

Politicians Still Don't Get Twitter

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Friday, June 04, 2010

<http://politicsrespun.org/2010/06/politicians-still-dont-get-twitter/>

There is generally a disconnect between politicians and people. Nothing new here. Many are too arrogant to care what people think. After all, they are elected so they know what's best. Others maybe are just too busy to keep up with thousands of constituents. That's more understandable.

But when we look to Twitter to see patterns of political discourse in Canada, we find politicians are generally behind the curve in using this medium to do anything more than promote the busy-ness of their daily itinerary.

More analysis below these interesting excerpts:

Small had been hoping to learn something about how politicians use Twitter, but to her surprise, she found that it's the media and political junkies who are taking the greatest advantage of the Twitterverse.

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The main problem with politicians' tweets, she says, is that they're too self-directed—often updates about what the politician is doing or where he or she is travelling or visiting. Rarely do politicians use Twitter for conversations, she found.

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Media accounted for about 10 per cent of the Twitter conversations with this tag, compared to politicians, who accounted for 1.4 per cent of conversations, Small found. The other big talkers with the #cdnpoli tag included bloggers and individuals, whether just partisans or political junkies.

via [Politician 'tweets' the least interesting thing about Twitter, study finds - thestar.com](#).

I can understand that politicians don't want to discuss political issues with other tweeps. They are rather busy. But they're also whipped by parties to not go rogue by saying something in Twitter that will cause scandal or otherwise engage the public in political dialogue in a way that the party spin machine can't run its message control.

That, I think, is why Tamara Small arrived at these conclusions about Twitter use: wonks and media outweigh politicians significantly.

Something, though, that Susan Delacourt doesn't explore in this piece is how journalists in Twitter may be affected by discussion about news topics to the point that trending topics in Twitter may actually help determine what corporate media and the CBC decide to be newsworthy.

If you have any doubt about that, do some research on how the #BustyHookers hashtag developed a life of its own in a way that likely would have left that phrase only marginally newsworthy.