



Social Media: Leveraging Your Social Status in the Sunshine





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All Politics is *Social*



Social Identification and Political Choice

Party “affiliation” is a *social* connection:

Affiliated - *closely associated with another typically in a dependent or subordinate position*

[merriam-webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com)



Similarly, most of your supporters feel an “affiliation”, a social connection, with you



It's not that policy doesn't matter . . .

For most of our constituents, our actions function more to foster association (or disassociation) than they do to score points toward a policy score.

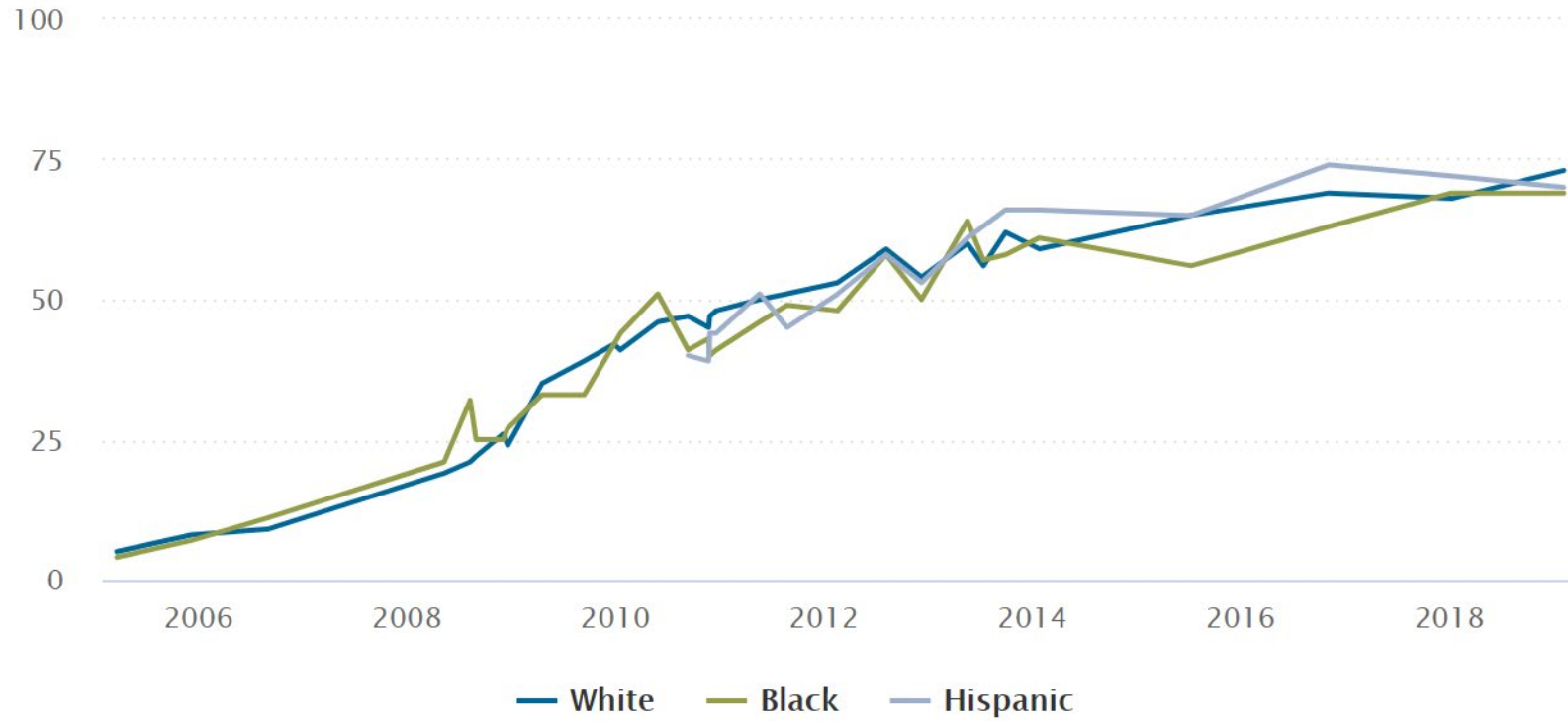


72% of Americans are on at least one social media platform

[Pew Research Center Social Media Fact Sheet - June 12, 2019](#)



% of U.S. adults who use at least one social media site, by race

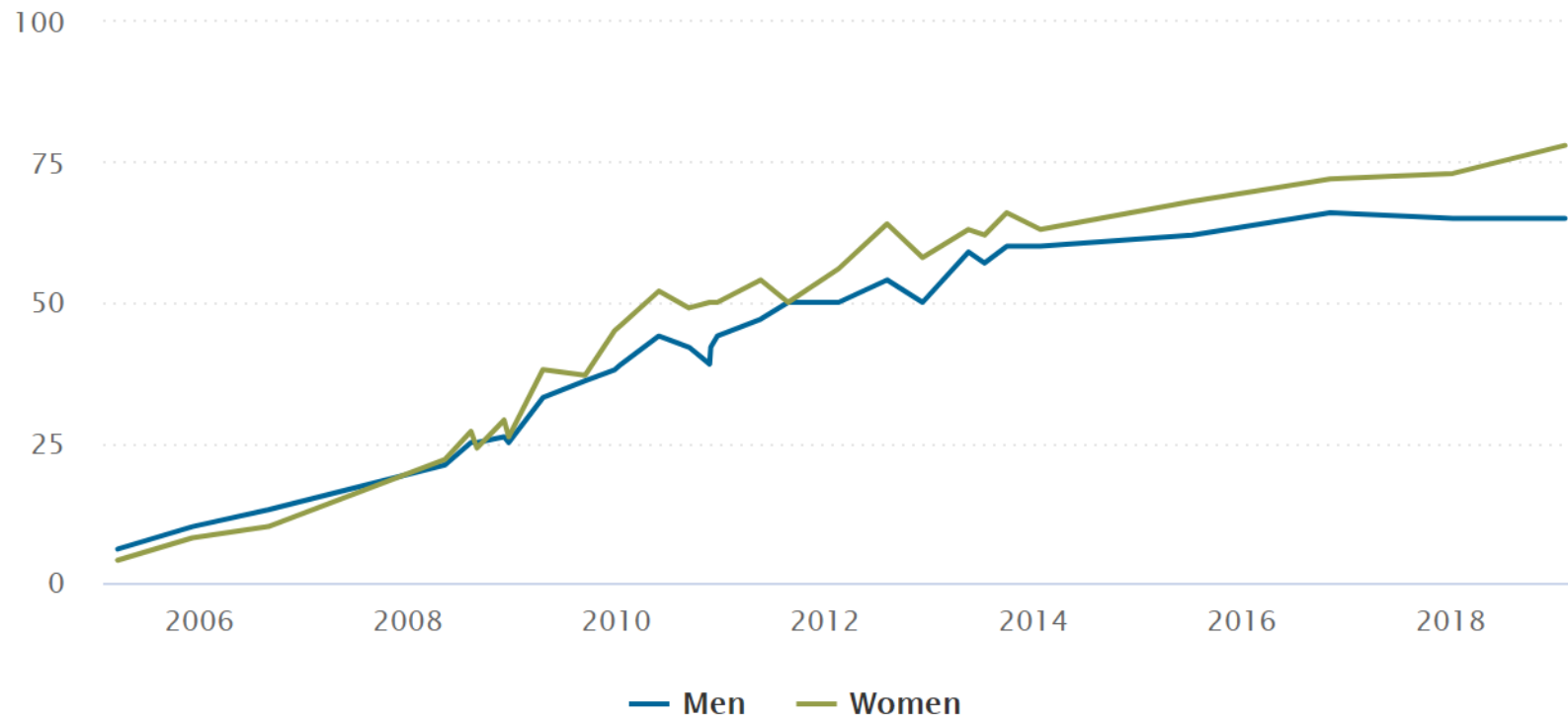


Source: Surveys conducted 2005-2019. Data for Hispanics includes only surveys that included Spanish-language interviews.

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% of U.S. adults who use at least one social media site, by gender

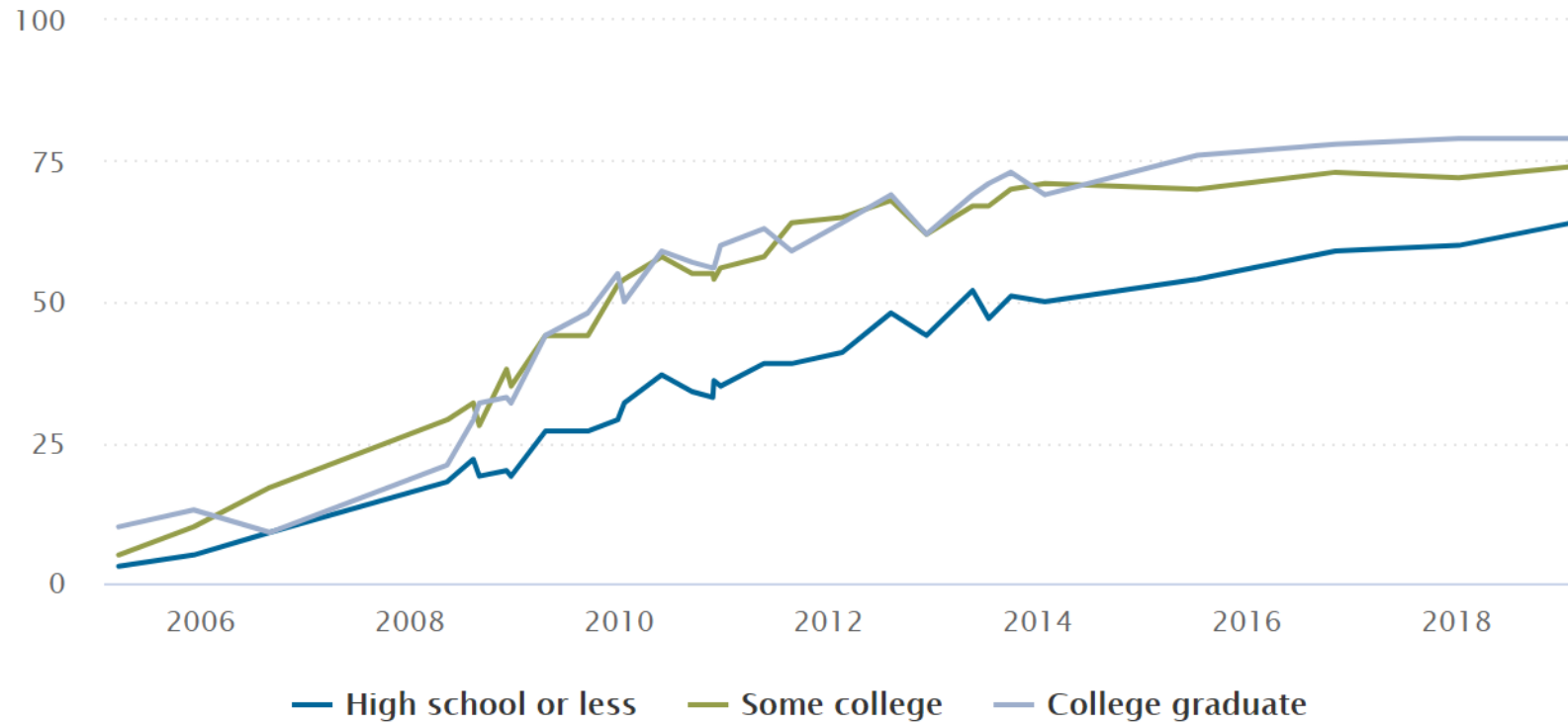


Source: Surveys conducted 2005-2019.

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% of U.S. adults who use at least one social media site, by education level

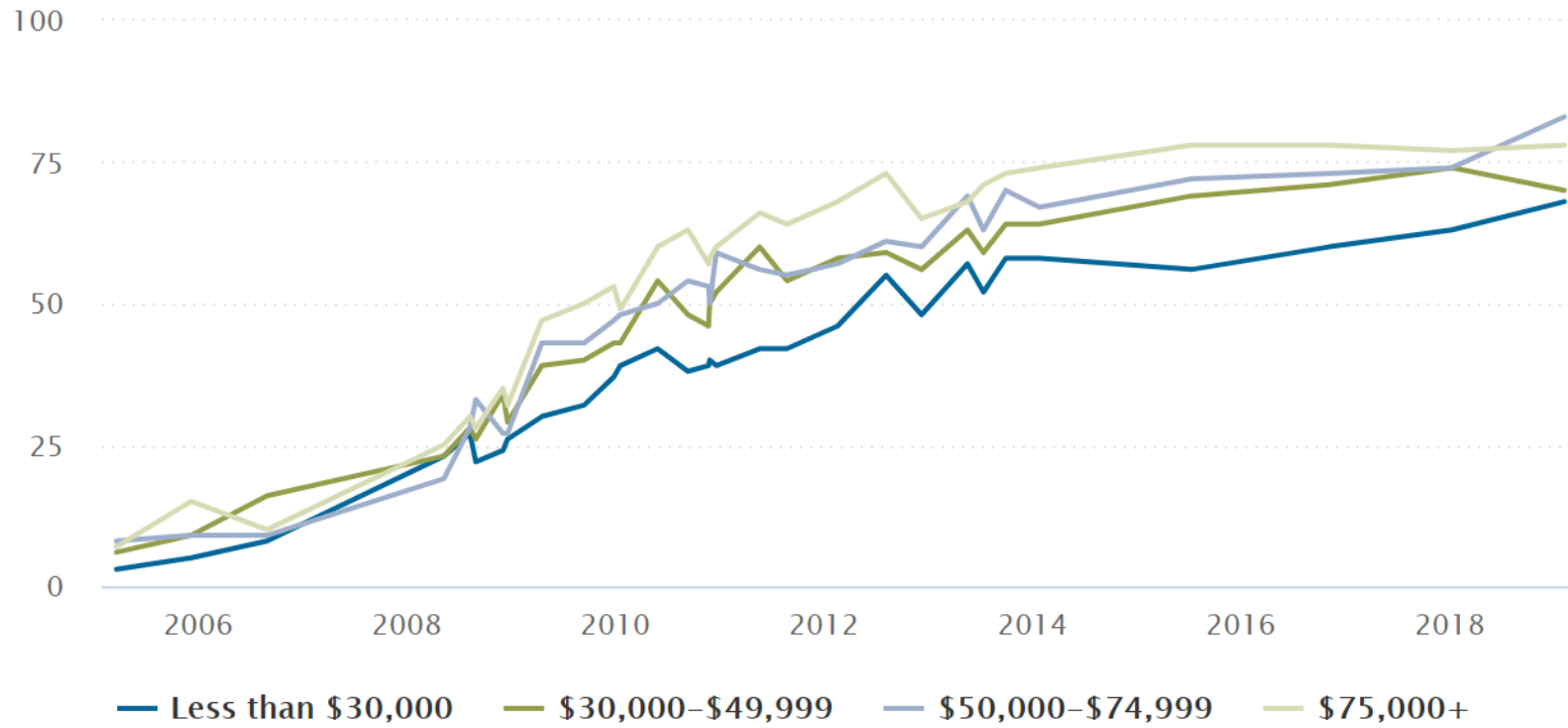


Source: Surveys conducted 2005-2019.

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% of U.S. adults who use at least one social media site, by income

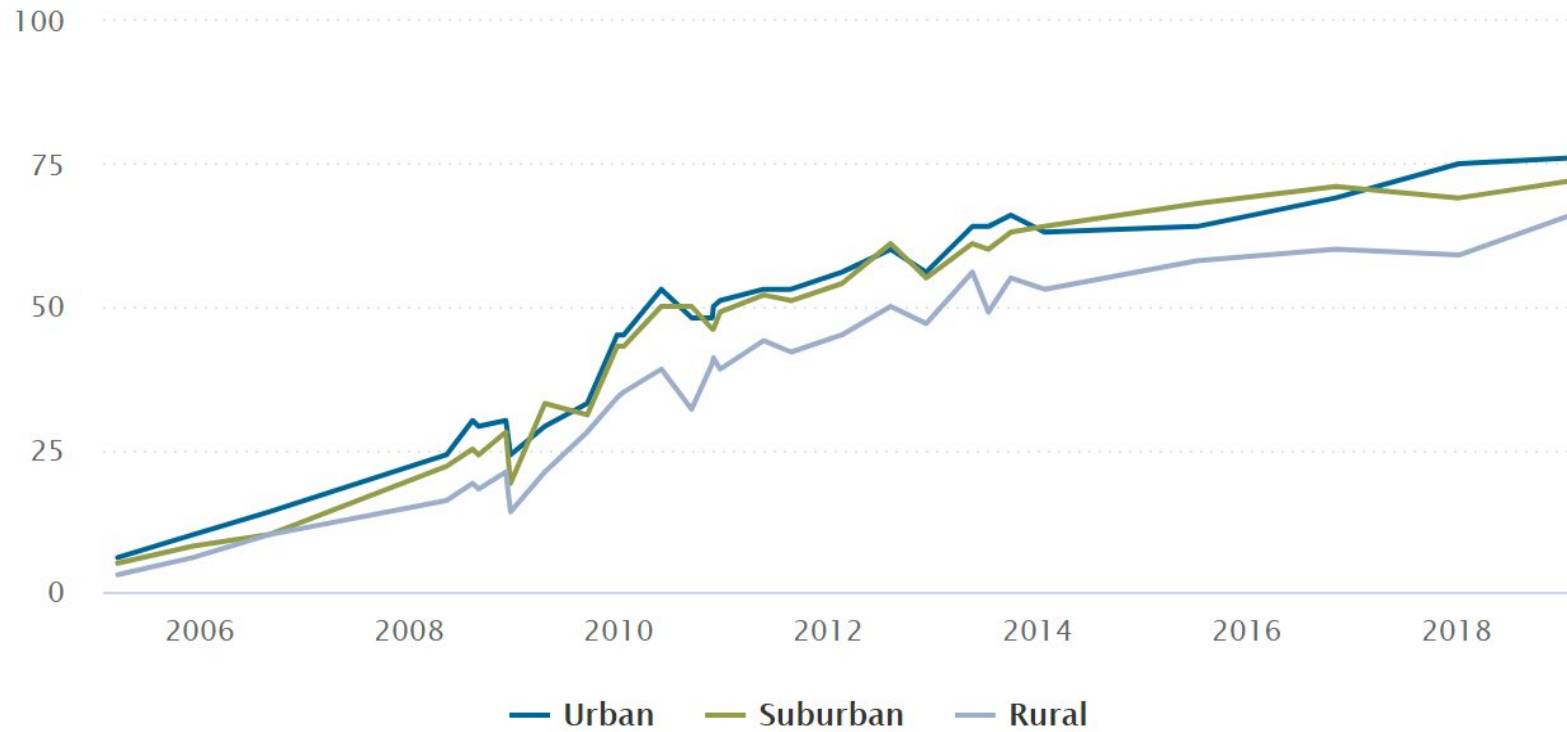


Source: Surveys conducted 2005-2019.

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% of U.S. adults who use at least one social media site, by community type

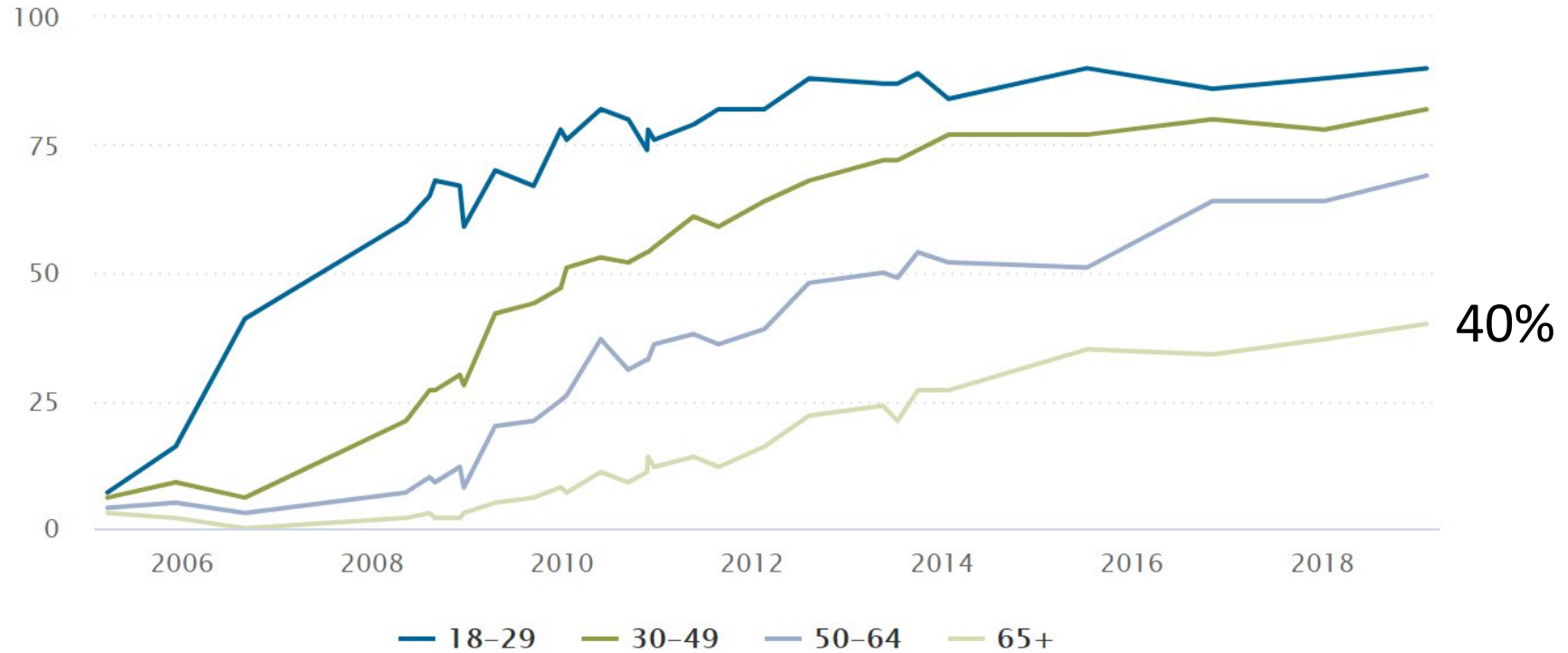


Source: Surveys conducted 2005-2019.

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% of U.S. adults who use at least one social media site, by age



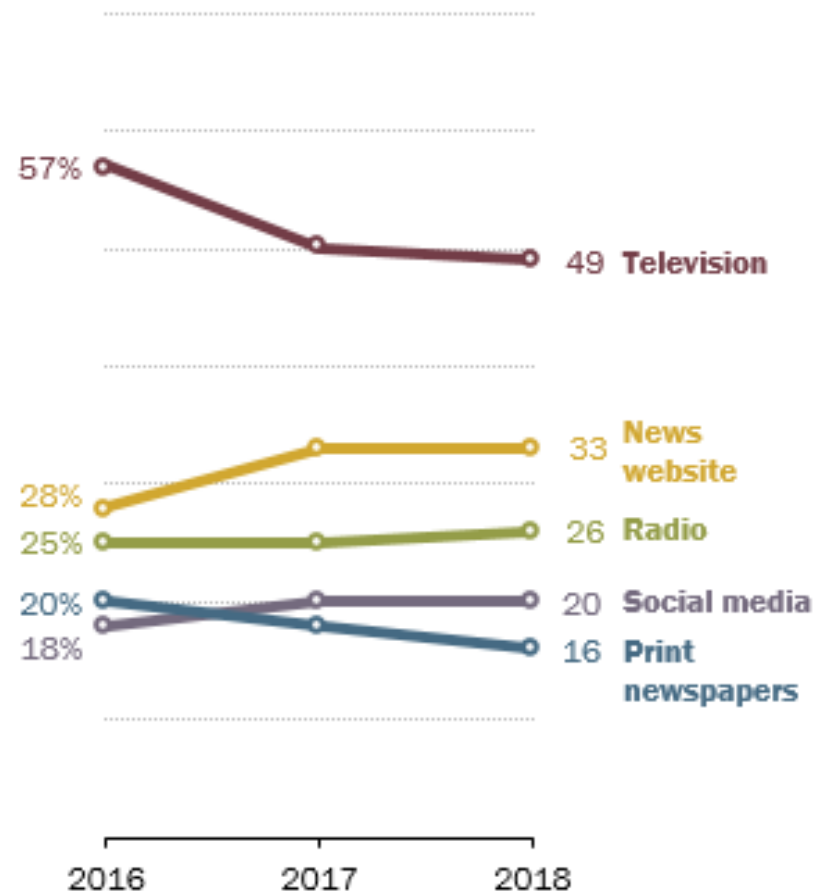
Source: Surveys conducted 2005-2019.

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More Americans get news often from social media than print newspapers

% of U.S. adults who get news often on each platform



Note: The difference between social media and print newspapers in 2017 was not statistically significant.

Source: Survey conducted July 30-Aug. 12, 2018.

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Making Social Use of Social Media



1. Join the Dance

- Find your platform
- Get social!



2. Engage with Your Partner(s)



- Follow others
- Like, Comment, Repost
- Speak @ them



3. Vary Your Steps

- Post your thoughts
- Post pictures
- Post video
- Post quotes
- Share what others have posted



4. Be You . . . It's What You Do Best

Your social “you” should be authentically you

- Styled for the medium

You are more than a one-issue leader

- Talk about many things

You are more than an officeholder

- Share *some* more personal moments



Pandora's Box



Opening the Social Media “Box”

- Public records requirements and exposure
- Potential violations of public meetings law
- Trolls



Disclaimer



Public Records

F.S. 119.011(12)

“All documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, **regardless of the physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission**, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any City.”



Public Records

Florida Constitution, Art. I, sec. 24(a)

“Every person **has the right to inspect or copy** any public record made or received in connection with the official business of any **public body, officer, or employee** of the state, or persons acting in their behalf This section specifically includes . . . counties, municipalities and districts;”



Generally speaking . . .

The posts of a public official . . .

- On any platform
- Using any device
- On anyone's account

. . . concerning the business of his/her agency . . .

- On the current agenda
- On a past agenda
- Potentially on a future agenda

. . . are **public records**



Sunshine and Online Chat

According to the Attorney General...

The Sunshine law applies to **all discussions** or deliberations as well as the formal action taken by a board or commission. It is applicable to **any gathering**, whether formal or **casual**, of **two or more** members of the same board or commission to discuss some matter on which foreseeable action will be taken by the public board or commission.



Generally speaking . . .

An exchange between public officials on the same board . . .

- On any platform
- Using any device
- On anyone's account

. . . concerning the business of his/her agency . . .

- On the current agenda
- On a past agenda
- Potentially on a future agenda

. . . is an illegal meeting



Trolls



The First Amendment and the Public Forum

Under this [the Public Forum] doctrine, the government must facilitate speech without discrimination on the basis of viewpoint within places that are traditionally devoted to or are otherwise well-suited to the exercise of such freedoms — such as public parks, sidewalks and streets. The government must also facilitate speech without regard to viewpoint within places that it controls and has opted to hold open for expression, regardless of whether those places are government-owned or privately-owned.

Dawn Carla Nunziato (2019) From Town Square to Twittersphere: The Public Forum Doctrine Goes Digital.
Boston University Journal of Science and Technology Law 25:1



Generally speaking . . .

If a public official uses a social media account . . .

- On any platform
- Using any device
- Whether the account is “official” or “private”

. . . to discuss public business with constituents . . .

- Formal announcements
- Informal discussions

. . . that account is* a public forum



If a Social Media Account is a Public Forum . . .

- Members of the public cannot be “blocked” from access to it
- Moderation of comments must be viewpoint neutral
- Moderation of comments may need to be content neutral
- And *any* moderation risks serious legal action



At the Bottom
of the Box



1. Expression, not Suppression

- Most people aren't trolls
- The more we engage others in constructive ways, the more that content outweighs (and drives down) the trolls



2. “I Get By With a Little Help From My Friends”

- Let supporters and constructively engaged constituents know that their contribution matters
- Encourage them to be “brand ambassadors”



3. Always Be Your Best



- Social media allow us to consider our responses
- Choose the message that conveys ***who you want to be***, not your reaction to how others treat you

4. Have Hope

In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too, I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquility will return again.

Anne Frank *The Diary of a Young Girl*



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