

2010 Capital Staffers Index

A Trans-Atlantic Analysis of Digital Media's Impact on Shaping Policy





The Lobby Keeps Getting Bigger

Jere Sullivan
 Chairman, Global Public Affairs
 Edelman

Perhaps the biggest difference is these new platforms serve as conduits to a two-way conversation.

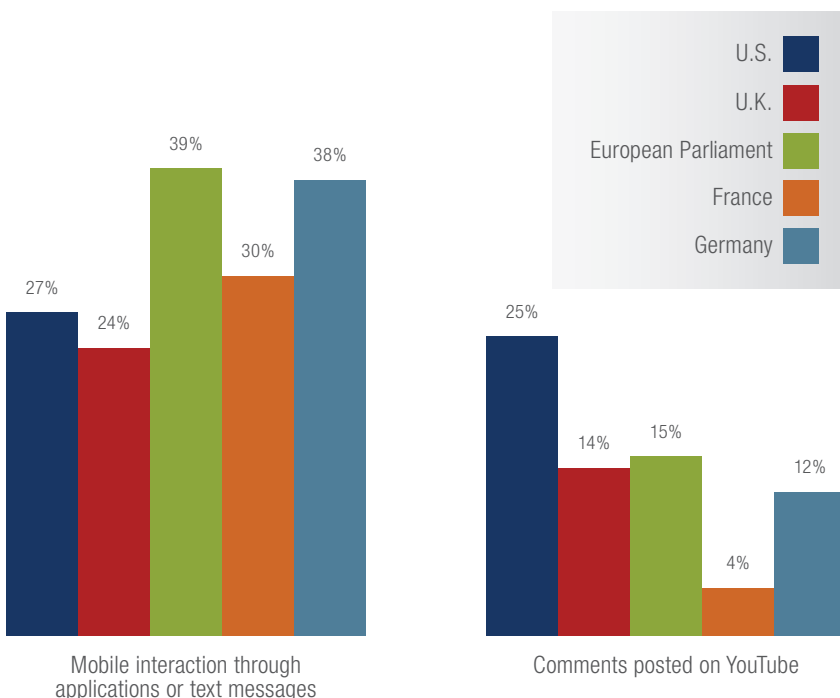
Public affairs in many ways can be described as the art of persuasive conversation. That quality has been constant since its origins in the lobby of the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C., when interest groups and constituents would camp out in hopes of getting a few minutes with then-President Ulysses S. Grant, to state their case on a host of issues and hopefully apply some gentle persuasion. And, although public affairs has matured, the same premise holds true today: we are still trying to have a conversation to advance an opinion with political leaders, NGOs, businesses and stakeholders from all walks of life. The big difference now is that the modes by which we have those conversations are changing.

As in the past, we are seeing the role of technology driving the public affairs methodologies that are being embraced to shape the discussion on the critical issues of our times—the economy, the environment, who we elect and how we govern. This is not a new phenomenon, as we have seen how other technologies, such as radio and television, have expanded the reach of political, societal and industry leaders and viewpoints. But the Internet—and, more recently, mobile technology—also significantly enhances the speed at which we all communicate. And perhaps the biggest difference is these new platforms serve as conduits to a two-way conversation. In some ways we have gone full circle, returning public affairs to its original days when personal conversations were at the heart of the practice.

The *2010 Capital Staffers Index* takes a closer look at how members of parliaments and the U.S. Congress and their constituents alike are embracing social media, from blogs to texting to Facebook and Twitter. We have found they are in many ways reintroducing and personalizing the conversation that had slipped away from us over the past few decades.

As we look back along the public affairs timeline, cynics have commented at every stage, “This is just a fad and will pass.” While traditional public affairs is clearly as important as it ever was, there is no denying that social media is now a part of the public affairs repertoire. And while the means for continuing the discussions are sure to morph with the advent of new technologies, the same basic premise will remain constant. We all want to engage in a conversation, but the lobby in which we do so is getting much larger and more crowded every day. ■

“When constituents contact your Member, how effective are the following modes of contact?”





Three Trends Emerge from 2010 Survey: Emergence, Parity and Localization

Sparky Zivin
Vice President
StrategyOne

In a year awash in dynamic changes across the public affairs space, it is perhaps not surprising that in the *2010 Capital Staffers Index*, we measured some fairly dramatic changes in the way parliamentary staffers engage in dialogue with constituents and special interest groups. This survey contains the views of between 50 and 67 senior staffers working for Members of the European Parliament, French Assembly, German Bundestag, U.K. Parliament and U.S. Congress, and tracks many baseline metrics first established in our 2009 benchmark study.

Of particular note are three recurring themes signaled in the data:

Emergence. This year's *Index* measured a significant rise in the perceived effectiveness

of digital communication channels in enabling successful two-way communication between Members and their constituents. For example, compared with the 2009 baseline data:

- Reaching Members through their blogs/ websites: up 41 points
- Reaching Members through social networks: up 15 points
- Reaching constituents through microblogging: up 11 points
- Reaching Members through microblogging: up 8 points

Furthermore, when staffers look back at technologies in use three years ago and compare them with today's utilization, we see explosive growth in technologies such as Facebook

(four times the usage compared with three years ago), text messaging (nearly double the usage), blogging (nearly three times the usage) and Twitter (more than five times the usage). And this growth is predicted to continue as staffers look to the coming years.

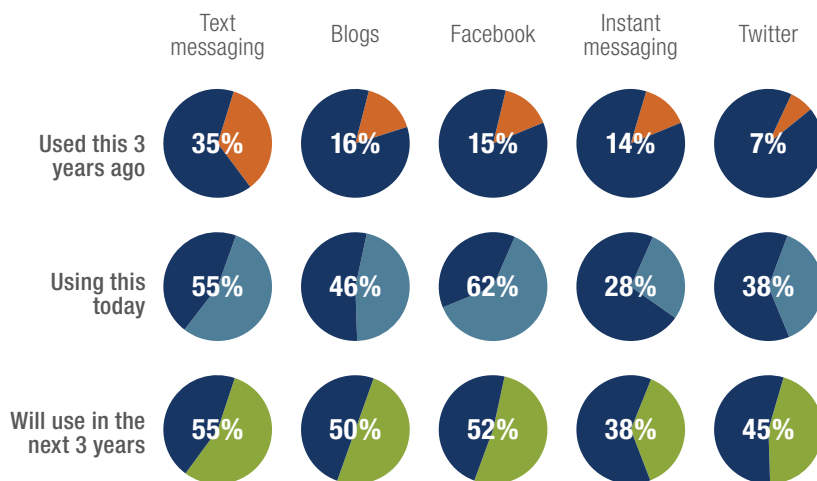
Parity. Driving these substantial increases in the effectiveness of digital media is a move toward parity across staffer audiences. While we saw high effectiveness ratings in the U.S. and U.K. in the 2009 data, the results of this year's survey show that staffers in the European Union Parliament, French Assembly and German Bundestag are rapidly catching up and are close in parity with U.S. and U.K. staffers.

Additionally, we are starting to see the perceived effectiveness of digital communications reaching parity with more traditional outreach and communications channels.

Lastly, we see interesting trends in the ways staffers are seeking out policy information online, both from more traditional online news sources and social media channels. For example, prior to 10 a.m., staffers rely primarily on traditional online information sources. However, from 11 a.m. on, social media usage outpaces online traditional media and spikes at various times throughout the day.

Localization. The old saying goes that "all politics is local," and the results from the *2010 Capital Staffers Index* certainly bear this out. Whether it is advocating a cause through local voices, or demonstrating how an issue is directly contributing to employment and community benefits in Members' home regions, staffers clearly feel that adding local context to an advocacy effort is key to ensuring successful outcomes. ■

"Thinking about several different technologies, please indicate whether or not your Member was using them to communicate with constituents on key issues three years ago, is using them now, and will be using them three years from now."





The Takeaway: Digital is Now Mainstream

Michael Burrell
 Chairman, European Public Affairs
 Edelman London

While the overall trends are similar in Berlin, Brussels, London and Paris, dig deeper and you find some interesting differences.

The key message for public affairs professionals in Europe from the *2010 Capital Staffers Index* is that digital communications are an increasingly effective way of getting your message across to legislative assistants—and through them, to the parliamentarians themselves.

Most lobbyists understand the vital role that parliamentary staffers play in the European Parliament, the House of Commons, the Bundestag and the Assemblée Nationale. What this survey underlines is the significant gains that digital communications continue to make as a channel to reach both them and their bosses.

Look at the 41-point increase in the use of legislators' websites and blogs, the 15-point rise in their use of social networks and a more modest increase in engagement through Twitter.

Fascinating too is the detailed evidence on when parliamentary staffers are most likely to be using social media (lunchtime and evenings), suggesting that lobbyists should pay attention to when they seek to deploy these tools to maximise effectiveness.

While the overall trends are similar in Berlin, Brussels, London and Paris, dig deeper and you find some interesting differences—the European Parliament and Bundestag staffers are using digital communications more than their equivalents in the House of Commons and the Assemblée Nationale, and mobile telephones are being used as a channel more in Continental Europe than in the U.S. or U.K.

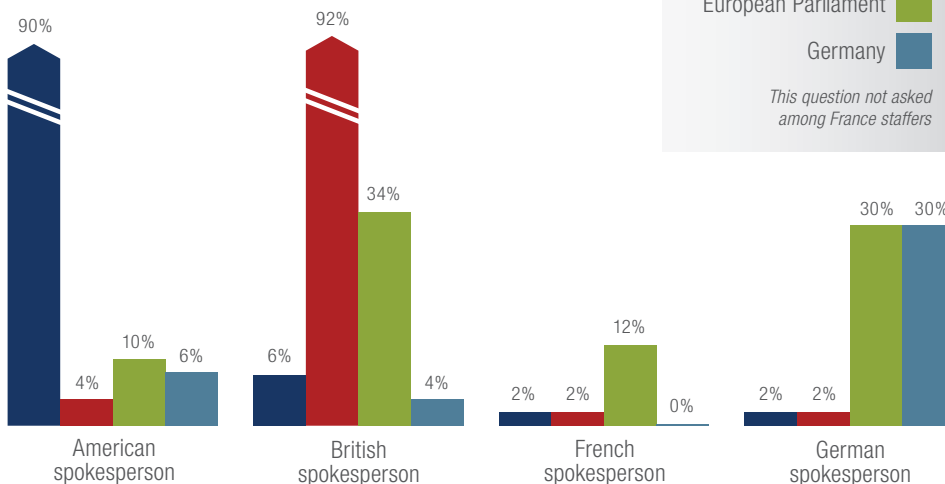
There is continuing good news in the survey for the online outlets of the BBC and *Le Monde*, named by 28% of British and French staffers as the information sources that they trust most for policy analysis. By contrast, relative newcomer EurActiv leads the pack in Brussels, name-checked by 13%.

Finally, one of the quirkiest sets of results came in answer to the question: "When meeting with representatives of companies based outside your own country, which of the following is the best approach?" For nine out of 10 American and British staffers, having an American or British spokesperson demonstrate the company's positive economic impact was seen as the best approach, while the nationality of the spokesperson was less critical in both Germany and France.

So a treasure trove of data—with one overriding message for public affairs professionals: while traditional public affairs techniques remain important, digital advocacy has become a mainstream public affairs tool worldwide. ■

"When meeting with representatives of companies based outside your own country, which of the following is the best approach?"

Having a/an ___ spokesperson demonstrate the company's positive economic impact in your country:





New Class of MPs More at Ease with Digital Communications

Chris Rumfitt
 Joint Managing Director, Public Affairs
 Edelman London

Over the last year we have seen the rise of the e-MP, a shift change in how MPs communicate with constituents.

The explosion in the use of digital and social media amongst parliamentary staff and Members of the U.K. Parliament must be viewed within the context of the General Election in May 2010, which saw the largest intake of new MPs since 1945 and a significant drop in the average age. For candidates who had campaigned online, it was natural to transfer and evolve their existing platforms on Twitter and Facebook, for example, as part of their ongoing interface with constituents once they were elected.

In essence, over the last year we have seen the rise of the e-MP, a shift in how MPs communicate with constituents that has been mirrored by an expectation from constituents that they can fire off an e-mail or track their representative's movements at will. Ultimately these headline figures suggest that MPs are closing the distance between them and their voters, demonstrating they want to be part of the conversation and "embracing the chaos" of what's happening in cyberspace, rather than issuing top-down, one-way public pronouncements.

Of course, against this backdrop, the irony is that more "traditional" visits and formal letters are still seen by parliamentary staff as "most effective." But is this because they are also the most easy to control? And the reality is that for every MP who launches a Facebook campaign within moments of a government announcement, there are some who still don't even have a website or use a parliamentary e-mail address.

The *2010 Capital Staffers Index* data from respondents in the U.K. shows that parliamentary staff's online activity tends to spike at lunchtime and in the evening, which suggests that they may still see using social media as additional to their day jobs rather than integral to them. But this is changing. And what does it say that more of them trust the policy analysis they get from *Conservative Home* than that posted by the *Financial Times*? ■

Summary of United Kingdom Staffer data (% Total Effective)

Member	Constituent		
Effectiveness of Outbound Digital Communications	2009	2010	Change
Websites	87%	76%	-11
Blogging	n/a	40%	n/a
Online videos	27%	32%	+5
Podcasting	n/a	32%	n/a
Text messaging	35%	30%	-5
Online advertising	38%	28%	-10
Microblogging	18%	26%	+8

Constituent	Member		
Effectiveness of Inbound Digital Communications	2009	2010	Change
E-mails	94%	86%	-8
Member's blog/website	18%	70%	+52
Member's Facebook page	15%	26%	+11
Mobile interaction	9%	22%	+13
Twitter	n/a	24%	n/a
Comments posted on YouTube	n/a	14%	n/a



MEPs Looking for More Direct Interaction with Constituents

Martin Porter
General Manager
Edelman Brussels/The Centre

Laurent Chokouale
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Edelman Brussels/The Centre



The most active MEPs—and their staffers—see [social media] as a way to bypass traditional information channels and to establish a more direct dialogue.

If one wanted to summarise the findings of the *2010 Capital Staffers Index* for the European Parliament, one would have to say, “Much has changed, yet everything’s the same.” Whilst there is a clear trend towards more active, targeted and sophisticated use of social media, there is also the fairly unexpected result that traditional constituent-to-Member communication—be that in-person visits, written letters or phone calls—has, in comparison with 2009, become significantly more important; other parliaments showed a rather declining or stagnating trend.

Does that mean MEPs and their staff are moving back towards communications 1.0? Not at all! A large number of staff have started using a variety of standard social media applications such as Facebook (increased 24% in 2010 over 2009), blogs (increased 30%) and microblogging, both to get information and to communicate on behalf of their Members. Yet when it comes to direct personal contact, e-mails and other forms of traditional communication still remain the most effective way to approach an MEP and get his or her ear.

Politicians Online!—a 2010 paper of the European Policy Institutes Network that looked at MEPs’ personal websites—adds some interesting details to the *Index*. MEPs appear to have invested significantly in the development of highly interactive online platforms. They provide a constant and “qualitatively high” flow of information and involve voters and supporters by means of interactive e-forums or regular chat rooms. The most active MEPs—and their staffers—see this as a way to bypass traditional information channels and to establish a more direct dialogue with audiences who are familiar with the Web.

And there was one significant finding with indications also for the use of social media: the Members’ Web presence seemed to have a strong relationship with their country’s electoral system—the more candidate-centred the system, the more active the politician’s Web presence. Furthermore, the characteristics of the MEP’s privileged electorate certainly has an impact. The more Internet-savvy the potential voters, the more important is an active and modern Web presence.

In essence, Web 2.0 does not save oneself the burden of knowing an MEP’s communication preferences. But it opens a number of additional challenges to get the message across. ■

Summary of European Parliament Staffer data (% Total Effective)

Member	Constituent		
Effectiveness of Outbound Digital Communications	2009	2010	Change
Websites	75%	78%	+3
Blogging	45%	51%	+6
Online videos	62%	45%	-17
Podcasting	n/a	42%	n/a
Text messaging	n/a	36%	n/a
Online advertising	38%	34%	-4
Microblogging	27%	33%	+6

Constituent	Member		
Effectiveness of Inbound Digital Communications	2009	2010	Change
E-mails	82%	96%	+14
Member’s blog/website	30%	60%	+30
Member’s Facebook page	22%	46%	+24
Mobile interaction	n/a	39%	n/a
Twitter	7%	16%	+9
Comments posted on YouTube	n/a	15%	n/a



Finding the Balance between Traditional and Digital Tools

Tristan d'Avezac
 Director, Public Affairs
 Edelman Paris

The *2010 Capital Staffers Index* shows increasing usage of “traditional” tools, as well as new forms of digital communications in France from both constituents and staffers.

This surge should not be misinterpreted. Traditional tools—personal visits, letters, etc.—remain effective in contacting members, most specifically in France. Respondents in France were far more likely than their counterparts in Germany, the European Union, the United States and the United Kingdom to respond to constituents with pre-formatted letters and individually written letters from staff and the Member himself.

The increasing attention that is given to social media and social networks is evidence of the French staffers’ appetite for direct interaction with constituents and third parties. Indeed, between the 2009 and 2010 surveys, the

effectiveness of contacting members through their Facebook page is seen as effective at 25% (up 24% vs. 2009) by staffers.

As with Facebook, Members’ personal blogs are “windows” into a world where both citizens and companies can understand a leader’s position on certain topics and directly interact with them or engage them in a conversation. Contact through Members’ blogs has jumped from 35% in 2009 to 62% in 2010 as an effective way for constituents to contact Members.

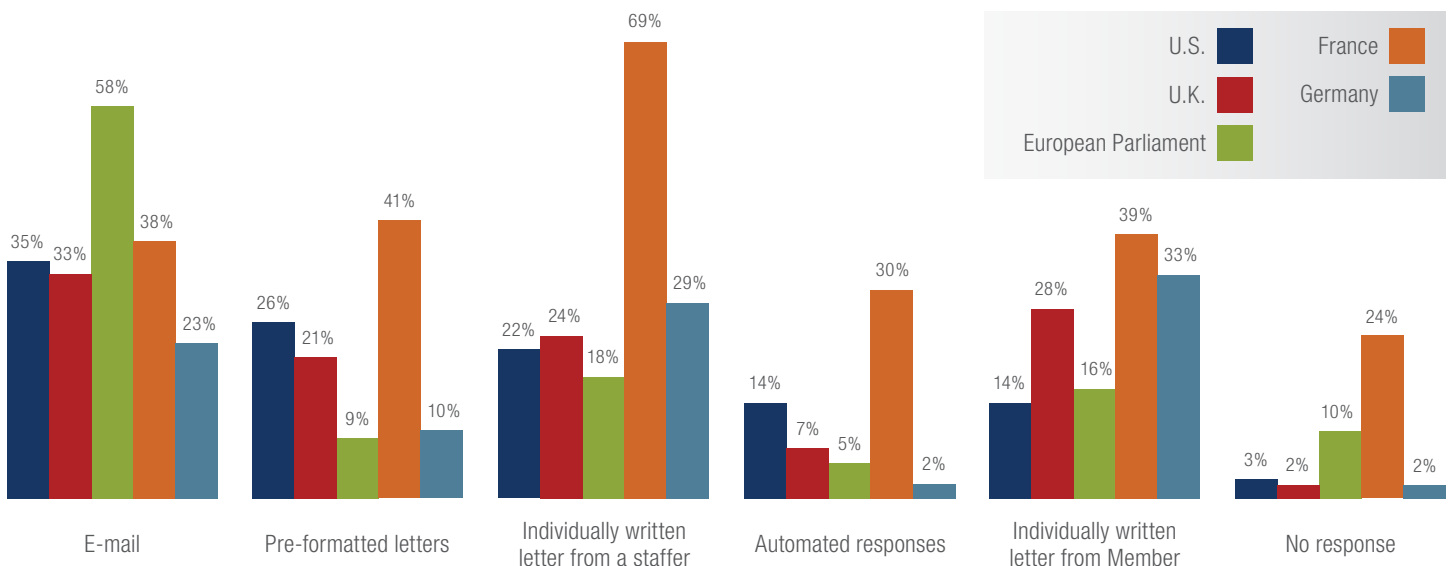
While we see an increasing importance given to online tools when addressing staffers and Members of the French Parliament, advocacy at the local level is still of high and even increasing importance. Clearly when one considers grassroots groups/local advocacy groups as well as letters from local community leaders and visits

to Members in their offices, one can see that this method of outreach remains a key way to address issues and get the attention of staffers.

In addition, demonstrating the benefits a company can bring—including both direct and indirect job employment as well as positive impact on the local communities—is considered to be the best approach. In fact, that approach ranks well above providing information on revenues, financial impact or taxes.

The economic and social climate of 2010, with its high level of unemployment and current restructuring at local levels, made staffers and Members alike highly sensitive to topics that are key in gaining (or losing) support from constituents when general elections occur. Thus, reputation management at both the national and local levels through regular contact with Members, local authorities and NGOs is something to which companies should pay deep attention and dedicate significant investment. ■

“When responding to outreach from constituents, what percentage of the time does your office use each of the following ways to respond?”





The Digital Age Arrives in the Bundestag

Bernd Buschhausen

Deputy Managing Director/Practice Leader, Public Affairs
Edelman Berlin

Amazing but true—
the Member's blog
is an open window
to the public.

The national federal elections one year ago have left a deep impact on how political communications are shaped in Germany. Initially mildly ridiculed as a channel more suited to informal, interpersonal communications, Twitter, Facebook and blogs have become mainstream tools for Members of Parliament and Cabinet Members.

From the first Parliament session, called a Twitter party, to ongoing microblogs from closed committee sessions and plenary debates, social media is developing into an important amplifier for making voices heard in German policy formulation.

State your case—on your Member's blog.

Without a doubt, in Germany as in the other countries studied in the *2010 Capital Staffers Index*, traditional communications with policymakers through meetings, letters and e-mail remains important. But there is a notable jump in the perception of effectiveness of blogging (up 18% since 2009) and microblogging (up 26%) as a channel for communications to constituents—as well as an enormous increase in the effectiveness of constituents' communication through the Member's blog or website (up 36% in 2010 vs. 2009).

Can one post make a real difference?

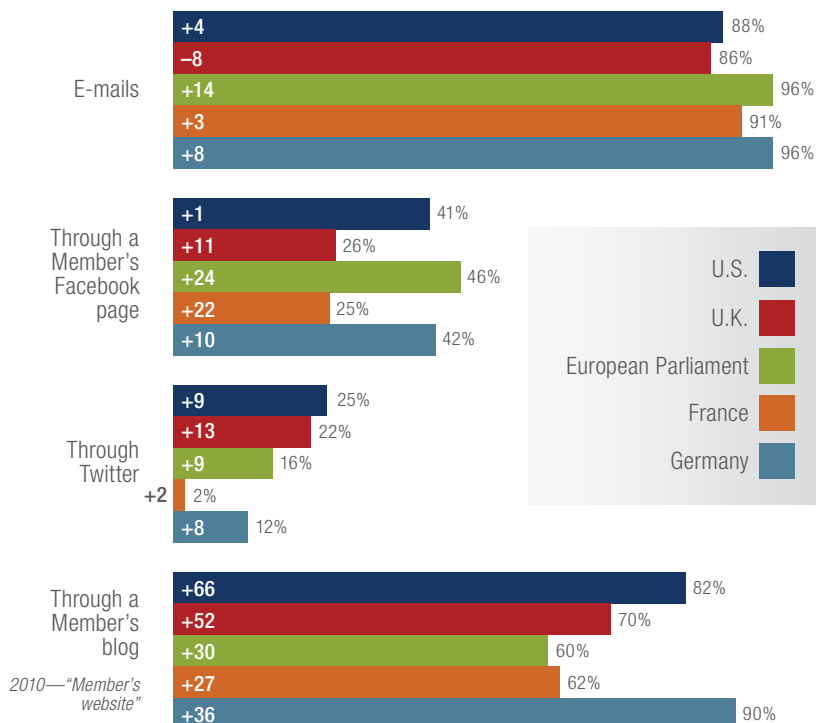
Amazing but true—the Member's blog is an open window to the public. Anything posted here makes its way into the public and requires addressing immediately. Or would you leave it unnoticed when you know that others are reading the post?

Digital public affairs as an amplifier

Social media provides a unique—and refreshingly transparent and open—way for individuals, company public affairs managers, associations and NGOs to amplify their traditional approaches. Effective monitoring of the debates in the Bundestag plenary or committee sessions, identifying other supporters and engaging in the debate directly and transparently to advance shared interests publicly underline the rise of digital public affairs in Germany. ■

“When constituents contact your Member, how effective are the following modes of contact?”

Numbers in white show change in % total effective from 2009.





No Matter the Channel, the Message Remains Essential

Rob Rehg
Regional President
Edelman Washington, D.C.

The growth of online communications channels, combined with the media's quest to keep up with instantaneous reporting, has led to an explosion of information in Washington, D.C. Members of Congress and their staffers now hear about more issues, from more people, through more avenues, than ever before. The *2010 Capital Staffers Index* reinforces that clear messages and compelling narratives—strong enough to carry through this rising level of noise—are essential to winning policy battles.

Respondents to a survey StrategyOne conducted in 2009 using its proprietary Beltway

Barometer™, a research tool that targets D.C.'s elite policymaker audiences, identified "deficient messaging" as the top reason D.C.-focused public affairs campaigns fail. Similarly, 30% of this group—drawn from government agencies, trade associations, lobbying and political consulting firms, NGOs and elite media—named "powerful messaging" (the ability to frame an issue to best advantage and define the debate on an issue) as one of the top reasons for success. Their perspective was clear: mastering the message helps companies, governments and organizations win.

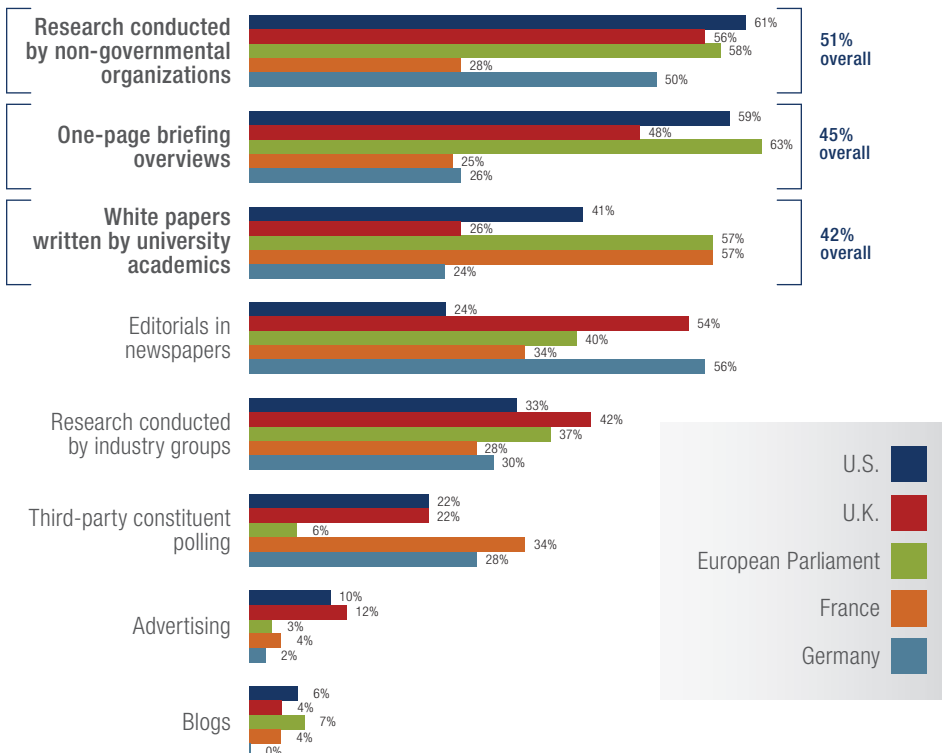
This year's *Index* shows the trend continuing. In the United States, 59% of surveyed staffers stated that one-page briefing overviews are among the most influential communications vehicles. That ranks higher than typical tools of the trade, such as white papers, editorials in newspapers and research conducted by industry groups.

For communicators and lobbyists, distilling an issue into its most essential points and backing them with data is more important than ever. Just as important, given the growth of social media, an organization's messaging should be tailored to the channel through which it will be deployed. A one-size-fits-all approach no longer works when positions must be shared through 140-character tweets, Facebook wall posts, op-eds, briefing papers and grassroots-generated constituent outreach to elected officials.

Job creation is the top priority for Congress, so framing messaging around the current U.S. economic climate—which drove the 2010 election cycle and is the lead topic of pundits' debates—is the most effective way to connect with staffers. Foreign entities seeking to define themselves in Washington should heed that 35% of staffers want to hear about direct and indirect jobs generated in the United States, while 25% expect companies to demonstrate their positive contributions to local communities.

Public affairs campaigns are changing dramatically, with emerging social media tools and grassroots engagement strategies serving to amplify constituents' voices. Yet smart campaigns will continue to invest in traditional media outreach and direct contact, to ensure positions are heard with consistency. No matter how many channels you use to reach your audiences, message is still king. ■

"When you meet with lobbyists, which THREE of the following things do you pay the most attention to?"





Effective Constituent Outreach Must Include Digital Mobilization

Bill McIntyre
Senior Vice President,
Grassroots Enterprise
Edelman Washington, D.C.

James Lundie
Joint Managing Director,
Public Affairs
Edelman London



The online community is the most watched, most used and most influential cultural medium in the U.S. and Europe.

If you want to influence elected officials, you would do well to pay attention to the online community. While the type and tone of engagement activity will vary by market, this new online community is changing the way we think about mobilization programs for two very important reasons. First, the online community is the most watched, most used and most influential cultural medium in the U.S. and Europe. Second, it is comprised of individuals who are eager to share, learn, praise, condemn, inform, question and engage their network of friends, family and co-workers about upcoming elections, social causes and product launches.

Clearly, community mobilization campaigns to influence public policy, consumer products and social issues are now a sophisticated interplay of traditional and digital strategies.

The *2010 Capital Staffers Index* clearly shows that online outreach, like e-mail, is one of the most effective methods to communicate with elected officials—and social media channels like Facebook and Twitter have made tremendous gains in capturing the attention of the staff serving elected officials.

Staffers ranked e-mail communications the most effective digital channel, in the high 80s to mid-90s, showing notable gains in (nearly) every capital. They rank Twitter and Facebook as roughly two times more effective with their bosses this year than in 2009, with Twitter getting into the teens and low 20s in three capital cities, while Facebook climbed into the mid-20s in France and the U.K. and the 40s everywhere else.

But a “digital-only” approach to mobilization would be a mistake. The *2010 Capital Staffers Index* confirms that traditional constituent-to-elected official communications—including personal visits, telephone calls and written letters—remain extremely effective. The big distinctions between the online community and our physical ones are its dense populations, vast active relationships, near-instant propagation of information and—most importantly—members of the online social community are as interested in social issues as they are in commercial concerns.

So whether you are in the world of public affairs, where risk and opportunity are managed through stakeholder relationships, or in the world of public relations, where reputations are managed by maintaining an organization’s public image, digital mobilization is an essential element to any strategy to manage the most watched, most used and most influential cultural medium in the U.S. and Europe. ■

The impact of digital communication has made significant gains, while traditional outreach remains critical.

Reaching Members % Effective	2009	2010	Change	
Written letters	90%	88%	-2	Traditional Channel
E-mails	87%	92%	+5	Digital Communication
In-person visits	86%	88%	+2	Traditional Channel
Telephone calls	85%	83%	-2	Traditional Channel
Member’s blog/website	31%	72%	+41	Digital Communication
Member’s social network	22%	37%	+15	Digital Communication
Microblogging/Twitter	7%	15%	+8	Digital Communication
Mobile interaction	n/a	32%	n/a	Digital Communication
Comments on YouTube	n/a	14%	n/a	Digital Communication



The Online Constituency: Citizen Engagement in the Digital Age

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After President Obama's victory in 2008, much was written about his campaign's effective use of digital and social media tools to build support, reach new audiences and engage younger voters. Many predicted that his Administration would use similar digital strategies—and they did, in fact, set out to build on the foundation laid by their predecessors to leverage emerging digital outlets to better serve and connect with Americans while simultaneously adapting to a rapidly evolving media landscape. The same was true for Capitol Hill.

Members of Congress and Hill staffers quickly learned how to navigate these new channels through direct constituent engagement and the creation of content best suited for social media and networking sites. In many cases, such content was embedded on official House and Senate "dot gov" sites. In May 2010, the House Republican leadership even created its own digital channel, "America Speaking Out," an

online clearinghouse for crowd-sourced policy ideas, with the best rising to the top based on community votes.

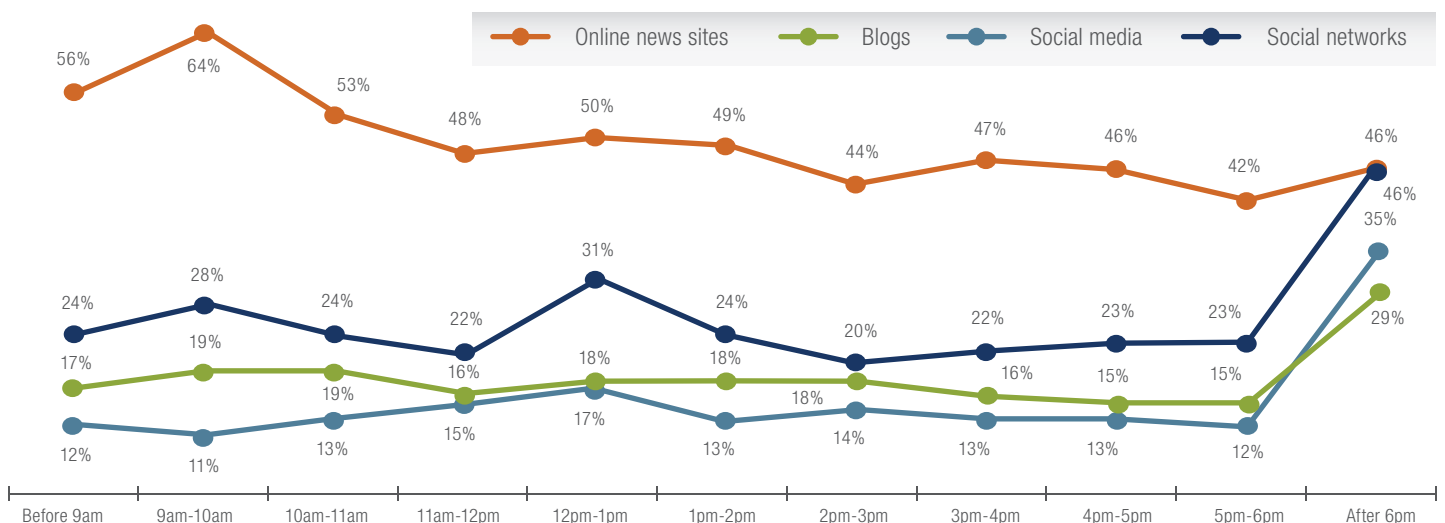
But, as the *2010 Capital Staffers Index* shows, let's not write obituaries for mainstream media outlets just yet. Newsrooms may be shrinking but their value and influence on Capitol Hill aren't. For staffers, online news sites consistently rank far above social networks, blogs and social media, with the highest usage (64%) occurring from 9-10 a.m. when staff are preparing for briefings, conducting research or getting caught up on the news.

For the most part, social networks run a distant second in usage percentage when compared with online news sites, except for significant spikes during the lunch hour (31% from noon to 1 p.m.) and at the end of a typical work day (tied with online news at 46% after 6 p.m.). This suggests

that while Hill staffers use social networking sites all day for both personal and professional purposes, there is an emphasis on personal usage during perceived "down time."

There remains a significant gap in online activation and engagement in governing compared with campaigning. As increasing numbers of winning candidates rely on digital strategies to win and make promises of online engagement part of their campaigns, Members who find themselves in positions of power must learn to govern online as well. Perhaps these words from American philosopher, writer and 1983 Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Eric Hoffer will serve as encouragement: "In times of change, learners inherit the earth; while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." ■

"When during the day do you normally access the following types of sites?"





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