

# **The use of social media in the Finnish Parliament Elections 2011**

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## Summary

The report briefly outlines the role of online social media in the Finnish Parliament Elections of 17 April 2011. The main objective is to produce basic knowledge about the use of social media by the elected Members of Parliament (MPs) for a four week period: three weeks before and one week after the elections. To achieve this goal, the study examined the online social media profiles of MPs, focusing on their use of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blog platforms and Flickr. Overall, despite expectations of a significant effect that social media might have had in the elections, the majority of the current MPs have not displayed any extensive use of the social media as a tool to communicate with constituents. However, all parties, now recognized as leading in the Finnish Parliament, have registered their accounts in and actively use almost all social media considered in the study.

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# INTRODUCTION

The most recent release of the Official Statistics Finland (2011) on the issue says that the use of the Internet in Finland is ever more widespread. The popularity of social media is also growing: now as many as forty-seven per cent of Finns aged 16 to 74 are registered into various social network services such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. It is also important to mention that according to the same report a third of all Finns follow social network services daily, while of young people and young adults about two thirds visit these services every day. Finns actively share content online and whilst global platforms such as Facebook and YouTube are popular, there are also a number of domestic platforms with many users, such as Suomi24 and IRC-Galleria. According to Socialbakers (2012) 39 per cent are registered on Facebook. According to the Official Statistics Finland (2011) report, sharing content is a very popular activity among Finns with 28 per cent regularly sharing text, images or other material online.

That along with the reduced campaign budgets have probably gave a ground for expectations of a significant role that social media would play in the Parliamentary Elections 2011<sup>1</sup>. The present study examined if and how the newly selected Finnish MPs used online social media three weeks before the elections (as parliamentary candidates) and one week after the election (as already elected MPs).

## Definition

“Social media” as a term is often used interchangeably with “social network sites”, “social web”, “Web 2.0” and “Customer Generated Content” (CGC) or “User Generated Content” (UGC) (Constantinides, Lorenzo, & Gomez, 2008). In this project, we have chosen to employ the term “online social media” because it combines three key elements of the phenomenon: informational, social and technical. Informational element refers to content that can be transmitted from one side to another, which equals social media to traditional media. Social element is exactly about the difference between these two types of media. It refers to “new ideas about the connected society” or “a more socially connected Web” (Anderson, 2007, p. 5), where the information is not just transmitted, but being circulated among participants who can change their roles from content consumer to content creator (Shao, 2009). Technical element refers to online nature of the services and their easy-to-use design for creating and sharing content.

There is also no general agreement about the definition of social media in the academic literature or practitioners' manuals. It seems that every study approaches the phenomenon in its own way, distinguishing a certain aspects from the variety of others. Boyd & Ellison (2007) and *Ellison Steinfeld, and Lampe (2007)* place emphasis on the

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1 YLE News: Tsunami Without an Earthquake? How the Web is Changing Finnish Politics. By Egan Richardson, published 14 April 2011, retrieved 15 July 2011, from: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2011/04/tsunami\\_without\\_an\\_earthquake\\_how\\_the\\_web\\_is\\_changing\\_finnish\\_politics\\_2515214.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2011/04/tsunami_without_an_earthquake_how_the_web_is_changing_finnish_politics_2515214.html)



possibilities for self-presentation and building contacts on a larger scale while defining social network sites. Anderson (2007), Beer and Burrows (2007) define Web 2.0 mostly as a technological or socio-technical phenomenon, focusing on its capabilities to add to and edit the information space easily. Finin and colleagues (2008) praise social media for its potential to transmit information, engage in discussions, and form communities on the Internet.

In this line, the emphasis of the current project has been placed on online social media as a collection of web-based services which provide users with a dynamic way to create and share content, build communities, engage in discussions, participate and encourage participating. We focus primarily on Facebook (personal and public pages), blogs, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr, five currently popular social media tools. Other social media tools, such as Finland's most used message board Suomi24 and social networking site IRC-Galleria also enjoy popularity among Finns, but are not discussed here as they have lower usage by the Finnish MPs<sup>2</sup>.

## Data and methods

The ability to mobilize supporters in online social media could well be considered an important asset for achieving success in election campaign. The success of an election campaign is to get elected. Following the buzz about the role of social media in the Finnish parliamentary elections 2011, our project was aimed to explore how 200 elected (i.e. successful) candidates used the online social media tools during and immediately after the campaign.

To collect the data, we searched through the profiles of all 200 elected MPs on Facebook (personal and public pages), blogs (all platforms that were used by MPs for blogging), Twitter, YouTube and Flickr, and checked how those profiles were used during three weeks before the election and one week after the elections 2011. The parliamentary elections in Finland were held on 17 April 2011, accordingly the study period for all social media, except Twitter, constituted a time line from 27 March 2011 to 24 April 2011. The study period for Twitter accounts was two months: 1 March to 30 April 2011.

The social media accounts were checked for a number of status updates/posts (creating and sharing content), a number of friends or followers (building communities), a number of comments or status updates made by other users on MPs' social media profiles (engaging in discussions), and a number of other users' replies to the most popular posts or status updates made by MPs (participating and encouraging participating). The data from every profile was collected from 16 May 2011 to 29 June 2011. The results are given according to these dates.

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<sup>2</sup> Facebook, YouTube, Suomi24, IRC-Galleria and Twitter are the most popular social media destinations in Finland according to the report of the US State Department (2010) and Alexa.com. However, the project considers blogs and Flickr, and not Suomi24 and IRC-Galleria, as they have wider use among Finnish MPs and, consequently, give better fit for the project objective. In addition, it is difficult to reliably find all message board activity by a certain politician.

## RESULTS

As online social media data changes quickly, the results below represent ‘snapshots’ of MPs’ social media accounts when the data has been gathered. This information provides a context for how online social media has been used by MPs, but does not necessarily indicate the role, influence, or popularity of the MPs in the political arena.

### Facebook

According to the Alexa traffic rankings, Facebook is the second most popular site in the world and the first most popular online social media application in Finland<sup>1</sup>. It continues rapidly growing in popularity with estimated 45 per cent of Finns having been registered as Facebook users (Socialbakers 2012). It is also the most used online social media site by the Finnish MPs: 163 MPs (81.5 per cent) have personal profiles and 110 MPs (55 per cent) have public profiles on Facebook. The MPs are represented on Facebook through their political parties as well: all eight political parties currently presenting in the Finnish Parliament have their accounts on Facebook.

### Facebook facts<sup>2</sup>

→ There are different types of Facebook accounts: personal profiles and public profiles (pages).

→ Personal profiles represent individuals and are held under an individual name. They usually display personal details, but can also contain the facts about professional activity of an individual. Personal profiles can be administrated in a way that people searching for MPs are unable to contact them or view details without becoming their friend. In other words, only friends can access complete information put by an MP, for other users only a restricted part or none of the information is available. Such profiles are referred as “close” in this project. There are also personal profiles, which can be viewed by other users, but only friends can engage in conversation with a profile owner by posting comments to status updates (or making own status updates). Such profiles are referred as “semi-open” in this project. The personal profiles are qualified as “open”, when all users despite their relation to a profile owner can access complete information and also comment on status updates. Every personal profile may have no more than 5,000 friends.

1 About Facebook in the world: <http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/facebook.com> about Facebook in Finland: <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/FI> (Accessed 15 July 2011)

2 Facebook facts are based on the information retrieved 16 July 2011 from the The New York Times article by Ball A.L., published 28 May 2010 “Are 5,001 Facebook Friends One Too Many?”, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/30/fashion/30FACEBOOK.html>, and also from the Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=217671661585622> (both accessed 16 July 2011).

- A Public profile or a Page is usually created by organizations, businesses, and celebrities to broadcast information in an official, public manner to people who choose to connect with them. Similar to personal profiles, Pages can be enhanced with applications that help the entity communicate and engage with their audiences, and capture new audiences virally through friend recommendations, News Feed stories, Facebook events, and beyond. Pages do not gain friends, but fans who like the Page (Facebook mostly ceased using the term fan around April 2010 and uses terms Like and Users instead). In order to become a fan and like a Page, one does not have to be a friend of a Page creator. Page likers can engage in conversation with a Page creator by posting comments to status updates or posting their own status updates. There are no limits for a number of fans: every page can have as many likes as it manages to earn.
- Each Facebook profile has a function called theWall, where friends/fans can post comments. In case of personal profiles, the wall activities are viewable only in “open” and “semi-open” profiles, “close” profiles restrict access to wall activities.

## Facebook personal profiles

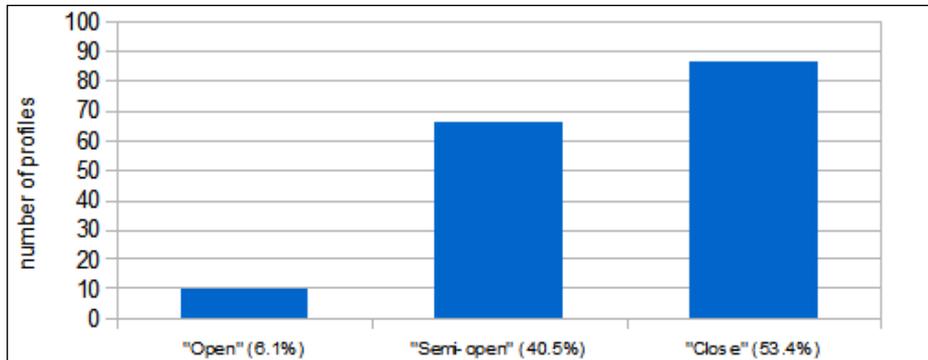
There are 163 MPs who have personal profiles on Facebook (Fb), 72 of them are female and 91 are male (see Table 1)<sup>3</sup>. The chi square test indicates that Fb usage is associated with the age of the MP, but not with the gender.

**Table 1: General statistics on MPs' Facebook personal profiles**

		Number of MPs in the Parliament:	Number of MPs with Fb personal profiles:	Per cent of MPs with Fb personal profiles:
		<b>200</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>81.5%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	85	72	84.7%
	<b>Male</b>	115	91	79.1%
p=ns. (FET)				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Younger than 30</b>	9	8	88.9%
	<b>30-45</b>	71	64	90.1%
	<b>46-60</b>	92	76	82.6%
	<b>Older than 60</b>	28	15	53.6%
$\chi^2=18,042; df=3; p<0.001$				

It might be expected for public figures like MPs that there is a relatively small number of closed personal profiles. However, only ten out of 163 MPs provide all users with full access to their personal profiles allowing them to read, comment, and participate in conversation. Other 66 MPs have semi-open profiles, meaning that they disclose their information to all users, but only friends can take part in conversation. And 87 MPs have close personal profiles, meaning that users are unable to contact MPs or view details without becoming their friend (see Graph 1).

<sup>3</sup> The profiles were found using the search function in Facebook and further their photos and personal information were used to verify their identity.

**Graph 1: Facebook personal profiles of MPs (n=163)**

The MPs representing Vasemmistoliitto (Left-Wing Alliance) and Suomen Ruotsalainen Kansanpuolue (Swedish People's Party in Finland) all have personal profiles on Facebook, though half of them are with the restricted access (close profiles). It is also worthy to note that the personal profiles are launched by the MPs across all political parties represented in the current Finnish Parliament (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Personal profiles of MPs on Facebook by political parties**

Party	Seats in the Parliament <sup>A</sup>	Personal profiles		Status of personal profiles		
		Num.	% of seats	Open	Semi-open	Close
Kansallinen Kokoomus (National Coalition Party)	44	33	75.0%	3	12	18
Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue (The Finnish Social Democratic Party)	42	35	83.3%	1	19	15
Perussuomalaiset (True Finns)	39	32	82.1%	3	12	17
Suomen Keskusta (Centre Party of Finland)	35	27	77.1%	1	13	13
Vasemmistoliitto (Left-Wing Alliance)	14	14	100%	1	7	6
Vihreä liitto (Green League)	10	7	70.0%	0	0	7
Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue (Swedish People's Party in Finland) and the Åland representative.	10	10	100%	1	3	6
Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit (Christian Democrats)	6	5	83.3%	0	0	5

$\chi^2=8,114$ ;  $df=7$ ;  $p=ns$ .<sup>B</sup>

For four largest parties  $\chi^2=1,775$ ;  $df=3$ ;  $p=ns$ .

A Retrieved 15 July 2011, from [http://www.stat.fi/til/evaa/2011/evaa\\_2011\\_2011-04-18\\_tie\\_001\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/evaa/2011/evaa_2011_2011-04-18_tie_001_en.html)

B Chi square test is not fully reliable if more than 20% of the expected values are less than 5 (Siegel & Castellan, 1988, 123). In this case, however, the estimated p-value was not significant regarding only the four largest parties either.

As of 30 May – 9 June 2011, ten MPs with most friends were the members of Finnish Social Democratic Party (4), National Coalition Party (2), True Finns (2), and Centre Party of Finland (2). This correlates well with the election results as the MPs with most friends represent the political parties with most seats in the Parliament (see Table 3).

**Table 3: MPs with most Facebook friends (data collected between May 30<sup>th</sup> and June 9<sup>th</sup>)**

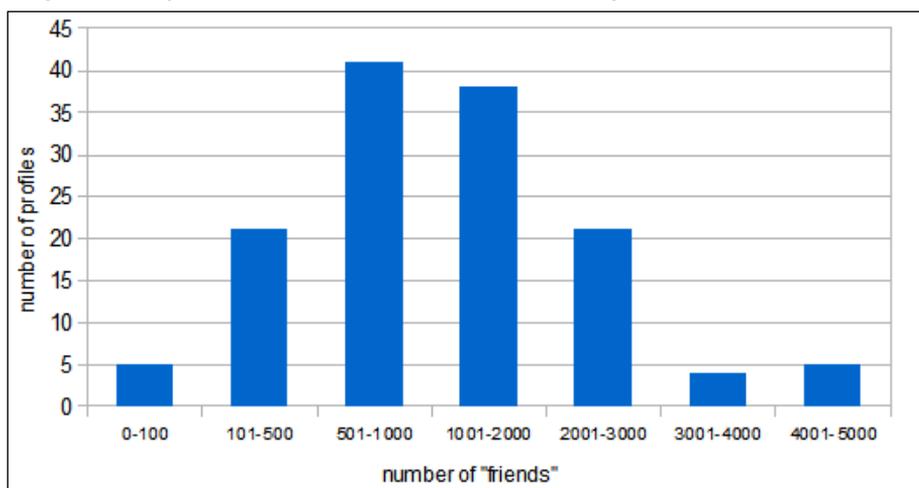
Name	Party	Number of friends
Halla-aho, Jussi	True Finns	5000 <sup>c</sup>
Skinnari, Jouko	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	5000
Kiviniemi, Mari	Centre Party of Finland	4984
Jungner, Mikael	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	4967
Elomaa, Ritva	True Finns	4877
Filatov, Tarja	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	3995
Heinonen, Timo	National Coalition Party	3805
Feldt-Ranta, Maarit	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	3450
Kaikkonen, Antti	Centre Party of Finland	3143
Harkimo, Leena	National Coalition Party	2984

C Maximum amount of friends in Facebook is 5000.

One of the top-10 Facebook personal profiles is open (Ritva Elomaa), two are closed (Tarja Filatov and Mikael Jungner), and others are semi-open.

The majority of MPs have about 500-1,000 friends, only five MPs have less than 100 friends and other five have more than 4,000 friends (see Graph 2). There are also 28 MPs whose personal profiles are close and do not display the number of friends.

**Graph 2: MPs by number of Facebook friends as of 30 May – 9 June 2011. (n=135)**

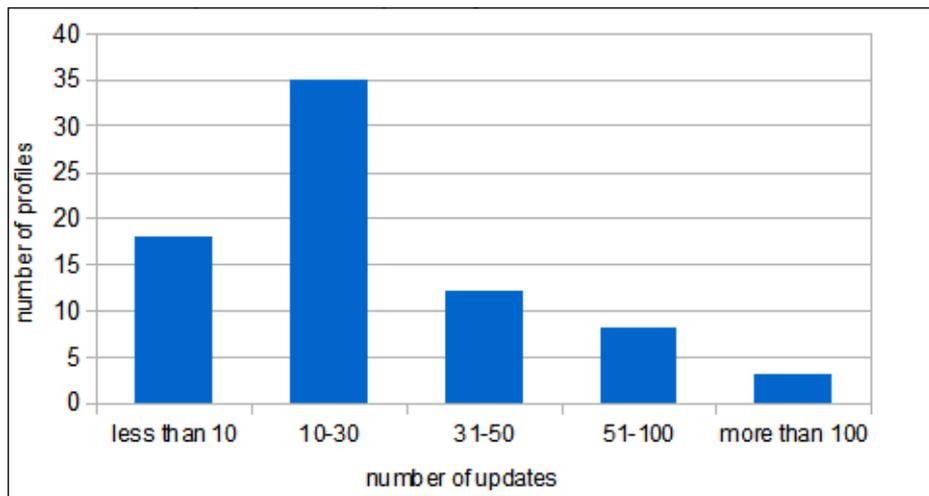


Most of the Facebook personal profiles were static in terms of MPs' participation. The wall activities in open and semi-open profiles<sup>4</sup> (76 out of 163) revealed that only

<sup>4</sup> "Close" profiles restrict access to wall activities.

24 MPs updated their profiles regularly or more than once a day (in total more than 28 times during the whole study period). 18 MPs updated their profiles less than ten times during the study period and four MPs did not update their profiles at all (see Graph 3). Most of the open and semi-open profiles were also low on interaction: 59 MPs had no messages on their walls left by other Facebook users, including their friends. However, we must take into consideration that due to Facebook privacy settings these posts might not be visible to a random visitor, but only to MP's friends.

**Graph 3: Facebook updates by MPs within 27 March – 24 April 2011.**



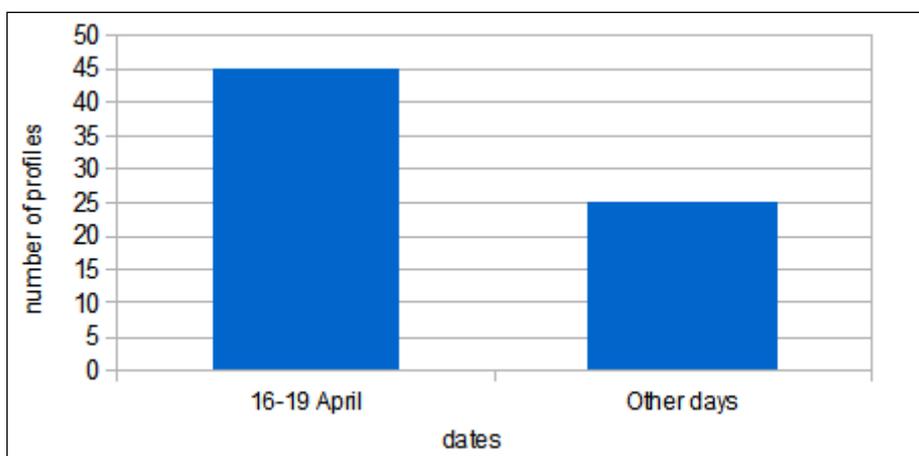
The number of MPs' updates seems to follow with the number of friends: most of the active MPs in terms of updating their Facebook profiles have more than 1,500 friends. The three most active Facebook updates represent the National Coalition party. However, the level of activity does not predict the level of interactivity. In other words, it seems the number of MPs' own updates is not connected to the number of messages left by other users on MPs' walls nor the number of MPs' replies to others' messages (see Table 4).

**Table 4: MPs with most Facebook updates within 27 March - 17 April 2011**

Name	Party	Number of friends <sup>D</sup>	Number of MPs' updates	Number of others' messages on MPs' walls	Number of others' messages replied by MPs
Heinonen, Timo	National Coalition Party	3805	237	300	37
Satonen, Arto	National Coalition Party	2495	205	0	0
Männistö, Lasse	National Coalition Party	2166	138	0	0
Sarkomaa, Sari	National Coalition Party	2604	83	123	5
Kumpula-Natri, Miapetra	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	2017	77	0	0
Paatero, Sirpa	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	1743	75	127	7
Kiuru, Krista	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	1548	64	0	0
Joutsenlahti, Anssi	True Finns	1302	62	0	0
Kiviniemi, Mari	Centre Party of Finland	4984	53	1	0
Väättäin, Juha	True Finns	461	53	0	0

D Data collected between 30 May 2011 – 9 June 2011

A peak in wall activities within the study period can be seen during the Election Day and the days before and after the elections (16-19 April 2011). During these four days the MPs' updates received the maximum number of replies and the maximum number of other users' messages left on MPs' walls. Most of the MPs' updates were thankful remarks and absolute majority of others' posts were congratulations and good wishes (see Graph 4).

**Graph 4: Most replied updates of MPs within 27 March - 24 April 2011**

As of 30 May – 9 June 2011, two MPs made no update on their Facebook wall during the study period at all, five MPs stopped updating their profiles right after the elections in April, and other 18 stopped posting anything on their Facebook wall in May 2011.

### Facebook public profiles (Pages)

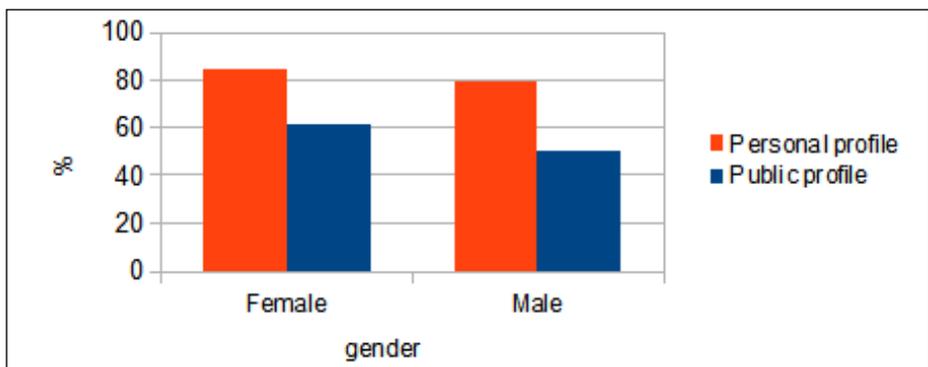
There are 110 MPs who have public profiles on Facebook, 52 of them are female and 58 are male (see Table 5). It should be noted, however, that there are 92 MPs who have both personal and public profiles.

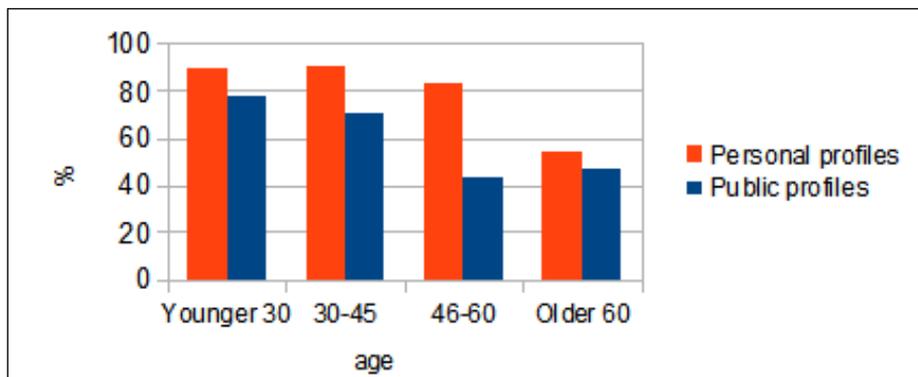
**Table 5: General statistics on MPs' Facebook public profiles (Pages)**

		Number of MPs in the Parliament: 200	Number of MPs with Fb public profiles: 110	Per cent of MPs with Fb public profiles: 55%
Gender	Female	85	52	61.2%
	Male	115	58	50.4%
p=ns. (FET)				
Age	Younger than 30	9	7	77.7%
	30-45	71	50	70.4%
	46-60	92	40	43.5%
	Older than 60	28	13	46.4%
$\chi^2=14,476$ ; $df=3$ ; $p<0.01$				

Although the public profiles on Facebook are specifically meant to be used by public figures like politicians, they have turned to be less popular among the Finnish MPs comparing to the personal profiles (see Graphs 5 and 6). However, as with personal profiles, the chi square test indicates that age is associated with the usage of Fb public profiles, even though the level of significance is smaller.

**Graph 5: Facebook personal and public profiles by gender of MPs**



**Graph 6: Facebook personal and public profiles by age of MPs**

As of 9-16 June 2011, the public profiles were mostly used by the Green League members and member of the Swedish People's Party in Finland. Only half of the representatives of other parties took advantage of the public profiles on Facebook (see Table 6).

**Table 6: MPs' public profiles on Facebook by political parties**

Party	Seats in the Parliament	Public profiles	
		Number	% of seats
Kansallinen Kokoomus (National Coalition Party)	44	27	61.4%
Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue (The Finnish Social Democratic Party)	42	22	52.4%
Perussuomalaiset (True Finns)	39	14	35.9%
Suomen Keskusta (Centre Party of Finland)	35	19	54.3%
Vasemmistoliitto (Left-Wing Alliance)	14	8	57.1%
Vihreä liitto (Green League)	10	9	90.0%
Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue (Swedish People's Party in Finland) and the Åland representative	10	8	80%
Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit (Christian Democrats)	6	3	50.0%

$\chi^2=14,154$ ;  $df=7$ ;  $p<0.053^E$

E The chi square test is not fully reliable if more than 20% of the expected values are less than 5 (Siegel & Castellan, 1988, 123). In this case, the estimated p-value was significant when calculated only for the seven largest parties but not for the four largest parties. The percentages and chi square estimates imply that the biggest difference is between True Finns, Green League and the Swedish People's Party in Finland.

The MPs' public profiles can hardly be called informative. Only 28 out of 110 profiles contained the details about MPs' political programmes (strategies, plans), interests, activities, professional achievements (career details), education background, contacts and links to their campaign websites. Other 20 profiles contained no piece of information on professional activities (career details) of MPs, 72 profiles gave no details on educational background of MPs, 21 profiles did not mention any political claims,

interests or activities of MPs, 29 profiles had no contact information, ten profiles had no links to campaign websites of MPs, and one profile contained no information about an MP at all.

Success of Facebook public profiles is measured by the number of likes. The highest ranking public profiles of the Finnish MPs do not necessarily reflect the election results (if to consider allocation of seats within the Parliament), but prove the popularity level of certain political parties' leaders (see Table 7).

**Table 7: MPs with most Facebook likes as of 9–16 June 2011**

Name	Party	Number of people who “like this”
Räsänen, Päivi	Christian Democrats	6181
Arhinmäki, Paavo	Left-Wing Alliance	6018
Stubb, Alexander	Centre Party of Finland	5760
Haavisto, Pekka	Green League	5380
Hirvisaari, James	True Finns	3810
Katainen, Jyrki	National Coalition Party	3288
Urpilainen, Jutta	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	2590
Sinnemäki, Anni	Green League	2532
Modig, Anna Silvia	Left-Wing Alliance	2115
Soini, Timo	True Finns	1692

All ten most popular public profiles contained pictures of the MPs and links to their campaign websites, nine of them contained information about professional activities of MPs, eight of them contained the details describing the MPs as personalities or politicians, eight of them provided contacts of the MPs, and three of them outlined educational background of the MPs.

Within the study period only three MPs with the most popular profiles according to the number of fans were also the most active in updating their Pages. They are Alexander Stubb, Anni Sinnemäki, and Silvia Modig, who was also high on interaction, receiving the biggest number of messages from other users and replying them back.

Seven MPs from the list with the highest number of fans were also recognized as having posted the most popular updates within the study period, where the most popular updates were measured by comments and likes received from other users (see Table 8).

**Table 8: Most popular updates by MPs within 27 March – 24 April 2011**

Name	Number of comments received for the most popular update	Number of likes received by the most popular update
Stubb, Alexander	112	718
Katainen, Jyrki	69	315
Modig, Anna	62	457
Hirvisaari, James	62	188
Urpilainen, Jutta	61	335
Arhinmäki, Paavo	36	330
Sinnemäki, Anni	31	154

Five of these updates were made on the day of the election or the day before and after the election (16-18 April 2011) and mostly contained appeals to “fans” to come to vote and expressions of thanks after voting. One of the most popular updates was made on 13 April 2011 returning home from a TV debate (“Tuli kotiin pääministeritentistä ja teki lihapullia yöpalaksi.. Taas on yksi tentti takana!”), and another one was made on 30 March 2011, also related to TV debates thus visibility in conventional media (“Miten meni vaalitentti? Kuulisin mielelläni teidän näkemyksiä keskustelusta. Eli mikä kiinnosti? Mitkä olivat keskustelun hyvät ja huonot puolet? Jne”).

Overall, almost every public profile had its own one or two most popular updates in comparison to others within the study period. We considered 114 such updates and 54 of them (47.4%) were made during the Election Day or the day before and after the election (16-18 April 2011).

It is also needed to be noted that as of 9-16 June 2011 five out of 110 public profiles were not updated during the study period, and other 36 profiles stopped being updated after the election campaign was over (last update was made in April 2011).

## Blogs

Alexa.com<sup>5</sup> shows that one of the weblog publishing platforms (Blogger.com) is in the top-10 most visited websites in Finland. Other sources show that about 37 thousand bloggers create more than four thousand posts and 50 new blogs every day<sup>6</sup>. It is also reported that blogs in Finland steadily increase their influence over people’s behaviour and attitudes<sup>7</sup>. Just before the elections the traditional media aired a statement that “blogs are still significant” for the Finnish politics<sup>8</sup>.

This study considered all blogging platforms used by MPs, including MPs’ campaigning websites, local and international blog platforms, media websites with blog publishing services. The information about MPs’ blogs has been collected between 17-27 June 2011, therefore the results are given accordingly to these dates.

According to the results, 177 out of 200 Finnish MPs have blogs, which constitutes 88.5% . The age of the MP is not a determinant for blogging: the younger MPs almost all have blogs, but other age groups are also well represented among bloggers. However, parties are associated with the probability of blogging, as is shown by the chi square test in Table 10. Relatively the most blogging parties are Green League and Christian Democrats: all MPs representing these two parties have blogs. The least blogging party is Centre Party of Finland and compared to all other parties the difference is statistically extremely significant ( $p=0.000$  FET): only half of MPs representing this party have blogs (see Tables 9 and 10). Some of the MPs publish their posts on up to 4 different blogging platforms, though usually they are the same posts just repeated on different websites.

5 <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/FI> (Accessed 26 July 2011)

6 <http://www.blogijista.fi/> (Accessed 26 July 2011)

7 [http://www.mediatoimistovoitto.fi/sivut/mita\\_teenme/#kunpu](http://www.mediatoimistovoitto.fi/sivut/mita_teenme/#kunpu) (Case: Linkki: Tutkimus sosiaalisesta mediasta, accessed 15 July 2011)

8 YLE News: Tsunami Without an Earthquake? How the Web is Changing Finnish Politics. By Egan Richardson, published 14 April 2011, retrieved 15 July 2011, from: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2011/04/tsunami\\_without\\_an\\_earthquake\\_how\\_the\\_web\\_is\\_changing\\_finnish\\_politics\\_2515214.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2011/04/tsunami_without_an_earthquake_how_the_web_is_changing_finnish_politics_2515214.html)

**Table 9: General statistics on MPs' blogs**

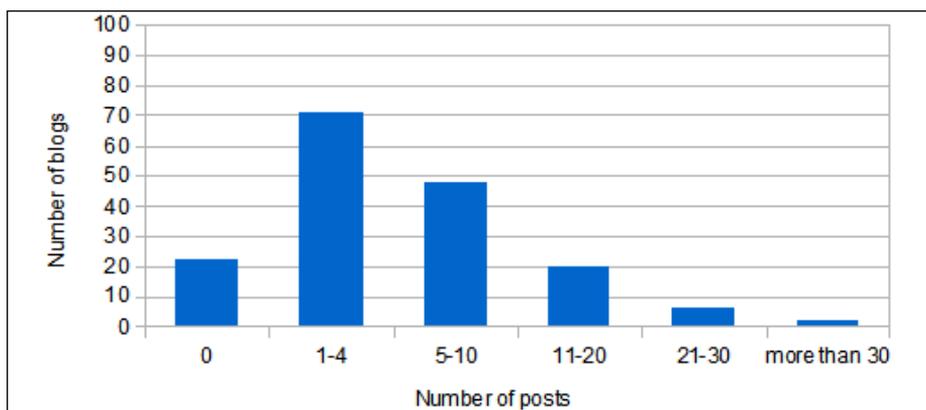
		Number of MPs in the Parliament: 200	Number of MPs with blogs: 177	Per cent of MPs with blogs: 88.5%
Gender	Female	85	77	90.6%
	Male	115	100	87.0%
p=ns. (FET)				
Age	Younger than 30	9	9	100%
	30-45	71	66	92.6%
	46-60	92	81	88.0%
	Older than 60	28	21	75.0%
$\chi^2=7,589$ ; $df=3$ ; $p<0.10$				

**Table 10: MPs' blogs by political parties**

Party	Seats in the Parliament	Blogs	
		Number	% of seats
Kansallinen Kokoomus (National Coalition Party)	44	37	84.0%
Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue (The Finnish Social Democratic Party)	42	38	90.5%
Perussuomalaiset (True Finns)	39	35	89.7%
Suomen Keskusta (Centre Party of Finland)	35	19	54.3%
Vasemmistoliitto (Left-Wing Alliance)	14	13	92.9%
Vihreä liitto (Green League)	10	10	100%
Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue (Swedish People's Party in Finland) and the Åland representative	10	7	70%
Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit (Christian Democrats)	6	6	100%
$\chi^2=28,391$ ; $df=7$ ; $p<0.001^F$			

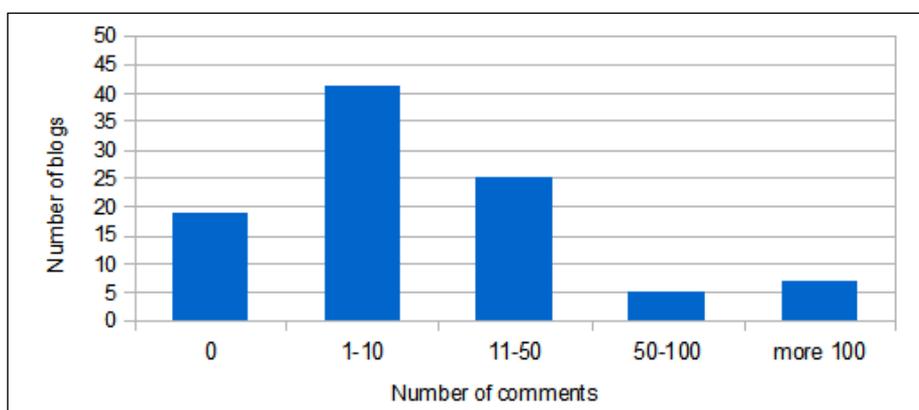
<sup>F</sup> The chi square test is not fully reliable if more than 20% of the expected values are less than 5 (Siegel & Castellan, 1988, 123). When only the Centre party of Finland was compared to other parties, FET gives  $p=0.000$ .

However, having a blog does not always mean using it for publishing messages or interacting with the community. Thus, seven out of 177 blogs were never used and contained no posts at all, other 22 were not updated during the study period and 20 more were updated just once during the study period (see Graph 7).

**Graph 7: Number of posts on MPs' blogs within 27 March – 24 April 2011.**

Moreover, 66 blogs do not enable comments, so that there is no interactivity or live possibility for exchange of views. There are also the blogs that technically support possibility to comment, but still are low on interactivity due to a small number of comments coming in reply to posts (see Graph 8). As of 17-27 June 2011 there were 19 blogs with no comments given to the posts. Thus, in total, there were 85 blogs (48%) which were not commented by readers at all, and other 17 blogs (9.6%) which were commented only once or twice during the whole study period. However, it should be marked that one of the blogs with no “comment” option is one of the most read political blogs in Finland; it belongs to Jussi Kristian Halla-aho<sup>9</sup>. Three more blogs with no possibility for comments to be added have been updated, though, almost every day (23-28 times during the study period) and belong to Timo Heinonen (28 posts), Reijo Hongisto (23 posts), Seppo Kääriäinen (23 posts)<sup>10</sup>.

**Graph 8: Number of comments in MPs’ blogs within 27 March – 24 April 2011.**



Three bloggers out of all 177 were extremely high in both posting and receiving comments (see Table 11). Every of these three bloggers has two blogs, though, most or all posts are just duplicated from one blog to another. In case of duplicating two same posts on different blogs were counted as one, but comments were recognized original, not duplicating, and counted all as collected from both blogs.

**Table 11: MPs with most blog posts made and comments received within 27.3-24.4. 2011**

Name	Party	Number of posts	Number of comments
Soininvaara, Osmo	Green League	51	3538
Joutsenlahti, Anssi	True Finns	46	92
Tossavainen, Reijo	True Finns	29	410

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.halla-aho.com/scripta/>

<sup>10</sup> Accordingly: <http://www.timoheinonen.fi/index.php?page=blogi>, <http://www.reijohongisto.fi/index.php>, <http://www.seppokaariainen.net/kommentit>

Two of these bloggers published the posts which were recognized among the most popular in terms of comments received within the study period (see Table 12). The most active blogger in terms of blog post count in the study period was Osmo Soininvaara, who also clearly had the biggest amount of comments in total (on average 69 comments per blog post). He also published the most popular blog post as measured by comments in the whole data; pondering the election result just a day after the Election day on April 18<sup>th</sup> a post which received 713 comments in total<sup>11</sup>.

What also has to be emphasized is that there are bloggers, who being low on publishing, stay popular in terms of receiving comments from their readers. In fact, if to consider only the number of comments received, these bloggers get inside the top ten blogging MPs in general and top ten of those whose posts made within the study period are recognized the most popular (see Table 12). Thus, for example, Kaj Turunen<sup>12</sup> published only two posts during the study period, but collected 112 comments, where 108 were given to only one of the posts. The fact that his blog is hosted in the blog archive of an online magazine Uusisuomi might partly explain the high number of comments; the blog gets more visibility on an online media platform than on a common blog service

**Table 12: MPs with a relatively small number of posts made, but a large number of comments received within 27.3 –24.4.2011**

Name	Party	Number of posts	Number of comments (total)	Post received most comments (date and title)	Number of comments for this post
Turunen, Kaj	True Finns	2	112	Date: 23.4.2011; Title: "Vihreiden pahaolo saa pelottavia muotoja"	108
Lipponen, Päivi	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	4	321	Date: 5.4.2011; Title: "Ihmeellistä vihan lietsontaa"	242
Vapaavuori, Jan	National Coalition Party	4	140	Date: 31.3.2011; Title: "Parkkipaikkoja kerjäläisille"	95
Pelkonen, Jaana	National Coalition Party	8	304	Date: 27-28.3.2011; Title: "Suomen paikka on Natossa"	162
Stubb, Alexander	National Coalition Party	12	326	Date: 23.4.2011; Title: "Vaalifiliksiä"	61

Overall, seven blogs had stopped being updated before year 2011 was started, other nine blogs stopped being updated before April 2011, 17 more blogs were last updated just before the elections, but not after, and for 23 other blogs the last post was published during the following month after the election (17 April – 17 May 2011).

11 "Mikä meni vikaan" (What went wrong) Blog 1: <http://www.soininvaara.fi/2011/04/18/mika-meni-vikaan/> Blog 2: <http://soininvaara.puheenvuoro.uusisuomi.fi/70321-mika-meni-vikaan>

12 <http://turuka.puheenvuoro.uusisuomi.fi/>

## Twitter

According to the US State Department Social Media Landscape report (2010), Twitter is listed among five most popular social media destinations in Finland. Alexa.com<sup>13</sup> marks it as 17<sup>th</sup> most visited Internet websites in Finland. The present study data suggests that Twitter, though, is not all that popular among the Finnish MPs. Female MPs have more interest in tweeting than male MPs, and popularity of Twitter goes down when the age of MPs goes up (see Table 13). Both age and gender are significantly associated with Twitter usage in statistical terms.

**Table 13: General statistics on Twitter**

		<b>Number of MPs in the Parliament: 200</b>	<b>Number of MPs with Twitter: 78</b>	<b>Per cent of MPs with Twitter: 39.0%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	85	43	50.6%
	<b>Male</b>	115	35	30.4%
p<0,01 (FET)				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Younger than 30</b>	9	7	77.8%
	<b>30-45</b>	71	39	54.9%
	<b>46-60</b>	92	29	31.5%
	<b>Older than 60</b>	28	3	10.7%
$\chi^2=24,841$ ; df=3; p<0.001				

Twitter is the most popular among MPs representing Green League in the Parliament and least popular among MPs from Christian Democrats, Centre Party of Finland and True Finns (see Table 14). The chi square test shows there is a relationship also between tweeting activity and the party the MP's are representing.

**Table 14: MPs' Twitter accounts by political parties**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Seats in the Parliament</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	
		<b>Number</b>	<b>% of seats</b>
Kansallinen Kokoomus (National Coalition Party)	44	25	56.8%
Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue (The Finnish Social Democratic Party)	42	20	47.6%
Perussuomalaiset (True Finns)	39	8	20.5%
Suomen Keskusta (Centre Party of Finland)	35	7	20.0%
Vasemmistoliitto (Left-Wing Alliance)	14	6	42.9%
Vihreä liitto (Green League)	10	7	70.0%
Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue (Swedish People's Party in Finland) and the Åland representative	10	4	40%
Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit (Christian Democrats)	6	1	16.7%
$\chi^2=24,487$ ; df=7; p<0.01			

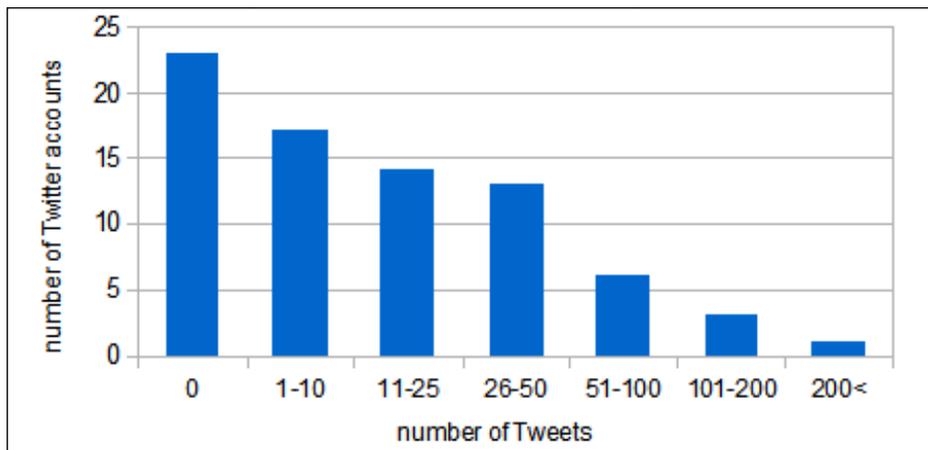
The number of Tweets for this study was counted for two months – 1 March to 30 April 2011. Accordingly the study period for Twitter was increased from four weeks

13 <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/FI> (Accessed 26 July 2011)

up to two months. The Tweets were counted with the help of the Internet-based tool TweetStats<sup>14</sup>. The information about MPs' Twitter accounts was collected 28-29 June 2011, and all results are given accordingly to these dates.

The data makes it obvious that for the Finnish MPs Twitter is not one of their favourite social media. Even a registered Twitter account does not guarantee that it is used by its owner. Thus, 23 out of 78 Twitter accounts were not used during March and April 2011 at all, and a few Tweets were made from other 17 accounts (see Graph 9).

**Graph 9: MP's tweets within March-April 2011 (n=78).**



The Twitter account of the current Prime Minister of Finland, Jyrki Katainen, was not considered for the number of Tweets and followers as it enabled only restricted access. Only confirmed followers can view Tweets of the Prime Minister and access his complete profile. One needs to send a request before it becomes possible to start following the Prime Minister's account. For this reason, we failed to collect the data from this account.

Alexander Stubb was the one who made most Tweets during two months of the study period (536 Tweets). He is also one of the top ten MPs with the largest number of Tweets made in total by 28-29 June 2011. This top list also shows that the most active Twitter users are the members of the Finnish Social Democratic Party, National Coalition Party and Green League (see Table 15).

<sup>14</sup> <http://tweetstats.com/>

**Table 15: MPs with most Tweets in total<sup>15</sup>**

Name	Party	Number of Tweets
Paasio, Heli	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	1597
Viitamies, Johanna	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	1419
Stubb, Alexander	National Coalition Party	1340
Tynkkynen, Oras	Green League	1268
Sinnemäki, Anni	Green League	938
Paatero, Sirpa	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	763
Heinonen, Timo	National Coalition Party	725
Jungner, Mikael	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	702
Autto, Heikki	National Coalition Party	367
Virkkunen, Henna	National Coalition Party	359

It has to be added that as of 28-29 June 2011, Heikki Autto and Timo Heinonen from the National Coalition Party stopped tweeting after April 2011.

In terms of the number of followers, Alexander Stubb is also leading the top list. He has nearly twice the number of followers compared to the next MP and several times compared to other MPs in this list (see Table 16).

**Table 16: MPs with most followers on Twitter<sup>16</sup>**

Name	Party	Number of followers
Stubb, Alexander	National Coalition Party	10669
Jungner, Mikael	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	5800
Sinnemäki, Anni	Green League	4192
Tynkkynen, Oras	Green League	2033
Kiviniemi, Mari	National Coalition Party	1879
Urpilainen, Jutta	The Finnish Social Democratic Party	1646
Haavisto, Pekka	Green League	1498
Virkkunen, Henna	National Coalition Party	1435
Modig, Anna	Left-Wing Alliance	1040
Toivola, Jani	Green League	828

The most popular MPs in terms of the number of Twitter followers are the members of Green League and National Coalition Party. Though it is needed to be added again that as of 28-29 June 2011, Jani Toivola from Green League and Mari Kiviniemi from National Coalition Party stopped tweeting after April 2011. Overall, 37 MPs (47.4%) made no tweets after April 2011.

## YouTube and Flickr

Alexa.com<sup>17</sup> puts YouTube on the fourth place of the list with most visited websites in Finland. The US State Department Social Media Landscape report (2010) mentions YouTube as one of the most popular online social media in Finland. The present study explored the MPs' use of both video and audio content sharing service (YouTube) and

<sup>15</sup> Data collected 28-29 June 2011

<sup>16</sup> Data collected 28-29 June 2011

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/FI> (Accessed 26 July 2011)

picture sharing service (Flickr). We also checked the local social networking service and personal picture sharing platform, IRC-Galleria, but found out that only one MP used this service and decided not to include it into the study.

YouTube as a social media tool turned, though, to be even less popular among MPs than Twitter. Only 56 MPs launched their individual YouTube channels, but 165 MPs were tagged on YouTube videos posted by other users. Female MPs are slightly more interested in broadcasting videos through their YouTube channels than male MPs, but the difference is not statistically significant. However, the popularity of this social media service statistically depends on age: the numbers indicate that younger MPs are more likely to have a YouTube channel than older MPs (see Table 17).

**Table 17: General statistics on MPs' YouTube channels**

		<b>Number of MPs in the Parliament:</b>	<b>Number of MPs with YouTube channels:</b>	<b>Per cent of MPs with YouTube channels:</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	85	27	31.8%
	<b>Male</b>	115	29	25.2%
p=ns. (FET)				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Younger than 30</b>	9	8	88.9%
	<b>30-45</b>	71	27	38.0%
	<b>46-60</b>	92	16	17.4%
	<b>Older than 60</b>	28	5	17.9%
$\chi^2=26,658$ ; $df=3$ ; $p<0.001$				

YouTube channels are mostly used for presenting campaigning clips and presenting more casual videos with political content. There also the MPs whose art or sport background makes their YouTube channels overwhelmed with the corresponding content. Though the individual YouTube accounts appear to be not used much, and there is no relationship shown by the chi square test, it should be noted that the members of the Finnish Social Democratic Party and National Coalition Party are slightly more active than MPs representing other parties in the Parliament (see Table 18).

**Table 18: MPs' YouTube channels by political parties**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Seats in the Parliament</b>	<b>YouTube channel</b>	
		<b>Number</b>	<b>% of seats</b>
Kansallinen Kokoomus (National Coalition Party)	44	17	38.6%
Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue (The Finnish Social Democratic Party)	42	17	40.5%
Perussuomalaiset (True Finns)	39	10	25.6%
Suomen Keskusta (Centre Party of Finland)	35	7	20.0%
Vasemmistoliitto (Left-Wing Alliance)	14	2	14.3%
Vihreä liitto (Green League)	10	1	10.0%
Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue (Swedish People's Party in Finland) and the Åland representative	10	1	10%
Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit (Christian Democrats)	6	1	16.7%
$\chi^2=11,833$ ; $df=7$ ; $p=ns.$ <sup>G</sup>			

<sup>G</sup> The chi square test is not fully reliable if more than 20% of the expected values are less than 5 (Siegel & Castellan, 1988, 123); in YouTube statistics 31% of the values were under 5.

Flickr photostreams (individual accounts) were used only by 21 MPs, though 142 MPs were tagged on the pictures of other users. The photostreams mainly contain campaigning pictures of MPs like portraits for campaigning posters/booklets or pictures made during the street campaigning activities/speeches. Male MPs are slightly more interested in using Flickr than female MPs, and the younger MPs are using Flickr slightly more than the older MPs (see Table 19). However, these differences are not statistically valid.

**Table 19: General statistics on MPs' Flickr photostreams**

		Number of MPs in the Parliament: 200	Number of MPs with Flickr photostreams: 21	Per cent of MPs with Flickr photostreams: 10.5%
Gender	Female	85	7	8.2%
	Male	115	14	12.2%
p=ns. (FET)				
Age	Younger than 30	9	2	22.2%
	30-45	71	9	12.7%
	46-60	92	10	10.9%
	Older than 60	28	0	0
$\chi^2=4,972$ ; $df=3$ ; $p=ns$ .				

Flickr, being not much in favor among the Finnish MPs, is slightly more used by members of the National Coalition Party and Green League. Flickr is not used at all by members of the Left-Wing Alliance and Swedish People's Party in Finland (see Table 20). However, as there are several other platforms for sharing images online and photos are commonly shared via other platforms e.g. Facebook, the Flickr numbers are only reflecting the use of one service, not photo sharing in general.

**Table 20: MPs' Flickr photostreams by political parties**

Party	Seats in the Parliament	Flickr photostream	
		Number	% of seats
Kansallinen Kokoomus (National Coalition Party)	44	9	20.5%
Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue (The Finnish Social Democratic Party)	42	5	11.9%
Perussuomalaiset (True Finns)	39	1	2.6%
Suomen Keskusta (Centre Party of Finland)	35	3	8.6%
Vasemmistoliitto (Left-Wing Alliance)	14	0	0
Vihreä liitto (Green League)	10	2	20.0%
Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue (Swedish People's Party in Finland) and the Åland representative	10	0	0
Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit (Christian Democrats)	6	1	16.7%
$\chi^2=11,499$ ; $df=7$ ; $p=ns$ . <sup>H</sup>			

H The chi square test is not fully reliable if more than 20% of the expected values are less than 5 or if any of the values are under 1 (Siegel & Castellan, 1988, 123); in the Flickr statistic both of these limitations unfortunately apply.

There are 17 MPs who have both YouTube channels and Flickr photostreams.

## Political parties and online social media

Political parties as entities also have accounts in social media. Facebook appears to be the first favorite as all parties have set a page in this social network. Twitter is used by the most parties as well. A bit fewer parties provide blog-publishing services through their official websites for party members and, thus, make their positions/opinions represented through blogs. YouTube and Flickr are least popular social media destinations for the parties in the current Parliament (see Table 21<sup>18</sup>).

**Table 21: Political parties' popularity in online social media<sup>1</sup>**

Party	Seats in the Parliament	Facebook (number of likes)	Twitter (number of followers)	YouTube (number of channel views)	Blog (Google Page Rank <sup>2</sup> )	Flickr (Google Page Rank)
National Coalition Party	44	4,488	2,108	24,475 <sup>K</sup>	4	0
The Finnish Social Democratic Party	42	4,227	1,562	22,489	3	5
True Finns	39	15,055	-	-	-	-
Centre Party of Finland	35	2,274	1,350	13,805	5	0
Left-Wing Alliance	14	5,479	1,426	-	4	-
Green League	10	7,371	2,764	20,520	5	5
Swedish People's Party in Finland	9+1 <sup>L</sup>	1,566	227	369	-	-
Christian Democrats	6	1,540	447	-	3	-

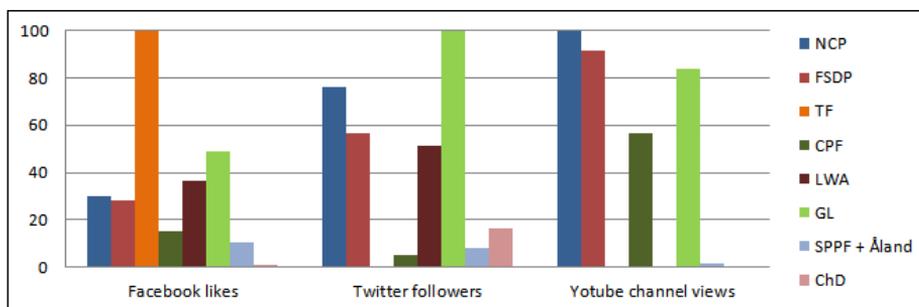
I Data from the parties' social media profiles and Alexa Traffic Rank and Page Rank for blogs was updated on 28 July 2011.

J As we have no access to the actual visitor statistics of the parties' blogs of Flickr pages, we used Google PageRank to determine their popularity. PageRank is what Google uses to determine the importance of a web page (n.b. not the whole website). The rank is based on the number of inbound links which are considered as "votes" for a website in question. The more votes (i.e., inbound links) a page gets, the more important the page is regarded. The study uses Toolbar PageRank, which is a numerical value between zero and ten. A value of zero means the page is not ranked at all while a value of ten conveys the ultimate importance. Google has not disclosed the precise method for determining a Toolbar PageRank value. The values listed in the table refer to the Toolbar PageRank value for the blog front page and Flickr front page (Photostream page).

K The National Coalition Party's website gives four links to their YouTube channels. Therefore the result in the table is based on a total number of views from all four channels.

L Åland representatives are usually counted as members of Swedish People's Party in Finland

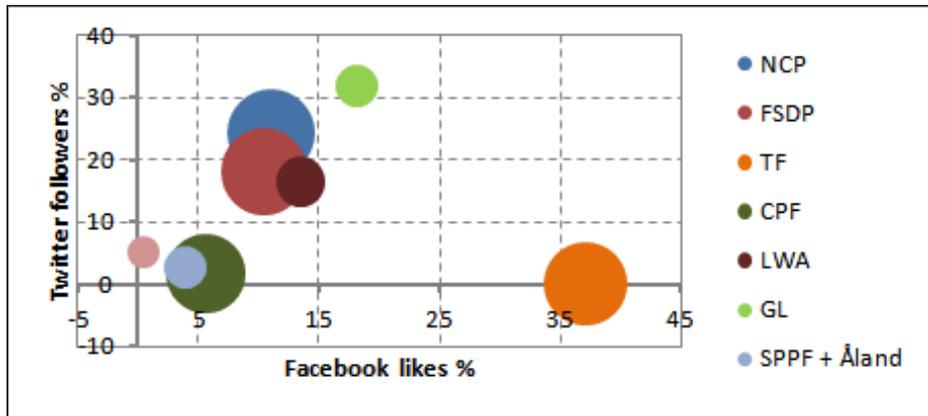
<sup>18</sup> The political party does not have a social media account, where the table shows "-" instead of numerical data.

**Graph 10. Parties popularity index in Facebook Twitter and Youtube.**

In Graph 10 the popularity ratings for each social media service (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) are shown as index numbers compared to the most popular party in that service. Thus True Finns with the 15 055 Facebook fans counts as 100 and accordingly Green League with 7371 fans scales to 48.9. On Twitter, Green League is the most followed, National Coalition Party being the second most popular. Green League also have a blog-publishing service on their website, which is the most visited page compared to other parties' blog pages. YouTube channel views fairly reflects the distribution of places in the Parliament only for two first leading parties – they are the most viewed, but Green League is just slightly behind them. Flickr is the online social media least used by the political parties – only four out of eight parties represented in the Parliament have Flickr photostreams. Overall, the most active political parties in social media are: National Coalition Party, the Finnish Social Democratic Party, Centre Party of Finland and Green League. The most popular political party needs to be identified in every social media separately, but Green League seems to stand out in the ratings in almost all social media, except Facebook, where True Finns are leading the board.

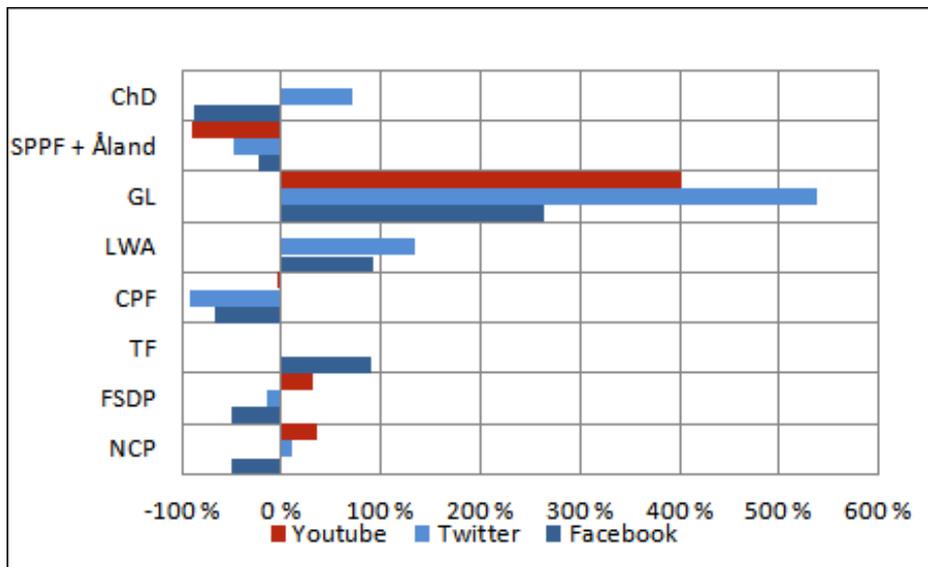
The differences between parties' Facebook and Twitter audience are shown in Graph 11. For these two popular social media services Green League and National Coalition Party are the most followed ones in both services, whereas True Finns has gained the biggest share of Facebook likes only – Facebook is the only social media service they are using as a party.

**Graph 11. Facebook likes and Twitter followers for the parties. Numbers are percentages of the total number of followers.**



Graph 12 depicts the popularity of the parties on social media services compared to the election results. The graph clearly shows the popularity of Green League among the online users. It seems that the supporters of the party are either using Internet more or are more willing to express their political views online by following or liking a party. The data shows that the popularity of the political parties in the social media not necessarily correlates with the election results. However, the results regarding Facebook could be taken as evidence for the increased popularity of the True Finns. Thus, for example, True Finns is the most popular party on Facebook, where they have twice the number of fans compared to Green League (the next most popular party on Facebook) and three times the number of fans compared to two leading parties in the Parliament. Nevertheless, in this comparison the Green League is the social media winner.

**Graph 12. Parties' social media popularity compared to their election results. 0% means the popularity in social media corresponds to the election results.**





## CONCLUSION

Online social media tools can be an effective way to communicate with the community and an easy way to find and reach MPs. However, contrary to what has been expected, Finland's April elections 2011 do not seem to give that breakthrough push in use of online social media yet. While some MPs use online social media tools that are useful for interaction with the public, most politicians take social media as a broadcasting mechanism, rather than as a way to engage with constituents. In addition, it seems that social media is often used as a campaigning tool and then quickly abandoned after the elections.

Thus, the majority of MPs use personal accounts on Facebook, but half of them are closed meaning that people searching for MPs are unable to contact them or view details without becoming their friends. Almost one third of MPs' personal profiles on Facebook can also hardly be considered as interactive: other users do not leave messages on MPs' Facebook walls or if they leave, MPs usually do not reply. As a result, it was a rare case when the Facebook personal profile served as a platform for debate or conversation between an MP and the community. The data follows the election results, as the MPs with most friends on Facebook represent the political parties with most seats in the Parliament. However, the correlation between the use of social media and the election result is uncertain and needs more analysis, starting by including the candidates who were not selected.

Facebook public profiles are less popular among the Finnish MPs. They are well equipped with campaigning pictures, but not with relevant content. One fourth of all Facebook public profiles the Finnish MPs did not contain contact details which would allow people to reach parliamentarians, and more than a half profiles failed to feature MPs' political, professional or personal interests. The highest public profiles of the Finnish MPs do not necessarily reflect the election results (if to consider allocation of seats within the Parliament), but prove the growth of popularity of True Finns and National Coalition Party political leaders.

Blogs seemed to be the most prominent social media platform as almost every MP had a blog or even a couple of them. However, the results did not support the assumption and proved that most of blogs were not used or were rarely used by MPs during the study period. Moreover, one third of blogs did not enable comments, so that there was no interactivity or live possibility for exchange of views. There were also the blogs that technically supported possibility to comment, but still were low on interactivity due to a small number of comments coming in reply to posts.

Twitter was believed as a new Internet trend in the European politics, but not this time for the Finnish Parliamentary elections. Only about 40% of all MPs have Twitter accounts and almost half of them never use it or use it occasionally (up to 10 Tweets during March and April 2011). What also is important to add is that almost half of

Twitter accounts used during the campaigning period received no new tweets after April 2011.

YouTube and Flickr are the least popular social media destinations among the Finnish MPs. Only 28% of all MPs have their YouTube channels and only 10% of MPs have registered their accounts on Flickr. Some of the YouTube and Flickr accounts were used by MPs not for their political content, but reflected their previous art or sport activities.

By using statistical chi square tests and Fisher's exact test we found some dependencies between social media usage and the age, gender and party of the MP's. The MP's Facebook usage is associated with their age on both personal and public profiles. Also the popularity of YouTube among the MP's statistically depends on age. What comes to tweeting, both age and gender were associated with Twitter usage in statistical terms. What is interesting, the age of the MP is not a determinant for blogging: the younger MPs almost all have blogs, but other age groups are also well represented. This might relate to the fact that blogging is a prominent and well-known tool of social media.

What is also interesting is that the party an MP represents is associated with the probability of blogging and the probability of using Twitter, as is shown by the chi square tests, even though not all of these are completely reliable due to the small size of some of the parties. Nevertheless, this implies that either communication strategies utilized by parties or a general atmosphere towards social media use within the party does have an effect on the MP's social media usage. Since blogging and tweeting are in essence more public ways of interacting with the voters than for example Facebook personal profiles, it is feasible that their usage would be instructed strategically on the party level. More statistical analyses and research focusing on the parties' communication strategies is needed to clarify these connections.

Political parties as entities have also online social media accounts. Some of them are quite active and the level of activity in social media well correlates with the allocation of seats in the Parliament. However, if to consider the level of popularity it differs from one social media to another. On Facebook, for example, True Finns as a party is an absolute leader according to the number of fans, though this is the only social media account registered by this party. Green League seems to lead in other social media services, especially in ratings based on the number of Twitter followers and inbound links to their blog page.

Overall, the study shows that social media does not play the role in the Finnish politics as it is usually ascribed for. The power of social media in the recent elections has been obviously exaggerated as most of the elected MPs can hardly be considered as active or very popular social media users. It can be one of the indicators showing that in Finland the political success is not yet equal to success in social media. In the future, however, the level of political use of online social media is likely to rise as more people access and become accustomed to using these Internet services, and their use becomes the norm.

Politicians are traditionally enthusiastic to adopt new forms of communication and marketing (Herkman 2011, 82). This report shows that Finnish politicians have

adopted social media, especially blogs and Facebook, for the 2011 elections. But their way of using social media mostly reminds one-way mass communication. In this sense it seems that despite the high hopes laid upon social media services as a tool of e-democracy, there still exists a gap between politicians and citizens. Social media will not foster deliberative democracy unless it is truly used for two-way communication and as a platform for conversation.

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