K.C. Brekken
WPSA Conference Paper
04-02-2015

Adapting Twitter to Home Style

"Most of the communication I have heard and seen is not overtly political at all. It is rather, part of a ceaseless effort to reinforce the underpinnings of trust in the congressman or the congresswoman as a person. Viewed from this perspective, the archetypical constituent question is not 'What have you done for me lately?' but 'How have you looked to me lately?'" (Fenno, 1978, p. 56).

Introduction:

Political scientists have long praised Richard Fenno's 1978 *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*, for breaking the mold on research concerning members of Congress and identifying a new and expansive area for future research on representational activities within the district (Fenno, 1978; Leuthold, 1979; McGraw, Timpone & Brucl, 1993).

As they have attempted to expand upon his bold agenda, new technologies have developed, further complicating Fenno's theory that scholars must understand representatives' district activities before they can fully appreciate their behavior in Washington. Most members of Congress have evolved to these new mediums with few exceptions (Sen. Lindsey Graham, potential Republican presidential candidate, says he's never sent an email, 2015). They use social media, Skype with their districts for town halls, send mass e-mails and solicit and collect donations via the Web. Therefore, political scientists have a tough job to examine these new methods of communication to determine how they are impacting representatives' goals of re-election, power within the chamber and good public policy (Aldrich, Perry & Rohde, 2013; Fenno, 1973.)

This paper concerns itself with just one of those goals – re-election – and how Nevada's four congressional representatives used Twitter to communicate with constituents during re-election as part of their presentation of self. It examines 714

tweets from Nevada's four congressional representatives' personal Twitter accounts from Aug. 1, 2014 to the election on Nov. 4, 2014, and the number of times each tweet was retweeted. Each tweet was then coded based on content, using the presentation of self theory laid out by Fenno in *Home Style*. This analysis shows that Fenno's three core elements of every representatives' presentation style in 1978 --- issue-orientated, person-to-person and service to district -- are present in representatives' posts on Twitter, but in varying degrees, some in more significant ways than others. Perhaps most interestingly, this research suggests that Twitter allows for greater latitude and more frequent presentations of personal preferences to actively engaged constituents. How representatives used this medium during their re-election campaigns is very different than other forms of directed communication allow.

Representatives are using this medium to connect with constituents in ways they have never been able to do with older forms of directed communication, e.g. press releases, newsletters and emails. It is this form of new communication that can provide scholars with rich data for future work to better understand representation in the 21st century (Evans, Cordova & Sipole, 2014; Straus, Glassman, Shogan & Smelcer, 2013).

Previous Twitter Research

Twitter is an open frontier for researchers wanting to study members of Congress outside the normative methods of collecting roll call votes and empirical analysis of Washington activity. Founded in 2006, the micro blogging service with 288 million active users (About Twitter, 2015) provides free, rich data that too few political scientists have tapped. It also presents an opportunity to expand upon Fenno's work and study

K.C. Brekken
WPSA Conference Paper
04-02-2015
Congress members doing what they do best, talking about themselves, 140 characters at a time.

In 2010, Twitter's legitimacy as a service providing rich and meaningful data worthy of scholarly attention arrived when the company signed a deal with the Library of Congress, authorizing library officials to archive all of America's tweets, 140-character micro-missives that they stated will further the organization's mission "to collect the story of America and to acquire collections that will have research value." (Library of Congress is archiving all of America's Tweets, 2010).

Twitter provides for multiple forms of direct communication. It allows for one-to-one dialogue that is public via a reply function, which followers use to respond to individual's tweets in a manner that other followers can see. Twitter also functions as a one-to-mass form of direct communication, like a micro-newsletter, allowing representatives to tweet a message to thousands of active followers. The goal of most companies and brands using social media is to increase the number of active followers or audience members and to have them spread messaging, similar to word-of-mouth. It follows that such metrics would serve representatives running for election as well. Therefore the most obvious metrics of successful candidates are the number of followers that an account has and the number of "retweets" an individual tweet has. Users can increase interactivity, when their followers retweet or refer to their tweets, showing new viewers the original account's message. A retweet is often viewed as an endorsement of the original tweet (Burton & Soboleva, 2011).

The use of Twitter is growing among congressional delegates and is now nearly ubiquitous. In the context of a rational perspective, where the typical member of

Congress is motivated by re-election, it makes sense that every elected official would have Facebook and Twitter accounts to freely and directly communicate and reinforce messaging with a growing number of followers and their friends. It provides a mechanism for members of Congress to control their public messages, reach increasingly broader audiences and develop routine communication with voters (Straus, et. al., 2013). In 2012, *The Hill* reported that there were 15 senators and 53 representatives that refused to use Twitter. "We just don't see a whole lot of value in Twitter overall compared to other methods of outreach. It might be worthwhile for updating folks on what you just ordered at the drive-through, but not communicating positions on big issues. We might come around to using it, eventually. Though we are definitely not there yet," said Joe Klasper, spokesman for California Rep. Duncan Hunter (Cohn, 2012). A year after the article was published, Rep. Duncan posted his first tweet on May 10, 2013 on the need for a national maritime strategy. It was big issue that was retweeted three times. He now posts multiple times each month and has nearly 4,000 followers. Today, more than 97 percent of congressional delegates have a Twitter account (Amira, 2013).

There is little research on congressional tweeting habits (Evans, Cordova & Sipole, 2010; Mirer, Bode, 2015). Last year, Michael Zimmer and Nicholas J. Proferes created a topology of Twitter research from 2006 to 2012 and found only 380 scholarly articles, dissertations and theses that relied on the collection and use of Twitter data. Of those, 279 were related to Computer Science, Information Science or Communications fields, with political science academic publications only accounting for 13 of the articles. In 2013, Straus, et. al, found that representatives from more urban districts were more likely to adopt Twitter. Those in the minority party were also more likely to have an

active account and at the time, Republicans had a 0.21 higher probability of having one.

Race and gender were not statistically significant. The older the member of Congress, the

less likely he or she was to have an account. They concluded that the decision to have a

Twitter account is driven by the members' desire to communicate with a wider audience,

particularly those who have difficulty getting their messages out through mainstream

media.

Home Style's Presentation of Self

The concept that a representative's presentation of self may differ depending on

the needs and desires of constituent groups was first elaborated by Erving Goffman

(1959). Fenno adapted it to members of Congress and found that their presentation of self

was the most important aspect of their home style. He referred to Goffman's work on the

theory of presentation of self regularly throughout the book, noting that the politician

behind the scenes may be different from the one who appears in front of audiences, and

may vary by audience, to reflect a separate person who the elected official thinks

constituents want to represent them (Fenno, 1978, p. 60).

Presentation of self serves to enhance voter trust and convey that the

representative is qualified for the job; is "one of you" and therefore thinks like you; cares

about the same things you do; and, finally that he or she empathizes with voters, "I

understand your situation and I care about," and "I can put myself in your shoes," (Fenno,

1978, p.60). To a large extent, Fenno noted that qualification, identification and empathy

can be conveyed through regular personal contact and therefore, it would be expected that

they may be found in the regular tweets conveyed from members of Congress to their

constituents.

Fenno used a series of case studies to generalize how representatives interpret their constituencies' representational preferences and then attempted to portray those traits. The case studies he selected range on a continuum from a style dependent upon developing personal relationships to one based on discussing policy issues (Fenno, 1978, p. 61).

Every presentational style contains three elements at its core, according to Fenno. Those are person-to-person, issue-orientated and district service components. Clearly, person-to-person messages are very difficult to do via Twitter, where the point is to have as many people see one's tweets as possible. This presents an environment in which the person-to-person dialogue is itself on display to convey something about the representative and how he or she interacts with others. Issue orientated tweets are much easier to do and often include links to the representatives' blog, website or press releases. Finally district service, providing followers with information about resources available to them, is also relatively easy to do via Twitter.

Related Work

Golbeck, Grimes and Rogers (2010) conducted an in-depth analysis of congressional tweets in 2009 and found them lacking in substantive legislative fodder. Only 5 percent of what lawmakers tweeted about involved official business, such as votes and hearings. Their study was also informative in terms of their process for collecting and coding Twitter data. It included the last 200 tweets of all representatives that had Twitter accounts at that time, starting on Feb. 6, 2009. In that first round, there were 69 members of Congress with Twitter accounts. They then repeated the same procedures in June 2009 and August 2009, with the number of representatives in their pool increasing each time to

134 and 159, respectively. They had three reviewers code Tweets using original

classifications, developed using an open coding approach, where all tweets were

organically organized into groups. The names of those categorizies were derived based

on the underlying themes of those groupings, which were non-exclusive, meaning tweets

could belong to multiple groups. In total, they analyzed 4,626 tweets. They found that

54.7 percent of Tweets were informational, about a fact or opinion, or link to an article,

position on an issue or resource. The second largest group was location/activity based

tweets, with 27 percent of tweets about the user's location or activities unrelated to

official congress business. The scholars concluded that Congress members' tweets do not

provide new insights into the legislative process, but instead serve as vehicles for self-

promotion or mini-press releases. In short, Golbeck, et. al, found representatives use

Twitter similar to how they would use other direct communication mechanisms, such as

press releases and newsletters.

However, in 2009, Twitter was still relatively new and there is research to suggest

that as technologies change, elected officials evolve the way they communicate (Straus,

et.al, 2013). Five years after Golbeck, et. al's work, members of Congress may have

evolved as well in how they use Twitter. Nearly four decades after Fenno's *Home Style*

was first published, it is also highly plausible that the staples of representatives' home

style have changed. In a gridlocked Congress, how many constituents want to hear about

the issues a candidate can do nothing about? Finally, if as Golbeck, et. al suggested, the

majority of members of Congress continue tweeting mini-press releases, scholars should

examine what those promotional tweets say about the persona representatives are trying

to convey to constituents.

Nevada's Delegation

Nevada's four congressional delegates provide an interesting case study that may be used as a way to craft and improve methods of studying congressional tweet content on a grander scale. As a battleground state with multiple competitive districts, Nevada has a small number of representatives and had equal numbers of Republican and Democrat incumbents, all of whom were up for re-election in 2014. At the same time, the state had two competitive districts, each of which leaned toward the opposite party, and two safe districts, each of which were held by opposite parties. Each representative had a well-established Twitter account that they used differently and none of the representatives had been in their seats for very long, with Rep. Heck being the most senior, having been first elected in 2010.

Although each district in Nevada is unique in the state, they are also generalizable characteristics similar to those in other states. District 1 is a small, highly urban, liberal and heterogeneous district, while District 2 is expansive, rural, conservative and homogeneous. Districts 3 and 4 were competitive
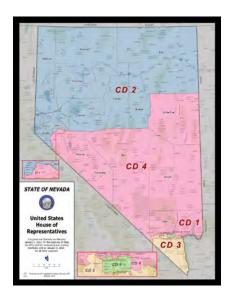

Figure 1: Nevada's four congressional districts

districts with only slight Republican and Democratic voter registration majorities in 2014, respectively, and comprise a mix of urban, suburban and rural land. They both are heterogeneous and District 4 in particular spans a highly urban area with a number of minority constituents as well as a large rural swath of land with conservative-minded voters.

Table 1 shows that some members of Nevada's congressional delegation used

Twitter more frequently than others. That may be due to the communication preferences

of constituents. In 2015, the largest number of Twitter users (22.6 percent) were age 18 to

24, followed 21.5 percent of users age 25-34 (Who's really using, 2015). According to

2012 U.S. Census data, Rep. Mark Amodei's District 2 had the largest number of

residents age 62 and older. They comprised 18 percent of his district. If his constituents

are not actively engaged in Twitter, it would not make sense for him to expend resources

communicating there. Interestingly though, Rep. Amodei had a Twitter account long

before he was elected to Congress in 2011 when he was in the state legislature.

Table 1: Nevada Congressional Delegation Information and Twitter Descriptive Information

Name-Party	District	Cook's Political Report House Ratings for Nov. 3, 2014*	Personal Twitter Account Founding Year	Ratio of Twitter Followers/Number of Total Tweets As of Dec. 7, 2014
Mark Amodei-R	2	Solid Republican	2009	1,347/13
Joe Heck-R	3	Leaning Republican	2009	1,981/ 1,245
Steven Horsford-D	4	Leaning Democrat	2011	3,992/ 1,222
Dina Titus-D	1	Solid Democrat	2008	3,329/ 1,706

* Solid: These seats are not considered competitive at this point, but have the potential to become engaged; Lean: These are considered competitive races, but one party has an advantage; Toss-Up: These are the most competitive; either party has a good chance of winning (Cook Political Report House Ratings, 2014).

Data & Method

The data for this study was manually captured directly from Twitter's website for

each of Nevada's four Congressional delegates in 2014 from their personal or campaign

accounts. Although much could also be gleaned from representatives' congressional

accounts, only the personal account was scrutinized in an effort to limit the scope of this

research and focus on the main research question: If and how Fenno's theory of home style has adapted to the usage of Twitter?

A total of 714 tweets were collected between Aug. 1 and Nov. 4 to capture the tail end of the election when there would likely be more tweets. The text was then coded by a single individual in an effort to group tweets by Fenno's presentation of self elements. The number of times a tweet was retweeted was also recorded.

Table 2: Fenno's Home Style Variables and Definitions

Variables	Description
Issue-Orientated Tweet	These tweets present information about where a member of Congress stands on issues, press releases, articles and other links. Representatives use these tweets to establish policy credentials among constituents and they convey a sense that, "I am qualified," (Fenno, 1978, p. 60).
Person-to-Person Tweet	Denoted by an @ symbol, these are tweets addressed to specific people or organizations, usually constituents or other elected officials. They also serve to demonstrate, "an elaboration of an interpersonal web and of the ties that bind its members one to the other," (p. 62).
Service to the District Tweet	These are tweets that communicate a service to constituents by informing them about resources they can access, providing information needed to thrive and or reminding them about important dates or deadlines, such as the date by which voters must register. "The core activity is providing help to individuals, groups and localities in coping with the federal government… It is universally recognized as an important part of the job in its own right," (p. 101).
Language of Identification Tweet	These are tweets that convey a sense of empathy or relation to the district. Also important in the establishment of trust with voters, the language of identification conveys to constituents that the member of congress is like them, one of them and understands them (p. 60).
In the District Tweet	These are tweets that prove the delegate is physically in the district. Fenno emphasizes the importance of being seen and dialoguing with constituents to establish trust with voters (p. 60).

In addition to these variables based off of Fenno's presentation of self, several other variables of interest were added. Because Golbeck, et. al. (2010) had found that nearly 30 percent of the tweets they coded had to do with non-business orientated messages, a Personal Message variable was added to include messages from the delegation about anything ranging from messages of encouragement to volunteers, happy

holidays, National Taco Day, family activities, workouts and more. A variable – Request

for Action – was organically devised due to a significant volume of tweets requesting

followers do something, whether that be sign a petition, volunteer, donate or vote. A final

variable – Retweet – was also organically devised to identify tweets that originated from

another account that representatives felt compelled to share with followers. Tweeters use

the acronym MT for 'Modified Tweet,' to preface tweets that originated elsewhere that

they are paraphrasing. Such MTs were classified as retweets for the purpose of this

research.

None of the codes are mutually exclusive. In fact, some tweets were classified

under as many as three separate variables. It should be noted that it is impossible to tell

how many retweets from a representative were retweeted based on their retweet. But

retweets provide interesting data and are often used to communicate personal messages,

even though the member of Congress did not produce the original tweet. For example, on

Sept. 25, Congressman Steven Horsford retweeted a staff member's tweet, stating, "Great

volunteer ladies that come make calls every week up and early for @StevenHorsford

#TeamHorsford #NVictory2014." By retweeting this post, Congressman Horsford also

conveyed a personal message of thanks to the volunteers and therefore this tweet was

coded as a retweet and a personal message.

RT: Jose macias @josemacias8: Great volunteer ladies that come make calls every week
up and early for @ StevenHorsford #TeamHorsford #NVictory2014

Finally, there are significant limitations to this study that should be recognized.

Coding was done by one individual. Whereas textual coding is a subjective process, most

of the research on Twitter content involves multiple coders (Goldbeck, et. al, 2015;

Mirier & Bode, 2015). A more extensive longitudinal data codifying more tweets going further back into the calendar year would also provider a richer compilation of tweets absent of the campaign. Finally, interviews with the candidates themselves and key staffers for all of the delegation would provide needed context.

Discussion

From the aggregate compilation of each Nevada congressional representative's tweets, it appears that Fenno's presentation of self theory applies in part to candidates' presentation of self on social media. In varying degrees, members posted issue, person-to-person and service-to-district orientated tweets.

Table 3: Aggregate Coded Tweets for Each Delegate

Variable	@DinaTitus	@StevenHorsford	@Heck4Nevada	@AmodeiforNevada
Retweet	78	105	8	4
Issue Orientated	46	32	117	2
Person to Person	52	34	2	0
Service to the District	15	11	3	1
Language of Identification	29	13	19	1
In the District	86	42	4	2
Personal Message	119	106	36	1
Request for Action	62	62	30	1

District 1

Table 4: District 1

Twitter Handle	First Elected	No. of Tweets Aug. 1-Nov. 4	Election Results	Tweet Home Style
@DinaTitus	2013*	267	56.84% of the Vote	In the District and Personal

Rep. Titus, a retired university political science professor and former state senate

minority leader, was the most avid tweeter among Nevada's congressional delegation

during the time period studied. She presented herself as frequently in the district and

provided followers with regular, colorful messages that demonstrate personal interests

and sentiments. For example, she tweeted about the deaths of actors Lauren Bacall and

Robin Williams, the School House Rock song and National Taco Day. She exhibited

language of identification with an often-used hash tag #OnlyInDistrict1, which she uses

to promote businesses and events happening within her district. Hash tags allow Twitter

users to follow conversations by searching for a word or phrase prefaced by a hash tag.

The #OnlyInDistrict1 was devised by Congresswoman Titus to highlight the, "projects,

locations, and events that epitomize our district, while also giving constituents the

opportunity to share their ideas and opinions with the Congresswoman," said Caitlin

Teare, Titus' communications director[1]. A quick search shows that other Twitter users

besides Titus use the hash tag to celebrate their district, often in conjunction with a

reference to Congresswoman Titus. Her Republican opponent used the hash tag when

attacking Titus on Twitter as well.

Among her issue-orientated tweets, Congresswoman Titus most frequently posted

about marriage equality. Seven of those issue-orientated tweets were negative, attacking

congressional Republicans. Her most frequently retweeted original post during this time

period (not counting retweets) occurred on Aug. 19, when she issued the personal

---

[1]Personal interview with Caitlin Teare, Congresswoman Dina Titus' Communications
Director on Feb. 23, 2015.

message, "Happy Birthday, President @billclinton. Thank you 4 your lifetime of service #1992 #NV01 @ClintonFdn @ReadyForHillary." It was retweeted 40 times.

She posted tweets that showed she was in the district more often than other Nevada delegates' posts, leading up to the election. This is important to support Fenno's findings that less senior representatives flew back to their districts more often than more veteran members to reinforce their re-election constituents and broaden their reach to new constituency groups (Fenno, 1978). Her person-to-person tweets most often addressed other Democratic candidates, supporters, party leaders, and district or political organizations. Like the other delegates, her requests for action were related mostly to get-out-the-vote activities, such as registration, voting and volunteering.

Titus also provided more services to constituents via Twitter than any other Nevada delegate. These 15 tweets provided information to find early voting or polling locations and several provided information about flooding conditions within the district during late summer storms. However, the majority of her casework is still initiated and handled through the phone or in person[2].

In summary, 9 percent of Titus' messaging via Twitter during this time period were issue-orientated, 10 percent were person-to-person type communications and 3 percent demonstrated services to the district. The largest percentage – 24 percent – were personal messages. These included an array of information unrelated to Washington activities, ranging from historical facts to statements of encouragement for volunteers, appreciation for local organizations, celebrated holidays, events and activities related to her district, which provide insight into her interests and values.

---

[2] Personal interview with Caitlin Teare, Congresswoman Dina Titus' Communications Director on Feb. 23, 2015.

Table 5: District 2

Twitter Handle	First Elected	No. of Tweets Aug. 1-Nov. 4	Election Results	Tweet Home Style
@AmodeiforNevada	2011	5	65.73% of the Vote	None

There is little to gain from reviewing Rep. Amodei's tweets during this period of time. In a safe district, largely comprised of older citizens who may not be tweeting, he posted too few tweets to make any conclusions. A review of his congressional account @RepMarkAmodei shows slightly more activity at 46 tweets during this time period. While he may become more active over time, there are currently not enough tweets available to evaluate for components of his presentation of self.

Table 6: District 3

Twitter Handle	First Elected	No. of Tweets Aug. 1-Nov. 4	Election Results	Tweet Home Style
@Heck4Nv	2010	201	60.75% of the Vote	Issue Orientated

Based on the coding, Rep. Heck, a physician, veteran and former state senator, portrayed himself as an issue-orientated congressman, focused on policy specifics. What the numbers do not show is that 63 percent or 127 of his 201 tweets from Aug. 1 to Nov. 4 are from the evening of Sept. 17, during which time a staff member tweeted a play-by-play of a debate between Heck and his democratic competitor. Nearly half – 53 -- of his issue-orientated tweets are negative and about his opponent or the Democratic Party. Although most of the debate tweets were never retweeted, the effort indicates that staff were experimenting with the medium and its potential. According to his Twitter feed, another debate occurred on Oct. 24, but there was only one tweet about that debate posted on the morning of the event to promote it. This may indicate lessons learned from the Sept. 17 debate.

Absent his Sept. 17 tweets, Heck's campaign account did not say much about Heck the man. It consisted of mostly third-person posts about his campaign activities and his stances on issues, particularly immigration. He was rarely retweeted more than three times. Personal messages referred to religious holidays and other special events. His most personal tweet was on Aug. 26: "In honor of #NationalDogDay, we'd like to introduce 2 furry members of the Heck Family, Denver and Aspen. #nv03." The post and photo of the dogs was retweeted twice. His most popular tweet was on Sept. 24, wishing followers a happy Rosh Hashanah. It was retweeted 13 times.

It is impossible to conclude why Heck primarily posts about issues rather than providing more personal details without insight from him. Some might say, he is cautious following a controversy that occurred in 2013, when Congressman Heck's son made headlines for inappropriate tweets, including one of which indicated he had access to classified information regarding the death of Osama bin Laden, referencing his dad's position on an intelligence committee (Spillman, 2013). But they may also be part of his presentation of style. Having observed Heck in a number of settings including interviews with media, debates, and closed-door forums with community representatives since 2011, Heck is comfortable speaking about policies, facts, legislation and politics.

He also seems to prefer to operate out of the spotlight, which goes against the purpose of Twitter to get as many followers as possible looking at one's content. For example, on Nov. 25, 2013, the Republican held a closed-door, invitation-only roundtable with Hispanic community leaders and higher education officials on immigration. He explained to the group that he wanted to introduce legislation, providing a pathway to citizenship for young undocumented students and if the majority of the participants in the

room would agree to publically support the bill, he would do so. A substantive

conversation about the details of his proposed legislation ensued. One young

undocumented student, who would benefit from the legislation, tearfully explained she

could not support it because it would not help her father, who faced deportation. She said

she would be supporting more comprehensive legislation in the Senate. No media were

invited to report on the substantive dialogue, which could have encouraged a number of

Latinos in the district to support Heck's moderate approach to immigration reform in his

upcoming election. Everyone went home and was asked to respond via email[3]. The

legislation was never introduced.

In summary, 53 percent of his coded messaging during this period were issue-

orientated, 0.9 percent were person-to-person and 1.3 percent were service-to-the-district

orientated, with all but one – related to veterans' services -- providing election-related

information.

Approximately 1.8 percent of Heck's messaging depicted him as in the district,

indicating that he may not believe his constituents require a regular presence from him.

Given this data, Heck's social media presentation of self is issue orientated.

District 4

Table 7: District 4

Twitter Handle	First Elected	No. of Tweets Aug. 1-Nov. 4	Election Results	Tweet Home Style
@StevenHorsford	2012	241	45.76% of the Vote	Personal

---

[3] Congressman Joe Heck meeting on November 25, 2013, at 3 p.m. at Humana Guidance Center, 1000 N Green Valley Pkwy, Suite 720, Henderson, NV 89074.

The first representative of color from Nevada, Rep. Horsford, an African American, lost his election after serving his first term to a Republican opponent from rural Southern Nevada that nearly everyone thought he would beat. Low turnout from Democrats prompted a flood of out-of-state funding to propel his opponent to a weak win (Rindels & Riccardi, 2014). Even the conservative local paper endorsed Horsford, who tweeted about it. Although he did not tweet as frequently as Rep. Titus, his Democratic colleague who was in a safer district in terms of registered Democrats, he tweeted more than Nevada Republican members, and demonstrated frequent trips back to the district.

Also like Titus, Horsford, a former state senate majority leader, largely posted personal messages about his thoughts and activities outside of work in Washington. Approximately 26 percent of coded messages were of a personal nature. For example, in 2013, Horsford, 40, had non-elective heart surgery to address a hereditary condition (Everett, 2013) and in 2014, he regularly posted about running.

He also retweeted frequently, indicating that he and his team actively monitored Twitter for relevant messages to repost. Approximately 26 percent of his total tweets during this time period were retweets. In one instance, he retweeted a retweet about his original tweet.

His most retweeted original post was an issue-orientated tweet about the need to increase the minimum wage on Sept. 29. It was retweeted 40 times (by other Twitter handles, not including @StevenHorsford).

Looking at the variables related to Fenno's foundation of presentation of self, only 8 percent of his coded messages were issue-based, similarly 8 percent were person-

to-person type communication and 2.7 percent demonstrated services to the district. This frames Horsford as a primarily personal poster.

Conclusion

Businesses and organizations regularly use Twitter to create electronic word of mouth as a form of online branding (Burton & Soboleva, 2011) and this paper begins to address how representatives are using the medium to brand themselves.

Despite the limitations of this case study, this research shows that Fenno's core staples of presentation of self are viable in members of Congress' social media presentations to followers. They tweeted a significant number of issue-orientated and person-to-person messages. They also did so in unique ratios that reflected their individuality as people. However, it shows that using Twitter to provide services to the district may be more challenging. Constituent casework is one of the most valuable and rewarding services a congressman can provide and has a statistical relationship to re-election (Dodd & Oppenheimer, 2013; Johannes, 1983). The use of social media to facilitate services to the district should be studied further, whereas Twitter's ability to potentially increase civic and political engagement is an appealing positive externality.

Apart from Fenno's theory, this data shows that representatives used this direct communication method far more frequently than they could employ other forms such as television or radio ads, electronic newsletters or press releases. For example, Horsford tweeted 11 times on Oct. 13. Titus tweeted 21 times on Oct. 29. While Rep. Heck's 135 tweets on Sept. 17 may seem excessive, when candidates are vying to achieve top-of-mind among constituents, frequency of messaging is a key tactic (Shaw, 2010).

In addition, the personal messages representatives posted may prove to provide a rich context for their policy decisions. Fenno emphasized that it is these displays of personal perspectives, unrelated to the policy activities of Washington, D.C., that help us understand congressional business (1978). So when Horsford posted, "My son reminded @SonyaHorsford & me that today would've been Trayvon Martin's 18th bday. Made saying 'I love you' all the more meaningful," it demonstrated a personal connection to current events and may help explain to some voters why Horsford voted for a Stand Your Ground law as a Nevada senator and then later called for the repeal of such state laws as a Congressman (Ralston, 2013). While not explicitly part of Fenno's home style theory, personal messages are not mutually exclusive to other categories and are indicative of non-official business, showing another side of the congressional representative not represented in the normative literature and worthy of study.

Further research might include whether these ratios of Fenno's presentation of self variables and the frequency of tweets change before, during and after campaigns and the role of negative or attack tweets in campaigns. It would also be useful to determine what issues members of Congress are tweeting, what kinds of tweets are most often retweeted and if they are related to representatives' Washington activities. While there is no research indicating that tweets are related to candidates' wins or losses (Mirier & Bode), scholars may be able to determine helpful practices to increase civic and political participation. Finally, political scientists should examine the benefits of tweeting. Although posts are micro in size, effective social media messaging has significant costs in terms of campaign staff and resources. Representatives and candidates rarely do the posting without some staff assistance or oversight and the potential for mistakes that can

be instantly retweeted nationally poses a significant threat to re-election (Straus, et. al,

2013). Whether representatives should spend resources on this medium; determining the

substance of what they are saying and how often; and the impact of these messages on the

electorate are all worthy areas of future study that may serve to improve participation and

engagement in the political process. Or, as Fenno predicted, scholars may also determine

that they can use the content of these messages to gain a greater understanding of policy

adoption and implementation in American politics.

References:

About Twitter (2015). Available at: https://about.twitter.com/company

Amira, D. (Sept. 3, 2013). Who do members of Congress follow on Twitter. New York Magazine. Available at: http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2013/08/who-do-members-of-congress-follow-on-twitter.html

Burton, S; Soboleva, A. (2011). Interactive or reactive? Marketing with Twitter, Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 28 Iss. 7 pp. 491 - 499

Cohn, A.M. (Sept. 25, 2012). More than 60 members of Congress just say no to Twitter's 140 characters. The Hill. Available at http://thehill.com/blogs/twitter-room/other-news/251417-more-than-50-members-of-congress-just-say-no-to-twitters-140-characters

Evans, H.K; Cordova, V.; Sipole, S. (2014). Twitter Style: An Analysis of How House Candidates Used Twitter in Their 2012 Campaigns. Political Science & Politics, Vol. 47, Issue 02, pp. 454-462.

Everett, B. (July 1, 2013). Rep. Steven Horsford has heart surgery. Politico. Available at: http://www.politico.com/story/2013/07/steven-horsford-heart-surgery-93631.html

Fenno, R. (1978). *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts.* Longman. New York: NY.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Anchor Books, New York: NY.

Golbeck, J.; Grimes, J.M. & Rogers, A. (2010). Twitter Use by the U.S. Congress. Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology. Vol. 61, Issue 8, pp. 1612-1621.

Johannes, J.R. 1983. Explaining Congressional Casework Styles. *American Journal of Political Science.* Vol. 27, pp. 530-47.

Leuthold, D.A. (1979). Home Style: House Members in Their Districts (Book Review). *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 1, pp. 150-151.

Library of Congress is archiving all of America's Tweets, (Jan. 22, 2010). *Business Insider.* Available at: http://www.businessinsider.com/library-of-congress-is-archiving-all-of-americas-tweets-2013-1#ixzz3UZUGDFjb

McGraw, K.M.; Timpone, R.; Brucl, G. (1993). Justifying Controversial Political Decisions: Home Style in the Laboratory. *Political Behavior*, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 289-308.

Mirier, M.L.; Bode, L. (2015). Tweeting in defeat: How candidates concede and claim victory in 140 characters. *New Media & Society*. Vol. 17(3) pp. 454-469.

Ralston, J. (July 22, 2013). Stand Your Ground Law in Nevada as Proposed by a Democrat and Pushed by Democrats. Ralston Reports. Available at: https://www.ralstonreports.com/blog/stand-your-ground-law-nevada-was-proposed-democrat-and-pushed-democrats

Rindels, M.; Riccardi, N. (Nov. 11, 2014). GOP wave decimates ranks of rising Democratic rising stars. *The Mercury*. Available at: http://www.pottsmerc.com/government-and-politics/20141111/gop-wave-decimates-ranks-of-rising-democratic-stars

Sen. Lindsey Graham, potential Republican presidential candidate, says he's never sent an email. (March 8, 2015). *Fox News.Com*. Available at: http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2015/03/08/sen-lindsey-graham-potential-republican-presidential-candidate-say-hes-never/

Spillman, B. (July 30, 2013). When interviewing Joe Heck save Twitter questions for last. *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. Available at: http://www.reviewjournal.com/political-eye/when-interviewing-joe-heck-save-twitter-questions-last

Straus, J.R.; Glassman, M.E.; Shogan, C.J.; Smelcer, S.N. (2013). Communicating in 140 Characters of Less: Congressional Adoption of Twitter in the 111th Congress. *Political Science and Politics*. Vol. 46, Issue 01. pp. 60-66.

Who's really using Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr and Instagram in 2015. (Jan. 12, 2015). *Ad Week*. Available at http://www.adweek.com/news/advertising-branding/new-social-stratosphere-who-using-facebook-twitter-pinterest-tumblr-and-instagram-2015-and-beyond-1622

Zimmer, M.; Proferes, N.J. (2014). A Topology of Twitter Research: Disciplines, Methods and Ethics. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*. Vol. 66, No.3, pp. 250-261.