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Technology-driven campaigning, social media and the 2019 European Parliament elections

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” Europe is a thought
that needs to become a
feeling

- Bono



Technology-driven campaigning

1. Collect and compile online and offline data about voters
2. Apply computational methods to analyze it
3. Design messages that target clusters of individuals

RESULT


Personalized political messages that persuade and mobilize



Social media's transnational potential

- Same platforms used around Europe and the world
- Same digital tools, same architectures, same habits
- English as the lingua franca
- Automated translation overcoming language barriers
- Tools for scheduling messages according to different time zones



Is technology used to maximize the transnational potential of social media in the EP?

Research based on

- interviews with communicators for six EP party groups
- Twitter data overview for EP party group accounts

looking for indicators of transnational communication

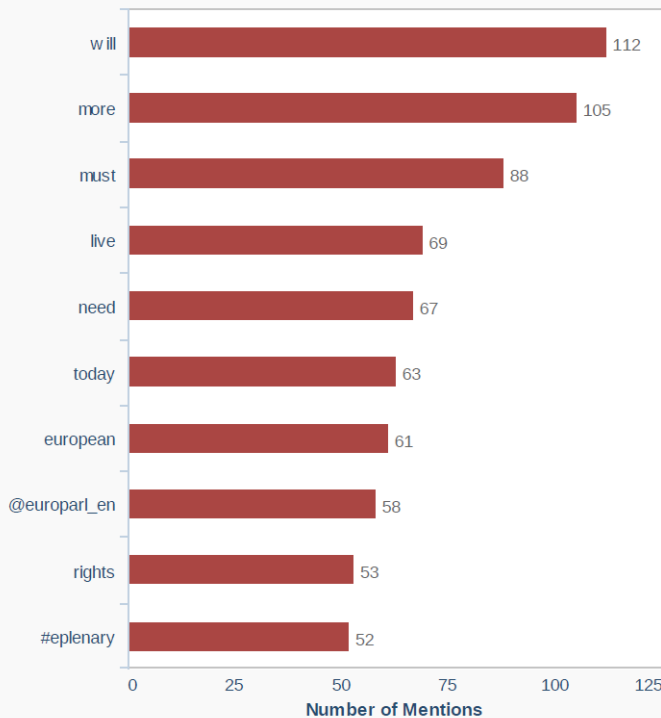
- Languages
- Users
- Topics



Case study: ALDE

Keyword Analysis of Tweets

The words used in tweets by ALDEgroup



Tweet Word Cloud

Most common words used in tweets by @ALDEgroup

order right follow today states make tomorrow
 most take political **must** here: "the time there
 were citizens situation proud agreement system
 the... better live join full **will** which freedom
 ensure member work meps **more** watch only
 women than according everyone happy liberal hearing
 alde report #panamapapers good countries
 @guyverhofstadt says support reform when future
 @europarl_en democracy **against** to... debate
 after here rule @sophieintveld seminar event stand
 people news free @eu_commission rules #brexit
 calls **need** week want from important read
 .@sophieintveld those lets their welcome about been
 @jezekcz reaction europe very fight next rights
 call **should** european #eplenary human

Cloud

generated with @ALDEgroup

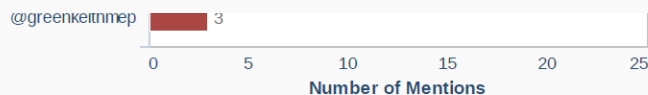
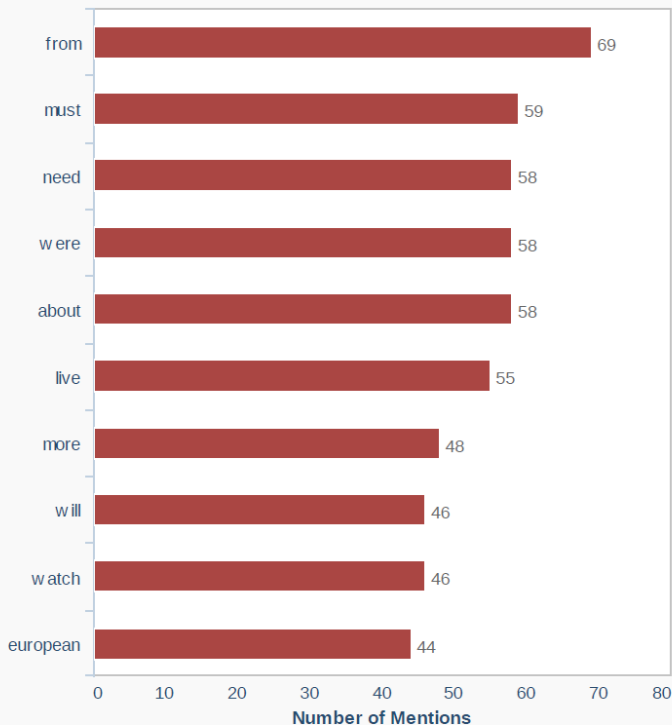
bot@angelamerkeicdu
 ihrer steve! 'volgens
 schinas maar #ep2019
 samt (zu) @jsolec
@fdp
 chen @regsprecher kopf
ladanoscs
 uropa notwendig
 s_pse mehr sollten
 ure'is! sowie waarden!
 nwesteuropa haben.



Case study: Greens

Keyword Analysis of Tweets

The words used in tweets by GreensEP



Tweet Word Cloud

Most common words used in tweets by @GreensEP

#eutrade **from** just @eu_commission great thanks change action work **fight** time **press** @ph_lamberts event protection stop **against** conference stand like **join** come countries know should hearing free debate important **citizens** says **good** dont people **need** last tune **were** their over heres #eplenary **will** european them starting here follow **europe** commission @europarl_en states **call** happy committee next read some check **watch** parliament show climate report **more** #panamapapers after start refugees there **today** @ben_beachy calling rules week @skakeller **live** into would well been make **meps** co-president news! when green rights news miss take member look live: want policy **must** protect trade **about**

% of audience

16%

Cloud

jaged with @GreensEP

ostrov_a @bruzzbe
 es_pse@christianlosson
 hose @skakeller
 n. @baseickhout
 S @ostrov_a
e_europa needs
 I □□□□@epp lettre
 je @madrid europe
 bock @scotgp front
 aec... @timmermanseu
 daldegrou @efdgroup
 rope tobe @guengl
 nrights @daroff @hrw
 tioned @greenpeace
 @europeangreens...
 asticfreeplux herbicide-
 . @terryreinke
 welcome users most
 fully alternatives
 ygenefutures

@mollymep@terryreinke @greensep just, jail.
 future @rebharms@europeangreens
 @greenpeace@greenpeaceusa... daysin @equo placed dumping
 @natalieben @timmermanseu@dcallejaec... business, strategies,
 co-signée @greenkeithmep @greens@canadiangreens
 @surfridereurope@emas_euecolabel

Limits of social media use in EP Party groups

- MEPs' skepticism towards the potential of social media
- Poor social media communication skills from the politicians' side
- Lack of resources
- **Political divisions** within EP party groups
- **Risk aversion** in content creation



Conclusions

The European institutions, and the EP groups with them, were not early adopters or innovators in the communication realm

No technology-driven communication

Inconsistent use of social media and of technology in general

Under-utilized potential for pan-European communication via social media

