EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION USING MOBILE DEVICES

Ralph Begleiter, Center for Political Communication
BECAUSE TABLETS ARE EVERYWHERE

LEVERAGE the technology students already use

“Road to the Presidency” 2012
STRUCTURE OF THE CLASS

- 39 students
  - 14 Honors students
  - 2 grad students
- Facebook participation required
- Weekly news quizzes
- Mid-term in-class exam
- Group project/presentations
- Final exam take-home essays

- Met twice a week (once often with guest speaker practitioners)
- Plus many extra hours:
  - Presidential debates
  - Delaware debates
  - Rove-Gibbs event
  - Election night
IPADS FOR EVERY STUDENT

Don’t try this in just any UD classroom!
IPADS FOR EVERY STUDENT

CPC purchased enough for an Honors section study. A UD ATS grant enabled all 40 students in the class to participate.
IPADS FOR EVERY STUDENT

Students treated this equipment well. Everything was returned intact, undamaged and on time.

We logged device serial #s linked to each student.
IPADS FOR EVERY STUDENT

Each student signed a contract including key points:

★ Loan, not gift
★ Personal security understanding
★ No “illegal or unethical use”
THERE'S AN APP FOR THIS!

- eClicker Audience
- Facebook
- Twitter/Twitterific/HootSuite
- Pinterest
- WashPost Politics
- NYTimes - (now free for UD family)
- Wall Street Journal - (fee for subscription)
- Fox News
- Real Clear Politics
- The Onion
- HuffPost
- Daily Show

- Pulse
- Flipboard
- USA Today
- CNN Time Convention Pass

- Ad Hawk - (ID's video sources of political ads) - phone app only
- SuperPACApp - ID's commercials and evaluates truth (factcheck)
- You Decide 2012 Map - (Fox news)
- Show of Hands - (national polling)
- Audience Opinion - (class polling)
- CNN
- AP Mobile

- Other apps you discover are encouraged and welcome!

(students received $25 Apple gift cards for this purpose)
See fact-check judgements
“Fair”
“Fishy”
View ads and where they’re running
Check virtually all publicly-available poll results promptly, over time and in comparison.
Result Summary

1. Who "won" the "debate" between Rove and Gibbs?
   a. Rove
   b. Gibbs
   c. Tie

2. How would you describe the Rove-Gibbs discussion?
   a. Too contentious
   b. Too civil
   c. About right
CLASS FACEBOOK GROUP

An unexpectedly vibrant aspect of the class

“We will use a special, closed Facebook group for exchanging ideas and discoveries in this class. You’ll be expected to use it both during class and outside class. This page is not public, and the only members of the group are members of this class, and its faculty members.

“Students will use their own Facebook logins to access the class group. Faculty members and other University officials will not have access to these student accounts, and will not use them for any purpose whatsoever. Neither the University of Delaware nor the faculty in this class will ever ask students to access any social networking service for the purpose of gaining institutional access or faculty access to that service; students should never offer or grant such access for that purpose.

“Although faculty members and other students in this class will participate in and observe class discussions in this specific Facebook group, as part of our class activities and assignments, neither the faculty nor the University of Delaware will record, “track,” monitor or recover any other activities of the students on these social networking systems. Once the loaned iPads are returned to the University at the end of the semester, their contents will be completely erased; no records of activities on social networking services or any other records created by the students will be copied, retained or used by the University or the faculty.”
FACEBOOK CONVERSATION

Grad student: Before this gets too old:

'Drunk Nate Silver': The best tweets from the funniest post-election meme
theweek.com
The New York Times stats wizard was spot-on in his election forecasts, defying his many critics. And all

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share

Paul Brewer, /student name/ 5 others like this.

View all 4 comments

/student name/ his problem is that he never does a simple summary of what happened. It's great he's going in depth but if people are still left wondering what you're talking about how effective are you being
November 27, 2012 at 7:39pm · Like

/student name/ I think Silver thinks his explanations are colloquial enough but I agree that it's hard to follow his train of thought. I wonder if he will be as big of a star in 2016 election?
November 28, 2012 at 11:41am · Like
Long after the election, the discussion continues.

Facebook Conversation:

Student name: Do you guys think that Christie's popularity surge from Sandy will stay long enough to have an impact on his re-election next year? Do you all think Mayor Booker will run against Gov. Christie still, or will the favorable numbers for Christie keep him from throwing his hat into the ring? [Link to article: http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1112/84269.html?hp=l8]

Poll: Chris Christie crushes Cory Booker – Bobby Cervantes
www.politico.com
New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie would trounce Cory Booker and other potential Democratic challengers in

Like · Comment · Follow Post · Share · November 27, 2012 at 8:06pm near Newark

Seen by everyone

Student name: Booker will likely still run. Jersey is a solid Democratic state and he's pretty popular. Assuming he does run it'll be the race to watch with both parties and super PACs pouring money into the race.
November 27, 2012 at 8:08pm · Like

Student name: I think it will be a big national race anyways, just because of the 2016 implications. But, Booker might be smart to sit this one out and run after Christie is gone, after he has some more time to prove himself.
November 27, 2012 at 8:16pm · Like · 1

Student name: An interesting (timely?) parallel to the political capital a president has in the first 100 days and the political capital this article gave Christie around from Sandy.
FACEBOOK CONVERSATION

Substantive discussion, even during “live” Mitchell Hall events
FACEBOOK
CONVERSATION

Substantive discussion, even during “live” Mitchell Hall events

November 14, 2012 at 8:09pm via mobile · Like

student name Schmidt is definitely playing the longer game – don’t be afraid to speak out on the changes the GOP will have to make, be looked at as a prophet when it happens. He doesn’t have to work to get back in the circle if he positions himself into the new one
November 14, 2012 at 8:11pm via mobile · Unlike · 3

student name Plouffe doesn’t seem nearly as candid as Schmidt
November 14, 2012 at 8:13pm via mobile · Unlike · 1
Substantive discussion, even during “live” Mitchell Hall events.
THE APPS

Some students easily connected their online experience with their class experiences.
“TWEET BURSTS”
New for 2014
Instant discussion burst during class, responding to topic/video/speaker
WHAT’S THE POINT?

• Encourage young people to engage in politics

• Discover “politics” is not a dirty word

• Encourage them to keep up with the political world & potential careers
WHAT WE LEARNED

Published research by COMM grad students
Meredith Isaacs & Katie Anderson, guided by Prof. Paul Brewer
ASSESSING TABLET TECHNOLOGY

**Goal:** To assess the effectiveness of using tablet devices (iPads) for instructional purposes in a course about the 2012 presidential campaign.

1. Political Efficacy
2. Technological Efficacy
3. Technology Use in the Classroom
How often did you use your iPad to find information about political campaigns?

- Less than once a week: 14.7%
- Once a week: 8.8%
- A few times a week: 5.9%
- Once a day: 26.5%
- Two or three times a day: 11.8%
- Over four times a day: 8.8%

Conclusion: Almost half our students used iPads to actively engage with the campaigns at least twice a day.
How often did you use your iPad to communicate with others about political campaigns?

Conclusion: 44% of our students used iPads to communicate about the campaigns every day.
USING IPADS
FOR CLASSES

How often did you use your iPad to communicate with instructors about your courses?

- Never: 11.8%
- Once a week: 11.8%
- A few times a week: 11.8%
- Once a day: 8.8%
- Two or three times a day: 8.8%
- More than four times a day: 38.2%

Conclusion: Almost 30% of our students used iPads to communicate with their instructors every day.
Using iPads for Classes

How often did you use your iPad to communicate with classmates about your courses?

- Never: 17.6%
- Once a week: 17.6%
- A few times a week: 17.6%
- Once a day: 8.8%
- Two or three times a day: 17.6%
- More than four times a day: 26.5%

Conclusion: 43% of our students used iPads to communicate with classmates about classes every day.
I enjoyed the “audience opinion” [online polling just for our class] a lot. I think that sparked a lot of good discussion. I also thought the iPads allowed us… to analyze polling data… (especially graphics) well.”
BUT WHAT DID THEY SAY?

“It is a great way to get all the information in one spot. …using many apps can provide different perspectives and views…”

Photo: Paul Hyde
“It made the class much more interactive, some of the best classes were when videos were on and everyone was in the group posting and commenting. That made the class feel much more alive. Also nice to see both professors join in with posts and comments. The audience opinion questions were fun as well.”
“The iPad is a lot more mobile than a laptop. In that sense, you can be online and tuned-in more often to the day-to-day ups and downs of a political campaign.”
“The iPads were distracting. At times I found it fascinating to communicate with my classmates and instructors about a speaker's remarks “live,” but often I felt like I was missing integral parts of their lecture. Also, with the iPads we had the internet literally at our fingertips, so it was easy to digress from course content and check email, check Facebook, etc.”
“I think there can be information overload and a constant pressure to stay updated and on top of what everyone is saying and doing. For some people, they might already do that with the campaign, but I think sometimes there is so much talk surrounding campaigns, it distracts from the issues themselves.”
“It might be information overload with so many apps and sources of information.”
“Because I have both a computer and a smartphone, I didn't find too much use for the iPad.”
THE “MAGIC” WAS...

THE COMBINATION
EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION

USING

MOBILE DEVICES

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