PLENARY SESSION II
A new phenomenon in election matters: the social media

“Information and communication technology and social media in elections”

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Debate and quality of contemporary democracies are focused on

- Financing of the electoral competition
- Behaviour of political parties
- Role of the media - use of social networks
Characteristics of the media in politics

- Develop diagnoses about the political reality
- Reflect political plurality
- Broadcast capability no candidate can reject.
- Without the media there is no politics.
- There is no direct cause between the use of the media and the electoral results.
Characteristics of the media in politics (2)

- Challenge: equity of parties and candidates in the use of the media.

- Campaigning: the media and its financing.

- Subject to political reforms, transparency and accountability to strengthen equity.

- A decade ago we were not dealing with social media and the challenges they pose for electoral processes.
Social media

- Web-based technological platforms and applications
- Means to create virtual interest communities

Characteristics

- Immediacy and real-time communication
- Users can easily produce and disseminate contents
- Accessibility
- Global projection
- Veracity (issue)
Social media - Variations

- Social networks ➔ Facebook
- Media sharing ➔ YouTube
- Microblogs ➔ Twitter
## Social media

### Expansion

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>1,073,380,925</td>
<td>167,335,676</td>
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<td>Asia</td>
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<td>Arab World</td>
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<td>North America</td>
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<td>Latin America /</td>
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<td>Oceania / Australia</td>
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<td>1.0 %</td>
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<td>World Total</td>
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<td>2,405,518,376</td>
<td>34.3 %</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
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Social media

*Debates*

- Cyber-optimists $\rightarrow$ democratising
- Cyber-pessimists $\rightarrow$ exclusion/polarisation
- Cyber-skeptics $\rightarrow$ adjustment to status quo
Social media in the political electoral world

• They have altered the communication strategies
• The way in which politics and political campaigns are made or understood
• How electoral processes are managed

The implementation of social media in the political-electoral field seems unlimited
FROM THE EMB’S PERSPECTIVE

- For information and guidance of electors
  - A growing practice (all EMBs in LA have internet websites)
  - Resources and capacities generated, and resistances overcame towards the use of social media.
  - Ease access to updated information

- For campaigning
  - They represent a complementary and increasingly important tool.
  - They tune with the signals of our time,
  - They approach to and can even get to “connect” with sectors (youth, mainly)
  - They can revitalise the interest and participation in politics and elections
FROM THE EMB’S PERSPECTIVE

But......

- They can transgress legal regulations that were conceived or adopted to control campaigns

Two questions to address.....

- are restrictions conceived for other media or campaigning applicable to them?
- should they be the object of specific regulations?
FROM THE EMB’s PERSPECTIVE

• We can argue that there are no generally valid or overarching answers
• The most effective solution is always the one that turns out to be suitable with each context’s conditions, requirements and demands.
• Identify the problem and assess the available resources.
Regulation?..... If yes

• To build the appropriate agreements and consensuses.

Anyway, for any answer or design

• Some key points to consider:
  • Access to information is not the product of explicit consent or deliberate search
  • Restrictions in terms of periodicity and content of the advertising materials be applied
  • Powers, capabilities and resources to assure their enforcement