

Social Media and Political Expression: Examining Affordances and Spiral of Silence Theories

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Abstract : This study compares how do people express their opinions on the Facebook versus on Twitter. It was sought to understand whether people were more willing to express their opinions on some social media channels than others. It was assumed that fear of isolation and affordances may influence users' opinion expression behaviors on social media websites. Thus two most popular social media websites, Twitter and Facebook, were compared. This study aims to provide the comprehensive understanding of political expression on social media platforms. An online survey (N=535) was conducted to understand respondents' opinion expression behaviors. Overall, the results suggested that people were more likely to express their opinion on Twitter than Facebook when they think the majority does not support their opinion. The study concluded that people operate differently on Facebook versus Twitter.

Keywords : social media, spiral of silence, affordances, political expression

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