

Citizens' Expectations, Motivations, and Evaluation of Participatory Use of Social Media Tools for Civic Engagement in Oman

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Abstract : Social media tools have currently been leading a major change in the flow and use of information for different life aspects within people and between people and their governments. They represent powerful channels for direct exchanges of information, ideas, and suggestions for purposes of civic participation. The current study aims at investigating Omani citizens' perceptions, expectations, and motivations of their uses of social media tools to interact with the government for civic participation. A quantitative methodology was used to collect data through self-administered questionnaires from a random sample of university students and staff drawn from Sultan Qaboos University, considering them as well-informed and typically active users of social media. The literature was comprehensively reviewed to retrieve relevant empirical studies that particularly investigated the use of social media for civic engagement which provided a basis for the construct of the questionnaire; taken into consideration the delineated dimensions of perceptions, expectations, and motivations. The findings of the study offer practical and useful recommendations for governmental units in Oman and similar contexts in the region to inform better and efficient use of social media tools to interact with citizens in issues related to civic engagement; particularly to make best use of these tools for improving services and developing existing and newer initiatives, and hence, encouraging and strengthening citizens' involvement for civic engagement.

Keywords : social media, social networking sites, web 2.0, civic engagement, civic participation, oman

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