

# Social Media and Political Participation

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The increasing use of social media throughout the globe has helped bridge the social capital amongst the human population, allowing us to express, exchange, and disseminate political information, leading towards a more knowledgeable and politically active life. The new media era first emerged in the 1990s with different platforms providing users the experience of brochures, static documents, and other interactive activities. Soon after, significant social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Youtube were launched, facilitating the public to react, discuss, share and communicate their views and concerns directly with political leaders and candidates. In addition, journalists discovered pioneering methods for reporting and reaching mass audiences. As a result of these technological advancements, a multitude of academics and commentators stress the importance of social media and the role it has played to change the political arena. However, despite its apparent advantages, many have rejected these findings and contest that while the majority of internet users are young adults, aged between 16-25, they are least likely to vote and participate in political campaigns, as compared to other age groups. By drawing upon evidence, this paper argues that whilst technological advancements have undoubtedly resulted in an increase in political participation, studies in this area often overlook the fact that digital platforms such as Facebook and Youtube are primarily used for entertainment and

ret relational Purposes which works to further:  
distract and reduce engagement than to mobilize  
and increase Political participation.