

EDITORIAL

When More Information is Not Enough

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Elections are more commonly understood as political activities, but they are also highly informational events. These are occasions when people create and share information and make decisions based on what they gather and learn. Political candidates communicate their platforms in various formats, from traditional brochures, flyers, billboards, and television and radio advertisements to newer digital media such as websites, e-mails, live streams, and podcasts. Campaign managers strategize and plan their candidates' image and messaging, coordinate schedules, and manage public events. Voters seek, evaluate, share, and critique political information, then make decisions based on it. They discuss candidates' positive and negative aspects with fellow voters and participate in the campaign process by putting up campaign posters in designated places and going from one community to another to share campaign materials. Non-voters also seek and share political information; even if they cannot vote, they also try to influence their friends' and family's choices. These activities of creating, sharing, receiving, and making sense of information in the context of elections, whether done in traditional means or via digital or online environments, constitute information practices. As

defined, these are the ways by which “people in different contexts seek and use information” (Pilerot & Ekström, 2025, p. 465), and social contexts, dispositions, experiences, and even emotions shape these practices. Social media and other digital technologies also contribute to changing information practices across contexts. They paved the way for more ways of interacting and made more information available. But they have also created challenges for people, especially in how they make sense of these developments, such as misinformation and disinformation, echo chambers, and algorithmic targeting. Because elections are informational events in which people engage in various information practices, we should conduct further research to examine what information is produced, how people engage with it, and the ethical and societal implications of these practices to help people understand their own practices and consequently enable them to become critical, reflective, and responsible creators and users of information not just in the context of elections but in every aspect of public and social life.

The Philippine National Elections in 2022 saw an increased use of digital media for political campaigns.

This was an alternative to in-person campaigning because the Philippines and the rest of the world were still reeling from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions on large physical gatherings prompted candidates to turn to digital media to compensate for these limitations. This year, digital platforms are no longer a mere alternative to traditional campaigning; they have become a primary ground for political campaigns. Developments in digital technologies have expanded how political information is shared and circulated, thereby increasing the reach of campaign materials. In traditional face-to-face campaigns, physical presence, location, time, and other logistical factors limit how many people they can reach. In contrast, digital campaign formats effectively reduce geographic barriers. Although political candidates may not be physically present, they can reach people through messages delivered via videos, livestreams, and other digital content. Social media has become “freely accessible public spaces that invite all users to make interventions” (Habermas, 2022, p. 166). These digital media allow interaction between candidates and the public, which traditional media cannot afford. Digital media allow the public to show support, disagreement, or criticism through comments and reactions. These affordances enable the public to transform from mere audiences to participants in the political discourse.

Social media use has “transformed the public sphere” (Smith & Niker, 2021, p. 613), changing how political candidates and supporters interact and redefining information practices in the process. Instead of a one-way flow of information from candidates and campaign materials to the public as consumers, candidates and the public are now on equal footing. A candidate can share information by livestreaming political rallies, turning messages and speeches into short-form videos, creating posters from key points from their speeches or political platform, or crafting a meme from a blooper or behind-the-scenes moment in their campaigns. The public is no longer a passive receiver of these materials. They can comment on content created by their candidates or fellow voters and supporters, expressing support, disagreement, criticism, suggestions for alternative actions, and the like. Social media platforms have facilitated better communication and interaction between the political candidates and the public. In traditional campaigning, comments and suggestions from supporters and critics alike had little chance of reaching the candidates; they might circulate only among peers and colleagues, but with social media, reactions have become almost instantaneous. These platforms have, in a way, become spheres of communication, “understood neither as public nor private, ...that had previously been reserved for private

correspondence but is not inflated into a new and intimate kind of public sphere (Habermas, 2022, p. 166). Comments from the public, which were limited to their circles before social media, are now available to wider audiences and networks. These comments are no longer mere responses or reactions; they have become information that others use to form their opinions and perceptions.

With more information about political candidates and more avenues for interaction, the public should have better means to make better decisions about whom to vote for. Those who have not attended political rallies were able to participate because these were livestreamed. Those who haven’t had the chance to meet any political candidate were able to meet one because the candidates have set up their own social media accounts and gone live on social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and many others to communicate with their supporters. These platforms also enabled the public to express their support for their candidates through comments, reactions, and other forms of online engagement. Arguably, being presented with more information and having more avenues for interaction does not necessarily result in ideal outcomes such as better understanding and more informed decisions. More information led to confusion, making it difficult to sift through available information and distinguish credible sources from inaccurate or misleading content. To complicate matters, the use of AI-generated content “further contributes to misinformation through deepfakes..., algorithmic biases, and hyper-realistic synthetic media” (Schipper, 2025, p. e39-2)

With more platforms for people to voice their views and engage in discussion, electoral and political discourse should be more inclusive, participatory, and democratic. However, more avenues for expression through these platforms do not necessarily translate to more democratic engagements. Participating in political discussions has become more complex because of the diverse range of perspectives and claims. In 2022, “there was a sharp increase in the use of the internet to obtain election information” (Arugay & Baquisal, 2022, p. 556), and while this enabled voters to show support, these platforms have also become venues for disinformation that polarized the elections. There were heated discussions online, calling people names and leaving derogatory comments (Laya, 2022), mocking others, and consequently sowing disgust. Algorithmic targeting and sorting (Stewart, et al., 2022) have limited the reach of messages, contributing to fragmented information exchanges and the creation of echo chambers. These platforms have also enabled populism and polarizing communication (Olaniran & Williams,

2020). Navigating these platforms has also been complicated by people's social relationships, where family, friends, colleagues, and online communities shape what information people trust or reject. On the other hand, exchanges on these platforms can strengthen or break social relationships, as seen in the prevalent cancel culture in both online and offline communities.

To a certain extent, the benefits of social media in electoral processes are now outweighed by its harms. While social media is deemed to “facilitate public participation, organize public conversation, and curate public opinion” (Balkin, 2020, para 21-23), it also proliferates echo chambers, cancel culture, populism, conspiracy theories, polarization, and the spread of mis- and disinformation. These harms do not merely affect individuals and their information practices; they also translate to institutional and societal issues. Collective distrust in agencies threatens democracy, as McKay and Tenove (2021) wrote, “disinformation campaigns can morally denigrate certain groups or individuals” (p. 709), making disrespect and injustices prevalent. If these practices go unchecked, the consequences can extend beyond social media and the digital sphere. When prejudices are reinforced, when trust in institutions erodes, and when respect for human rights is diminished in online and offline spheres, social order and public welfare are put at risk. The implications of information practices in social media and society are not just technological but ethical and social, as they affect not only how individuals relate to each other but how society functions as a whole.

Librarians and information professionals are positioned to raise awareness about these concerns and help individuals navigate the complexities of information environments. More than simply providing media and information literacy instruction or trying to control and impose authority over what information is available, librarians and information professionals should first understand and further study information practices in various contexts to provide informed solutions to these problems. Studies on political information can be done to determine how people decide which to accept or reject, how they interpret, negotiate, and respond to what they find online as well as in traditional media, and how these practices shape their relationships and communities. Librarians and information professionals should also continue to provide access to information and help individuals evaluate and manage political information they encounter. Beyond the technical and practical aspects of media and information literacy, individuals should be taught to engage with information ethically and critically. They should also be taught how to become socially responsible with their information

practices, so that even when they encounter an avalanche of mis- and disinformation, they can very well survive it.

This issue features research articles on information practices, providing insights on how these can be conducted in different contexts. Ferrer courageously discusses information practices on a once taboo topic of consensual non-monogamous relationships. She acknowledges that with the democratization of information, more information is now available and accessible, enabling informed learning about this social relationship. She argues that more information allows individuals to make sense of their perspectives and transform their understanding and experience of the concept, which was once limited by “social context, relational dynamics, stigma, and limited public discourse.” Ponciano shares her systematic review of literature on feminist activists' information practices, offering insights into how they share, seek, and use information across various aspects of activism. This article shows that social media helps spread messages and amplify marginalized voices, arguing that social media and information practices are multifaceted.

De Castro et al. looked into how state colleges and universities allocate and share their subscription-based resources. This article offers insight into how institutions prioritize resources based on needs, secure additional funding to support them, and pursue collaborative initiatives for information sharing. Related to information literacy, this article underscores the importance of helping library patrons become familiar with available resources, a task librarians and information professionals should carry out even outside the confines of libraries. Zulueta discusses censorship and intellectual freedom in academic libraries within the backdrop of Foucault's power/knowledge. She shows how librarians and concerned groups have struggled against censorship, illustrating how libraries can control collections and how that control can lead to different outcomes. According to her, the control that librarians exercise over their collections is motivated by the need to organize these resources to facilitate information discovery and learning. On the other hand, censorship as a form of control, is motivated by the need to limit knowledge, and this is what librarians struggle against. Taking insight from this article, information on social media should not be controlled, nor should librarians and information professionals exercise authority over it.

Finally, VanScoy's message during the Gabriel A. Bernardo Memorial Lecture Series reiterates the importance of balancing theory and practice in LIS education and practice. While LIS is a practice-oriented

field, “theory often operates as a ‘silent foundation,’ shaping how practitioners interpret user needs, make decisions, and design services.” She concludes by saying that “narratives are not inherited conditions but practices the field can revise.” This resonates with this editorial, which argues that librarians and information professionals can and should move beyond what they have been traditionally taught to help clients navigate the complexities of traditional and digital information. Librarians and information professionals should be at the forefront when more information is not enough because the public needs tools such as critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and social awareness to survive an avalanche of information.

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