactions are created by their members. Small worlds allow people to:

> … share a similar cultural and intellectual space. That is, those things that hold this world together include a common assessment of information worthy of attention, social norms that allow its members to approach or ignore information and behaviours that are deemed by other inhabitants to be appropriate for this world (Huotari & Chatman, 2001, p. 352).

Within a given small world, information access and exchange can occur through official access points, through channels of the public sphere, though interpersonal connections, or through

some combination of these, depending on the world's norms (Case & Given, 2016; Williamson, 1998). The pattern of one’s information behaviour is ultimately predicated on what is typical in the small world in which one dwells (Jaeger & Thompson, 2004, p. 100). It was Chatman’s (1999) contention that individual members of a small world tend to observe and follow the world's norms of information access and exchange, because such norms give definition and meaning to available information. To members of a small world, norms are perceived as natural. As such, everyday activities—including information access and exchange—are frequently taken for granted as being standard across all small worlds, even when they were unique to a specific cluster (Burnett & Jaeger, 2008, p. 5).

Chatman’s concept of the small world is neither a negative nor a positive concept, but rather a descriptive one (Thompson, 2008). It acknowledges the “small” field of concerns and interests active in specific social settings and the predictability and routines of day-to-day life within those settings (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 163). Meted at Chatman’s small world theory was a criticism that it failed to interrogate the interconnections between small worlds or the social forces of the larger world surrounding it. In other words, Chatman’s theories stopped at the boundary separating one world from another (Burnett & Jaeger, 2008, p. 7). The interactions between small worlds and the broader society within which they existed were not systematically examined by Chatman. Neither were the larger-scale interactions across multiple small worlds dealt with extensively (Burnett & Jaeger, 2008, p. 7). As a consequence of this, Chatman’s theory does not adequately account for the place of phenomena such as the mass media, and the national political discourse, nor the impact of the marketplace on the exchange of information. From a Habermasian perspective, Chatman's small world theories do not embody the concept of the public sphere and lifeworlds. On the otherhand, as Burnett and Jaeger (2008) pointed out, Habermas' concepts does not directly address the kinds of local and

contextually specific issues central to Chatman's work, even suggesting that local and personal interests may detract from larger political and social issues (p. 7).

In the increasingly technologically mediated information environment that contemporary parliamentarians inhabit, the lifeworld can therefore be best understood as the "totality of communication and information options and outlets available culture wide" (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 166). In this complex information ecosystem, the concept of the lifeworld does not focus on the specifics and contextual aspects of localised communities, unlike Chatman's concept of the small world. As Burnett and Jaeger (2011) astutely put it: "To Chatman's necessary little picture, it provides the equally necessary big picture" (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 166). This study will therefore contemplate both the big and little picture of a parliamentarian's everyday information behaviour as it relates to both Chatman's and Habermas' concepts and theories.

The fusion and fission of Chatman and Habermas

The two sets of theoretical concepts—Habermas' and Chatman's public sphere, small worlds and lifeworlds—have been subject of successful fusion in the past. Previous research by Burnett and Jaeger (2008) explored both concepts cognately based on the premise that Habermas and Chatman explored similar issues of information behaviour at different levels of society. They were of the view that the two approaches are complementary and when used in conjunction provided a better approach to explaining the access and exchange of social and political information in society (Burnett & Jaeger, 2008, p. 3). After all, both conceptualised the ways in which the access, exchange and communication of social and political information shaped society (Fulton, 2010).

As another later study by Burnett and Jaeger (2011) discovered, the concepts of both Chatman and Habermas are useful tools for analysing the social and political contexts of information behaviour. However, when considered in isolation, each can be problematic as social contexts and information behaviour are not isolated from one another (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 166). For example, Chatman rarely considered the other worlds that are to be found outside of a specific small world, whether the broader social context within which a small world exists or other small worlds, even when those multiple worlds come into contact with one another. Conversely, Habermas fails to consider how the broader lifeworld might be instantiated within, or might interact with, localised contexts and specific communities (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 166; 2008). According to Burnett and Jaeger (2008) the lifeworld and the small world share a symbiotic relationship in a rich and complex way, deeply intertwined and yet neither is reducible to the terms of the other. It is for these reasons that they are "most fruitfully considered in terms of both sets of concepts" and that the union of both the works of Habermas and Chatman complement each other (p. 7). As Burnett, Jaeger & Thompson (2008) explained:

> Information is neither isolated either inside of a small world, nor is it broadly accessible only by means of the mechanisms of the public sphere. Rather, information is one of the things that allows mediation between the local and the broader social. Examinations of information in society and in policy must take both ends of the spectrum into account. Therefore, considering the relationships between these concepts, the lifeworld can be viewed as comprising the total information and communication activities of all of the small worlds (within an individual small world and between multiple small worlds) in that society (p. 7).

The combined use of the concepts of Habermas and Chatman provides new avenues for understanding the complexities of information behaviour in a technologically-advanced and

interconnected information society (Burnett & Jaeger, 2008, p. 11). When used in conjunction with each other, and when situated in the everyday as per the works of Savolainen (1995), these theoretical concepts provide a suitable approach for accounting for the different ways people engage information in the context of their social interactions (Burnett & Jaeger, 2008; Di Fatta et al., 2016). Given the information-rich environments in which parliamentarians dwell the fusion of the works are therefore usefully applied in this study (Galtrud & Byström, 2019).

Today's public sphere, lifeworlds and small worlds

Information in the lifeworld and in small worlds is increasingly linked to the function of information and communication technologies, in terms of both the information infrastructure undergirding a society and the ways in which people use and otherwise interact with information (Gorichanaz, Latham & Wood 2018). As Zaret (2000) reminded us, in the past, the printing press helped foster the public sphere with the mass production of newspapers, petitions and pamphlets. Then, in the 1990s the introduction of the internet proved useful in facilitating information access and exchange in small worlds and lifeworlds (Abbate, 2019). Internet mediated communication is fundamentally different from that of the old media —one in which gatekeeping journalists and mass media institutions seem to play a less important role (Gerhards & Schäfer, 2010, p. 145). Therefore, a better understanding of how information access and exchange occurs, and the linkages between information behaviours in the contemporary public sphere, small worlds and lifeworlds is becoming ever more important.

Social media is another aspect of the internet in which small worlds, lifeworlds, public policy and the public sphere intersect. It has the potential to affect the information behaviours of small worlds, ultimately affecting the health of the public sphere and the discourse in the lifeworld (Boeder, 2005). According to Blumler (2018) we now inhabit a more "disrupted public sphere" in which "almost anything goes or can be said" (p. 89). Pfetsch (2018) agrees and describes it

as one in which the portrayals of political issues and policy options have been displaced by a dissonance of outlooks, opinions, voices and values. Coleman (2017) observed that digital networks have "expanded the range of voices to be heard in the public sphere" (Coleman, 2017, p. 19). Despite this, Boeder (2005) harboured the view that Habermas' public sphere was very much alive and well:

> In a sense, the public sphere has always been virtual: Its meaning lies in its abstraction. Habermas' classical argument that the public sphere is intermittently threatened by latent power structures that attempt to inhibit and control the individual is undoubtedly correct. Yet at the same time, groups and individuals can indeed accomplish change by communicative action and digital communications technology may empower them to do so (p. n. p.).

According to Habermas, the emergence of the mass press is based on the commercialisation of the participation of the masses in the public sphere. Consequently, this "extended" public sphere lost much of its original political character in favour of commercialism and entertainment and it is now much derided in the literature (Boeder, 2005, p. n. p.; Fuchs, 2014). Yet the works of Habermas (1989) that relate to the communication and exchange of information in social and political contexts continue to be applied across many disciplines, see for example, Buschman (2003, p. 41). Yet curiously, within the context of parliamentary information studies, these ideas have been insufficiently considered by the academic community. In contrast, information theorist Elfreda Chatman's works have tended to be cited in the library and information studies, but not specifically in parliamentary information studies. See: Burnett, Besant & Chatman (2001); Burnett, Jaeger, & Thompson (2008); González-Teruel & Abad-García (2018).

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, Chatman's small world theory had evolved beyond socio-economically constrained information environments and was applied to the information-rich worlds of feminist booksellers and virtual communities (Burnett, Besant, & Chatman, 2001). Given that parliamentarians inhabit an information-rich and time-poor world and live their "life in the round", Chatman's works are therefore highly relevant to this study. Chatman (1999) defined life in the round as a public form of life in which things were implicitly understood. It underscored Chatman's belief that information behaviour was about constructing meaning and that construction of meaning was facilitated by context (Fulton, 2010, p. 251). As Fulton (2010) noted, members of this information lifeworld were "concerned with their own small world, the creation and support of roles in that world, and information that can be used there" (p. 249). It is therefore useful for demonstrating the importance of context in shaping an individual's information seeking (Solomon, 1998). It has high salience for this study given the significance of context in MPs' information lifeworlds.

Lifeworlds and parliamentary representation

In her influential work on the concept of political representation, Pitkin (1967) observed that the term "representation" is derived from a Latin term *repraesentare*— to "make present again" (p. 241). Put another way, representation can be defined as a system in which a "majority of citizens can induce the government to do what they want it to do and avoid doing what they most want it not to do" (Dahl, 1989, p. 95). The concept of political representation is both complex and puzzling (Eulau & Karps, 1977). As Pitkin (2004) explained, it is puzzling because it implies a paradox—that of being "present and yet not present" (p. 335). A considerable body of work has been written on the topic and a systematic treatment of the historical and theoretical basis of political representation falls outside the scope of this study. For more on this, see extensive literature reviews in: Brito Vieira (2017); Criddle, (2018);

Pitkin (1967, 1989); Shapiro et al., (2010); and Saward (2010). Much of this literature is contested: See, for example, Mansbridge (2003, 2011) and Rehfeld (2009, 2011).

Instead, in this study, the focus is on the importance of the information exchange and communications between constituents and their elected representatives on social media on a day-to-day basis. It is these interactions that take place "between" elections, rather than "at" elections that are the subject of this study. Esaisson and Naurd (2013) refer to this as "between-election democracy" (p. 4). It describes the every-day ways in which the constituency indicates its stance on an issue and expects its elected representative to act accordingly and in its best interests. Participation research conceptualises these individual between-election activities at an electorate level in terms of contacts, manifestations, party engagement and protests (Dalton, 2019; Lamprianou, 2013; Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995). This also includes signing a petition, attending a rally, boycotting an event, buycotting a product, writing a letter, and many other activities such as "political consumerism" (Stolle & Micheletti, 2013). There is a tradition within democratic theory that regards this type of public deliberation as the foundation of the democratic process (Chambers, 2003; Dewey, 1991, [1927]); Habermas, 1989, 1996). In a representative democracy, such as Western Australia, representatives are not bound by the instructions of the represented and are free to follow their own judgment in how to act, even when citizens disagree about the right course of action (Peters, 1993; Urbinati, 2006).

In 2007, just prior to the commencement of the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012), in a survey commissioned by the Western Australian Parliamentary History Advisory Committee (WAPHAC), 71.8 per cent of respondents believed that MPs should vote to reflect the majority of opinion in their electorates, rather than in line with the views of the political parties of which they were members (only 18.5 per cent) (Pendal, Black & Phillips, 2007, p. 263). Although now dated, this is still the latest survey by the WAPHAC. An example of this occurred in the

PoWA when MPs were given a free vote on the issue of voluntary assisted dying. This meant that MPs were not expected to vote as a bloc with their party, and instead, could vote with their conscience. However, when exercising this privilege, elected representatives are usually obliged to provide convincing justifications to their electorate as to their issue stance (Esaisson & Naurd, 2013). This again reinforces the importance of communication and the exchange of information which is paramount in a functioning democracy (Urquhart & Heyer, 2018).

Role and responsibilities

Given that MPs are the focus of this study, an understanding of their role is important for contextualising the research. There appears to be little understanding in the wider community about what MPs do day-to-day in the execution of their duties. Australians have always had a sceptical view of their representatives (Burchell & Leigh, 2002; Dickenson, 2013; Leigh, 2002). Research has found that in defining the role of MPs, society holds a "potpourri of notions about them" (Pendal, Black & Phillips, 2007, p. 253). The stereo-typical public assume that all MPs are "hypocritical, double-dealing and corrupt" (Crewe, 2021, p. 180) and involved in "dirty politics" (Geoghegan, 2020).

Several scholars have sought to explain the cause of the politician-politics malaise (Corbett, 2016; Crosby, 2016; Peters, 1993). One reason cited for a rise in anti-politician sentiment is that many are demographically unrepresentative of the general population (Bean, 2015; Clarke et al., 2018; Cowley, 2014). There is a strong public sentiment that "politicians are out of touch" from the interests of "ordinary citizens" because they neither look like them nor behave like them" (Fawcett & Corbett, 2018, p. 412). The literature suggests that the general public want representatives that are "more like them" (Fawcett & Corbett, 2018, p. 412; Wood, Corbett & Flinders, 2016).

Another factor contributing to the anti-politician sentiment that has emerged in recent years, is the professionalisation of politics (Cairney, 2007). The public ascribes much of what is regarded as shortcomings or aberrations in the political sphere to the professionalisation of politics (Kerrouche & Schüttemeyer, 2018, p. 59). There appears to be a dominant notion that it has created “a self-referential and cosseted elite” (Fawcett & Corbett, 2018, p. 412). A report by the Cambridge University based Centre for the Future of Democracy found that many large democracies are at their highest-ever recorded level for democratic dissatisfaction—including Australia. See also, Cameron & McAllister (2016, 2017) and Foa et al., (2020). Widespread concern is rampant in contemporary western societies about declining engagement in civic life and a trust deficit in political processes. See: Cowley (2014); Engesser et al., (2016); Fawcett & Corbett (2018); Norris, (2011); Pakulski & Tranter (2015); Stoker, Evans & Halupka (2018).

Others have argued that there is no such thing as a golden age of trust in politics and Australians have always had a negative view of their representatives (Burchell & Leigh, 2002; Dickenson, 2013; Leigh, 2002). The growth of “celebrity politics” has also led to social fragmentation in the public sphere which has culminated in corrosion of “collective action and social responsibility” (Loader & Mercea, 2011, p. 762). There is a deep-rooted dissatisfaction from legacy institutions both inside and outside politics (Persily, 2017). In a representative democracy, to be labelled as a professional MP tends to “conjure up notions of spin, party management and a lack of authenticity” (Flinders et al., 2020, p. 268). This indicates that the general public are largely unaware of how parliamentarians spend their time.

Lifeworlds and the constituency

At the heart of democratic life is the constituency, that is, the population of voters living within a physical geographical boundary (Papp, 2020). Constituency service or home style (Fenno, 1978) is a network of relationships between MPs and citizens. It is a collection of various

activities carried out by MPs, "on behalf of individuals, groups and organisations in the district" (Cain et al., 1987, p. 8). As Love (2005), explained:

> It is the basic unit for election to parliament. MPs represent electors who live within their constituency, some of whom they will assist, and many of whom they will speak for and often vote for in parliament to reflect the views. The link between the individual elector and their MP is a critically important aspect of democracy (p. 23).

The constituency role of MPs has evolved over the centuries (Lundberg, 2007, p. 52). They gradually assumed the role of constituency advocate as parliament became more and more successful in obtaining "redress of grievances before supply", or the granting of revenue to the Crown (Birch, 1971, p. 28). Searing (1994) describes MPs as "constituency servants" finding that their main focus is on being "welfare officers and local promoters" (p. 124). That is, they concentrate primarily on collective concerns of the constituency as a whole, or sections within it and advocate on their behalf (Grant & Burton, 2018, p. 15; Norris, 1997). They do this using their own individual home styles (Andre & Depauw, 2013; Andre, Bradbury & Depauw, 2014).

MPs devote a significant and increasing share of their lifeworld with their electorate (Crewe, 2021). Some MPs have found that the demands of constituency are "overwhelming" (Norton & Wood, 1993, p. 156). In a series of exit interviews with former members of the Canadian legislature, the Samara Institute described constituency workload as unrelenting. As one former Canadian MP noted: "I spread myself as puff-pastry thin as possible and yet still... I just constantly felt like I was letting people down. The go-go-go schedule has serious personal repercussions" (Ghebretecle et al., 2018, p. 15).

The complexity of the work of politicians means that they face overlapping and often conflicting pressures, demands and audiences to a far greater intensity than the rest of society

(Crewe, 2021, p. 173). According to Crewe (2014) being an MP is akin to "feeling like Genghis Khan", that is attaching four horses to ones limbs and then being pulled simultaneously in four different directions. Furthermore, that the more inclusively MPs listen, the more directions they are pulled in, and the more likely they are to "sink under the weight of many voices and demands" (Crewe, 2014, p. 52). It seems that the more politicians consult and engage, the more diversity and pressure they experience (Crewe, 2021, p. 173; Flinders, 2016, p. 196).

In Western Australia, MPs maintain an electorate office which offers constituents a fixed point of contact for making representations about issues they would like to see addressed. The local MP is often the first point of call for citizens trying to navigate the public system—for help with health, housing, immigration, social welfare, etc.—in accessing various government departments (state and federal) and general government information and services. These individual enquiries from constituents can be time consuming, require extensive research and follow up contact with government agencies, ministerial offices and the constituents themselves. Often responsibility for coordinating these requests falls with the electorate office staff on behalf of the MP. Additionally, the MPs' electorate office staff support their MP by managing the daily diary, correspondence, constituent concerns, media relations, electorate communications, record keeping, and electorate office management.

MPs representing regional electorates often say they have a "FIFO job"—a uniquely Western Australian phenomenon where a large proportion of resource sector workers fly-in and fly-out (FIFO) of their workplace (Grant & Burton, 2018, p. 15). Therefore, not only is the MPs' role unique, it is also often described by incumbents as "all-consuming" (Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, 2019, p. 7). In addition, all MPs (other than independent members) are expected to contribute to the work of their political parties and are involved in regular party or caucus meetings as well as various ad hoc political party meetings and policy or legislative

development processes. This work is distinct from lay-party political business such as fundraising activities, electioneering or the development of local party branches (Grant & Burton, 2018 , p. 15). Increasingly, community expectations are such that it is assumed that MPs support a wide range of organisations and individuals within the electorate. This may involve providing financial support from their electorate allowance to donate trophies to sporting groups, sponsor community groups attending competitions, or provide book prizes to school students (Grant & Burton, 2018, p. 15).

A 2009 study by Australian Parliamentary Fellow, Dr Scott Brenton based on a survey of (then) current and former federal parliamentarians found that the profession had "changed with technological and communication developments, increases in staff and constituents, increased media intrusions, and challenges to balance work and family" (Brenton, 2009, p. xii). Twelve years on, it is likely that many would agree that this remains the case. Politicians are expected to respond to requests from constituents, lobbyists, interest groups and local supporters. Typically, these interests are "unknowable, dynamic and open to endless contestation" (Crewe, 2012, p. 48). A global survey of parliamentarians conducted by the Inter Parliamentary Union in 2012 showed that, when asked what they believed that citizens saw as politicians' most important role, almost one third identified solving constituents' problems as their most important role. The IPU (2012) survey also revealed the amount of time attributed to constituency work by MPs: one-fifth of MPs reported devoting more than 40 hours a week solely to helping their constituents, while a further third of MPs spent between 21 and 40 hours each week on constituency related duties.

It is now over twenty years since the Western Australian Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT), the organisation responsible for setting MPs' remuneration packages and entitlements for MPs in Western Australia, found that the time spent by MPs ranged between sixty and

eighty hours per week, with the average being about seventy hours (Western Australia. Salaries and Allowances Tribunal, 1999). In lieu of updated statistics from the SAT, it is useful to cite the recent findings from another Australian jurisdiction.

In 2019, Victorian MPs were surveyed about their constituentcy engagement (Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, 2019, p. 6). They were asked to approximate what proportion of time they allocated to several different tasks across a full year, during both during parliamentary sitting and non-sitting weeks to gauge their time commitments. Information was sought about the contacts that MPs had received in their electorate office on a weekly basis. From the data presented it appeared that the most contacts per week emanated from constituents requiring assistance, making suggestions or requesting information (Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, 2019, p. 6). The responses indicated that constituency matters were a time-intensive task in parliamentary non-sitting weeks, occupying more than a third of an MP's time. During non-sitting weeks, about half of respondents indicated that they spent between eight and 12 hours on all these tasks (Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, 2019, p. 4). While the aforementioned is interesting, it is important to emphasise that no two legislatures across Australia are identical and therefore direct comparisons with the PoWA are problematic.

The electoral cycle looms large for many MPs and features heavily in their strategic communications and in their decision-making when it comes to the facilitation of MPs' constituency roles (Kousser, 2019; Lilleker & Koc-Michalska, 2013). MPs devote a significant and increasing share of their time to their electorate (Crewe, 2021). For MPs, reputation building with constituents is important in propagating personal vote and cultivating incumbency advantage (Gaines, 1998; Martin, 2011; Smith 2013). According to Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina (1984) the personal vote refers to "that portion of a candidate's electoral support which originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities and record" (p. 111).

Being able to claim credit for having provided "constituency effort" is particularly valuable electorally where personal vote-seeking incentives are high (Arter & Raunio, 2018). In some instances, it can mean the difference, for an individual incumbent, between winning re-election and being unseated (Crisp & Simoneau, 2018, p. 347). An extensive body of literature exists which examines the relationships among the role conceptions adopted by MPs, their personal attributes, and their willingness to invest resources creating a personal following that will assist them electorally (Däubler, Bräuninger & Brunner, 2016; Parker & Richter, 2018; Searing, 1994; Studlar & McAllister, 1994; Wessels, 1999).

Therefore, central to constituency effort is the relationship between MPs and their constituency (Dudzińska et al., 2014; Studlar & McAllister, 1996; Sudulich, Trumm & Bridgewater, 2020). Constituency service is both demand and supply driven. It is responsive and demand driven, in that it is generated by the represented, but it is also initiated on behalf of the electorate by the representative and is therefore supply stimulated (Arter, 2018). The "gravity" of the MP constituent relationship shifts towards the actions of representatives in their role as authoritative decision makers after being elected (Esaisson & Naurd, 2013, p. 3).

Political communication and parliamentary information

Political communication is seen as crucial for the building of a society in which the state and its people feel that they are "connected" (Lilleker, 2006, p. 1). Karlsson (2013) puts forward a view that political communication has three functions, including accountability, inquiry and connectivity. Accountability is understood as the communication from MPs to constituents that informs them of their member's actions and as a consequence makes them more accountable (Karlsson, 2013, p. 1206). The second function of political communication, inquiry, relates to the role of consultation, where MPs use communication to reveal the views, opinions and sentiments of their constituents (Karlsson, 2013, p. 1207). The final characteristic is

connectivity, where communication fosters trust-relationships between constituents and MPs (Karlsson, 2013, p. 1218).

The advent of social media and the internet has shifted the balance of power toward citizens, through more open communication lines between themselves and their representatives (Tasente, 2013). In effect this means that political communication is now characterised as an interactive process on two levels: vertically (from MPs to citizens and others) and horizontally (among same tier–MPs and institutions) (Tasente, 2013). This has led to the transformation of political communication which has become decentralised, removing some of the barriers to communication for constituents and representatives to communicate (Brants & Voltmer, 2011; Jackson & Lilleker, 2004).

According to Allan (2015) the decline in democratic decision making can, in part, be attributed to "pusillanimous parliamentarians" (p. 155). Consequently, MPs run the risk of being punished at the ballot box if they remain disconnected from constituents' opinions (Esaisson & Naurd, 2013). When connections are made, it creates social cohesion, increases accountability and aids in the formation of a well-informed citizenry with flow-on benefits for democracy (McNair, 2018, p. 4). This supports Pitkin's theory of representation where, by explaining their actions, MPs enable their constituents to better understand how they are being represented (Pitkin, 1967, pp. 209-10). It also aligns with Huber and Powell's (1994) view that liberal democracies are most successful when the sentiments of citizens are congruent with the policy implemented. Putnam (2001), found a linkage between the perceived feeling of being represented and a healthy democracy. Apparently, feelings of representativeness foster a sense of network through reciprocal social relationships, or social capital, as opposed to a society of isolated individuals (Putnam, 2001, p. 19).

Ideally the representative-constituent relationship is a two-way process that involves continuous interactions (Alonso, Keane & Merkel, 2011; Page & Shapiro, 1992, p. 354). Noting Mansbridge's (2003) observation that the MP-constituent relationship is a dynamic one, where constituents make demands that motivate representatives to respond, however, elected representatives also take actions that prompt constituents to take action. Therefore, at the crux of democracy rests on the link between representatives and the represented: the MP-constituent relationship (Curato & Dryzek, 2017; Nabatchi, Gastil & Weiksner, 2012; Parkinson, 2012).

Nevertheless, as many have noted, this relationship is fraught with tension in highly politicised contexts given that there can be no deliberation without representation (Boswell, Niemeyer & Hendriks, 2013; Brown, 2018; Lees-Marshment, 2015; Schäfer, 2017). As Bohman (2012) explained, for deliberative encounters to be meaningfully interactive, they require some limitation of the number of actors involved, which makes deliberation "inherently representative" (p. 76). That said, according to Parkinson (2006), a potential conflict arises when the people who did not directly participate in the deliberative process question or refuse to accept the outcome (Haggard & Kaufman, 2020). In a representative democracy therefore, MPs are authorised to make collective decisions on behalf of the electorate. Much of this political discourse now plays out on social media. There is also a suggestion that online behaviour also creates new expectations about what people envisage of their elected representatives and what MPs might assume in return (Krasodomski-Jones, 2017, p. 6). Legitimate questions arise as to who is actually being represented? (Carson et al., 2013; Criddle, 2018; Judge, 2014). Who is being listened to? (Lacey, 2013). Who actually speaks? (Lee, McQuarrie & Walker, 2015)? And what of the equality of the voices? (Enns & Wlezien, 2011; Hendriks & Lees-Marshment, 2019). The fusion of the works of Habermas' public sphere and lifeworld, and Chatman's work on small worlds will be usefully applied to explore this further in following chapters.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter sought to provide the details about this study and its theoretical foundations. It accomplished this by introducing the concept of parliamentary representation. This chapter delved into the intricacies of the multifaceted role of being a parliamentarian, including the constituency. It also provided a description of the study setting before identifying the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning the research, which is the TIW. This included an introduction to the works of Habermans' public sphere and lifeworlds and Chatman's small worlds. The following chapter seeks to explore the social media phenomenon, especially as it intersects with politics and parliamentary representation.

CHAPTER 3: The social media phenomenon

It is a very sad thing that nowadays there is so little useless information (Wilde, 2007, p. 60)

Introduction

The previous chapter established the study's foundational setting and the conceptional and theoretical framework underpinning the study, this chapter explores the phenomenon of social media. To facilitate this, it delves into the research that exists on the use of social media in the political sphere. It examines the use of social media by parliamentarians to communicate with their constituents in non-election times using examples from a wide range of sources in the English-language academic literature. It also provides insights into the background to the research by drawing on literature from information studies and the political sciences. This chapter also presents details of some of the impediments cited in the academic literature as reasons for non-use of social media and examines some of the barriers and challenges to using social media.

Everyday use of social media by parliamentarians

Writing over a decade ago, Williamson (2009), observed that only limited research existed on parliamentarians' attitudes to digital media and their perception of its use and value to them (p. 514). A decade later, this still remains largely the case. Much has been written about social media, MPs and elections, but less so about their everyday use of social media in their lifeworlds. According to Gillespie (2018), the emergence of the social media platforms "arose out of the exquisite chaos of the web" (p. 5). The development of the World Wide Web in general, and the growth of social media and Web 2.0 in particular, has created a new communications landscape, which allows for direct, bilateral, updated and fast communication

between representatives and their constituents and has fundamentally altered political communication (Marwick, 2019). See also: Akirav, 2017, p. 2; Furman et al., 2019, p. 21; Glassman, Straus & Shogan, 2013; Richardson, 2017. As Marwick (2014) observed, social media have become “a part of everyday life, not apart from it” (p. 10). Increasingly information, generally and political information specifically, is being accessed online via one’s personal device (Schrock, 2015). This is especially true of the younger cohorts (Christian, 2019). Since the introduction of the iPhone in 2007 (Ling et al., 2020, p. 4), smartphone penetration has grown from 76 per cent to 91 per cent over the past six years (Deloitte Australia, 2019, p. 9). The mobile telephone has become “a remote control for our lives, playing an integral role in how we live, transact and relax” (Deloitte Australia, 2019, p. 2).

To Wheeler (2020), the mobile device has been “as defining for the 21st century as the railroad was for the 19th century or the printing press was for the 16th century” (p. xi). Greater access to smartphone technology has helped people become more mobile in their social networking activities. The proliferation of smartphones in western society underscores the indispensability of social media (Chen & Ling 2015). The “appification of mobile communication” has played a major part in this as these devices are used by people, irrespective of age, gender or socio-economic background (Ling et al., 2020, p. 9). For instance, statistics from the Sensis (2017) social media report stated that over a third of Australians surveyed used a smartphone to access their social media sites. By 2018, smartphones were the most popular device used for accessing social media, used by almost nine in ten adults (Yellow, 2018, p. 8).

Politicians who were early adopters of the internet were accused of jumping on the bandwagon (Lilleker & Jackson, 2008, 2011). The bandwagon effect has also been found to occur in the adoption and use of social media (Cheng-Jun & Zhu, 2019; Deželan & Vobic, 2016; Fu, Teo & Seng, 2012; Lilleker, Pack & Jackson, 2010). In the earliest days of the field of information

theory, Shannon (1956) introduced the concept of the "bandwagon" and the bandwagon effect, as it became known, describes the tendency of individuals to join (or choose) a collective behaviour (or an item) that has become popular.

Social media has followed a similar trajectory—its emergence generated exuberance over its potential, until its actual use could be determined and normalised (Fenn & Blosch, 2018; Graham & Dutton, 2019). Initially new technology is viewed with suspicion, but over time as it becomes a part of a normal way if life and is seen in more nuanced ways (Ward & Gibson, 2007). Eventually the technology becomes so taken for granted that it becomes all but invisible (Baym, 2015; Ling, 2012). According to Carr (2020), this argument has been applied to every new medium, from the books of Gutenberg's press onwards. This is evidenced by the fact that, in the last decade a politician with a Twitter account has gone from being a "novelty to a norm" (Fuller, Jolly & Fisher, 2018, p. 89; Highfield, 2013). In 2016, more than two-thirds of the world's heads of state and government officials had an active Twitter account (Tromble, 2016b). Social media can hardly be consigned to the history books as a passing fad, as might once have been suggested (Quesenberry, 2020).

One of the first to document the trajectory of social media in an Australian parliamentary setting, over a decade ago, was the Parliamentary Librarian at the Commonwealth Parliament (Missingham, 2010). Missingham (2010) had already noted that the early adoption of social networking had moved to regular use by many parliamentarians, and at a startling pace. Since then, social media has made its mark on the practice of politics in Australia (Chen, 2013). At the start of the Thirty-eighth Parliament in November 2008, the number of Australian internet users aged 14 and over who went online during the December quarter of 2009 was reported to be 14.2 million (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2016, p. 2). By 2010

Australians had become some of the world's heaviest users of social media. (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2016, p. 2).

Social media and politics

Given the fluid nature of politics, it is unsurprising that social media offers innovative communication opportunities for political actors at all levels (Larsson, 2018, p. v). As Borge Bravo and Esteve Del Valle (2017) reminded us, the progress of political communication in electoral politics, political parties, and parliaments has been historically intertwined with technological changes. Nearly two decades since its introduction, the role of social media in politics is a well-developed area that has been researched extensively. See, for example, Hoffmann & Suphan (2017); Wattal et. al, (2010); van Dijck & Poell (2013); Vowe & Henn (2016). We now reside in a global informational ecosphere (Birkinbine, Gomez & Wasko, 2017). Political communication has become "multifarious and multifaceted, and […] inescapable" (Lilleker, 2006, p. 10).

Increasingly, elected representatives all around the world use social networks to communicate directly with their electorates, to earn trust and to build support within their communities (Gunn & Skogerbø, 2013). (See also, Hong & Nadler, 2011; Kreiss, 2012; Strandberg, 2013). However, the extent of this use and its perceived value from a parliamentarian's point of view is still under-researched. It was Howard Dean, then Governor of Vermont, in his 2004 US presidential campaign, that led the way with an online citizen-initiated approach to political campaigning and funding drives (Iosifidis & Wheeler, 2018). This was followed, in 2008, by the successful use of social media by Barack Obama in his bid for the US presidency and this prompted an increased interest in the use of social media for political gain (Bimber, 2014). (See also, Heilemann & Halperin, 2010; Hoffmann & Suphan, 2016; Towner & Dulio, 2011; Wattal et al., 2010).

Since then, social media has had a profound impact on major political events such as the last three US presidential elections (Conway, Kenski & Wang, 2013, 2015; Evans, 2016; Kreiss, 2012). The presidential election of Donald Trump is certainly a notable example (See, Korostelina, 2017; Noam, 2017; Ouyang & Waterman, 2020). Far from it being an outlier, the election of Donald Trump has been mooted as "a precursor of politics to come" given that social media has embedded itself in political communication and plays an entrenched role in politicians' communications armoury (Chomsky, 2017, p. 25; Toews, 2018). In a relatively short-time social media has shifted from being on the fringe, and in the margins, to a position where it is now considered mainstream. A culture of connectivity has developed and has become a permanent fixture in western society (Gibson, 2020; van Dijck, 2013). This is particularly true of younger people where living and communicating in a "permanently online, permanently connected world" has become the norm (Laughland-Booÿ, 2020; Vorderer et. al, 2017). Turkle (2008) described it as "always-on/always-on-you: The tethered self" (p. 121).

The turning point in the political use of digital media in Australia has been attributed to the 2007 federal election (Chen & Walsh, 2010). It can be ascribed to the (then) federal Leader of the Opposition, Hon Kevin Rudd's use of social networking services (Leys, 2013). This timing coincided with the starting point for this study, the commencement of the Thirty-eighth Parliament. At the time the (incumbent) Prime Minister, Hon John Howard, was associated with the more traditional modes of communication; talkback radio and television. As a point of difference, Rudd emphasised his information technology credentials and tech savviness by using social media which was a conscious strategy designed to appeal to younger voters and advance the notion of the potential for generational change (Chen, 2013).

The politics of disruption

Some sectors have been severely impacted by the rise of digitally mediated platforms. Disruptive innovation, a term coined by Christensen (2002), describes a process by which a product or service takes root initially in simple applications at the bottom of a market and then relentlessly moves up the market eventually displacing established competitors (McKell Institute, 2015, p. 50). Industries that traditionally delivered a paper-based service have had to adapt or suffer the consequences. As Fahour (2014) reminded us:

> Think of video and bookstores or the publishers of all sorts of news, entertainment and media or photographic companies that failed to adapt—like Kodak—or paper-based cheques, Yellow Pages directory advertising and, of course, letters. (p. n. p.).

These innovative multisided markets with their monopolistic proclivities have disrupted and challenged the incumbent business models (Tirole, 2003). The music industry is a good example of this. Napster irrevocably changed the way people accessed music to download and share music MP3 files, until it was sued for infringing copyright laws and filed for bankruptcy (Arditi, 2014; Knopper, 2009). Facebook Ads fundamentally changed the way advertisers and customers connected (Auletta, 2018). These organisations facilitate an exchange between two or more interdependent groups, rather than making physical objects. They have successfully monetised the simple act of connecting people (Moazed & Johnson, 2016).

Social media usage is increasingly carried out through portable devices. This has meant that with access to the wireless internet mobile devices have expanded from a tool of voice or text-based communication to devices and services for multimedia communication, consumption and even production (Chen & Ling, 2015). According to Wilding et al., (2018) this gave the voiceless a way to express themselves and in doing so audiences became empowered both as

citizens and creators (p. 12). This prompted Bruns (2007) to coin the phrase “produser”, a portmanteau of the words production and user, which refers to the ability of online users to be both producers and users of content simultaneously. The embeddedness of digital media in society has also meant that the entry barriers for some using these platforms have been lowered (Lister et al., 2003). Chen (2013) observed that phones were once glorified typewriters and calculators, but “morphed into minicomputers” (p. 2). While the cost of smartphones has declined, their computational power has continued to rise (Diamond & Whittington, 2018, p. 254). Rheingold (2002) observed that:

> Moore’s Law drove the PC industry and the cultural changes that resulted, Metcalfe’s Law drove the deployment of the Internet and Reed’s Law will drive the growth of the mobile and the pervasive net. (p. xv).

Rheingold (2002) also predicted the potential of mobile telephones “to bring a social tsunami” by enabling “smart mobs” to be formed (p. xi). Writing at a time that pre-dated Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, he envisaged a world where people could “act in concert” even if they did not know one another (Rheingold, 2002, p. xii). Certainly, digital media has enabled “unprecedented forms of trust-building, cooperation and coordination, even among people who do not know one another” (Diamond & Whittington, 2018, p. 257). While technology may be an imperfect substitute for face-to-face encounters, mediated messages via social media can reach far larger audiences. In this way they have disrupted collective action, digital citizenship and political engagement (Vromen, 2016).

Interested citizens cohere on an issue and form connections based on shared interests rather than on physical borders (Jackson & Lilleker, 2009; Lynch, 2015, p. 97). It is for this reason that the Egyptian uprising in early 2011, has become synonymous with the successful use of social media to transform online activism into offline protests (See: Bruns, Highfield &

Burgess, 2013; Brym et al., 2014; Faris, 2013; Jackson, 2020; Lim, 2012). As Howard and Hussain (2011) pointed out, in the case of the Arab Spring protests, they "helped to turn individualised, localised and community-specific dissent into a structured movement with a collective consciousness about both shared plights and opportunities for action" (p. 41).

Twitter, for example, opens a space for the mass dissemination of ideas to individuals who once would have had far less access to them (Burgess & Baym, 2020). As Cummings and Gottshall (2014) noted, Twitter has provided "a new milieu where access to the ability to transmit ideas is shared across much greater demographics" (p. 618). This can be seen in the example of the mobilisation of effort in the aforementioned Arab Spring uprising (Jungherr, Rivero & Gayo-Avello, 2020; Pătruţ & Pătruţ, 2017; Trottier & Fuchs, 2015). Facebook was used to schedule the protests, Twitter was used for tactical coordination, and YouTube was used to share the visuals with the world (Curran, Fenton & Freedman, 2012; Gerbaudo, 2012; Shearlaw, 2016).

According to Castells (2015) the protests shifted the scales of political power toward the decentralised movement of citizens coordinating around shared grievances, thus severely limiting the oppressive power of centralised autocratic governments. Social media provide a platform for activation, where marginalised perspectives or dissent can be expressed by subverting the usual political power structures (Bennett & Livingston, 2020). (See also: Adi, Gerodimos & Lilleker, 2018; Gibson, Greffet & Cantijoch, 2017; Karpf, 2016; Schier, 2000; Vincent & Straub, 2017). At the same time, the organisations that had previously mediated citizen political engagement, mobilisation and sustained collective action, such as political parties and unions, were also undergoing change (Cross & Gauja, 2014; Kefford, 2021; Miragliotta, Gauja & Rodney, 2015; van Biezen & Poguntke, 2014, Whiteley, 2011).

The traditional news cycle has also been subjected to technologically mediated disruption. As Karpf (2020) noted, “episodes of political contention now move back and forth between social media, television, radio and newsprint” (p. 157). This ease of online access has ramifications for democracy, in that it provides a more immediate, open and arguably, an inclusive forum for commentary and debate than is available offline (Lax, 2004; Shane, 2004; Wilhelm, 2000). The social media channels offer considerably more possibilities for pluralising the flows of information and widening of the scope of commentary, debate and dissent for those able to access it (Dahlgren, 2013). According to Chadwick (2017) rather than having a news cycle, this has been converted into a political information cycle.

Everyday use of social media in the constituency

There is a large and rapidly growing corpus pointing to the transformational impact that technology is having on the nature of the public sphere and altering the way that citizens encounter one another, receive political information and engage in the democratic process (Dommett & Verovšek, 2021, p. 9). The transformative impact on politics cannot be ignored. Cracks have begun to appear in the decades-old status quo of politics thanks to the disruption caused by technology (Coleman, 2014). Recently, the social media corporations have been the subject of public criticism given that they have accrued vast reserves of public trust, influence and wealth in obscure ways (Vaidhyanathan, 2012).

Allegations of cyber-attacks and “information warfare” linked to elections in other democratic states aimed at undermining democracy have increased (Jamieson, 2018). Australia is not immune to such activity; in the lead up to the 2019 Australian federal elections, the Australian Cyber Security Centre identified a “malicious intrusion” into the Australian parliamentary computer network (Doche, McCombie & Rabehaja, 2019). Also, in February 2021, Facebook banned all news content and news sharing for users within Australia, owing to an “imminent

threat" they faced from the proposed news media bargaining code legislation which was due to be finalised by the Australian federal Parliament (Leaver, 2021, p. 1.).

Perhaps the day-to-day politics has been disrupted by social media in subtler ways. For example, social media have had a profound impact upon how elected representatives represent their constituents. There are also implications for how "the represented" make contact with their elected representatives, and how they make them aware of their feelings about an issue. One way that MPs could be said to be subject of disruption in their information lifeworlds is through their constituency communications given the abundance of electronic channels on which they can now be contacted. The degree to which their constituency communications were digitally disrupted, if indeed they were impacted, was therefore deemed worthy of investigation as part of this research.

To a resources-starved MP, another attractive element of social media lies in its reduced cost of communication (Coelho, Pereira Correia & Medina, 2017; Gibson, 2015; Hellweg, 2011). The real cost of sending a message via the traditional channels (letter, in person meeting, phone call) is manifestly excessive when compared to online media (social media and email) (Chen, Lee & Marble, 2019, p. 3). As Lupia and Sin (2003) noted, high communication costs can be helpful for MPs in distinguishing between constituents for whom an issue is very important and for those to whom it is unimportant. When the costs of contacting an elected representative are high, MPs can interpret increased communication on an issue as highly salient to the constituent and a credible sign of public concern. Lower communication costs decrease the informational value of communications. For instance, the increased volume of messages via social media is likely to come with increased noise due to its low barriers of use (Chen, Lee & Marble, 2019). It is likely that MPs would be more interested in the opinions of the high-

salience group as it is resource intensive having to sort through the noise (Baek, Wojcieszak & Carpini, 2012).

The first phase of the data collection for this study commenced in the parliamentary winter recess of 2012. This was the year that the forty-fourth President of the United States, Barack Obama was re-elected for a second term. On hearing of his re-election, President Obama chose to tweet a photograph of the first couple to thank the Americans who voted for him. This was followed up with a tweet that simply said: “4 more years” (Graham, Jackson & Broersma, 2018, p. 137). Almost immediately, this became the most popular tweet of all time, with over 740,000 retweets (Graham, Jackson & Broersma, 2018, p. 137). As this study drew to a close, a 94-year old-grandfather, a first-time user of Instagram, broke the Guinness World Record for amassing one million followers in the fastest time (Punt, 2020). Naturalist Sir David Attenborough debuted on Instagram with a video about global warming, and claimed the record for the fastest time to reach one million followers on Instagram (Punt, 2020). These examples serve to illustrate the scale of social media, where information is disseminated around the planet at “lightning speed” (Shah, 2017, p. 29).

It seems trite to quote the mind-boggling statistics, given that they become outdated so quickly, but they serve an important purpose in demonstrating the extent of the social media phenomena and its propensity to grow exponentially and seemingly unabated. In 2019, globally, on average 500 million tweets were posted per day, and there were 1.33 billion daily active Facebook users. On average, 400 hours of video was uploaded to YouTube every minute (United Kingdom. House of Lords and House of Commons. Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2017, p. 32). According to the 2018 Yellow Social Media report, more than one-third of people (34 per cent) accessed social media, and did so over five times a day and 62 per cent did so daily (Yellow, 2018, p. 10).

Interestingly, usage and frequency of using social media declined with age but was also quite common in older age groups. Females were more frequent users than males: 41 per cent of females, compared with 26 per cent of males accessed social media more than five times a day (Yellow, 2018, p. 10). Yellow (2018) also found that on average, Facebook users were accessed the site 37 times each week. Users of Snapchat and Instagram accessed those sites almost as often as Facebook users accessed that site—36 times and 33 times respectively per week on average, while users of users of Twitter and LinkedIn, on average, accessed those sites 23 times and 15 times (Yellow, 2018, p. 18).

Emanating from the analysis of the Sensis/Yellow data, is the observation that social media usage patterns have changed over time as new platforms have emerged and existing ones have waxed and waned. Some of the platforms have fallen out of favour completely (Sensis, 2017, p. 20). This is noteworthy as it illustrates the transitory nature of social media and supports the polymedia approach taken in this study. It supports the view that social media usage appears to be driven by a desire to connect, converse and interact. The general public are not wedded to specific platforms and should something better come along, they tend to flock to that. It is worth remembering that before Facebook, MySpace was the dominant player, and before that it was Friendster. This is also reinforced why a polymedia approach was applied in this study where the emphasis was on the importance of the media assemblage rather than examining the micro-workings of any one platform (Madianou, 2020, p. 77).

Opportunities for MPs to engage on social media

In recent years there has been mounting evidence demonstrating that parliamentarians are increasingly engaging with the public via social media. Examples include: Argarwal, Sastry & Wood, 2019; Broersma, Hazelhoff & van't Haar, 2013; Bruns et al., 2016; Bruns & Moon, 2018; Grant, Moon & Busby, 2010; Kruikemeier, 2014; Larsson, 2016; and Scherpereel,

Wohlgemuth & Schmelzinger, 2017. The opportunities that social media offers for engaging with the community and supporting democratic renewal has also been recognised by parliaments world-wide (Digital Democracy Commission (UK), 2015; Duffy & Foley, 2011; Hansard Society (UK), 2013; Fox, 2009; Leston-Bandeira & Bender, 2013). The Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) World e-Parliament Report (2018) highlighted that social networks such as Facebook are now the most used tool for parliamentary outreach and engagement, overtaking television or radio (p. 25).

In a landmark Australian study by MacNamara and Kenning (2011, p. 5) the social media use by incumbent federal politicians (n=206) standing for re-election in 2010 to the Australian Parliament was examined. Their study provided an interesting snapshot of use by Australian parliamentarians at a time when social media use was not yet fully normalised in contemporary Australian politics. The timing of that foundational study coincided with the timing of this study. MacNamara and Kenning (2011) found that the number of social media sites used by federal politicians more than doubled in 2010 compared with 2007 (p. 10). They also discovered that the major changes in social media use by politicians over the same period were as a result of large increases in use of Twitter and Facebook and significantly increased use of personal websites, YouTube, blogs and Flickr. For instance, they identified a massive growth in Facebook usage (an increase of 1725 per cent) among parliamentarians during the period 2007 to 2010 (MacNamara & Kenning, 2011, p. 11).

Twitter was not used to any discernible level by politicians in 2007, having only been launched in the United States in July 2006 (MacNamara & Kenning, 2011, p. 11). At the conclusion of the 2010 Australian federal election campaign, 45 per cent of all federal MPs (n=92) had a Twitter account (MacNamara & Kenning, 2011, p. 11). More than 70 per cent of federal MPs (n=146) were active to some extent on Facebook in 2010, compared with just eight (3.5 per

cent) in 2007 (MacNamara & Kenning, 2011, p. 12). They also noted that, in 2010, 34 federal MPs (16.5 per cent) posted videos to YouTube, compared with thirteen in 2007 (5.75 per cent), and 29 MPs (14.1 per cent) had a blog compared with 15 MPs (6.6 per cent) in 2007. Nine of the MPs posted photos to Flickr in 2010 compared with negligible use in 2007 (MacNamara & Kenning, 2011, p. 12). They also described the fate of MySpace as the "biggest loser" among social media in the 2010 federal election, with just nine federal MPs listing a MySpace site (4.4 per cent), compared with 26 MPs (11.5 per cent) in 2007. Furthermore, most of these were inactive and had been for some time (MacNamara & Kenning, 2011, p. 12). The authors did a follow-up study for the 2013 Federal election and compared the use of social media and online communication with the 2007 and 2010 elections (MacNamara & Kenning, 2013). In the same way that these important studies were able to capture social media use at a point in time, this study hopes to inform future research on social media use in the PoWA during the Thirty-eighth (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth (2013–2017) Parliaments.

Arnaboldi et al., (2017) observed that many politicians—especially those based in the US and in Europe—were adopting social media as "official channels" to communicate with their constituency and the wider public in general (p. 231). Because of the "many-to-many" networked character of social media, they serve as potent and adaptable tools of political engagement, organisation and mobilisation (Diamond & Whittington, 2018, p. 255). A 2016 study into the Twitter habits of Danish, UK, and US politicians found that Danish representatives encouraged and engaged with interactive communication the most, with UK MPs following closely behind, and US politicians being last in interactive dialogue (Tromble, 2016a). This builds on the works of Broersma and Graham (2012), who found that UK MPs were more likely to broadcast messages than their Dutch equivalents, but there was still evidence of some interaction.

Factors influencing adoption practices

The extent to which political elites use social media is likely to be shaped by a combination of personal, constituency, party, and parliamentary factors and is also dependent on the balance of resources, incentives and skills available to them (Akirav, 2017, pp. 4-5; Chen, 2010; Ward & Lusoli, 2005). Scholars have offered several explanations for the differences both the use of social media and political elites' attitudes toward them (Kelm, Dohle & Bernhard, 2019; Kelm, 2020; Khang, Han & Ki, 2014; Kreiss, Lawrence, & McGregor, 2018). Personal factors such as educational background and skillset, and socio-demographic characteristics such as age and gender may also account for some differences (Bimber, 2001; Francoli, 2007; Hoff, 2004; Tenscher, 2014). Political party affiliation may also be influential (Quinlan et al., 2018). Parliamentary position and seniority may also impact the extent to which MPs use social media (Heinsohn & Schiefer, 2019; Norris, 2001; Riddell, 1995). Backbenchers tend to be more active users (Gulati, 2004; Jackson & Lilleker, 2011; Lindh & Miles, 2007).

Being in government or opposition/coalition may also have an impact, with some scholars noting that membership in the majority party is an important variable (Miquel & Snyder, 2006; Steinfeld & Lev-On, 2020). When MPs are part of the governing majority, it is argued that they are in a better position to advance their agenda or achieve their goals than when they are part of a resource-limited opposition. There are also a number of environmental factors relating to the electorate itself which may have implications for take-up and use. Variables such as the electoral vulnerability or marginality of the constituency may also have an impact (Jackson, 2003; Kellermann, 2016; Ward & Lusoli, 2005). The composition of the constituency and demands by constituents for service are also factors worthy of consideration (Norton, 1994; Rush, 2001; Searing, 1994).

The technological skills profile of the constituency may also be influential (Ward, Lusoli & Gibson, 2002; Ward & Lusoli, 2005). A growing body of work suggests that MPs from the more technologically savvy constituencies will be more likely to adopt and use new technologies (Adler, Gent & Overmeyer, 1998; Chadwick, 2006; Peterson, 2012; Scherpereel, Wohlgemuth & Schmelzinger, 2017). Other variables (such as the political party's culture, resources and incentives, and the relationships between the MPs and the political party they are affiliated with), will also affect the adoption and use of digital media (Norton, 2007; Ward & Lusoli, 2005). Parliamentary and electoral conditions such as the political culture and parliamentary resource allocation will also have implications for social media adoption and use (Campbell, Harrop & Thompson, 1999; Haleva-Amir, 2011; Magarey, 1999). Traditions of digital media use within a given political system are also likely to impact politicians' decisions on when and how to employ new communication technologies (Graham et al., 2016). In the context of this study, it will be interesting to note the profile of MPs active on social media during the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) to gain a better understanding their motivations for social media adoption.

The prime motivator to most MPs relates to their prospects electorally—getting elected and re-elected. For many, harnessing social media for electoral purposes is seen as germane to their efforts. And central to this is "getting their message out there" into the public domain. It also provides parliamentarians with unique opportunities to engage directly with constituents and participate in public debate (Forkert, 2019). Another motivating factor influencing MPs' adoption practices is that social media provides MPs with a mechanism to cut ties with their traditional journalistic gatekeepers and reach the public directly (Southern & Purdam, 2016). MPs can now turn to social media to voice their discontent and offer a counter discourse to the coverage of events by elite media organisations (Lalancette, Raynauld & Crandall, 2018 , p. 278). It also exposes MPs to public scrutiny with a relentless intensity that previous generations

of politicians never had to endure (Grant & Burton, 2018, p. 18). Social media are capable of spreading disinformation and hate speech just as fast and cheaply as reliable information and civil discourse (Starr, 2020, p. 68).

In a democracy, the feedback loop between the represented and their elected representatives is a crucial one (Sobieraj et al., 2020). As Gamson (1992) reminded us, these political conversations are important because they help people figure out what they believe in. Social media have now become a part of the feedback loop for elected officials. It has become a forum in which grievances are shared, and the views of citizens are aired. At times this results in a back-and-forth exchange and sometimes this feedback can be critical and is not always delivered in a cordial manner (Guttmann & Thompson, 1996; Jones, 2010). Frame and Brachotte (2015) caution MPs not to overreact in the heat of the moment on social media and "not to let oneself get caught up in their temporality" (p. 285).

Tolerance of online incivility is in decline and this has led to the emergence of a wide variety of disconnection options to "shut people out" of the conversation on social media (Masullo, 2020, p. 72). This includes blocking, muting or simply deleting content online (Elder, 2020). Blocking and muting are a distinctly modern phenomenon, and another way that politicians can control their message on social media. Being blocked by an elected representative is seen by some as a "badge of honour" (Masullo, 2020, p. 80). It has raised the ire of others, who viewed being blocked by an elected representative as a breach of democratic norms (Morris & Sarapin, 2020; Rose, 2020; Schetzer, 2018). Such practices have not gone unnoticed by the electorate (Sobieraj et al., 2020).

The irony of politicians blocking people they disagree with is not lost on some given that generally speaking, politicians are the ones to laud freedom of speech (Brison & Gelber, 2019; Gelber, 2011, p. 6; Schetzer, 2018). Such behaviour raises a number of ethical and societal

questions. Chief among them, whether the practice best serves democracy if it thwarts politically "expressive talk" and silences voices in the constituency (Douek, 2020; Masullo, 2020, p. 68). See also: Browning (2019); Hadjian (2018); Mongiello (2019); and Morris & Sarapin (2020). As Gelber (2011) pointed out, "democracy works when people can criticise and engage with the political processes they are implicated in" (p. 6).

In Westminster parliaments, considerable protections are afforded to MPs under the auspices of parliamentary privilege (Forkert, 2019, p. 2). This freedom is essential for any legislature in a democracy to operate effectively (Buti, 2015; Phillips & Black, 2002). Parliamentary privilege ensures that MPs have the freedom to speak their minds without fear of legal repercussions for what they say. These protections are considered "undoubtedly the most important of the privileges of parliaments and are essential in parliamentary democracies" (Campbell, 2003, p. 68). While this protects MPs for what they say on the floor of the Parliament, it does not necessarily extend to comments made on social media. MPs need to be mindful of this, lest they end up being sued or suing for defamation (Bristow, 2018; Douglas, 2021; Ireland, 2012).

When deciding whether to be active on social media platforms, another factor considered by MPs relates to the expectations of their constituents and how these expectations shape their responses. According to Tromble (2016b), once a critical mass of politicians have adopted a platform, members of the public know to look for, and will react to, their posts, but they do not necessarily expect a direct response to the inquiries and demands they make of those MPs. Citizens are used to top-down communication, and though they may desire reciprocity—even believe it warranted—they are unlikely to expect it from their MPs. Politicians, in turn, understand that they do not have to act reciprocally, however positive reciprocity is more likely to bring politicians substantial rewards (Tromble, 2016a). According to the "principle of

reciprocity" the behaviour of each political actor in a two-way relationship is necessarily influenced by the actions of the other.

Ostrom (1998) noted that those who build reputations for positive reciprocity gain trust, which is a crucial ingredient for healthy democratic functioning. Simmel (1950) suggested that in situations where reciprocity is unexpected, a returned favour engenders even greater gratitude and goodwill than normal (p. 387). Research by Lee and Shin (2012) suggested that merely observing an MP interacting online with members of the public via social media can increase the observer's goodwill and intention to vote for them. Put another way, trust promotes reciprocity, and reciprocity promotes trust (Tromble, 2016a, p. 692). Conversely, negative reciprocity does not auger well for MPs. As Fehr and Gachter (2000) explained, in circumstances where an MP responds in kind to received hostility, the reciprocity norm holds that a harsher reaction will be meted out to them. It is difficult for the MP to respond in kind to negative comments without risking a hostile response. As a consequence, it could be reasonably expected that they "choose silence over reciprocal exchange" (Tromble, 2016a, p. 682). Others choose to deal with it by alternative means, by suing for defamation (Douglas, 2021).

A report by Davies (2017) found that over a three-month period, one in 20 tweets sent to MPs were abusive. The most abused MPs, which tended to be the more senior figures such as the party leaders or other frontbenchers, received one abusive message for every ten they received (Davies, 2017). The report also demonstrated how the number of tweets MPs receive, and their ability to effectively manage and respond to them, also varied wildly. Some MPs received as many as 10,000 messages every day, while others received fewer than five a day. This obviously presents huge potential inconsistencies between MPs' abilities to respond to

members of the public using this medium. According to Davies (2017), political engagement online is currently not functioning in a manageable or societally beneficial way.

As can be seen from the above, an online social media presence presents both democratic opportunities and also practical challenges for MPs in that it allows them to engage, or to be engaged with the electorate, allowing them to access new ideas and new people, to listen to constituents, and to gauge public sentiment (Krasodomski-Jones, 2017, p. 6). It can also leave them with a sense of feeling overwhelmed by "information overload" as they are unable to make sense of the digital "noise", and, as a result, often feel unable to respond to the flood of online political expression in real time (Chen & Aitamurto, 2018; Straus et al., 2016). Also known as information overabundance, infobesity or infoglut, it occurs when relevant and potentially useful information becomes a hindrance rather than a help (Batista & Marques, 2017; Bawden & Robinson 2009; Bertram Gross, 1964).

This has been exacerbated in recent years with the profusion of information as a result of technological advances (IFLA, 2017; Lovink, 2016; Sunstein, 2020). Therefore, it is less a matter of whether MPs can be informed, as how they can avoid being overwhelmed by information overload (Walgrave & Dejaeghere, 2017, p. 229). This can create negative psychological and behavioural responses leading to the discontinued use of particular information sources (such as social media) (Fu et al., 2020; Hanif Soroya et al., 2021). While information avoidance can minimise the probability of interacting with unnecessary information, it can also reduce the opportunity to receive relevant information (Case et al., 2015). This can pose a risk to politicians who need access to information in order to be able to carry out their parliamentary duties. Barclay (2018) bemoaned that information overload had become "the one constant" and the "old standards of objectivity and factuality seemed to have been tossed into the same waste bin containing the pay phone and the foldable road map" (p.

x). This lack of response risks undermining confidence in MPs, who, in the eyes of their electorate, may as a result appear "out of touch or unresponsive" (Krasodomski-Jones, 2017, p. 6).

In the literature on politics and communication, candidate-centered political behaviour has been extensively studied under the umbrella term of the "personalisation of politics" (Adam & Maier, 2010; Bennett, 2012; Metz, Kruikemeier & Lecheler, 2020). Personalisation refers to the process in which the political weight of the individual actor in the political process increases over time (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007, p. 65). In this process, political elites become the main anchor of interpretation and evaluation in the political arena rather than the political party holding this mantle, as in the past (Balmas & Sheafer, 2015). No single explanation accounts for the increasing personalisation of politics in democratic societies, however, it is clear that it is a complex and multi-causal process (McAllister, 2007, p. 571).

The personalisation of the political and the extent to which politics is personalised, has become a dominant feature of the contemporary political sphere (Cross, Katz & Pruysers, 2018; Karvonen, 2010; McAllister, 2015). Personal branding online has become the epitome of self-commodification (Garbasevschi, 2020). MPs are required to be prominent and highly visible, but also to be more relatable and accessible to the electorate (Bennett, 2012, p. 22; McAllister, 2015). At the individual level this can be observed from the personalised behaviours of political figures in real life and on social media, and the manner in which they communicate with their constituents (Rahat & Zamir, 2018).

According to Hasson (2020) social media "represents a threat to the political monoculture enforced by elite institutions" (p. 5). For instance, political parties continue to fade as the primary mechanisms for organising civic life (Bennett, 2012; Putnam, 2001). Also, no longer is news done in the old-fashioned way, instead news and information flows across social media

networks (Martin & Dwyer, 2019). In this information ecosystem specific audience demographics source their news and share their political information and opinions using social media (Davis, 2019; Newman et al., 2018, p. 141). Users are preferencing news that is "on-demand, rather than live and scheduled" (Sheller, 2015, pp. 17-8). As such, the tone and flavour of the news-making process has been irrevocably altered and disrupted (Crawford, Filipovic & Hunter, 2017; Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2018; Schwanholz, Graham & Stoll, 2017, p. 27). This may likely be a reason motivating politicians to adopt social media given that an increasing number of people can be found there sourcing their news (Wilding et al., 2018, p. 25). The young are particularly social (Andersen et al., 2020; Park et al., 2018, p. 51; Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2014).

Building or engaging with new audiences may be another motivating factor in MPs' social media adoption practices. Increasingly social media is being used by like-minded citizens to overcome spatial and temporal challenges to cohere on issues (Allen & Light, 2015). Groups of people who share similar views, public interest groups, social movement organisations, faith communities, and loose-knit groups of citizens responding to current events and issues have all made use of the internet and social media to build a sense of community and, at times, have put pressure on governments to act (Patten, 2013, p. 25). According to Norris (2001), these people are likely to be politically engaged already, and use digital technologies to seek out additional information and connect with others who were equally politicised (Guess et al., 2018; Harris & Harrigan, 2015).

This has led to a suggestion that social media has disrupted the traditional definition of a constituency—the geographical boundary precisely defined on a map and taking into account communities of interest, land use patterns, numbers of electors, etc, that is used to outline the territory that MPs represent electorally. Rehfeld (2009; 2011) predicted challenges to the

longstanding tradition that MPs only represent constituents within a select geographic area, with the introduction of e-representation of online constituencies built from common interests. Jackson and Lilleker (2011) describe this as a "new architecture of participation" (p. 232). MPs can act as surrogate representatives to non-constituents from other areas by becoming issue specialists (Rush, 2001). For example, an MP may choose to become an online advocate by championing a cause or advancing an issue and in doing so they may attract a following of like-minded people who reside outside their constituency. In this case, they have a connection based on shared interests rather than on geographical boundaries (Jackson & Lilleker, 2009).

Barriers and challenges to social media use by MPs

While penetration rates for social media are high, not everyone is a devotee (Ward & Gibson, 2007). There are various reasons as to why people eschew the use of social media (Brailovskaia, Schillack & Margraf (2020); Hunt et al., (2018); Sheldon, Rauschnabel & Honeycutt (2019). Some believe that digital overuse may impair individual wellbeing (Büchi, Festic & Latzer, 2019; Gui & Büchi, 2019; Halfmann & Rieger, 2019; Twenge, 2017). Others have pointed to the negative effects of screen time (Kardaras, 2016; Kaye, 2019). The US-based Center for Human Technology has compiled a *"Ledger of Harms",* which summarises the negative impacts of technology (United States. Center for Human Technology , n. d.). Closer to home, Sensis Australia (2018), cited the main catalysts for non-use of social media as: a lack of time, interest and know-how. Security and privacy have also emerged as reasons for not using social media, but not as a "powerful force" (Sensis, 2017, p. 20).

The triviality of social media is often noted as a reason to degrade its place in political communication. It has been derided as a medium devoid of serious interchange, and described as "superficial, shallow, [and] evanescent" (Cummings & Gottshall, 2014, p. 618). According to Cummings and Gottshall (2014) an increasing appetite for "feel-good content" and a "focus

on fripperies" have short-circuited any meaningful discourse on social media (p. 618). Fuchs (2021b) agrees that the short-form messaging on Twitter "invites simplistic arguments and is an expression of the commodification, superficiality, tabloidisation, and acceleration of culture" (p. 76). Detractors point out that news on social media "is sandwiched between cats, Kardashians and status updates from friends" (Wilding et al., 2018, p. 24). Social media "favours the bitty over the meaty, the cutting over the considered. It also prizes emotionalism over reason. The more visceral the message, the more quickly it circulates and the longer it holds the darting public eye" (Carr, 2015, p. n. p.). It has been suggested that in the political sphere, social media and in particular Twitter, promotes public discourse that is "simple, impetuous, and frequently denigrating and dehumanising", and that "fosters farce and fanaticism, and contributes to callousness and contempt" (Ott, 2017, p. 60).

Social media has altered the pace of political debate by encouraging and enabling its users to comment on political news stories in real time (Aharony, 2012; Parmelee & Bichard, 2012). Public commentary and criticism are far simpler and faster through social media. In this fast-paced environment, messages can be sent immediately, and without the deliberation that may take place in face-to-face communication (Ott & Dickinson, 2019). While social media can make political messages more accessible, the motivation to break down complex political ideas into short messages can alter the tone of debate. The norms of appropriate communication are not yet well established on the social media (Krasodomski-Jones, 2017).

Another perspective proffered, advanced the notion that a key feature of social media was its brevity (Chen, 2013). According to Chen (2013) this characteristic has been a great equaliser because practitioners have had to condense their thoughts, choose their words wisely and have their ideas reduced to simple hashtags. The character limit, as Chen (2013) elaborated:

> …made equals of everyone, in a way: From the greatest wordsmiths to the leader of the free world to the casual user, everybody shared the struggle of editing their thoughts down to their sharpest point (p. 90).

Social media generally, and Twitter in particular, offers a novel way of understanding citizens' attitudes and reactions to events as they unfold, in a way that can be extremely powerful and useful for academics, researchers, advocacy groups, policy makers and MPs.

In the political sphere real time election counts, parliamentary divisions, and reporting of leadership spills is where Twitter has found its niche. More broadly, it has increasingly become important in crisis communications (Flew et al., 2014; Fraustino, Liu & Jin, 2017). As Bartlett et al., (2014) observed, most of the data emanated from peoples' real time reactions to unfolding events (p. 12). Similiarly, Carr (2015) argued that this emotional appeal can be beneficial to politics as it can "spur civic involvement, even among the disenfranchised and disenchanted" (p. n. p.). This "emotional connection" may lead to a "sustained engagement with the political process" (p. n. p.). It is little wonder then that political elites and non-elites have flocked to the platform, despite its reputation for triviality that is off-putting to some.

Social media's reputation as being a double-edged sword may also account for its non-use by some MPs (Grant & Burton, 2018). It has been classified as both a blessing and a curse for politicians (Hermida, 2016). While it is an effective form of communication, it can also cause social media users—including unsuspecting MPs—to inadvertently embarrass themselves or cause irreversible reputational damage. One of social media's unique characteristics is that it preserves digital memory by making a permanent record of online transactions (Pankow, 2013, p. 612). A screen capture of a tweet or a deleted Facebook post detrimental to the reputation of the elected official can now be re-circulated endlessly (Masullo, 2020, p. 59; Perloff, 2018).

Presently every detail posted online is fair game for public consumption (Mandell & Chen, 2016; Stanyer, 2013). This is a deviation from the past, where withholding information was more likely the default setting. According to Habermas (1989), this is known as the "repoliticized social sphere" and has grown out of the traditional separation of public and private. This supports Mayer-Schönberger's (2011) view that for the first time in history, committing information—public or private—to digital memory has become the default, and forgetting the exception. Social media's socio-technical affordances which "foment social saturation" to the point where the default position is to share, share and overshare (Chen, Pain & Fadnis, 2016, p. 135). Or, as Leadbetter (2009), succinctly put it: "you are what you share" (p. 1). Some MPs find this a frightening prospect and have deliberately chosen not to use social media as a result (Jackson, Lilleker & Veneti, 2019).

For instance, a study of Greek MPs revealed that their use of social media was hampered by a range of fears (Jackson, Lilleker & Veneti, 2019). This included a fear of exposing their family, a fear of appearing narcissistic, and a fear of being subjected to trolling (Jackson, Lilleker & Veneti, 2019, p. 5). A fear of making mistakes given that everything on social media is archived and retained permanently was also noted as a barrier to use (Jackson, Lilleker & Veneti, 2019, p. 5). So, although the Greek MPs recognised that social media could be a valuable communication tool for them, their fears outweighed any perceived benefits and precluded their use of the medium (Jackson, Lilleker & Veneti, 2019).

Another barrier to the use of social media by MPs related to literacy. What it means to be social media literate has become more critical to MPs than ever before (Bonnet & Rosenbaum, 2020; Lee, 2018). Training and professional development in this area appears to be an area of unmet need for MPs (Lewis, 2012; Steinack, 2012). Evidence presented to a House of Commons parliamentary committee (2019) repeatedly emphasised the need for greater digital literacy

among users of social media (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2019, p. 85).

Meikle (2016) believed that while “the everyday uses” of the platforms have become second nature to many hundreds of millions of people, there is more to literacy than everyday use (p. 147). Social media literacy is not just about learning how to use specific proprietary software or devices (Meikle, 2016). It is also about both media literacy and information literacy skills in the context of the ongoing practical and conceptual convergence of public and personal content, computing and communications, and the resulting networked digital media environment in which public and personal communication are combined (Meikle, 2016, p. 146). It involves the processes in being able to critically assess, analyse, evaluate, create and act using all forms of communication (Christian, 2019, p. 7). Being information literate can make the difference to one’s lifeworld between being “empowered or manipulated, serene or frenetic” (Rheingold, 2012, p. 3). This is a position supported by Padgett (2017).

Another element that dissuades people from using social media, is its potential as a conduit for online incivility (Standage, 2019). Incivility can best be understood as the “features of discussion that convey an unnecessarily disrespectful tone toward the discussion forum, its participants, or its topics” (Coe, Kenski & Rains, 2014, p. 660; Coe & Park-Ozee, 2020). What constitutes uncivil behaviours has been the subject of scholarly attention, with some arguing they are in the “eye of the beholder” (Herbst, 2010, p. 3; Muddiman, 2017). Chen et al., (2019) conceptualised online incivility on a continuum which includes impoliteness on the benign end and hate speech at the unacceptable end of the scale. Some of the activity on social media violate the norms of polite conversation and some go a lot further (Bejan, 2017; Flint, 2021; Gorman, 2019; Oz, Zheng & Chen, 2018).

Online harassment and threatening behaviours targeting politicians are now prevalent in society (Every-Palmer, Barry-Walsh & Pathé, 2015; James et al., 2016; Rheault, Rayment & Musulan, 2019). A study by Akhtar and Morrison (2019) surveyed 181 members of the UK Parliament. All of them had experienced trolling and many were trolled multiple times a day via Twitter and Facebook. The study found that the pattern of trolling varied between male and female MPs, with a much greater burden on female MPs. The male MPs reported more concern about reputational damage, whereas, the female MPs had more concerns about their personal safety. Gender trolling is directed specifically toward women, and those perceived as feminists or social justice warriors, and is often part of an organised effort to silence their voices (Paananen & Reichl, 2019, p. 152). It aims to limit their impact in digital publics (Sobieraj, 2018). Examples abound of behaviour aimed at shutting down some people's involvement in the political sphere, as well as politically sensitive debates and potentially divisive issues (Rowe, 2015). The proliferation of this "e-bile" in cybersphere is concerning (Jane, 2014, p. 558).

Experiences from other countries pointed to the fact that MPs felt ill-equipped to manage inappropriate behaviour on social media, and that arming them with strategies on how best to identify and report illegal behaviour to the relevant authorities would be beneficial. (United Kingdom. Committee Standards in Public Life, 2017). Without such training it may be difficult to be confident in recognising when intimidatory behaviour constitutes a criminal offence and knowing what to do about it (United Kingdom. Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2017, p. 67). In Australia too there are increasing reports of similar scenarios arising (Flint, 2021, p. 84).

A study by Pathe et al., (2014) revealed that public figure harassment is relatively common among state parliamentarians and identified the possibility that mental disorders may be a commonality among the perpetrators. There was an increasing awareness of the important role

of warning behaviours in the period preceding attacks on public figures (Pathe et al., 2015). This includes the staff of public office holders (Lowry et al., 2015). These warning signs can be monitored so as to assess if someone is escalating on a pathway to violence (Calhoun & Weston, 2016). In Western Australia such behaviours are reported to the Western Australia Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (Sheridan et al., 2019).

It is widely acknowledged that online discourse takes place under a different set of norms to those offline (Jamieson & Doron, 2017, p. 207). Politics has had to adapt to the intricacies of social media which are by no means tailored to the structures, expectations and longstanding traditions of democracy (Krasodomski-Jones, 2017, p. 7). Much of what MPs find unpleasant or counterproductive in online politics simply does not occur to the same degree in offline settings (Krasodomski-Jones, 2017, p. 7). The perils of social media are "painfully apparent" (Gillespie, 2018, p. 5). Feelings of resentment or frustrated disagreement that might previously have been voiced only in front of the television set or among friends, can now be posted directly to social media, where they may gain support and contribute to the user's notoriety, with virtually no risk of recrimination. This propensity for intemperate language and the uncivil tone taints discussions online and can sometimes act as a repellent for those wishing to use social media. (Boulianne, Koc-Michalska & Vedel, 2019; Maisel, 2012; Papacharissi, 2004; Ryall, 2017); Vallor, 2016). As Theocharis et al., (2020) observed, politicians' words can, "not only restrain and reconciliate, but can also spread division and elevate the status of offensiveness from unacceptable to routine" (p. 1).

It is important then, as Gamble and Wright (2019) argued, that the civilised management of disagreements not be lost. In a robust debate, with opposing points of view, a sense of civility needs to be fostered and encouraged (Douglas, 2021). Representative democracies are dependent on people's freedom to engage in political discussion. Freedom of expression is an

important part of a vibrant public life, and democracy depends on those with different viewpoints disagreeing well. That freedom is compromised when a culture of intimidation effectively forces people out of public life, and where people are dissuaded from engaging in political processes (United Kingdom. Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2017, p. 28). Online intimidatory behaviour has already been shown to have a profound impact on, and in shaping political culture with some candidates discouraged from standing for public office (United Kingdom. Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2017, p. 28). This has a disportionate impact on women (Citron, 2014).

It is well known that women in public office are held to a different standard than their male counterparts (Jalalzai, 2016). As far back as 1921, when Edith Cowan was the first woman elected to an Australian parliament, in the PoWA's Legislative Assembly, women MPs have been derided in their workplace (Black & Phillips, 2012; Choules, 2012; Phillips, 1996). Yet the practice continues today, exacerbated by social media (Jane, 2014; Rheault & Rayment, 2019). Media reports frequently focus on women MPs' appearances but feature their male counterparts' political achievements and abilities (Crewe, 2014). To illustrate this point, Hon Darren West (ALP, MLC) made a statement on the floor of the Legislative Council revealing that without anyone noticing or commenting, he wore the same suit into parliament every sitting day for a year (Western Australia. Legislative Council. (2015, November 24) Parliamentary Debates *(Hansard)*, p. 8757). Longer term, the concern is that if the issue of gender equality and equality more broadly, is not addressed the resultant political culture might not be reflective of the society that it represents (United Kingdom. Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2017, p. 29).

Another barrier to using social media by MPs centres on the representativeness of its user base when compared to the general population (Mellon & Prosser, 2017). Parkinson (2012)

questioned how representative social media actually was given that it only attracted “a few loud voices” (p. 165). Pinpointing who is and is not represented on the social media platforms can be problematic (Enns & Wlezien, 2011; Weller, 2016). There is a lack of differentiated statistical evidence of the social characteristics of users on each of the social media platforms (Sloan, 2017). This has been the subject of much discussion and conjecture (Blank & Lutz, 2017). Different social media platforms attract different types of users and audiences (Barberá & Rivero, 2015; Haight, Quan-Haase & Corbett, 2014; Halberstam & Knight, 2016; McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). However, a large proportion of society remains excluded, and potentially and increasingly disadvantaged as a result (Blank, 2017). This points to a digital divide; that is, the prevalence of unequal access to, and usage of, the digital sphere (Broadbent & Papadopoulos, 2013).

The veracity of the information circulating in one’s lifeworld can pose a challenge, especially if decisions are being made based on the accuracy of that information. The challenge for MPs who dwell in a lifeworld that is time-poor and information-rich is in calculating which content is and is not trustworthy (Wheeler & Muwanguzi, 2021). This is not a new problem; it is just that it was known by other synonyms (Flew, 2019, p. 9). The latest is “fake news” which refers to “fabricated stories” which are either wholly not grounded in fact, or work in enough falsehoods as to be misleading” (Lutz, 2019, p. 190). It has also been applied to describe content that a reader might dislike or disagree with (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). The term is also “interchangeable with accusations of bias, or outright lying” (Humprecht, 2019; Lutz, 2019, p. 193). This is what led Persily (2017) to state that fake news creates a “blanket of fog that obscures the real news and information” (pp. 69-70).

The challenge for MPs is the pervasiveness of fake news in their small worlds, lifeworlds and the public sphere, which makes it less likely that political decisions will be based on genuine

information (Valenzuela et al., 2019). In this environment, the viral diffusion of misinformation and disinformation have found fertile ground on which to flourish (Bennett & Pfetsch, 2018; Guess & Lyons, 2020; Nahon, & Hemsley, 2013). Social media have been found to manipulate online discussion based on false assumptions in order to influence or change public perceptions. For example, bots (short for software robots) have been deployed to artificially inflate support for a political candidate (Ferrara et al., 2016, p. 96). One of the implications of this for MPs is that the electorate is distracted from important issues and this undermines public trust in rational deliberation and debate (Vaidhyanathan, 2018, p. 18). It also points to a vulnerability in a democracy in the social media age, especially when it comes to the integrity of information (Edson, Lim & Ling, 2018). This has also led to a degradation in the quality of democratic practices (Persily, 2017, p. 67). A House of Commons (2019) parliamentary committee found that while the internet enabled an unheralded ability to communicate, it also carried an "insidious ability to distort, to mislead and to produce hatred and instability. … and, on a scale and at a speed that is unprecedented in human history" (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2019, p. 6).

Another barrier to use is public trust in the platforms and the degree to which they act as good corporate citizens and conduct their business in an ethical fashion. The "platform" has emerged as a new business model capable extracting and controlling immense amounts of data (Srnicek, 2017). Known as data exhaust, the trace data left by internet users during their online activities have become a valuable commodity (Laterza, 2018). Facebook's current business model of data-driven targeted advertising is at the core of its decision-making (Alaimo & Kallinikos, 2017; Fuchs, 2015), all the while swimming in the "murky waters of content governance" (Bowers & Zittrain, 2020, p. 7). Their invisible inner workings are beyond dispute or appeal, making them relatively unaccountable (O'Neil, 2016).

In essence, this is what transpired with Facebook and its now infamous dalliance with Cambridge Analytica (Isaak & Hanna, 2018; McNamee, 2019; Tarran, 2018). A UK parliamentary committee found that the content people provided to the platforms for a specific purpose was later used to infer information about them for another purpose, without their knowledge or consent (United Kingdom. House of Commons. Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2019, p. 17). This has eroded the trust of some existing social media users and is off-putting to those considering signing up (Freelon, 2019).

Yet these privately-owned platforms are responsible for managing and organising people's lives and heir "hidden decisions" shape social media and influence what we buy, watch and listen to (Bucher, 2018; Gillespie, 2018; Dormehl, 2014). Furthermore, this has meant that the algorithms shape and influence political communication (Kreiss & McGregor, 2017). Or as Zittrain (2013) puts it, they practice "digital gerrymandering" which is the term given to the selective presentation of information by an intermediary to meet its own ideological agenda rather than to serve the best interests of its users. Given the ubiquity of the platforms, they have carved out a privileged position within the public sphere (Sims, 2019). Perhaps, then, MacKinnon (2012) was prescient when foreshadowing that the growth of a privately-owned sphere, that functioned as a new kind of public sphere would be problematic.

As every digital keystroke leaves a time-stamped digital footprint it offers a very fine-grained account of users' information behaviours, including those of politicians (Golder & Macy, 2014; Nielsen & Fletcher, 2020; Solove, 2004; Richards, 2013). This aspect of information behaviour has been forever disrupted by social media (Goggin et al., 2019; van Dijck, 2013, p. 7). Evidence of this was found in the views, attitudes and opinions expressed in the comments, likes and shares posted by, and to, MPs on the social media platforms (Coe, Kenski & Rains, 2014; Muddiman, 2019; Stroud & McGregor, 2019).

Organisational challenges

Another determinant of social media use by parliamentarians relates to their workload and their resourcing capabilities. Over a decade ago, Williamson (2009a & b) observed that little substantive data existed on how the use of digital media had impacted the workload of MPs. As far back as 2002 the House of Commons Information Committee suggested that between 10 and 20 per cent of correspondence was electronic (United Kingdom. House of Commons Information Committee, 2002, p. 9). This figure would be by now significantly higher. Parliaments around the world, as well as individual MPs, have reported increased contacts with citizens, particularly by email (Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Program, 2018).

Instantaneous electronic communications and social media have placed politicians at the forefront of public attention like never before (Grant & Burton, 2018, p. 18). The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2012) noted worldwide accounts from parliamentarians bemoaning that they were “struggling to meet the ever-expanding expectations” of their constituents (p. xxix). MPs had highlighted to the IPU the extent to which their capacity to deliver was “being stretched to the limits” at the expense of their other parliamentary duties (Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Program, 2012, p. xxix). More recently, members of the Victorian Parliament reported that:

> There is increasingly higher levels of engagement by the community in their politics and a much higher level of accessibility of politicians and with this comes a higher expectation of access, immediate engagement and an immediate response to contact and an expectation that we enter every community or political debate, that we offer an informed comment on every issue, if not intervene in every issue. (Mercer, 2019; Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, 2019, p. 8).

These days democratic representation must also include ongoing and responsive listening (Masullo, 2020, p. 60). Capturing and understanding "citizen voices" offers MPs a new way of listening to people and a transformative opportunity to understand what and how they think about a matter (Annany, 2020; Mahoney & Tang, 2017; Solis & Breakenridge, 2009). This offers a "crucial opportunity" to close the democratic deficit (Bartlett et al., 2014, p. 9).

Silences and absences were once seen to be politically suspicious, and the public sphere was the domain of speakers, not listeners (Lacey, 2013; Preece, Nonnecke & Andrews, 2004). Larsson (2016) pointed out that the electorate has an expectation that politicians be contactable and responsive online, social media is not just another tool to broadcast a message to passive listeners but a place for conversation and argument. Online question and answer sessions or townhall-like discussions using Facebook Live demonstrate how technology can be used by MPs to keep up with the demand for two-way "talking" and "listening" communication from their constituents (Krasodomski-Jones, 2017, p. 34). The pace of offline politics is "often slow, laborious and secretive", which is in stark contrast to the pace of online life (Krasodomski-Jones, 2017, p. 13). This poses a challenge for MPs who struggle to respond. However, the challenge for MPs in disregarding political chatter by constituents on social media runs the risk of alienating those who treat it in the same way as a letter or an email. There is a danger for MPs who are incapable of meaningfully responding to the correspondence they receive via social media. Citizens may feel ignored or unheard, while MPs simultaneously feel overwhelmed (Fu et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2020; Matthews et al., 2020).

Having a social media account has become the rule rather than exception for world leaders in western democracies (Burson-Marsteller, 2014). Evidence of increasing contact between the public and its elected parliamentary representatives through social media can be seen through their Facebook posts and Twitter feeds, but less is known about the processes involved in

generating MPs' social media or as Lev-On et al., (2017) puts it, determining how "a Facebook post is born" (p. 549). There is little scholarly research into the dynamics and the behind-the-scenes processes that goes into producing MPs' social media content; that is, whether the account is managed solely by the MP or whether others assist (Frame & Brachotte, 2015). This aspect of MPs' information lifeworlds is explored in this study to understand the maintenance and management of their social media accounts.

One of the few studies to have examined this aspect of MPs' workloads and, the impact of social media on their workloads involved members of Israel's Knesset (Lev-On et al., 2017). Lev-On et al., (2017) inquired into the processes through which Knesset MPs' social media presence was created. The results were generated by interviewing Knesset MPs' staff who offered insights into public perceptions of social media by parliamentarians. The study looked into whether social media was a "dialogue to be carried out, or a burden to be managed" (Lev-On et al., 2017, p. 550). In their study, Lev-On et al., (2017) also advanced the notion that an ethical dimension was involved in staff maintaining politicians' Facebook accounts in that there should be proper disclosure when staff write in an MP's name. That is, staff should identify themselves when they contribute content to the parliamentarian's Facebook account. Otherwise, parliamentarians "reap the benefit" of seemingly direct communication without revealing that a proxy is maintaining their account on their behalf (Lev-On et al., 2017, p. 553).

In another study by Roth et al., (2013), it was reported that many social media accounts in the name of MPs were not actually maintained by the politician themselves, but by their staff. Sabag-Ben Porat and Lehman-Wilzig (2019) found that while many staff were heavily involved in the production of content, the comments themselves were attributed to the MP, with only a quarter of them reportedly writing under their own name. The more intense an MP's social presence and the higher the frequency with which they communicate online with

the public, the greater the interest and the more positive the latter feel towards them (Lev-On et al., 2017, p. 553). Studies show that a feeling of closeness to a politician is positively correlated with a sense of their presence (Kruikemeier et al., 2013; Lee & Shin, 2012a, 2012b cited in Lev-On, Sabag-Ben Porat, & Lehman-Wilzig, 2017, p. 553).

The research by Lev-On et al., (2017) demonstrated that people were far more excited when knowing that the "real MP" was behind the screen and the communication was informal and authentic (p. 553). Despite this, it seems that most staff do not identify themselves by name even when they are responsible for the posts rather than the MPs themselves. As Lev-On et al., (2017) pointed out, MPs' staff did not set out to intentionally deceive the public, "rather the duplicity was more a matter of benign obfuscation" (p. 561). Seemingly, this practice on social media mirrors what occurs in the realm of speech-writing for MPs, where the author's name is not mentioned (Lev-On et al., 2017, p. 561).

When executed well, social media can be a resource hungry endeavour. It has been discussed in the literature by Tenscher (2014) as being time and labour intensive. The criticality in needing to attend to respond in real time is an important element which cannot be ignored (Lev-On et al., 2017, p. 560). In their study, Krasodomski-Jones (2017) found that while many politicians were keen to use social media, they did have some reluctance based on a fear of being overwhelmed by the volume of messaging they might have to respond to and the resources that would need to be allocated to do so (p. 17). Insufficient resourcing is an ongoing source of frustration for parliamentarians (New South Wales. Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal, 2017, p. 17).

Most MPs do not have a standalone position in their office dedicated to social media. At best, their electorate or research officer has been assigned the task, but even that is somewhat problematic because managing the MPs' social channels forms only part of their job description

and in a small team of two, they cannot dedicate themselves fully to it (New South Wales. Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal, 2017, p. 17). Also, shifting staff support to social media from electorate work, means that MPs have less help with other parliamentary work (Ghebretecle et al., 2018). A staff allocation imbalance such as this may mean that the MP is more dependent on their political party for help, and less able to act independently (Ghebretecle et al., 2018, p. 23). NSW parliamentarians argued successfully for designated social media staff to focus on constituent communication. In their view this would lead to more meaningful connections with constituents on social media (New South Wales. Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal, 2017, p. 17). Having dedicated staff tasked with managing social media outwardly demonstrates to constituents that the MP is serious about communicating in an online environment (Straus et al., 2016).

Who influenced adoption?

This study also sought to ascertain who, if anyone, influenced members in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) to adopt social media as part of their constituency communications. Enli & Skogerbø (2013), in a study of Norwegian MPs, queried who motivated them to join social media, finding the key catalyst behind MPs' adoption was pressure from colleagues, journalists, and voters. Once they had opened accounts, the Norwegian MPs reported posting on social media in order to increase their personal visibility, mobilise support, and provide opportunities for dialogue (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013).

According to Tromble (2016a) in an environment where social media use has become common among their colleagues, MPs were more likely to undertake direct engagement with the electorate. The adoption practices of others can influence MPs to open their own accounts and attribute greater importance to them (Metag & Marcinkowski (2012). Avery and Graham's (2013) study indicated that US legislators also recognised that their colleagues' practices

stimulated them to make greater use of social media. There are also example of MPs using social media to forge and maintain strategic relationships with other politicians. See, Cook (2016); Gillespie (2018, p. 5); Jackson & Lilleker (2011); and Noor Al-Deen & Hendricks (2012). According to a study of the Catalan Parliament, social media provided MPs with a networking opportunity for time-poor MPs (Esteve Del Valle & Borge Bravo, 2018, p. 83; Pew Research Center, 2020).

Central to this study is the identification of the factors that influenced members elected to the Thirty-eighth (2008–2012) Parliament and the Thirty-ninth (2013-2017) Parliament to adopt and use social media. This will be considered in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter sought to introduce the phenomenon of social media. Drawing on the extensive academic literature on the topic, the intention was to examine how social media had impacted and disrupted political communications. It also inquired into social media's uptake factors, including the bandwagon effect. It also examined the factors influencing social media adoption and the affordances it offered politicians. The degree to which social media was used by MPs was also addressed, and its impact on MPs' workflows and workloads was also considered. It also examined in some detail a number of the perceived barriers to use of social media by political elites. Using supporting citations from a wide variety of published academic research, the chapter interrogated some of the reasons why social media does not have wholescale penetration within the political domain.

The next chapter considers the design and implementation of the research methodology employed to address the objectives of the study. It also discusses the selection of the survey population, the procedures followed in the design and implementation of the study's primary

research instruments, data collection, data analysis and the ethical dimensions of the study, including the validity and reliability of the survey results.

CHAPTER 4: Research design and methodology

Research is about enquiry, about discovery, about revealing something that was previously unknown (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton, 2000, p. xv).

Chapter objectives

This chapter presents details of the design and implementation of the research methodology employed to address the objectives of this longitudinal study. The chapter discusses the selection of the survey population, the procedures followed in the design and implementation of the study's primary research instruments, data collection, data analysis and the ethical dimensions of the study, including the validity and reliability of the survey results.

Introduction

The previous chapters established the context, background and justification for this study in the form of a review of the available academic literature on the subject. The rationale for undertaking such an extensive literature review is borne out by Hansen and Machin (2019) who posited that all research should be informed by existing research, knowledge and theory, and only after exploring this can consideration be given to the method/s most likely to be suitable. An extensive review of the literature focused on the use of social media by parliamentarians, specifically as it pertains to the member constituent relationship outside of an election campaign. It was informed by a range of important works from the information studies domain, especially everyday information behaviours. Given the longitudinal dimension of the quantitative data, the study aimed to capture the extent to which beliefs, perceptions and information behaviours of the survey population changed or matured over a period of time of time (Menart, 2008; Williamson & Johanson, 2017).

Research design

The research design constitutes the plan or blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Cooper & Emory, 1995). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) defined research design as "a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms first to strategies of inquiry, and second to methods of collecting empirical material" (p. 14). In the same way that the research problem, aim and objectives of the research guide the research in a particular direction, an appropriate and well-planned research design also guides the research process (Cooper & Schindler, 2013).

Similarly, according to Bless, Highson-Smith & Kagee (2006), research design is the specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to achieve the goals established in the research objectives. In the same way that the research problem, aim and objectives of the research guide the research in a particular direction, an appropriate and well-planned research design also guides the research process (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). After all, "[a] good design, one in which the components work harmoniously together, promotes efficient and successful functioning; a flawed design leads to poor operation or failure" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 2).

Methodological approach

Williamson (2018) noted the importance in distinguishing the differences between research methods and methodology. Dervin (2005) observed that many times researchers "collapse methodology into methods" (p. 26). It is therefore useful, and pertinent to the validity of the research that each aspect is well defined and understood. In this study, the definitions of "methods", "methodology" and "theoretical perspective" devised by Crotty (1998) were

applied. In this study, the definitions of "methods", "methodology" and "theoretical perspective" devised by Crotty (1998) were applied.

- *Methods: The techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis.*
- *Methodology: The strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes.*
- *Theoretical perspective: The philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria*. (p. 3).

In assessing a suitable approach for this study, several methodological perspectives were considered, including an ethnographical one. An ethnographical approach has been successfully implemented by parliamentary scholars in previous studies—see, for example, Coleman, 2010; Crewe, 2018; and Geddes, 2019.

While it could be argued that aspects of this study shared some ethnographic qualities, it was adjudged that it did not qualify as a full ethnographic study (Roulston, 2010). Neither can this study be described as a pure phenomenological study, although it does share some of its characteristics. Phenomenology focusses on the study of an individual's lived experience and their inner thoughts, beliefs and their sense of selfhood. See: Budd, 2005; Groenewald, 2004; and Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019. This study was concerned with understanding how social media use impacts the day-to-day professional work practices and information behaviours of MPs in a small Westminster legislature. After further consideration, a mixed methods approach was assessed to be most appropriate.

Mixed Methods Research

This study sought to document the important information discovered at the nexus of the lifeworlds of the participant MPs using mixed methods research (MMR). While previous research has demonstrated how MPs used social media, few of these studies have explored MPs' actual views of their social media use. To address this gap in the literature the overarching research question guiding this study was: To what extent do MPs use social media to communicate with their constituents?

Central to the study was an interest in examining the lived experiences of the MPs and the meanings they derived from that experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was accomplished by asking the MPs themselves to share their thoughts and their lived experiences and was based on replies to two online questionnaires (in Phases 1 and 2 of the study) and on open-ended interview response data (Phase 2 of the study). This had the benefit of being able to garner a more accurate account of the MPs' experiences of using social media. It also enabled their voices to be "heard" in the study's findings. To date, very little, if any, academic research has been carried out in this area. It was envisioned that this study would generate useful insights into the subject area and make a valuable contribution to information behaviour research.

Given that politics is a multifaceted phenomenon, it is too simplistic to be approached from a single angle. Halperin & Health (2016) make the valid point that in politics, often observable things occur, but they cannot be analysed through a solely quantitative approach. In qualitative research, life is translated into text. While not an "exact translation, it is a mirror image: "a product inspired—or breathed into—by the lives you observe and by what you, as researchers, bring to the setting and research interactions" (Glesne, 2016, p. iv). It was for this reason that the mixed methods research (MMR) approach was adjudged to be suitable for understanding the multilayered data involved in this study.

According to Williamson (2007), as with other research conceptualisations, there is a lack of agreement as to what constitutes MMR. Put simply, MMR is the application of both quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study (Timans, Wouters & Heilbron, 2019). However, while the methodologies are complementary, they "are separate and distinct from one another, with different purposes, methods and outcomes" (Mellon, 1990, p. 5). Green and Caracelli (2003) conceded that there is value in the integration of MMR, but stress that an awareness of the assumptions underpinning both is required given that they constituted a "different way of seeing, knowing, and valuing"' (p. 107). In this study, the longitudinal dimension of the of the quantitative data served to illustrate how, if, and to what extent, beliefs, perceptions and behaviours of the survey population changed or matured over a period of time as it related to social media use by MPs. Having multiple data collection points meant that a more detailed level of analysis could be usefully applied (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

Specifically, this study applied an explanatory mixed-methods design that involved collecting and analysing quantitative data in two consecutive phases within the one study (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006). An online questionnaire was disseminated in the parliamentary winter recess in 2012 (Survey 1), followed four years later, by Survey 2. Then qualitative data was gathered in face-to-face interviews with 24 MPs from a subgroup of the target population that had completed Survey 2, (2016). Had a purely quantitative focus been employed, this would not have adequately captured the subjective facets of the inquiry: The "why", and "how" of which MPs used social media platforms to communicate with their constituents, or "which" platforms they used, and for "what" purpose.

Triangulation is an important factor in the validation of research. Triangulation refers to use of multiple methods of data collection with a view to increasing the reliability of a study (Flick,

2014). Put another way, it is the observation of a research issue from a minimum of two points (Flick, 2015). Yet, how it is understood and applied differs greatly within qualitative (e.g., completeness) and quantitative (e.g., confirmatory) traditions (Archibald, 2015). It is also important to note that results that can be triangulated hold significantly more weight while at the same time vastly expand understanding of the results as a whole (Denzin, 2012). Triangulation of results was applied in this study to enhance the validity of the findings.

Ethical considerations

Guided by the leading scholars in this area important ethical concerns were considered at every stage of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Fabris, 2015; Liamputtong, 2013). The requirement that the research be conducted ethically should not be seen as "some red-tape bureaucratic obstacle" (Hansen & Machin, 2019, p. 25). Rather, and importantly, it provides an opportunity for the researcher to check whether the research design was asking the right questions in the most appropriate, acceptable and efficient way. Central to the decision-making in designing and implementing this study was one of the core tenets of ethical social scientific research—the notion of "do no harm" (Berg & Lune, 2016, p. 34).

Informed consent, voluntary participation

In line with Marzano's (2012) teachings on informed consent, study participants were informed about the purpose of this research, the benefits of participation, and the extent to which the records identifying the participants would be treated confidentially. Curtin University, as with all Australian universities, complies with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (NHMRC's National Statement see https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018).

Permission was granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at Curtin

University to conduct this study (MCCA 07-2012; HREC RDHU-169-15). HREC ethical guidelines were adhered to at all stages of the research. A copy of the HREC approval letters can be found in Appendix C.

The consenting adults participating in this study were assessed as being at minimal risk. HREC ethical guidelines were adhered to at all stages of the research. All participants of the research willingly gave their consent to take part. Potential respondents were provided with the contact details of the HREC in case they encountered any issues with the ethical dimensions of the research topic or the researcher. A statement that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw at any time was also included at the beginning of each interview. Interviewees gave explicit consent for their interviews to be recorded and transcribed. This was also documented in the participant information sheet. See Appendices H, I and J.

Confidentiality and anonymity

The "privacy guarantee" is important to not only retain validity of the research but also to protect study participants (Cooper & Schindler, 2013, p. 34). Researchers have a responsibility to protect participants from harm, not just physical, but also from discomfort, embarrassment or reputational harms (Kaiser, 2012). Therefore, both confidentiality and anonymity are fundamental to the conduct of ethical research and were integral components of this study (Morris, 2015). Confidentiality refers to the agreement made between the researcher and the participant about what happens to their data (Sieber, 1992, p. 52). Anonymity means that the respondents remain nameless (Berg & Lune, 2016, p. 38). This meant that participants could feel assured that they could express their opinions without fear of being later identified in any way that might be to their disadvantage.

A well-known difficulty of surveying political elites is protecting the anonymity of respondents. As elites are public figures it is possible to identify individual respondents on the basis of only a few variables (such as year of birth, gender, type of university degree, or party membership). Many of their identifying details are in the public domain. This is especially true for elite respondents with a rare combination of personal characteristics, for example, female holders of senior positions in a legislature. Cognisant of this, every effort was made throughout this study to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the study participants and their data.

Crucial to the success of this study was the trust relationship between the researcher and the participants. In order to encourage participants to provide frank, candid and honest responses to the questions asked in this study, they needed to feel assured of anonymity and confidentiality. This commitment was taken very seriously by the researcher at every juncture of the study, from the data collection and storage to summarising and analysing the results, to writing up the findings. The de-identification of data occurred at the first opportunity. All results and findings were de-identified and aggregated so that individual responses were not distinguishable. Particular attention was paid to the direct quotations cited in the main body of the study to ensure the non-disclosure of the details of the MPs who participated in the study.

Scope of the study

Informed by the extensive literature review, this longitudinal study aimed to gather accurate and reliable qualitative and quantitative data directly from the target population that could be applied to, and, in turn be used to answer the unique research question posed by the study. A longitudinal study is an extended investigation following changes in certain variables amongst a sample over time (Menart, 2008). There are considerable complexities involved in designing and executing a longitudinal survey over and above those that apply to other research methods. However, the benefits and analytical advantages over one-time or cross-sectional surveys make

the endeavour worthwhile (Lynn, 2009). In this study the longitudinal dimension refers to the quantitative data that was gathered over two surveys, four years a part.

Survey target population

There is a strong body of work on empirical elite research, suggesting that the recruitment of parliamentarians for academic research studies is fraught with difficulties (Bailer, 2014; Lilleker, 2003; Tourangeau, Edwards & Johnson, 2014). One reason for this can be attributed to the "many claims on their time" (Crewe, 2021, p. 202). Another barrier to recruiting elites is that they are regularly shielded by gatekeepers, particularly their electorate office or ministerial staff (Druckman & Lupia, 2012). The target population for the study were the 95 members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) in the Parliament of Western Australia. All members of the cohort were personally invited to participate and a high number of them chose to do so. The response rate for both surveys was high: Survey 1 (2012) 76.84 per cent, Survey 2 (2016) 86.32 per cent. See Table 1. This was pleasing given that as Cowley (2021) puts it, politicians are busy people: "Really busy. Busier than most people can imagine" (p. 2).

Given that the target group comprised political elites short on time, much thought was given to the development and use of a flexible and responsive research design to optimise MPs' participation in whatever mode and manner suited them best. As the researcher's preference was for face-to-face interviews with the MPs there was some to-ing and fro-ing with the scheduling of interviews. Some interviews had to be rescheduled, sometimes more than once, at the last minute as the subjects were required on urgent parliamentary business. With this in mind, only a sample of the target population was interviewed (in Phase 2 of the study) from the Thirty-ninth Parliament owing to the practicalities of resource and time constraints. As

Dillman et al., (2014) explained, rather than being a census of every member of the target population, it is acceptable that only a sample be interviewed without it impacting the validity of the overall results.

There are no universally accepted rules for sample size in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, p. 18). The vexed question of how many qualitative interviews should be undertaken is not easily answered (Beitin, 2012), the rule of thumb follows that the researcher keeps asking as long as they are getting different answers (Baker & Edwards, 2012, p. 3). Saturation point is usually achieved when the addition of new interviews does not result in any new information (Finkbeiner, 2016, p. 151; Francis et al., 2010). Furthermore, in a mixed methods study, such as this one, no special sampling strategy was required, and convenience sampling was deemed to be sufficient (Schreier, 2014).

In this study, the number of interviews carried out was predicated on reaching saturation point. By limiting the data collection to a carefully selected sample of the population of interest the researcher was able to concentrate limited resources on fewer individuals. Also, the number of interviews conducted for this study was not perceived as a predictor of quality, and it was for this reason that 24 interviews were determined as a suitable number of interviews for this study. This equated to about a third of the target population. The interviewees comprised a subsection of the cohort that completed Survey 2 (2016) in Phase 2 of the data collection.

Recruitment

Initially email was seen as the best way to contact MPs with the request to participate in this research. However, as Cowley (2021) observed: "MPs now get so much email, and many have If-You-Are-Not-My-Constituent-Then-Bugger-Off auto-replies, so old fashioned snail mail now seems to get more cut through" (p. 25). Although Cowley's account was written after the

data collection phase of this study was completed, it accords with the experience of this researcher. To some degree this scenario was anticipated, and it was for this reason, in the recruitment phases of the research, a letter of introduction was sent to each member of the target population in both the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Parliaments by the respective presiding officers in each house. A follow-up pre-notice letter was then sent by the researcher. See Appendix D

The letter introduced the researcher, described the importance of the research and the salience of the topic and encouraged MPs to participate. This legitimised the request and may have given it an element of credibility that it otherwise may not have been accorded by the target population. This may have accounted for the high response rate and interest in the study by the MPs involved. Other parliamentary scholars have bemoaned a lack of access to MPs and observed that some parliaments "operate with fortress-like impenetrability" (Crewe, 2021, p. 202). Subsequent to the letter from the presiding officers being sent to the target population, a personalised email, tailored to each individual MP, outlining the purpose, nature and sponsorship of the survey and inviting participation via a link to the online questionnaire was sent. The link to the online questionnaire included a unique login which was tied to the MPs' email address. This ensured that a person other than the MP (such as their staff) did not complete the questionnaire. It also avoided the issue of multiple survey submissions by one person.

In Phase 2 of the research, as part of the questionnaire, MPs were asked to volunteer themselves for follow-up interviews. Therefore, the initial preselection for the interviews was based on self-selection from Members of the Thirty-ninth Parliament. Some of the interviewees emerged from recommendations from other MPs and snowballed (Given, 2008, p. 816) from there. The online surveys administered in this study relied on self-reported measures. Survey measures

and long-form interviews have frequently proven to be extremely useful in probing aspects of MPs' experiences that hard-data analysis alone may have been unable to capture (Heitshusen, Young, & Wood, 2005).

Survey instruments

Survey design is "beguiling in its apparent simplicity", but in reality the opposite is true (Daniel, 2012, p. 1). Good survey design is complex, multifaceted and time consuming. With all this in mind, the factors impacting the choice of survey instruments used included: the scope of the study, resource allocation and the timing of the study. Practical issues, such as timing in the electoral cycle, also played an important and significant role in the decision about when and how the research was to be conducted (Banducci & Stevens, 2015). Based on these elements, it was decided that questionnaires and interviews would be the most suitable survey instrument to be applied in this study in order to generate the high-quality dataset required.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires offer an effective means of gathering data from a potentially large number of respondents. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) define a questionnaire as "an instrument of data collection consisting of a standardised series of questions relating to the research topic to be answered in writing by participants" (p. 156). Guiding the structure of the questionnaire was a desire to be able to translate the information required into a set of specific questions that the respondents could and would answer. The aim was to develop an instrument that minimised respondent fatigue, boredom, incompleteness, and non-response given that most respondents are unwilling to devote a lot of effort to provide information (Malhotra, 2019).

Best practice questionnaire design recommends that question wording should strike a balance between two competing goals: the collection of pertinent information in sufficient detail to

answer the study questions, while optimising simplicity to maximise understandability and reliability. The questionnaire was structured using a funnel technique. This meant that the questionnaire started with broad, general questions that were designed to be easy for the respondent to answer.

Tillotson's (1985) strategy of deploying "Dorothy Dix-type" question — those that are questions that are obvious or easily answered—was used at the beginning of the questionnaire (p. 139). Dorothy Dixers are often used tactically by government-aligned backbenchers to prompt a response from a minister. These types of questions serve to warm up the respondent and get them involved in the survey. The middle part of the survey contained the questions that took a little time to think about, and those that were less general interest. The survey ended with generalist type questions that were designed to be easier to answer and of broad interest and application. See Appendices E, F and G for a copy of the questionnaire and related materials.

Thought was given to the layout of the questionnaire and to the order of the questions so as to achieve continuity and a natural flow. Attention was given to the sequencing of the questions so that they flowed logically. Particular emphasis was paid to the way in which the survey questions were worded. Some questions used Likert scale response formats requiring participants to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements pertaining to a parliamentarians' use or non-use of social media. Open-ended questions were included following each of the questions to accommodate any further comment.

The questions were grouped into three sections: Section one of the questionnaire was designed to identify the extent to which MPs used social media in the execution of their parliamentary constituency duties, and the nature of their use. Section two was designed to investigate the respondents' attitudes towards social media and the impact this had on their parliamentary role,

specificially their relationship with their constituents. The final section was designed to generate demographic information about the profile of the respondents.

The first question in any survey is an important one. As such it needs to be salient, interesting and should apply to everyone so that all respondents will need only a few seconds to read, comprehend, and respond to it (Dillman et al., 2014). Success in understanding and answering the first question generally encourages people to continue with the questionnaire. With this in mind, a great deal of thought was put into choosing the opening question in this questionnaire. Following the perusal of a number of previous studies a decision was made to make the lead question a dichotomous response format—"yes–no". From the outset this style of question would funnel respondents as they had to self-select themselves into users and non-users. It was also chosen as it was deemed to be interesting, had universal applicability to all respondents and was assessed as being relatively easy to answer by the survey target population.

The remaining questions were original questions, devised by the researcher in a bid to solicit original and personal insights about the extent to which MPs used social media in the execution of their parliamentary duties, the nature of their use and the impact this had on their parliamentary role, specifically their relationship with their constituents.

The demographic questions used in this study appear towards the end of the questionnaire. Although these demographics were highly relevant to the study objectives and easy to answer, it was decided that it would be unlikely that respondents would see the obvious relevance to the topic if asked first. The final question of the questionnaire provided respondents with an opportunity to make comments about any aspect of the study. Zuckerman (1972) noted that respondents "resent being encased in the straightjacket of standardised questions" (p. 167). Therefore, it was pleasing that numerous respondents took advantage of this opportunity and did so. Many of these de-identified comments have been quoted throughout the dissertation.

Consideration was also given to the appearance and aesthetics of the questionnaire. A visually appealing survey is more likely to garner the attention of the respondent. Particular attention was also given to devising an attractive, interesting and easy-to-complete questionnaire in a bid to optimise responsiveness from the target population. For instance, on-screen font legibility was considered, and an easy-to-read font was used, and allowances were made for adequate white space to be used, so that the questionnaire did not feel crowded and was easy to read. Attention was also paid to the ordering of response categories throughout the questionnaire so as to achieve consistency (Foddy, 1993). It can be jarring to have a multiple-choice question following a yes–no question, then an open-ended question. Clear instructions were provided on how best to complete an answer.

Emphasis was also placed on on keeping the questionnaire as concise as possible while still collecting information in sufficient detail to answer the research questions. Respondents are more likely to satisfice—that is, just get through the survey by marking responses haphazardly, without giving adequate attention to each question and potential responses—if the questionnaire is too long (Gibson & Bowling, 2020; Scott, 2012, p. 1). Potentially this may undermine the veracity of the results as it can detract from the quality of data collected and may even introduce bias (Roberts et al., 2019). With this in mind, considerable effort was put into all aspects of the questionnaire so as to deter satisficing.

Testing and refinement

Pre-testing a survey instrument is an essential aspect of identifying and eliminating potential problems with the instrument ahead of it being circulated to respondents (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). It is advantageous in that it offers the researcher first-hand feedback about whether the questions can be applied without misinterpretation or ambiguity. It also demonstrates how successful the instrument is in capturing the information relevant to

answering the research questions (Hansen & Machin, 2019). The testing and refinement of this survey was completed in a number of stages. The first phase involved a review of the content of the survey questions by select parliamentary officers. The purpose of this phase was to elicit suggestions for improvement and refinement based on familiarity with the subject matter and the cohort of potential respondents.

The second phase of the pre-testing involved a trial of the online questionnaire. The pilot group was broadly representative of the survey sample group in that it comprised both female and male respondents, former parliamentarians from each of the major political parties and senior parliamentary officers who were familiar with the subject matter of the questionnaire and the broader context of the study. The selection of the respondents to the pilot group was more purposive than random (Iarossi, 2006, p. 94). Pre-testers were invited to evaluate all facets of the questionnaire. This included an assessment of the content of the questionnaire, including the appropriateness of the terminology; the importance and salience of the subject matter, the content of the introductory email; the use of the online survey software system (ease of use, ease of accessibility, format, aesthetics, adequacy of instructions); the length of the survey; and the time and effort taken to complete the survey. The piloting phase also allowed for testing of the visual and interactive elements of the questionnaire. As recommended by Orr (2005), the online questionnaire was tested using a variety of devices, platforms browsers, and internet connections.

The feedback from the pre-testing confirmed that the questions were appropriate and not too intrusive or ambiguous. Consequent upon the pilot study, only some minor revisions were made to the layout in a bid to de-clutter the screen. The spacing and size of response boxes where free comments were invited were adjusted. It was suggested by pre-testers that having a larger response-box may invite more comments. A smaller box may have given the impression that

there was a character limit to responses. Between Survey 1 (2012) and Survey 2 (2016), a revision took place and it was decided to drop a question relating to records management, and to add a couple of questions related specifically to the updating practices of MPs when it came to their social media accounts. Also, a decision was made to use Qualtrics in Survey 2, instead of Survey Monkey, owing to access and licensing by Curtin University.

Interviews

Unlike questionnaires, interviews allow participants to answer questions in their own way, and on their own terms. Interviews are particularly useful for making sense and meaning out of people's lived experiences and lifeworlds (Halperin & Heath, 2017). As part of this study, 24 face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with MPs in Phase 2 of the study. All interviews took place in person, at a venue of the participant's choosing. Interviewees were asked the same set of questions, and roughly in a similar order. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in Appendix G. Each interview commenced with an explanation of what the interview was about, and an explanation of the confidentiality of interviewee responses. Ahead of the interviews, permission was sought to make recordings of the interviews so as to obtain an accurate account of what was said and to avoid the loss of important data. This meant that the context was retained and MPs were able to share their nuanced thoughts on "the subtle, as well as the explicit and the obvious" of the social media phenomenon and how it influenced their information behaviours (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. xv).

The first section of the interview revolved around usage of social media to communicate with their constituents. MPs' perceptions, interpretations, views were sought so as to better understand how and why they engaged with their constituents on social media. MPs were also asked about their work practices as they related to social media and the impacts of social media on their workload and day-to-day communication practices with their constituents. The second

part of the interview dealt with their thoughts on social media more generally and its societal impact.

The responsive design of the interviews allowed for a conversational partnership to develop and for questions to be added if required. Many of the interviews exceeded the 30 minutes allocated as the interviewees were generous with their contributions and willing to share their views. This supports the work of Crewe, (2014) who found that most MPs were relieved to talk about what they “really do, rather than idealised versions to counter the often-vicious criticism by the press” (p. 41). That was certainly the experience of this researcher. At the end of each interview, interviewees were asked if they wanted to discuss anything that had not already been raised, or if they had any suggestions for other people to interview. Many of the interviewees suggested other MPs in the Thirty-ninth Parliament that should be interviewed, and this served as a useful referral tool. It also meant that the request for an interview had another layer of legitimacy when they were told that their colleague “MP X” had suggested that they were included in the study.

While it may have been desirable to have had face-to-face interviews with each member of the target population, this would have been impractical. The cumulative effect meant that more MPs were interviewed than originally intended and over a longer time frame than originally anticipated. Although this had timing and resourcing implications, it was adjudged that the benefits outweighed the costs. Most participants had compelling stories to share. Their personal insights offered a unique glimpse into their thoughts and attitudes towards their information behaviours with regards to social media and offered a practical snapshot of their everyday working practices. This added to the veracity of the study.

Data collection and analysis

The data gathering techniques used in this study were designed to capture the knowledge of the lived experiences of the MPs who participated in this study. The aim of the data analysis component of the study was to "make connections, identity patterns and contribute to greater understanding" of the social media phenomenon as experienced by the survey population (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 146). Front of mind throughout the research process was a commitment to data integrity. According to Wheelan (2013) no amount of fancy analysis can make up for fundamentally flawed data. Hence the expression "garbage in, garbage out." (p. 110). The data were systematically collected using the most appropriate methods, they were analysed and interpreted, and inferences are drawn.

Electronically submitted online survey results were saved directly into a computerised file. This automated data collection process sped up the analysis process considerably. It also had the advantage of minimising transcription errors. While the online survey service providers used to host the survey provided basic level analysis, the data was exported into the Microsoft Excel software package, which was used to analyse the questionnaire data. Excel is a sophisticated spreadsheet software with advanced statistical capabilities (Vaughan, 2001). It enabled data to be sorted and arranged in a logical manner. It also facilitated frequency counts, and trend analysis. This allowed the findings between groups to be compared systematically.

Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data from Phase 1 and 2 of the study contained the numerical results and corresponding percentage values for each of the survey responses. The unique dataset was analysed so as to explore the characteristics in the responses and relationships between different data. The quantitative data was exported from the online questionnaire software and imported

into Microsoft Excel, then variables for each of the answer options were defined. The results of the questionnaire also had to be converted into numerical codes. As most of the questions were attitudinal, the Likert scale response options were treated as single variables ranging from "1" for "strongly agree" to "5" for "strongly disagree". Similarly, five-point Likert scales were applied to code answer options with "1" indicating "very important" and "5" indicating "not important at all". Categorical variables were assigned whole numbers. For example, gender fell into one of two categories, with 1 indicating male and 2 indicating female. A few responses were found to have missing answers to individual questions. Where this occurred, it is indicated in the results.

Descriptive statistics were used to obtain a demographic snapshot of respondents. The survey data were analysed comparing their specific values and interdependencies, and lowest values, totals, proportions and distributions. Frequencies and means analysis of the data were used to achieve this. The frequency distribution relates to the number of responses to each of the answer options to each of the survey questions. Means analysis refers to a method of calculating the measure of central tendency (average) for the datasets (Pickard, 2013, p. 287). The results were presented in and tables. These were created using Microsoft Excel.

Qualitative data analysis

The comments emanating from the free-form questions in the questionnaire (from Phase 1 and 2) and the interview component (from Phase 2) of this study generated a rich and multi-layered repository of unique data for analysis. The de-identified data recordings from the interviews, which varied from 30 minutes to over an hour, were professionally transcribed verbatim by a third party. The researcher checked the transcript for accuracy against the audio files. Although textual material can never fully record everything that happens during an interview (such as non-verbal cues), the transcribed interviews provided the data for analysis (Green, Franquiz &

Dixon, 1997). Data analysis of lifeworld-oriented research is an iterative process (Dahlberg, Dahlberg & Nyström, 2020). Qualitative data analysis such as this is based on the subjective, looking at human “perceptions” of the reality constructed by individuals in the context of their everyday worlds, instead of “concrete” realities of objects (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013, p. 92).

Part of the qualitative data analysis process was then automated using QSR International’s NVivo software program. QSR NVivo was chosen for the project due to its robust capabilities for handling written and audio files (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). The use of this software program is particularly helpful when dealing with large datasets, as manual separation of the data and regrouping into themes can be cumbersome and prone to manual transcription errors (Seale & Rivas, 2012). All the qualitative raw data generated from the online questionnaires and transcribed interviews were imported into the QSR NVivo software. NVivo offered timesaving opportunities and facilitated organising the data for easy retrieval and automated cross referencing (Edhlund, 2011). For instance, as the participants were all asked the same set of questions in the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews it was possible to use heading styles to automatically organise the responses. For example, all the responses for question 1 were grouped together.

Analysis of the qualitative data took the form of iterative pattern coding, which entailed repeated readings of the transcribed data, while looking for patterns in the data, connections to the research questions and linkages to the theoretical works underpinning this study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). This enabled the researcher to identify trends and patterns within the data as each answer was analysed for recurring themes and for “similarities, differences, consensus and dissonance within the data” (Williamson, Given & Scifleet, 2018, p. 457). The most common themes were identified by the researcher and then the relevant quotes were

chosen to illustrate the opinions and attitudes of the survey population. Where these comments are quoted, or where reference is made to them, this is indicated with the use of italics in the body of the text.

As well as this, the data were again read through multiple times so that the researcher could "get a feel for the text by handling [the] data multiple times" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 11). This allowed the researcher to become immersed in the textual data before coding sections of text and then combining codes into themes. Again, this meant that like comments were grouped together. These themes were then used as a starting point to systematically organise the data so that it could be subjected to further hands-on analysis by the researcher. Motivated by a desire to better understand what study participants were talking about, the "actual" words they used were closely analysed using the NVivo. This featured interrogation of the data looking for word repetitions, keywords in contexts and the repetition of associative linkages.

The researcher looked for meaning in the representations of the study participants' lifeworlds, as conveyed through the connections found in the rich trove of questionnaire comments and passages in the interview transcripts. Guided by the research question and the objectives of the study and underpinned by the review of the literature on the subject, the researcher closely examined the data to identify common themes—topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. Some broad themes were identified which were relevant to the research question and these were used to develop a rich description of the phenomenon being studied (Clarke & Braun, 2017). This meant that a condensed overview of the main points and common meanings that recurred throughout the data could be formulated.

Data handling and storage

From the outset this study was undertaken with an ethical mindset by the researcher. Data handling procedures in this study complied with the NHMRC's *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. The research was subject to audit by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Accordingly, participants were made aware that the data relating to this project was to be kept for a limited period of five years following the completion of the research, as per HREC standards. Access to the dataset was restricted as is best practice.

Personal details were stripped from the dataset and stored separately. All response files were password protected, this assuring privacy and anonymity of participants. All traceable links connecting the names of participants with their survey responses were removed. No records of participants names were taken, beyond the signing of the participant consent forms. Consent forms were kept separate from the transcripts of interviews at all times. Codes were assigned to each participant before the transcripts were created from the audio files. As can be seen from the aforementioned, every effort was made to facilitate best practice ethical data handling practices and storage.

Rigour of the research findings

To achieve rigour, all aspects of the study—including sample selection, questionnaire design and development, survey piloting and pre-testing, survey instrument delivery, data collection, and data analysis—have been conscientiously planned and executed. Particular attention has been paid to the Total Survey Error (TSE) framework (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2014). The TSE framework refers to the accumulation of all errors that can arise in the design, collection, processing, and analysis of survey data. The survey instruments were designed in such a way that maximised data accuracy, but within the confines of being able to practically

complete the surveys (Biemer & Lyberg, 2003). The best practice guidelines as per the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) "Forms design standards manual" (ABS Cat. No. 1530.0) and "An introduction to sample surveys: A user's guide" (ABS Cat. No. 1500.0) were also consulted. Rigour is also a critical aspect of qualitative research. As such in this study particular attention was given to consistency of approach and delivery in the interviews, including regard for credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Dempsey, 2018).

Validity of the research findings

Validity is defined as the degree to which a researcher has a true or honest picture of the phenomenon being studied (Pendleton & Chatman, 1998, p. 743). Research of this nature should possess both internal and external validity. Internal validity is defined as the extent to which the ideas about cause and effect are supported by the study. External validity refers to the extent to which the study's findings can be generalised to specific populations or to other settings (Walliman, 2018, p. 104). In this study, to ensure internal validity the research questions and objectives aligned with the data collected and the following validation processes were included: the execution of survey pre-tests (questionnaire and interview schedule); methodological triangulation (gathering data by more than one method and from multiple sources); and rich, thick descriptions.

External validity is demonstrated by the study's ability to be replicated (Maxwell, 2013). This is also known as its transferability and refers to the ability of a study's findings to be transferred to other studies regardless of populations, settings, or times (Aastrup & Halldorsson, 2013). It is hoped that this study has a high degree of transferability, however that determination is usually left to the discretion of future researchers (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Reliability of the research findings

Reliability is an important element of survey research, and refers to the extent to which the research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated at a later date, or with a different sample group (Corbetta, 2003). Reliability is concerned with stability, equivalence, internal consistency, and reproducibility (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Corroborating data from multiple perspectives is desirable as it enhances the depth of understanding of the phenomenon that participants use to frame their lifeworlds (Forsey, 2010, Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018). It also provides verification when the data is accurate, the inferences have a reasonable probability for occurring and can be linked to the study's conceptual framework (Roe & Just, 2009).

Therefore, another strength of this study is that methodologically it examined data from more than one source and sought multiple perspectives directly from the stakeholders themselves. The questionnaire was run in 2012 and repeated in 2016, with similar results. This indicates a high degree of reliability. Interviews took place in Phase 2 of the research. Participants' own words (de-identified) were used as much as possible (where appropriate) to support the quantitative data and to describe their views, perspectives and lived experiences. These validity measures augmented the insights gleaned from the extensive literature review and served to enrich and contextualise the references cited, thus ensuring a high degree of reliability. Another strength was the detailed study methodology included to aid replicability for future studies.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter detailed design and implementation of the methodology employed to address the research questions posed in the study. It sought to assess the extent to which social media was used by parliamentarians to communicate with their constituents and the nature of this use. It

sought to obtain the views, opinions and attitudes of the MPs themselves. The chapter discussed the ethical issues involved in the conduct of the study. It also discussed the design and developments of the study's research instruments, two online self-administered questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The selection of the survey sample, the procedures followed, protocols involved, the collection of the data, the analysis of the data, and the validity and reliability of the survey results were also discussed in some detail.

In the next chapter the results of the survey are considered in some depth. These results are discussed in the context of the survey instruments and the data generated by the study participants.

CHAPTER 5: Results

All social research is a coming together of the ideal and the feasible. Because of this, there are many circumstances in which the nature of the topic or the subjects of an investigation and the constraints on a researcher loom large in decisions on how best to proceed (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 35).

Chapter objectives

This chapter presents details of the results emerging from the study. The previous chapter discussed the design and the implementation of the research methodology employed. This study examined the results as they related to Objective One and Objective Two of the study. Objective One sought to assess the extent to which members elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), used social media to communicate with their constituents and the nature of this use. Objective Two sought to obtain the views of the survey population in relation to their motivations for their use or their non-use of social media to communicate with their electorate. These results are discussed in the context of the two online self-administered questionnaires sent to all members of the target population and in-depth face-to-face interviews with select members of this cohort. The study explored MPs' use of social media in their everyday communications with their constituents.

Introduction

In this study, both the online self-administered questionnaires (Phase 1 and 2 of the study) and the interviews (Phase 2 of the study) were designed to collect a unique dataset to enable the testing of a number of propositions on respondents' attitudes to their social media use. The de-identified quotes from participants appear in italics. They have been used extensively throughout this chapter. This is a strength of mixed methods research (MMR) in that it permits those interviewed to have their say and to share their experiences of a phenomenon as it relates

to their information lifeworld (Creamer, 2017). It provides a glimpse into a world “which is not ordinarily on view and examines that which is often looked at, but seldom seen” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. xv).

Analysis of the research questions

The results will now be presented in a question-by-question analysis of the quantitative data gleaned from both questionnaires. The results are illustrated using tables. Throughout this chapter the quantitative data has been supplemented with the results from the qualitative data by using quotes from the interviews and survey comments.

The following abbreviations have been used:

- “n” refers to the response count, that is the number of valid responses received. Some completed questionnaires were found to have missing individual answers. Hence where this has occurred it is noted, as “n” will be less than the total response rate for the online questionnaire.
- “%” refers to the response frequency, that is, the percentage of valid responses received. The percentage is calculated by dividing the number of actual responses by the total number of responses to each question. The results are rounded to one decimal place. Where a rounding error occurs (that is when the totals do not add to one hundred percent) this is noted.
- (S1) refers to Survey 1, the questionnaire conducted with the Thirty-eighth Parliament in 2012 and (S2) refers to Survey 2, the questionnaire conducted with the Thirty-ninth Parliament in 2016.
- (MP interviews) refers to the data collected in Phase 2 of the research in the face-to-face interviews with 24 Members of the Thirty-ninth Parliament.

Response rate

As can be seen below in Table 1, the response rate for both surveys is high:

- Survey 1 (2012) 76.84 per cent
- Survey 2 (2016) 86.32 per cent

Table 1: Survey responses – response rate

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response type	%	n	%	n
No response	23.16	22	13.68	13
Completed	76.84	73	86.32	82
Total	100	95	100	95

The high response rate attained in this study meant that the data generated from respondents are indicative of a wide cross-section of the survey population. Online questionnaires were distributed to all members (n=95) of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly elected to serve in the Thirty-eighth (2008–2012) Parliament and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) in the PoWA. Some completed questionnaires were found to have missing individual answers but given that they were partially completed they were scored as responses. When this occurred, it is indicated in the relevant table.

Demographic characteristics

In addition to the attitudinal style questions, respondents were also asked multiple-choice questions relating to demographics. These questions served to provide context for the collected survey data, allowing for a more nuanced and in-depth analysis of the data. The results of the analyses yielded some valuable insights and are presented here to demonstrate the multidimensional aspects of the quantitative data. Participants in this study embody a cross-section of MPs. This includes MLCs and MLAs from different parties, regions, genders and age groups.

These results are based on the demographic-type multiple-choice questions in the online questionnaire and were used to obtain a profile of the respondents. As can be seen in Table 2 below, the high response rate attained in this study meant that the data generated from respondents are indicative of a wide cross-section of the survey population. For example, the analysis reveals that in Survey 1 (2012), 56.16 per cent of respondents were from the parties in government. Respondents representing the non-government parties (also known as the opposition) comprised 43.84 per cent. In Survey 2 (2016), the opposite was the case, with the majority of respondents from the opposition (65.85 per cent) and just over a third (34.15 per cent) were from the government-side. See Table 2.

Table 2: Survey responses – by parties in government and opposition

		Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Party	Type	n	%	n	%
ALP	Opposition	25	34.24	26	31.71
GWA	Opposition	5	6.85	2	2.44
IND	Opposition	2	2.74	0	0
Libs*	Government	31	42.47	44	53.66
Nats*	Government	10	13.70	10	12.20
Totals	Both Government and Opposition	73	100	82	100
	All Government	41	56.16	54	65.85
	All Opposition	32	43.84	28	34.15

*Note: * = Parties in a coalition-government*

Therefore, responses from a good cross-section of both government and non-government parties were captured. Responses were received from each of the political parties represented in the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. It is therefore a useful metric from which to further analyse the results. See Tables 3 and 4 following:

Table 3: Comparison of respondents to proportion of all MPs – by party affiliation

Respondents	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
- By Party	n	%	n	%
ALP	25	26.31	26	27.36
GWA	5	5.26	2	2.10
IND	2	0.21	0	0
Libs	31	32.63	44	46.32
Nats	10	10.53	10	10.53
Total respondents	73	75.71	82	96.84

Note: 95 members were elected to serve in both the Thirty-eighth and the Thirty-ninth Parliaments respectively

Table 4: Social media usage – by party affiliation

Survey 1 (2012)												
	ALP		GWA		IND		Libs*		Nats*		Total	
Response	%	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes	68	17	100	5	50	1	48.40	15	60	6	60	44
No	32	8	0	0	50	1	51.60	16	40	4	40	29
Total	100	25	100	5	100	2	100	31	100	10	100	73

Survey 2 (2016)										
	ALP		GWA		Libs*		Nats*		Total	
Response	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes	92.30	24	100	2	59.10	26	100	10	100	62
No	7.70	2	0	0	40.90	18	0	0	0	20
Total	100	26	100	2	100	44	100	10	100	82

As can be seen in **Error! Reference source not found.** and Table 4 above, in Survey 1 (2012), general frequencies revealed different trends regarding social media and party affiliation among respondents. Over two-thirds of respondents (68 per cent) who stated that they had adopted social media were from the Australian Labor Party (ALP). In Survey 2 (2016), this had increased to 92.3 per cent. In Survey 1 (2012), over half (51.6 per cent) of members affiliated with the Liberal Party (Libs) indicated that they did not use social media to communicate with their constituents. By Survey 2 (2016), this had decreased to 40.9 per cent, as usage had increased between the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017). Those MPs representing the National Party (Nats) also showed increased social media patronage, with Survey 1 (2012) showing that 60 per cent of respondents

identified as having a social media account, and in Survey 2 (2016) all Nats MPs had a presence. All members of the Greens (WA) had a social media presence in both surveys.

Respondents were also asked to identify the type of electorate that they represented: metropolitan or non-metropolitan. Given that so much rests on the city and the rural/regional divide and the controversial electoral malapportionment in place in Western Australia, it was thought that this would be an insightful metric to measure. See Table 5.

Table 5: Social media usage – by electorate type

	Survey 1 (2012)						Survey 2 (2016)					
	Metro		Non-metro		Total		Metro		Non-metro		Total	
Response	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes	72.9	35	36	9	36	44	84.6	44	60	18	75.61	62
No	27.1	13	64	16	64	29	15.4	8	40	12	24.39	20
Total	100	48	100	25	100	73	100	52	100	30	100	82

When the total number of seats in the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, were compared with the actual number of respondents “by type of electorate”, the response ratio accorded with the constitutional composition of the Parliaments, given that the majority of the respondents represent metropolitan based seats.

Age and gender were other elements considered in the analysis of responses. As can be seen in Table 6 below, the general frequencies generally reflected the distribution of the ages of the members elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017).

Table 6: Social media usage – by age

Survey 1 (2012)										
	30-39		40-49		50-59		60-69		Total	
Response	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes	6.8	5	24.7	18	19.2	14	9.6	7	60.3	44
No	0	0	5.5	4	11	8	23.3	17	39.7	29
Total	6.8	5	30.2	22	30.2	22	32.9	24	100	73

Survey 2 (2016)												
	30-39		40-49		50-59		60-69		>70 yrs		Total	
Response	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes	14.6	12	14.6	12	31.7	26	12.2	10	2.4	2	75.6	62
No	0	0	0	0	7.1	6	17.1	14	0	0	24.4	20
Total	14.60	12	14.60	12	38.80	32	29.3	24	2.40	2	100	82

Only 6.8 per cent of respondents in the 30-39 age bracket in Survey 1 (2012) stated that they used social media to communicate with their constituents. In Survey 2 (2016) this age cohort, doubled to 14.6 per cent of usage. For those in the 40-49 age bracket nearly a quarter (24. 7 per cent) identified as being social media users. However, in Survey 2 (2016) this result was only 14.6 per cent. The results showed that those aged 50-59 years accounted for 19.2 per cent of users in Survey 1 (2012). In Survey 2 (2016), this had increased to almost a third (31.7 per cent) of respondents. The usage by those aged over 60 dropped to 9.6 per cent in Survey 1 (2012) and to 14.6 per cent in Survey 2 (2016).

The role of gender was also considered in this study given that it may impact MPs' information lifeworlds. See Table 7. In terms of gender, the results suggested that the male-to-female ratio of respondents mirrored the composition of the chambers. Male respondents tended to dominate with an overall response rate of 64.4 per cent in Survey 1 (2012). In Survey 2 (2016) the response rate for male respondents was 68.3 per cent. Female respondents equated to 28.8 per cent of respondents in Survey 1 (2012) and 31.7 per cent in Survey 2 (2016). This result is not unexpected, as it accords with the composition of the PoWA (and parliaments generally), where men have tended to traditionally dominate (Gordon et al., 2021, p. 5; Hough, Wilson, & Black, 2020).

As can be seen below in Table 7, in terms of gender, the results show that in Survey 1 (2012), 71.4 per cent of social media users were female and 57.4 per cent were male. In Survey 2 (2016), 67.9 per cent of males identified as being social media users and 92.3 per cent of females used the medium. See Table 7.

Table 7: Social media usage – by gender

	Survey 1 (2012)						Survey 2 (2016)					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
Response	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes	57.4	27	71.4	15	61.8	42	67.9	38	92.3	24	75.6	62
No	42.6	20	28.6	6	38.2	26	32.1	16	7.7	2	24.4	20
Total	100	47	100	21	100	68	100	56	100	26	100	82

Length of service was also examined, as depth of parliamentary experience may have been a factor influencing the use of social media. See Table 8.

Table 8: Social media usage – by length of service

Survey 1 (2012)										
	First term		5-8 yrs		9-20 yrs		> 20 yrs		Total	
Responses	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes	25.35	18	15.49	11	16.90	12	2.82	2	60.56	43
No	14.49	11	9.86	7	8.33	6	5.63	4	39.44	28
Total	39.84	29	25.35	18	25.23	18	8.45	6	100	71

Survey 2 (2016)										
	First term		5-8 yrs		9-20 yrs		> 20 years		Total	
Responses	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes	36.58	30	12.20	10	24.39	20	2.44	2	75.61	62
No	2.43	2	9.76	8	12.20	10	0	0	24.39	20
Total	30.01	32	21.96	18	36.59	30	2.44	2	100	82

The results in Table 8 above show that in Survey 1 (2012) over a quarter of respondents that said they used social media to connect with their constituents were serving in their first parliamentary term. In Survey 2 (2016) this figure equated to 36.58 per cent of respondents. In Survey 1 (2012), 15.49 per cent of respondents indicated that their tenure was in the five to

eight years bracket, in Survey 2 (2016) this equated to 12.20 per cent respondents. In Survey 1 (2012), 16.90 per cent of respondents indicated that their tenure was in the nine to twenty years bracket, in Survey 2 (2016) this was 24.39 per cent of respondents. Only a very small percentage of respondents who had served in the PoWA for more than 20 years reported usage of social media. These results are indicative of the length of experience in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), which included a mix of career politicians and first termers.

Education was another element that was considered in this study as it may have been an influencing factor in social media adoption by parliamentarians. See Table 9. The results indicate that in Survey 1 (2012), 45.5 per cent of respondents stated that they had a TAFE or trade qualification. In Survey 2 (2016), this equated to 41.7 per cent of respondents. Respondents were also asked if they had attained a university degree and in both surveys the majority had. In Survey 1 (2012), 61.8 per cent of respondents had gained a university undergraduate or postgraduate (64.3 per cent) qualification. In Survey 2 (2016), this response was 89.5 per cent and 90 per cent respectively.

Table 9: Social media usage – by educational attainment

Survey 1 (2012)								
	TAFE/Trade qualification		University undergraduate degree		University postgraduate degree		Total	
Response	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes	45.5	5	61.8	21	64.3	18	60.3	44
No	54.5	6	38.2	13	35.7	10	39.7	29
Total	100	11	100	34	100	28	100	73

Survey 2 (2016)								
	TAFE/Trade qualification		University undergraduate degree		University postgraduate degree		Total	
Response	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes	41.7	10	89.5	34	90	18	75.6	62
No	58.3	14	10.5	4	10	2	24.4	20
Total	100	24	100	38	100	20	100	82

Analysis of questionnaire responses

The results from Survey 1 (2012) and Survey 2 (2016) of the study will now be examined in the context of the multi-part research question posed by this study:

> *To what extent did Members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), use social media to communicate with their constituents, and what were their motivations for use or non-use?*

The results are also discussed in the context of *Objective One* and *Objective Two* of the study, which were:

Objective One: Assess the extent to which Members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), used social media to communicate with their constituents.

Objective Two: Obtain the views of these MPs relating to their motivation to use or not to use social media to communicate with their constituents.

The quantitative responses will be supplemented with qualitative data from the questionnaire comments and interview transcriptions.

Social media adoption and usage

To get a sense of the extent to which members of the PoWA—used or did not use—social media in the execution of their parliamentary constituency duties, study participants were asked to indicate whether they used social media to communicate with their constituents. The majority of MPs in both the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) answered in the affirmative. See Table 10.

Table 10: Social media usage – by MPs

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Yes	60.27	44	75.61	62
No	39.73	29	24.39	20
Total	100	73	100	82

As can be seen in Table 10 above, less than 40 per cent of respondents stated that they did not use social media in Survey 1 (2012). By the second survey in 2016, this had further reduced to

less than a quarter; over three-quarters of members in the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) had adopted social media to communicate with their constituents. Usage grew just over fifteen per centage points in the four years between the surveys.

Table 11: Social media – by platforms used

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Facebook	43.16	41	48.33	58
Instagram	0	0	0	0
LinkedIn	0	0	0	0
Snapchat	0	0	0	0
Twitter	34.74	33	35.00	42
YouTube	22.11	21	13.33	16
Other	0	0	3.33	4
Total	100	95	100	120

Note: Multiple options could be selected.

Study participants were also asked which platforms they subscribed to. See Table 11 above. The results indicated that Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were the platforms of choice in both surveys. Adoption of both Facebook and Twitter grew between the two surveys. In the intervening four years, between surveys, the usage of YouTube dropped over the same period.

Some early adopters of social media were accused of "jumping on the bandwagon". Others believed that social media was simply a "passing fad" and unlikely to be usefully integrated into MPs communication portfolios. With this in mind, MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) were asked to share their thoughts on this. The results are shown below in Table 12. Participants were asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed that MPs who used social media were adjudged as jumping on the bandwagon.

Table 12: Bandwagon effect

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Strongly Disagree	26.03	19	26.83	22
Disagree	41.10	30	46.34	38
Neutral	0	0	4.88	4
Agree	30.14	22	19.51	16
Strongly Agree	2.74	2	2.44	2
Total	100	73	100	82

In Survey 1 (2012) about a third of respondents (32.88 per cent) of respondents either "*strongly agreed"* or "*agreed*" that MPs who use social media are jumping on the bandwagon. By Survey 2 (2016) this had dropped to 21.95 per cent of respondents. Put another way, in Survey 1 (2012) almost two-thirds of respondents either "*strongly disagreed"* (26.03 per cent) or "*disagreed"* (41.10 per cent) with the sentiment. This was endorsed further in Survey 2 (2016) when nearly three-quarters (73.17 per cent) "*strongly disagreed"* or "*disagreed"* that the adoption of social media by their colleagues was akin to jumping on the bandwagon.

As to whether MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) believed that social media was a passing fad, the results can be seen below in See Table 13. The results revealed that in Survey 1 (2012) over 72 per cent of respondents either "*strongly disagreed"* or "*disagreed"*. In Survey 2 (2016) this had grown to over three quarters (78 per cent) of respondents.

Table 13: Degree to which social media was seen as a passing fad by MPs

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Strongly Disagree	34.25	25	29.27	24
Disagree	38.36	28	48.78	40
Neutral	0	0	0	0
Agree	26.03	19	17.07	14
Strongly Agree	1.37	1	4.88	4
Total	100	73	100	82

There was little support for the notion that that the use of social media by MPs was a passing fad. This finding was also supported by the survey comments and the interview data which found that social media being a passing fad was a minority view. Although there was some bemusement that it had *"caught on"* as evidenced by this survey comment:

> *Look, I know this is the way of the future, but it's all a bit beyond me. I can't seem to fathom the fascination. Who wants to read a tweet saying what I had for breakfast? (S2)*

Other respondents acknowledged that social media was something that they were going to have to look into, as noted by the following typical survey comments:

> *It's on the to-do list, I just haven't managed to find the time to invest in it. My EO [Electorate Officer] tells me I need to be on Facebook as no-one reads the newspaper anymore. (S1)*
>
> *Not something I've dipped my toe in yet, but it looks like I may have to. (S2)*

Having established that the majority MPs in the PoWA were using social media, respondents were then asked how long they had been active on the platforms. In both surveys the year of the 2008 state general election was used as the benchmark. It will be recalled that social media was still in its infancy at the start of the Thirty-eighth Parliament (6 November 2008). In Survey 1 (2012) over a third (34.09 per cent) of respondents said that they had adopted social media prior to 2008. See Table 14. This finding suggests that a relatively high number of MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) were early adopters of social media, having been active since before 2008. Adoption rates continued to grow as in Study 1, (2012), 65.91 per cent of respondents and in Study 2, (2016) over half of respondents (54.84 per cent) stated that they took up social media since the baseline of November 2008.

Table 14: Social media – active users since 2008

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Since 2008	34.09	15	45.16	28
Before 2008	65.91	29	54.84	34
Total	100	44	100	62

Motivations for using social media

To get a sense of why the study participants adopted and used social media, they were asked to reveal their motivation/s for doing so. They were presented with a range of options and asked to select the reasons best suited to them and their particular lifeworlds. Multiple options could be chosen from the online questionnaire. Additionally, respondents could select the "Other" field, where their choice could be elaborated on in the comments section of the questionnaire. As the following example demonstrates a number of respondents chose to expand on their particular motivations for using social media:

> *[It] allows me to keep an eye on what the commentariat in my electorate are saying. It gives me a sense of what issues are resonating in my community. (S2)*

Useful contributions were also gleaned from the interview quotes, including the following examples:

> *[Name] had a reach of about 7 000 to 8 000 people. So, if I was then to make a comment on both these platforms, I'd be reaching nearly 20 000 residents […] and that would cost me nothing. To try to reach the same amount of people by post would cost me a significant amount of money. (MP interview).*
>
> …

I felt a bit of a responsibility because the media were not there. You know, they came [the media] to events that were quite orchestrated … they weren't there every day. (MP interview).

Interestingly in Survey 1 (2012), an equal spread of respondents (14.29 per cent) reported that they had used social media for multiple reasons simultaneously: because it informed their constituency of their activities in the electorate, publicised their work in the PoWA, allowed them to reach new audiences, raised their constituency profile, generated feedback directly from their constituency, promoted their campaign for re-election, and allowed them to communicate their personal views on an issue. See Table 15.

Table 15: Factors motivating use of social media

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Responses	%	n	%	n
Informs my constituency of my activities in the electorate	14.29	44	15.05	62
Publicises my work in the Parliament	14.29	44	15.05	54
Allows me to reach new audiences	14.29	44	14.56	60
Raises my constituency profile	14.29	44	14.56	60
Generates feedback from my constituency	14.29	44	14.56	60
Promotes my campaign for re-election	14.29	44	12.62	52
Allows me to communicate my personal views on an issue	14.29	44	14.08	58
Other	0	0	0.97	4

Note: Multiple options could be selected. N=95 total MPs elected.

As can be seen in Table 15 above, the results in the Survey 2 (2016) changed slightly, with 15.05 per cent of respondents stating that they used social media because it informed their constituency of their activities in the electorate and simultaneously publicised their work in the Parliament; 13.11 per cent of respondents revealed that social media allowed them to reach new audiences; 14.56 per cent of respondents indicated that their use of social media raised their constituency profile and generated feedback directly from their constituency; and and 12.62 per cent of respondents used social media to promote themselves in a future re-election campaign. Interestingly, 14.08 per cent of respondents reported that their use of social media

allowed them to communicate their personal views on an issue, rather than a political party perspective.

Table 16: Who or what influenced social media adoption?

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Self-motivated	34.19	40	32.56	56
Party	29.06	34	27.91	48
Staff	18.80	22	13.95	24
Peers	8.55	10	11.63	20
Other	4.27	5	10.47	18
Constituents	2.56	3	3.49	6
Media	2.56	3	0	0
Total	100	117	100	172

Note: Multiple options could be selected. “Other” included MPs’ family.

In teasing out the motivations behind their use of social media, MPs were asked to report on who, or what, had influenced them to use social media in the first place. The results, as shown above in Table 16, revealed that in both Survey 1 (2012) and Survey 2 (2016) over a third of respondents stated that their use of social media was self-motivated. The results also indicated that the political party with which the MP is affiliated, and their staff also had an impact on their motivation to adopt social media. In Survey 1 (2012) nearly a third of respondents (29.06 per cent) attributed their adoption to party influence. This trend continued in the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), with 27.91 per cent of respondents stating that the party had had an impact on their take-up.

In Survey 1 (2012) staff had encouraged MPs into engaging with constituents on social media at a rate of 18.80 per cent. This declined somewhat in Survey 2 (2016) when it came to the impact of staff on MPs’ adoption of social media—down to 13.95 per cent. Respondents were also given the opportunity to elaborate on who motivated them to start using social media. Again, many chose to do so. It was also discussed as part of the interviews. This qualitative

dataset from the questionnaires revealed the important and influencing role that staff played in whether or not MPs adopted social media.

My staff were early adopters and they got me onto social media a while back. Took me a while to warm to the idea but now I wonder how I'd get by without it. (S2)
I've got some young, tech savvy staff that encouraged me to take up social media. I was hesitant at first, but now they are an indispensable tool for me. (S1)
I have very savvy staff who alerted me some time ago to the benefits of social media for a constituency focused MP with little resources (S2)

Other factors that impacted MPs' motivation to adopt social media included: their peers, their constituents and the media. In Survey 1 (2012) only 8.55 per cent of respondents indicated that their peers had influenced their social media adoption. In Survey 2 (2016) this had grown to 11.63 per cent. Typical comments included:

Colleagues encouraged me to join up - they were singing Twitter's praises in the party room (S2)
Other colleagues have mentioned how useful it is. (S2)

To (an equally) lesser degree in both surveys, only a small proportion of respondents (2.56 per cent in 2012, 3.49 per cent in 2016) reported that their constituents or the media influenced their motivation to start using social media. In Survey 2 (2016), the results revealed that the media had no stated influence. Some MPs made mention of the characteristics of their electorate and how this had been a motivating factor on their adoption of social media:

As a regional MP, I find social media to be a great way to 'virtually' get around the electorate when it is physically impossible to be everywhere at once. If my constituents

see me busy in one end of the electorate, they understand why I can't be in their part of the electorate. (S2)

I have a highly engaged and online electorate. (S2)

I have a massive electorate. It's really hard for me to get around and see everyone face-to-face so social media helps me in that regard. (S2)

Noteworthy too, was the influence of family in motivating MPs to adopt social media. A number of MPs commented that their children and grandchildren had encouraged them to engage on the social media platforms (MP interviews). See Table 16. Family were a trusted source for MPs, so it is to be expected that they put a high weighting on referrals from them. This is illustrated in the following comments from the questionnaires:

My family also helped to get me on to social media. (S1)

My kids are into it so at first, I joined up to connect with them. I soon saw the benefits of engaging with my electorate. (S1)

My kids inspired me to take the leap into the world of social media (S2)

Having identified which MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) had adopted social media, their reasons for doing so, their motivations for use, and who had influenced their decision to adopt, the next tranche of questions sought to understand more about MPs' lifeworlds and the practicalities involved in the updating and maintaining their social media presence.

Resourcing and organisational challenges

The "back-of-house" aspects of MPs' lifeworlds were also explored for this study. The updating practices within the electorate office differed from MP to MP. As can be seen in Table 17, some MPs indicated that they updated their own social media, whilst others delegated the

task to their electorate office staff. In Survey 1 (2012) nearly two-thirds of respondents (65.91 per cent) indicated that both themselves, and their staff co-jointly managed the MP's social media. This rate declined in Survey 2 (2016) to 51.61 per cent.

Table 17: Responsibility for updating social media

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Myself	22.73	10	29.03	18
My staff	4.55	2	12.90	8
Both myself and my staff	65.91	29	51.61	32
Other	6.82	3	6.45	4
Total	100	44	100	62

In Study 1, (2012), 22.73 per cent of respondents reported that they updated their own social media accounts. By Study 2, (2016), this had grown to nearly a third of MPs who exclusively updated their own social media platforms. In the interviews, this was discussed. As one of the participants observed in a response typical of others:

I don't let the staff run my social media. ... No, I run the social media. Not that I—I trust my staff implicitly in the electorate but I'm not confident that they would be able to put the same political message and nuance the message in the way that I would be happy with... (MP interview).

Another commented that:

It boils down to priorities. I choose to allocate staffing resources to updating Facebook because I can see there is a benefit. More fool to my colleagues who can't see that social media is here to stay…it's not going away. (MP interviews).

In both surveys only a small proportion of respondents reported that their social media accounts were updated exclusively by their electorate office staff as a routine task. Four years later,

although somewhat higher (12.90 per cent of respondents) still a relatively small proportion of respondents reported that their electorate office staff, on their behalf updated their social media.

Given that there were ongoing resourcing implications to consider when establishing, maintaining and engaging in social media, MPs were asked to provide some insights into their day-to-day professional work practices and to expand on how social media adoption impacted them. A small number of respondents—only 6.82 per cent in Survey 1 (2012) and 6.45 per cent in Survey 2 (2016)—revealed that they outsourced their social media to "*others*", including online communication consultants and social media "*experts*". Other respondents shared that they had employed electorate office staff with experience in curating social media content (MP interviews). Another respondent stated that they had a volunteer with social media experience who came in to assist them (MP interviews).

Again, in both questionnaires, and in subsequent interviews, respondents were invited to elaborate on their responses with regards to resourcing their social media initiatives. Inadequate staffing, lack of time and requisite skills featured repeatedly. As one typical participant noted:

> *I could spend all my time responding or commenting to online messages. Every week there is such a deluge to deal with. It gets me down. I feel I'm judged when I don't get back to people. I don't want them to think I'm ignoring to them or not listening. I am! I'm just busy. (MP interview).*

To better understand the way in which MPs used social media to engage with their constituents, the survey asked MPs about how frequently they updated their social media accounts and the degree to which this impacted their already limited resources. This data was useful in assessing the extent to which social media was rated in terms of resourcing priorities.

As can be seen below in Table 18 in Survey 1 (2012) a very high proportion (93.18 per cent) of respondents reported that the updating of their social media occurred *"several times a day"*. When contrasted with the results from Survey 2 (2016) it was interesting to note that the updating rate remained consistently high but had decreased to 67.74 per cent of respondents. In Survey 2 (2016) only 9.68 per cent of respondents stated that they updated their platforms *"once a day"* and only 6.45 per cent of respondents stated that did they so *"weekly"*.

Table 18: Updating frequency

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Several times a day	93.18	41	67.74	42
Once a day	2.27	1	9.68	6
Weekly	0	0	6.45	4
Monthly	0	0	0	0
Other	4.55	2	16.13	10
Total	100	44	100	62

Other comments related to updating social media typical of survey responses included:

Sporadic—often after hours or in between meetings (S1)

As required. If we've got something to post, we do it then. We don't have a regular posting schedule in place. (S2)

I find I spend a lot of time on my socials after hours which isn't ideal (S2)

Very adhoc—depends how busy I am. (S2)

As a non-metropolitan based MP, representing a regional electorate, typical of others stated:

Assuming I'm home, I leave for Perth a Monday morning. I've got Parliament, meetings, committee hearings and events throughout the week, including at night. Then home from Thursday night to Sunday afternoon, mostly doing events in the electorate: school and other 'can't miss' events. Then there's the never-ending local branch fundraising events. I have a big area to cover so I spend a lot of time in my car driving from A to B in the

electorate. My wife and kids are lucky if they get a look in. I'm not complaining, [I'm] just being honest ... it's exhausting. I often head into Parliament on Tuesday simply shattered, before the week has even begun. (MP interview).

As another put it:

I post regularly, but not frequently. (MP interview)

Participants also noted that their physical location and the type of work they were engaged in had a bearing on their information behaviours, specifically on how and when their social media was updated. Others noted that their updating practices varied according to whether Parliament was in session. A new question introduced into the survey in 2016 asked respondents whether the frequency of updating their social media differed according to whether it was a parliamentary sitting day or not. The results revealed that overwhelmingly MPs in the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) were more likely to update their social media on a sitting day when they were present in Parliament House. See Table 19.

Table 19: Updating on a sitting day

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Yes	100	44	45.16	28
No	0	0	54.84	34
Total	100	44	100	62

Comments made in the online questionnaires included:

I often update my Facebook late at night or early in the morning, depending on my schedule. I sometimes update during the day when Parliament is sitting. I spend hours sitting in the Chamber, so it is one thing I can do there and one less thing to do when I get home. (S1)

Now that I think about it, my tweeting increases when Parliament is sitting. It's something I do in the Chamber—especially during QT [Question Time] (S2)

Reading my feed and simply re-tweeting doesn't require much effort so that's something I can chip away at while still being present in the House. (S2)

In an interview, one typical respondent explained that:

it is always front of mind for me— cynical me— that people will assume I'm doing nothing if I don't tell them where I am and what I'm doing. The irony being that if I don't post something for a few days, it's probably because I'm too busy to. (MP interview).

Another facet of the study examined whether participants had formalised their use of social media with a strategy document. Both surveys showed that nearly three-quarters of respondents had not. See Table 20.

Table 20: Formal social media strategy

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Yes	13.95	6	3.23	2
No	74.42	32	74.19	46
Other	11.63	5	22.58	14
Total	100	43	100	62

Notably 11.63 per cent of respondents answered "Other" to this question. Some of the typical survey comments explained this further:

I think having a social media strategy is a good idea for a local MP, but finding the time to sit down and write one is quite another story. It's on the to-do list! (S1)

The party tend to take care of all the strategy stuff, as a local MP, I'm a 'doer'. I'm into getting things done. (S1)

The party had a strategy document for the election, but I don't have one for the day to day MP duties. It would be good to have some direction for social media use and best practice "in between" election cycles. (S2)

I don't have a formal strategy, but I am investing a lot more of my time and resources into social media. Previously, I was very ad hoc in my use, but now I am a lot more considered in my approach. (S2)

Nothing formal in place at this stage. It is something I am planning to look into as I can see the benefits in having a more strategic approach to social media. At the moment, I'm a bit 'hit and miss'...it just depends how busy I am. (S2)

Participants' use of social media could best be described as tactical rather than strategic. This was evident from the comments and interviews with the study participants:

Sporadic—often after hours or in between meetings (S1)

As required. If we've got something to post, we do it then. We don't have a regular posting schedule in place. (S2)

I find I spend a lot of time on my socials after hours which isn't ideal. (S2)

Very adhoc—depends how busy I am. (S2)

This study also sought to assess social media self-efficacy of study participants in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) with regards to social media. Respondents were asked if they, or their electorate staff on their behalf had attended any formal training on social media. See Table 21. In both surveys over half of respondents stated that they had not engaged in any formal training on the use of social media. In Study 1, (2012) this equated to over half (56.82 per cent) of respondents and in Study 2, (2016) it had increased to over two-thirds (64.52 per cent).

Table 21: Social media training

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Yes	29.55	13	9.68	6
No	56.82	25	64.52	40
Other	13.64	6	25.81	16
Total	100	44	100	62

In the online questionnaires, respondents were given the opportunity to expand on their yes/no answers. A number of responses referenced the fact that the political party had organised group training or MPs had organised for their staff to attend training and then shared this training with the MPs (MP interviews). Comments typical of responses included:

> *The folks at party headquarters organised training for all MPs and their staff. It was very worthwhile. (S1)*
>
> *I haven't had any training, perhaps I should. (S2)*
>
> *I'd like to send my staff so that they could come back and teach me! I just don't have the time. (S2)*

A number of respondents mentioned a desire to have training on the better strategic use and management of social media. The scheduling of this training appeared to be a barrier given workloads, especially for country MPs. Some respondents suggested that organising training such as this was a role for the parliamentary authorities. Participants recommended that training could be embedded into the inductions that they were expected to attend once they elected to a new Parliament (MP interviews):

> *I wish this is something that the Parliament would offer. I might suggest at the next PSC [Parliamentary Services Committee] meeting. (S2)*
>
> *This is something I'd like as part of the parliament's induction seminars. There's lots of pitfalls for someone like me. (S2)*

While a large number of respondents stated that they had not had formal social media training, a number of them emphasised that they were self-taught. Others mentioned being *"hands-on"* and *"learning by doing"* (MP interviews).

Contemporary Correspondence Practices of Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments

The next part of the study examined the impact, if any, that social media has had on MPs' contemporary correspondence practices with their constituents. One way to do this was to interrogate the composition of MPs' mailbags, to try and ascertain if, and to what degree it had been impacted by social media. In attempting to learn more about the composition of the everyday mailbox of MPs, participants were asked to estimate what proportion of their electorate office communication comprised correspondence received via social media rather than via the traditional communication channels, such as emails, letters, faxes, telephone calls, in-person visits, etc. See Table 22.

Table 22: Mailbag composition

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Less than 25%	97.73	43	67.74	42
25 - 49%	2.27	1	22.58	14
50 - 74%	0	0	0	0
More than 75%	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	9.68	6
Total	100	44	100	62

Again, while the amount of social media traffic increased significantly from 2.27 per cent in Study 1, (2012) to 22.58 per cent in Study 2 (2016), these results suggest that it was yet to overwhelm. See Table 22. In the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), social media as a form of general correspondence to the electorate office was yet to *"inundate"* or *"take over"* (MP interviews). The majority of constituent-MP contact still relied on the *"traditional channels"* (MP interviews).

Although the survey didn't ask specifically about email, discussion of email arose in both the open-ended responses in the questionnaire and in the interviews. Many respondents referred to the *"daily deluge"* of email and how it *"dominated"* their inboxes (MP interviews). Others spoke of an *"overabundance of email"* and *"feelings of information overload"* (MP interviews). The following comments arising from respondents' survey comments provide some indication of the impact that email has had on the composition of the contemporary MPs' constituency mailbag:

> *Email is still the dominant channel. The electorate office phone rings less and less. These days we hardly get any snail mail, but when we do, it often a rant. Sometimes we get thank you letters from school children and what a joy they are to receive. (S2)*
>
> *My mailbag is mostly my in-box and it is constantly overflowing. I seem to be in perpetual email overflow. (S2)*
>
> *The social media traffic to my accounts is definitely increasing. Plus, I'm still drowning in emails. (S2)*

This study found evidence of MPs being strategic in terms of how they managed their private lifeworlds and the public sphere given that they had to navigate both. Respondents reported having multiple accounts for private and family content on the same platform and a *"MP-work account"* for the purpose of all that is related to their parliamentary duties (MP interviews). As one typical MP responded:

> *I have both. I have my personal account and my MP account. I basically established my personal account just so I could use my MP account. ... tried to keep the political stuff and the official stuff of my office on the MP Facebook page ... My personal page has some of my friends from [Place] and some of my family and people that I've met over the*

> *years who might follow my personal page but they're not interested in [Party name]s' state politics, so they don't follow me on my MP page. (MP interview).*

And, another typical example:

> *With Facebook, I have two sites. I have a private site, which I just use for personal-type stuff, with my friends, and then I have another site, which is basically from my office as a parliamentarian, my shadow ministries, things I get involved with the local community, […] work I'm doing as a member of Parliament, […] I've never believed in being too political with friends and family. (MP interviews).*

Besides seeking insights about the practical lifeworlds, informational small worlds and everyday use of social media by MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), this study also sought to get a sense of how the target population felt about particular affordances offered by social media. The next section of the questionnaire dealt with the affordances and gratifications associated with social media. Informed by the literature review, the next tranche of questions centred on the perceptions and lifeworld experiences of the survey population as they were queried about whether they thought that social media enhanced their representative role, and in what way. For instance,

- Did social media allow them to engage in dialogue with their constituents?
- Did social media afford them an opportunity to improve their electoral prospects?
- In their opinion, to what extent did social media give them new avenues for self-publicity?
- Did they agree that social media eliminated intermediaries and made it easier for them to contact their constituents?
- Did the participant MPs feel that social media gave them greater control over their messaging?

- Did the MPs feel that they were more accessible to their constituency because of their presence on social media?
- In their experiences, have social media facilitated the development of a discrete e-constituency?
- What is their reaction to the statement that social media helps *"humanise"* MPs?
- In their electorate, are their constituents more responsive to MPs' messaging on social media compared to traditional communication channels?
- Did they feel that they needed to be wary of using the real time social media, given that their digital footprint could be used against them at a future date?
- Given the information lifeworlds that they inhabit, did they agree with the premise that it was inappropriate to tweet from the parliamentary chamber, or that doing so may be perceived threat to the dignity of the Parliament?

Informed by the literature review, the study sought to find answers to these questions by asking the MPs elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017). An overview of the responses can be seen in Table 23 below. Further response details can be found in Appendix K.

Table 23: Social media affordances

	Study 1 (2012) n=72						Study 2 (2016) n=82					
	Strongly Disagree or Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree or Agree		Strongly Disagree or Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree or Agree	
Response	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Enhances MPs' role?	9	12.50	9	12.50	54	75.00	10	12.19	12	14.63	60	73.17
Engages in dialogue?	2	2.77	7	9.72	63	87.50	4	4.88	12	14.63	66	80.49
Improves MPs' electoral prospects?	1	1.39	5	6.94	66	91.67	4	4.88	10	12.19	68	82.93
Eliminates intermediaries?	1	1.39	9	12.50	62	86.11	2	2.44	14	17.07	66	80.49
Control message?	5	6.94	7	9.72	60	83.33	2	2.44	14	17.07	66	80.49
MPs more accessible?	10	13.89	7	9.72	65	90.28	4	4.88	12	14.63	64	78.05
Demystify MPs?	6	8.33	7	9.72	59	81.94	4	4.88	12	14.63	66	80.49
e-Constituency?	5	6.94	12	16.67	55	76.39	8	9.76	20	24.39	54	65.85
Responsiveness?	14	19.44	9	12.50	49	68.5	14	17.07	24	29.27	44	53.66
Comments haunt?	0	0	2	2.78	61	84.72	0	0	0	0	82	100
Threat to dignity of Parliament?	50	69.44	0	0	23	31.94	60	73.17	2	2.44	18	21.95
Inappropriate to tweet when in Chamber?	48	66.67	1	1.39	23	31.94	58	70.73	4	4.88	20	24.39

Note: Respondents were asked: To what extent do you agree or disagree to each statement? See also Appendix K.

As can be seen above in Table 23, in Survey 1 (2012) three-quarters of respondents either "*strongly agreed"* or "*agreed"* that social media played an integral role in enhancing their representative role. Similarly, in Survey 2 (2016) an even greater majority of respondents (87.80 per cent), again either "*strongly agreed"* or "*agreed"*. Based on these results, MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) were in no doubt that social media enhanced their roles as representatives of their electorate. See Table 23. The results also revealed that respondents were under no illusion that social media did provide them with a platform from which they could engage in dialogue with their constituents. See Table 23. In both Survey 1, (2012) and Survey 2 (2016) the vast majority of respondents (87.5 per cent in Survey 1 (2012) and 80.48 per cent in Survey 2 (2016) either "*strongly agreed"* or "*agreed"*. Whether they actually did or not was a moot point (Lawless, 2012; Sørensen, 2016).

As was demonstrated in the literature review MPs are very focussed on the electoral cycle. Everything they say and do pivots on that. With this in mind, MPs in this study were asked to share their thoughts, opinions and lifeworld experiences on the perceived benefits of social media on the electoral front. To explore this more fully, respondents were asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed with the statement that having a social media presence improved their electoral prospects. As can be seen Table 23, in both surveys over three-quarters of respondents indicated that they either "*strongly agreed"* or "*agreed"* that having a social media presence improved their electoral prospects. In Survey 1 (2012), 48.61 per cent of respondents "*agreed*" with the statement, 26.39 per cent of respondents "*strongly agreed*". In Survey 2 (2016), 43.90 per cent of respondents "*agreed*" with the statement, a slight drop on the previous result. Also, in Survey 2 (2016), the percentage of respondents that "*strongly agreed*" that a social media presence improved MPs' electoral prospects increased, up 7.76 per cent to 34.15 per cent.

Identified in the review of the literature and examined in this study was the suggestion that social media afforded MPs new opportunities for self-publicity. To explore this further, study participants were asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed with the statement that social media afforded them new opportunities for self-publicity. The results revealed that overwhelmingly MPs agreed with the statement. In Survey 1 (2012), 91.67 per cent of respondents either "*strongly agreed*" or "*agreed*" that MPs had new opportunities for self-publicity on social media. Although the overall result declined slightly in Survey 2 (2016), it still represented the majority of respondents who either "*strongly agreed*" (31.71 per cent of respondents) or "*agreed*" (51.22 per cent of respondents).

A reoccurring theme running through the academic literature suggested that one of the benefits of social media was that it eliminated traditional intermediaries. To ascertain the extent to which study participants agreed with this sentiment they were asked to share some of their personal insights based on their lifeworld experiences. The results revealed that in both surveys the vast majority of respondents either "*strongly agreed*" or "*agreed"* that social media eliminated intermediaries, thereby making it easier for them to communicate with their constituents. The results revealed that in both surveys the vast majority of respondents either "*strongly agreed*" or "*agreed*" that it did. In Survey 1 (2012), this equated to 86.11 per cent of respondents. In Survey 2 (2016), this number declined to 80.49 per cent, but still indicated very strong support for the proposition.

MPs in this study were also of the strong view that social media eliminated the traditional gatekeepers that impacted their constituent communications. In Survey 1 (2012), 83.33 per cent of respondents either "*strongly agreed*" or "*agreed*" that social media allowed them to control their message. See Table 23. A similar finding followed in Survey 2 (2016), when again the majority of respondents (80.49 per cent) either "*strongly agreed*" or "*agreed*". Interestingly, in

Survey 2 (2016), over half of the respondents "*strongly agreed*" with the statement, up from 37.50 per cent in Survey 1 (2012). This is supported by the discussion that emanated from the in-depth interviews with MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017). Many of them believed that social media was an effective way for them to "*get their message out there*" (MP interviews).

Respondents also explained how they created "*personal content on their mobile devices*" to supplement the party's messaging (MP interview). It is therefore beyond doubt that the MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) were cognisant of the affordances of social media to "*steer the narrative*" and "*nuance*" their messages (MP interviews). Examples of this came up in the interviews, where multiple MPs emphasised the importance of nuancing their message, especially when it came to their achievements, which were at times misinterpreted as "*bragging*" (MP interviews).

That social media made MPs more accessible to their constituents was also a factor considered by this study. In Survey 1 (2012), over three-quarters of respondents (76.39 per cent) either "*strongly agreed"* or "*agreed"* that social media made them more accessible to their constituents than ever before. By Survey 2 (2016), this had increased to 80 per cent of respondents. See Table 23. Again, the results were unequivocal, with consistently high ratings between the four-year interval in between surveys.

Given that another defining characteristic of social media is that it is boundless, MPs in this study were asked to consider to what extent they felt that the medium helped them develop a discrete e-constituency comprising persons outside of their physical and territorial electoral boundaries. As one typical respondent explained in an interview:

> *Sometimes they can be useful, especially when I'm working on something or backgrounding for a campaign. But, there's a but! ... if it relates to a request that needs actioning, then I will definitely handball to the relevant member or minister. (MP interviews).*

In Survey 1 (2012), over three-quarters (or 76.39 per cent) of respondents indicated that they either "*strongly agreed*" or "*agreed*" that social media helped them develop a discrete e-constituency comprising persons outside of their geographical electorate. In Study 2 (2016), this had decreased slightly to 65.85 per cent, but still equated to two-thirds of respondents. See Table 23.

Whether social media helped *"demystify"* MPs and provided constituents with an opportunity to get to know them as a person rather than as a stereotypical politician was another aspect considered by the study. The results revealed that in Survey 1 (2012), the majority of respondents either "*strongly agreed"* (20.83 per cent) or "*agreed"* (61.11 per cent) that social media helped to *"demystify"* an MP in the eyes of the electorate. See Table 23. A similar result followed in Survey 2 (2016), when over 80.49 per cent of respondents again either "*strongly agreed"* or "*agreed"*.

The degree to which study participants felt that constituents favoured messages from them via social media when compared to traditional communication (offline) channels was also explored. Respondents in both surveys "*strongly disagreed*" with the notion that constituents were more responsive to messages from MPs on social media versus traditional communications. See Table 23. In Survey 1 (2012), just over 68 per cent of respondents either "*strongly agreed"* or "*agreed"* that constituents were more responsive to messages from MPs on social media versus traditional communications. This dropped slightly in Survey 2 (2016), in which over half (53.66 per cent) of respondents either "*strongly agreed"* or "*agreed"* that

constituents were more responsive to messages from MPs on social media versus traditional communications.

Respondents were also asked how they felt about the risks associated with social media and whether they had considered that they should be wary of using real time social media. The results revealed that in Survey 1 (2012), a very high proportion of respondents (97.26 per cent) either "*strongly agreed"* or "*agreed"* that their comments may come back to haunt them. By Survey 2 (2016), this sentiment was unequivocal as the response grew to encompass 100 per cent of respondents. As one typical respondent noted in an interview, they had a cautious approach to using Twitter, explaining that:

> *I take a more cautious view [to social media]. … if I have got something that I want to say about a policy or something that's happening in my electorate … I'll put it on Twitter. But I'm not just hitting the Twitter button all day like Donald Trump sending out tweets all the time … I don't like that. But that maybe I'm old-fashioned, maybe that's the way of the future. (MP interview).*

Study participants were also asked to share their thoughts on the practice of live-tweeting while sitting in the chamber and participating in parliamentary proceedings. See Table 22. MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) either "*strongly disagreed*" (23.29 per cent) or "*disagreed*" (45.21 per cent) that tweeting in the chamber was a threat to the dignity of parliamentary proceedings. In Survey 2 (2016), 22.50 per cent of MPs in the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) "*strongly disagreed*" and over half (52.50 per cent) "*disagreed*" with the statement. See Table 23.

Study participants were also asked to share their opinions on the appropriateness of MPs tweeting from the chamber when Parliament was in session. In both surveys over two-thirds of

respondents either "*strongly disagreed*" or "*disagreed*" that it was inappropriate. The majority view indicated that MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) did not see the activity as being inappropriate. In Survey 1 (2012), this equated to two-thirds (66.66 per cent) of respondents and in Survey 2 (2016), this had increased slightly to 70.73 per cent. See Table 23.

Impediments to social media use

The questions to date have focused on study participants who adopted social media and their motivations for doing so. The next section deals with the respondents who chose not use social media to communicate with their constituents and details the factors underpinning this decision.

Some of the respondents in both surveys stated that they did not use social media. As was seen above in Table 10, in Survey 1 (2012), 39.73 per cent of respondents indicated that they did not use social media. In Survey 2 (2016) this had dropped to 24.39 per cent of responses. They had a variety of reasons for this. For instance, in Survey 1 (2012), the greatest impediment reported by respondents was a *"lack of knowledge"* (49.15 per cent). See Table 24.

Table 24: Impediments to use of social media

	Survey 1 (2012)		Survey 2 (2016)	
Response	%	n	%	n
Lack of time	11.86	7	18.18	8
Lack of resources	11.86	7	18.18	8
Lack of knowledge	49.15	29	45.45	20
Other	27.12	16	18.18	8
Total	100	59	100	44

Other barriers reported included a *"lack of time"* (11.86 per cent) and a "*lack of resources"* (11.86 per cent). Similar results were yielded four years later, when in Survey 2, respondents revealed that a *"lack of knowledge"* (45.45 per cent), a *"lack of time"* (18.18 per cent), and a "*lack of resources"* (18.18 per cent) had impeded their adoption and use of social media. That

in both sets of survey results, the greatest impediment to use was a lack of knowledge is significant given the fiercely competitive characteristics of the politically partisan lifeworld of a politician.

In the questionnaire, where respondents selected the "*Other*" option they were asked to elaborate on their reasons for their non-use of social media. Reasons given included instances of online incivility, a lack of etiquette, digital connectivity, online access and the representativeness of social media. A number of respondents referred to the representativeness of social media, citing their concerns about the composition of the cohorts using the platform. Many were of the view that social media was not reflective of the general population. Take for instance, this typical comment in the questionnaire:

> *I just don't know enough about social media as yet. I'm cautious about using it. I'm not sure that if it would actually be that useful for me given the demographics of my electorate. (S2)*

A number of other MPs made the point that Twitter was an *"echo chamber"*. For instance, as one typical respondent shared:

> *... a political echo chamber that's [...] "monitored" by journalists. There are other people who will follow you—a Twitterati. There will be other people who will be following your statements, but they'll probably be people of a like-mind anyway. They won't be people that you're trying to reach who you want to change their vote and support you in the next election.*

Another reason that had impeded study participants' use of social media to communicate with their constituents related to online incivility. As one typical participant explained in an interview:

> *I just don't understand it. You can meet someone face to face and have a sensible exchange with them. You might not agree with them, but you respectfully agree to disagree with them and you move on. But in my experience, you can't always have the same on social media. Twitter for example…Twitter seems to attract those who like to rant and rave. Sometimes it is awful. Just awful. (MP interview)*

Others referred to having to deal with *"the trolls"*, many of which came from unexpected quarters (MP interviews). As one interviewee explained:

> *…there are plenty of them out there. […] keyboard warriors, of surprising people. […] younger to middle-aged women in the western suburbs, who would appear as though butter wouldn't melt in their mouth, who drop their kids off in the Audi A5 at the private school, go home and then turn into this raving, crazy keyboard warrior, just piling vitriol on other people to get their jollies. It's not all some weird and whacky overweight, bearded, check shirt wearing, […] people sitting at home, bitter and twisted. It is the most strangest people who are trolling. (MP interview)*

Another typical interviewee reflected that there were:

> *… always sorts of issues there about the way people behave on Facebook, the way they treat each other, the comments they make. […] it's a useful space but it can be very dangerous if you're not careful. It can do more harm than good if it's not treated with the right level of respect […] we need to be more careful about it and no doubt it will evolve and become all-encompassing at some point in point in time. (MP interview)*

As a typical participant observed:

> *Sadly, and to its detriment I think, social media has spurned one too many gutless faceless keyboard cowards. (MP interview)*

Another stated:

> *I have a thick skin, boy do you need it on Twitter. Some of the comments are vile. (MP interview)*

Chapter conclusion

This chapter detailed the results of the analysis of data collected in the two online questionnaires and the in-depth interviews with 24 MPs elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017). The results provide a valuable insight into MPs' information lifeworlds. They are based on the views and experiences shared by a select group of parliamentarians in a Westminster-style parliament. This unique and rich dataset as laid out in the previous sections, has served to describe how this group of parliamentarians perceived of, experienced and incorporated social media into their everyday constituency communications. These results offer a rare and distinct glimpse into the thoughts, opinions and beliefs of the MPs who participated in the study. It also provides a view into their "back of house" and professional work practices not usually available in the public domain and seldom the subject of academic research and analysis. This provides a useful snapshot of social media use among the survey population.

The next chapter discusses the study's findings in more depth, and in the context of satisfying the objectives of this study. The Theory of Information Worlds has guided the study, with particular reference to the works of Habermas and Chatman (See Chapter 2). This is brought together by an extensive review of the literature, which has underpinned every aspect of the study.

CHAPTER 6: Discussion of findings

In terms of information behaviour, the sum total of the small worlds, taken together, are also the lifeworld of the society. Discourse in the public sphere, then, can be viewed as the information and communication activities within and between small worlds occurring simultaneously. (Burnett, Jaeger & Thompson, 2008, p. 7).

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the results of the study in the context of the research question and objectives of this study. Objective One sought to assess the extent to which members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), used social media to communicate with their constituents. Objective Two sought to obtain the views of this cohort of MPs about issues relating to their motivation to use or not to use social media to communicate with their constituents. These results were based on the data generated from two online questionnaires and face-to-face interviews with the MPs themselves.

This chapter discusses the implications of the major findings arising from the study through the prism of the Theory of Information Worlds (TIW). It does so by considering the unique dataset in the context of the scholarly literature on the topic. It will be recalled that the TIW is based on Chatman's theories of small worlds and normative behaviour (Burnett, Besant & Chatman, 2001, Chatman, 1991, 1999) and Habermas' (1992) concept of the lifeworld. The TIW serves this study well as it combines Chatman's conceptualisation of information behaviour at an individual (or groups of individuals) level, with Habermas taking a more generalist approach to the public sphere. Combined, they create a theory that be applied across a variety of settings and contexts to explain the interrelated ways in which information is

treated. For more on the conceptual and theoretical framework underpinning the research see Chapter 2.

This chapter considered the extent to which study participants adopted and used social media. It also examined the motivations and impediments underlying this use and non-use. It did so by addressing the key research question, which was:

> *To what extent did members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), use social media to communicate with their constituents, and what were their motivations for use or non-use?*

Helpfully the broad research question provided the flexibility to explore the topic in depth. It allowed for trends to emerge from the data rather than being limited by a strict set of parameters which may have nudged it toward certain findings and obscured others. Furthermore, the five core concepts central to TIW (Social Norms, Social Types, Information Values, Information Behaviour and Boundaries) that describe social contexts and information behaviour in those contexts, were applied to the findings. The chapter then draws some general conclusions about the use of social media by parliamentarians, including the organisational challenges it imposes on their information lifeworlds and how it influenced their information behaviours.

Direct (de-identified) quotes from the 24 face-to-face interviews carried out in Phase 2 of the study and responses to the open-ended answers in the online questionnaires (from Phases 1 and 2) have been embedded in the text throughout this chapter and appear in italics. The discussion is enriched by these personal insights as they provide a unique insiders' perspective and a rare glimpse into MPs' information lifeworlds rather than constructing a complete picture. The

inclusion of these authentic voices is a strength of the study and it helps us to better understand information behaviours from a more person-centred perspective. First-hand accounts and reflections of the "behind the scenes" and "back of house" operations are useful in compiling an accurate account of this often-opaque aspect of parliamentarians' information behaviours in the niche field of parliamentary information studies.

Social media and information behaviours

Central to this study was understanding the information behaviours of a group of parliamentarians through the application of the TIW. According to the TIW, each individual information world has its own set of social norms and social types, its own patterns of information behaviour and perceptions of information value. Furthermore, the individuals comprising each of these small worlds (in this case a cohort of parliamentarians) have well-established ways in which information is accessed, understood and exchanged within their worlds and the degree to which it is shared internally and externally. As the five key components comprising TIW are not mutually exclusive, they often overlap within any given information lifeworld. How the information behaviours of the study cohort were influenced by perceived social norms and social types, how they were driven by the perception of information values, and the boundaries that separate information worlds were also explored.

In this study, a lifeworld was conceptualised as "the collective information and social environment that weaves together the diverse information resources, voices and perspectives" that all members of a society share (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p. 26). This allowed for different perspectives and experiences realised in the localised context of each individual small world even if theoretically they shared a lifeworld (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010). It also explained how these smaller information worlds, which are situated within a larger lifeworld, were separated by boundaries. In the case of parliamentarians, for instance, an MP operating as a specific social

type at the boundaries between two worlds may engage in specific behaviours (social norms) in a manner that accords with a certain set of information values. They may also—and simultaneously—engage in a specific set of information behaviours (Jaegers & Burnett, 2010). Given the lack of research into the information behaviours of members of the PoWA, this study has provided a unique set of empirical findings to add to the body of knowledge into this hereto nascent topic.

Like other cohorts, politicians' adoption of new media may be attributed to a variety of use intensities and purposes (Hoffmann, Suphan & Meckel, 2016). The determining effects of demographic, socioeconomic, generational, and geographical differences in adopting technology were identified in Chapter 3, with some empirical examinations finding a link between technology adoption and age, gender and education (Czaja et al., 2006; Gulati & Williams, 2015). However, other scholars have found that socio-demographic factors had no effect on adoption practices (Chi and Yang, 2014). For instance, Bürger and Ross' (2014) findings support the notion that external variables such as party, gender, age and class rarely affect the levels of politicians' use of social media, and that differences between the politicians were due ostensibly to their positive or negative experiences with social media and their personal tendency to embrace, or not embrace, new technologies in general (See also: Lev-On et al., 2017).

There are also other factors associated with both the MPs and the technology itself, such as perceived risk, patience, prospective rewards and/or negative outcomes which may influence MPs' information behaviours (Hollibaugh, Ramey and Klinger, 2018). Therefore, the question of why some MPs adopt social media while others do not, is a complex and multifaceted one. Afterall, MPs dwell in an information-rich environment, in which the rates and speeds at which they adopt new technologies vary considerably (Galtrud & Byström, 2019). This is evidenced

by the range of demographic variables on the perceptions and information behaviours shared by the study participants in this study. By analysing the data collected (which was based on their responses to the demographic questions posed in the surveys), a profile of the participants who used or did not use social media in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliaments (2013–2017) emerged.

Central to MPs' decision-making is their electoral prospects and each individual MP's home styles (Fenno, 1978). As was pointed out multiple times in the face-to-face interviews, every decision a politician makes tends to be strategically honed toward invoking political or electoral gain. This includes the decision to adopt and use social media (Freberg, 2018; Hoffmann, Suphan & Meckel, 2016; Marcinkowski & Metag, 2014). Therefore, the marginality of a MP's seat, or how comfortable an incumbent felt about their electoral prospects may be a determining factor influencing social media adoption—see, for example, Gulati & Williams, 2010.

Once elected, the marginality of the seat becomes integral to the incumbent's decision-making. As the electoral safety of a seat decreases, each vote becomes more valuable (Umit, 2017, p. 764). It is for this reason that MPs will investigate options that may garner them exposure and potentially additional votes on election day (Hersh, 2015). Given that they have fewer incentives to cultivate a personal vote it may be expected that MPs from electorally safe seats are less likely to use social media to communicate with their constituents (Umit, 2017, p. 764). Representing a safe-seat did not appear to be a factor in this study, in that it was not mentioned by the study participants as having an influence. This metric, however, wasn't specifically questioned.

Constituency characteristics, such as the number of constituents may also impact information behaviours relating to the uptake of social media (D'Alessio, 2000; Lev-On, 2012). Also, the demographic composition of the electorate was a factor noted by study participants as a

determinant of their social media adoption practices (MP interviews). The type of electorate may have been an influencing factor. Respondents were also asked to identify the type of electorate that they represented: metropolitan or non-metropolitan. Given that so much rests on the city and the rural/regional divide and the controversial electoral malapportionment in place in Western Australia, it was thought that this would be an insightful metric to measure. See Table 5. However, nothing exceptional was noted. When the total number of seats in the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, were compared with the actual number of respondents "by type of electorate", the response ratio accorded with the constitutional composition of the Parliaments, given that the majority of the respondents represented metropolitan based seats.

Doubtless, other subjective considerations also play a significant role in social media adoption (Hoffman, Suphan & Meckel, 2016). For instance, in a parliamentary setting, political party affiliation (a social type) may have an influence. Studies from overseas have shown that adoption is often greatest among politicians drawn from conservative parties (Golbeck, Grimes & Rogers, 2010, p. 1618; Golbeck et al., 2018). In the PoWA, the Liberal Party and National Party are regarded as the conservative parties. In this study, the Liberal Party had the lowest social media penetration in both surveys, but usage did increase between the data collection periods. See Tables 2 and 3. Usage by the National Party also grew in the same period, with all its members identifying as social media users. In fact, usage grew among all the parties represented in PoWA at the time.

Representatives from the smaller parties and those representing more marginal ideologies, admitted to actively using social media to compensate for a lack of mainstream media attention (MP interviews). As with other studies (see, for example, Gibson & Ward, 2002; Hoffmann, Suphan & Meckel, 2016), participants felt that their voices were not being heard in the

mainstream media so they carved out a niche communications channel via social media instead (MP interviews). Study participants observed that there were times they attended events at which the mainstream media were not present, and they were able to capture footage and broadcast it on their social media accounts, which then got picked up by other journalists (MP interviews). This is an example of where MPs assigned the concept of information value to the information they accessed and exchanged in the boundaries of where two small worlds or lifeworlds met.

The results were also analysed through the lens of another social type, that of government and opposition. See Table 2. Analysis by party type (government and non-government parties) provides an important dichotomy in a parliamentary setting. As McKay (2004) observed:

> *Just as seating in the chamber is arranged on the basis of a single clear-cut division between government and opposition, many other matters, and in particular the arrangement for the conduct of business, are based on this principle. (p. 247).*

It is therefore a useful metric from which to further analyse the results. As was seen in Table 2, the analysis revealed that in Survey 1 (2012), over half (56.16 per cent) of respondents were from the Liberal Party and the National Party, that is, the parties who formed a coalition government. Respondents representing the non-government parties comprised 43.84 per cent. In Survey 2 (2016), the opposite was the case, with the majority of respondents from the opposition (65.86 per cent) and just over a third (34.14 per cent) were from the government-side. This may have been linked to their lack of relative resources given their status as an opposition party. The low costs of opening an account for non-government and less established parties may make social media an attractive proposition for resource-deprived opposition members (MP interviews).

Another element linked to the government and opposition dichotomy, not asked about explicitly in the survey but raised by respondents in the interviews as a factor impacting their information behaviours, specifically their adoption and use of social media, was their positionality within the parliamentary party, and again within their parliamentary team (MP interviews). Social types can change over time which influences information behaviours. For example, transitioning from being an opposition backbencher to a cabinet minister can have a range of implications for an individual MP and their information lifeworld, with information behaviours related to social media usage being one of them (MP interviews). In the Westminster system, cabinet confidentiality is a time-honoured convention (Read, 2006). Ministers are duty bound to keep secrets; in not only in their own portfolio, but other portfolios as well. As such, social media use by ministers can be *"very tricky"* (MP interviews). Study participants explained the intricacies associated with holding the dual role of high office of minister, while also being a local representative, and the impact this had on influencing their sense of social norms, information value and information behaviours (MP interviews). At times these overlapping elements were in conflict with one of the small worlds (ministerial role, government member role, local representative role, "good constituency member" role, political party role, faction role, etc.) in which the minister is expected to operate.

Age also appeared to have an influence on social media adoption and use by the study participants. See Table 6. Australia is regarded as having Internet rates of use among a majority of age groups, but the use of social media is primarily related to younger cohorts (We Are Social, 2020). With this in mind it is assumed that MPs' age may have influenced their approach to social media—younger representatives may reasonably be expected to engage more frequently online. There was a view that when social media first emerged, it was only the "legislature neophytes" who were more likely to adopt social media rather than "veteran

legislators" (Cook, 2017, p. 726). See also: Chi & Yang (2014); Lassen & Brown (2010); Peterson (2012).

Age and gender were other elements considered in the analysis of responses. The findings in this study supported the notion put forward by Miskin and Lumb (2006) that "politics is the domain of the middle-aged, that is those aged between forty-five and fifty-nine years" (p. 1). In the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008-2013), the average age of an MP was 53 years, and in the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) it was 51 years (Black, 2018, p. 129). In terms of age, in Survey 1 (2012) over a third (37 per cent) of respondents were aged under 50 and about two-thirds (63 per cent) were aged over 50. This had shifted somewhat by Survey 2 (2016), in that 29.3 per cent of respondents were aged under 50 and 70.7 per cent were aged over fifty.

In 2009, the average age of members serving in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) in the Legislative Assembly was 49.83 years (Black, 2009). The average age for male MLAs was 50.04 years and for women it was 49 years. In the Legislative Council, the average age of MLCs was 53 years. For male MLCs the average age was 53.25 years and for females, the average age was 46.62 years. Therefore, taken together, the average age of all members who served in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) was 50.01 years (as of 1 July 2009) (Black, 2009, p. 123).

In 2013, the average age of members serving in the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) in the Legislative Assembly was 53.9 years (Black, 2013). The average age for male MLAs was 53.06 years and for women it was 52.80 years. In the Legislative Council, the average age of MLCs was 51.07 years. For male MLCs the average age was 52.24 years and for females, the average age was 49.43 years. In the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), the average age of all members serving was 53.02 years (as at 1 July 2013) (Black, 2013, p. 114). As was indcated in Table 6, the general frequencies generally reflected the distribution of the ages of the

members elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017).

The role of gender was also considered in this study given that it may impact MPs' information lifeworlds. See Table 7. References to gender trolling and gender inequity in parliamentary democracies emanating from the interviews suggest that it could have been a factor. In the Legislative Council, in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012), membership comprised 17 women and 19 men. Eleven women and 48 men were elected to serve in the Legislative Assembly. In all, 28 women (or 29.5 per cent) comprised the total membership of the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012). In the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) the gender breakdown was 14 women and 22 men in the Legislative Council; in the Legislative Assembly, it was 13 women and 46 men. Of the total membership of the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), women represented 28.4 per cent (Black, 2018, p. 123). In terms of gender, the results suggested that the male-to-female ratio of respondents mirrored the composition of the chambers.

Male respondents tended to dominate with an overall response rate of 64.4 per cent in Survey 1 (2012). In Survey 2 (2016) the response rate for male respondents was 68.3 per cent. Female respondents equated to 28.8 per cent of respondents in Survey 1 (2012) and 31.7 per cent in Survey 2 (2016). This result is not unexpected, as it accords with the composition of the PoWA (and parliaments generally), where men have tended to traditionally dominate (Gordon et al., 2021, p. 5; Hough, Wilson, & Black, 2020). The year 2021 marked the centenary of Edith Cowan's election to the Legislative Assembly (Cowan, 1978). She was the first woman elected to any Australian parliament (Phillips, 1996). Since then, only a small proportion of members elected to the PoWA have been women (Black, 2018). It seems Edith was correct when she described her attempt to penetrate the PoWA, as being a "tough nut to crack" (Cowan, 1978,

p. 166). As already seen in Table 7, in terms of gender, the results show that in Survey 1 (2012), 71.4 per cent of social media users were female and 57.4 per cent were male. In Survey 2 (2016), 67.9 per cent of males identified as being social media users and 92.3 per cent of females used the medium.

Length of service was also examined, as depth of parliamentary experience may have been a factor influencing the use of social media. See Table 8. Tenure is noteworthy as it tends to be very transient in nature. As the Western Australian Parliamentary Fellows, Hon Philip Pendal, David Black and Dr Harry Phillips (2007) observed:

> Ultimately, so much depends on the Machiavellian combination of good fortune and good management, including the whims of the electorate and the party machines, the decisions made by electoral distribution commissioners, and the state of the Australian and the Western Australian economies, international events, and the ability of the members just stay within legal and ethical boundaries. (Pendal, Black & Phillips, 2007, p. 234).

MPs themselves have little control over the caprices of the electorate, as many of those who found themselves unexpectedly and involuntary deposed on election day can attest (Roberts, 2017). As was demonstrated in Table 8, in Survey 1 (2012) over a quarter of respondents that said they used social media to connect with their constituents were serving in their first parliamentary term. In Survey 2 (2016) this figure equated to 36.58 per cent of respondents. In Survey 1 (2012), 15.49 per cent of respondents indicated that their tenure was in the five to eight years bracket, in Survey 2 (2016) this equated to 12.20 per cent respondents. In Survey 1 (2012), 16.90 per cent of respondents indicated that their tenure was in the nine to twenty years bracket, in Survey 2 (2016) this was 24.39 per cent of respondents. Only a very small percentage of respondents who had served in the PoWA for more than 20 years reported usage

of social media. These results are indicative of the length of experience in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), which included a mix of career politicians and first termers.

Education was another element that was considered in this study as it may have been an influencing factor in social media adoption by parliamentarians. See Table 9. The results indicated that in Survey 1 (2012), 45.5 per cent of respondents stated that they had a TAFE or trade qualification. In Survey 2 (2016), this equated to 41.7 per cent of respondents. Respondents were also asked if they had attained a university degree and in both surveys the majority had. In Survey 1 (2012), 61.8 per cent of respondents had gained a university undergraduate or postgraduate (64.3 per cent) qualification. In Survey 2 (2016), this response was 89.5 per cent and 90 per cent respectively.

This study covered the period 2008 to 2017, a period that could best be described as transitional given that social media adoption and use became mainstream over this time. Children entering school in 2021, will be first-time voters at the 2035 election. It is expected that these digital naturals will bring with them their digital habits and expectations and will already have well-established online social networks (Marquart, Ohme & Möller, 2020). See, also: Bowler & Nesset, 2013; Ohme, 2019; Ohme, de Vreese & Albæk, 2018; Palfrey & Gasser, 2016. The findings of this study found that the number of non-digital native-MPs still outnumbered the digital natives. Study participants predicted that younger and future MPs, having grown up with digital technology will find incorporating social media into their parliamentary representative duties more seamless than the generation of MPs who served in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) (MP interviews).

In the future, it is likely that politicians who choose not to communicate with their constituents on social media will be seen as outliers. Not that long ago it was odd to see a computer in a

MPs office, whereas for an MP not to have a computer on their desk or a device in their pocket is now deemed an oddity. Having a social media account is now expected, and as “mundane” as politicians having a website or a telephone (Flinders, 2016, p. 336). Rather, not having a social media presence is considered an exception to this social norm (Highfield, 2016, p. 123). In future parliaments, this may be worthy of further research, especially as this study of the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) provides a useful baseline from which to pursue further research into this multilayered topic.

MPs’ motivations for using social media by Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments

A range of motivating factors which determine parliamentarians’ adoption and use of social media (see Chapter 3). Often these motivations are interwoven and overlap. This was corroborated by the findings in this study. Respondents reported that they had used social media for several complementary purposes, such as informing the constituency about what they have been working on in the electorate, publicising their contributions to the Parliament, generating feedback from constituents and the wider community about proposed policy, regulatory or legislative initiatives, raising their personal brand and party profile and communicating their views on issues arising. See Table 15. This was reinforced by statements captured from the interviews, responses to the questionnaires and examples in the literature. For instance, a survey of New Zealand MPs, found that the adoption of social media followed similar patterns to those described above—circumvention of the media, citizen interaction, electioneering, and because MPs see other politicians using it (Ross & Bürger, 2014). All of which impacted the information lifeworlds and information behaviours of parliamentarians.

The major findings of the study relating to the factors motivating participants’ adoption and use of social media to communicate with their constituents will now be explored through the prism of the five conceptual elements comprising the TIW.

Social norms

Social norms are what a group or a society deem to be acceptable in behaviour and in appearance. In analysing the data gathered for this study, social norms were a constant theme. Specifically, participants referred to the social norms concerning their role as parliamentarians, how the expectations of this multi-faceted role were reinforced, and how this influenced their information behaviours on social media adoption and use. Participants described the social norms and expectations of them given their position of high office, with many of these norms acting as barriers in their ability to adopt and use social media to communicate with their constituents on a day-to-day basis. In a number of cases participants explained the expectation that they fulfil duties that conflicted with their ability to do so.

The circumvention of traditional intermediaries and gatekeepers was another motivating factor frequently used to explain the adoption of social media by study participants (MP interviews). The vast majority of respondents in both surveys indicated that social media eliminated intermediaries, thereby making it easier for MPs to reach their constituents and control their messaging. See Table 23. Previously, gaining access to the flow of political information meant attracting or influencing mass media coverage which involved designing events that would appeal to TV and radio audiences. Political announcements and press conferences were timed with precision so as to align with the "temporal rhythms of news production" (Jungherr, Rivero & Gayo-Avello, 2020, p. 10). The finely tuned balance between political elites, journalists and media organisations that ultimately shaped the flow of political information has been subjected to "disruption" by social media (Bruns, 2018; Rinke, 2016). Discussions arising from the interviews suggested that there are new social norms regarding information flows, the news cycle and disruption (MP interviews).

This disruption has manifested itself into the information lifeworlds of MPs in a number of ways. Chief among them is the way in which the traditional news cycle has been impacted (MP interviews). As Habermas (1992) contended, the media play an important part in the public sphere. However, political elites have recognised that they no longer need to rely on traditional intermediaries to disseminate their messages (Armstrong et al., 2019). By "cutting out the middleman" politicians can speak directly to a wide audience, and all at once (Hänska-Ahy & Bauchowitz, 2017, p. 28; McNair, 2018; Morini, 2020, p. 3). Tweets or posts can reach millions of people directly "unadulterated by pesky journalists fact-checking and contextualising their message on the evening news" (Hänska-Ahy & Bauchowitz, 2017, p. 28).

As study participants confirmed, gone are the days when a handful of media organisations decided what constituted the news of the day (MP interviews). The contemporary media system now comprised multiple outlets covering politics: "from lowbrow muckraking to highbrow investigative journalism" (Jungherr, Rivero & Gayo-Avello, 2020, p. 10). This accords with the social norms concept in the TIW, where study participants noted that concessions have also been made to editorial standards in the coverage of politics, such that everything is now "*fair game*" and *"there's not much left that's off limits"* (MP interviews). This is especially true of their perceptions of social media (MP interviews).

A number of study participants referenced the fact that they used social media as part of their advertising campaigns given that it was *"very cheap and highly visible"* (MP interviews). Paid advertising or sponsored content on social media is a topic within itself and was outside the scope of this study. It did however come up in discussions with study participants. As a typical interviewee explained *"you can do it in a very subtle way"* through Facebook Groups.

Study participants also explained how they created *"personal content on their mobile devices"* to supplement the party's messaging. One MP described how they created raw *"selfie videos"*

live from a protest rally and had posted them to their Facebook page: *"...something like 40 000 people were seeing my videos and that lifted the patronage to my [MP] page"* (MP interview). This had the advantage of *"bringing in other voices"* to the discussion, especially in the absence of the mainstream media who were not there to capture the story (MP interview). As the interviewee went on to explain:

> *I ... [have] that privileged position of providing a conduit for other people to speak. I think that made it much more interesting than just hearing me speak ... That was one of the most popular videos that I did because they were just young people, talking about the direct impact of [issue] on them. ... they'd grown up in that area and so they were able to tell a personal tale, and so young people used social media more and so they were looking for that and sharing it amongst their friends and so that really went off. (MP interviews).*

The above serves as an example of another strategy used by MPs to *"get their message out"* and study participants noted that the content was often picked up by the local newspapers (MP interviews). In some regions, the demise of the local newspaper or the absence of a resident journalist, has meant that this MP-curated messaging has filled this void (MP interviews). These examples demonstrate how the study participants had modified their information behaviours in a bid to harness the affordances offered by the social media platforms. It also illustrated how the loss of information resulting from the consolidation and commercialisation of media had impacted the small worlds of local communities (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p. 118). The contemporary media landscape now comprised only a few, but very influential information worlds, from which they can then impose their own social norms, social types, information behaviour and information value across the boundaries in small and lifeworlds. By influencing perceptions about certain information in many small worlds, the media can shift

the overall social perception of the value placed on that information across information worlds (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p. 118). Social media provides MPs with a means by which they can use its affordances to shift the perceptions of other small worlds and the lifeworld alike.

In the past MPs' communication options were also curtailed by the gatekeepers at party headquarters, but this relationship has been disrupted by digital technology generally, and social media specifically (Weinberg, 2020). Political parties' preference to centralise and control the communications of political elites is well documented (Marland, Lewis, & Flanagan, 2017). With the advent of social media, it is more difficult for the partisan gatekeepers to control this aspect of an MPs' information lifeworld (MP interviews). This has resulted in MPs being increasingly able to create and share their own online content with the outside world (Grimmer & Grube, 2019; Milazzo & Townsley, 2019). For this reason, social media has been seen by some politicians as "*emancipatory*" in that they now have greater ease in disseminating their own messages, and in their own way (MP interviews).

The surveys revealed that respondents felt their use of social media had allowed them to communicate their personal views on an issue. As some study participants noted, this can be very important to them electorally. There are times when their stance and that of their electorate may differ from the party or government policy. It is therefore useful to be able to express their perspective on an issue "*in their own words*" and from their own "*point of view*" on an issue (MP interviews). This is noteworthy, given the dominant political party system in place in Western Australia (Black, 1979).

Constituents were starting to use social media to bypass politicians' staff so as to get direct access to an elected official. Many of study participants confirmed that they updated their own social media, therefore the chances of them directly seeing a comment or a post in real-time is likely to be quite high when compared to other communication types. In this way, social media

gave the impression that MPs were more accessible. This was confirmed by a large proportion of study participants who agreed (in both surveys) that having a social media presence made them feel more accessible to their constituents. See Table 23. This was seen as another motivating factor in their decision to adopt and use social media to communicate with their constituents.

Study participants shared that another appeal of social media was that it was not subjected to the same traditional gatekeeping practices as other communication channels (MP interviews). This also had implications for their information behaviours. This was especially pertinent when it came to championing their achievements, which were at times misinterpreted as *"bragging"* (MP interviews). Examples of this came up in the interviews, where multiple MPs emphasised the importance of nuancing their message so as not to breach any of the social norms in their information lifeworld. As one typical interviewee explained, if they were to make a statement claiming credit for a government initiative:

> *… I can absolutely guarantee you that I would be lambasted with that. I would really be hammered hard, mainly from the [name] groups who are trolling a lot of the social media sites. But also, you know from people who go, 'Who do you think you are? You cocky bugger'. You know, or they may not have voted for me or people who just think, 'I'll take him down a peg or two'. So, you have to be very nuanced on what you put up [on social media].*

Other study participants explained that in their view, a *"nuanced approach"* and *"subtlety"* worked best on social media, and cited many examples (MP interviews). In the following example, the interviewee explained that they had seen on a Facebook community page that one of their constituents was having a *"rough trot"* after a water inundation issue at the public housing dwelling where they resided with a number of young children. The MP contacted the

constituent to let them know that they were able to organise assistance. The constituent then posted a *"thank you"* message on a community Facebook Group page. As the MP explained, a number of *"positive comments and feedback poured in"*:

> *… it's a question of how you go about putting your message out there. You don't have to put your message out there by ramming your political—either the political ideology or your own political position, down their throat, but if you draw them into the conversation of, 'I'm the local member of Parliament who is actually there to help when people are in difficulties or trouble and represent you,' then you get a completely different response. The trolls will stay away because they know that's not a fight they are going to win, so they'll stay away from it. That's the reason why I would do my own social media. It's important that you do your own social media because you get to control the message and you have to be very careful nowadays about what that message—or how that message is expressed.*

This again points to a recognition by the study participants of a need to adapt and modify their information behaviour to account for the specific affordances offered by social media. In the above example it can be seen that their approach, tone and choice of language influenced their information behaviour. It is therefore beyond doubt that the MPs in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) were cognisant of the affordances of social media to *"steer the narrative"* and *"nuance"* their messaging without being subjected to traditional gatekeeping practices (MP interviews). This was a strong motivator in determining their social media adoption practices.

Social types

Given the composition of the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008-2013) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) mixed age groups, different cultural and employment backgrounds and educational levels, it was unsurprising that the data analysis revealed a mix of competencies relating to social media technologies' best practice and use (social types). Based on analysis of the data collected in this study, it became obvious that MPs shared a combination of motives that shaped their decisions to adopt social media as a way to communicate with their constituents. It also influenced their information behaviours. Like investing in any start-up company, the adoption of a new technology involved weighing up the perceived risks against the benefits (MP interviews). Being an early adopter of a new technology results in either wins or losses. If the medium gains public acceptance, then the politician will be rewarded for being "ahead of the curve" (Hollibaugh, Ramey & Klingler, 2018, p. 6).

This appears to have been the case at the 2007 Federal election, where social media adopter Kevin Rudd was rewarded electorally by tech-savvy voters (Chen, 2013). Another example of this, and noted by study participants, was the 2008 US presidential campaign, when then-Senator Barack Obama assembled a team of "technological wizards" to develop sophisticated models of voter turnout (Hollibaugh, Ramey & Klingler, 2018, p. 6). Initially scoffed at, his success at the ballot box vindicated the risks he took and since then countless politicians all around the world have attempted to replicate his (then) novel approach (Hollibaugh, Ramey, & Klingler, 2018). As this study found, politicians as far afield as Western Australia, took notice and this motivated their adoption of social media (MP interviews). As one interviewee observed:

> *When I was first elected, social media was hardly in vogue. ... we first noticed it with Obama, who was very big into social media. ... he built up such a massive network. I*

think that helped him be elected and I think that came back to Australia. ... politicians saw it and realised that you've got to be there. (MP interview).

The social types element of the TIW was also helpful in describing how people in a group or in a society are perceived and defined by other people who occupy the same information world. In analysing the survey and interview data it became apparent that there was overlap with social norms, as again discussions of social type centered around the role of a parliamentarian, and specifically their constituency role. MPs were often expected to fulfil a number of roles simultaneously and this had a bearing on their information behaviours. As was discussed in Chapter 2, as a profession, politicians are not well regarded (Foa et al., 2020). Typically, politicians do not rate highly in the trustworthiness stakes (Ipsos, 2019). When seen through the prism of the TIW, the social types of self-interest and dishonesty appeared to feature highly when describing the characteristics of elected officials (Allen, 2018; Medvic, 2013; Riddell, 2011). The misdeeds of a few politicians have eroded public confidence in the entire profession (Western Australia. Salaries and Allowances Tribunal, 2020).

Citizens' views of politicians therefore tend to be "highly negative, cynical and characterised by a vernacular of disillusionment that underpins the public disapprobation for those who govern" (Weinberg, 2020, p. 5). Yet for the most part, people simply want their elected representative to be one who perceives their role as that of a constituency representative and one that is a strong advocate for their electorate (Vivyan & Wagner, 2015). In this study, it was therefore unsurprising to hear participants state that they used their social media accounts in order to *"balance the ledger"* (MP interviews).

This was another example of study participants using social types and modifying their information behaviours to account for the affordances offered by social media. Participants confirmed that the functional roles of individuals within an information world were related to

the ways in which such individuals were perceived by other members of that information world. They noted that because they were viewed by others as a specific social type and expected to meet the expectations of that social type, they conformed to the role as it was perceived.

In a bid to meet this community expectation of them, a number of study participants described using social media to satisfy this information need. Study participants recognised that social media could be used to dispel the stereotypical myth of a politician by utilising it to publicise the work they did while in Parliament (MP interviews). They shared that it was particularly useful for highlighting the work they had done in the electorate, as this often went unreported in the mainstream media (MP interviews). Often, electorate work was done at the community level and didn't have the same spotlight on it that perhaps state or federal issues did. While it may have a big impact to a particular subsection of the community, it did not often resonate on the big stage and frequently went unreported.

Again, when viewed through the prism of TIW, this was an example of study participants applying the concept of social types to categorise their information behaviour. Study participants had consciously or subconsciously classified their information exchange with their constituents in a different manner to satisfying their other roles (MP interviews). Therefore, a motivating factor in adopting and using social media was that it enabled MPs to inform their constituency about what they had been doing in actively advocating for the electorate.

By openly sharing information with their constituents on social media, MPs were seen to offer increased transparency and accountability to their electorate through a perception of furthering discussion and civic engagement. This also built trust and credibility, and strengthened democracy, which also benefitted the reputation of the local elected representative. It was also an acknowledgment of the political engagement taking place beyond the realm of formal representative institutions (Gauja, 2015). MPs' personal brands also benefitted from electoral

incumbency (MP interviews). Study participants agreed that they tended to use these extra-legislative mechanisms to enhance their reputation with constituents which, in turn improved their electoral prospects. See Table 23.

Study participants shared that their social media feeds and timelines *"benefitted from photo ops"* (MP interviews). These were subtle ways for MPs to build their personal brand in the electorate giving the impression that they were an active and engaged local representative (Goffman, 1959; Tashmin, 2016). These optics feed into a personal vote-for-me narrative (social type) given that MPs are electorally oriented in their information behaviours (Martin, 2018). This appeared to be a central determinant of social media adoption and use by participants in this study.

Information value

The concept of information value is used to describe the determination of how important information is. Members of an information world tend to share an understanding of which aspects of their world and the wider world are important enough to deserve attention and which are not, as well as an understanding of the information value and meaning of the objects and practices comprising that world. participants also talked about information value in terms of the integration of social media into their communication channels (MP interviews). They also noted the informaiton value in having the requisite skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the technologically advanced society that contemporary MPs are expected to inhabit.

To a certain extent, study participants may be typecast as "early adopters" of social media given that at the start of the Thirty-eighth Parliament social media was in its infancy and this period coincided with the transitioning of social media from being a niche pursuit to one increasingly favoured by the political elite. The early use of social media by Kevin Rudd and Barack Obama

are examples of this. It was this cohort that evaluated social media and assessed the degree to which it offered them favourable affordances. Had this new technology been rendered ineffective, then MPs could have risked their reputations and may have been tarnished by their misjudgement, and adjudicated by the electorate accordingly (Hollibaugh, Ramey & Klingler, 2018). Therefore, the adoption of a new technology constituted a balancing act for many politicians as they had to weigh up the value and consequences of its use or non-use against their particular lifeworld. In a bid to better understand how MPs assessed this risk profile and whether it impacted their decision to adopt social media, this study inquired about it. In both of the surveys, study participants were asked about this. The data supported the argument that there was little support for the notion that social media was a passing fad by study participants. See Table 13.

As Wilson (1999) noted, the information environment can also be a factor. For example, in the context of elected representatives, they differ in periods of political stability (in a non-election period) and instability (during an election, for example). Their characteristic features may influence (stimulate or hinder) information needs and determine behaviour, including the adoption and continued use of a platform. Such contextual factors influence not only the occurrence, and determine the kind of information need, but may also affect the perception of information barriers, and the ways in which a need is satisfied. In this regard MPs in this study placed an information value on the medium and assessed it as adding value to their information lifeworlds. It may have played a part in advancing their constituency roles.

To some extent the uptake of new technologies can also be explained by MPs choosing to use a new service based on their perceptions of how many other MPs used the platform. This was discussed and appeared to be the case in this study (MP interviews). This has been referred to as the bandwagon effect, where a large group of supporters automatically adds credibility and legitimacy to a product or platform as its user base grows. When politicians observe their

contemporaries—and their opposition—using a service, they may assign it an information value that they otherwise might not. They may also be more likely to modify their information behaviour to include the service. Confirmation of this was found in this study, with almost a third of respondents (in both surveys) stating that the political party that they represented had an impact on their initial adoption of social media. See Table 4. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, Western Australia has a longstanding party system, so this finding is unsurprising given the dominant and influential role of the political party in parliamentary and electoral politics.

An equally influential factor for about a third of respondents, in both surveys, was that their adoption of social media was self-motivated. See Table 16. These MPs assigned an information value to the service and as a consequence, they identified that they themselves had made the rational choice to sign up for a social media account. Electorate staff (a small world) were also credited with influencing MPs to take-up social media, but to a much lesser extent. The influence of family in motivating MPs to adopt social media is also worthy of mention as a number of MPs commented that their children and grandchildren had encouraged them to engage on the social media platforms (MP interviews). In the political world, where it is difficult to determine where loyalties lay, MPs' families (another small world) are a trusted source. It is therefore to be expected that a high weighting was placed on referrals from them. This is a further example of where a small world (family, electorate, political party, etc) can influence information behaviours in a lifeworld.

The social norm of waiting until others have trialled and tested the usefulness of new technology does seem have some merit when one considers that parliamentarians have limited resources and the quick rate at which new technologies come and go. While it was not widespread, there was a perception among some of the study cohort that some early adopter-MPs were merely jumping on the social media bandwagon. See Table 12. Again, this points to

social types and the place of social media on the continuum of information value, and how it is very much context dependent.

Information behaviour

Information behaviour refers to how information is used (or not used) within a group or a society. As was identified in Chapter 2, information is key to parliamentarians. In order to fulfil their role, MPs must locate and share information. Participants noted their information behaviours comprised primarily sharing and exchanging information with a number of various stakeholders (including their constituents) and also about seeking information for themselves so as to make informed and evidence-based decisions.

In an era of fast and abundant political communication, social media provides a forum for informed and inclusive public deliberation in the political public sphere. Not quite the public sphere that Habermas (1989) idealised, but it does offer the potential for important information and perspectives from multiple small worlds and lifeworlds to be brought into the political arena. As Chatman (1999) theorised, this provides important conduits for citizens, groups and experts to express and share their views. The power of social media as a political force lies in it being a "low tech version of old fashioned, word of mouth" (Jones, 2014, p. 155). The study findings suggest that participants (as members of an information world) shared an understanding of what information behaviours, practices and activities were most useful to them in terms of their information use, exchange and storage (MP interviews). Therefore, all facets of the normative activities and practices of MPs related to information within a small or lifeworld have been influenced by social media and they have had to adapt accordingly.

In the TIW context, this has meant that the study participants' information behaviours, comprising information exchange (active sharing of information), information seeking (the

explicit behaviour of seeking out information), information sharing (the dissemination of information) and information avoidance (the explicit or implicit avoidance or non-use of information that is linked to information value and social type) have been impacted. For example, by using social media MPs can easily inform their constituents directly about an issue affecting their electorate which can then be publicised in the parliament.

As social media is immediate, the feedback loop also tends to be instantaneous. In the current age of social media, anyone can have their say, in multiple ways and at any time of the day. Responsiveness is widely considered a core value in democratic politics. MPs believe that they are rewarded for responsive behaviour at the ballot box (Campbell & Zittel, 2020). In the past, non-elites have bemoaned the fact that they were not consulted about important political decisions that affect their lives. The advent of social media use for constituent communications has meant that citizens are no longer left "feeling like beguiled and confused onlookers" in the political sphere (Coleman, 2017, p. 30). This affordance is one of the reasons that study participants were drawn to and motivated them to open an account on social media (MP interviews).

Scholars theorised that the reduced barriers to directly contacting elected officials brought about by social media would lead to a more robust, participatory and responsive representative democracy (Blumler, 2015). However, social media's democratic potential depended not only on facilitating new forms of citizen-to-MP communication, but also on these new forms of participation being effective in influencing elected representatives. Based on the findings contained in this study, the participatory potential of social media for MPs was yet to be fully realised by the members of the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017). While, ideally, MPs would like to engage with their constituents in real time, many did not (MP interviews). This points to a mismatch between MPs' idealistic

ambitions of dialogue with constituents and the broadcast nature of these interactions (Sweetser & Lariscy, 2008). A healthy democracy thrives on the bi-directional flow of information between MPs and citizens, and citizens and MPs. Yet MPs are often derided for not utilising this two-way functionality to engage with their constituents. The vast majority of study participants shared a desire to engage in dialogue with their constituents and agreed that social media provided them with a platform from which to do so. See Table 23. However, the degree to which they did so varied from MP to MP (MP interviews).

The information behaviours of some of the study participants indicated that they used social media more as a *"listening tool"* than a *"talking tool"* (MP interviews). This is noteworthy because generally in politics, the social norm of hearing a counter argument is undervalued (Dobson, 2014; Mutz, 2006). Democracy is typically focused on political "voices" rather than on "listening" (Flinders, 2016, p. 194). In part, this can be put down to adversarial or gladiatorial nature of politics which tends to be "loud and brash […] high-pitch and high-octane […] frequently shallow and inane, but there is very little silence" (Flinders, 2016, p. 195). Another factor may be that MPs who are good listeners run the risk of being ridiculed for reassessing information provided to them and reconsidering their point of view on an issue. In a parliamentary setting where the default culture is infantile and immature, such reflective behaviour is not rewarded (Flinders, 2016, p. 195). Changing one's mind or compromising on a position is perceived as a weakness (Flinders, 2016). This view of political culture was shared by study participants (MP interviews).

This also points to the TIW's concept of information value where something can be of ideological value (because it supports a particular political position), of contextual value (within a specific timeframe, place or situation but otherwise may not be of value), or simply of intrinsic value (to the individual without articulating how or why it is important important—

it just is). This means that study participants assigned an information value to their presence on social media simply because it facilitated *"listening"* rather than *"talking"* (MP interviews). Sometimes this listening took place in the boundaries between information worlds.

Boundaries

A key tenet of the TIW is that the exchange of information may occur, or not occur, at the boundaries between information worlds, either between small worlds, or between a small world and the lifeworld. A parliament can be thought of as a small world that exists within the larger lifeworld of society. So too, an electorate. Each of those is also an information world, and there are other information worlds within a parliament. Politicians occupy one of those worlds, as do constituents, journalists, political parties, parliamentary staff and many others. Individual MPs may be part of those information worlds as well, but also removed from them in some ways. Participants expressed this paradox of boundaries in the context of their day-to-day information behaviours (MP interviews). They observed their information worlds were a complex, interwoven, ever-changing information ecosystem.

The extent to which social media afforded MPs the opportunity to develop a discrete e-constituency comprising persons based outside of the geographical and physical borders of their electorate, was also considered by this study given its potential impact on the TIW's concept of boundaries. Participants were asked to share their views on this aspect of their parliamentary lifeworld. See Table 23. The findings suggest that some participants were open to being *"surrogate"* representatives to non-constituents. This is where an elected representative and a non-elector form a bond or a connection based on shared interests rather than on geographical or electoral boundaries (Jackson & Lilleker, 2009; Rush, 2001). In this study many of the participants noted that they were open to receiving messages on social media from non-constituents as long as they were civil and relevant. In otherwords study participants

assigned an information value to the information exchanged in these boundaries and if it benefitted them, they were more likely to foster the relationship or connection.

Some study participants noted that there were drawbacks to engaging online with constituents outside the boundaries of their electorate given the difficulties that arose in distinguishing how many of them were qualified to vote for them on election day (MP interviews). Explaining this, one typical participant stated in an interview:

> *I've got loads of followers on Twitter, but what does that actually mean? Are they eligible to vote for me? How can I tell? You see, when people wrote letters me, the office could look up their address and tell straight away if they were in my electorate. These days people don't even use their own name so half the time I have no idea who they are. (MP interviews).*

This supports the research carried out by Krasodomski-Jones (2017) who found that many parliamentarians lack the resources and skillset to understand who their online audience is, particularly, who is, and who is not, a constituent. In terms of more traditional forms of communication, MPs already have systems in place to identify if a citizen contacting them is a constituent—such as checking their name against the electoral roll. This is something which they cannot readily do with social media accounts, especially those using pseudonyms. Therefore, an understanding of one's online audience is a useful competency for parliamentarians to possess. Such an understanding would likely impact the MPs' information behaviours in a positive way and make them more discernible consumers of information (MP interviews).

Study participants also noted that another determinant motivating the use of social media by MPs was that it enabled them to be in touch with an unprecedented number of citizens

simultaneously irrespective of borders or boundaries (MP interviews). This gave the impression that the MPs were available to assist their constituents at any time of the day or night (Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014; Siegel, 2018). A common theme that emanated from participants in this study was the *"weight of expectation"* placed upon MPs by the electorate in servicing their needs in a timely fashion (MP interviews).

This *"always on presence"* had profound implications for their information behaviours in that the study participants felt that they had made themselves more accessible to their constituents See Table 23. It also came with a feeling that perhaps they had made a rod for their own backs in that it came with an expectation that they be as equally responsive via social media to constituent requests. Non-elites were increasingly using social media to directly convey their interests and concerns to their elected representatives (Gunitsky, 2015; Richardson, 2017). However, a US study found that legislators were discerning about who they choose to respond to, and this had important implications for political discourse (Butler & Dynes, 2016; Chen, Lee & Marble, 2019).

Study participants noted that the use of social media by their constituents was increasing, but not yet embedded (MP interviews). The findings of this study indicated that at the time social media was inferior to traditional (offline) forms of communication (MP interviews). While social media was relied upon by many constituents to communicate with their elected representatives, traditional media continued to outperform social media for *"serious constituent-to-MP"* communications (MP interviews). See also Table 22.

Social media and Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments

Politicians constantly assess the electoral consequences of their decision-making processes and in doing so consciously or subconsciously assign it an information value. In this regard they

tend to be driven by strategic initiatives, yet the findings from this study indicate that the use of social media by MPs to communicate with their constituents was rarely driven by formalised strategic initiatives. Study participants confirmed this, with few having a formal strategy in place. Nearly three-quarters of respondents agreed that ideally a documented formal strategy would be useful to have, but few actually had developed one. See Table 20. The happenstance nature of MPs' information behaviours in updating their social media was evident from the interview discussions (MP interviews). Many MPs were candid about having definite strategic reasons for using social media, but not having formalised it. Instead, the study findings showed that their usage could best be described as *"ad hoc"* and *"piecemeal"* (MP interviews).

Polymedia approach

In studying this topic, a conscious decision was made against using a content analysis of participants' social media accounts as the basis for analysis. Instead, the focus was on the reasons underpinning parliamentarians' adoption practices and interrogating the motivations behind their information behaviours, especially in relation to their use or non-use of social media to communicate with their constituents through the lens of TIW. As was demonstrated in Chapter 3, there is a fluidity to technology, with specific hardware and software falling in and out of favour, and with some technology permanently disappearing from use and memory. For instance, in 2016, when the second phase of the survey data collection was underway, Blackberry went from controlling the smartphone market to now being a relic of the past (Appolonia, 2019, Gigi, 2009, Shogan, 2010). Cognisant of this trend, the study relied instead on a polymedia approach. The strength of polymedia is that it shifts the attention to the micro-workings of mediated communication channels rather than on the platforms themselves. For more on this, see Chapter 1. Polymedia also recognises an inability for one social media platform to be fully understood in isolation in one's small world or lifeworld. This again draws

on the fusion of the works of Habermas (1989) and Chatman (1989) and their complementarity given that together they provide a holistic approach to explaining the access and exchange of social and political information in the public sphere.

There is widespread agreement that the factors driving technology adoption depend to a certain extent on the nature and type of the technology itself and the domain in which adoption occurs. This underscores the belief that no one-size-fits-all approach can be adopted across technologies. For this reason, the study took a "stocktake approach" to social media use by study participants in 2012 and again in 2016. Gaining a better understanding of who is, and who is not, using which platforms, why and for what purposes is an important aspect of information behaviour (boyd & Ellison, 2007). This study makes some in-roads into facilitating which members in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) used which platforms, why and for what purposes.

Platforms of choice

The findings revealed that MPs' platforms of choice aligned with those of the general population: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (Sensis 2018). Interestingly, in Survey 1 (2012) none of the study participants reported having signed up to LinkedIn, Instagram or Snapchat, despite them being used by segments of the community. See Table 11. By way of comparison, it is worth noting that as of March 2012 just over half (56 per cent) of parliamentarians in the Australian federal Parliament maintained a Twitter account (Miragliotta, 2012). In 2016, Survey 2 found that the favoured platforms had not changed, with again Facebook, Twitter and YouTube dominating with study participants. Adoption of both Facebook and Twitter grew between the two surveys. In the intervening four years between the Survey 1 and Survey 2, the usage of YouTube dropped.

Some of the MPs shared that some accounts were only for private use and contained personal family content, while other accounts were designated their *"MP-work account"* which covered their parliamentary duties and work-related content (MP interviews). This is an example of study participants employing boundary management strategies, a key element of information behaviour (Hoffmann & Suphan, 2016). The following statement by one of the interviewees was typical of responses and provides some insight into which of the social media platforms they used and the reasons why:

> *I use Facebook predominantly. I do have a Twitter account as well, that's relatively new, but I wouldn't say that I was an active Twitter user. It's more for monitoring what others are saying rather than necessarily engaging directly. But Facebook, yes, I do use Facebook to do posts of various community events and functions that I attend both as a local member or in my capacity a shadow minister. I don't go overboard though. (MP interview)*

Social media and parliamentary proceedings

Findings from the study also showed that study participants had modified their information behaviours to share information about what is happening on the floor of the Parliament. To a certain degree, the reporting of parliamentary proceedings had been subjected to disruption with the advent of social media, given that the highly-regulated deliberations can now be unofficially shared to the outside world in real-time (Fernandes, 2013). An example demonstrating the intersection of private communications, parliamentary privilege and the challenge of the real-time affordances of social media occurred in the Federal Parliament where the Speaker of the house had to rule on the issue. (Australia. House of Representatives. (2013, March 13). Parliamentary debates (*Hansard*), p.1934.).

While this scenario was yet to arise on the PoWA, MPs in this study were very alive to the issue. MPs tended to watch keenly what happened in other jurisdictions lest it impact them at a future date (MP interviews). Following on from this incident, interviewees shared that in their estimation it was *"unnecessary to ban social media"* or be *"too prescriptive about its use in the Chamber"* (MP interviews). From their perspective, regulating the use of social media in such a prohibitive manner could be interpreted as being "*akin to gagging a member or a parliament*" (MP interviews). The consensus was that, so long as the commentary did not interfere with the smooth running of the parliament, then they saw no need to control its use. There were others who believed that such activity undermined the *"sanctity"* or *"dignity"* of the Parliament (MP interviews).

To get a sense of how participants in this study felt about the practice of live-tweeting from the chamber while Parliament was in session, they were asked to share their thoughts on the practice. The results revealed that in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012), about a third of respondents agreed that tweeting from the chamber was indeed a threat to the dignity of the proceedings in Parliament. See Table 23. However, the vast majority of respondents did not support the proposition, with over two-thirds of respondents declaring that the practice was acceptable to them. By the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), there were indications that the sentiment had become even more entrenched as three-quarters of respondents either "*strongly disagreed"* or "*disagreed"* that tweeting in the chamber was a threat to the dignity of parliamentary proceedings. This suggests that so long as the proceedings in the parliament were not disrupted the practice had become normalised activity and was practised by a number of sitting MPs (MP interviews). Real-time tweeting from the chamber had become another way in which MPs had altered their information behaviours as a result of utilising the real-time affordances of social media.

According to study participants, social media had also become a back-channel through which parallel real-time conversations had emerged, both in the chamber and outside of it (MP interviews). Direct messaging on social media provided an alternative and complementary route for MPs in opposing to parties to interact discreetly. As Frame and Brachotte (2015) noted in their study of French politicians:

> *Whereas email might be seen as too official, and politicians might not have access to an opposition member's mobile phone number or feel able to send them a text message, then direct messages on Twitter can constitute a more acceptable form of communication (Frame & Brachotte, 2015, p. 282).*

To date, politician-to-politician direct messaging has not been something that has been widely reported on in the academic literature. It is still relatively early days, but it is likely to gain more traction as more people use it. Instant messaging was not something specifically asked about in the questionnaires, but it arose in the discussions emanating from the interviews. Participants shared that unlike email correspondence which *"overwhelmed"* and *"overloaded"* members of the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), direct messaging was yet to disrupt or overwhelm participants (MP interviews). At that time direct messaging via social media had not been embedded into their everyday information activities nor their day-to-day constituency communications (MP interviews).

More recently, there has been significant growth in instant messaging apps (Vermeer et al., 2021). Favoured by the youth, these apps enable conversations in relatively more private, closed environments compared with the more public-facing social media platforms (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009; Valeriani & Vaccari, 2018; Waterloo et al., 2018). The obvious appeal of communication by direct messages by politicians is that it escapes the public eye, and therefore scrutiny. Direct messaging enables the sharing of "private, synchronous,

interpersonal communication while being invisible and possibly anonymous" (Barnidge, 2017; Dolev-Cohen; Barak, 2013, p. 58). Unless, of course, the contents of the messages are leaked to the press gallery, as recently happened in the PoWA involving serving members of the study cohort in the Legislative Council. A file containing over 700 pages of sensitive and private WhatsApp direct messages was leaked and made front-page news in the mainstream media (See: Taylor, 2021, Zimmerman, 2021, Zimmerman & Law, 2021). When viewed through the lens of the TIW, it defied the social norms of the public-private boundaries of MPs' information lifeworlds. It also played into the stereotypical social type of the grubby politician. Despite this, it is likely that direct messaging will have implications for political communication as it becomes a more embedded practice with future generations of politicians.

Resourcing and organisational challenges for Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments

A dominant theme emanating from this study was that while the adoption of social media created advantages and unprecedented opportunities for information exchange, it simultaneously posed a number of substantial complex operational and organisational challenges for MPs. For some this was a major impediment and influenced their decision to adopt and use social media to communicate with their constituents (MP interviews). As was noted in Chapter 3, apart from the actual act of creating and curating timely and relevant content, there was also a requirement to balance openness, strategy and day-to-day management. Politicians also had to contend with a number of "disruptive traits" on social media (MacNamara & Zerfass, 2012). Given the discussion in Chapter 3 on disruption and social media, the effective management of MPs' social media presence has important implications for their information behaviours and information management practices. As this study has shown, a challenge shared by all parliamentarians irrespective of their age, sex and

political affiliation is having to simultaneously balance multiple and competing demands, with scant resources.

MPs' homestyles

Curious to better understand this opaque element of an MPs' information lifeworld, the study inquired into the organisational challenges faced by them when managing their social media. In exploring these back-of-house aspects of MPs' lifeworlds it became evident that how the electorate offices operated varied considerably. The management or "home style" of the MP (Fenno, 1978) was dependendent on the MPs themselves, their specific set of circumstances and the particularities of the electorate (such as, for example, the marginality of the seat or the demographics of the constituency (MP interviews). Common among participants was a lament that there was a need for more resources in this area, with a shared feeling that they were now "*expected to interact*" with and be "*accountable*" to their constituents using these channels (MP interviews).

This aspect of the study's findings was unsurprising given that parliamentarians work in a politically sensitive time-pressured and information-rich environment and have little control over the fluid political agenda and how this impinged their day-to-day workloads and schedules more generally. Politicians generally decry their lack of resources (Leitch, 2019). This study cohort was no exception *"lack of resources"* cited as a reason given as to why they did not use social media, or did not use it to the extent to which they would otherwise have liked (MP interviews). See also Table 24.

Participants shared details about their level of involvement in the day-to-day operation of their social media accounts. Insightful responses emanated from the two questionnaires and discussions arising from the face-to-face interviews with the MPs about how "hands on" they

were. The study found an assortment of arrangements in place for the management of MPs' social media accounts. Sometimes the MP themselves did the updating without assistance from others.

At the other end of the spectrum, others stated that they delegated the task of managing their social media accounts to their staff in entirety. Significantly, the number of staff exclusively updating the accounts of respondents had almost tripled, up from only 4.55 per cent in Survey 1 (2012) to 12.9 per cent in Survey 2 (2016). While the rate was low, this may have been indicative of a trend towards MPs increasingly delegating social media to their electorate staff in recognition of the time and resourcing impost it placed on the MPs themselves. See Table 17.

In both surveys the vast majority of respondents indicated that the day-to-day operations of their social media accounts was a task shared between themselves and their electorate office staff. MPs reported that they sometimes delegated the task of posting content (that they had authorised) to their staff, whilst at other times the MP posted content directly. Interviewees noted that the determination of who did what was often workload dependent, and often boiled down to who had the capacity to do it at the time (MP interviews). For instance, some interviewees explained that they alerted their staff when an electorate-specific issue came before the house and then their staff created the post on their behalf, which is then shared with the MPs' followers (MP interviews). A small, but relatively consistent, rate of respondents reported that they outsourced their online communications (including social media) to consultants and experts. See Table 17. This indicates that even as far back as 2012 some MPs had already identified that they or their staff did not have the requisite skillset or resources to optimally operationalise their social media in-house.

MPs' updating patterns

Several study participants noted that their information behaviours were influenced by the physical location and the nature of work they were engaged in at the time. Participants shared that to a certain extent their social media usage, updating patterns and habits were also determined by their location. It also affected the nature and type of content they posted (MP interviews). This is an example of the boundaries concept of the TIW. For instance, MPs at any given time could be undertaking investigative committee travel, driving from event to event in their constituency, sitting in a meeting with stakeholders in their electorate office, or on their feet contributing to the legislative debate on the floor of the Parliament (MP interviews). Yet they were still receiving, processing and sharing information.

Data analysis of the interview transcripts revealed a relationship between how MPs accessed their social media platform and how often it was updated. Mobile computing devices are a significant access point for information-based activities and many MPs were using mobile devices as their primary mode of communication (MP interviews). This is to be expected given that many of the functions previously only available from a desktop computer have been embedded into the functionality of mobile tablet-style devices (Burford & Park, 2014). Individuals can now filter and customise content for personalised experiences through multiple devices and platforms.

The size, connectivity to the internet and ensuing portability of mobile devices has enabled continuous and individualised access to information (Burson-Marsteller, 2014, p. 622). In effect, this means that social media content can be added anywhere and at any time. No longer does an MP have to be tethered to their electorate office desktop computer to be able to apprise their followers of their activities, their whereabouts or their real-time views on an issue (MP interviews). In the past they would have had to be in the electorate office or at the office in

Parliament House to do this, but now they can do it from their mobile device. Interestingly, this practice differed from their deskbound electorate office staff who tended to update the MPs' social media using their desktop computer at the electorate office (MP interviews).

This study also noted that a sign of social media's growing acceptance in the study participants' information lifeworlds was the degree to which MPs accepted and normalised the practice of updating social media. For instance, a resounding majority of respondents stated that they were more likely to review and update their social media presence on a parliamentary sitting day, rather than on a non-sitting day. Typically, on non-sitting days MPs were busy with duties remote from the parliamentary precinct. As one typical interviewee noted:

> *Often when I'm in the chamber, I'll check my Facebook account and update content while I'm sitting there half listening to the debate. (Member interview)*

A dated or stagnant social media account impacts negatively on the account holder. As such managing a social media account can be fraught and places heavy demands on resourcing. With that in mind, MPs were asked about their information behaviours in the context of updating their social media. Study participants resoundingly reported that it had become an embedded practice and they updated their social media accounts several-times-a-day. See Table 17. In Survey 1 (2012) this accounted for 93.18 per cent of responses, but by Survey 2 (2016) it had dropped to just over two-thirds of respondents (or 67.74 per cent). One possible reason accounting for this decline could be that the number of people using social media and consequently the sheer volume of information flowing on social media had increased significantly by 2016. As will be recalled, social media was being heavily used at the time and its use had become a normalised information behaviour.

Apart from the predictable response about the frequency of updating, what was not envisaged in this study was a discernible platform-dependent difference in who updated what. For instance, some study participants reported that they tended to manage their own Twitter accounts, but often had assistance with the management of their Facebook account (MP interviews). Perhaps this can be put down to the differences in social media affordances: Twitter tends to pivot on the instantaneous of the here-and-now, Facebook, on the other hand lends itself to the distribution of longer messages which can be curated, authorised and scheduled ahead of time. Interviewees explained that they used Twitter for sharing or commenting on contemporaneous news and for facilitating short and nuanced messaging.

It is interesting too to note that MPs mentioned that they receive more constituency engagement through Facebook, than on any other social media platform. In response, and in terms of electorate office workflows, these MPs give their staff access to their Facebook page to pick up this type of communication on their behalf. This can then be logged into the electronic document and record management system, as per the requirements under the *State Records Act* 2000 (WA). Until now, it was commonplace for MP's electorate office staff to deal centrally with the correspondence sent to the MP, rather than the MPs themselves (Dale, 2015). The degree of autonomy over this task differed from MP to MP, but at the very least the electorate office staff pre-screen and triage the majority of the constituency communications, including telephone calls, emails, letters, invitations and meeting requests. How they effectively and efficiently dealt with social media information flows was still an evolving process (MP interviews).

In an information environment where MPs are already time pressured and have little free time in their diaries, the acceptance of social media into the mainstream has added an additional burden on their already scarce time and resources. Public expectations (another social norm)

are such, that when it comes to social media accounts, immediate (or, as close to immediate) responses are required. Multiple interviewees indicated a growing cognisance of the time-consuming nature of communicating with constituents—whether actively listening or engaging in dialogue–on social media. Yet they recognised that ignoring it, was perilous as their reputation and re-election prospects may be at stake (MP interviews).

Information overload

Never before has it been more difficult for MPs to claim to represent people, while simultaneously ignoring their interests and preferences (Masullo, 2020). Research suggests that the data deluge caused by social media can significantly impact MPs' workloads and make their work life balance even more challenging (Krasodomski-Jones, 2017, pp. 13-4). Study participants confirmed this was indeed the case for them (MP interviews). Many expressed a feeling of being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information in their lifeworlds and underwhelmed by their capacity to respond given that their resourcing, especially human resources had not increased commensurately (MP interviews). There was also a feeling among MPs interviewed that by not getting back to constituents, it might have wider implications for their input in the future. By believing that their MP was unresponsive to their plight, they may not contact them again and this may have electoral consequences (MP interviews).

As was covered in some detail in Chapter 2, life as an MP is a busy one, and many MPs have expressed difficulties in overcoming the feeling that it is "impossible to ever get ahead" (Leitch, 2019, p. 24). As one interviewee shared, they had *"grand plans"* and *"good intentions to update their social media more frequently",* but at times*, "it was simply too hard"* as there weren't "*enough hours in the day"* (MP interviews).

Tenscher (2014) argued that although Facebook was regarded as an important tool for communicating with the public, MPs were not always willing to invest resources to maintain a lively presence on the platform. Unlike their websites, which were typically low maintenance, the social media platforms required timely updates in order to be relevant, particularly for political information sharing (Weeks et al., 2017). A number of participants in this study shared feelings of being pressured to keep their social media accounts up to date (MP interviews). They could be the subject of ridicule for not doing so (Whittington, 2020). The weight of constituents' expectation loomed large for many of them.

Many participants spoke of being conscious of having inadequate resources available to them to fully commit to optimising social media to engage in dialogue with their constituents. One typical participant noted that the electorate officer they tasked with curating social media content often got too busy with *"core business"* and they instead prioritised *"real life"* contacts (MP interviews). As a consequence, they didn't get to update their social media channels as often as they'd like to. Or, as another typical interviewee put it:

> *It boils down to priorities. I choose to allocate staffing resources to updating Facebook because I can see there is a benefit. More fool to my colleagues who can't see that social media is here to stay…it's not going away. (MP interview)*

This points to a paradox for social media's democratic potential. On the one hand, the dramatic decline in the cost of communication associated with social media makes it easier for constituents to engage with their representatives. On the other hand, this popularity has also created challenges that undermined responsiveness to these new forms of communication (Chen, Lee & Marble, 2019; Crewe, 2015). According to the study participants, based on current resourcing levels and increasing demands from constituents, this tension is likely to have a profound impact on the information behaviours of MPs (MP interviews).

Contemporary constituency communications of by Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments

How the volume of constituent communication received via social media, compared to correspondence received through more traditional methods (written letters, emails, faxes, telephone calls, in-person visits and meetings), was also examined. As was indicated in Chapter 3, some years ago, Larsson and Kalsnes (2014) identified a gap in the academic literature relating to the role of social media in contemporary constituency communication. This gap remains and can, in part, be attributed to the ostensibly private nature of these communication channels. Such details are not generally in the public domain. Instead, these details can only be known if the MP is willing to share this information publically. In contrast, social media is generally more open to the observable public, although this open to contention given that the inner workings of the algorithms are not in the public domain.

MPs' modern mailbag

This study provided evidence that the mailboxes and in-trays of study participants has been subjected to transformation over the past decade. Noteworthy was the conspicuous growth in the composition of the MPs' mailbag owing to social media from Survey 1 (2012) to Survey 2 (2016). See Table 22. However, the results suggest that social media was yet to overwhelm. It can reasonably be expected that this trend will continue over time given the community's falling reliance on letters and the declining volume of mail being sent within Australia. Evidence of a digital transformation began with the widespread availability of fast broadband in 2008 and the extensive substitution of digital mail for letters mail (Lelkes, 2020; McKell Institute, 2015, p. 52). The year 2008 is significant as it coincided with the opening of the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008-2012). Since the advent of the internet Australians have been

gradually weaning themselves off letters in favour of digital messaging (Boston Consulting Group, 2014, Fahour, 2014).

While handwritten letters to MPs may be in decline, there were multiple instances in this study where MPs referenced the fact that email correspondence was overloading their inboxes (MP interviews). Due to the lower resource costs when compared to postal or telephone communication, email has enabled those who may not have otherwise contacted an MP to do so. This drastically increased the frequency of communication received by MPs via email (Coleman & Spiller, 2003, p. 7; Hooge & Marien, 2012). As a consequence, many participants noted that they had adapted their information behaviours to account for this *"email daily deluge"* (MP interviews). Rather than being overloaded with correspondence on social media, study particants noted the number of emails they receive.

During the interviews a number of participants referenced being *"swamped"* or *"bombarded by clicktivist online petitions"* via email on the issue of same-sex marriage. At the time the federal Parliament was considering the same-sex marriage debate (Copland, 2018). As noted in Chapter 3, clicktivism is characterised by the use of the internet generally, and social media in particular, as a primary mode of engagement and participation in political discourse (Tufecki, 2017). It is often derided as being "merely symbolic" and "feel good self-congratulatory noise" and served only as a prelude to feet-on-the-ground activism (Williams, 2017, p. 30). Supposedly this is because of the easy action requiring *"little sustained effort"* or *"ongoing commitment"* (MP interviews).

Certainly, arising from the interview data were observations by study participants that constituents used social media to communicate with them on *"less pressing matters"* (MP interviews). Study participants also observed that the traditional approach of writing a letter or an email was adopted when the matter was important to the constituent, or a formal response

was required. Social media was used more for reactionary, spontaneous or opportunistic commentary, rather than for documenting *"a well-considered call to action", "a detailed grievance"* or *"a heartfelt plea for help"* (MP interviews). These findings accord with those of Williams (2017) who contended that the low costs of online advocacy resulted in the assumption that born-digital campaigns are somehow "less valid, less effective, less sustainable, efficacious, or engaging than real world actions" (p. 30).

That in-person interactions were afforded a higher priority by MPs than generic online engagement was another finding of this of this study (MP interviews). While MPs continued to utilise traditional forms of political communication, many had adapted their information behaviours and had adopted social media. However, the findings of this study offer little evidence that communicating with MPs via social media has usurped the traditional forms of political engagement. See Table 22.

The degree to which study participants felt that constituents favoured messages from them via social media when compared to traditional communication channels was also examined by this study. All respondents in both surveys strongly disagreed with the sentiment that constituents were more responsive to messages from them on social media versus traditional communications. A number of respondents referenced their belief that it was a risk in assuming that *"everyone is online"*, when in fact there are pockets of the community that simply were not (MP interviews). The digital divide was very much *"alive and well in the electorate"* (MP interviews). Some participants acknowledged that while social media did have a place in their communication suite, it was not necessarily *"the best"* or *"only tool"* (MP interviews).

Again, if looking at this through the lens of the TIW, this points to the concept of information value, whereby study participants were happy to assign a value to social media, but this varied according to a number of variables. In terms of boundaries, they were aware of the digital

inequality prevalent in the community and were conscious not excluding anyone. Their information behaviours would be adapted to account for this. For example, they continued to run a hybrid system for their correspondence, comprising a mix of traditional channels in tandem with an abundant email inbox. A small, but increasing proportion of their correspondence could be assigned to coming from social media. It will be interesting to see if, or how this changes in coming years.

Impediments to social media use by Members of the 38th and 39th Parliaments

The previous section discussed the findings of the study as they related to study participants' motivations for adopting and using social media to communicate with their constituents. This section details the findings as they relate to the determinants of non-use by the study cohort. From an information behaviour perspective, ascertaining why study participants used social media is instructive in better understanding their motivations, but finding out about the barriers that impeded their use is also insightful.

Some of the participants' responses could be described as predictable, but others less so. See Table 24. For example, the results showed that in both questionnaires, the majority of respondents stated that the key impediments to their use of social media included knowledge deficits, inadequate resourcing, heavy workloads and being time-poor. Other factors influencing information behaviour in the form of non-use included instances of online incivility, a lack of etiquette, digital connectivity, online access and the representativeness of social media.

Social norms

It is now widely acknowledged that social media presents significant opportunities for MPs to connect directly with constituents and the wider community. However, the rapid dissemination

of information to a wide audience made possible by social media does present some risks for MPs and their information behaviours. The tenor of debate and discussion on social media is frequently aggressive and adversarial. The social norms with respect to social media are still evolving. Politicians can inadvertently open themselves up to behaviour they are less likely to experience in the offline world. In this lifeworld, the perceptions of the "rightness or wrongness" of the social norms of this type of information behaviours provide members of the world with a common understanding of what is expected of them in terms of the visible social aspects of the world, and how acceptable (or unacceptable) it is to violate these social norms (Burnett and Jaeger, 2010, p. 22). Study participants were aware of this and many of them referenced being in *"uncharted waters"* when it came to social norms and social media (MP interviews).

As we have seen throughout this study, MPs are not a homogenous group, rather they are diverse and have to navigate many complex, dynamic socio-political information worlds each day. Their information worlds are complex and interwoven. Parliamentarians are, as Crewe (2014) puts it, influenced "Janus-like" by both the past and the future:

> *Janus is the God of entrance and exit, beginnings and endings, and he looks backwards and forwards simultaneously. In a similar vein MPs are not navigating their multiple roles, pressures and audiences consecutively but in the same moment. (Crewe, 2014, p. 53).*

This study has shown that this thinking can also be applied to MPs' information behaviour as it related to social media usage where they simultaneously have one eye to the past and the other to the future. As their information worlds exist at various levels, this in effect means that they also exist within and alongside others, which means that the perception of, access to, and evaluation of information is complex and subject to multiple discrete influences. Politicians

are cognisant that what they share on social media today is likely to impact them at some time in the future. Participants indicated their very strong and almost unanimous belief that MPs should be *"absolutely"* and *"overwhelmingly"* wary when using social media given that their comments may come back to haunt them (MP interviews). See Table 23.

It is unsurprising that some MPs shy away from a forum that they know little about, and that which they do know about suggests that it is not for the faint-hearted given that every misdeed is unceremoniously magnified (MP interviews). A litany of infamous missteps on social media by politicians has shown that they are not immune to having their private foibles instantly captured and publicly reported at speeds and to audiences previously unimagined (Almond, 2016; Mandell & Chen, 2016; McNair, 2014, p. 21). They also shared that when it came to commenting in real time on social media, they were aware that their "*off the cuff remarks"*, which social media thrives on, could easily be misinterpreted (MP interviews). When privately expressed offhanded utterances were released into the public sphere via social media they can have far-reaching, long-lasting and unintended consequences (van Dijck, 2013, p. 7).

Therefore, as this study has shown, social media created an aspect of uncertainty in the information behaviours of study participants (especially as it related to social norms) given that inherent in social media use is a risk for otherwise image-conscious and typically risk-averse MPs. The immediacy and the (virtual) permanence of, for example, Twitter posts can generate significant negative publicity (Miragliotta, 2012, p. 8). As the TIW notes, similar to the subjective nature of "appropriateness" within social norms, members do not operate with an objective sense of the usefulness or information value, rather, information behaviours are influenced by community practices and are enforced by members of that world (social norms and types) (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010).

The survey results and interview data suggested that MPs were acutely aware of the risks associated with navigating social media in real-time. Despite there being a wariness of social media among them, some members of the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) still fell prey to gaffes and had to endure the controversy that ensued on social media and in the legacy media.

Study participants noted this a number of times as a potential barrier to use. They discussed examples where their colleagues' use of social media had mired them in "*bad press*" (MP interviews). One such example involved the case of the government minister who inadvertently "liked" an inappropriate image on Facebook (MP interviews). Framed by the (then) opposition as ineptitude, the member was lambasted in the house and in the media (Western Australia. Legislative Council. (2013, May 23) Parliamentary Debates *(Hansard)*, p. 1020). At the time, the contrite MP stated that it had been a mistake, but served as "an important lesson to us all about the appropriate use of social media" (Western Australia. Legislative Council. (2013, May 23) Parliamentary Debates (*Hansard*), p. 1019).

Alongside technological solutions to improving the level and safety of online debate, MPs need to be prepared for the "nastier" sides of the online world (Chen, 2017; Krasodomski-Jones, 2017, p. 34). In 2013, Hon Kate Doust MLC suggested on the floor of the PoWA, that MPs' should "learn about the traps of social media and how to better deal with them" (Western Australia. Legislative Council. (2013, May 23) Parliamentary Debates (*Hansard*), p. 1025). This coincided with the publication of Inter-Parliamentary Union's (2013), inaugural "Social media guidelines for Parliament" (Williamson, 2013, [2021]). Two years later, the Department of the Legislative Council published a procedural note which provided members of the Legislative Council with guidance on how to responsibly use electronic devices in the chamber. It acknowledged that social media "have proven to be an effective way for members of

Parliament to communicate and interact instantaneously with their constituents and others on matters of public interest", however, it also recognised that "the use of electronic devices in the chamber for this communication during parliamentary proceedings can raise the potential for distraction, along with more serious unforeseen consequences" (Western Australia. Legislative Council. (2015, May 19) Parliamentary Debates (*Hansard*), p. 3801).

The guide also clarified some related issues concerning social media and some of the common parliamentary social norms (this included, for example: parliamentary privilege, defamation, disorderly conduct and parliamentary contempt). In the house, MPs are afforded protections by virtue of parliamentary privilege, but outside of what is known colloquially as "the cowards castle" they are not (Somlyay, 2002). If they were to post something on social media, even if they were sitting in the chamber at the time) they may not be afforded the same protections. They may fall foul of defamation laws for ill-advised comments made on social media (Rozzoli, 2006, p. 300). Therefore, the publication of such a guideline by the Legislative Council was an acknowledgment of the growth in the adoption and use by MPs of social media and its associated affordances. Many interviewees referenced this (MP interviews).

Another reason that had impeded study participants' use of social media to communicate with their constituents related to online incivility. Online abuse targeted at members of the PoWA was not something contemplated in the questionnaire nor the interview schedule, however the matter arose on multiple occasions in the interviews. Several of the interviewees referenced the fact that they personally had been, or knew of a colleague, who had been subjected to some level of online anti-sociality.

When one considers that polite, courteous and civil argument and deliberation are central to the public sphere, this finding was an alarming facet of the study. Civility is an important social norm and has been used as a valued indicator of a functional democratic society for many years

(Eulau, 1973, p. 369). The lack of it can have detrimental consequences for society (Papacharissi, 2004, p. 260). Political discourse has always been an arena of heated argumentation (Herbst, 2010). Despite the name-calling, mudslinging and rancorous debate, there have always been well understood social norms in political communication. In the past the intemperate nature of the political sphere was mitigated by various moderating influences, such a slower pace of life, a greater degree of deference towards people in authority, and significantly, the absence of social media and 24-hours-a-day-seven-days-a-week news cycle (Cox, 2021).

"Witty, caustic, ironic, and often times vitriolic verbal exchanges" have become a part of the acceptable political discourse (Theocharis et al., 2020, p. 1). Nowadays there are few, if any, rules of engagement (Matejic, 2015). We live in the "age of instant connection, where everyone can shout at everyone else, where there is no filtering or editing process and little time for reflection, or for empathy with someone advancing an opposite point of view" (Cox, 2021, p. 2). This is a good example of where the social norms of parliamentarians are having to be renegotiated in real-time, with implications for their general well being, but also specifically on their information behaviours.

In recent years, disrespectful discourse that silences or derogates alternative views has become normalised on Facebook and Twitter (Jamieson et al., 2017, p. 206). Study participants confirmed that this was also their experience (MP interviews). As far back as the 2010 Australian federal election, evidence supporting this contention was found by Burgess and Bruns (2012) in the tweets directed at politicians. Even a decade ago, the online political sphere contained a substantial number of the tweets that contravened the TIW's social norms of some information worlds given that they were sarcastic and snide in nature (p. 395). The usual social

norms in political communication have not translated well to social media (Phillips, 2016; Phillips & Milner, 2017).

Study participants observed a general *"lack of etiquette"* and felt that political culture was *"less tolerant"* than perhaps it once was in the pre-social media era (MP interviews). According to study participants antisociality in its many guises was rife on the social media platforms with many noting examples involving their colleagues or former colleagues. These exchanges and unpleasantries online were adjudged by their peers as "*not befitting of a member of Parliament*" and as a consequence it breached the social norms of their information lifeworlds (MP interviews). These exchanges were derided on social media and became the subject of further scuttlebutt in the mainstream media (McKnight, 2018; O'Shea, 2017a, 2017b).

In discussions with MPs during the interviews, multiple references were made to the fact that the unpleasant counter-side of being more accessible to the constituency was the trolling (MP interviews). Trolling (behaving in a deceptive, destructive, or disruptive manner) for no apparent reason and flaming (comments laden with profanities, obscenities and insults) were two of the most common examples cited by study participants. This kind of behaviour is generally committed with the express purpose of causing disruption and exacerbating conflict, much of the time simply for the agitators own amusement (Phillips, 2016). As one MP put it:

> *They are the people who should know better and somehow are getting off on abusing people on social media because they've got their own issues. (MP interview)*

Multiple study participants explained that, for them, the downside of using social media were the *"legions of faceless keyboard warriors"* they had to contend with (MP interviews). Participants explained that they took exception to the naming of trolls as *"keyboard warriors"* believing that instead they should be referred to as *"keyboard cowards"* (MP interviews).

As identified in Chapter 3, there is a growing body of work exploring the issue of incivility online. See, for example, Mantilla (2015); March & Marrington (2019); Megarry (2014); and Moor and Anderson (2019). The consensus appears to be that it seems all too easy to hide behind the cloak of anonymity online and engage in trolling in an environment where incivility breeds incivility (Gross & Johnson, 2016; Scheinbaum, 2018; Sydnor, 2019). Trolling comments are not meant to convince or even to generate a back-and-forth argument, but just to upset people (Tufecki, 2017, p. 238). Falling victim to their traps, tended to intensify the trolling further rather than stopping it. That is why we are cautioned not to "feed the trolls!" (Buckels, Trapnell & Paulhus, 2014, p. 97). However, some trolling comments do merit denunciatory responses (Clucas, 2020, p. 17; Polak & Trottier, 2020). Study participants seemed to be aware of this, as another interviewee shared, when dealing with trolling, they had *"picked up a few tips along the way"* (MP interviews). Besides not getting *"sucked into"* and not engaging in *"long to-and-fro chats"*, they were also of the view that such *"carry on"* did not reflect well on the MP as a *"model citizen"* (MP interviews). As they explained:

> *… you respond once, they come back at you and you say we'll agree to disagree and move on. My opponent was using it quite a lot and getting into long dialogues with other people, quite nasty ones at times […] it's not a good look, so I don't do that. (MP interview)*

But multiple respondents said that they drew the line at "*vicious personal attacks"* on social media, and that they made the distinction between "*disagreement"* and *"actual incivility"* (MP interviews). Another typical response stated:

> *… there're always sorts of issues there about the way people behave on Facebook, the way they treat each other, the comments they make. […] it's a useful space but it can be very dangerous if you're not careful. It can do more harm than good if it's not treated*

with the right level of respect […] we need to be more careful about it and no doubt it will evolve and become all-encompassing at some point in point in time. (MP interview)

Others mentioned that they compartmentalised critical comments made on social media as an *"attack on their point of view"* and not necessarily on them personally:

I have always seen it as attacking what I believe in or what I think, rather than who I am as a person. (MP interview)

For others, being questioned or critiqued about policy was *"all part of the role"* and in their view, it gave them an opportunity to *"mix"* with people who *"think differently from the way I do"* (MP interviews). In the interview they explained that:

I didn't mind having conversations with people and saying have you thought about this or actually allowing other experts to come in and put the case and argue it. I think it [social media] is one of the places where you can have a conversation with people who you don't normally run into. (MP interview)

Another behaviour that defied the social norms of an information world and was noted by a number of study participants as impacting their information behaviours was the phenomenon of gender trolling on social media (MP interviews). This finding was particularly interesting in light of a recent report on gender trolling by Amnesty International (2018) where Twitter was described as a toxic place for women. Being female is a major characteristic of troll victims (Citron, 2014). The Amnesty study found that the abuse meted out to women in high public office, including parliamentarians, had a "detrimental effect on their right to express themselves equally, freely and without fear" (Amnesty International, 2018, p. n. p.). In their view, instead of "strengthening women's voices", the abuse experienced by many women on Twitter led them to self-censor what they posted, limited their online interactions, and in some

instances, meant they ceased usage of the platform (Amnesty International, 2018). Many of the study participants shared that the abuse levelled at them was *"very hurtful"* and *"deeply personal"* (MP interviews).

Some of the female participants revealed that they were more circumspect about what they posted online for fear of reprisals for themselves and their staff (MP interviews). Many admitted to altering their information behaviours and were more conscious of limiting references to their family (MP interviews). They were mindful of not giving away too many personal details (MP interviews). These findings accord with those of Sobieraj's (2018) study which found that women were habitually intimidated, shamed, and discredited in a bid to limit their impact in the digital publics. Study participants also noted that their awareness was more acute since the murder of serving UK MP Jo Cox in 2016. Although Jo Cox was a serving member of the House of Commons, her death resonated with parliamentarians worldwide. The PoWA was no exception (Western Australia. Legislative Assembly, Parliamentary Debates (*Hansard*), 20 October 2020, p. 7). Numerous study participants shared that they had *"set the bar pretty high"* when it came to *"controlling their message"* and *"blocking constituents"* on the social media platforms, however when it came to *"threats of violence or misogynistic or racist attacks"* they did not hesitate in using the blocking or mute features (MP interviews).

The topic of politicians blocking followers so as to control the narrative on social media arose from discussions in the interviews. Offence was taken when a stakeholder was blocked on Twitter by a number of state government ministers (Carr, 2018, p. 2). By way of explanation, the ministers stated that they were open to hearing opinions shared respectfully, but that in this instance they had been subjected to personal attacks. In their view, just because the aggrieved parties didn't like the government's policy decision it did not give them the right to be offensive or that they could "feel justified to stoop to abuse" (Carr, 2018, p. 2). This again points to

another example where the defiance of social norms in an information lifeworld has led to significant modifications in some of the study participants' information behaviours.

A related theme emerging from this study was the number of participants who revealed that they had previously had a presence on social media, but they had adjusted their information behaviours and ceased continued usage because of the vitriol meted at them on the platforms. This is supported in the literature, as evidenced in some detail in Chapter 3. For instance, MPs in New Zealand, reported discontinuance of Twitter due to the high levels of abuse levelled at them on the platform (Ross & Bürger, 2014, p. 58). Many politicians worldwide have increasingly bemoaned this toxic element of the public sphere (Lyons & Veenstra, 2016; Weeks et al., 2019). The degree to which this toxicity has infiltrated the small worlds and lifeworlds of the study participants is concerning, and a somewhat unexpected finding of this study.

Study participants also referenced their mental health as being negatively impacted by the ubiquity of social media and a potential barrier to their continued use of the platforms. This issue was raised by multiple MPs in their interviews. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the impacts of social media on their information behaviour may assist in better understanding the emotional and cognitive performance of elected representatives (Flinders et al., 2020). As noted in the literature review, politicians lament a range of stressors, including: unremitting levels of scrutiny punctuated by paradoxical expectations, constant media intrusion, an incessant propensity by opponents to capitalise on human error and mistakes, and streams of abuse and incivility on social media (Hardman, 2018, p. 6; Kwiatkowski, 2012; Roberts, 2017; Weinberg, 2012, 2017). The incessancy of social media has inundated the information environment to such an extent that study participants reported that it was "*difficult to escape"* and hard *to "mentally switch-off from"* (MP interviews). Calls for more open, tolerant, respectful and

conciliatory politics in light of the incivility endemic on social media and its potential consequences are growing (Cox, 2021). As Australian political journalist Katharine Murphy (2017), cautioned:

If balanced people could no longer cop the life, the profession would shrink back to representation by a very narrow type of personality—people who live for the brawls and the knockouts, and can't function without the constant affirmation of being a public figure. We would end up with representation by ideologues, adrenalin junkies and preening show ponies, posturing for a media chorus as unhinged as the political class. This isn't just some abstract first-world problem. Politics is fundamentally a people business, and we need good people, talented people, people of ideas and values and commitment to keep volunteering for public life. The health of our democracy depends on it. (p. 3).

It is a worrisome trend and worthy of further research, however an in-depth coverage of this aspect of parliamentarians' information lifeworlds is outside the scope of this study.

Social types

Although it is incontrovertible that an increasing number of parliamentarians are turning to social media as a communication channel, not every one of them uses social media to communicate with their constituents. In the past, some MPs have been quite open about their disdain for the platforms. Take for example, Hon Simon O'Brien (Liberal, MLC) who at one time deemed the prospect of using social media "unfathomable":

I do not have it, and I do not want it, I am not interested. The whole thing leaves me cold; I just do not get it. I have better things to do with my time ... (Western Australian. Legislative Council.Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 23 May 2013, pp. 1024-5).

Other study participants saw social media as a medium for those they typecast as *"show offs"* and *"attention seekers"* where they could *"sound off"* to anyone willing to listen (MP interviews). This supported a theme emanating from the literature review, that when compared to the pre-social media era, such self-disclosure appeared *"exhibitionist"* (Siegel, 2018).

For other study participants, social media remained an enigma and a "*bit of a mystery"* (MP interviews). Others *"couldn't see what all the fuss is about" (S1).* This points to the use of social types when determining who used or did not use social media and for what purpose. It also provides an indication of where they are placed on the information values continuum. At the other end of the spectrum, there were study participants who could not understand the non-use of social media by their peers and saw it as a *"missed opportunity"* for engaging with the electorate. In their view, it was becoming more difficult to ignore social media as a serious political communication channel. They firmly believed that not having a social media presence could leave an elected representative open to criticism and ridicule for being *"out of touch with ordinary people"*, *"inept"* or *"disconnected from the constituency"* (MP interviews). No MP wants to be typecast in this manner, so doubtless this will influence their information behaviours (MP interviews).

Hall and Sinclair (2011) argued that it was imperative to a politician's success to stay up to date and use the newest technologies because it helped them stay relevant and competitive in the eyes of the electorate (p. 60). In modern everyday life, individuals experience an abundance of digital information and communication options and pressure to use them effectively and constantly (Büchi, Festic, & Latzer, 2019). Study participants also noted this pressure (MP interviews). Posting content or establishing a profile on the latest social media platform can help establish an MP's tech-savvy credentials because nowadays the electorate expects politicians to be at least as active online as they are themselves (MP interviews). Politicians are

expected to at least match their constituents' use and knowledge and proficiency of technology (Gainous & Wagner, 2014, Schauer, 2019).

Despite this, a high proportion of study participants noted that the greatest impediment to their adoption of social media was a *"lack of knowledge"*. Over half of respondents in both the surveys admitted to not using social media because of a knowledge deficit about the platforms themselves, their various affordances and their differing respective functionalities. See Table 24. While social media usage grew over the period under review, in both the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), over half of respondents stated that they had not engaged in any formal training on the use of social media. In Survey 1 (2012) this equated to over half of respondents and in Survey 2 (2016) it had increased to over two-thirds. See Table 21.

This is a small, but significant change in information behaviour in that it showed that as social media adoption grew among the respondents, training rates did not follow suit. The timing of the surveys may go some way toward explaining the decline in training attendance, in that in 2012, social media use in the PoWA was still in its infancy. MPs may have been more likely to take up training opportunities then, than four years later when social media use had evolved and matured, and people had more experience in using the medium. Nonetheless, that training in social media was not an embedded feature of MPs' professional development (a social norm) was worth noting.

The data gleaned from the face-to-face interviews indicated that study participants had also interpreted their knowledge deficits with regard to information literacy. Social media literacy includes not only how to *"drive the platform"*, but also how knowing the *"rules of the road and how best to navigate them"* (MP interviews). Study participants shared that they had a desire to know how best to optimise their use of social media, including the best times to post,

which platforms to use for what content, audience segmentation, data analytics, and best practice in web accessibility (MP interviews). With the latter, many expressed a sense of moral obligation to *"do better"* and to *"lead by example"* (MP interviews). That such a large proportion of respondents cited a knowledge gap as a contributing factor to their non-use of social media was a significant influence on their information behaviour. One of the MPs admitted that they felt "*embarrassed to say*" that they did not know how to update their own social media accounts (MP interview). Using the TIW analogy, it could be suggested that they wanted to be typecast as a tech-savvy local MP.

These admissions are noteworthy when one considers the competitive and very public political sphere in which MPs dwell. Every aspect of the conduct of politics is centred on the premise that the winner takes all. The social norms and social types of political culture are such that it is acceptable to be aggressive and adversarial. Politics is portrayed and practiced as a "Machiavellian contest for power: a game of thrones, a contest for commanding influence" (Coleman 2017, p. 29). This is evident in the parliamentary systems and processes, even the architectural design of the chambers has been deliberately designed for debate and to accommodate conflict (Cooper & Gaunt, 2019; Goodsell, 1988; Macintyre, 2008). In this dominant culture, there is an unhealthy willingness by opponents (sometimes, this includes colleagues from the same political party) to capitalise on one's weaknesses for political gain (Flinders et al., 2020). Therefore, "learning to be learned" can result in politicians' competence being questioned and even ridiculed (Coghill, 2016; Holland & Lenders, 2016; Power, 2016). As Coleman (2017) explained, "[t]o act 'politically' has come to mean operating with an eye to manipulative advantage, to sacrifice veracity for plausibility" (p. 29).

This has an impact on the contours of their information behaviours, as in practice this means that there are few incentives for MPs to acknowledge or admit personal failings, professional

weaknesses, knowledge deficits or skills gaps (Flinders et al., 2020). Certainly, the findings of this study point to the presence of a significant skills gap and indicate an area of unmet need for MPs. Many respondents spoke of the *"weight of expectation"* on them and of the impactful nature of the *"toxicity of political culture"* (MP interviews). As one interviewee lamented, *"in addition to everything else, we are now expected to be social media experts as well"* (MP interviews).

Another finding of this study was that the availability of appropriate training and support to strengthen MPs' social media competencies and literacies was an impediment related to the non-use or sub-optimal use of social media. That hands-on training on the practical application of social media could be augmented with specialist and strategic training by the parliamentary authorities was a sentiment shared by many of the study participants (MP interviews). Participants were of the view that this type of training was "*falling through the cracks*" (MP interviews). Some scholars have already identified that the professional development offerings for parliamentarians is an area "ripe for reform" (Fox & Korris, 2012; Lewis, 2012, 2016; Norton, 2016).

Incorporating contextualised hands-on tuition, best practice guidelines, social media optimisation, and training on social media analytics, etc. may prove to be beneficial for MPs. Sessions on the strategic use of social media and their affordances may help explain the intricacies and potential pitfalls of social media to non-users. As noted by participants, although the general consensus in society was that social media was *"easy to use and intuitive"*, this was not necessarily the case for all, especially the older and the non-tech savvy MPs (MP interviews). Training may also appeal to those MPs, as yet unconvinced about the merits of using social media to communicate with their constituents (Kreiss, Lawrence & McGregor, 2018; Sutherland, 2021).

Information behaviour

Another barrier to use provided by multiple respondents to account for their non-use of social media as a way of communicating with their constituents related to *"digital access"* and *"digital connectivity"* (MP interviews). As Wilson (1999) noted, environmental factors can be significant determinants of information behaviour. Like the factors influencing the occurrence of information need, they can be of a personal, role-related or of environmental nature. Digital access is one such environment factor and as study participants explained, it impacted their decision to use social media to communicate with their constituents because not everyone in their electorate had access to, or could access a computer or had an internet connection. They explained that they represented an electorate with a high Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) rating. SEIFA is a set of indices developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. Typically, MPs use this rating to profile their electorate and to advocate for additional government (Commonwealth and State) funding, or improved services or to identify the correlative relationship between health and education outcomes and the socio-economic conditions specific to that electorate.

By making the point that their electorate featured highly on the SEIFA index, study participants were highlighting that the electorate they represented had lower than average internet and social media penetration. With such low digital connectivity and access, it was therefore understandable that they chose not to allocate scarce electorate resources to communicating with their constituents via the social media platforms. In their assessment of information value, other formats and communication channels are better suited to their needs (MP interviews). When reviewing the literature on this topic, it was found that other studies have also pointed to

the socio-economic characteristics of an electorate as influencing an MPs' social media adoption (Auel and Umit, 2018; Parker & Richter, 2018, p. 8). This study confirmed that the socio-economic characteristics of an electorate played a part in influencing some participants' information behaviours in the decision to place an information value on the use of social media as a mechanism to communicate with their constituents (MP interviews).

Digital connectivity was another factor raised by study participants as an impediment to using social media to communicate with their constituents. Respondents explained that the non-metropolitan electorate they represented consistently had limited coverage and service capacity and was in a known mobile black-spot area. This had a major impact on their information behaviour. It was also a chief gripe of constituents in non-urban constituencies, where it was difficult to get a reliable internet connection given the inadequate and ageing telecommunication infrastructure in place in Western Australia.

"Digital disadvantage" seemed to be a reoccurring theme for non-metropolitan MPs representing rural and regional electorates and was an influential factor in determining their information behaviours (MP interviews). Informational and social inequality were therefore key factors which impeded some MPs from adopting and using social media to communicate with their constituents (Park, 2017, p. 399). For instance, another typical interviewee shared that they were often inundated with complaints and grievances from disgruntled constituents (most of whom were business operators, tourism vendors, education providers and tele-health specialists) bemoaning the ongoing unreliability of the digital connectivity and its implications for their economic viability (MP interviews).

Another typical interviewee recalled that frequently people standing in the main street of a town in their [Electorate name] with a mobile phone could not get a signal They also made the point that unreliable communications in rural and regional areas was a vexed issue as it

impeded quality of life and quality of commerce throughout regional Western Australia (MP interviews). This was a serious issue that could impact a local representative electorally, so they were *"very alive"* to the issue and brokering, where possible, a solution for their constituents (MP interviews).

This finding served as a reminder that in the great geographical vastness of the state of Western Australia, not everyone had equal access to online communication networks and that as such, a digital divide existed (Bond-Smith et al., 2018). This was something that perhaps city-based MPs and their constituents took for granted as it was not raised by metropolitan-based MPs. In devising the survey questions and the interview guide, questions relating to the impact of digital connectivity and access were not contemplated as having an impact on the information behaviours of participants. Neither was it contemplated as being an impediment to MPs' use of social media as a tool to communicate with their constituents throughout the immense state of Western Australia. Therefore, this finding is significant and may be worthy of further research.

Information value

Another impediment noted by study participants as to their use or non-use of social media to communicate with their constituents related to the "crisis of verification" (Jones, 2014, p. 155). As explained in some detail in Chapter 3, nowadays, facts are semantically renegotiated to a greater extent than ever before because of social media. Mis-and-dis-information and alternative facts have become a part of the common vernacular and constitute an omnipresence in politicians' information lifeworlds (Boczkowski & Papacharissi, 2018, p. 4; Kreps & Kriner, 2021). Study participants were cognisant of this, and they recognised that "factitious informational blends" which drove speculative politics had infiltrated their small worlds and lifeworlds (Rojecki & Meraz, 2016, p. 25).

This points to evidence of the TIW's concept of Chatman's worldview (Chatman, 1999). Burnett, Besant and Chatman (2001) defined worldview as "a collective perception held in common by members of a social world regarding those things that are deemed important or trivial" (p. 537). It relates to the scope of a small world and the degree to which the members of a small world perceive the importance or triviality of those beliefs. It also impacts the extent to which citizens are interested in issues that exist outside the boundaries of their own small worlds, as well as which issues are worthy of their attention.

In the TIW, Chatman's concept has been repurposed and renamed information value (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010, p.8). The concept of information value is heavily context dependent and relies on the individual and the information world that they navigate to influence the value activity. For example, in this study, many of the participants acknowledged that while social media did offer many benefits for them personally, they were aware of deeper issues of accountability and transparency for society at large (MP interviews). Participants also expressed a desire to be *"across the bigger picture issues"* posing a threat to their information worlds (MP interviews). Increasing concerns about the impact of technology on democratic information lifeworlds and its violation of social norms (including for example, platform governance, online incivility, data misuse, voter manipulation, polarisation and fake news was noted by a number of study participants (MPs' interviews).

Participants shared an awareness that, as Pickard (2019) had observed, the maladies had set in and there were issues outside of their immediate life world, and in the boundaries, that were *"on their radar"* (MP interviews). The corporate colonisation of social media was of concern to many in the wider community so it is understandable that politicians would also be invested in the issue (Fuchs, 2021b; Moazed & Johnson, 2016; Moore & Tambini, 2018). Study participants expressed varying degrees of concern about this issue, given that not since the

British and Dutch East India Companies simultaneously ruled vast territories, millions of people, and the most valuable trade routes, has the world witnessed such a global concentration of wealth and power as is now the case with Facebook and Google (Vaidhyanathan, 2018, p. 212). Potentially, this had profound implications for study participants' information behaviours given that it impacted their small worlds, information lifeworlds, and the public sphere more generally. Many study participants noted that potentially it had ramifications for the way in which they connected with their constituents. As Karpf (2020) eruditely observed, there is no one political leader, tech company, or journalistic organisation that alone can remedy these issues, however each of them had an important role to play (p. 165). Doubtless, strengthening the democratic function of social media would benefit many (Wischmeyer, 2019). Study participants recognised this community expectation and it weighed heavily on some of them (MP interviews).

Also, and significantly, while the representativeness of social media was not explicitly queried in the two questionnaires or the interview schedule, it arose in the context of both. The representativeness of the composition of the social media user base when compared to the general population and the content they created, curated and circulated were also contributing factors to social media non-use by the cohort in this study. A number of participants shared the view that social media was not reflective of the general population and this influenced their information behaviours. Drawing on the academic literature on the topic and following the adoption trends of other technological innovations, social media tended to favour the educated and the wealthy, therefore it cannot really represent the pulse of public opinion as a whole (Gazit, Aharony & Amichai-Hamburger, 2019; Manstead, 2018; Masullo, 2020, p. 68). In doing so, it tended to increase social inequality and stratification in society (Fuchs, 2021b, p. 218; Gui & Büchi, 2019). Although pervasive, not everyone has a social media account. For

instance, only a subset of Western Australians was active on social media. And, even then it tended to attract niche pockets of society. For instance, as one typical interviewee noted:

> *… Twitter is only really followed in the political world by journalists who want to pick up stories. It is not a slack way, but it's an "easy" way for them to pick up on issues that they normally might not have been aware of. (MP interview)*

A number of other MPs made the point that Twitter was an *"echo chamber"* and a *"huge time waster"* (MP interviews). For instance, as another typical respondent stated:

> *[…] a political echo chamber that's […] "monitored" by journalists. There are other people who will follow you—a Twitterarti. There will be other people who will be following your statements, but they'll probably be people of a like-mind anyway. They won't be people that you're trying to reach who you want to change their vote and support you in the next election. (MP interview)*

Due to its composition, the political use of digital media is highly skewed to specific strata of the population. Consequently, voiced expression online is unlikely to be representative of the opinions of the general population (Patten, 2013). Study participants noted that difficulties arise in assessing whether the insights gleaned from social media are applicable to the political sphere generally or just those using social media (MP interviews).

Gauging public opinion is important to politicians and something that they do constantly (MP interviews). Previously, assessing public opinion depended on media coverage and the polling industry. However, and increasingly, social media is being used to infer public opinion. Yet while public expressions on digital media were easy and quick to measure, they had the potential to be misleading. Also, of concern to study participants was a worry that if they were to rely on a communication channel which skewed or distorted the overall opinion of their

constituents, then there could be significant ramifications at election time. No parliamentarian wants to suffer at the ballot box by mis-reading the room (MP interviews). Participants in this study reported being mindful of avoiding taking action based misleading information (MP interviews). Several participants went further, stating that they did not rely on Twitter or Facebook as a reliable gauge of constituency opinion (MP interviews). This is significant as it illustrates again that study participants were placing an information value on social media as an information source. In some instances, they were actively practicing information avoidance, but longer term this was not sustainable given their information needs (MP interviews). Some participants said it was difficult for them to distinguish how many of their followers could actually vote for them on election day and this was a concern to them (MP interviews).

This supports the research cited earlier where it was stated that many parliamentarians lacked the resources and digital literacy competencies to understand who their online audience comprised (MP interviews). See also, Barberá & Rivero (2015); Krasodomski-Jones (2017); Zittrain (2017). Participants agreed that a nuanced understanding of one's online audience was a useful competency in determining a strategic approach to their contemporary constituent communications (MP interviews).

As was highlighted in Chapter 3, there was also a suggestion that given the sheer volume of online expression it is comparatively easy to manipulate social media sentiment by interested parties (Spierings, Jacobs & Linders, 2019). An over-reliance on social media as a measure of public sentiment on an issue runs the risk of severely mis-calculating public opinion given that the self-selection power of social media also skews results (Jungherr, Rivero & Gayo-Avello, 2020). This could have profound implications if skewed data was relied upon for a key decision. An example of this is highlighted by unsuccessful previous attempts to use Twitter to predict elections, all ultimately producing unreliable models (Epstein & Robertson, 2015;

Mitchell & Hitlin, 2013). There is a disconnect between electoral preferences as reflected on social media and the actual preferences of an electorate (Nahon, 2016). This was borne out by the findings of the study, with a number of participants stating that they "*proceeded with caution*" when it came to relying on social media (MP interviews).

Difficulties can also arise for political elites if a large percentage of their social media followers are "low-quality followers" given that for the most part, low-quality followers take the form of bots (Ferrara et al., 2016, p. 96). This may mean that an MP's ability to gauge public opinion based on the strength of their social ties may not be accurate and may impact their sense of genuine public sentiment on an issue (Straus, 2018). The bots may create a false impression of support by artificially inflating numbers and skewing the data (Burnap et al., 2016). Twitter is well known in this regard for its propensity to be a platform for astroturfing, where fake accounts simulate a widely popular uproar for or against an issue (Seoane Pérez et al., 2019, p. 15).

As noted in Chapter 3, social media can be manipulated so that its content shapes what "diffuses fastest and furtherest" (Starr, 2020, p. 74). Sophisticated bots that are difficult to detect can generate personas that appear as credible followers in MPs' small worlds and lifeworlds (Woolley & Howard, 2016). This concern was voiced by a number of study participants with many of them admitting that it was a phenomenon that they had little knowledge or firsthand experience with (MP interviews). This may have ongoing implications for politicians and their trust in the platforms. It may also have a bearing on the information value they place on the usefulness of social media to them in communicating with their constituents. This is of significance to information behaviour research because people generally use the size of others' followers as an indicator of the reliability or popularity of the person that they are following (Garcia et al, 2017; Steinmetz, 2018; Thomsen, 2017).

Boundaries

Another interesting finding on study participants' information behaviour was the manner in which they managed their private lifeworlds and the public sphere given that they have to navigate both. This accords with the TIW and the highlights the significance of the concept of boundaries. It will be recalled that in the TIW, boundaries are the places where information worlds intersect, and where there is potential for information exchange between those worlds to occur (Jaeger & Burnett, 2009).

Using Jaeger and Burnett's (2010) sink of bubbles metaphor, the bubbles each represent an information world and where those bubbles come into contact with one another is known as a boundary. When two worlds are touching, they can potentially pass information through the thin membrane of soap that separates them, but the space within those bubbles is still separate, even if the information moves between them. Examples of this was evident in the data-gathered in this study where participants noted that aspects of their work life and family life met at the boundary of one or another lifeworld. Participants reported having multiple concurrent accounts on the same platforms (MP interviews).

Digital trace data (the data consciously or unconsciously produced as a by-product of user interactions precipitated on the digitally based services) can be found in the boundaries where information worlds intersect (Howison, Wiggins & Crowston, 2011; Jungherr, 2019). The existence of digital trace data is cited by study participants as another impediment to their use of social media. The topic arose in conversations emanating from the interviews as a reason influencing their information behaviours with regards to their non-use of social media. In the context of the TIW, this was an example of information found in the boundaries. Study participants were aware of the amount of digital trace data that appeared in their information lifeworlds and were concerned that it could be mined by nefarious actors for political gain (MP

interviews). This unnerved many of the study participants as it could potentially be used as "*ammunition against them*" (MP interviews). A high proportion of the participants shared a common view that the probability of their social media footprint being used against them for political gain by their opponents was a discrete possibility (MP interviews). Political parties now regularly vet the social media of their prospective candidates for precisely this reason (Marland, 2020, p. 40).

Chapter conclusion

This chapter sought to discuss the implications of the major results arising from this original longitudinal study into the adoption and use of social media which was linked to the research question. This was done by analysing the unique dataset generated by the two online questionnaires and face-to-face interviews and considering the data in the context of the literature on the topic and through the prism of the TIW. Specifically, the findings were viewed in the context of the five conceptional elements of the TIW: Social norms, Social Types, Information Value, Information Behaviour and Boundaries. The motivating factors and determinants of use were considered in this context. So too were the impediments and organisational challenges. An interesting snapshot of constituency correspondence in the Thirty eighth (2008–2012) Parliament and the Thirty-ninth (2013–2017) Parliament was also provided. This included details about the back-of-house systems and processes that occur in terms of managing and maintaining MPs' social media account. This provided further context for understanding the influence that social media has on the information behaviours of the survey population.

The next chapter presents the conclusions of the study. It also makes recommendations for further research based on the findings emanating from this study.

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

Over the last decade, social media has gone from being a dream of Silicon Valley technologists to a central part of contemporary digital life around the world. (boyd, 2015, pp. 1-2).

Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study into the extent to which members elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), used or did not use social media to communicate with their constituents. The first section provides an overview of the study, followed by a discussion of the major findings emanating from the research question. This is then followed by a discussion of the implications of these findings for parliamentary information studies. The chapter concludes with some suggested areas for future research and some final comments.

As was highlighted in Chapter 1, studies of the everyday use of social media by parliamentarians to communicate with their constituents has to date been somewhat neglected by academia in favour of situating them during election times. There is a paucity of academic literature pertaining specifically to Western Australian parliamentarians and the influence that social media adoption and use has had on their information behaviours. Viewed through the lens of the Theory of Information Worlds (TIW), this unique study found that social media had influenced study participants' information behaviours and that its adoption and use was widespread in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and continued to grow in the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017). According to the research, social media did play a significant role in the MP constituent communicative relationship in the study period 2008-2017. These findings corroborated those found in the review of the academic literature presented in Chapter

3. Researching and compiling the literature review proved to be a useful and worthwhile exercise in that it assisted immeasurably in the identification of a number of themes that underpinned this study.

The role that social media plays in providing the electorate with a platform from which to engage in dialogue, exchange information, air grievances, share opinions and connect with their elected representatives, and the way this has influenced MPs human information behaviour was integral to this study. The growing body of scholarly works relating to all facets of social media has demonstrated that the way information is exchanged and shared on social media has created a cultural shift with long-term implications for social interactions, data privacy, social status and social hierarchies (Goggin et al., 2019; Marwick, 2013, p. 19). Citizen engagement also appears to have been influenced by social media, most notably since the election of President Donald Trump (Keith, 2019). Trump's unheralded penchant for tweeting from the White House made headlines worldwide and for a time, the @realDonaldTrump Twitter account became a staple in nightly news broadcasts (Ouyang & Waterman, 2020; Pelled et al., 2018). Many study participants referenced this phenomenon numerous times, and with their perceptions of the disruptive influence this has had on the public sphere (MP interviews).

The research methodology used in this study was established in Chapter 4 and built on the existing literature. The results gathered from the two online questionnaires and the 24 in-depth face-to-face interviews with MPs, coupled with the analysis of a range of secondary resources (such as the Western Australian parliamentary debates (*Hansard*) and newspaper clippings) were reported in Chapter 5. The findings of the research contextualised with the literature on the topic and seen through the prism of the TIW were discussed further in Chapter 6.

Overview of the study

Research into political communication has tended to emphasise the "visceral and visible, not the elusive and opaque" (Davis et al., 2020, p. 22). This study fell into the latter category as many of the information activities being explored occurred out of sight and were reliant on study participants sharing their knowledge, opinions and perceptions of this aspect of their information lifeworlds. Therefore, this study has a high degree of originality. It includes a rare and unique insight into the everyday information behaviours and the contemporary work practices of a cohort of MPs in a subnational Westminster-style Parliament as it relates to their adoption and use of social media to communicate with their constituents.

The aim of the study was to examine the extent to which the social media phenomenon had influenced MPs' information behaviours, from the point of view of those elected to serve in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA). The timing of the study was significant in that it was situated outside of an election campaign and it was specifically focused on the everyday MP-constituent communicative relationship and the role that social media played. Given that the MP-constituent relationship is one of the basic building blocks of a representative democracy it is important that this aspect of an MP's role is well understood (Glassman, 2014, p. 95). This study contributes to furthering this understanding from a Western Australian perspective.

An extensive and systematic review of the literature was carried out to identify relevant sources relating to social media. Background for the study was further gleaned from informal conversations with current and former parliamentarians, parliamentary officers and political scientists at conferences, including those hosted by the Australian Study of Parliament Group (ASPG), the Australian and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table (ANZACATT),

the National Conference of State Legislatures and #SocialMedia, Perth. This contextual background benefitted the study in multiple ways.

The extensive literature review uncovered a number of differing perspectives on the significance of social media. Some argued that it was of no practical use to parliamentarians, whereas others perceived it as an essential part of their communications arsenal. What was obvious from the review of the literature was that advances in technology, including the adoption and use of social media could be said to have fundamentally disrupted the everyday communications between MPs and their constituents. A longitudinal understanding of the adoption practices and the strategies informing the determinants motivating the use of social media by MPs were important considerations when attempting to comprehend information behaviours in a political context. Recognising the perceived benefits and affordances of social media was important, but so too were the impediments and barriers to use. To better understand this aspect of MPs' information behaviours and lifeworlds, the study sought to examine the following multi-part research question:

> *To what extent did Members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), use social media to communicate with their constituents, and what were their motivations for use or non-use?*

To achieve the stated aim of this study, two research objectives were devised. These objectives were as follows:

> *Objective One: Assess the extent to which members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), elected to the*

Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), used social media to communicate with their constituents.

Objective Two: Obtain the views of Members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA), elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) about issues relating to their motivation to use or not to use social media to communicate with their constituents.

The study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Two self-administered online questionnaires were distributed to all members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the PoWA, elected to serve in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017). Both of the online questionnaires generated consistently high response rates. In Survey 1 (2012), this was 76.84 per cent and in Survey 2 (2016), this was 86.32 per cent. See Table 1. The results are therefore highly indicative of the membership of the both Parliaments. Although this is considered to be a high response rate, some caution should be observed as to the generalisability of the results (Engel et al., 2014). These results provide a snapshot and tell the story of a particular legislature, comprising a particular cohort of parliamentarians, at a particular point in time. Therefore, some of the findings may not directly translate to other parliaments in the same or other jurisdictions for comparative purposes.

In addition to the two self-administered online questionnaires, 24 in-depth face-to-face interviews with MPs were also carried out. These generated a rich dataset of unique qualitative data which was used to provide context to the quantitative data collected. This equated to be about a third of the survey population. This enabled the voices of the study participants to dominate throughout the study. Therefore, one of the strengths of this study was the plethora

of original data that was generated, which in turn was used to address the research question and objectives. Attention was given to ensuring the ethical conduct of the study, the veracity of the results, and that the reliability and validity of the research were beyond reproach.

Reflections on the importance of information behaviour research

The concept of information behaviour is useful for explaining how individuals may potentially behave given the information available to them in a specific world, including information seeking, sharing, provision, exchange and information avoidance (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010). As this study has shown, social media have transformed the way information is consumed and exchanged, and yet its impact on human information behaviour is not fully understood. This research contributes to a better understanding of the complexitites underlying the motivations that influence social media adoption and use by MPs. Conceptualising these intricate and interconnected facets of information behaviour deepens our knowledge of the topic and enables us to understand the concept of information behaviour more holistically.

Using the TIW as the theoretical framework underpinning the study, this dissertation was able to capture the dynamics of the study participants' information behaviours from multiple contexts and settings. According to Burnett et al., (2001) the extension of the small worlds into virtual worlds is useful in providing broader application to examine the multi-tiered online contexts of information and information behaviours. It can also be usefully applied to examine the complexity of information behaviours from a number of contexts, including for example, online, parliamentary, party-political, political, etc. This could also include social media given how little we know about the longer-term impact on democracy (Margetts, 2019). The TIW accounts for the use of information and information behaviours that occur simultaneously in the immediate (micro) and the broader (meso and macro) social levels and contexts.

Without sufficient information about political and social issues, the ability for political elites and non-elites to deliberate and discuss within their information worlds at all levels would be severely impeded. Therefore, inadequate information about important issues can reduce deliberation within small worlds and lifeworlds. It can also constrict political discourse across the information worlds in a society. Information is embedded within cultures and communities and take specific forms within individual information worlds. By researching human information behaviour and better understanding how people construct meaning and value within their information worlds, much can be learnt from close attention to how information functions and flows within and across diverse settings and multiple contexts (Cooke, 2017).

Review of study findings

Although based on a single legislature, which makes it more difficult to generalise the findings, this study adds to the understanding of the information lifeworlds of a cohort of parliamentarians within a Westminster legislature. Habermas' (1992) concept of the public sphere was useful in explaining how social media facilitated information access and exchange for political deliberation and participation. Research into information behaviours in a public sphere within a broader lifeworld is useful in providing the parliamentary information studies research community with original insights into studying how individuals' information behaviours on social media have evolved over the study period (2008-2017). A constant theme running through this study has been the importance MPs' place on information, the pervasiveness of social media and its profound impact on their information behaviours and lifeworlds. Information is everywhere, and as Ford (2015) observed: "Constantly as we traverse the landscape of people, things and places making up our lives—and even as we dream—we are constantly processing information" (p. 1).

Study findings also confirmed that parliamentarians place a great deal of emphasis on constituency service. A big part of this involves communicating with the electorate and social media has a central role to play in this. Parliamentarians do not exist in a vacuum, as was seen in Chapters 2 and 3, they are often expected to represent a number of different interests simultaneously. Sometimes MPs can be asked to represent competing interests and arguments in a highly pressured, politically charged and emotional environment. Consequently, a fine balancing act ensues for MPs as they endeavour to represent their electorate, and as this study has shown, this has an influence on their information behaviours.

Research based on the study's objectives sought to investigate the extent to which members elected to the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) in the PoWA used social media to communicate with their constituents. As this study has shown it was very much a feature of the information lifeworlds and professional work practices of the study cohort. It confirmed that the majority of members elected to the Parliament of Western Australia (PoWA) in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) had adopted social media as a way of communicating with their constituents. Many of them could be described as being early adopters.

One of the key motivations for social media adoption and continued use was that it enabled unmediated information exchange. No longer were the traditional intermediaries (such as the press gallery or party headquarters) able act as the gatekeepers. A number of respondents spoke of feeling liberated at being to control and nuance their own message, and in their own way. While many shared a desire to offer more two-way dialogue and more interactivity on social media, they explained that it was not yet embedded part of their communication suite. This was due in part to staff resourcing challenges and workload related issues. Many used social media more as a listening tool. Other motivations included the ability to reach new audiences, the

ability to easily raise their constituency profile, the ability to be able to generate feedback directly from their constituency, being able to promote their campaign for re-election, and allowing them to communicate their personal views on an issue.

This study also demonstrated that the TIW presents a useful framework from which to understand information behaviour at an individual and societal level. The combined use of the concepts of Habermas (1989) lifeworlds and Chatman's (1996) small worlds provided another opportunity to explore the complexities of information behaviour in a modern and technologically advanced information society (Burnett & Jaeger, 2008, p. 11). The study provides another example of the successful fusion of these two theoretical concepts, demonstrating that it served as a useful spatial and social lens from which to examine the information behaviours of a cohort of political elites.

It provided a useful and practical theoretical construct upon which to base the study, particularly with regards to situating the findings in the context of social norms, social types, information value, information behaviours and boundaries. The influential work of Savolainen (1995) was also important in highlighting the significance of the everyday in information behaviour research. It usefully demonstrated that many study participants had adapted their information seeking and sharing practices to encompass, that which is found on the social media platforms. However, in doing so they came across information (in the boundaries) that they may not have had reason to interface with in an offline environment. For this reason, may noted that they had increasingly used information avoidance tactics so as to limit their exposure to this type of information.

That parliamentarians' dwell in an information-rich and time-poor environment was another element confirmed by the study. The study provided a unique glimpse into the information lifeworlds of political elites, a typically under-studied group. It also provided interesting

insights into MPs' back-of-house work practices relating to their day-to-day handling of social media. As Chatman (1991) observed, people have their own "view of social reality, and ways in which they satisfy their intellectual, social and physical needs" (p. 438). Often, much of what happens in a parliamentary setting occurs behind closed doors and many deals are brokered "behind the chair". Marland (2020) noted, the dominant political culture of secrecy has meant that much of our knowledge about parliamentary practices are anecdotal and unsystematic. The instantaneity of social media now makes it more difficult than perhaps it once was to "operate in whispers, hide embarrassing information, cover up failed projects and deliver one message to one audience and a quite different one to others" (Coleman, 2017, p. 80). To this end social media has profoundly impacted the transparency and accountability in the public sphere. As we have seen, MPs have had to adapt their information behaviours accordingly.

This has also had implications for resourcing and has posed some organisational challenges for MPs in the day-to-day management of their social media. For others, this served as an impediment to their adoption and use of social media. There are tensions between the reality of limited human resources (including training and professional development opportunities) and community expectations of what constituted being a "good constituency" member. Responsiveness was an important factor influencing MPs information behaviours as it may have electoral consequences if not managed well. This was something that study participants reported having to grapple with, with many aiming to be more strategic in their future endeavours. Their current setting appeared to be more opportune and happenstance, than well considered.

Other impediments noted by the study participants included digital connectivity, online access and the representativeness of the platforms. Another concern of the MPs that featured prominently in discussion of their information lifeworlds was the ubiquity of online incivility

and gendertrolling. This too influenced their information behaviours as they had to negotiate the social norms of social media, where once established social norms no longer seemed to apply. For many respondents this was new ground and they felt a sense of bewilderment at the prospect of renegotiating this aspect of their information lifeworlds. A further complexity noted by participants was the blurring of the public and the private, the professional and the personal. Traditional boundaries and information values no longer applied and this also had implications for the day-to-day navigation of MPs information flows, information gathering and satisfying information needs. However, as Jungherr, Rivero & Gayo-Avello (2020) observed, despite the disruption caused by social media, the fundamentals of politics have remained unchanged. It is more a case of the "retooling of politics", as the same goals are in play, but what has changed is the way in which they are pursued (Jungherr, Rivero & Gayo-Avello, 2020, p. 28). Therefore, while the information needs of the political elites may not have changed, and as this study has shown, the way in which they are now pursued has been disrupted by social media.

Participants also identified an unmet need in terms of social media literacy with many indicating the presence of knowledge deficits in this area. While on the one hand, it appeared user-friendly and intuitive, the particularities of each of the platforms required a nuanced skillset to competently navigate the functionalities they offer. Understanding audience segmentation given the representativeness of social media to better inform evidenced based decision-making is but one notable aspect. The vast majority of respondents expressed a cautious approach to using social media in real time. Many were of the view that an ill-advised comment or their trace-data could come back to haunt them one day. They are shared concerns about the interplay of social media and falling foul of parliamentary privilege or defamation law.

All of these elements (parliamentary bubbles in the sink), individually and combined meant that information behaviours had to be repeatedly modified and adapted in order to be able to seek, access and exchange the right information, and at the right time. This was very much context dependent and varied from MP to MP and was contingent on their personal self-efficacy with social media, their workloads, their schedule, whether the parliament was sitting, etc.

As this study has confirmed the information lifeworld of a parliamentarian is complex and multi-layered. The TIW, in particular Habermas' public sphere and Chatman's information lifeworlds and small worlds were therefore useful in framing how the study cohort aligned with the conception of information-poor and information-rich lifeworlds. Information lies at the heart of parliamentary democracies, therefore core to this is the exchange of information between political actors. Dynamic small worlds are forged through interaction and exchanges of information between MPs and their constituents using social media as one of the many communication channels now at their disposal.

As has been demonstrated in this study, both the political elites and the general public were increasingly turning to social media to further each of their respective goals. This was evident in the way the composition of the MPs' mailbags and inboxes had changed over time. This has meant that people have had to adapt their information behaviours, including their longstanding work practices, systems and processes so as to optimise the affordances provided by social media.

Reflection on process

The success of this study can be attributed in part to the application of the mixed methods approach (MMR). The central premise of MMR is that the use of quantitative and qualitative

approaches in combination may provide a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than a standalone approach. MMR accounts for the flaws and deficiencies of any single method used (Dillman & Messer, 2010). This resulted in a more targeted understanding of the topic. Importantly, it also added rigour, a breadth of complexity, richness and depth to the study that may otherwise may not have been achieved with a one-dimensional approach (Denzin, 2012, p. 82). With MMR, combining the two "theoretically valuable" approaches made it possible to compensate for the limitations and weaknesses of each, while producing synergies between them both (Adler, 2012, p. 8). This involved delving "more deeply into those individuals, settings, subcultures, and scenes, hoping to generate a subjective understanding of how and why people perceive, reflect, role-take, interpret and interact." (Adler, 2012, p. 8). This study successfully did just that by getting the study participants to share aspects of their information lifeworlds relating their motivations for adopting and using social media to communicate with their constituents. Of course, not everyone was an adoptee, therefore ascertaining the impediments to use from the MP's perspective was another important facet considered by the study.

Recommendations for future research

In the preceding chapters a number of areas have been highlighted that could be the subject of future research. Throughout the study, several interesting questions emerged that could not be satisfactorily answered by this study due to the constraints on scope and feasibility. The subject matter of this research was extensive and as such not all aspects could be explored within the confines of the study. However, the results of this study raise a number of interesting questions that merit further academic exploration. For instance, the everyday and electorate-oriented work practices of MPs deserve much more scholarly attention than is currently the case. This study goes some way towards addressing this lack of academic consideration of the ordinary,

routine and everyday work practices of parliamentarians and highlighting its potential as an under-studied area, and ripe for research (Geddes, 2019). It was scholar danah boyd (2015) who stated that it was “imperative to analyse the phenomenon of social media” and this study has successfully done that. (p. 2). In light of the findings outlined throughout the dissertation, it is proposed that the following recommendations for further research be considered:

Examine the social media use in future parliaments

The scope of this study was constrained by financial, resource and time limitations. To that end, this study was confined to examining two parliaments: Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017). Ideally, it would have been beneficial to extend this longitudinal study to cover the Fortieth Parliament (2017-2021), however that was outside the remit of the study. It would be interesting to see how the perspectives of the members elected to the Fortieth Parliament (2017-2021) aligned with, or deviated from, those in the previous parliaments.

The Fortieth Parliament (2017-2021) was noteworthy for a number of reasons. For one, 22 new members of the Legislative Assembly and 13 new members of the Legislative Council were elected. It also coincided with the presidency of Donald Trump (Daniel & Whalan, 2021) and his controversial use of, and subsequent suspension from, Twitter and Facebook in January 2021 (Fuchs, 2021a; Marantz, 2021). This was a significant event in political communications and will have countless implications (Fukuyama, 2021, Newitz, 2021). Worldwide, legislatures and regulators are being tasked with responding to threats to subvert democratic processes by nefarious forces disrupting political discourse using social media (See: Leaver, 2021; Madianou, 2020; Nagelhus Schia & Gjesvik, 2020). Gauging the thoughts of serving MPs about this aspect of political communication may also be worthy of further research.

COVID-19 and social media

Another important phenomenon impacting the Fortieth Parliament (2017-2021) was the outbreak of the coronavirus (known as COVID-19), a highly contagious respiratory disease that was declared to be a pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020). During the pandemic humans limited physical contact in that hope that physical distancing would slow the spread of the hyper-virulent disease wreaking havoc worldwide. This led to the unprecedented rise in the use of technology in general, and social media in particular (Legislative Assembly, 2020). As political elites and non-elites retreated to the safety of their homes, they became ever more dependent on technology (Fuchs, 2020).

Social media became a critical means for social connection when physical distancing prevented traditional forms of interaction (Blick, 2021). As Persily and Tucker (2020) observed, if anything, the importance of social media became even more acute as people spent more time alone, inside, and online. It is therefore recommended that a further study of members elected to serve in future parliaments be undertaken. Doubtless capturing these important insights would inform future parliamentary information scholars about how COVID impacted their information behaviours and their everyday communications with their constituents using social media.

Constituents' perspectives

As previously noted, financial, resource and time limitations constrained the scope of this study. This study focussed on the MP constituent relationship from the point of view of the parliamentarian. The study found that that in terms of information flows, these are key relationships, but the constituents' perspectives were not included. Constituents were not surveyed as part of this study as it was beyond the scope of this study to provide an in-depth

examination of this facet. Further research could be conducted in order to gain constituents' insights into the key relationship. This perspective would be illuminating and would doubtless provide another angle from which to understand this important, but oft overlooked relationship, in a representative democracy.

Comparative research

The scope of this study was constrained by financial, resource and time limitations. While this study did consider other jurisdictions in the context of the literature review, it was not a comparative study in the true sense of the word. Rather, what was happening in other jurisdictions served to inform the research. A more comparative work would be interesting and indeed is lacking in the Western Australian context. As previously noted, worldwide, Westminster parliaments and their members are grappling with the social media phenomenon. It would be instructive to learn what is happening based on their experiences and specific information lifeworlds. It is therefore recommended that further qualitative research be undertaken that includes comparative data from other parliaments.

Everyday information behaviours

This study focussed on the everyday information lifeworlds and work practices of a group of sitting MPs in a non-election period. This is a period often neglected by scholars, who have tended to emphasise electoral processes and electioneering. Consequently, the everyday information behaviour aspect is under-represented in the literature, particularly in parliamentary information studies (Baldwin-Philippi, 2017; Jungherr, Rivero & Gayo-Avello, 2020). This runs the risk of overlooking an important aspect of MPs' information behaviours (Geddes, 2019). It also privileges the short view, and as such may miss the nuances of how social media are shaping politics incrementally and on a day-to-day basis. This is reinforced by Arthur (2021) who makes the point that we dwell in an "age of social warming". This infers

gradualism and a degree of subtly, whereby we do not quite notice the point at which shifts occur. Changes in information behaviour in our small worlds, lifeworlds and in the public sphere are almost imperceptible and only seem obvious retrospectively (Arthur, 2021).

In a similar vein, Nielsen and Fletcher (2020) pointed out that it is only with the examination of “mundane practices” of social media adoption and use by parliamentarians that over the longer term their information behaviours can be examined (Nielsen & Fletcher, 2020, para 9.2). Moreover, it is only by knowing about the “regularities of the mundane” that we can be confident in recognising the “exceptional” when it occurs (Nielsen & Fletcher, 2020, para 9.2).

Social media impact on MPs’ mental health and lifeworlds

The electoral cycle looms large with the high degree of uncertainty and insecurity it entails. As Theakston, Gouge & Honeyman (2007) made clear, the notion that all former MPs walk into “cushy and lucrative jobs” is a misconception (p. 13). The reality is, and contrary to popular belief, securing post-parliamentary employment can be very difficult for some (Flinders et al., 2020). Also, when compared to other professions or mental health literature in general, there is scant academic scrutiny of the mental health of parliamentarians (Flinders et al., 2020, Poulter et al., 2019).

As this study has shown, there are a number of other stressors, including: unremitting levels of scrutiny, constant media intrusion, an incessant propensity by opponents to capitalise on human error and mistakes, information overload, information avoidance, and unending streams of abuse and incivility on social media that MPs have to deal with. (See also: Hardman, 2018, p. 6; Kwiatkowski, 2012; Roberts, 2017; Weinberg, 2012, 2017). This is worthy of follow-up study, particularly as it relates to social media, information overload, mental health and the information lifeworlds of parliamentarians in the PoWA.

Social media literacy

As this study has shown, those with competencies in social media literacy are better positioned to navigate the endless information flows and are empowered critical information consumers (See for example: Ashley, Maksl & Craft, 2017, p. 79; Christian, 2019; Krutka & Carpenter, 2017; Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013). This is an important skillset for MPs to have to be able to discern fact from fiction in this social media mediated world. According to Middaugh (2018) greater attention should be focused on civic media literacy and what it means to share information ethically and responsibly. Underscoring this is a need for these future voters—and future MPs—to be skilled in the areas of self-expression, civics education and digital literacy (See: Kligler-Vilenchik & Literat, 2020; Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2018; Marquart, Ohme & Möller, 2020). It has been argued that the school curriculum is ill equipped to provide a twenty-first century skillset—that prepares students for jobs that have not yet been created, for technologies that have not yet been invented, and to solve problems that have not yet been anticipated (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 5; Print & Tan, 2015). This aspect of information behaviour is also worthy of further study.

Contribution to knowledge

Enlarging the scope of social media research beyond the high profile and controversial stand-out cases and into the space of the everyday has been a theme running through this study. It is by considering the everyday—some would say mundane—rather than the exceptional, that this study makes a unique and significant contribution to information behaviour and parliamentary information studies. Research into human information behaviour is crucial in informing an understanding of how digital data has become so meaningful in mundane contexts of everyday life (Pink et al., 2017). The academic literature suggests that digital media in general, and social media in particular, has had a profound impact on democracy (Fukuyama, 2021, pp. 37-8;

Persily & Tucker, 2020). The way we consume and are consumed by politics and parliamentary affairs has changed incalculably since the introduction of social media. This has led to changes in the practices, performances and reception of politics worldwide. As this study has shown, the PoWA is no exception. While some of these changes have not been as big as sometimes suggested, social media is now so pervasive that it can no longer be ignored by the political elite as a channel from which they can communicate with their constituents (Nielsen & Fletcher, 2020). This was a sentiment shared by the majority of MPs who participated in this study.

This study has shown that one way to get a clearer view of the impact of social media on the political sphere is to focus on how different parliamentary actors go about using it, and to what extent they do so in their small worlds and information lifeworlds. Perhaps by focusing solely on large-scale political or electoral outcomes the smaller day-to-day, but yet significant, changes in practice, procedure and experience go unnoticed and are under-researched (Brabham, 2015). This longitudinal mixed methods study of everyday use of social media by MPs in a small sub-national Australian parliament goes some way towards remedying this.

Research into the everyday information lifeworlds of parliamentarians is worthy of exploration given that there has been a paucity of scholarly interest in this area to date. Up until now, the opinions and perceptions of members of the PoWA, elected to serve in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017) about issues relating to their use or non-use of social media to communicate with their electorate have not been solicited, much less documented. There has been a deficit in the academic scrutiny of the social media phenomenon and its influence on the information behaviours of the elected representatives in the PoWA. This study contributed to an understanding of social media prevalence by providing a snapshot of the extent to which it was used by the target population.

Informed by a ground-level perspective from parliamentarians themselves, this involved hearing directly from the MPs who served the PoWA during the period 2008 to 2017. This was accomplished by gleaning insights directly from them through in-depth face-to-face interviews and two online self-administered questionnaires. The human-focused approach to the research design meant that the study was able to delve deeply into the experiences, perceptions, behaviours and beliefs of those being studied (Given, 2016). Significantly too, as was evidenced in the results in Chapter 5, this study also confirmed that MPs are information-rich and time-poor. Members of the PoWA were no outliers in this regard, this appears to be a common characteristic among parliamentarians worldwide as they grapple with disrupted information flows and lifeworlds (Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Program. (2018).

Limitations of the study

The limitations that constrained the study are important to acknowledge given that they shaped the scope of the research. The researcher was limited in some important ways regarding how the research was conducted during the duration of this longitudinal study. Notwithstanding these challenges, a number of important trends emanated from analysis of the dataset as was seen in the previous chapter. In order to ensure the academic rigour, validity and reliability of this study’s research findings, all aspects of the research design and implementation were diligently considered. This was achieved by being explicit about the procedures followed at each stage of the research and by ensuring that they were methodologically sound and well documented (See Chapter 4). Throughout the study considerable effort was put into including sufficient detail and explanations of key elements of the process and the rationale for decisions made. A part of this academic rigour is also identifying potential limitations of the study and

assessing them given that they had the potential to undermine the veracity of the research. The following have been identified as potential limitations:

Theory of Information Worlds

While the TIW provides a strong foundation for understanding and analysing the complex and interwoven contexts within which we interact with information (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011, p. 162), it does have some limitations. Afterall, the TIW is a relatively new theoretical framework in the field of Library and Information Sciences (LIS), having only been devised just over a decade ago. As such it is still evolving as a concept. Despite this, the foundational concepts of Chatman's small worlds and normative behaviour, in addition to Habermas' conception of the lifeworld and the public sphere have been in existence for a much longer time, so that in some ways mitigates this potential limitation of this study.

Findings become outdated quickly

The continual dynamism of a parliament means that any study of it is never really finished and is "made more complex still by the inevitability of change" (Crewe, 2021, p. 207). In effect, this means that some statements about a specific parliament become outdated almost as soon as they have been published. This limitation may apply to this study. However, as Crewe (2021) further usefully noted:

> *… other observations endure in their relevance, so like any inquiry about people the researcher needs to consider both the stable and unstable, the continuities and the dynamism, the patterns at different times, places and scales (p. 9).*

For that reason, a study like this offers a significant way of capturing a point in time. It could be said that this study captured social media use at different times, places and scales. Rather than it being an apt descriptor of the present, it offers a snapshot of the views, thoughts and

attitudes of a specific group of people elected to serve in the PoWA at a specific point in time. This of course has implications for the generalisability of the results.

Salience of the topic

When dealing with a target population that is notoriously complex and difficult to deal with, of concern too, was the salience of the research topic (Cowley, 2021). Initially there was trepidation at the potentiality that respondents might have attached low salience to "another" survey request. MPs have many demands on their time and get many requests to participate in all manner of surveys by school students, university students, media, pollsters, etc. The overuse of surveys can undermine their utility and lead to a phenomenon known as survey fatigue. With the longitudinal aspect of this study there was an early concern that the repeated contacts may have impacted the MPs' engagement and may have introduced nonresponse error. Fortunately, this turned out not to be the case as a lot of effort went into designing the survey cognisant of being sensitive to respondent burden with an already busy target population. The salience of the topic helped in this regard, as did the early establishment of the credibility of the study with letters of endorsement. The high response rates suggests that the topic resonated with survey population given that a large number assessed it as being worthy of their time.

Researcher effects

Another potential limiting factor that may have impacted the success of the study was researcher effects given that the researcher is a long-serving employee of the PoWA. As the researcher was known to many of the prospective respondents, this had the potential to introduce an element of bias into the study. It was thought that perhaps respondents may have felt some obligation to complete the survey because the researcher was known to some of the

sample population, when they otherwise may not have chosen to do so. Or, that they may have perceived the survey request as originating from the PoWA.

Conscious that the study may have been susceptible to social desirability bias and sponsor bias, mitigation strategies were put in place to limit the impact of this potential bias. For instance, one practical strategy was that the implementation of the survey was executed external to the PoWA in that all correspondence relating to the survey was branded with the name and logo of the sponsoring academic institution, Curtin University. All the visual cues indicated that the study was linked to a postgraduate student at Curtin University, and not the PoWA per se. Additionally, the researcher used her official postgraduate student email address to communicate with survey population, and not her parliamentary email address. The online questionnaires were hosted by third parties on the Curtin University servers. All contact details provided were those of the Department of Information Studies at Curtin University.

While important to acknowledgment these limitations of the study, they do not decrease the significance of the findings.

Concluding thoughts

This study sought to advance the understanding of parliamentary information studies, with an emphasis on the information behaviour of a group of parliamentarians. Using the theoretical concept of the TIW, the study examined their information behaviours related to their use of social media to communicate with their constituents outside of an election campaign. In doing so it provided a rare and unique glimpse into the information lifeworlds and small worlds of MPs as they navigated information flows in the public sphere. Based in a small Westminster parliament, it sought to ascertain the personal views of members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the PoWA, elected to serve in the Thirty-eighth Parliament (2008–

2012) and the Thirty-ninth Parliament (2013–2017), on the importance they placed on social media as facilitating the communicative link between them and their constituents.

The research began with the identification of the research problem, the statement of the research question and objectives, the selection of the research design and methodology. It then proceeded to its implementation phase in the form of two online questionnaires and a number of in-depth face-to-face interviews. The findings were then analysed and discussed in the context of the extensive literature review, and through the five components of the TIW (Social Norms, Social Types, Information Values, Information Behaviours and Boundaries). The life experiences of the study participants accorded with these elements and it was a helpful way to be able to categorise the data. It also became obvious that there was overlap between them. For examples there were numerous occurrences where social norms, information value and boundaries of an information world overlapped. This was useful for making links and seeing connections with the data. Conclusions and recommendations emanating from the unique and valuable dataset then followed.

This research makes an important contribution to the field of parliamentary information studies. It is important that work in this understudied area continue. Schauder (2018) made the erudite point that: "Information researchers are privileged to have information as their subject of study—information, the very phenomenon that makes possible the sharing and transmission of knowledge" (p. 571). This was a view shared by the researcher, who was provided with a glimpse into the information lifeworlds of a select group of parliamentarians in the PoWA. Writing at the sesquicentenary of Western Australia in 1979, noted scholars Pervan and Sharman lamented that Western Australia's political processes had been "denied the attention that its richness and variety deserve" (Pervan & Sharman, 1979, p. xv). They went on to state that the intention of their book, "Essays on Western Australian politics" was to "assist in

remedying this defect and to encourage further study" (Pervan & Sharman, 1979, p. xv). A lofty goal indeed, and a sentiment also shared by this study. As has been illustrated throughout this work, there has been a lack of scholarly interest in the PoWA generally, and in its members and their information behaviours specifically.

As boyd (2015) noted in the chapter's opening quote above, it is imperative to analyse the phenomenon of social media, as this study has done. In doing so it makes an important and unique contribution to furthering understanding of information behaviours in the PoWA, through the prism of the TIW. It is hoped that future scholars of parliamentary information studies and those researching the information behaviours and lifeworlds of parliamentarians in the PoWA add another storey to the sound foundation established here. There is still much more to explore when it comes to the question of information exchange using social media between elected representatives and those whom they represent, and how this influences information behaviours in the short and long term.

REFERENCES

Parliamentary debates (Hansard)

Commonwealth

Australia. *Parliamentary debates (Hansard*). House of Representatives. 13 March 2013, p.1934. (Speaker Anna Burke, Disruption in the galleries: Use of Twitter).

Western Australia

Western Australia. *Parliamentary debates (Hansard*). Legislative Council. 23 May 2013, p. 1019. (Hon Peter Collier, Minister for Education: Social media site).

Western Australia. *Parliamentary debates (Hansard*). Legislative Council. 23 May 2013, p. 1019. (Hon Sue Ellery, Minister for Education: Social media site).

Western Australia. *Parliamentary debates (Hansard*). Legislative Council. 23 May 2013, p. 1025. (Hon Kate Doust, Minister for Education: Social media site).

Western Australia. *Parliamentary debates (Hansard*). Legislative Council. 19 May 2015, p. 3801. (Deputy President, Electronic devices: Procedural note for Members, no. 8).

Western Australia. *Parliamentary debates (Hansard*). Legislative Council. 25 November 2015, p. 8757. (Hon Darren West, Statement Work attire: Gender equality).

Western Australia. *Parliamentary debates (Hansard*). Legislative Assembly. 20 October 2020, p. 7. (Rob Hunter, Estimates).

Legislation

Constitution Act 1889 (WA) *(*CA 1889)

Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899 (WA) (CAAA 1899)

State Records Act (WA) 2001

Newspaper articles

Carr, T. (2018, April 25). Rural campaigner blocked by ministers on Twitter. *Mid-West Times,* p. 2.

McKnight, G. (2018). MP stands by profane comment. *Sound Telegraph, 18 April*, 7.

O'Shea, B. (2017a, February 23). Silly buggers: Inside cover. *The West Australian*, p. 2.

O'Shea, B. (2017b, September 8). Inside cover: Today's Tweet @TheNationalsWA. *The West Australian*, p. 2.

Zimmerman, J. (2021, September 6) You be the judge: The West releases thousands of texts as calls grow for Clan duo to resign: Make up your own mind: The West releases Lib "Clan" texts, *The West Australian*, p. 1.

Zimmerman, J. & Law, P. (2021, August 21) Libs 'clan' text life - The secret of clan-destine powerbrokers, *The West Australian*, p. 1.

Statistics

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2010). *Forms design standards manual* (ABS Cat. No. 1530.0). Retrieved from ABS:

https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/1530.0Contents2010?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=1530.0&issue=2010&num=&view=

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (1999) An introduction to sample surveys: A user's guide (ABS Cat. No. 1500.0). Retrieved from ABS: https://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/CA25687100069892CA2568880020B400/$File/12990_1999.pdf

Textual Works

Aastrup, J., & Halldorsson, A. (2013). Quality criteria for qualitative inquiries in logistics. *European Journal of Operational Research, 144*, 321–332. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0377-2217(02)00397-1

Abbate, J. (2019). Popularising the internet. In P. Heyer, & P. Urquhart (Eds), *Communication in history: Stone age symbols to social media* (pp. 297-302). New York, NY: Routledge.

Adam, S., & Maier, M. (2010). Personalisation of politics: A critical review and agenda for research. *Annals of the International Communication Association, 34*(1), 213-257. https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2010.11679101

Adi, A., Gerodimos, R., & Lilleker, D. G. (2018). "Yes we vote" civic mobilisation and impulsive engagement on Instagram. *Javnost: The Public, 25*(3), 315-332. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2018.1464706

Adler, E., Gent, C., & Overmeyer, C. (1998). The home style hompeage: Legislator use of the world wide web for constituency contact. *Legislative Studies Quarterly, 23*(4), 585–595. https://doi.org/10.2307/440242

Adler, P. (2012). The espistemology of numbers. In S. E. Baker, & R. Edwards (Eds), *How many qualitative interviews is enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research* (pp. 8-11). National Centre for Research Methods. Retrieved from http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/4/how_many_interviews.pdf

Agada, J. (1999). Inner-city gatekeepers: An exploratory survey of their information use environment. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 50*, 74-85.

Aharony, N. (2012). Twitter use by three political leaders: An exploratory analysis. *Online Information Review, 36*(4), 587–603. https://doi.org/10.1108/14684521211254086

Akhtar, S., & Morrison, C. M. (2019). The prevalence and impact of online trolling of U.K. members of Parliament. *Computers in Human Behavior, 99*, 322-327. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.05.015

Akirav, O. (2017). Israeli representatives' use of and attitudes toward web applications. *International Journal of E-Politics, 8*(4), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJEP.2017100101

Alaimo, C., & Kallinikos, J. (2017). Computing the everyday: Social media as data platforms. *The Information Society, 33*(4), 175–191 https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2017.1318327.

Albertson, B., & Guiler, K. (2020). Conspiracy theories, election rigging and support for democratic norms. *Research & Politics, July-September*, 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168020959859

Allan, J. (2015). Pusillanimous parliamentarians. *Australasian Parliamentary Review, 30*(2), 155-163.

Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 31*(2), 211–236. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211

Allcott, H., Gentzkow, M., & Yu, C. (2019). Trends in the diffusion of misinformation on social media. *Research & Politics, 6*(2), 1-8.

Allen, D., & Light, J. S. (2015). *From voice to influence: Understanding citizenship in a digital age.* Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

Allen, P. (2018). *Why it matters who our politicians are.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Almond, S. (2016). Anthony Weiner: A meditation on the politics of prurient need. In H. Mandell & G. Masullo Chen (Eds), *Scandal in a digital age.* (pp. 97–103). New York, NY: Springer.

Alonso, S., Keane, J., & Merkel, W., (Eds). (2011). *The future of representative democracy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Amnesty International. (2018). *Toxic Twitter: A toxic place for women*. Retrieved from Amnesty International: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2018/03/online-violence-against-women-chapter-1/

Andersen, K., Ohme, J., Bjarnøe, C., Bordacconi, M. J., Albæk, E., & De Vreese, C. H. (2020). *Generational gaps in political media use and civic engagement: From baby boomers to generation Z.* New York: Routledge.

Andre, A., & Depauw, S. (2013). District magnitude and home styles of representation in European Democracies. *West European Politics, 36*, 986–1006. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2013.796183

Andre, A., Bradbury, J., & Depauw, S. (2014). Constituency service in multi-level democracies. *Regional and Federal Studies, 24*, 129–150. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2013.858708

Annany, M. (2020). Exploring the democratic significance of silence. In L. Bernholz, H. Landemore, & R. Reich, *Digital technology and democratic theory.* (pp. 141-166). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Anstead, N., & O'Loughlin, B. (2015). Social media analysis and public opinion: The 2010 UK general election. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 20*(2), 204–220. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12102

Appleyard, R. (1981). Western Australia: Economic and demographic growth, 1850–1914. In C. Stannage (Ed), *A new history of Western Australia.* (pp. 211–236). Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press.

Appolonia, A. (2019, November 22). *How Blackberry went from controlling the smartphone market to a phone of the past.* Retrieved from Business Insider: https://www.businessinsider.com.au/blackberry-smartphone-rise-fall-mobile-failure-innovate-2019-11?r=US&IR=T

Aral, S. (2020). *The hype machine: How social media disrupts our elections, our economy and our health and how we must adapt.* New York: Random House.

Archetti, C. (2017). Image, self-presentation and political communication in the age of interconnection: An alternative understanding of the mediatisation of politics. *Northern Lights: Film & Media Studies Yearbook, 15*(1), 89–109. https://doi.org/10.1386/nl.15.89.

Archibald, M. M. (2015). Investigator triangulation: A collaborative strategy with potential for mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 10*(3), 228-250. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689815570092

Arditi, D. (2014). *iTake-over: The recording industry in the digital era.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Argarwal, P., Sastry, N., & Wood, E. (2019). Tweeting MPs: Digital engagement between citizens and members of Parliament in the UK. *13th International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media (ICWSM), 11-14 June 2019.* Retrieved from: https://ojs.aaai.org/index.php/ICWSM/article/view/3359

Arklay, T., & Laurie, N. (2019). Parliaments of Australia. In P. Chen, N. Barry, J. Butcher, D. Clune, I. Cook, A. Garnier, Y. Haigh, S. Motta, & M. Taflaga, *Australian politics and public policy: Senior edition* (pp. 70-87). Sydney: University of Sydney Press.

Armstrong, G. M., Kotler, P., Harker, M., & Brennan, R. (2019). *Marketing: An introduction* (4th ed). London: Pearson UK.

Arnaboldi, V., Passarella, A., Conti, M., & Dunbar, R. (2017). Structure of ego-alter relationships of politicians in Twitter. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 22*, 231-247. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12193

Arter, D. (2018). The what, why's and how's of constituency service. *Representation, 54*(1), 5-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2017.1396240

Arter, D., & Raunio, T. (2018). Concluding remarks: Constituency service or constituency effort? *Representation, 54*(1), 1-4. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2017.1396240

Arthur, C. (2021). *Social warming: The dangerous and polarising effects of social media.* London: Oneworld Publications.

Ashley, S., Maksl, A., & Craft, S. (2017). News media literacy and political engagement: What's the connection? *Journal of Media Literacy Education, 9*(1), 79-98. https://doi.org/10.23860/JMLE-2017-9-1-6

Auel, K., & Umit, R. (2018). Explaining MPs' communication to their constituents: Evidence from the UK House of Commons. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations, 20*(3), 731-752. https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148118762280

Auletta, K. (2018). *Frenemies: The epic disruption of the advertising industry.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2016). *The connected citizen: A disruptive concept informing ACMA perspectives: Occasional paper.* Belconnen, ACT: ACMA.

Büchi, M., Festic, N., & Latzer, M. (2019). Digital overuse and subjective well-being in a digitised society. *Social Media + Society, 5*(4), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119886031

Baek, Y. M., Wojcieszak, M., & Carpini, M. X. (2012). Online versus face-to-face deliberation: Who? Why? What? With what effects? *New Media and Society, 14*(3), 363-383.

Bailer, S. (2014). Surveys and interviews in the study of legislatures. In S. Martin, T., Saalfeld, & K. W. Strom, *Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies* (pp. 167–93). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Baker, S. E., & Edwards, R. (Eds). (2012). *How many qualitative interviews is enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research.* National Centre for Research Methods: Southampton.

Baldwin-Philippi, J. (2017). The myths of data-driven campaigning. *Political Communication, 34*(4), 627–633. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414019852686

Balmas, M., & Sheafer, T. (Eds) (2015). Personalisation of politics. In *The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication* (pp. 1–9). London: John Wiley & Sons.

Banducci, S., & Stevens, D. (2015). Surveys in context: How timing in the electoral cycle influences response propensity and satisficing. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 79*(S1), 214–243. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfv007

Banks, J. (2021). *Power play: Breaking through bias, barriers and boys' clubs.* Sydney, NSW: Hardie Grant Publishing.

Barberá, P., & Rivero, G. (2015). Understanding the political representativeness of Twitter users. *Social Science Computer Review, 33*(6), 712–729. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439314558836

Barclay, D. A. (2018). *Fake news, propaganda and plain old lies: How to find trustworthy information in the digital age.* Rowman and Littlefield: Lanham, Maryland.

Barker, A., & Rush, M. (1970). *The member of parliament and his information.* London, UK: Allen and Unwin.

Barnidge, M. (2017). Exposure to political disagreement in social media versus face-to-face and anonymous online settings. *Political Communication, 34*(2), 302–321. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2016.1235639

Bartlett, J., Miller, C., Reffin, J., Weir, D., & Wibberley, S. (2014). *Social media is transforming how to study society*. Retrieved from Vox Digitas Demos: https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Vox_Digitas_-_web.pdf?1408832211

Bates, J. A. (2004). Use of narrative interviewing in everyday information behaviour research. *Library & Information Science Research, 26*(1), 15-28.

Bates, M. J. (1999). The invisible substrate of information science. *Journal of the American Society for Information Scienc*e, 50(12), 1043-1050.

Bates, M. J. (2010). Information behaviour. In M. J. Bates, & M. N. Maack, (Eds), *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences.* (3rd ed). (pp. 2381–2391). New York: CRC Press.

Batista, J., & Marques, R. (2017). An overview on information and communication overload. In R. M. (Eds), *Information and communication overload in the digital* (pp. 1-19). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Baym, N. K. (2015). *Personal connections in the digital age: Digital media and society.* (2nd ed). Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Bean, C. (2015). Changing citizen confidence: Orientations towards political and social institutions in Australia, 1983–2010. *The Open Political Science Journal, 8*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.2174/1874949601508010001

Beckingham, V. (2004). *The alternative vote: In theory and practice. Unpublished Honours Thesis.* Mount Lawley, WA: Edith Cowan University.

Beitin, B. K. (2012). Interview and sampling: How many and whom. In J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti, & K. D. McKinney, *The SAGE Handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (pp. 243-255). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bejan, T. M. (2017). *Mere civility: Disagreement and the limits of toleration.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bell, E., Bryman, A., & Harley, B. (2019). *Business research methods.* (5th ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bennet, C. (2010). Democracy between elections: Politics 2.0. *The Parliamentarian, XCI*(2), 126-129.

Bennett, L. (2012). The personalisation of politics: Political identity, social media, and changing patterns of participation. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 644*(1), 20-39. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716212451428

Bennett, W. L., & Livingston, S. (2020). *The disinformation age: Politics, technology and disruptive communication in the United States: SSRC Anxieties of Democracy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bennett, W. L., & Pfetsch, B. (2018). Rethinking political communication in a time of disrupted public spheres. *Journal of Communication, 68*(2), 243–253. https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqx017

Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2016). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (9th ed). London: Pearson.

Biemer, P., & Lyberg, L. (2003). *Introduction to survey quality.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Bimber, B. (2001). Information and political engagement in America: The search for effect in information technology at the individual level. *Political Research Quarterly, 54*(1), 53-67.

Bimber, B. (2014). Digital media in the Obama campaigns of 2008 and 2012: Adaptation to the personalised political communication environment. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 11*(2), 130-150. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2014.895691

Birch, A. H. (1971). *Representation: Key concepts in political science.* London: Pall Mall Press.

Birkinbine, B., Gomez, R., & Wasko, J. (Eds). (2017). *Global media giants.* New York: Routledge.

Black, D. (1979). The Liberal Party and its predecessors. In R. Pervan, & C. Sharman, *Essays on Western Australian politics* (pp. 191-232). Nedlands, WA: UWA Press.

Black, D. (Ed) (1991). *The house on the hill: A history of the Parliament of Western Australia, 1832-1990.* Perth, WA: Parliament of Western Australia.

Black, D. (Ed). (2009). *Western Australian parliamentary handbook.* (22nd ed) Perth, WA: Parliament of Western Australia.

Black, D. (Ed). (2013). *Western Australian parliamentary handbook.* (23rd ed) Perth, WA: Parliament of Western Australia.

Black, D. (Ed). (2018). *Western Australian parliamentary handbook.* (24 ed) Perth, WA: Parliament of Western Australia.

Black, D., & Phillips, H. C. (2012). *Making a difference: A frontier of firsts: Women in the Western Australian Parliament 1921-2012.* Perth, WA: Parliament of WA.

Blair, J., Czaja, R. F., & Blair, E. A. (2013). *Designing surveys: A guide to decisions and procedures.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Blank, G. (2017). The digital divide among Twitter users and its implications for social research. *Social Science Computer Review, 35*(6), 679–697.

Blank, G., & Lutz, C. (2017). Representativeness of social media in Great Britain: Investigating Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, and Instagram. *American Behavioural Scientist, 61*(7), 741-756. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217717559

Bless, C., & Higson-Smith, C. (2000). *Fundamentals of social research methods.* (3rd ed). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta.

Bless, C., Higson-Smith, C., & Kagee, A. (2006). *Fundamentals of social research methods. An African perspective.* (4th ed). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta.

Blick, A. (2021). *Electrified democracy: The internet and the United Kingdom Parliament in history.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blumler, J. (2015). Core theories of political communication: Foundational and freshly minted. *Communication Theory, 25*(4), 426–438. https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12077

Blumler, J. G. (2018). The crisis of public communication 1995-2017. *Javnost: The Public, 25*(1-2), 83-92. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2018.1418799

Boczkowski, P., & Papacharissi, Z. (2018). Introduction. In P. Boczkowski, & Z. Papacharissi, (Eds). *Trump and the media* (pp. 1–6). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Boeder, P. (2005). Habermas' heritage: The future of the public sphere in the network society. *First Monday, 10*(9). https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/download/1280/1200

Bohman, J. (2012). Representation in the deliberative system. In J. Parkinson, & J. Mansbridge, (Eds), *Deliberative systems: Deliberative democracy at the large scale (Theories of institutional design* (pp. 72-94). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bond-Smith, S., Duncan, A., Kiely, D., & Salazar, S. (2018, August). *Falling through the net: The digital divide in Western Australia. Focus on Western Australia. Report Series, No. 11/18.* Retrieved from Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre. Perth, WA. Retrieved from: https://bcec.edu.au/assets/2018/08/BCEC-Falling-Through-the-net-The-Digital-Divide-in-WA.pdf

Bonnet, J. L., & Rosenbaum, J. E. (2020). Fake news, misinformation, and political bias: Teaching news literacy in the 21st century. *Communication Teacher, 34*(2), 103-108.

Borge Bravo, R., & Esteve Del Valle, M. (2017). Opinion leadership in parliamentary Twitter networks: A matter of layers of interaction? *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 14*(3), 263-276. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2017.1337602

Bossetta, M. (2018). The digital architectures of social media: Comparing political campaigning on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat in the 2016 U.S. election. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 95*(2), 471-496. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699018763307

Boston Consulting Group. (2014). *Australian and international postal services overview: Background report.* Sydney, NSW: The Boston Consulting Group.

Boswell, J., Niemeyer, S., & Hendriks, C. (2013). Julia Gillard's citizens' assembly proposal for Australia: A deliberative democratic analysis. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 48*(2), 164–178. https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2013.786675

Boulianne, S. (2019). Revolution in the making? Social media effects across the globe. *Information, Communication & Society, 22*, 39-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1353641

Boulianne, S., Koc-Michalska, K., & Vedel, T. (2019). Gender and online politics: Digital media as friend and foe in times of change. *Social Science Computer Review*, https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439319865511.

Bowers, J., & Zittrain, J. (2020). Answering impossible questions: Content governance in an age of disinformation. *The Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review, 1* (January), 1-8.

Bowler, L., & Nesset, V. (2013). Information literacy. In J. A. Large, & J. Beheshti, *The information behaviour of a new generation: Children and teens in the 21st Century* (pp. 45-60). Lanham, UK: Scarecrow Press.

boyd, d. (2015). Social media: A phenomenon to be analysed. *Social Media + Society, 1*(1), 1-2. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115580148.

boyd, d., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13*(1), 210–30. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x

Brabham, D. (2015). Studying normal, everyday social media. *Social Media + Society, April-June*, 1–2. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115580484

Brand, A. (1990). *The force of reason: An introduction to Habermas' theory of communicative action.* New York, NY: Allen & Unwin.

Brenton, S. (2009). *What lies beneath: The work of senators and members in the Australian Parliament: Report of the 2009 Australian Parliamentary Fellow.* Canberra, ACT: Parliament of Australia. Department of Parliamentary Services.

Brett, J. (2019). *From secret ballot to democracy sausage: How Australia got compulsory voting.* Melbourne, Victoria: The Text Publishing Company.

Brison, S. J., & Gelber, K. (Eds) (2019). *Free speech in the digital age.* Oxford, UK: University Press Oxford.

Bristow, P. (2018). #Trending: The rise of social media and the challenges for Australia's defamation law, *37*(2), *Communications Law Bulletin,* 19.

Brito Vieira, M. (2017). *Reclaiming representation: Contemporary advances in the theory of political representation.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Broadbent, R., & Papadopoulos, T. (2013). Bridging the digital divide: An Australian story. *Behaviour & Information Technology, 32*(1), 4-13. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2011.572186

Broersma, M., & Graham, T. (2012). Social media as beat: Tweets as news source during the 2010 British and Dutch elections. *Journalism Practice, 6*(3), 403-419. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2012.663626

Brown, M. B. (2018). Deliberation and representation. In A. Bächtiger, J. S. Dryzek, J. Mansbridge, & M. E. Warren, *The Oxford handbook of deliberative democracy* (pp. 171-186). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Browning, J. G. (2019). Blocked in the digital age: Constitutional dimensions of elected officials blocking critics on social media. *Oklahoma Bar Journal, 91*(3), 6-12. Retrieved from: https://www.okbar.org/barjournal/mar2020/obj9103browning/

Bruce, C., Partridge, H., Davis, K., Hughes, H., & Stoodley, I. (2014). *Information experience: Approaches to theory and practice.* Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.

Bruns, A. (2007). Produsage: Towards a broader framework for user-led content creation. B. Shneiderman (Ed), *Proceedings of 6th ACM SIGCHI conference on creativity and cognition,* (pp. 99-105). United States of America: Association for Computing Machinery.

Bruns, A. (2012). *Ad hoc innovation by users of social networks: The case of Twitter.* Vienna: Centre for Social Innovation.

Bruns, A. (2018). *Gatewatching and news curation.* New York: Peter Lang.

Bruns, A., & Highfield, T. (2012). Blogs, Twitter, and breaking news: The produsage of citizen journalism. In R. L. Lind (Ed), *Produsing theory in a digital world: The intersection of audiences and production.* (pp. 15–32). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Bruns, A., & Highfield, T. (2013). Political networks on Twitter: Tweeting the Queensland state election. *Information, Communication & Society, 16*(5), 667–691. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814546728

Bruns, A., & Highfield, T. (2016). Is Habermas on Twitter? In A. Bruns, G. Enli, E. Skogerbø, A. O. Larsson, & C. Christensen, (Eds). *The Routledge companion to social media and politics* (pp. 56–73). New York, NY: Routledge.

Bruns, A., & Moon, B. (2018). Social media in Australian Federal elections: Comparing the 2013 and 2016 campaigns. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 95*(2), 425-448. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699018766505

Bruns, A., Highfield, T., & Burgess, J. (2013). The Arab Spring and social media audiences: English and Arabic Twitter users and their networks. *American Behavioural Scientist, 57*(7), 871–98. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213479374

Brym, R., Godbout, M., Hoffbauer, A., Menard, G., & Huiquan Zhang, T. (2014). Social media in the 2011 Egyptian uprising. *The British Journal of Sociology, 65*(2), 266-292. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12080

Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How it is done? *Qualitative Research, 6*, 97-113.

Bryman, A. (2012). The espistemology of numbers. In S. E. Baker, & R. Edwards, (Eds), *How many qualitative interviews is enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research* (pp. 17-20). London: National Centre for Research Methods. Retrieved from http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/4/how_many_interviews.pdf

Bryman, A. (2015). *Social research methods* (5th ed). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2015). *Business research methods.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Bucher, T. (2018). *If...then: Algorithmic power and politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buckels, E. E., Trapnell, P. D., & Paulhus, D. L. (2014). Trolls just want to have fun. *Personality and Individual Differences, 67*(1), 97-102.

Budd, J. (2005). Phenomenology and information studies. *Journal of Documentation, 61*, 44-59.

Burchell, D., & Leigh, A. (Eds). (2002). *Prince's new clothes: Why do Australians dislike their politicians?* Sydney, NSW: UNSW Press.

Burford, S., & Park, S. (2014). The impact of mobile tablet devices on human information behaviour. *Journal of Documentation, 70*(4), 622-639. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-09-2012-0123

Burgess, J., & Baym, N. K. (2020). *Twitter: A biography.* New York: New York University Press.

Burgess, J., & Bruns, A. (2012). (Not) The Twitter election. *Journalism Practice, 6*(3), 384–402. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2012.663610

Burgess, J., Marwick, A., & Poell, T. (2018). Editors' introduction. In T. Poell, J. Burgess, & A. Marwick, (Eds). *The SAGE handbook of social media* (pp. 1-10). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Burnap, P., Gibson, R. K., Sloan, L., Southern, R., & Williams, M. L. (2016). 140 Characters to victory? Using Twitter to predict the UK 2015 general election. *Electoral Studies, 41*, 230-233. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2015.11.017

Burnett, G., & Jaeger, P. (2008). Small worlds, lifeworlds and information: The ramifications of the information behaviour of social groups in public policy and the public sphere. *Information Research, 13*(2), 346.

Burnett, G., & Jaeger, P. (2011). The theory of information worlds and information behaviour. In A. Spink, & J. Heinström, (Eds). *New directions in information*

behaviour (Library and Information Science, Vol. 1) (pp. 161-180). Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Burnett, G., Besant, M., & Chatman, E. A. (2001). Small worlds: Normative behaviour in virtual communities and feminist bookselling. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 52*(7), 536-547.

Burnett, G., Jaeger, P., & Thompson, K. (2008). Normative behaviour and information: The social aspects of information access. *Library & Information Science Researh, 30*(1), 56-66.

Burson-Marsteller. (2014). *Twiplomacy report 2014: Heads of state and government and foreign ministers on Twitter.* Retrieved from Twiplomacy: https://twiplomacy.com/blog/twiplomacy-study-2014/

Buschman, J. E. (2003). Dismantling the public sphere: Situating and sustaining librarianship in the age of the new public philosophy: Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Buti, A. (2015). Information and parliamentary democracy: The battle of privileges. *Australasian Parliamentary Review, 30*(2), 73-79.

Butler, D. M., & Dynes, A. (2016). How politicians discount the opinions of constituents with whom they disagree. *American Journal of Political Science, 60*(4), 975–89. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12206

Cain, B., Ferejohn, J., & Fiorina, M. (1984). The constituency service basis of the personal vote for U.S. representatives and British members of Parliament. *American Political Science Review, 78*(1), 110-125. http:// doi:10.2307/1961252

Cairney, P. (2007). The professionalisation of MPs: Redefining the “politics-facilitating” explanation. *Parliamentary Affairs, 60*(2), 212–233.

Calhoun, C. (Ed). (1992). *Habermas and the public sphere.* Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press.

Calhoun, F. S., & Weston, S. (2016). *Threat assessment and management strategies: Identifying the howlers and hunters* (2nd ed). Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis Group.

Cameron, S., & McAllister, I. (2016). *Trends in Australian political opinion: Results from the Australian election study 1987–2016.* Canberra, ACT: The Australian National University.

Cameron, S., & McAllister, I. (2017). *Trust, parties and leaders: Findings from the 1987–2016 Australian Election Study: Papers on parliament, no. 68.* Canberra, ACT: Department of the Senate.

Campbell, A., Harrop, H., & Thompson, B. (1999). Towards the virtual Parliament: What computers can do for MPs. *Parliamentary Affairs, 52*(3), 388-403.

Campbell, E. (2003). *Parliamentary privilege.* Sydney, NSW: The Federation Press.

Campbell, R., & Zittel, T. (2020). The personal sources of responsiveness. Introduction to a special section. *Swiss Political Science Review, 26*, 1-9. http:// DOI:10.1111/spsr.12389

Carr, N. (2015, September 2). *How social media is ruining politics.* Retrieved from Politico Magazine: https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/09/2016-election-social-media-ruining-politics-213104/

Carr, N. (2020). *The shallows: What the internet is doing to your brain.* London: W. W. Norton.

Carson, L., Gastil, J., Hartz-Karp, J., Lubensky, R., (Eds). (2013). *The Australian citizens' parliament and the future of deliberative democracy.* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Press.

Case, D. O., Given, L. M., & Mai, J.-E. (2016). *Looking for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behaviour.* (4th ed) Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Castells, M. (2015). *Networks of outage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age.* (2nd ed) Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Center for Humane Technology. (2019, August 1). *Ledger of harms*. Retrieved from Center for Humane Technology: https://ledger.humanetech.com

Chadwick, A. (2006). *Internet politics: States, citizens, and new communication technologies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chadwick, A. (2017). *The hybrid media system: Politics and power.* (2nd ed) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chambers, S. (2003). Deliberative democratic theory. *Annual Review of Political Science, 6*(1), 307–326.

Chatman, E. A. (1985). Information, mass media use and the working poor. *Library & Information Science Research, 7*(2), 97-113.

Chatman, E. A. (1987). The information world of low-skilled workers. *Library & Information Science Research, 9*(4), 265-283.

Chatman, E. A. (1991). Life in a small world: Applicability of gratification theory to information-seeking behaviour. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 42*, 438-449. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4571(199107)42:6<438::AID-ASI6>3.0.CO,2-B

Chatman, E. A. (1992). *The information world of retired women.* Westport, CT : Greenwood Press.

Chatman, E. A. (1996). The impoverished world of outsiders. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 47*(3), 83-92.

Chatman, E. A. (1997). *Nickel-hoppers and other social types: Implications for information behaviour.* Los Angeles, CA: University of California at Los Angeles, Samuel Lazeroru Lecture, 1-23.

Chatman, E. A. (1999). A theory of life in the round. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 50*(3), 207-217.

Chatman, E. A. (2000). Framing social life in theory and research. *New Review of Information Behaviour Research, 1*, 3-17.

Chatman, E. A., & Pendleton, V. (1995). Knowledge gap, information-seeking and the poor. *Reference Librarian, 49/50*, 135-145. https://doi.org/10.1300/J120v23n49_10

Chen, G. M. (2017). *Online incivility and public debate nasty talk.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chen, G. M., Muddiman, A., Wilner, T., Pariser, E., & Stroud, N. J. (2019). We should not get rid of incivility online. *Social Media and Society, 5*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119862641

Chen, G., Pain, P., & Fadnis, D. (2016). Over-sharing in a political sex scandal. In H. Mandell, & G. Masulla, *Scandal in a digital age* (pp. 131-144). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chen, K., & Aitamurto, T. (2018). Barriers for crowd's impact in crowdsourced policymaking: Civic data overload and filter hierarchy. *International Public Management Journal, 22*(1), 99-126. https://doi.org/10.1080/10967494.2018.1488780

Chen, K., Lee, N., & Marble, W. (2019). *How policymakers evaluate online versus offline constituent messages*. Retrieved from Social Sciences Research Network: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3251651

Chen, P. J. (2010). Adoption and use of digital media in election campaigns: Australia, Canada and New Zealand compared. *Public Communication Review, 1*(1), 3–26. https://doi.org/10.5130/pcr.v1i1.1249

Chen, P. J. (2013). *Australian digital politics.* Canberra, ACT: Australian National University EPress. https://doi.org/10.1080/07288430903164777

Chen, P. J., & Stilinovic, M. (2020). New media and youth political engagement. *Journal of Applied Youth Studies, 3*, 241–254. https://doi.org/10.1007/s43151-020-00003-7

Chen, P. J, & Walsh, L. (2010). e-Election 2007? Political competition online? *Australian Cultural History, 28*(1), 47-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/07288430903164777

Chen, W., & Ling, R. (2015). Mobile media and communication. In L. Cantoni, & J. A. Danowski, *Communication and technology* (pp. 323-344). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Cheng-Jun, W., & Zhu, J. J. (2019). Jumping onto the bandwagon of collective gatekeepers: Testing the bandwagon effect of information diffusion on social news website. *Telematics and Informatics, 41*, 34-45. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2019.03.001

Chi, F., & Yang, N. (2014). Twitter adoption in Congress. *Review of Network Economics, 10*(1), 1–49.

Choules, M. (2012). The right to sit. In D. Black and C.H. Phillips, (Eds). *Making a difference: A frontier of firsts women in the Western Australian Parliament 1921–2012* (pp. 32–46). Perth, WA: Parliament of Western Australia.

Christian, S. E. (2019). *Everyday media literacy: An analog guide for your digital life.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Citron, D. K. (2014). *Hate crimes in cyberspace.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Clarke, N., Jennings, W., Moss, J., & Stoker, G. (2018). *The good politician: Folk theories, political interaction and the rise of anti-politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Commentary: Thematic analysis. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 12*(3), 297-298. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613

Clucas, T. (2020). Don't feed the trolls: Social media and the limits of free speech. In S. Polak, & D. Trottier, (Eds). *Violence and trolling on social media: History, affect and effects of online vitriol* (pp. 47-64). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Coe, K., & Park-Ozee, D. (2020). Uncivil name-calling in the U.S. presidency, 1933–2018. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 50*(1), 264-285. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/psq.12619

Coe, K., Kenski, K., & Rains, S. A. (2014). Online and uncivil? Patterns and determinants of incivility in newspaper website comments. *Journal of Communication, 64*(4), 658–79. http://doi:10.1111/psq.12619

Coelho, P. M., Pereira Correia, P., & Medina, I. G. (2017). Social media: A new way of public and political communication in digital media. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies, 11*(6), 150–157. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v11i6.6876

Coghill, K. (2016). Learning to be learned. In C. Lewis, & K. Coghill, (Eds). *Parliamentarians' professional development: Public administration, governance and globalisation* (Vol. 16, pp. 77-99). Cham: Springer.

Coghlan, D., & Brannick, T. (2014). *Doing action research in your own organisation* (4th ed). London: Sage.

Cole, C. (2013). Concepts, propositions, models and theories in information behaviour research. In J. A. Large, & J. Beheshti, *The information behaviour of a new*

generation: Children and teens in the 21st Century (pp. 1-22). Lanham, UK: Scarecrow Press.

Coleman, G. (2010). Ethnographic approaches to digital media. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 39*, 487–505. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.104945

Coleman, G. (2014). *Hacker, hoaxer, whistleblower, spy: The many faces of Anonymous.* London: Verso.

Coleman, S. (2017). *Can the internet strengthen democracy?* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Coleman, S., Taylor, J., & van de Donk, W. (1999). Parliament in the age of the internet. *Parliamentary Affairs, 52*(3), 365-370. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/52.3.365

Coleman, W., Broadbent, C., & Moore, B. (2017). *Determination of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal: Remuneration of Members of Parliament, 30 November 2017.* Perth WA: Salaries and Allowances Tribunal.

Collin, P., & McCormack, J. (2019). Young people and politics. In P. Chen, N. Barry, J. Butcher, D. Clune, I. Cook, A. Garnier, Y. Haigh, S. Motta & M. Taflaga, *Australian politics and public policy: Senior edition* (pp. 487-500). Sydney, NSW: University of Sydney Press.

Conway, B. A., Kenski, K. M., & Wang, D. (2013). Twitter use by presidential primary candidates during the 2012 campaign. *American Behavioural Scientist, 57*(11), 1596-1610. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213489014

Conway, B. A., Kenski, K., & Wang, D. (2015). The rise of Twitter in the political campaign: Searching for intermedia agenda-setting effects in the presidential primary. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 20*(4), 363–380. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12124

Cook, J. M. (2016). Are American politicians as partisan online as they are offline? Twitter networks in the U.S. Senate and Maine state legislature. *Policy & Internet, 8*(1), 55–71. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.109

Cook, J. M. (2017). Twitter adoption in US legislatures: A 50-State study. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 724-740. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217717564

Cooke, N. (2017). Post-truth, truthiness and alternative facts: Information behaviour and critical information consumption for a new age. *Library Quarterly, 87*(3), 211-221. https://doi.org/10.1086/692298

Cooper, D. R., & Emory, C. W. (1995). *Business research methods* (5th ed). Chicago, IL: Irwin.

Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2013). *Business research methods* (12th ed). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

Cooper, J. P., & Gaunt, R. (2019). Architecture and politics in the Palace of Westminster, 1399 to the present. *Parliamentary History, 38*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1111/1750-0206.12410

Copland, S. (2018). The Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey and the limitations of vulnerability-based politics. *Australian Feminist Studies, 33*, 96, 261-274. https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2018.1517247

Corbett, J. (2016). Diagnosing the problem of anti-politicians: A review and an agenda. *Political Studies Review, 14*(4), 534–543. https://doi.org/10.1111/1478-9302.12076

Corbetta, P. (2003). *Social research: Theory, methods and techniques.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cowan, P. (1978). *A unique position: A biography of Edith Dirksey Cowan 1861-1931.* Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press.

Cowdell, J. (1998). No longer mushrooms: A more informed Parliament in Western Australia? *Legislative Studies, 12*(2), 25-30. http://doi: doi/10.3316/agispt.19982870

Cowley, P. (2014). Descriptive representation and political trust: A quasi-natural experiment utilising ignorance. *The Journal of Legislative Studies, 20*(4), 573–587. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2014.937121

Cowley, P. (2021, January 12). *Interviewing MPs*. Retrieved from SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3764202

Cox, D. (2021). A woman's place is in the House: Reclaiming civility, tolerance and respect in political life. *The Political Quarterly*, 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.13069

Crawford, H., Filipovic, D., & Hunter, A. (2017). *All your friends like this: How social networks took over news.* New York: HarperCollins.

Creamer, E. G. (2017). *An introduction to fully integrated mixed methods research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J., & Poth, C. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches.* (4th ed) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, Inc.

Crewe, E. (2014). Westminster parliamentarians: Performing politics. In S. M. Rai, & R. E. Johnson, *Democracy in practice: Ceremony and ritual in Parliament* (pp. 40-59). Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave.

Crewe, E. (2018). Ethnographies of parliaments: Culture and uncertainty in shallow democracies. *Journal of Organisational Ethnography, 7*(1), 1-16. http://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-11-2017-0057

Crewe, E. (2021). *The anthropology of parliaments: Entanglements in democratic politics.* London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003084488

Criddle, B. (2018). Parliamentary representation. In B. Jones, P. Norton, & O. Daddow, (Eds). *Politics UK* (pp. 204-208). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Crisp, B. F., & Simoneau, W. M. (2018). Electoral systems and constituency service. In R. J. Erik S. Herron, *The Oxford handbook of electoral systems* (pp. 345-364). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crosby, S. (2016). *The trust deficit.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Cross, W. P., Katz, R. S., & Pruysers, S. (2018). *The personalisation of democratic politics and the challenge for political parties.* London: Rowman and Littlefield ECPR Press.

Cross, W., & Gauja, A. (2014). Evolving membership strategies in Australian political parties. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 49*(4), 611-625. https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2014.958979

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research.* London: Sage Publications.

Cummings, K., & Gottshall, C. (2014). Citizenship and consumption. In R. S. Fortner, & P. Fackler, (Eds). *The handbook of media and mass communication theory* (pp. 612-628). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Curato, N., & Dryzek, J. E. (2017). Twelve key findings in deliberative democracy research. *Daedalus, 146*(3), 28–38.

Curran, J., Fenton, N., & Freedman, D. (2012). *Misunderstanding the internet.* New York: Routledge.

Curthoys, A., & Martens, J. (2013). Serious collisions: Settlers, Indigenous people, and imperial policy in Western Australia and Natal. *Journal of Australian Colonial History, 15*, 121–44.

Czaja, S. J., Charness, N., Fisk, A. D., Hertzog, C., Nair, S. N., Rogers, W. A., & Sharit, J. (2006). Factors predicting the use of technology: Findings from the Center for Research and Education on Aging and Technology Enhancement (CREATE). *Psychology and Aging, 21*(2), 333–352. https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.21.2.333

Däubler, T., Bräuninger, T., & Brunner, M. (2016). Is personal vote-seeking behaviour effective? *Legislative Studies Quarterly, 41*, 419-444. https://doi.org/10.1111/lsq.12119

Dahl, R. (1989). *Democracy and its critics.* New Haven, CT: Yale University.

Dahlberg, H., & Dahlberg, K. (2020). Open and reflective lifeworld research: A third way. *Qualitative Inquiry, 26*(5), 458–464. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419836696

Dahlgren, P. (2013). *The political web: Online civic cultures and participation.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.

Dale, R. (2015). How to be a parliamentary researcher. London: Biteback Publishing.

Dalton, R. J. (2019). *Citizen politics: Public opinion and political parties in advanced industrial democracies.* (7th ed) Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Daniel, S. (2012). Satisficing in survey design. *Conference: Deakin Symposium on contemporary approaches to research in mathematics, science, health and environmental education, November 2012.* Melbourne: Retrieved from: https://deakinsteme.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Satisficing-in-Survey-Design.pdf.

Daniel, Z., & Whalan, R. (2021). *Greetings from Trumpland: How an unprecedented presidency changed everything.* Ultimo: ABC Books.

Davies, A., & Tonts, M. (2007). Changing electoral structures and regional representation in Western Australia: From countrymindedness to one vote one value. *Space and Polity, 11*(3), 209-225. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562570701811544

Davies, J. (2017). Social political engagement. *IT NOW, 59*, 3-10.

Davis, A. (2019). *Political communication: A new introduction for crisis times.* Medford, MA: Polity Press.

Davis, A., Fenton, N., Freedman, D., & Khiabany, G. (2020). *Media, democracy and social change: Re-imagining political communications.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Deloitte Australia. (2019). *Mobile consumer survey 2019: The Australian cut.* Retreived from: Deloitte: https://images.content.deloitte.com.au/Web/DELOITTEAUSTRALIA/%7B3a35a2e7-7ce2-4cc9-b7b2-3472be4267a7%7D_Deloitte_Global_Mobile_Consumer_Survey_2019.pdf?_ga=2.258829834.1642263145.1609319339-5322796.1609319339.

Dempsey, P.R. (2018). *How LIS scholars conceptualise rigor in qualitative data*. portal: Libraries and the Academy, 18(2), 363-390. doi:10.1353/pla.2018.0020.

Denzin, N. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods.* (2nd ed) New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Denzin, N. K. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 6*(2), 80-88.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2012). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (4th ed). London Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2017). *The SAGE Handbook of qualitative research.* (5th ed) Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dervin, B. (1976). The everyday information needs of the average citizen: A taxonomy for analysis. In M. Kochen, & J. Donohue, (Eds). *Information for the community* (pp. 19-54). Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Dervin, B. (2005). What methodology does to theory: Sense-making methodology as examplar (Chapter 2). In K.E. Fisher, S. Erdelez & L. McKechnie, (Eds.). *Theories of information behaviour.* ASIS&T Monograph Series. Medford, NJ: Information Today.

Deželan, T., & Vobic, I. (Eds.). (2016). *(R)evolutionising political communication through social media.* Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Deville, M., & Lord, C. (2020). Parliaments as places of discourse. In C. Benoît, & O. Rozenberg, (Eds). *Handbook of parliamentary studies: Interdisciplinary approaches to legislatures* (pp. 465-478). Cheltenham, UK: Elgar Publishing.

Dewey, J. (1991 [1927]). *The public and its problems.* Athens, Ohio: Shallow Press/Ohio University Press.

Dexter, L. (2006). *Elite and specialised interviewing.* Colchester: ECPR Press.

Di Fatta, D., Caputo, F., Evangelista, F., & Dominici, G. (2016). Small world theory and the World Wide Web: Linking small world properties and website centrality. *International Journal of Markets and Business Systems, 2*(2), 126–140. http://doi.org/10.1504/IJMABS.2016.080237

Diamond, L., & Whittington, Z. (2018). Social media. In C. W. Haerpfer, P. Bernhagen, C. Welzel, & R. F. Inglehart, *Democratisation* (pp. 253-267). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dickenson, J. (2013). *Trust me: Australians and their politicians.* Sydney: NewSouth Publishing.

Dickinson, N. (2018). Advice giving and party loyalty: An informational model for the socialisation process of new British MPs. *Parliamentary Affairs, 71*(2), 343–364. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsx035

Digital Democracy Commission (UK). (2015, January 26). *Open Up! Report of the Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy*. Retrieved from Digital Democracy Commission (UK): Retrieved from: http://www.digitaldemocracy.parliament.uk/documents/Open-Up-DigitalDemocracy-Report.pdf

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method.* (4th ed). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

Dillman, D., & Messer, B. (2010). Mixed-mode surveys. In P. Marsden, & J. Wright, (Eds). *Handbook of survey research.* (2nd ed), (pp. 551-574). Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.

Dimitrova, D. V., & Matthes, J. (2018). Social media in political campaigning around the world: Theoretical and methodological challenges. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 95*(2), 333-342. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699018770437

DiNucci, D. (1999). Fragmented future. *Print Magazine, 53*(4), 32 [and] 221-222.

Doche, C., McCombie, S., & Rabehaja, T. (2019). Cyber attack on the Australian parliament and the lessons learned. *Australian Outlook*. Retrieved from: http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/cyber-attack-australian-parliament-lessons-learned/

Dobson, A. (2014). *Listening for democracy: Recognition, representation, reconciliation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dodou, D., & de Winter, J. (2014). Social desirability is the same in offline, online and paper surveys: A meta-analysis. *Computers in Human Behaviour, 36*, 487–495. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.04.005

Dolev-Cohen, M., & Barak, A. (2013). Adolescents' use of instant messaging as a means of emotional relief. *Computers in Human Behaviour, 29*(1), 58-63 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.07.016.

Dommett, K., & Verovšek, P. J. (2021). Promoting democracy in the digital public sphere: Applying theoretical ideals to online political communication. *Javnost: The Public*, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2021.1955206

Dormehl, L. (2014). *The formula: How algorithms solve all our problems–and create more.* New York, NY: Penguin.

Douek, E. (2020). Australia's "Abhorrent violent material" law: Shouting "nerd harder" and drowning out speech. *Australian Law Journal, 94*(1), 41-60.

Douglas, M. (2021). Suing Google, Facebook or Twitter for defamation. *Communications Law Bulletin*, *40*(2), 53.

Druckman, J. N., & Lupia, A. (2012). Experimenting with politics. *Science, 335*(6073), 1177–1179. http://doi.org/10.2307/41508195

Dudzińska, A., Poyet, C., Costa, O., & Weßels, B. (2014). Representational roles. In K. Deschouwer, & S. D. (Eds.), *Representing the people* (pp. 19–38). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Duffy, B., & Foley, M. (2011). Social media, community engagement and perceptions of Parliament: A case study from the NSW Legislative Council. *Australasian Parliamentary Review, 26*(1), 198–206.

Dunleavy, P. (2018). The UK's proportional electoral system: The single transferable vote. In P. Dunleavy, A. Park, & R. Taylor, (Eds). *The UK's changing democracy: The 2018 democratic audit* (pp. 69-78). London, England: LSE Press.

Dunleavy, P., Park, A., & Taylor, R. (Eds). (2018). *The UK's changing democracy: The 2018 democratic audit.* London, England: LSE Press.

Edhlund, B. (2011). *NVivo 9 essentials.* Stallarholmen, Sweden: Form&Kunskap AB.

Edson, C. T., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining “fake news”. *Digital Journalism, 6*(2), 137-153. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143

Elder, A. (2020). The interpersonal is political: Unfriending to promote civic discourse on social media. *Ethics and Information Technology, 22*, 15–24. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-019-09511-4

Ellis, D., & Haugan, M. (1997). Modelling the information seeking patterns of engineers and research scientists in an industrial environment. *Journal of Documentation, 53*(4), 384-403. https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000007204

Ellis, K. (2021). *Sex, lies and question time: Why the successes and struggles of women in Australia’s parliament matter to us all.* Hardie Grant: Richmond, Victoria.

Engel, U., Jann, B., Lynn, P., Scherpenzeel, A., & Sturgis, P. (2014). *Improving Survey Methods: Lessons from Recent Research European Association of Methodology Series.* (Rev. ed). Routledge.

Enli, G. S., & Skogerbø, E. (2013). Personalised campaigns in party-centred politics: Twitter and Facebook as arenas for political communication. *Information, Communication & Society, 16*, 757–774. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.782330

Enns, P. K., & Wlezien, C. (2011). *Who gets represented?* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Epstein, R., & Robertson, R. E. (2015). The Search Engine Manipulation Effect (SEME) and its possible impact on the outcomes of elections. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 112*(33), E4512–E4521. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1419828112

Erlingsson, C., & Brysiewicz, P. (2013). Orientation among multiple truths: An introduction to qualitative research. *African Journal of Emergency Medicine, 3*(2), 92-99. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.afjem.2012.04.005

Esaiasson, P., & Narud, M. (2013). *Between-election democracy: The representative relationship after election day.* Colchester: ECPR Press.

Esteve Del Valle, M., & Borge Bravo, R. (2018). Leaders or brokers? Potential influencers in online parliamentary networks. *Policy & Internet, 10*, 61-86. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.150

Eulau, H. (1973). Technology and the fear of the politics of civility. *Journal of Politics, 35*(2), 369.

Eulau, H., & Karps, P. D. (1977). The puzzle of representation. *Legislative Studies Quarterly, 2*, 233-254. https://doi.org/10.2307/439340

Evans, H. K. (2016). Communication with constituents in 140 characters: How members of Congress used Twitter to get out the vote in 2014. In R. Davis, C. Holtz Bacha, & M. R. Just, *Twitter and elections around the world: Campaigning in 140 characters or less* (pp. 75-89). New York: Routledge.

Every-Palmer, S., Barry-Walsh, J., & Pathé, M. (2015). Harassment, stalking, threats and attacks targeting New Zealand politicians: A mental health issue. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 49*, 634–641. https://doi.org/10.1177/0004867415583700

Fabris, A. (2015). Ethical issues in internet communication. In C. Lorenzo, & J. A. Danowski, *Communication and technology: Handbook of communication science* (Vol. 5, pp. 365-384). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Fahour, A. (2014, August 19). Australia Post at a turning point. *The Mandarin*. Retrieved from The Mandarin: https://www.themandarin.com.au/1911-ahmed-fahour-turning-point-australia-post/

Faris, D. (2013). *Dissent and revolution in a digital age: Social media, blogging and activism in Egypt.* New York: Palgrave.

Fawcett, P., & Corbett, J. (2018). Politicians, professionalisation and anti-politics: Why we want leaders who act like professionals but are paid like amateurs. *Policy Science, 51*(1), 411–432. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-018-9323-7

Fehr, E., & Gachter, S. (2000). Fairness and retaliation: The economics of reciprocity. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives, 14*, 3159–181. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.14.3.159

Feng, Y., & Agosta, D. (2017). The experience of mobile information overload: Struggling between needs and constraints. *Information Research, 22*(2), 574.

Fenn, J., & Blosch, M. (2018, August 20). *Understanding Gartner's Hype Cycles ID: G00370163*. Retrieved from Gartner Research: https://www.gartner.com/en/documents/3887767/understanding-gartner-s-hype-cycles

Fenna, A. (2014). Parliament and responsible government. In A. Fenna, J. Robbins, J. Summers, (Eds). *Government politics in Australia* (pp. 33-52). Sydney, NSW: Pearson Higher Education.

Fenna, A., & Manwaring, R. (2021). *Australian government and politics.* Melbourne, Vic: Pearson.

Fenno, R. F. (1978). Home style: House members in their districts. New York: Longman.

Fernandes, S. (2013, March 14). *Tweeting from the chamber*. Retrieved from Parliamentary Library FlagPost: https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/2309613/upload_binary/2309613.pdf

Ferrara, E., Varol, O., Davis, C., Menczer, F., & Flammini, A. (2016). The rise of social bots. *Communications of the ACM, 59*(7), 96-104. https://doi.org/10.1145/2818717

Ferree, M., Gamson, W., Gerhards, J., & Rucht, D. (2002). Four models of the public sphere in modern democracies. *Theory and Society, 31*(3), 289-324.

Finkbeiner, P. (2016). *Social media for knowledge sharing.* Stuttgart, Germany: Springer International AG. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-48544-7

Finn, M., Elliott-White, M., & Walton, M. (2000). *Tourism and leisure research methods: Data collection, analysis and interpretation.* Harlow: Pearson Education.

Fisher, K. E., Erdelez, S., & McKechnie, L. (2005). *Theories of information behaviour: American Society for Information Science and Technology monograph series.* Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc.

Flew, T. (2018). Platforms on trial. *Intermedia, 46*(2), 24-29.

Flew, T. (2019). Digital communication, the crisis of trust, and the post-global. *Communication Research and Practice, 5*(1), 4-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2019.1561394

Flew, T., Bruns, A., Burgess, J., Crawford, K., & Shaw, F. (2014). Social media and its impact on crisis communication: Case studies of Twitter use in emergency management in Australia and New Zealand. *2013 ICA Shanghai Regional Conference: Communication and Social Transformation*, (pp. 8-10).

Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Flick, U. (2015). *Introducing research methodology: A beginner's guide to doing a research project* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Flinders, M. (2016). The problem with democracy. *Parliamentary Affairs, 69*, 181–203. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsv008

Flinders, M., Weinberg, A., Weinberg, J., Geddes, M., & Kwiatkowski, R. (2020). Governing under pressure? The mental wellbeing of politicians. *Parliamentary Affairs, 73*(2), 253–273. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsy046

Foa, R., Klassen, A., Slade, M., Rand, A., & Collins, R. (2020, February). *The global satisfaction with democracy report 2020*. Retrieved from Centre for the Future of Democracy, Cambridge: https://www.cam.ac.uk/system/files/report2020_003.pdf

Ford, N. (2015). *Introduction to information behaviour.* London, UK: Facet Publishing.

Forkert, J. (2019). ASPG Parliaments navigating disruption in 2019. *ASPG Annual Conference 2019, 2-4 October 2019*, Canberra, ACT: ASPG. Retrieved from: https://www.aspg.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/J-Forkert-research-paper-for-ASPG-Oct-2019.pdf).

Forsey, M. (2010). Ethnography as participant listening. *Ethnography, 11*, 558–572. https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138110372587

Fox, R. (2009). Engagement and participation: What the public want and how our politicians need to respond. *Parliamentary Affairs, 62*(4), 673–85. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsp027

Fox, R., & Korris, M. (2012). A fresh start? The orientation and induction of new MPs at Westminster following the 2010 general election. *Parliamentary Affairs, 65*, 559–575. ttps://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gss014

Frame, A., & Brachotte, G. (2015). Le tweet stratégique: Use of Twitter as a PR tool by French politicians. *Public Relations Review, 41*(2), 278–287. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.11.005

Francis, J., Johnston, M., Robertson, C., Glidewell, L., Entwistle, V., Eccles, M., & Grimshaw, J. (2010). What is adequate sample size? Operationalising data saturation

for theory-based interview studies. *Psychology and Health, 25*, 1229-45. http://doi.org/10.1080/08870440903194015

Francoli, M. (2007). E-participation and Canadian parliamentarians. In A. V. Anttiroiko, & M. Malkia, (Eds). *Encyclopedia of digital government* (pp. 1547-1554). Hershey: Idea Group.

Frantzich, S. E. (1982). *Computers in Congress: The politics of information (Managing information).* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Fraustino, J. D., Liu, B. F., & Jin, Y. (2017). Social media use during disasters. In &. Y. L. Austin, *Social media and crisis communication* (pp. 283-295). New York, NY: Routledge.

Freberg, K. (2018). *Social media for strategic communication: Creative strategies and research-based applications.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Freelon, D. (2019). Inferring individual-level characteristics from digital trace data: Issues and recommendations. In N. J. Stroud, & S. C. McGregor, *Digital discussions: How big data informs political communication* (pp. 96-110). New York, NY: Routledge.

Fu, S., Li, H., Liu, Y., Pirkkalainen, H., Salo, M. (2020). Social media overload, exhaustion, and use discontinuance: Examining the effects of information overload, system feature overload, and social overload. Information Processing & Management, 57(6), Article 102307. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2020.102307

Fu, W., Teo, J., & Seng, S. (2012). The bandwagon effect on participation in and use of a social networking site. *First Monday, 17*, 5–7. https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v17i5.3971

Fuchs, C. (2014). Social media and the public sphere. *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique, 12*(1), 57-101. https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v12i1.552

Fuchs, C. (2015). *Culture and economy in the age of social media.* New York: Routledge.

Fuchs, C. (2017). *Social media: A critical introduction* (2nd ed). London: Sage.

Fuchs, C. (2020). Everyday life and everyday communication in coronavirus capitalism. *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique, 18*(1), 375-399. https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v18i1.1167

Fuchs, C. (2021a). How did Donald Trump incite a coup attempt? *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique, 19*(1), 246-251. https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v19i1.1239

Fuchs, C. (2021b). *Social media: A critical introduction.* (3rd ed). London: Sage.

Fukuyama, F. (2021). Making the internet safe for democracy. *Journal of Democracy, 32*(2), 37-44.

Fuller, G., Jolly, A., & Fisher, C. (2018). Malcolm Turnbull's conversational career on Twitter: The case of the Australian Prime Minister and the NBN. *Media International Australia, 167*(1), 88-104. https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X18766081

Fulton, C. (2010). An ordinary life in the round: Elfreda Annmary Chatman. *Libraries & the Cultural Record, 45*(2), 238-259. http://doi.org/10.1353/lac.0.0122

Furman, J., Coyle, D., Fletcher, A., Marsden, P., & McAuley, D. (2019). *Unlocking digital competition: Report of the Digital Competition Expert Panel.* London, UK: Digital Competition Expert Panel.

Fusch, P., Fusch, G.E., & Ness, L.R. (2017). How to conduct a mini-ethnographic case study: A guide for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report, 22*, 923–941. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2017.2580

Fusch, P., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2018). Denzin’s paradigm shift: Revisiting triangulation in qualitative research. *Journal of Social Change, 10*(1), 19–32. https://doi.org/10.5590/JOSC.2018.10.1.02

Gaines, B. (1998). The impersonal vote? Constituency service and incumbency advantage in British elections, 1950–92. *Legislative Studies Quarterly, 23*, 167–195. http://doi.org/10.2307/440279

Gainous, J., & Wagner, K. (2014). *Tweeting to power: The social media revolution in American politics.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Galligan, B., & Brenton, S. (Eds). (2015). *Constitutional conventions in Westminster systems.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Galtrud, Å., & Byström, K. (2019). Information-rich, but time-poor: Exploring members of parliament's approaches to information by Chatman's "small world" conception. *Journal of Documentation*, 409-423. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-03-2019-0057

Gamble, A., & Wright, T. (2019). *Rethinking democracy.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Gamson, W. A. (1992). *Talking politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Garbasevschi, D. (2020). *Infoselves: The value of online identity.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Garcia, D., Mavrodiev, P., Casati, D., & Schweitzer, F. (2017). Understanding popularity, reputation and social influence in the Twitter society. *Policy & Internet, 9*, 343-364. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.151

Gauja, A. (2015). The state of democracy and representation in Australia. *Representation, 51*(1), 23-34. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.151

Gauntlett, D. (2011). *Making is connecting: The social meaning of creativity, from DIY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0.* London: Polity Press.

Gazit, T., Aharony, N., & Amichai-Hamburger, Y. (2019). Tell me who you are and I will tell you which SNS you use: SNS' participation. *Online Information Review, 44*(1), 139-161. https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-03-2019-0076

Geber, S., & Scherer, H. (2015). My voter, my party, and me: American and German parliamentarians on Facebook. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 12*(4), 360-377. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2015.1101037

Geddes, M. (2019). *Dramas at Westminster: Select committees and the quest for accountability: Political ethnography.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Gelber, K. (2011). *Speech matters: Getting free speech right.* St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press.

Geoghegan, P. (2020). *Democracy for sale: Dark money and dirty politics.* London, UK: Head of Zeus.

GeoScience Australia. (2021, June 19). *Land areas of states and territories*. Retrieved from GeoScience: https://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/national-location-information/dimensions/area-of-australia-states-and-territories

Gerbaudo, P. (2012). *Tweets and the streets: Social media and contemporary activism.* London: Pluto Press.

Gerhards, J., & Schäfer, M. S. (2010). Is the internet a better public sphere? Comparing old and new media in the USA and Germany. *New Media Society, 12*(1), 143-160. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809341444

Ghebretecle, T., Morden, M., Hilderman, J., & Anderson, K. (2018). *Beyond the barbeque: Reimagining constituency work for local democratic engagement.* Toronto: The Samara Centre for Democracy.

Gibbons, A. (2021). Politics and media in the digital age. In A. Fenna, & R. Manwaring, *Australian government and politics* (pp. 270-286). Melbourne, Vic: Pearson.

Gibson, A. M., & Bowling, N. A. (2020). The effects of questionnaire length and behavioural consequences on careless responding. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 36*(2), 410-420. https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759/a000526

Gibson, R. K. (2015). Party change, social media and the rise of ‘citizen-initiated’ campaigning. *Party Politics, 21*(2), 183–197.

Gibson, R. K. (2020). *When the nerds go marching in: How digital technology moved from the margins to the mainstream of political campaigns.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gibson, R. K., & Ward, S. J. (2009). Parties in the digital age: A review. *Representation, 45*(1), 87. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344890802710888

Gibson, R., Greffet, F., & Cantijoch, M. (2017). Friend or foe? Digital technologies and the changing nature of party. *Political Communication 34*(1), 89-111. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2016.1221011

Giger, N., Bailer, S., Sutter, A., Turner-Zwinkels, T. (2021). Policy or person? What voters want from their representatives on Twitter. *Electoral Studies, 74*(102401). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.

Gigi, K. E. (2009). A new era of presidential security: The president and his Blackberry. *Computing in Science, 7*(2), 67–70. https://doi.org/10.1109/mcse.2005.32

Gillespie, T. (2018). *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, content moderation and the hidden decisions that shape social media.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Gitlin, T. (1998). Public sphere or public sphericules. In L. Tamar, J. Curran, & E. Katz, (Eds). *Media, ritual, and identity* (pp. 168-174). London, England: Routledge.

Given, L. (2008). *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Glassman, M. (2014). *Tweet your congressman: The rise of electronic communications.* Retrieved from Congress Senate Committee on Rules and Administration: The evolving Congress, S.Prt: Retrieved from: https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-113SPRT89394/pdf/CPRT-113SPRT89394.p

Glassman, M. E., Straus, J. R., & Shogan, C. J. (2013). *Social networking and constituent communications: Members' use of Twitter and Facebook During a two-month period in the 112th Congress.* Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, CRS Report for Congress.

Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (5th ed). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction.* White Plains, NY : Longman Publishing Group.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of the self in everyday life.* Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Goggin, G., Vromen, A., Weatherall, K., Martin, F., & Sunman, L. (2019). Data and digital rights: recent Australian developments. *Internet Policy Review, 8*(1), https://doi.org/10.14763/2019.1.1390.

Golbeck, J., Grimes, J., & Rogers, A. (2010). Twitter use by the U.S. Congress. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 61*(8), 1612–1621. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.21344

Golbeck, J., Auxier, B., Bickford, A., Cabrera, L., McHugh, M. C., Moore, S., Hart, J., Resti, J., Rogers, A., & Zimmerman, J. (2018). Congressional Twitter use revisited on the platform's 10-year anniversary. *Journal of the Association for Information Science & Technology, 69*(8), 1067–1070. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24022

Golder, S. A., & Macy, M. W. (2014). Digital footprints: Opportunities and challenges for online social research. *Annual Review of Sociology, 40*(1), 129-152. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071913-043145

González-Teruel, A., & Abad-García, F. (2018). The influence of Elfreda Chatman's theories: A citation context analysis. *Scientometrics, 117*, 1793–1819. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-018-2915-3

Goodsell, C. T. (1988). The architecture of parliaments: Legislative houses and political culture. *British Journal of Political Science, 18*(3), 287–302. doi:10.1017/S0007123400005135

Gordon, R., O'Connell, S., Fernandes, S., Rajagopalan, K., & Frost, R. (2021, June 1). *Women's political careers: Leadership in practice.* Retrieved from Westminster Foundation for Democracy: https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Womens-

Gorichanaz, T., Latham, K., & Wood, E. (2018). Lifeworld as a unit of analysis. *Journal of Documentation, 74*(4), 880-893. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-12-2017-0174

Gorman, G. (2019). *Troll hunting: Inside the world of online hate and its human fallout.* Richmond, Victoria: Hardie Grant.

Graber, D. (1996). Say it with pictures. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 546*, 85–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716296546001008

Graham, M., & Avery, E. (2013). The role of social media in local government crisis communications, *Public Relations Review, 41*(3), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.02.001

Graham, M., & Dutton, W. H. (2019). *Society and the Internet: How networks of information and communication are changing our lives* (2nd ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Graham, T. J., & Broersma, M. (2019). The personal in the political on Twitter: Towards a typology of politicians' personalised tweeting behaviours. In J. Schwanholz, T.

Graham, & P. Stoll, (Eds), *Managing democracy in the digital age* (pp. 137-157). Berlin: Springer.

Graham, T., Jackson, D., & Broersma, M. (2018). The personal in the political on Twitter: Towards a typology of politicians´ personalised tweeting behaviours. In J. Schwanholz, T. Graham, & P.T. Stoll, *Managing democracy in the digital age: Internet regulation, social media use, and online civic engagement* (pp. 137-157). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Grant, P., & Burton, R. (2018). Trust in Parliament in a post-truth world: Institutional trust. *Australasian Study of Parliament Group Annual Conference, 18–20 July 2018* (pp. 1-34). Brisbane, Qld: ASPG.

Grant, W., Moon, B., & Grant, J. (2010). Digital dialogue? Australian politicians' use of the social network tool Twitter. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 45*(4), 579-604. https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2010.517176

Green, A. (2013). *Western Australia 2013 State general election: Analysis of results.* Perth, WA: WA Parliamentary Library.

Green, J., Franquiz, M., & Dixon, C. (1997). The myth of the objective transcript: Transcribing as a situated act. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*(1), 172-176. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587984

Green, L. (2001). *Communication, technology and society.* London: Sage.

Greifeneder, E. (2014). Trends in information behaviour research. *Proceedings of ISIC, the Information Behaviour Conference, 2-5 September* (Paper ISIC 13). Leeds, England: http://InformationR.net/ir/19-4/isic/isic13.html

Griffith, G. (2010). *Minority governments in Australia 1989-2009: Accords, charters and agreements: Background paper 1/10.* Sydney, NSW: NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service.

Grimmer, M., & Grube, D. (2019). Political branding: A consumer perspective on Australian political parties. *Party Politics, 25*(2), 268-281. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068817710585

Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 3*(1), 42–55. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300104

Gross, B. (1964). *The managing of organisations: The administrative struggles.* New York: Free Press of Glencoe.

Gross, J. H., & Johnson, K. T. (2016). Twitter taunts and tirades: Negative campaigning in the age of Trump. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 49*(4), 748-754. http://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096516001700

Guess, A. M., Lyons, B., Nyhan, B., & Reifler, J. (2018). *Avoiding the echo chamber about echo chambers: Why selective exposure to like-minded political news is less prevalent than you think.* Retrieved from Knight Foundation: https://kf-site-production.s3.amazonaws.com/media_elements/files/000/000/133/original/Topos_KF_White-Paper_Nyhan_V1.pdf

Guess, A., & Lyons, B. (2020). Misinformation, disinformation and online propaganda. In N. Persily, & J. A. Tucker (Eds). *Social media and democracy: The state of the field, prospects for reform (SSRC Anxieties of Democracy).* (pp. 10-33). Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Gui, M., & Büchi, M. (2019). From use to overuse: Digital inequality in the age of communication abundance. *Social Science Computer Review, 39*(1), 3-19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439319851163

Gulati, G. (2004). Members of Congress and presentation of self on the world wide web. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 9*(1), 22–40.

Gunitsky, S. (2015). Corrupting the cyber-commons: Social media as a tool of autocratic stability. *Perspectives on Politics*, *13(*1), 42-54. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592714003120

Gulati, G. & Williams, C. (2015). Congressional campaigns' motivations for social media adoption. In V. Farrar-Myers & J. Vaughn (Eds), *Controlling the message: New media in American political campaigns.* (pp. 32-52). New York, USA: New York University Press. https://doi.org/10.18574/9781479865505-004

Enli, G. (2015). *Mediated authenticity: How the media constructs reality*. Peter Lang: New York.

Gunn, S. E., & Skogerbø, E. (2013). Personaliased campaigns in party centred politics. *Information, Communication & Society, 16*(5), 757-774. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.782330

Guo, Y., Lu, Z., Kuang, H., Wang, C. (2020). Information avoidance behaviour on social network sites: Information irrelevance, overload, and the moderating role of time pressure. *International Journal of Information Management*, Article 102067. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102067

Guttmann, A., & Thompson, D. (1996). *Democracy and disagreement.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hänska-Ahy, M., & Bauchowitz, S. (2017). Tweeting for Brexit: How social media influenced the referendum. In J. Mair, T. Clark, N. Fowler, R. Snoddy, & R. Tait, (Eds). *Brexit, Trump and the media.* (pp. 31-35). Bury St Edmunds: Abramis Academic Publishing.

Habermas, J. (1974). The public sphere: An encyclopedia article. *New German Critique, 3*(Autumn), 49-55.

Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action volume 1: Reason and rationalisation of society.* Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (1989 [1962]). *The structural transformations of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (1992). *Autonomy and solidarity: interviews.* London: Verso.

Habermas, J. (1996). *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (1996). The normative content of modernity. In W. Outhewiate, (Ed). *The Habermas reader.* (pp. 341-365). Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Hadjian, A. (2018). Social media and the government: Why it may be unconstitutional for government officials to moderate their social media. *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review, 51*(1), 361-378.

Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. (2020). *Backsliding: Democratic regress in the contemporary world.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haight, M., Quan-Haase, A., & Corbett, B. (2014). Digital divide in Canada: Demographic trends in internet access, digital skills and social networking. *Information, Communication & Society, 17*, 503-519. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2014.891633

Halberstam, Y., & Knight, B. (2016). Homophily, group size, and the diffusion of political information in social networks: Evidence from Twitter. *Journal of Public Economics, 143*, 73–88. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2016.08.011

Haleva-Amir., S. (2011). Online Israeli politics: The current state of the art. *Israeli Affairs, 17*(3), 467-485. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2011.584678

Halfmann, A., & Rieger, D. (2019). Permanently on call: The effects of social pressure on smartphone users' self-control, need satisfaction, and well-being. *Journal of*

Computer-Mediated Communication, 24, 165–181. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmz008

Hall, T., & Sinclair, B. (2011). American internet voter. *Journal of Political Marketing, 10*(1-2), 58-79. https://doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2011.540194

Halperin, S., & Heath, O. (2016). *Political research: Methods and practical skills.* (2nd ed). Oxford: University Press Oxford.

Hanif Soroya, S., Farooq, A., Mahmood, K., Isoaho, J., & Zara, S. (2021). From information seeking to information avoidance: Understanding the health information behaviour during a global health crisis. *Information Processing & Management*, *58*(2), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2020.102440.

Hänska-Ahy, M., & Bauchowitz, S. (2017). Tweeting for Brexit: How social media influenced the referendum. In: J. Mair & T. Clark, N. Fowler, R. Snoddy & R. Tait, (Eds.) *Brexit, Trump and the media*. Abramis Academic Publishing, Bury St Edmunds, UK, pp. 31-35.

Hansard Society UK. (2013). *#futurenews: The communication of parliamentary democracy in a digital world*. Retrieved from Hansard Society: https://assets.contentful.com/u1rlvvbs33ri/3x5fTrhbji6AQswyGMcwMA/48f494c8e1b4523dc7ab63f39027e69a/Publication__Future-News-the-Communication-of-Parliametentary-Democracy-in-a-Digital-World.pdf

Hansen, A., & Machin, D. (2019). *Media and communication research methods.* (2nd ed). London: Red Globe Press.

Harari, Y. N. (2017). *Homo Deus: A brief history of tomorrow.* New York: Vintage.

Hardman, I. (2018). *Why we get the wrong politicians.* London: Atlantic Books.

Harris, L., & Harrigan, P. (2015). Social media in politics: The ultimate voter engagement tool or simply an echo chamber? *Journal of Political Marketing, 14*(3), 251-283. http://doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2012.693059

Harvey, L. (2013). Western Australia's constitutional documents: Drafting history. *University of Western Australia Law Review, 36*(2), 49-68.

Hasson, P. J. (2020). *The manipulators: Facebook, Google, Twitter, and big tech's war on Conservatives.* New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Hay, C. (2002). Political analysis: A critical introduction. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Heilemann, J., & Halperin, M. (2010). *Race of a lifetime: How Obama won the White House.* New York, NY: Viking Penguin.

Heinsohn, T., & Schiefer, M. (2019). Advancing to positions of power in parliament: Does seniority matter? *The Journal of Legislative Studies, 25*(4), 511-532. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2019.1582185

Heinström, J. (2010). *From fear to flow: Personality and information interaction.* Oxford: Chandos.

Heitshusen, V., Young, G., & Wood, D. (2005). Electoral context and MP constituency focus in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. *American Journal of Political Science, 49*, 32-45. https://doi.org/10.2307/3647711

Hellweg, A. (2011). Social media sites of politicians influence their perception by constituents. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications, 2*(1), 22–36. http://doi.org/ 10.22359/cswhi_10_3_04

Hendriks, C., & Lees-Marshment, J. (2019). Political leaders and public engagement: The hidden world of informal elite-citizen interaction. *Political Studies, 67*(3), 597-617. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321718791370

Hennick, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods.* London, UK: Sage.

Herbst, S. (2010). *Rude democracy: Civility and incivility in American politics.* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press.

Hermida, A. (2016). Social media and the news. In T. Witschge, C. W. Anderson, D. Domingo, & A. Hermida, (Eds). *The SAGE handbook of digital journalism* (pp. 81-94). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Hersh, E. D. (2015). *Hacking the electorate: How campaigns perceive voters.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Highfield, T. (2013). National and state-level politics on social media: Twitter, Australian political discussions, and the online commentariat. *International Journal of Electronic Governance, 6*(4), 342–60. http://doi.org/10.1504/IJEG.2013.060648

Highfield, T. (2016). *Social media and everyday politics.* Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Higley, J., & Burton, M. (2006). *Elite foundations of liberal democracy: Elite transformations.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Higley, J., Deacon, D., & Smart, D. (1975). *Elites in Australia.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hoff, J. (2004). The democratic potentials of information technology: Attitudes of European MPs towards new technology. *Information Policy, 9*(1/2), 55-66. https://doi.org/10.3233/IP-2004-0044

Hoffmann, C. P., & Suphan, A. (2016). Stuck with "electronic brochures"? How boundary management strategies shape politicians' social media use. *Information, Communication & Society, 20*(4), 551-569. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1200646

Hoffmann, C. P., Suphan, A., & Meckel, M. (2016). The impact of use motives on politicians' social media adoption. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 13*(3), 239-256 https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2016.1169241.

Hoffmann-Lange, U. (2007). Methods of elite research. In R. J. Dalton, & H.-D. Klingemann, (Eds). Klingemann, *The Oxford handbook of political behaviour* (pp. 910-928). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Holland, P., & Lenders, R. (2016). Adult learning: From learning theory to parliamentary practice. In C. Lewis, & K. Coghill, (Eds). *Parliamentarians' professional development: Public administration, governance and globalisation* (Vol. 16, pp. 37-55). Cham: Springer.

Hollibaugh, G. E., Ramey, A. J., & Klingler, J. D. (2018). Welcome to the machine: A model of legislator personality and communications technology adoption. *Sage Open, 8*(3), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018802883

Hong, S., & Nadler, D. (2011). Does the early bird move the polls? The use of the social media tool Twitter by U.S. politicians and its impact on public opinion. *Proceedings of the 12th Annual International Digital Government Research Conference: Digital Government Research Conference: Digital Government Innovation in Challenging Times.* College Park, Maryland: AIDGRC.

Hooge, M., & Marien, S. (2012). How to reach members of Parliament? Citizens and members of Parliament on the effectiveness of political participation repertoires. *Parliamentary Affairs, 67*(3), 536-560. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gss057

Hough, A., Wilson, J., & Black, D. (2020). *Women parliamentarians in Australia 1921–2020 Research paper series 2020-21, 9 December 2020.* Canberra, ACT: Parliamentary Library.

Howard, P. N., & Hussain, M. M. (2011). The role of digital media. *Journal of Democracy, 22*(3), 36-48. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2011.0041

Howison, J., Wiggins, A., & Crowston, K. (2011). Validity issues in the use of social network analysis with digital trace data. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 12*(12), 767-797.

Humprecht, E. (2019). Where "fake news" flourishes: A comparison across four Western democracies. *Information, Communication & Society, 22*(13), 1973-1988.

Huotari, M., & Chatman, E. (2001). Using everyday life information seeking to explain organisational behaviour. *Library & Information Science Research, 23*(4), 351-366. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0740-8188(01)00093-7

Iarossi, G. (2006). *The power of survey design: A user's guide for managing surveys, interpreting results, and influencing respondents.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

IFLA. (2017, August 18). *2017 IFLA statement on digital literacy*. Retrieved from International Federation of Library Associations: Retrieved from https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11586

Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Program. (2012, April). *Global Parliamentary Report: The changing nature of parliamentary representation*. Retrieved from Inter-Parliamentary Union: http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gpr2012-full-e.pdf

Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Program. (2018). *World e-Parliament report 2018.* Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2013, March). *Social media guidelines for Parliament*. Retrieved from IPU online: https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reference/2016-07/social-media-guidelines-parliaments

Iosifidis, P., & Wheeler, M. (2018). Modern political communication and Web 2.0 in representative democracies. *Javnost: The Public, 25*(1-2), 110-118. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2018.1418962

Ipsos. (2019, August). *Global trust in professions: Who do global citizens trust?* Retrieved from Ipsos: https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2019-09/global_trustworthiness_2019-australia.pdf

Ireland, J. (2012). Defamation 2.0: Facebook and Twitter. *Media and Arts Law Review, 17*(1), 53.

Isaak, J., & Hanna, M. (2018). User data privacy: Facebook, Cambridge Analytica and privacy protection. *Computer, 51*(8), 56-9.

Islin, E. F., & Ruppert, E. (2015). *Being digital citizens.* London: Rowman & Littlefield.

Ivankova, N. V., Creswell, J. W., & Stick, S. L. (2006). Using mixed-methods sequential explanatory design: From theory to practice. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 3-20. http://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05282260

Jackson, D., Lilleker, D. G., & Veneti, A. (2019). *Social media use in political communication in Greece: A report from Bournemouth University's Centre for Politics & Media Research.* Poole, England: Centre for Politics and Media Research at Bournemouth University.

Jackson, K., & Bazeley, P. (2019). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jackson, N. A. (2003). MPs and web technologies: An untapped opportunity? *Journal of Public Affairs, 3*(2), 124–137. https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.141

Jackson, N. A., & Lilleker, D. (2004). Just public relations or an attempt at interaction? British MPs in the press, on the web and “in your face”. *European Journal of Communication, 19*(4), 507-533. https://doi:10.1177/0267323104047671

Jackson, N. A., & Lilleker, D. G. (2009a). Building an architecture of participation? Political parties and Web 2.0 in Britain. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 6*(3-4), 232-250. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331680903028438

Jackson, N. A., & Lilleker, D. G. (2009b). MPs and E-representation: Me, MySpace and I. *British Politics, 4*(2), 236–264. https://doi.org/10.1057/bp.2009.2

Jackson, N., & Lilleker, D. (2011). Microblogging, constituency service and impression management: UK MPs and the use of Twitter. *Journal of Legislative Studies, 17*(1), 86-105. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2011.545181

Jackson, S. J. (2020). *#Hashtag activism: Networks of race and gender justice.* Boston: MIT Press.

Jaeger, P. T., Burnett, G. (2010) Information worlds. New York: Routledge.

Jaeger, P., & Thompson, K. (2004). Social information behaviour and the democratic process: Information poverty, normative behaviour, and electronic government in the United States. *Library & Information Science Research, 26*(1), 94-107. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2003.11.006

Jalalzai, F. (2016). *Shattered, cracked, or firmly intact? Women and the executive glass ceiling worldwide.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

James, D. V., Farnham, F., Sukhwal, S., Jones, K., Carlisle, J., & Henley, S. (2016). Aggressive/Intrusive behaviours, harassment and stalking of members of the United Kingdom Parliament: A prevalence study and cross-national comparison. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 177-197. https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2015.1124908

Jamieson, K. H. (2018). *Cyberwar: How Russian hackers and trolls helped elect a president: What we don't, can't, and do know.* Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Jamieson, K. H., & Doron, T. (2017). Disruption, demonisation, deliverance, and norm destruction: The rhetorical signature of Donald J. Trump. *Political Science Quarterly, 132*(Winter), 618–49. https://doi.org/10.1002/polq.12699

Jamieson, K. H., Volinsky, A., Weitz, I., & Kenski, K. (2017). The political uses and abuses of civility and incivility. In K. Kenski, & K. H. Jamieson, *The Oxford handbook of political communication* (pp. 205–218). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jane, E. (2014). Back to the kitchen, cunt: Speaking the unspeakable about online misogyny. *Continuum, 28*(July), 558–570. https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2014.924479

Johanson, G. (2017). Ethical research practices. In K. Williamson, & G. Johanson, (Eds). *Research methods: Information, systems, and contexts* (pp. 480-503). Singapore: Chandos Publishing.

Johnson, J. (2014). Controlling the flood: When more of a dose is less. *Journal of Documentation, 70*(3), 330-345. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-01-2013-0008

Jones, B. (2014). Political concepts and perspectives. In B. Jones, & P. Norton, (Eds), *Politics UK,* (8th ed) (pp. 2-17). London: Routledge.

Jones, B. (2020). *British politics: The basics.* London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Jones, B. & Baumgartner, F. (2005). *The politics of attention: How government prioritises attention.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

Jones, T. (2010, October 25). *The odd angry shoe: John Howard on Q and A (Video and transcript).* Retrieved from Q&A. Australia: ABC TV: https://www.abc.net.au/qanda/the-odd-angry-shoe-john-howard-on-q-and-a/10662844

Judge, D. (2014). *Democratic incongruities.* London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jungherr, A. (2019). Normalising digital trace data. In N. J. Stroud, & S. C. McGregor, *Digital discussions: How big data informs political communication* (pp. 9-35). New York: Routledge.

Jungherr, A., Rivero, G., & Gayo-Avello, D. (2020). *Retooling politics: How digital media are shaping democracy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kaiser, K. (2012). Protecting confidentiality. In J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti, & K. D. McKinney, *The Sage Handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (pp. 457–65). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kardaras, N. (2016). *Glow kids: How screen addiction is hijacking our kids and how to break the trance.* New York: St Martin's Press.

Karlsson, M. (2013). Representation as interactive communication: Theoretical considerations and empirical findings. *Information, Communication & Society, 16*(8), 1201-1222. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.757633

Karpf, D. (2016). *Analytic activism: Digital listening and the new political strategy.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Karpf, D. (2020). How digital disinformation turned dangerous. In W. L. Bennett, & S. Livingston, *The disinformation age: Politics, technology and disruptive communication in the United States: SSRC Anxieties of Democracy* (pp. 153-169). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Karvonen, L. (2010). *The personalisation of politics: A study of parliamentary democracies.* Colchester: ECPR Press.

Katzer, L. (1987). User studies, information science and communication. *Canadian Journal of Information Science, 12*(3/4), 15-30.

Kaye, A. (2019). Facebook use and negative behavioural and mental health outcomes: A literature review. *Journal of Addiction Research & Therapy, 10*(1), 1-10 https://doi.org/10.4172/2155-6105.1000375.

Kefford, G. (2021). *Political parties and campaigning in Australia: Data digital and field.* Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan.

Keith, T. (2019). President Trump's Twitter use is unheralded. In P. Schauer, (Ed). *Politicians on social media: At issue* (pp. 40-44). New York: Greenhaven Publishing.

Kellermann, M. (2016). Electoral vulnerability, constituency focus, and parliamentary questions in the House of Commons. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations, 18*(1), 90–106. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-856X.12075

Kelly, N. (2006). Western Australian electoral reforms: Labor finally succeeds. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 41*, 419–426. https://doi.org/10.1080/10361140600849000

Kelly, N. (2012). *Directions in Australian electoral reform: Professionalism and partisanship in electoral management.* Canberra, ACT: Australian National University ePress.

Kelm, O. (2020). Why do politicians use Facebook and Twitter the way they do? The influence of perceived audience expectations. *Studies in Communication and Media, 9*, 8–34. http://doi.org/10.5771/2192-4007-2020-1-8

Kelm, O., Dohle, M., & Bernhard, U. (2019). Politicians' self-reported social media activities and perceptions: Results from four surveys among German parliamentarians. *Social Media + Society, April-June*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119837679

Kerrouche, E., & Schüttemeyer, S. S. (2018). Parliament centered or constituency centered? The professionalisation of the parliamentary mandate. In O. Gabriel, E. Kerrouche, & S. S. Schüttemeyer, *Political representation in France and Germany: Attitudes and activities of citizens and MPs* (pp. 59-86). Cham: Springer.

Khang, H., Han, E.-K., & Ki, E. J. (2014). Exploring influential social cognitive determinants of social media use. *Computers in Human Behaviour, 36*, 48-55 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.03.038.

Kligler-Vilenchik, N., & Literat, I. (2020). Youth digital participation: Now more than ever. *Media and Communication, 8*(2), 171-174. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v8i2.3180

Klinger, U., & Svensson, J. (2016). Network media logic: Some conceptual considerations. In A. Bruns, G. Enli, E. Skogerbo, A. O. Larsson, & C. Christensen, (Eds). *The Routledge companion to social media and politics* (pp. 49-67). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Kneidinger-Müller, B. (2017). Perpetual mobile availability as a reason for communication overload experiences and coping strategies of smartphone users. In R. P. Figueiredo, & J. C. Lopes (Eds). *Information and communication overload in the digital age.* (pp. 93-11). Hershey, PA,: IGI Global.

Knopper, S. (2009). *Appetite for self-destruction: The spectacular crash of the record industry in the digital age.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Korostelina, K. V. (2017). *Trump effect.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Kousser, T. (2019). Tweet style: campaigning, governing and social media in Australia. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 54*(2), 183-201. https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2019.1568966

Krasodomski-Jones, A. (2017). *Signal and noise: Can technology provide a window into the new world of digital politics in the UK?* London: Demos.

Kreiss, D. (2012). Acting in the Public Sphere: The 2008 Obama campaign’s strategic use of new media to shape narratives of the presidential race. *Research in Social Movements, Conflict, and Change*, 33. http://doi.org/ 10.1108/S0163-786X(2012)0000033011

Kriess, D. (2016). Seizing the moment: The presidential campaigns' use of Twitter during the 2012 electoral cycle. *New Media & Society, 18*(8), 1473-1490. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814562445

Kreiss, D., & McGregor, S. C. (2018). Technology firms shape political communication: The work of Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter and Google with campaigns during the 2016 US Presidential cycle. *Political Communication, 35*(2), 155-177. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1364814

Kreiss, D., Lawrence, R. G., & McGregor, S. C. (2018). In their own words: Political practitioner accounts of candidates, audiences, affordances, genres, and timing in strategic social media use. *Political Communication, 35*(1), 8-31. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1334727

Kreps, S., & Kriner, D. (2021). Contemporary presidency: Going public in an era of social media: Tweets, corrections, and public opinion. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 51*, 151-165. https://doi.org/10.1111/psq.12687

Kruikemeier, S. (2014). How political candidates use Twitter and the impact on votes. *Computers in Human Behaviour, 34*, 131-139. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.01.025

Kruikemeier, S., van Noort, G., & Vliegenthart, R. (2013). Getting closer: The effects of personalised and interactive online political communication. *European Journal of Communication, 28*(1), 53-66. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323112464837

Krutka, D. G., & Carpenter, J. P. (2017). Digital citizenship in the curriculum. *Educational Leadership, 75*(3), 50-55.

Kwiatkowski, R. (2012). Politicians and power: MPs in the UK Parliament. In A. Weinberg, (Ed). *The psychology of politicians* (pp. 39–5). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lacey, K. (2013). *Listening publics: The politics and experience of listening in the media age.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Lalancette, M., Raynauld, V., & Crandall, E. (Eds). (2018). *What's trending in Canadian politics?: Understanding transformations in power, media, and the public sphere.* Vancouver, CA: UBC Press.

Lamprianou, I. (2013). Contemporary political participation research: A critical assessment. In K. Demetriou, (Ed). *Democracy in transition.* (pp. 21-42). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.

Larsson, A. O. (2016). Online, all the time? A quantitative assessment of the permanent campaign on Facebook. *New Media & Society, 18*(2), 274–292. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814538798

Larsson, A. O., & Kalsnes, B. (2014). "Of course we are on Facebook": Use and non-use of social media among Swedish and Norwegian politicians. *European Journal of Communication, 29*(6), 653–667. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323114531383

Larsson, A. O., & Moe, H. (2016). From emerging to established? A comparison of Twitter use during Swedish election campaigns in 2010 and 2014. In A. Bruns, G. Enli, E. Skogerbo, A. O. Larsson, & C. Christensen, (Eds), *The Routledge companion to social media and politics.* (pp. 311-324). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Lassen, D., & Brown, A. (2010). Twitter: The electoral connection? *Social Science Computer Review, 29*, 419-436. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439310382749

Laterza, V. (2018). Cambridge Analytica, independent research and the national interest. *Anthropology Today, 34*, 1-2. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8322.12430

Laughland-Booÿ, J. G. (2020). Young people and politics in Australia: An introduction. *Journal of Applied Youth Studies, 3*, 189–192. https://doi.org/10.1007/s43151-020-00025-1

Lawless, J. L. (2012). Twitter and Facebook: New ways for members of Congress to send the same old messages? In R. L. Fox & J. Ramos, (Eds). *iPolitics: Citizens, elections, and*

governing in the new media era. (pp. 206–232). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lax, S. (2004). The internet and democracy. In D. Gauntlett, & R. Horsley, (Eds), *Web studies.* (2 ed) (pp. 217–229). London: Arnold Publications.

Leaver, T. (2021). Going dark: How Google and Facebook fought the Australian news media and digital platforms mandatory bargaining code. *M/C Journal*, 24(2). https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.2774

Lee, C., McQuarrie, M., & Walker, E. (Eds). (2015). *Democratising inequalities: Dilemmas of the new public participation.* New York: New York University Press.

Lee, E., & Shin, S. (2012). Are they talking to me? Cognitive and affective effects of interactivity in politicians' Twitter communication. *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking, 15*(10), 515–520. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2012.0228

Lee, N. M. (2018). Fake news, phishing and fraud: A call for research on digital media literacy education beyond the classroom. *Communication Education, 67*(4), 460-466. https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2018.1503313

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2015). *Practical research: Planning and design.* (11th ed). Harlow, NY: Pearson Higher Ed.

Lees-Marshment, J. (2015). *The ministry of public input: Integrating citizen views into political leadership.* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Leigh, A. (2002). Explaining distrust: Popular attitudes towards politicians in Australia and the United States. In D. Burchell, & A. Leigh, (Eds). *Prince's new clothes: Why do Australians dislike their politicians?* (pp. 47–61). Sydney, NSW: UNSW Press.

Leitch, K. (2019). Instead of increasing seats, provide more resources to members of parliament. *Canadian Parliamentary Review, 42*(3), 21- 24.

Lelkes, Y. (2020). A bigger pie: The effects of high-speed internet on political behaviour. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 25*(3), 199–216.

Leston-Bandeira, C., & Bender, D. (2013). How deeply are parliaments engaging on social media? *Information Polity, 18*, 281–297. https://doi.org/10.3233/IP-130316

Lev-On, A., Sabag-Ben Porat, C., & Lehman-Wilzig, S. (2017). A Facebook post is born: Exploring the process of generating MPs' social media presence. *The Journal of Legislative Studies, 23*(4), 549-565. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2017.1394738

Lewis, C. (2012). Barriers to prioritising education and training for parliamentarians: Role complexity and the media. *Parliamentary Affairs, 65*(3), 699–714. http://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gss020

Lewis, C. (2016). Reform required. In L. Colleen, & K. Coghill, (Eds). *Parliamentarians' professional development* (pp. 201-208). Cham: Springer.

Leys, N. (2013, August 10). *Kevin Rudd—selfie-obsessed PM misses the mark*. Retrieved from The Australian: http://www.theaustralian.com.au/media/kevin-rudd-selfie-obsessed-pm-misses-the-mark/story- e6frg996-1226694575617

Liamputtong, P. (2013). *Qualitative research methods.* (4th ed). South Melbourne, Victoria: Oxford University Press.

Lievrouw, L. (1998). Four research programs in scientific communication, *Knowledge in Society, 1*(2), 6-22.

Lilleker, D. (2003). Interviewing the political elite: Navigating a potential minefield. *Politics, 23*(3), 207–214.

Lilleker, D. G. (2006). *Sage key concepts: Key concepts in political communication.* London: SAGE.

Lilleker, D. G., & Jackson, N. (2008). Politicians and Web 2.0: The current bandwagon or changing the mindset? *Politics: Web 2.0 International Conference, 17-18 April 2008*.

London Royal Holloway: University of London. Retrieved from http://newpolcom.rhul.ac.uk/politics-web-20

Lilleker, D. G., & Koc-Michalska, K. (2013). Online political communication strategies: MEPs, e-representation, and self-representation. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 10*(2), 190-207. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2012.758071

Lilleker, D., Pack, M., & Jackson, N. (2010). Political parties and Web 2.0: The Liberal Democrat perspective. *Politics, 30*(2), 105-112. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9256.2010.01373.x

Lim, M. (2012). Clicks, cabs and coffee houses: Social media and oppositional movements in Egypt, 2004–2011. *Journal of Communication, 62*(2), 231–48. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01628.x

Lindgren, S. (2017). *Digital media and society.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lindh, M., & Miles, L. (2007). Becoming electronic parliamentarians? ICT usage in the Swedish Riksdag. *Journal of Legislative Studies, 13*(3), 422–440. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572330701500896

Ling, R. (2012). *Taken for grantedness: The embedding of mobile communication into society.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Ling, R., Fortunati, L., Goggin, G., Lim, S. S., Li, Y., (Eds). (2020). *The Oxford handbook of mobile communication and society.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lippmann, W. (1920). *Liberty and the news*. New York: Harcourt.

Literat, I., & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2018). Youth online political expression in non-political spaces: implications for civic education. *Journal of Learning, Media and Technology, 43*(4), 400-417.

Livingstone, S., & Blum-Ross, A. (2020). *Parenting for a digital future: How hopes and fears about technology shape children's lives.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Loader, B. D., Vromen, A., & Xenos, M. (2014). The networked young citizen: Social media, political participation and civic engagement. *Information, Communication and Society, 17*(2), 143–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.871571

Love, A. (2005). Parliament and its place in the constitution. In N. Baldwin, (Ed). *Parliament in the 21st century.* (pp. 17-28). London: Methuen.

Lovink, G. (2016). *Social media abyss: Critical internet cultures and the force of negation.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Lowry, T. J., Pathé, M. T., Phillips, J. H., Haworth, D. J., Mulder, M. J., & Briggs, C. J. (2015). Harassment and other problematic behaviours experienced by the staff of public office holders. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, 2(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1037/tam0000039

Lupia, A., & Sin, G. (2003). Which public goods are endangered? How evolving communication technologies affect "The logic of collective action". *Public Choice, 117*, 315–331. http://doi.org/10.1023/B:PUCH.0000003735.07840.c7

Lutz, B. A. (2019). Digital sophistry: Trump, Twitter, and teaching about fake news. In M. Lockhart, (Ed). *President Donald Trump and his political discourse: Ramifications of rhetoric via Twitter* (pp. 190-209). New York, NY: Routledge.

Lutz, B., & du Toit, P. (2014). *Defining democracy in a digital age: Political support on social media.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lynch, M. (2015). After the Arab Spring: How the media trashed the transitions. *Journal of Democracy, 26*(4), 90–99.

Lynn, P. (2009). *Methodology of longitudinal surveys.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

Lyons, B., & Veenstra, A. (2016). How (not) to talk on Twitter: Effects of politicians' tweets on the whole Twitter environment. *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking,* 19(1), 8–15. http://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2015.0319

MacIntyre, C. (2008, May 9). *Parliamentary architecture and political culture*. Senate Occasional Lecture Series at Parliament House, Canberra: Retrieved from Senate: https://www.aph.gov.au/binaries/senate/pubs/pops/pop49/parliamentary_architecture_political_culture.pdf

MacKinnon, R. (2012). *Consent of the networked: The world-wide struggle for internet freedom.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

MacNamara, J., & Kenning, G. (2011). E-electioneering 2010: Trends in social media use in Australian political communication. *Media International Australia, Incorporating Culture & Policy, 139*(May), 7-22. http://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X1113900104

MacNamara, J., & Kenning, G. (2013). *E-electioneering 2013: An analysis of the use of social media and online communication in the 2013 Australian federal election and comparison with the 2007 and 2010 elections.* Sydney, NSW: Australian Centre for Public Communication, University of Technology Sydney.

MacNamara, J., & Zerfass, A. (2012). Social media communication in organisations: The challenges of balancing openness, strategy and management. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 6*(4), 287-308. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2012.711402.

MacNamara, J., Sakinofsky, P., & Beattie, J. (2012). *E-lectoral engagement: Maintaining and enhancing democratic participation through social media. Report to the Australian Electoral Commission by Australian Centre for Public Communication.* Sydney, NSW: University of Technology.

Macphail, I. (2008). *Highest privilege and bounden duty: A study of Western Australian parliamentary elections 1829-1901.* Perth, WA: Western Australian Electoral Commission.

Madianou, M. (2020). Polymedia and mobile communication. In R. Ling, L. Fortunati, G. Goggin, S. S. Lim, & Y. Li, (Eds). *The Oxford handbook of mobile communication and society.* (pp. 68-80). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Madianou, M., & Miller, D. (2013). Polymedia: Towards a new theory of digital media in interpersonal communication. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 16*(2), 169-187. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877912452486

Magarey, K. (1999). The internet and Australian parliamentary democracy. *Parliamentary Affairs, 52*(3), 404–427. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/52.3.404

Mahoney, L. M., & Tang, T. (2017). *Strategic social media: From marketing to social change.* Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

Malhotra, N. (2019). *Marketing research: An applied orientation.* (7th ed) London: Pearson.

Mandell, H., & Chen, G. M. (2016). *Scandal in a digital age.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

Manin, B. (1997). *The principles of representative government.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mansbridge, J. (2003). Rethinking representation. *The American Political Science Review, 97*, 515-528. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000856

Mansbridge, J. (2011). Clarifying the concept of representation. *American Political Science Review, 105*(3), 621-630. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055411000189

Manstead, A. (2018). The psychology of social class: How socioeconomic status impacts thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. *The British Journal of Social Psychology*, *57*(2), 267–291. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12251

Mantilla, K. (2015). *Gendertrolling: How misogyny went viral.* Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Marantz, A. (2021, January 15). The importance, and incoherence, of Twitter's Trump ban. Retrieved from *The New Yorker:* https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-importance-and-incoherence-of-twitters-trump-ban.

Marcella, R., Carcary, I., & Baxter, G. (1999). The information needs of United Kingdom members of the European parliament MEPs. *Library Management, 20*(3), 168-178. https://doi.org/10.1108/01435129910259667

March, E., & Marrington, J. (2019). A qualitative analysis of Internet trolling. *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking, 22*(3), 192-197. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2018.0210

Marcinkowski, F., & Metag, J. (2014). Why do candidates use online media in constituency campaigning? An application of the theory of planned behaviour. *Journal of Information Technology Politics*, *11*(2), 151-168. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2014.895690

Margetts, H. (2019). Rethinking democracy with social media. *The Political Quarterly, 90*, 107-123. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923x.12574

Marland, A. (2012). Political photography, journalism, and framing in the digital age: The management of visual media by the Prime Minister of Canada. *The International Journal of Press/Politics, 17*(2), 214-233. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161211433838

Marland, A. (2016). *Brand command: Canadian politics and democracy in the age of message control.* Vancouver, BC: University British Columbia Press.

Marland, A. (2020). *Whipped: Party discipline in Canada.* Vancouver, BC : University British Columbia Press.

Marland, A., Lewis, J., & Flanagan, T. (2017). Governance in the age of digital media and branding. *Governance, 30*, 125-141.

Marquart, F., Ohme, J., & Möller, J. (2020). Following politicians on social media: Effects for political information, peer communication, and youth engagement. *Media and Communication, 8*(2), 197-207. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v8i2.2764

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2016). *Designing qualitative research.* (6th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Martin, F. & Dwyer, T. (2019). *Sharing news online.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Martin, S. (2011). Electoral institutions, the personal vote, and legislative organisation. *Legislative Studies Quarterly, 36*(3), 39-361. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23053246

Martin, S. (2018). Electoral systems and roles in the legislative organisation. In E. S. Herron, R. J. Pekkanen, & M. S. (Eds), *The Oxford handbook of electoral systems* (pp. 303-320). Oxford: Oxford University.

Marwick, A. E. (2013). *Status update: Celebrity, publicity and branding in the social media age.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Marwick, A. E. (2014). The public domain: Surveillance in everyday life. *Surveillance and Society, 9*(4), 378-393. https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v9i4.4342

Marwick, A. E. (2019). A cultural history of Web 2.0. In P. Heyer, & P. Urquhart, (Eds). *Communication in history: Stone age symbols to social media* (pp. 311-316). New York, NY: Routledge.

Marzano, M. (2012). Informed consent. In J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti, & K. D. McKinney, *The SAGE Handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (pp. 443-457). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Masullo, G. M. (2017). *Online incivility and public debate: Nasty talk.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Masullo, G. M. (2020). *The new town hall: Why we engage personally with politicians.* Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Matejic, N. (2015). *Social media rules of engagement: Why your online narrative is the best weapon during a crisis.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Matthews, J., Karsay, K., Schmuck, D., Stevic, A. (2020) Too much to handle: Impact of mobile social networking sites on information overload, depressive symptoms, and well-being. Computers in Human Behaviour, 105. Article 106217. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.106217

Maxwell, J. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach.* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mayer-Schönberger, V. (2011). *Delete: The virtue of forgetting in the digital age.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

McAllister, I. (2007). The personalisation of politics. In R. J. Dalton, & H. D. Klingemann, *The Oxford handbook of political behaviour.* (pp. 571–88). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McAllister, I. (2015). The personalisation of politics in Australia. *Party Politics, 21*(3), 337-345. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068813487111

McAllister, I., & Makkai, T. (2018). Electoral systems in context: Australia. In E. S. Herron, R. J. Pekkanen, & M. Shugart. *The Oxford handbook of electoral systems.* (pp. 763-780). Oxford: Oxford University.

McCarthy, J., Beckler, D., & Qualey, S. (2005). An analysis of the relationship between survey burden and nonresponse: If we bother them more, are they less cooperative? *Journal of Official Statistics, 22*(1), 97–112.

McGregor, S. C. (2019). Social media as public opinion: How journalists use social media to represent public opinion. *Journalism*, 20(8), 1070–1086. https://doi.org/10.1177/146488491984

McKay, W. (2004). *Parliamentary practice: Erskine May's treatise on the law, privileges, proceedings and usage of parliament.* (22nd ed) London: LexisNexis.

McKee, A. (2005). *The public sphere: An introduction.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

McKell Institute. (2015, March). *Digital post: Business transformation and the future sustainability of Australia Post*. Retrieved from the McKell Institute: https://mckellinstitute.org.au/app/uploads/The-McKell-Institute-Digital-Post-March-2015.pdf

McNair, B. (2018). *An introduction to political communication* (6th ed). Oxon, UK: Routledge.

McNair, J. (2014). The implications of social media for parliamentary privilege and procedure. *Canadian Parliamentary Review, Winter*, 17–23.

McNamee, R. (2019). *Zucked: Waking up to the Facebook catastrophe.* New York: Penguin Press.

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual Review of Sociology, 27*(1), 415-444. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.415

Medvic, S. K. (2013). *In defence of politicians: The expectations trap and its threat to democracy.* London: Routledge.

Megarry, J. (2014). Online incivility or sexual harassment? Conceptualising women's experiences in the digital age. *Women's Studies International Forum, 47*(Part A), 46-55.

Meikle, G. (2016). *Social media: communication, sharing and visibility.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Meikle, G., & Young, S. (2012). *Media convergence: Networked digital media in everyday life.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mellon, C. (1990). *Naturalistic inquiry for library science: Methods and applications for research, evaluation and teaching.* New York, NY: Greenwood Press.

Mellon, J., & Prosser, C. (2017). Twitter and Facebook are not representative of the general population: Political attitudes and demographics of British social media users. *Research & Politics 4*(3), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168017720008

Menart, S. (Ed) (2008). *Handbook of longitudinal research: Design, measurement and analysis.* Burlington, MA: Academic Press.

Mercer. (2019). *Backbench member of Victorian Parliament salary benchmarking Report prepared for the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.* Melbourne, Vic: Mercer.

Merchant, B. (2017). *The one device: The secret history of the iPhone.* New York, NY: Little Brown Company.

Metag, J., & Marcinkowski, F. (2012). Strategic, structural, and individual determinants of online campaigning in German elections. *Policy & Internet,* 4(3–4): 136–158. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.14

Metz, M., Kruikemeier, S., & Lecheler, S. (2020). Personalisation of politics on Facebook: Examining the content and effects of professional, emotional and private self-personalisation. *Information, Communication & Society, 23*(1), 1481–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2019.1581244

Middaugh, E. (2018). Civic media literacy in a transmedia world: Balancing personal experience, factual accuracy and emotional appeal as media consumers and circulators. *Journal of Media Literacy Education, 10*(2), 33-52.

Mihailidis, P., & Thevenin, B. (2013). Media literacy as a core competency for engaged citizenship in a participatory democracy. *American Behavioural Scientist, 57*(11), 1611-1622. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213489015

Mikecz, R. (2012). Interviewing elites: Addressing methodological issues. *Qualitative Inquiry, 18*(6), 482–493. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800412442818

Milazzo, C., & Townsley, J. (2019). Conceived in Harlesden: Candidate-centred campaigning in British general elections. *Parliamentary Affairs, 73*(1), 127-146. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsy040

Miles, M., Huberman, A., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miller, D., Costa, E., Haynes, N., McDonald, T., Nicolescu, R., Sinanan, J., & Wang, X. (2016). *How the world changed social media.* London: UCL Press.

Milner, H. (2002). *Civic literacy: How informed citizens make democracy work.* Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.

Miquel, G. P., & Snyder, J. M. (2006). Legislative effectiveness and legislative careers. *Legislative Studies Quarterly, 31*, 347-381. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40263391

Miragliotta, N., Gauja, A., & Rodney, S. (2015). *Contemporary Australian political party organisations.* Melbourne, Vic.: Monash University Publishing.

Miragliotta, N., Murray, S., & Harbord, J. (2019). Western Australia. In P. Chen, N. Barry, J. Butcher, D. Clune, I. Cook, A. Garnier, Y. Haigh, S. Motta & M. Taflaga, *Australian politics and public policy: Senior edition* (pp. 313-330). University of Sydney: Sydney, NSW.

Miskin, S., & Lumb, M. (2006). *The 41st Parliament: Middle-aged, well-educated and (mostly) male.* Retrieved from: Department of Parliamentary Services. Parliamentary Library: http://www.aph.gov.au/library/Pubs/RN/2005

Miskin, S., & Missingham, R. (2008). Alert and informed: The role of the federal Parliamentary Library in the Commonwealth Parliament. Brisbane: ASA. *Australian Political Studies Association Conference 6-9 July 2008, Hilton Hotel, Brisbane, Australia* (p. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Roxanne_Missingham/publication/240625727_Alert_and_informed_the_role_of_the_federal_Parliamentary_Library_in_the_Commonwealth_Parliament/links/55e63b4108aede0b57376983.pdf).

Missingham, R. (2008). What the politicians think of the Australian Parliamentary Library. *Australian Library Journal, 57*(2), 147-168. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049670.2008.10722462

Missingham, R. (2010). The Australian Parliament in the Twitterverse. *Australasian Parliamentary Review, 25*, 3–16. https://doi.org/10.3316/ielapa.201213964

Mitchell, A., & Hitlin, P. (2013). *Twitter reaction to events often at odds with overall public opinion.* Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

Moazed, A., & Johnson, N. L. (2016). *Modern monopolies: What it takes to dominate the 21st century economy.* New York: St Martin's Press.

Mongiello, A. B. (2019). Is President Trump violating the first amendment when blocking citizens on Twitter? Exploring multi-party negotiation as way to protect citizens' rights in the wake of the new digital age. *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution, 21*(1), 217-246.

Moor, L., & Anderson, J. R. (2019). A systematic literature review of the relationship between dark personality traits and antisocial online behaviours. *Personality and Individual Differences, 144*, 40-55. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.02.027

Moore, M., & Tambini, D. (Eds). (2018). *Digital dominance: The power of Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Morini, M. (2020). *Lessons from Trump's political communication: How to dominate the media environment.* Cham: Springer.

Morris, A. (2015). *A practical introduction to in-depth interviewing.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morris, P. L., & Sarapin, S. H. (2020). You can't block me: When social media spaces are public forums. *First Amendment Studies, 54*(1), 52-70. https://doi.org/10.1080/21689725.2020.1742760

Mostert, B. J., & Ocholla, D. N. (2005). Information needs and information seeking behaviour of parliamentarians in South Africa. *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science, 71*(2), 136-150. https://doi.org/10.7553/71-2-616

Muddiman, A. (2017). Personal and public levels of political incivility. *International Journal of Communication, 11*(12), 3182–3202. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/6137

Muddiman, A. (2019). The technical, the personal and the political: Understanding journalists and news users' engagement in The New York Times comments section. In N. J. Stroud, & S. C. McGregor, *Digital discussions: How big data informs political communication* (pp. 111-133). New York, NY: Routledge.

Murdock, G., & Golding, P. (1989). Information poverty and political inequality: Citizenship in the age of privatised communications. *Journal of Communication, 39*(3), 180-195. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1989.tb01051.x

Murphy, K. (2017). The political life is no life at all: A toxic work environment threatens the health of our democracy. *Meanjin*, 76(2), 26–35. https://doi/10.3316/informit.036681078442858

Murray, S., & Thomson, J. A. (2013). Western Australian Constitution: Documents, difficulties and dramatis personae. *University of Western Australia Law Review, 36*(2), 1-48.

Murthy, D., Bowman, S., Gross, A., & McGarry, M. (2015). Do we tweet differently from our mobile devices? A study of language differences on mobile and web-based Twitter platforms. *Journal of Communications, 65*, 816-837. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12176

Mutz, D. C. (2006). *Hearing the other side: Deliberative versus participatory democracy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nabatchi, T., Gastil, J., & Weiksner, G. (2012). *Democracy in motion: Evaluating the practice and impact of deliberative civic engagement.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Nagelhus Schia, N., & Gjesvik, L. (2020). Hacking democracy: Managing influence campaigns and disinformation in the digital age. *Journal of Cyber Policy*. https://doi.org/10.1080/23738871.2020.1820060

Nahon, K. (2016). Where there is social media there is politics. In A. Bruns, G. Enli, E. Skogerbo, A. O. Larsson, & C. Christensen, (Eds). *The Routledge companion to social media and politics* (pp. 68-87). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Nahon, K., & Hemsley, J. (2013). *Going viral.* Cambridge, England: Polity Press.

Narayan, B. (2013). From everyday information behaviours to clickable solidarity. *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies, 5*(3), 32-53. https://doi.org/10.5130/ccs.v5i3.3488

Naughton, J. (2012). *From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg: What you really need to know about the Internet.* London, UK: Quercus.

Neill, S. D. (1992). *Dilemmas in the study of information: Exploring the boundaries of information science.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Nerone, J. (1994). *Violence against the press: Policing the public sphere in U.S. history.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives in Medical Education, 8*, 90-97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2

New South Wales Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal. (2017, May 31). *Annual report and determination*. Retrieved from New South Wales Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal: https://www.remtribunals.nsw.gov.au/parliamentary/all-prt-determinations

Newitz, A. (2021). Trapped between an insurrection and a strike. *New Scientist, 249*(3318), 24. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0262-4079(21)00104-4

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A., Levy, D., & Nielsen, R. (2018). *Digital News Report 2018.* Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.

Nielsen, R., & Fletcher, R. (2020). Democratic creative destruction? The effect of a changing media landscape on democracy. In N. Persily, & J. Tucker, (Eds), *Social media and democracy: The state of the field, prospects for reform: SSRC anxieties of democracy* (pp. 139-162). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Noam, E. (2017). How the internet got Donald Trump elected. *InterMEDIA, 44*(4), 22-5. https://www.iicom.org/wp-content/uploads/22-25-election-1.pdf

Noor Al-Deen, H., & Hendricks, J., (Eds). (2012), *Social media: Usage and impact.* Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Norris, P. (1997). The puzzle of constituency service. *Journal of Legislative Studies, 3*(2), 29–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572339708420508

Norris, P. (2001). *Digital divide: Civic engagement, information poverty and the internet worldwide.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P. (2011). *Democratic deficit: Critical citizens revisited.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norton, P. (1994). The growth of the constituency role of the MP. *Parliamentary Affairs, 47*(4), 705–720. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.pa.a052506

Norton, P. (2007). Four models of political representation: British MPs and the use of ICT. *Journal of Legislative Studies, 13*, 354–369. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572330701500771

Norton, P. (2016). Learning the ropes: Training MPs in the United Kingdom. In C. Lewis, & K. Coghill, (Eds). *Parliamentarians' professional development* (Public Administration, Governance and Globalization, (Vol 16., pp. 187-197). Cham: Springer.

Norton, P., & Wood, D. (1993). *Back from Westminster: British members of parliament and their constituents.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Ohme, J. (2019). When digital natives enter the electorate: Political social media use among first-time voters and its effects on campaign participation. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 16*(2), 119-136. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2019.1613279

Ohme, J., de Vreese, C. H., & Albæk, E. (2018). The uncertain first-time voter: Effects of political media exposure on young citizens' formation of vote choice in a digital media environment. *New Media & Society, 20*(9), 3243–3265. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817745017

O'Neil, C. (2016). *Weapons of math destruction: How big data increases inequality and threatens democracy.* London: Penguin Books.

Orr, S. (2005). New technology and research: An analysis of internet survey methodology in political science. *PS: Political Science and Politics, 38*(2), 263-267. https://doi:10.1017/S1049096505056404

Orton, R., Marcella, R., & Baxter, G. (2000). An observational study of the information seeking behaviour of members of Parliament in the United Kingdom. *ASLIB proceedings, 52*(6), 207-217. https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000007015

Ostrom, E. (1998). A behavioural approach to the rational choice theory of collective action. *American Political Science Review, 92*(1), 1–22. https://doi:10.2307/2585925

Ott, B. L. (2017). The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement. *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 34*, 59–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2016.1266686

Ott, B. L., & Dickinson, G. (2019). *The Twitter presidency: Donald J. Trump and the politics of white rage.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Ouyang, Y., & Waterman, R. W. (2020). *Trump, Twitter, and the American democracy: Political communication in the digital age.* Cham, Springer: Palgrave MacMillan.

Oz, M., Zheng, P., & Chen, G. M. (2018). Twitter versus Facebook: Comparing incivility, impoliteness and deliberative attributes. *New Media & Society, 20*, 3400–3419. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817749516

Pătruţ, B., & Pătruţ, M. (2017). *Social media in politics: Case studies on the political power of social media.* New York: Springer.

Paananen, A., & Reichl, A. J. (2019). Gendertrolls just want to have fun, too. *Personality and Individual Differences, 141*, 152-156. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.01.011

Padgett, L. (2017). Filtering out fake news: It all starts with media literacy. *Information Today, 34*(1), 6. Retrieved from: https://www.infotoday.com/it/jan17/Padgett--Filtering-Out-Fake-News.shtml

Page, B. I., & Shapiro, R. Y. (1992). *The rational public: Fifty years of trends in Americans' policy preferences.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pakulski, J., & Tranter, B. (2015). Introduction: What is wrong with our politicians? In J. Pakulski, & B. Tranter, *The decline of political leadership in Australia? Changing recruitment and careers of federal politicians* (pp. 1-16). New York: Palgrave Pivot.

Palfrey, J., & Gasser, U. (2016). *Born digital: How children grow up in a digital age.* (Rev ed).Philadelphia, PA: Perseus Book.

Pallant, J. (2016). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS.* Allen & Unwin.

Pankow, K. (2013). Friend request denied: Chapter 619 prohibits colleges from requesting access to social media accounts. *McGeorge Law Review, 44*(3), 611-618. https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/mlr/vol44/iss3/10

Papacharissi, Z. (2004). Democracy online: Civility, politeness, and the democratic potential of online political discussion groups. *New Media & Society, 6*(2), 259–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444804041444

Papacharissi, Z., & Trevey, M. T. (2018). Affective publics and windows of opportunity: Social media and the potential for social change. In G. Meikle, (Ed). *The Routledge companion to media and activism* (pp. 87-96). New York: Routledge.

Papp, Z. (2020). Research handbook on political representation. In M. Cotta, & F. Russo, (Eds). *Constituency service: Incentives and consequences* (pp. 266-275). Cheltenham, Glos: Edward Elgar.

Park, S. (2017). Digital inequalities in rural Australia: A double jeopardy of remoteness and social exclusion. *Journal of Rural Studies, 54*, 399-407. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2015.12.018.

Park, S., Fisher, C., Fuller, G., & Lee, J. (2018). *Digital news report: Australia 2018.* Canberra: News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra.

Parker, D. C., & Richter, C. (2018). Back from Holyrood: How mixed-member proportional representation and ballot structure shape the personal vote. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 20(3), 674–692. https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148118762279

Parkinson, J. R. (2006). *Deliberating in the real world.* Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.

Parkinson, J. R. (2012). Democratising deliberative systems. In J. Parkinson, & J. Mansbridge, (Eds), *Deliberative systems: Deliberative democracy at the large scale* (pp. 151-172). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Parmelee, J. (2013). The agenda-building function of political tweets. *New Media & Society, 16*(3), 434–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444813487955

Parmelee, J. H., & Bichard, S. L. (2012). *Politics and the Twitter revolution: How Tweets influence the relationship between political leaders and the public.* Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Pathé, M., Phillips, J., Perdacher, E. & Heffernan, E. (2014). The harassment of Queensland members of Parliament: A mental health concern. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law, 21*, 577-584. https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719.2013.858388

Pathé, M. T., Lowry, T., Haworth, D. J., Webster, D. M., Mulder, M. J., Winterbourne, P., & Briggs, C. J. (2015). Assessing and managing the threat posed by fixated persons in Australia. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology, 26*, 425-438. https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2015.1037332

Pathé, M., Phillips, J., Perdacher, E., Heffernan, E. (2014). The harassment of Queensland members of Parliament: A mental health concern. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law, 21*, 577-584. https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719.2013.858388

Patten, S. (2013). Assessing the potential of new social media. *Canadian Parliamentary Review, 36*(2), 21-26.

Pelled, A., Lukito, J., Boehm, F., Yang, J., & Shah, D. (2018). "Little Marco," "Lyin' Ted," "Crooked Hillary," and the "Biased" Media: How Trump used Twitter to attack and organise. In N. J. Stroud, & S. McGregor, *Digital discussions: How big data informs political communication* (pp. 176-196). New York: Routledge.

Pendal, P., Black, D., & Phillips, H. (2004). *House to house: The story of Western Australia's government and Parliament Houses over 175 years.* Perth, WA: Western Australian Parliamentary History Project.

Pendal, P., Black, D., & Phillips, H. (2007). *Parliament: Mirror of the people? Members of Parliament of Western Australia 1890-2007.* Perth, WA: Western Australian Parliamentary History Project, Parliament of Western Australia.

Pendleton, V., & Chatman, E. (1998). Small world lives: Implications for the public library. *Library Trends, 46*, 732-751.

Perloff, R. M. (2018). *The dynamics of political communication: Media and politics in a digital age.* New York: Routledge.

Persily, N. (2017). Can democracy survive the Internet? *Journal of Democracy, 28*(2), 63-76. Retrieved from: https://journalofdemocracy.org/articles/the-2016-u-s-election-can-democracy-survive-the-internet/

Persily, N., & Tucker, J. (2020). *Social media and democracy: The state of the field, prospects for reform (SSRC Anxieties of Democracy).* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pervan, R., & Sharman, C. (1979). *Essays on Western Australian politics.* Nedlands, WA: UWA Press.

Pervan, R., & Mitchell, D. (1979). The changing nature of the Australian Labor Party. In R. Pervan, & C. Sharman, *Essays on Western Australian politics* (pp. 129-158). Nedlands, WA: UWA Press.

Pew Research Center. (2020). *For global legislators on Twitter, an engaged minority creates outsize share of content*. Retrieved from the Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/05/18/for-global-legislators-on-twitter-an-engaged-minority-creates-outsize-share-of-content/

Peters, J. D. (1993). Distrust of representation: Habermas on the public sphere. *Media, Culture & Society, 15*(4), 541–571. https://doi.org/10.1177/016344393015004003

Peterson, R. (2012). To tweet or not to tweet: Exploring the determinants of early adoption of Twitter by House members in the 111th Congress. *Social Science Journal, 49*, 430-438. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2012.07.002

Petkov, M. P., & Kaoullas, L. G. (2016). Overcoming respondent resistance at elite interviews using an intermediary. *Qualitative Research, 16*(4), 411–429. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794115589646

Pettigrew, K., Fidel, R., & Bruce, H. (2001). Conceptual frameworks in information behaviour. *Annual Review of Information Science & Technology, 35*, 43-78.

Pfetsch, B. (2018). Dissonant and disconnected public spheres as challenge for political communication research. *Javnost: The Public, 25*(1-2), 59-65. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2018.1423942

Phillips, H. C. (1996). *The voice of Edith Cowan, Australia's first woman parliamentarian 1921-1924.* Perth, WA : Edith Cowan University.

Phillips, H. C. (2006). *The quest for "One vote one value" in Western Australia's political history.* Perth, WA: Western Australian Electoral Commission.

Phillips, H. C. (2013). *Electoral law in the state of Western Australia: An overview.* (3rd ed) Perth, WA: Western Australian Electoral Commission.

Phillips, H. C. (2014). *Second reading: Parliamentary government in Western Australia.* Perth, WA: Parliament of Western Australia.

Phillips, H. C. (2015). *A citizen's guide to the Western Australian Parliament* (Rev. ed). Perth, W.A.: Parliament of Western Australia.

Phillips, H. C., & Black, D. (2002). Parliamentary privilege in Western Australia: The House of Commons conundrum. *Australasian Parliamentary Review, 17*(2), 175–189.

Phillips, H. C., Black, D., Bott, B., & Fischer, T. (1998). *Representing the people: Parliamentary government in Western Australia.* Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Arts Centre Press.

Phillips, H. C., & Kerr, L. (2013). Political chronicles: Western Australia, July to December 2012. *Australian Journal of Politics and History, 59*(2), 303-309.

Phillips, W. (2016). *This is why we can't have nice things: Mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Phillips, W., & Milner, R. (2017). *The ambivalent internet: Mischief, oddity and antagonism online.* Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Pickard, A. J. (2013). *Research methods in information.* (2nd ed). London: Facet Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.895530

Pickard, V. (2019). *Democracy without journalism?: Confronting the misinformation society.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pickard, V. (2020). The public media option: Confronting policy failure in an age of misinformation. In W. L. Bennett, & S. Livingston, *The disinformation age: Politics,*

technology and disruptive communication in the United States: SSRC Anxieties of Democracy (pp. 238-261). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pink, S., Sumartojo, S., Lupton, D., & Heyes La Bond, C. (2017). Mundane data: The routines, contingencies and accomplishments of digital living. *Big Data & Society, 4*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951717700924

Pitkin, H. (1967). *The concept of representation.* University of California Press: Berkeley, CA.

Pitkin, H. (1989). Representation. In T. Ball, J. Farr, & R. Hanson, (Eds), *Political innovation and conceptual change* (pp. 132-154). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pitkin, H. (2004). Representation and democracy: Uneasy alliance. *Scandinavian Political Studies, 27*, 335-342. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9477.2004.00109.x

Polak, S., & Trottier, D. (Eds.). (2020). *Violence and trolling on social media: History, affect, and effects of online vitriol.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Poulter, D., Votruba, I., Bakolis, F., Debell, J., Das-Munshi, & Thornicroft, G. (2019, July 10). Mental health of UK Members of Parliament in the House of Commons: A cross-sectional survey. *British Medical Journal Open, 9*(7),e027892. https://doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2018-027892

Power, G. (2016). A solution in search of a problem? International approaches to "Training" MPs. In C. Lewis, & K. Coghill, (Eds). *Parliamentarians' professional development: Public administration, governance and globalisation* (Vol. 16, pp. 145-153). Cham: Springer.

Preece, J., Nonnecke, B., & Andrews, D. (2004). The top five reasons for lurking: Improving community experiences for everyone. *Computers in Human Behaviour, 20*(2), 201–223. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2003.10.015

Price, M. E. (1995). *Television: The public sphere and national identity.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Print, M., & Tan, C., (Eds). (2015). *Educating "good" citizens in a globalising world for the twenty-first century.* Rotterdam: Sense.

Punt, D. (2020, September 24). *Sir David Attenborough breaks Instagram record for fastest time to reach one million followers*. Retrieved from Guinness World Records: https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2020/9/sir-david-attenborough-breaks-instagram-record-for-fastest-time-to-reach-one-mill-632391

Purdey, R. (2013). Use of social media in the Parliament. *Paper presented to the 44th Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference, 2 July.* Canberra, ACT: ACT Legislative Assembly.

Putnam, R. D. (2001). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community.* Touchstone Books: New York.

Quesenberry, K. A. (2020). *Social media strategy: Marketing, advertising, and public relations in the consumer revolution.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman Littleman.

Quinlan, S., Gummer, T., Roßmann, J., & Wolf, C. (2018). Show me the money and the party! Variation in Facebook and Twitter adoption by politicians. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1031–1049. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1301521

Rahat, G., & Sheafer, T. (2007). The personalisation(s) of politics: Israel, 1949–2003. *Political Communication, 24*(1), 65-80. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600601128739

Rahat, G., & Zamir, S. (2018). Personalised politics online. In W. P. Cross, R. S. Katz, & S. Pruysers, (Eds). *The personalisation of democratic politics and the challenge for political parties* (pp. 103–124). London: ECPR Press.

Read, J. (2006). *Dynamics in government: A guide to the workings of government in Western Australia.* Perth, WA: Constitutional Centre of Western Australia.

Rehfeld, A. (2009). Representation rethought: On trustees, delegates, and gyroscopes in the study of political representation and democracy. *American Political Science Review, 103*(2), 214–230. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055409090261

Rehfeld, A. (2011). The concepts of representation. *American Political Science Review, 105*(3), 631-641. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055411000190

Rheault, L., & Rayment, E. M. (2019). Politicians in the line of fire: Incivility and the treatment of women on social media. *Research & Politics, 6*(1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168018816228

Rheingold, H. (2002). *Smart mobs: The next social revolution.* Cambridge, MA: Persues Books.

Rheingold, H. (2012). *Net smart: How to thrive online.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Richards, N. M. (2013). The dangers of surveillance. *Harvard Law Review, 126*(7), 1934–1965. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23415062

Richardson, G. W. (2017). *Social media and politics: A new way to participate in the political process. Redefining politics: How are social media changing the political game?* (Vol 2). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Riddell, P. (1995). The impact and rise of the career politician. *The Journal of Legislative Studies, 1/2*, 186-191. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572339508420424

Riddell, P. (2011). *In defence of politicians (in spite of themselves).* London: Biteback Publishing.

Rieh, S. Y. (2004). On the web at home: Information seeking and web searching in the home environment. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 55(8), 743-753. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.20018

Rinke, E. M. (2016). The impact of soundbite journalism on public argument. *Journal of Communication, 66*(4), 625–645. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12246

Robbins, J. (2014). Executive government. In A. Fenna, J. Robbins, & J. Summers, (Eds). *Government politics in Australia* (10th ed), (pp. 53- 71). Sydney, NSW: Pearson Higher Education.

Roberts, C., Gilbert, E., Allum, N., & Eisner, L. (2019). Research synthesis: Satisficing in surveys: A systematic review of the literature. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 83*(3), 598–626. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfz035

Roberts, J. (2017). *Losing political office.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Robinson, K. (1998). *Ambiguities in parliamentary representation: An examination of representation and party attachment in the Western Australian Legislative Assembly. Masters Thesis.* Nedlands, WA : University of Western Australia Press.

Roe, B., & Just, D. (2009). Internal and external validity in economics research: Tradeoffs between experiments, field experiments, natural experiments, and field data. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics, 91*, 1266–1271.

Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations*, (5th ed.), New York: Free Press.

Rogers, R. (2004). *Information politics on the Web.* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Rojecki, A., & Meraz, S. (2016). Rumours and factitious informational blends: The role of the web in speculative politics. *New Media & Society, 18*(1), 25-43. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814535724

Rose, S. (2020). Blocked by the @realdonaldtrump Twitter account: Implications for speech and press freedoms after presidential block. *Wayne Law Review, 65*(2), 495-524. https://waynelawreview.org/blocked-by-the-realdonaldtrump-twitter-account-implications-for-speech-and-press-freedoms-after-a-presidential-block/

Ross, K., & Bürger, T. (2014). Face to Face(book): Social media, political campaigning and the unbearable lightness of being there. *Political Science, 66*(4), 46-62. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032318714534106

Ross, K., Fountaine, S., & Comrie, M. (2015). Facing up to Facebook: Politicians, publics and the social media(ted) turn in New Zealand. *Media, Culture & Society, 37*(2), 251–269. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443714557983

Roth, M., Peters, G., & Seruga, J. (2013). Some insights into the role of social media in political communication. *Proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Enterprise Information Systems* (pp. 351-360). ICEIS.

Roulston, K. (2010). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative research, 10*(2), 199–228. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109356739

Rowe, I. (2015). Civility 2.0: A comparative analysis of incivility in online political discussion. *Information, Communication & Society, 18*(2), 121-138. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2014.940365

Rozzoli, K. (2006). *Gavel to gavel: An insider's view of Parliament.* Sydney: UNSW Press.

Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rush, M. (2001). *The role of the member of Parliament since 1868: From gentleman to players.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ryan, G., & Bernard, H. (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods, 15*(1), 85-109. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X02239569

Rydon, J. (1968). Malapportionment: Australian style. *Politics, 3*(2), 133-147. https://doi.org/10.1080/00323266808401138

Sørensen, M. P. (2016). Political conversations on Facebook: The participation of politicians and citizens. *Media, Culture & Society, 38*(5), 664–685. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443715620924

Sabag Ben-Porat, C., & Lehman-Wilzig, S. (2019). Political “postwriting” on Facebook: Public perceptions about parliamentarians’ (un)real SNS involvement. *Social Media + Society, 5*(4), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119881697

Saunders, M. N., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2015). *Research methods for business students* (7th ed). New York, NY: Pearson Higher Ed.

Savolainen, R. (1995). Everyday life information seeking: Approaching information seeking in the context of “way of life”. *Library & Information Science Research, 17*(3), 259-294. https://doi.org/10.1016/0740-8188(95)90048-9

Saward, M. (2010). *The representative claim.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Schäfer, A. (2017). Deliberation in representative institutions: An analytical framework for a systemic approach. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 52*(3), 419-435. https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2017.1330397

Schauder, D. (2018). Concluding reflections: The research journey. In K. Williamson, & G. Johanson, (Eds). *Research methods: Information, systems, and contexts* (pp. 565-572). Singapore: Chandos Publishing.

Schauer, P. (2019). *At issue: Politicians on social media.* New York: Greenhaven Publishing.

Scheinbaum, A. C. (2018). *The dark side of social media: A consumer psychology perspective.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Scherpereel, J., Wohlgemuth, J., & Schmelzinger, M. (2017). The adoption and use of Twitter as a representational tool among members of the European Parliament. *European Politics and Society, 18*(2), 111–127. https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2016.1151125

Schier, S. E. (2000). *By invitation only: The rise of exclusive politics in United States.* Pittsburgh, Penn: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Schlozman, K., Verba, S., & Brady, H. (2013). *The unheavenly chorus: Unequal political voice and the broken promise of American democracy.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Schoenberger, N. (2018). Access to information in the age of Trump. *Emerging Library & Information Perspectives, 1*(1), 6–33. https://doi.org/10.5206/elip.v1i1.360

Schreier, M. (2014). Sampling and generalisation. In U. Flick, (Eds). *Handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 84-98). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schrock, A. (2015). Communicative affordances of mobile media: Portability, availability, locatability, and multimediality. *International Journal of Communication, 9*, 1229-1246. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/3288

Schudson, M. (2018). *Why journalism still matters.* Medford, MA: Polity Press.

Schwanholz, J., Graham, T., & Stoll, P.-T. (2017). *Managing democracy in the digital age: Internet regulation, social media use, and online civic engagement.* Cham: Springer.

Seale, C., & Rivas, C. (2012). Using software to analyse qualitative interviews. In J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti, & K. D. McKinney, *The SAGE Handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (pp. 427-440). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Searing, D. (1994). *Westminster's world: Understanding political roles.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sensis. (2017). *Social media report 2017*. Retrieved from Sensis: https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/535ef142/files/uploaded/Sensis-Social-Media-Report-2017.pdf

Seoane Pérez, F., Asiaín Román, I., & Rodríguez, J. L. (2019). Seizing the populist rhetorical toolkit: A comparative analysis of Trump and Clinton's discourse on Twitter during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. In L. M. (Ed), *President Donald Trump and his political discourse: Ramifications of rhetoric via Twitter* (pp. 13-32). New York, NY: Routledge.

Shane, P. M. (2004). *Democracy online: The prospects for political renewal through the Internet.* New York: Routledge.

Shannon, C. E. (1956). The bandwagon. *IRE Transactions on Information Theory, March*, 3.

Shapiro, I., Stokes, S., Wood, E., & Kirshner, A. (2010). *Political representation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shaw, G. (2012). Active and informed citizens: Moving beyond the aspiration. *Ethos, 20*(3), 11-16.

Shearlaw, M. (2016, January 25). Egypt five years on: Was it ever a "social media revolution"? Retrieved from: *The Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/25/egypt-5-years-on-was-it-ever-a-social-media-revolution.

Sheldon, P., Rauschnabel, P., & Honeycutt, J. (2019). *The dark side of social media: Psychological, managerial, and societal perspectives.* Academic Press: Cambridge, MA.

Sheller, M. (2015). News now. *Journalism Studies, 16*(1), 12-26. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.890324

Shepherd, C. (1991). The members' need for information. In D. Englefield, (Ed). *Workings of Westminster* (pp. 25-30). Dartmouth: Aldershot.

Sheridan, L., Pyszora, N., Cooper, B., & Bendlin, M. (2019). Problematic behaviours experienced by electorate and ministerial office staff: Results of and responses to a

Western Australian survey. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management, 6*(3-4), 128-137. https://doi.org/10.1037/tam0000130

Shirky, C. (2008). *Here comes everybody: How change happens when people come together.* New York: Allen Lane.

Shogan, C. J. (2010). Blackberries, tweets, and YouTube: Technology and the future of communicating with Congress. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 43*(2), 231–233. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096510000041

Sieber, J. (1992). *Planning ethically responsible research: A guide for students and internal review boards*, *31*., Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Siegel, R. (2018). Life, liberty and the pursuit of social media: Understanding the relationship between Facebook, Twitter, and political understanding. *Sociology Senior Seminar Papers. 3.* https://creativematter.skidmore.edu/socio_stu_stu_schol/3.

Silvester, J., Wyatt, M., & Randall, R. (2014). Personality, Machiavellianism and political skills. *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology, 87*, 258–279. https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12038

Simmel, G. (1950). The sociology of Georg Simmel. In K. Wolff, (Ed). Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Sims, R. (2019). The regulator: Dealing with the digital giants. *Company Director, 35*(2), 50.

Sloan, L. (2017). Who Tweets in the United Kingdom? Profiling the Twitter population using the British Social Attitudes Survey 2015. *Social Media + Society, 3*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117698981

Sloan, L., & Quan-Haase, A. (2017). *The SAGE Handbook of social media research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Smith, T. (2013). Are you sitting comfortably? Estimating incumbency advantage in the UK: 1983–2010. *Electoral Studies, 321*, 167–173. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2012.12.002

Sobieraj, S. (2018). Bitch, slut, skank, cunt: Patterned resistance to women's visibility in digital publics. *Information, Communication & Society, 21*(11), 1700-1714. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1348535

Sobieraj, S., Masullo, G. M., Cohen, P. N., Gillespie, T., & Jackson, S. (2020). Politicians, social media, and digital publics: Old rights, new terrain. *American Behavioural Scientist, 64*(11), 1646-1669. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764220945357

Solis, B., & Breakenridge, D. K. (2009). *Putting the public back in public relations: How social media is reinventing the aging business of PR.* Upper Saddle, NJ: FT Press.

Solomon, P. (1998). Information mosaics: Patterns of action that structure. In T. W. (Eds.), *Exploring the contexts of information behaviour: Proceedings of the second international conference on research in information needs, seeking and use in different contexts* (pp. 150-175). London: Taylor Graham.

Solove, D. (2004). *The digital person: Technology and privacy in the information age.* New York: New York University Press.

Somlyay, A. (2002). The use and abuse of parliamentary privilege. *Australasian Parliamentary Review, 17*(2), 241-246.

Southern, R., & Harmer, E. (2019). Twitter, incivility and "everyday" gendered othering: An analysis of tweets sent to UK members of Parliament. *Social Science Computer Review*, https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439319865519.

Southern, R., & Purdam, K. (2016). The changing representation interface: Democracy and direct contact with politicians. *Journal of Civil Society, 12*(1), 101-120. https://doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2016.1134388

Spierings, N., Jacobs, K., & Linders, N. (2019). Keeping an eye on the people: Who has access to MPs on Twitter? *Social Science Computer Review, 37*(2), 160-177. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439318763580

Spink, A. (2010). *Information behaviour: An evolutionary instinct.* Dordrecht: Springer.

Spink, A., & Cole, C. (2001). Everyday life information seeking research. *Library and Information Science Research, 23*(4), 301–304.

Srnicek, N. (2017). *Platform capitalism.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Standage, T. (2019). Social media retweets history. In P. Heyer, & P. Urquhart, (Eds), *Communication in history: Stone age symbols to social media* (pp. 317-323). New York, NY : Routledge.

Stanyer, J. (2013). *Intimate politics: Publicity, privacy and the personal lives of politicians in media saturated democracies.* London: John Wiley.

Starr, P. (2004). *The creation of the media: political origins of modern communication.* New York, NY: Basic Book.

Starr, P. (2020). The flooded zone: How we became more vulnerable to disinformation in the digital era. In W. L. Bennett, & S. Livingston, *The disinformation age: Politics, technology and disruptive communication in the United States: SSRC Anxieties of Democracy* (pp. 67-94). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Steinack, K. (2012). Between apathy and enthusiasm: An international comparison of MPs' attitudes towards parliamentary training. *Parliamentary Affairs, 65*, 541–558. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gss021

Steinfeld, N., & Lev-On, A. (2020). MPs on Facebook: Differences between members of coalition and opposition. *Journal on Digital Government Research and Practice, 1*(2), 14. https://doi.org/10.1145/3363415

Stier, S., Bleier, A., Lietz, H., & Strohmaier, M. (2018). Election campaigning on social media: Politicians, audiences, and the mediation of political communication on Facebook and Twitter. *Political Communication, 35*(1), 50-74. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1334728

Stoker, G., Evans, M., & Halupka, M. (2018). *Democracy 2025: Trust and democracy in Australia. Democratic decline and renewal. Report, no. 1.* Canberra, ACT: MoAD.

Stolle, D., & Hooge, M. (2005). Inaccurate, exceptional one-sided or irrelevant? The debate about the alleged decline of social capital and civic engagement in Western societies. *British Journal of Political Science, 35*(1), 149-167.

Stolle, D., & Micheletti, M. (2013). *Political consumerism: Global responsibility in action.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Strandberg, K. (2013). A social media revolution or just a case of history repeating itself? The use of social media in the 2011 Finnish parliamentary elections. *New Media & Society, 15*(8), 1329-1347.

Straus, J., Williams, R., Shogan, C., & Glassman, M. (2016). Congressional social media communications: evaluating Senate Twitter usage. *Online Information Review, 40*(5), 643-659 https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-10-2015-0334.

Stroud, N. J., & McGregor, S. (2019). *Digital discussions: How big data informs political communication.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Studlar, D., & McAllister, I. (1994). The electoral connection in Australia: Candidate roles campaign activity and the popular vote. *Political Behaviour, 16*(3), 385–410. https://www.jstor.org/stable/586627

Studlar, D., & McAllister, I. (1996). Constituency activity and representational roles among Australian legislators. *Journal of Politics, 58*(1), 69–90. https://doi.org/10.2307/2960349

Sudulich, L., Trumm, S., & Bridgewater, J. (2020). Parliamentary representation: A cross-national study of candidates' views. *Parliamentary Affairs, 73*(1), 522–542. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsz009

Summers, J., Robbins, J., & Fenna, A. (2014). Liberal-democratic government in Australia. In A. Fenna, J. Robbins, & J. Summers, *Government politics in Australia* (10th ed), (pp. 1-10). Pearson Higher Education.

Sunstein, C. R. (2020). *Too much information: Understanding what you don't want to know.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Sutherland, K. E. (2021). *Strategic social media management: Theory and practice.* Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sweetser, K. D., & Lariscy, R. W. (2008). Candidates make good friends: An analysis of candidates' uses of candidates' uses of Facebook. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 2*, 175–198. https://doi.org/10.1080/15531180802178687

Swigger, J. (2018). Knowledge begins in wonder: The Smithsonian Institution's children's room. *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth, 11*(3), 439-454. https://doi.org/10.1353/hcy.2018.0054.

Sydnor, E. (2019). *Disrespectful democracy: The psychology of political incivility.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Tarran, B. (2018). What can we learn from the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal? *Significance, 15*, 4-5. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-9713.2018.01139.x

Tashmin, N. (2016). Art of impression management on social media. *World Scientific News, 30*, 89-102.

Taylor, R. (2018). Social media and citizen vigilance. In P. Dunleavy, A. Park, & R. Taylor, (Eds). *The UK's changing democracy: The 2018 democratic audit* (pp. 136-146). London, England: LSE Press.

Taylor, R. S. (1991). Information use environments. In B. Dervin, & M. Voigt, (Eds). *Progress in communication sciences.* (Vol. 10) (pp. 217-255). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Tenscher, J. (2014). MPs and the internet: An empirically-based typology. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, *20*(3), 305-320. http://doi.org.10.1080/13572334.2014.895125

Thapisa, A. (1996). Legislative information needs of indigenous parliamentarians in Botswana and impact on effective decision making. *International Information and Library Review, 28*(3), 203-232. http://doi.org/10.1080/10572317.1996.10762398

Theakston, K., Gouge, E., & Honeyman, V. (2007). *Life after losing or leaving: A report for the Association of Former Members of Parliament.* London, UK: Association of Former Members of Parliament. Retrieved from: https://ontafp.com/assets/research/life-after-losing-or-leaving.pdf

Theocharis, Y., Barberá, P., Fazekas, Z., & Popa, S. A. (2020). The dynamics of political incivility on Twitter. *Sage Open, 10*(2), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020919447

Thompson, K. M. (2008). Remembering Elfreda Chatman: A champion of theory development in library and information science education. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 50*, 119–126.

Tillotson, G. (1985). *A study of the role of Australian state parliamentary libraries as information sources for members of Parliament*. Masters Thesis University of New South Wales. Sydney: University of New South Wales.

Tillotson, G. (1991). Writings on Australian parliamentary librarianship: A survey. *Australian Library Journal, 40*(1), 45-59. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049670.1991.10755582

Timans, R., Wouters, P., & Heilbron, J. (2019). Mixed methods research: What it is and what it could be. *Theory and Society, 48*, 193–216. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019-09345-5

Toews, D. (2018). *Social life and political life in the era of digital media higher diversities.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Torrance, H. (2012). Triangulation, respondent validation, and democratic participation in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 6*, 111–123. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689812437185

Tourangeau, R., Edwards, B., & Johnson, T. P. (Eds). (2014). *Hard-to-survey populations.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Towner, T. L., & Dulio, D. A. (2011). An experiment of campaign effects during the YouTube election. *New Media & Society, 13*(4), 626-644. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444810377917

Tromble, R. (2016a). Thanks for (actually) responding! How citizen demand shapes politicians' interactive practices on Twitter. *New Media & Society, 20*(2), 676-697. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816669158

Tromble, R. (2016b). The great leveler? Comparing politician-citizen Twitter engagement in three Western democracies. *European Political Science, 17*(2), 223-239. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41304-016-0022-6

Trottier, D., & Fuchs, C. (Eds). (2015). *Social media, politics and the state: Protests, revolutions, riots, crime and policing in the age of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.* New York, Routledge: Routledge.

Tufecki, Z. (2017). *Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of network protest.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Turkle, S. (2008). Always-on/always-on-you: The tethered self. In J. Katz, (Ed). *Handbook of mobile communication studies* (pp. 121-138). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Turkle, S. (2017). *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other.* (3rd ed). New York: Basic Books.

Twenge, J. (2017). *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy (and completely unprepared for adulthood) and what that means for the rest of us.* (2nd ed). New York: Atria Books.

Umit, R. (2017). With happiness and glory, from your MP: The use of e-newsletters in the UK Parliaments. *Parliamentary Affairs, 70*(4), 759-779. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsx006

United Kingdom. House of Commons. Information Committee. (2002). *Digital technology: Working for the parliament and the public. First Report from the Committee, Session 2001–02, HC 1065.* Retrieved from UK Parliament: https://publications.parliament.uk.

United Kingdom. House of Commons. Committee on Standards in Public Life. (2017). *Intimidation in public life: A review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Seventeenth report. CM 9534.* Retrieved from UK Parliament: https://publications.parliament.uk.

United Kingdom. House of Commons. Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee. (2019). *Disinformation and "fake news".* Final report. Eight report, Session 2017-19, HC 1791. Retrieved from UK Parliament: https://publications.parliament.uk.

United Kingdom. House of Lords and House of Commons. Joint Committee on Human Rights. (2019). *Democracy, freedom of expression and freedom of association: Threats to MPs. First Report of Session 2019–20: HC 37, HL 5*. Retrieved from UK Parliament: https://publications.parliament.uk

United States. Center for Human Technology. (n.d.). *Ledger of harms*. Retrieved from Center for Human Technology: https://ledger.humanetech.com

Urbinati, N. (2006). *Representative democracy: Principles and genealogy.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Urquhart, P., & Heyer, P. (2018). *Communication in history: Stone age symbols to social media.* (7th ed). New York, NY: Routledge.

Vaccari, C. (2013). *Digital politics in western democracies: A comparative study.* Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Vaidhyanathan, S. (2012). *The Googlization of everything (And why we should worry).* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Vaidhyanathan, S. (2018). *Antisocial media: How Facebook disconnects us and undermines democracy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Valenzuela, S., Halpern, D., Katz, J. E., & Miranda, J. P. (2019). The paradox of participation versus misinformation: Social media, political engagement, and the spread of misinformation. *Digital Journalism, 7*(6), 802–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.20

Valeriani, A., & Vaccari, C. (2018). Political talk on mobile instant messaging services: A comparative analysis of Germany, Italy and the UK. *Information Communication and Society, 21*(11), 1715–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1350730.

Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2009). The effects of instant messaging on the quality of adolescents' existing friendships: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Communication, 59*(1), 79–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.01405.x

Vallor, S. (2016). *Technology and the virtues: A philosophical guide to a future worth wanting.* New York: Oxford University Press.

van Biezen, I., & Poguntke, T. (2014). The decline of membership-based politics. *Party Politics, 20*, 205–16. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068813519969

van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

van Dijck, J., & Poell, T. (2013). Understanding social media logic. *Media and Communication, 1*(1), 2-14.

Vaughan, L. (2001). *Statistical methods for the information professional: A practical, painless approach to understanding, using and interpreting statistics: American Society for Information Science and Technology, no. 367.* Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K., & Brady, H. (1995). *Voice and equality.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Vermeer, S. A., Kruikemeier, S., Trilling, D., & de Vreese, C. H. (2021). WhatsApp with politics?! Examining the effects of interpersonal political discussion in instant messaging apps. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *26*(2), 410–437. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161220925020.

Vincent, C. S., & Straub, S. (2017). Structures of dissent: Social media, resistance journalism, and the mobilization of poverty activism. In G. W. Richardson, *Social media and politics: A new way to participate in the political process. Redefining politics: How are social media changing the political game?* (Vol 2, pp. 1-19). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Vivyan, N., & Wagner, M. (2015). What do voters want from their local MP? *The Political Quarterly, 86*, 33-40. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12128

Vorderer, P., Hefner, D., Reinecke, L., & Klimmt, C. (Eds.). (2017). *Permanently online, permanently connected: Living and communicating in a POPC world.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Vromen, A. (2016). *Digital citizenship and political engagement: The challenge from online campaigning and advocacy organisations.* Cham: Springer.

Wagner, T., & Dintersmith, T. (2016). *Most likely to succeed: Preparing our kids for the innovation era.* New York: Scribner.

Walgrave, S., & Dejaeghere, Y. (2017). Surviving information overload: How elite politicians select information. *Governance, 30*(2), 229-244. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12209

Walliman, N. (2011). *Doing your research project.* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Walliman, N. (2018). *Research methods: The basics.* (2nd ed). Abingdon, Oxon, Routledge: Routledge.

Ward, S. L., & Gibson, R. (2007). Australian MPs and the internet: Avoiding the digital age? *Australian Journal of Public Administration, 66*, 210-222. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8500.2007.00529.x

Ward, S., & Lusoli, W. (2005). From weird to wired: MPs, the Internet and representative politics in the UK. *Journal of Legislative Studies, 11*, 57–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572330500158276

Ward, S., Lusoli, W., & Gibson, R. (2002). Virtually participating: A survey of online party members. *Information Policy, 7*(4), 199-215. https://doi.org/10.3233/IP-2002-0018

Warhurst, J., Davies, A., Parr, E., & Ransome, A. (1992). The Information and policy analysis sources of Australian federal parliamentarians. *Legislative Studies, 6*(2), 13-20.

Waterloo, S. F., Baumgartner, S. E., Peter, J., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2018). Norms of online expressions of emotion: Comparing Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp. *New Media and Society, 20*(5), 1813–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817707349

Wattal, S., Schuff, D., Mandviwalla, M., & Williams, C. (2010). Web 2.0 and politics: The 2008 U.S. presidential election and an e-politics research agenda. *MIS Quarterly, 34*(4), 669-688. https://doi.org/10.2307/25750700

We Are Social. (2020). *Digital Australia 2020: Special report*. Retrieved from We Are Social: https://wearesocial.com/au/blog/2020/01/digital-2020-australia/

Weeks, B. E., Kim, D. H., Hahn, L. B., Diehl, T. H., & Kwak, N. (2019). Hostile media perceptions in the age of social media: Following politicians, emotions, and perceptions of media bias. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 63*(3), 374–392. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2019.1653069

Weinberg, A. (2012). *The psychology of politicians.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weinberg, J. (2017, June 5). *Speak. Vote. Debate. Meet. Repeat. Why the mental health of MPs is at risk*. Retrieved from The Conversation: http://theconversation.com/speak-vote-debate-meet-repeat-why-the-mental-health-of-mps-is-at-risk-77827

Weinberg, J. (2020). *Who enters politics and why: Basic human values in the UK Parliament.* Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Weinberg, J., & Flinders, M. (2018). Learning for democracy: The practice and politics of citizenship education in the United Kingdom. *British Educational Research Journal, 44*, 573–592. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3446

Weller, K. (2016). Trying to understand social media users and usage: The forgotten features of social media platforms. *Online Information Review, 40*(2), 256-264. https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-09-2015-0299

Wessels, B. (1999). Whom to represent? Role orientations of legislators in Europe. In H. Schmitt, & J. Thomassen, (Eds). *Political representation and legitimacy in the European Union* (pp. 209–234). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Western Australia. Commission on Government. (1996). *Report, no. 5.* Perth, W.A.: The Commission.

Western Australia. Legislative Assembly. (2020). *The Legislative Assembly's response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Report, no. 8.* Perth, WA: Parliament of Western Australia.

Western Australia. Legislative Assembly. Public Accounts Committee. (2011). *A report on the 11th Biennial Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees Conference. Report No. 11 Presented by: Hon J.C. Kobelke, MLA (Chair) Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly on 26 May 2011.* Perth, WA: Parliament of Western Australia.

Western Australia. Salaries and Allowances Tribunal. (2020). *Report on allowances provided to Members of Parliament.* Retrieved from Salaries and Allowances Tribunal: https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/SAT%20Report%20on%20Allowances%20provided%20to%20MPs%2010%20August%202020_1.pdf

Wheelan, C. (2013). *Naked statistics: Stripping the dread from the data.* New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Wheeler, T. (2020). Foreword: The great smartphone misnomer. In R. Ling, L. Fortunati, G. Goggin, S. S. Lim, & Y. Li, (Eds). *The Oxford handbook of mobile communication and society.* (pp. xi-xii). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wheeler, M. B., Muwanguzi, S. (2021). Mapping intersections of politics and information in twenty-first century cyberculture. *The Library Quarterly*, 92(1), 24-38. https://doi.org/10.1086/717231

Whiteley, P. (2011). Is the party over? The decline of party activism and membership across the democratic world. *Party Politics, 17*, 21–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068810365505

Whittington, T. (2020, July 2). Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. *Farm Weekly*, 36.

Wilde, O. (2007). *Epigrams of Oscar Wilde: Wordsworth reference.* London: Wordsworth Editions.

Wilding, D., Fray, P., Molitorisz, S., & McKewon, E. (2018). *The impact of digital platforms on news and journalistic content.* Sydney, NSW: University of Technology Sydney. Retrieved from University of Technology Sydney: https://www.uts.edu.au/node/247996/projects-and-research/impact-digital-platforms-news-journalistic-content

Wilhelm, A. G. (2000). *Democracy in the digital age: Challenges to political life in Cyberspace.* New York: Routledge.

Williams, C., & Gulati, G. (2010). Communicating with constituents in 140 characters or less. *Working papers 43*. Retrieved from: http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/pn_wp/43.

Williams, L. (2017). Platforms with purpose: Clicktivism and crowdfunding campaigns in the era of citizens united. In G. W. Richardson, *Social media and politics: A new way to participate in the political process. Redefining politics: How are social media changing the political game?* (Vol 2, pp. 21-41). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Williamson, A. (2009a). *MPs online: Connecting with constituents. A study into how MPs use digital media to communicate with their constituents.* London: Hansard Society (UK).

Williamson, A. (2009b). The effect of digital media on MPs' communication with constituents. *Parliamentary Affairs, 62*, 514–527. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsp009

Williamson, A. (2013). *Social media guidelines for parliaments.* Geneva, Switzerland: Inter-Parliamentary Union. Retrieved from IPU: https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reference/2016-07/social-media-guidelines-parliaments

Williamson, A. (2021). Social media guide for parliaments and parliamentarians. Geneva, Switzerland: Inter-Parliamentary Union. Retrieved from IPU: https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reference/2021-02/social-media-guidelines

Williamson, K. (1998). Discovered by chance: The role of incidental information acquisition in an ecological model of information use. *Library & Information Science Research, 20*(1), 23-40. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0740-8188(98)90004-4

Williamson, K. (2007). The broad methodological contexts of information literacy research. In S. Lipu, K. Williamson, & A. Lloyd. *Exploring methods in information literacy research: Topics in Australasian Library and Information Studies, no. 28*. (pp. 1-12). Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Information Studies.

Williamson, K., & Johanson, G. (2017). *Research methods: Information, systems, and contexts.* (2nd ed). Cambridge, MA: Chandos Publishing.

Williamson, K., Given, L. M., & Scifleet, P. (2018). Qualitative data analysis. In K. Williamson, & G. Johanson, *Research methods: Information, systems, and contexts* (pp. 453-475). Singapore: Chandos Publishing.

Wilson, T. (1981). On user studies and information needs. *Journal of Documentation, 37*(1), 3–15. https://doi.org/10.1108/eb026702

Wilson, T. (1999) Models in information behaviour research, *Journal of Documentation*, 55(3), 249-270.

Wilson, T. (2000). Human information behaviour. *Informing Science, 3*(2), 49-55. https://doi.org/10.28945/576

Wimmer, R., & Dominick, J. (2014). *Mass media research: An introduction.* (10th ed). Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Wischmeyer, T. (2019). Making social media an instrument of democracy. *European Law Journal, 25*(2), 169–181. https://doi.org/10.1111/eulj.12312

Wood, M., Corbett, J., & Flinders, M. (2016). Just like us: Everyday celebrity politicians and the pursuit of popularity in an age of anti-politics. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations, 18*(3), 581–598. https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481166321

World Health Organisation. (2020, March 12). *WHO announces COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic*. Retrieved from WHO: http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/news/news/2020/3/who-announces-covid-19-outbreak-a-pandemic

Yellow. (2018). *Social media report 2018*. Retrieved from: Yellow https://www.yellow.com.au/social-media-report/social-media-report-2018

Young, P., & Åkerström, M. (2015). Meet the digital naturals. In W. T. Coombs, J. Falkheimer, M. Heide, & P. Young. *Strategic communication, social media and democracy: The challenge of the digital naturals* (pp. 1-10). London: Routledge.

Zaret, D. (2000). *Origins of democratic culture: Printing, petitions, and the public sphere in early-modern England.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Zittrain, J. (2013). Engineering an election: Digital gerrymandering poses a threat to democracy. *Harvard Law Review Forum, 127*, 335.

Zuckerman, H. (1972). Interviewing an ultra-elite. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 159-175. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/1944-2866.POI360

APPENDIX A

A select glossary of terms associated with parliamentary practice.

Act	-	a law made by Parliament, a Bill which has passed all three readings in each House and has received the Royal assent.
bicameral	-	Having two Chambers or Houses: The state Parliament is bicameral because it has an upper and a lower House.
bill	-	a proposal for a new law which has been presented to Parliament.
by-election	-	a special election held to fill the seat of a member of the Legislative Assembly who has died or retired.
cabinet government	-	a system of government in which the most important decisions are made by cabinet ministers, who are members of Parliament, and who are supported by a majority in the lower House.
cabinet minister	-	a Minister who is a member of the Cabinet, a senior or leading minister.
cabinet	-	the group of senior ministers in a Government: The Cabinet meets regularly to make important decisions.
coalition	-	the joining together of two or more groups of parties, usually to form a Government or Opposition: The Liberal and National Parties have formed a coalition.
constituency	-	the electorate or area, or the people in it represented by an MP.
constituent	-	someone who votes, or lives in an electorate or area which a member of Parliament represents: The constituent went to his member of Parliament to get help to find housing.
constitution	-	the set of basic rules by which a country or State is governed: Australia's Constitution came into force on 1 January 1901.
cross the floor	-	to vote with an opposing party: The government member crossed the floor on the issue because he believed that the Opposition was right.
Crown	-	1. the King or Queen, or the highest governing power in a monarchy. 2. the Queen exercising her legal powers through one or more of her agents, usually a Minister or ministers.
dorothy dix question	-	a question asked in Parliament by a member at a minister's request to allow the Minister to give a prepared reply.
electorate office	-	the office in a member of Parliament's electorate where the member works when Parliament is not sitting.

electorate	-	1. an area represented by a member of Parliament, a constituency: The member of Parliament was very keen to have a public swimming pool built for the people in her electorate. 2. the group of people who live in an area represented by a member of Parliament: The member is always ready to assist his electorate. 3 all the people who have the right to vote in an election: The Premier asked the elect orate to think carefully about the needs of the State.
executive	-	the branch of government which carries out or administers the laws, the group of people from the governing party who make policy and control government departments, and who are answerable to the Parliament for the way they run government.
fixed term	-	a term of office which cannot usually be shortened.
free vote	-	a vote in Parliament in which members are free to vote according to their own judgment or beliefs, and not necessarily according to the guidelines, policies or decisions of their political party: All parties were given a free vote on whether the death penalty should be abolished.
frontbencher	-	a Minister or shadow minister.
Governor	-	the representative of the Queen in a state of the Commonwealth of Australia.
Hansard	-	1. the printed record of the debates in Parliament. 2. the people who produce the printed record.
independent	-	a member of Parliament who does not belong to a political party.
Labor Party (Australian Labor Party [ALP])	-	first political party in Australia. Formed 1890.
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council	-	the Leader of the government party in the Council, the Government's main spokesperson and most senior Minister in the Council.
Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council	-	the leader of the Opposition Party in the Council, the Opposition's main spokesperson and a leading shadow minister.
Leader of the Opposition	-	the leader of the party which is the next largest after the government party in the Legislative Assembly, and which is made up of members who do not support the Government.
Legislative Assembly	-	the lower House of Parliament in Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland (where it is the only House), called the House of Assembly in South Australia and Tasmania.
Legislative Council	-	the upper House of Parliament in all States except Queensland.

legislature	- the law-making body of a country or a State.
Liberal Party of Australia (LP)	- a party founded in 1944 by Sir Robert Menzies and others.
ministerial accountability	- the requirement that a Minister can be called on to explain in Parliament his or her actions and those of the department and agencies under his or her control.
ministerial responsibility	- responsibility to the Parliament for actions taken by a Minister or on that minister's behalf, the doctrine that the ministers in a Government, individually and collectively, depend for their continuance in office on maintaining the support of the majority of the Legislative Assembly. Similarly, for those ministers in the Legislative Council, maintaining the support of the majority of the Legislative Council.
minister	- a member of Parliament who is a member of the Executive Government, and who is usually in charge of a government department: The Minister for Transport.
ministry	- ministers, the Executive Government, members of both Houses of Parliament chosen from the parties or coalition of parties with a majority in the lower House who are formally appointed by the Governor as his or her Ministers of State.
minority government	- a Government formed by a party or coalition of parties which does not have a majority in the lower House in its own right.
The Nationals WA (Nats)	- a party formed in 1920 as the Australian Country Party, later called the National Country Party and then the National Party of Australia.
Opposition	- the second largest political party or coalition of parties after the government party in the Legislative Assembly, which works to oppose what it believes to be wrong in government policies or actions, and which stands ready to form a Government should the voters so decide at the next or subsequent election.
parliamentary democracy	- a system of government in which power is vested in the people who exercise their power through elected representatives in Parliament.
parliamentary government	- a system of government in which the Executive Government is answerable to the Parliament, in which the Government is formed from members of the Parliament and in which the Parliament is supreme.
Parliament	- from the French verb parler, to speak. the legislative branch of government, consisting in Western Australia of the Sovereign (represented by the Governor), the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly.

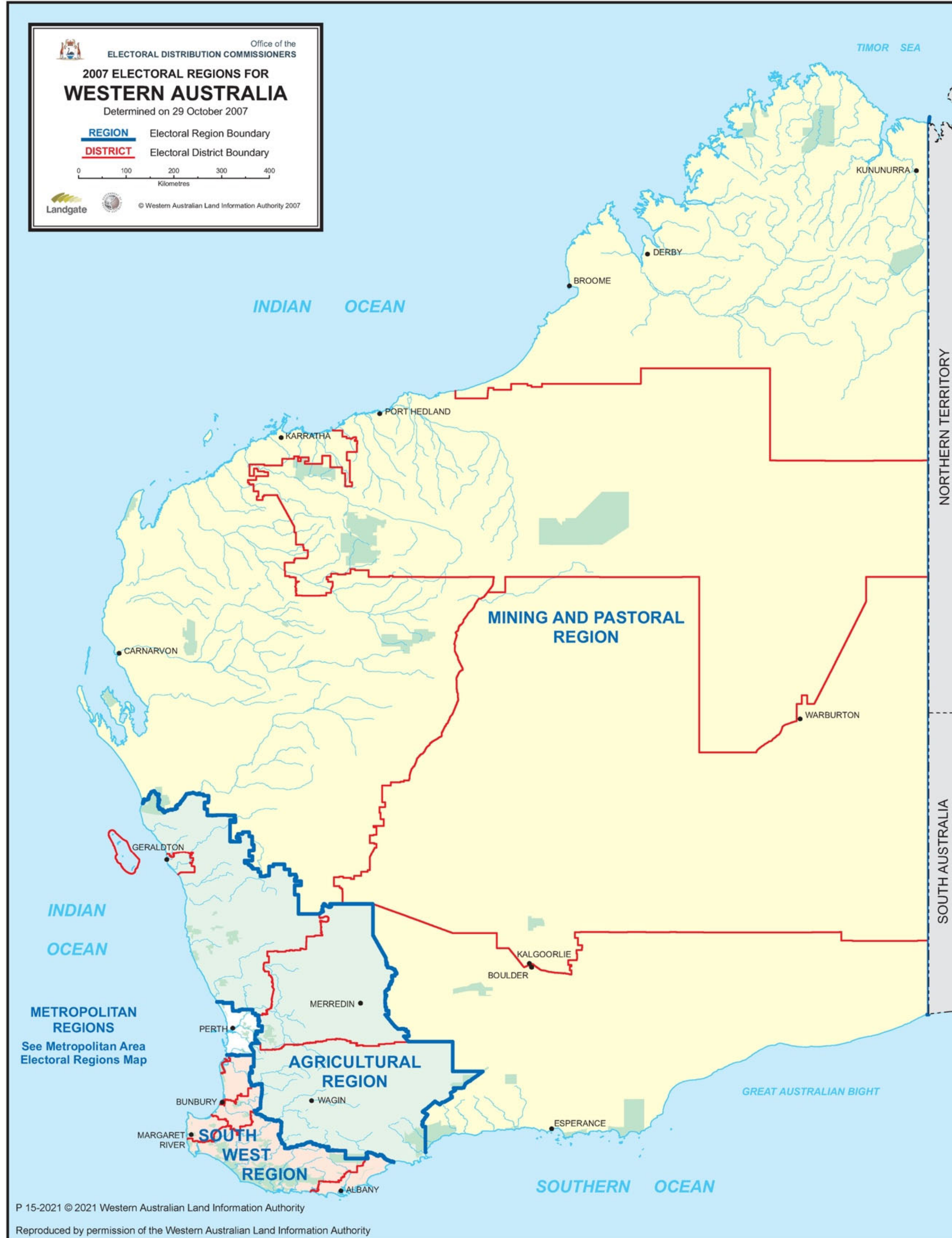
political party	-	a group of people with similar ideas or aims, some of whose members stand at elections in the hope that they will be able to form a Government: The National Party is a political party.
preferential voting	-	a system of voting in which a voter shows an order of preference for candidates, giving the number one to his or her first choice and the last number to the last choice.
Premier	-	the head of the State Government.
President	-	the member who is elected by the Legislative Council as its presiding officer.
press gallery	-	1. a gallery in a house reserved for the press. 2. a group of people who work for the various media inside Parliament House.
private member	-	a member of Parliament who is not a minister.
proportional representation	-	a voting system, such as that used in the Legislative Council elections, based on multi-member electorates, designed to make sure that the number of successful candidates from each party reflects as closely as possible the total vote for that party as a proportion of all the valid votes cast in an election.
prorogue	-	to end a session of Parliament and so discontinue meetings of the Houses until the next session.
Question Time	-	a daily period of time in each house of the Parliament in which ministers are asked questions concerning their responsibilities by other members.
redistribution	-	a new division of an area into electorates with the result that boundaries of some existing electorates are moved.
representative democracy	-	groups of citizens representing members of the wider community and participating in the decision-making process on their behalf.
representative	-	a person who acts on behalf of others, a person elected to a law-making body.
royal assent	-	the signing of a Bill by the Queen's representative (The Governor in the case of State Parliaments, the Govern-General in the case of federal Parliament), which is the last step of making a Bill into an Act of Parliament.
ruling	-	a formal decision made by the Speaker or President, usually on a matter of procedure.
safe seat	-	an electorate in which the support for a member or party is such that the member or representative is very likely to be elected.

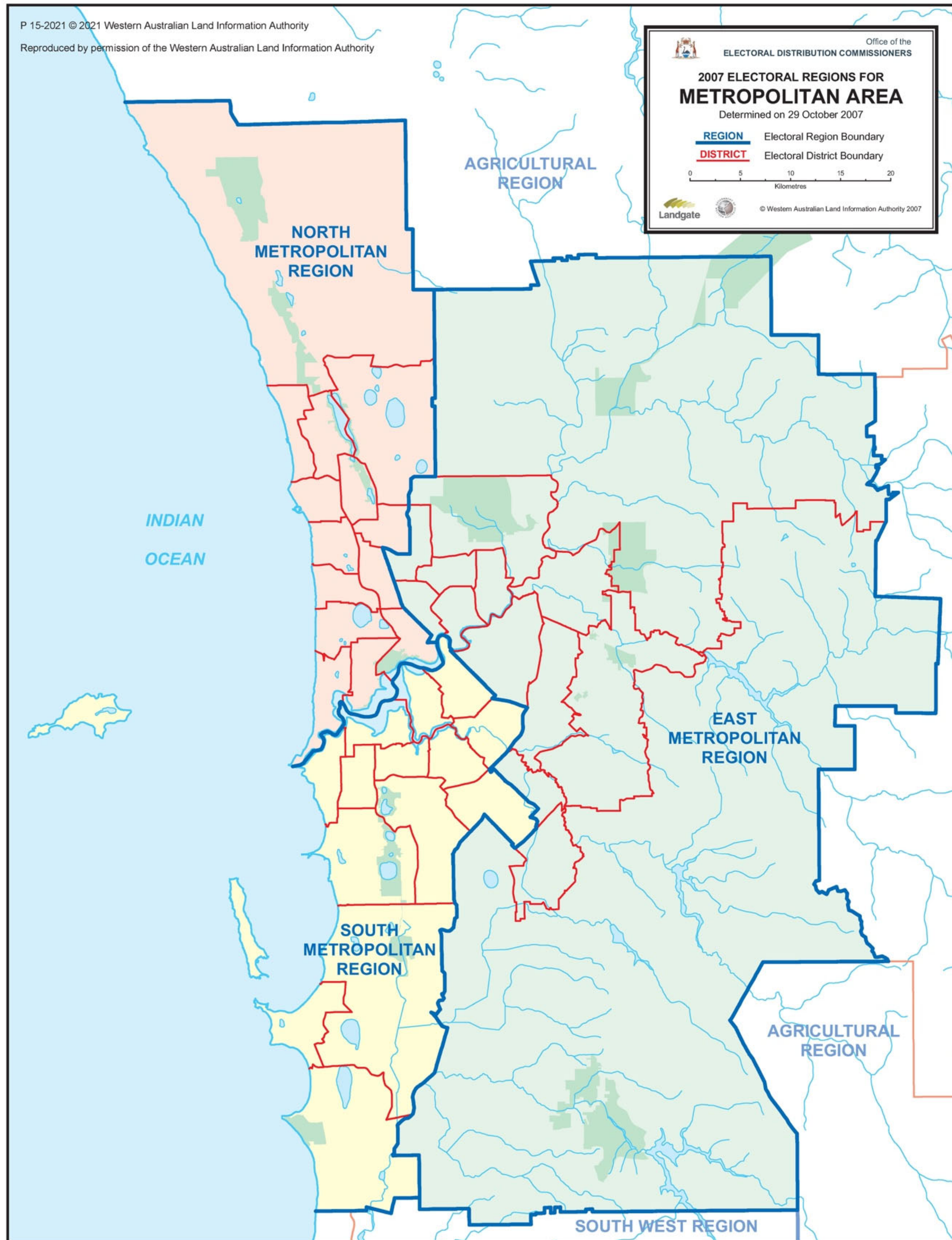
session	-	a parliamentary period which starts on the first day of sitting after an election or prorogation and ends at a prorogation or dissolution of the House
shadow cabinet	-	the group of members of the main opposition party or parties in a Parliament who Act as party spokesperson on the principal areas of government.
shadow minister	-	a member of the shadow ministry. Shadow ministers shadow, or follow closely, the areas of responsibility and activities of ministers.
sittings	-	meetings of a House of Parliament. in the state Parliament, the two periods in the year when the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council meet usually between March and June (the autumn sitting) and between August and December (the spring sitting).
Speaker	-	the member who is elected by the Legislative Assembly as its presiding officer
standing orders	-	the permanent rules which govern the conduct of business in a House of Parliament.
term	-	a limited period of time during which an office is held. This is the member's fourth term in the Legislative Assembly.
upper house	-	the second Chamber: The Legislative Council is the upper House in the state Parliament.
vote	-	a formal expression of choice, such as putting up one's hand or marking a piece of paper.
Westminster system	-	a system of government originating in Britain, the main features of which are a head of state, who is not the head of government, and an executive which is drawn from and which is directly responsible to the Parliament.
Westminster	-	1. the Houses of Parliament in London. 2. the city of Westminster in London where the Houses of Parliament (the place of Westminster) are located.

Sourced from: Parliament of Western Australia website:
https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/webcms/webcms.nsf/content/home-glossary

APPENDIX B

Western Australia's electoral districts and regions as defined by the *Electoral Act* 1907 (WA) (as amended).




P 15-2021 © 2021 Western Australian Land Information Authority
Reproduced by permission of the Western Australian Land Information Authority
Office of the
ELECTORAL DISTRIBUTION COMMISSIONERS
2007 ELECTORAL REGIONS FOR
METROPOLITAN AREA
Determined on 29 October 2007
REGION
Electoral Region Boundary
DISTRICT
Electoral District Boundary
0 5 10 15 20
Kilometres
Landgate
© Western Australian Land Information Authority 2007
AGRICULTURAL REGION
NORTH METROPOLITAN REGION
INDIAN OCEAN
EAST METROPOLITAN REGION
SOUTH METROPOLITAN REGION
AGRICULTURAL REGION
SOUTH WEST REGION

Maps used with permission. Please see copyright declaration following:

Permission to Use 15-2021

Permission to Use (200219)

c/- Curtin University

Business & Government Solutions
Landgate
PO Box 2222, Midland WA 6936
T: (08) 9273 7210
E: licensing@landgate.wa.gov.au
www.landgate.wa.gov.au

The Western Australian Land Information Authority (Landgate) grants you, the Licensee a Licence to publish Landgate's Location Information in your Product on the following Conditions.

Location Information: **2x State Electoral region maps from 2007**
416010_Western_Australia_Electoral_Map_2007.pdf and
416010_Metropolitan_Area_Electoral_Map_2007.pdf

Product: To be used in a PhD thesis. The thesis will not be published.

Grant and Term

1. This is a non-exclusive, non-transferable, revocable Licence between Landgate and you, the Licensee to publish Landgate's Location Information in the agreed Product only.
2. Publishing means incorporating the Location Information into the Product, which may be either for sale or distributed free of charge and may include, but is not limited to books, newsletters, brochures, journals, websites, blogs etc.
3. The Licence is valid for the life of the thesis and from the date of this Licence.

Use

4. Title and all copyright and intellectual property rights overs and in respect of the Location Information are owned by Landgate and the Licensee only acquires the right to use and reproduce in accordance with this Licence.
5. The Licensee must not distribute, sell, licence, hire, let, trade or expose for sale or hire the Location Information to any third party, except in accordance with this Licence and in the form contained in the Product.
6. Failure to comply with the Conditions will be construed as a licence infringement and the Licensee must perform any corrective action reasonably required by Landgate.

Disclaimer

7. No warranties or undertakings express or implied, statutory or otherwise, as to the condition, quality, performance or fitness for the Licensee's purposes are provided with or in relation to the Location Information.
8. The Licensee must ensure the Product will display the following proprietary notice:
   (a) *'© 20__ Western Australian Land Information Authority'*
   (b) 'Reproduced by permission of the Western Australian Land Information Authority'

Permissions

9. Permission is given to the Licensee to display the Location Information in a format so it may be viewed on the Licensee's website, provided the Location Information vector or intelligent data cannot be used interactively in any way or accessed by third parties for the purpose of copying, reproducing or downloading.
10. The Location Information must not to be altered or overprinted with additional information (eg the map colours cannot be changed, the map content cannot be removed or changed), except as approved for the Product in this Licence.

The Product

11. If applicable, any scale statement (eg 1:7,500) must be deleted if the Product is reduced or enlarged.
12. If applicable, the Landgate logo must be added or remain on the face (or base) of each map or image, with Landgate able to supply this logo if required.
13. On request by Landgate, a copy of the Product must be forwarded to the Manager, Business & Government Solutions who may, acting reasonably, request amendment to the use of the Location Information or Product or terminate this Licence if the Location Information is used contrary to the intention of this Licence.

If you require any further information please contact Kim Tilley, Licensing Coordinator, Business & Government Solutions on (08) 9273 7210.

Yours faithfully,

Landgate

Date: 25 October 2021

© Western Australian Land Information Authority. ABN: 86 574 793 858
P 15-2021 Curtin University Permission to Use (200219) 251021.docx

APPENDIX C

MEMORANDUM

To:	[redacted] School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts
CC:	[redacted]
From	[redacted] Manager Research Integrity
Subject	Ethics approval Approval number: [redacted]
Date	09-Sep-15

Office of Research and Development
Human Research Ethics Office

TELEPHONE 9266 2784
FACSIMILE 9266 3793
EMAIL hrec@curtin.edu.au

Thank you for your application submitted to the Human Research Ethics Office for the project:
The tangled web of parliamentary information: the use of social media by members of the Western Australian Parliament.

Your application has been approved through the low risk ethics approvals process at Curtin University.

Please note the following conditions of approval:

1. Approval is granted for a period of four years from **09-Sep-15** to **09-Sep-19**
2. Research must be conducted as stated in the approved protocol.
3. Any amendments to the approved protocol must be approved by the Ethics Office.
4. An annual progress report must be submitted to the Ethics Office annually, on the anniversary of approval.
5. All adverse events must be reported to the Ethics Office.
6. A completion report must be submitted to the Ethics Office on completion of the project.
7. Data must be stored in accordance with WAUSDA and Curtin University policy.
8. The Ethics Office may conduct a randomly identified audit of a proportion of research projects approved by the HREC.

Should you have any queries about the consideration of your project please contact the Ethics Support Officer for your faculty, or the Ethics Office at hrec@curtin.edu.au or on 9266 2784. All human research ethics forms and guidelines are available on the ethics website.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Catherine Gangell
Manager, Research Integrity

memorandum

To	Niamh Corbett, Department of Information Studies, MCCA
From	Marianne Connell, Ethics Coordinator, MCCA
Subject	Protocol Approva
Date	4 June 2012
Copy To	Kerry Smith, Department of Information Studies, MCCA

School of Media, Culture & Creative Arts

MCCA Human Research Ethics Committee

Telephone +61 8 9266 7211
Facsimile +61 8 9266 3152
Email m.connell@curtin.edu.au
Web curtin.edu.au

CRICOS Provider Code 00301J

Dear Niamh

Thank you for your "Form C Application for Approval of Research with Low Risk (Ethical Requirements)" for the project titled *"The tangled web of parliamentary information: the use of social media by members of the Western Australian Parliament"*. On behalf of the Human Research Ethics Committee, I am authorised to inform you that the project is approved.

Approval of this project is for a period of twelve months **31 May 2012** to **31 May 2013**.

Please note that all participants in the survey should be provided with an Information Sheet and be asked to sign a Consent Form.

The approval number for your project is *Please quote this number in any future correspondence*. If at any time during the twelve months changes/amendments occur, or if a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs, please advise me immediately.

Yours sincerely

Coordinator
MCCA Human Research Ethics Committee

Please Note: The following standard statement must be included in the information sheet to particpants:

This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee. If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, C/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845, or by telephoning 9266 2784 or hrec@curtin.edu.au.

APPENDIX D

Faculty of Humanities

School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts
GPO Box U1987
Perth WA 6845

CRICOS Provider Code 00301J

[Name]
Address
Address

Re: PhD Research Request

Dear Mr [Name]

I am a PhD candidate at Curtin University. Please see enclosed a letter of introduction from Hon Michael Sutherland MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

My research seeks to investigate the extent to which social media is used by Members of the Western Australian Parliament. The objective of the study is to determine if Members of the Legislative Assembly and Members of the Legislative Council use social media as a tool to communicate with constituents.

To assist in the gathering of data on this subject, I am writing to request your help in completing an *online questionnaire*. I would appreciate if you could complete the online questionnaire that *will be emailed to you in the next few days*. I realise that you are extremely busy with a range of demands on your time, but your experiences and opinions are vitally important to the success of the study.

I hope you will be able to find time to answer the questionnaire, as it should only take *a few minutes to complete*. If you are unable to complete the survey by the due date, but would like to participate in the survey at a later date, please let me know. Your views and opinions are important to me and crucial to the success of this research project.

Please note that your anonymity is assured as the results of the questionnaire will only be produced in the thesis as accumulated data, no part of which will be attributable to any individual Member.

Thank you for your time and for considering my request.

Yours sincerely

Name

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Hon. Michael Sutherland

Member for Mount Lawley

14 July 2016

Dear Member

re: PhD Research request

Niamh Corbett is a PhD student seeking your assistance with her research. Some of you may know Niamh from her work over many years in the Parliamentary Library and more recently with parliamentary committees.

Niamh was selected to receive the *Australian Postgraduate Award* (APA) and a *Curtin University Postgraduate Scholarship* (CUPS) to fund her research. Both merit based, the APA and the CUPS scholarships provide support to postgraduate students of exceptional research promise who undertake their higher degree by research.

Niamh is researching the use of social media by parliamentarians in the Western Australian Parliament. The longitudinal study aims to investigate the extent to which members of the 39th Parliament are using social network tools in the execution of their parliamentary duties; the nature of their use; and also seeks to examine the impact this has on their parliamentary role, specifically their relationship with their constituents. This follows on from a similar project Niamh did in the 38th Parliament.

Research of this nature is necessary and important, as there has been a lack of scholarly interest in this emerging topic. There is limited research explaining why parliamentarians use social media, how they use them, and over time, to what effect. Indeed the Parliament of Western Australia has been the subject of little academic research at the PhD level—Niamh hopes to address this imbalance, with your help.

I am well aware that Members have many demands on their time, however I encourage you to support Niamh's research by completing the questionnaire which Niamh will send to you in coming days. Your views are critical to the success of the research.

Yours sincerely

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENT HOUSE, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6000

Telephone: (+61 8) 9222 7222 Facsimile: (+61 8) 9321 2901

Hon Barry House MLC

11th July 2016

Dear Member

Re: PhD Research Request

Niamh Corbett is a PhD student seeking your assistance with her research. Some of you may know Niamh from her work over many years in the Parliamentary Library and more recently with Parliamentary Committees.

Niamh was selected to receive the *Australian Postgraduate Award* (APA) and the Curtin *University Postgraduate Scholarship* (CUPS) to fund her research. Both merit based, the APA and the CUPS scholarships provide support to postgraduate students of exceptional research promise who undertake their higher degree by research.

Niamh is researching the use of social media by Parliamentarians in the Western Australian Parliament. The longitudinal study aims to investigate the extent to which Members of the 39th Parliament are using social network tools in the execution of their parliamentary duties; the nature of their use; and also seeks to examine the impact this has on their parliamentary role, specifically their relationship with their constituents. This follows on from a similar project Niamh did in the 38th Parliament.

Research of this nature is necessary and important, as there has been a lack of scholarly interest in this emerging topic. There is limited research explaining why parliamentarians use social media, how they use them, and over time, to what effect. Indeed the Parliament of Western Australia has been the subject of little academic research at the PhD level – Niamh hopes to address this imbalance, with your help.

I am well aware that Members have many demands on their time, however I encourage you to support Niamh's research by completing the questionnaire which Niamh will sent to you in coming days. Your views are critical to the success of the research.

Kind Regards,

President of the Legislative Council

PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HARVEST TERRACE, PERTH WA 6000 TELEPHONE: (08) 9222 7211 FACSIMILE: (08) 9222 7814

APPENDIX E

Text of recruitment email

Dear [Name goes here]

I recently wrote to you as I need your assistance in gathering data for my PhD thesis. I would appreciate it if you could complete my questionnaire.

I realise that you are extremely busy with a range of demands on your time, but information about your experiences and opinions is vitally important to the success of the study. I am hoping that by contacting you now I may be able to capture some of the valuable corporate knowledge you have accumulated as a member of the Western Australian Parliament.

I hope you will be able to find time to answer the questionnaire; it should take only a few minutes to complete.

If you are unable to complete the survey by the end of the Winter recess, but would like to participate in the survey at a later date, please let me know by return email.

Your views and opinions are important to me and crucial to the success of this research project.

Thank you for your time and for considering my request. I hope you enjoy the Winter recess.

Here is a link to the survey:

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address, please do not forward this message.

Yours sincerely

[Name]

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from me, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from my mailing list.

APPENDIX F

Questionnaire consent

The following text and tick box was added to the landing page of the questionnaire.

☐ I voluntarily consent to take part in this online questionnaire.

Questionnaire participant information sheet

Dear [Name]
re: Western Australian Parliamentarians' Use of Social Media to Communicate with Constituents

Research Team

This research is being conducted by [Student Name], for the award of PhD at Curtin University, under the supervision of [Supervisor Name].

Project Aims

This study seeks to investigate the extent to which members of the 39th Parliament are using social network tools in the execution of their parliamentary duties, the nature of their use and also seeks to examine the impact this has on their parliamentary role, specifically their relationship with their constituents. Research of this nature is necessary, as there has been a lack of scholarly interest in this emerging topic to date. There is limited literature explaining why parliamentarians use social media, how they use them, and to what effect. Indeed, the Parliament of Western Australia has been the subject of little academic research at the PhD level. This study hopes to address that imbalance in the literature with your help.

Your participation

All Members of the Western Australian Parliament have been invited to participate in this research project. Participation is completely voluntary. Participants are at liberty to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Participants will be asked to provide first-hand experience about their use of social media in the context of their dealings with their constituents.
The study involves completing a short online questionnaire. It is estimated that completion of the survey for most participants takes approximately 10 minutes.
Participants will be invited to indicate their willingness to take part in a follow-up interview.

Confidentiality and security of information

Responses to the questionnaire will be held in complete confidence. Your responses will be recorded electronically, however the information you provide will be kept separate from your personal details, and only the researcher will have access to this. No identifying details of respondents will be made available for public access, only the aggregated de-identified data. This data may be later developed into a journal article. All information pertaining to this study will be securely stored.

Human Research Ethics Committee Approval

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number XXXX). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in

particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on [Phone number] or the Manager, Research Integrity on [Phone number] or [Email].

Contact details

Should you require any further information, or have any questions about any aspect of this questionnaire, please feel free to contact: [Name of student/supervisor and contact details]

Thank you for your interest in this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

APPENDIX G

Questionnaire text

PART 1. MPs' use of social media to communicate with constituents

For the purposes of this questionnaire social media is generally defined as any online platform for user generated content. By this definition, for example, Facebook (social networking site), Flickr (photo sharing site), Linked In (professional resume sharing site), and MySpace (video sharing site) qualify as social media, as do Twitter (microblogging site) and YouTube (video sharing site), amongst others.

Do you use social media to communicate with your constituents?
Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- Yes (Go to Q. 3).
- No (Go to Q. 2).

If no, what prevents you from using social media?
Please tick each one that applies:

- Lack of time (Go to Q. 12).
- Lack of resources (Go to Q. 12).
- Lack of knowledge (Go to Q. 12).
- Other (Please elaborate) (Go to Q. 12).

How long have you been using social media?
Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- This Parliament (ie since 2008)
- Prior to this Parliament (is before 2008)

What is your motivation for using social media?
Please tick each one that applies:

- Informs my constituency of my activities in the electorate
- Publicises my work in the parliament
- Allows me to reach new audiences
- Raises my constituency profile
- Generates feedback from my constituency
- Promotes my campaign for re-election
- Allows me to communicate my personal views on an issue
- Other (Please elaborate).

Who, or what, motivated you to use social media to communicate with your constituents?
Please tick each one that applies:

- Self-motivated
- Party
- Constituents
- Media

- Staff
- Peers
- Other (Please elaborate).

Who updates your social media presence/s?
Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- Myself
- My staff
- Both myself and my staff
- Other (Please elaborate).

How frequently is your social media presence/s updated?
Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- Several times a day
- Once a day
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Other (Please elaborate).

Which of the following social media tools do you, or your electorate staff on your behalf, use?
Please tick each one that applies:

- Facebook (social networking)
- Flickr (photo sharing)
- LinkedIn (professional resume sharing)
- MySpace (video sharing)
- Twitter (microblogging)
- You Tube (video sharing)
- Other (Please elaborate).

Have you, or your electorate staff on your behalf attended any formal training on social media?
Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Other (Please elaborate).

When compared to traditional communication channels (emails, letters, faxes, telephone calls, in-person visits, etc.), please estimate what percentage of your electorate office communication is via social media (Tweets, Wall posts, SMS, Apps, etc.)?
Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- Less than 25%
- 25 - 49%
- 50 - 74%
- More than 75%
- Other (Please elaborate).

*** Do you, or your staff on your behalf, permanently retain electronic communications received from constituents via social media?**

Please indicate your choice by ticking ONE of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Other (Please elaborate).

*** Do you, or your staff on your behalf, have a policy or practices regarding record keeping of electronic communications received from constituents via social media?**

Please indicate your choice by ticking ONE of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Other (Please elaborate).

**** Are you more likely to update your social media presence/s on a sitting day than a non-sitting day?**

Please indicate your choice by ticking ONE of the following:

- Yes
- No

**** Do you have a social media strategy?**

Please indicate your choice by ticking ONE of the following:

- Yes
- No

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about MPs' use of social media?

Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following options PER ROW:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

- Social media enhances an MPs representative role.
- Social media allows an MP to engage in dialogue with their constituents.
- Having a social media presence improves an MPs electoral prospects.
- Social media affords new opportunities for self-publicity for an MP.
- Social media eliminates intermediaries, making it easier for MPs to reach their constituents.
- Social media allows an MP to control their message.
- Social media makes an MP more accessible to their constituents than ever before.
- Social media helps an MP develop a discrete e-constituency made up of persons outside of their geographical electorate.
- Social media helps demystify an MP and gives a constituent an opportunity to get to know the MP as a person.

- Constituents are more responsive to messages from MPs on social media versus traditional communications.
- MPs who use social media are jumping on the bandwagon.
- The use of social media by MPs is a passing fad.
- MPs should be wary of using real-time social media. Their comments may come back to haunt them.
- Tweeting in the chamber is a threat to the dignity of parliamentary proceedings.
- It is appropriate for MPs to tweet from the Chamber when Parliament is in session.

PART 2. Background Information

This part of the questionnaire asks for responses that are personal in nature. Your confidentiality is assured. Names of participants are not required for this survey. No identifying details of respondents will be made available, only the aggregated de-identified data.

How long have you served as a member of the House you currently sit in?

Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- First term
- 5 - 8 years
- 9 - 20 years
- More than 20 years

Which type of electorate do you represent?

Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- Metropolitan
- Non-metropolitan

Which of the following best describes the political party or grouping you are affiliated with?

Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- Australian Labor Party
- Greens (WA)
- Fishers and Shooters
- Independent
- Liberal Party
- National Party

Which of the following best represents your gender?

Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- Male
- Female

Which of these groups best describes the highest level of education you have attained?

Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- No formal education
- Year 10
- Year 12
- TAFE / Trade qualification
- University undergraduate degree
- University postgraduate qualification
- Other (please elaborate)

Which of the following groups best represents your age?
Please indicate your choice by ticking one of the following:

- 30 - 39 years old
- 40 - 49 years old
- 50 - 59 years old
- 60 - 69 years old
- 70+ years old

PART 3. Additional comments

Please feel free to make additional comments in response to any of the issues raised in this questionnaire. Perhaps you are the first MP to have a Facebook profile, the first MP to tweet from the Chamber, the first MP to have his/her own App, and/or have had a fake account set up in your name. If so, please tell me about it. [Space for comments]

Your observations regarding your current, or potential use, of social media in communicating with your constituents is of great assistance to this research project – the first of its kind in the Western Australian Parliament. [Space for comments]

Please let me know if you would be happy to participate in an interview. [Tick box]

Thank you for your time and invaluable contribution to this research.

* = Survey 1 only. Question dropped from Survey 2.

** = Survey 2 only. Question added to Survey 2.

APPENDIX H

Text of interview protocol

PART 1. Introduction and Recording Authorisation (estimated 4 minutes)
Thank MP for taking the time to meet with me.

- Interview comprises three sections, with estimated interview time being 30 minutes.

PART 2. Open-ended Interview Questions (estimated 25 minutes, unstructured)

- I am interested to know more about how you use social media to engage with your constituents.
- How hands-on are you with your social media presence?
- What proportion of your time is spent on social media given that it is 24/7 and the expectation is that it be updated on a continual basis?
- What is your opinion about tweeting from the Chamber?
- Have you received any training in the use of social media?
- Do you find that through social media you communicate with people outside of your constituency?
- Is part of the attraction with social media that it cuts out the middle man?
- It has been said that social media enhances the representative role of Members of Parliament. What are your thoughts about this?

PART 3. Concluding questions (estimated 1 minute)

- Thanks for answering my questions. This interview was intended to cover information on issues related to MPs' use of social media.
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me? Is there anything I have not touched upon in this interview?

APPENDIX I

Text of interview participant information sheet

Research Team
This research is being conducted by [Name], for the award of PhD at Curtin University, under the supervision of [Name].

Project Aims
This study seeks to investigate the extent to which members of the 39th Parliament are using social network tools in the execution of their parliamentary duties, the nature of their use and also seeks to examine the impact this has on their parliamentary role, specifically their relationship with their constituents. Research of this nature is necessary, as there has been a lack of scholarly interest in this emerging topic to date. There is limited literature explaining why parliamentarians use social media, how they use them, and to what effect. Indeed, the Parliament of Western Australia has been the subject of little academic research at the PhD level. This study hopes to address that imbalance in the literature with your help.

Your participation
All Members of the Western Australian Parliament have been invited to participate in this research project. Participation is completely voluntary. Participants are at liberty to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Participants will be asked to provide first-hand experience about their use of social media in the context of their dealings with their constituents.
This part of the study asks you to participate in a short interview. It is estimated that interview for most participants takes approximately 30 minutes. Times will vary according to the individual.

Confidentiality and security of information
Responses to the questionnaire will be held in complete confidence. Your responses will be recorded electronically, however the information you provide will be kept separate from your personal details, and only the researcher will have access to this. No identifying details of respondents will be made available for public access, only the aggregated de-identified data. This data may be later developed into a journal article. All information pertaining to this study will be securely stored.

Human Research Ethics Committee Approval
Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number XXXX). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Contact details
Should you require any further information, or have any questions about any aspect of this questionnaire, please feel free to contact: [Student name and details] / [Supervisor name and details]
Thank you for your interest in this research project.
Please keep this sheet for your information.

APPENDIX J

Declaration by Interviewee:

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- have read and understood the information document regarding this project
- have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team
- understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty
- understand that this project has been approved by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
- understand that you can contact the HREC Ethics Officer on [phone number] or the Manager, Research Integrity on [phone number] or [Email] to discuss any aspect of the study
- understand that the project will include audio recording
- agree to participate in the project

[Insert Student Name]

[Signature] / [Date]

Declaration by Researcher:

I have supplied the participant information sheet and consent form to the participant who has signed above, and believe that they understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of their involvement in this project.

[Insert Student Name]

[Signature] / [Date]

Thank you for your time and your interest in this research project.

APPENDIX K

Social media affordances

	Study 1 (2012) n=72										Study 2 (2016) n=82									
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Responses	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Enhances MPs' role?	0	0	12.5	9	12.5	9	59.72	43	15.28	11	0	0	12.2	10	14.63	12	56.1	46	17.07	14
Engages in dialogue	0	0	2.78	2	9.72	7	62.5	45	25	18	0	0	4.88	4	14.63	12	43.9	36	36.59	30
Improves MPs' electoral prospects?	0	0	1.39	1	6.94	5	65.28	47	26.39	19	0	0	4.88	4	12.2	10	51.22	42	31.71	26
Eliminates intermediaries?	0	0	1.39	1	12.5	9	48.61	35	37.5	27	0	0	2.44	2	17.07	14	43.9	36	36.59	30
Control message	0	0	6.94	5	9.72	7	45.83	33	37.5	27	0	0	2.44	2	17.07	14	29.27	24	51.22	42
MPs more accessible?	0	0	13.89	10	9.72	7	54.17	39	22.22	16	0	0	5	4	15	12	60	48	20	16
Demystify MPs?	0	0	8.33	6	9.72	7	61.11	44	20.83	15	0	0	4.88	4	14.63	12	51.22	42	29.27	24
e-Constituency	0	0	6.94	5	16.67	12	68.06	49	8.33	6	0	0	9.76	8	24.39	20	65.85	54	0	0
Responsiveness	0	0	19.44	14	12.5	9	58.33	42	9.72	7	0	0	17.07	14	29.27	24	53.66	44	0	0
Comments haunt?	0	0	0	0	2.74	2	21.92	16	75.34	55	0	0	0	0	0	0	19.51	16	80.49	66
Threat to dignity of Parliament	23.29	17	45.21	33	0	0	31.51	23	0	0	22.5	18	52.5	42	2.5	2	17.5	14	5	4
Inappropriate to tweet when in Chamber	19.44	14	47.22	34	1.39	1	30.56	22	1.39	1	21.95	18	48.78	40	4.88	4	21.95	18	2.44	2

Note: Respondents were asked: To what extent do you agree or disagree to each statement?

Survey 1 (2012)

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mea n	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Social media enhances a parliamentarian's representative role	4.00	5.00	4.25	0.43	0.19	44
2	Social media allows a parliamentarian to engage in dialogue with their constituents	4.00	5.00	4.39	0.49	0.24	44
3	Having a social media presence/s improves a parliamentarian's electoral prospects	2.00	5.00	4.36	0.61	0.37	44
4	Social media affords new opportunities for self-publicity for a parliamentarian	4.00	5.00	4.39	0.49	0.24	44
5	Social media eliminates intermediaries, making it easier for a parliamentarian to reach their constituents	4.00	5.00	4.55	0.50	0.25	44
6	Social media allows a parliamentarian to control their message	4.00	5.00	4.57	0.50	0.25	44
7	Social media makes a parliamentarian more accessible to their constituents than ever before	4.00	5.00	4.36	0.48	0.23	44
8	Social media helps a parliamentarian develop a discrete e-constituency made up of persons outside of their geographical electorate	4.00	5.00	4.14	0.34	0.12	44
9	Social media helps demystify a parliamentarian and gives a constituent an opportunity to get to know the MP as a person	4.00	5.00	4.32	0.47	0.22	44
10	Constituents are more responsive to messages from parliamentarians on social media than traditional communications	2.00	5.00	4.11	0.49	0.24	44
11	Parliamentarians who use social media are jumping on the social media bandwagon	1.00	5.00	1.73	0.86	0.74	44
12	The use of social media by parliamentarians is a passing fad	1.00	2.00	1.43	0.50	0.25	44
13	Parliamentarians should be wary of using real-time social media as their comments may come back to haunt them	4.00	5.00	4.73	0.45	0.20	44
14	Tweeting in the Chamber is a threat to the dignity of parliamentary proceedings	1.00	4.00	1.66	0.60	0.36	44
15	It is inappropriate for parliamentarians to tweet from the Chamber when parliament is in session	1.00	5.00	1.89	0.88	0.78	44

Note: These results were exported from Qualtrics.

Survey 2 (2016)

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Social media enhances a parliamentarian's representative role	2.00	5.00	3.78	0.87	0.76	82
2	Social media allows a parliamentarian to engage in dialogue with their constituents	2.00	5.00	4.12	0.83	0.69	82
3	Having a social media presence/s improves a parliamentarian's electoral prospects	2.00	5.00	4.02	0.92	0.85	82
4	Social media affords new opportunities for self-publicity for a parliamentarian	2.00	5.00	4.10	0.79	0.62	82
5	Social media eliminates intermediaries, making it easier for a parliamentarian to reach their constituents	2.00	5.00	4.15	0.78	0.61	82
6	Social media allows a parliamentarian to control their message	2.00	5.00	4.29	0.83	0.69	82
7	Social media makes a parliamentarian more accessible to their constituents than ever before	2.00	5.00	3.95	0.74	0.55	80
8	Social media helps a parliamentarian develop a discrete e-constituency made up of persons outside of their geographical electorate	2.00	4.00	3.56	0.66	0.44	82
9	Social media helps demystify a parliamentarian and gives a constituent an opportunity to get to know the MP as a person	2.00	5.00	4.05	0.79	0.63	82
10	Constituents are more responsive to messages from parliamentarians on social media than traditional communications	2.00	4.00	3.37	0.76	0.57	82
11	Parliamentarians who use social media are jumping on the social media bandwagon	1.00	5.00	2.24	1.12	1.26	82
12	The use of social media by parliamentarians is a passing fad	1.00	5.00	2.20	1.17	1.38	82
13	Parliamentarians should be wary of using real-time social media as their comments may come back to haunt them	4.00	5.00	4.80	0.40	0.16	82
14	Tweeting in the Chamber is a threat to the dignity of parliamentary proceedings	1.00	5.00	2.30	1.14	1.31	80
15	It is inappropriate for parliamentarians to tweet from the Chamber when parliament is in session	1.00	5.00	2.34	1.12	1.25	82

Note: These results were exported from Qualtrics.