



## G.O.P. Winning Social Media Battle By Wide Margin

### Abstract

Republican candidates for the U.S. senate have amassed about four times as many Facebook Fans as their Democratic counterparts, and five times as many Twitter Followers, according to an analysis of social media conducted by HeadCount, a nonpartisan voter registration organization.

### Research and Analysis

Just two years after Barack Obama made Facebook and social media a staple of his campaign for the presidency, Republicans have far surpassed their Democratic rivals in popularity on Facebook and Twitter. As of Sept. 21, 2010, Republican candidates for the Senate have amassed 1.43 million Fans on Facebook, compared to just under 300,000 for Democrats. The differential on Twitter is even more striking, where Republican Senatorial candidates collectively have close to 520,000 Followers, and Democrats are just below 90,000.

Even when eliminating Arizona Republican Senator John McCain and California Senate hopeful Carly Fiorina, who respectively have the largest number of Facebook Fans and Twitter followers, Republicans are clearly making larger inroads with social media. Without McCain and Fiorina, Republican candidates average 20,985 Fans on Facebook, compared with 8,260 for Democrats. Those Republicans averaged 5,891 Followers on Twitter, compared to 2,591 for their opponents.

Party	Average Facebook Fans	Average Twitter Followers
Democratic	8,260	2,591
Republican	38,718	14,009
Republican (without McCain or Fiorina)	20,985	5,891

Source: HeadCount.org, Facebook and Twitter

In 22 out of 37 Senatorial races, the Republican candidate has a larger social media presence than his or her Democratic opponent across both Facebook and Twitter. The Democrat has a larger presence in nine races, and in six races the lead is split.

Incumbents enjoy a larger social media presence in most races. Among the 22 races where an incumbent is seeking re-election, the challenger has more Fans and followers in only two – Sharron Angle (R) is leading Harry Reid (D) in Nevada and John Boozman (R) is leading Blanche Lincoln (D) in Arkansas.



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Candidates associated with the Tea Party movement are among the most popular in social media, most notably South Carolina Republican Senator Jim DeMint. Hailed as one of the most new media savvy elected officials, he has more Twitter Followers than any incumbent and more Facebook Fans than any incumbent other than McCain. Across both parties, candidates in California and Florida have strong social media followings. In Florida Kendrick Meek has the third largest social media following of any Democrat nationwide, but he also ranks third in his own state, trailing Republican Marco Rubio and Independent Charlie Crist.

Below is a list of all Democratic and Republican candidates, listed in order of their total Facebook Fans and Twitter Followers.

Democrat				
State	Candidate	Facebook Fans	Twitter Followers	Totals
California	Barbara Boxer*	35,309	22,688	57,997
Wisconsin	Russ Feingold*	24,996	11,214	36,210
Florida	Kendrick Meek	20,876	4,812	25,688
Connecticut	Richard Blumenthal	18,563	1,377	19,940
Washington	Patty Murray*	18,155	1,369	19,524
Nevada	Harry Reid*	12,350	5,288	17,638
New York (2)	Kirsten Gillibrand*	11,483	6,041	17,524
Illinois	Alexi Giannoulis	13,444	2,564	16,008
Missouri	Robin Carnahan	13,499	2,151	15,650
Pennsylvania	Joe Sestak	9,400	4,798	14,198
Louisiana	Charlie Melancon	12,261	1,640	13,901
Oregon	Ron Wyden*	12,720	1,137	13,857
Arkansas	Blanche Lincoln*	10,492	1,592	12,084
North Carolina	Elaine Marshall	8,858	1,609	10,467
New York	Charles Schumer*	6,413	3,696	10,109
Kentucky	Jack Conway	7,977	2,032	10,009
Indiana	Brad Ellsworth	7,809	998	8,807
Ohio	Lee Fisher	6,979	1,715	8,694
Colorado	Michael Bennet*	5,550	1,859	7,409
Delaware	Christopher Coons	5,551	1,342	6,893
Arizona	Rodney Glassman	5,640	924	6,564
Iowa	Roxanne Conlin	4,446	1,242	5,688
West Virginia	Joe Manchin	4,584	357	4,941
Vermont	Patrick Leahy*	4,456	316	4,772
New Hampshire	Paul Hodes	3,365	1,397	4,762
Maryland	Barbara Mikulski*	3,852	844	4,696
Alaska	Scott McAdams	2,361	835	3,196
Utah	Sam Granato	1,297	778	2,075
Hawaii	Daniel Inouye*	1,385	300	1,685
South Carolina	Alvin Greene	407	795	1,202
Kansas	Lisa Johnston	837	158	995
Georgia	Michael Thurmond	732	64	796
North Dakota	Tracy Potter	511	No Twitter	511
Alabama	William G. Barnes	329	159	488
Idaho	Tom Sullivan	450	27	477
Oklahoma	Jim Rogers	20	No Twitter	20
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>297,357</b>	<b>88,118</b>	<b>385,475</b>

Source: HeadCount.org, Facebook and Twitter





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Republican				
State	Candidate	Facebook Fans	Twitter Followers	Totals
Arizona	John McCain**	683,950	13,731	697,681
California	Carly Fiorina	14,150	298,428	312,578
South Carolina	Jim DeMint*	95,723	52,419	148,142
Florida	Marco Rubio	122,848	15,888	138,736
Kentucky	Rand Paul	76,235	7,391	83,626
South Dakota	John Thune*	73,654	9,140	82,794
Nevada	Sharron Angle	69,435	5,543	74,978
Louisiana	David Vitter*	42,472	7,542	50,014
Washington	Dino Rossi	42,402	1,916	44,318
Oklahoma	Tom Coburn*	13,036	17,463	30,499
Connecticut	Linda McMahon	9,887	15,842	25,729
Delaware	Christine O'Donnell	18,409	6,399	24,808
Ohio	Rob Portman	20,641	2,666	23,307
Iowa	Chuck Grassley*	2,132	20,893	23,025
Missouri	Roy Blunt	13,905	7,369	21,274
North Carolina	Richard M. Burr*	14,571	5,039	19,610
Pennsylvania	Pat Toomey	12,450	5,522	17,972
Illinois	Mark Steven Kirk	13,612	3,962	17,574
Arkansas	John Boozman	12,217	3,907	16,124
Wisconsin	Ron Johnson	9,015	1,481	10,496
Alaska	Joe Miller	5,806	3,973	9,779
New York (2)	Joseph DioGuardi	8,715	633	9,348
North Dakota	John Hoeven	8,165	292	8,457
Georgia	Johnny Isakson*	7,602	821	8,423
Kansas	Jerry Moran	6,103	1,237	7,340
Colorado	Ken Buck	5,930	1,277	7,207
Alabama	Richard Shelby*	4,516	2,338	6,854
Utah	Mike Lee	5,418	1,272	6,690
New Hampshire	Kelly Ayotte	3,759	1,313	5,072
Indiana	Daniel Coats	4,040	890	4,930
Vermont	Len Britton	3,020	229	3,249
Maryland	Eric Wargotz	2,765	280	3,045
West Virginia	John Raese	2,432	192	2,624
Oregon	Jim Huffman	1,694	378	2,072
New York	Jay Townsend	837	335	1,172
Hawaii	Cam Cavasso	660	194	854
Idaho	Mike Crapo*	365	155	520
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,432,571</b>	<b>518,350</b>	<b>1,950,921</b>

Source: HeadCount.org, Facebook and Twitter

Independent				
State	Candidate	Facebook Fans	Twitter Followers	Totals
Florida	Charlie Crist	28,098	6,940	35,038

Source: HeadCount.org, Facebook and Twitter

\* Incumbent

# Official McCain for Senate ("Team McCain") Twitter account.

He has another account with 1.7 million followers

## Obama Still Social Media Commander in Chief; Tea Party Voices Close Behind

Barack Obama's surging presence on Facebook during the 2008 campaign was widely hailed as an early sign that a grass-roots movement was building around him. He remains one of the most popular figures in all of social media, with 13.6 million Fans on Facebook and 5.5 million Followers on Twitter. Beyond Obama however, it is mostly conservative voices and specifically ones operating outside of the political establishment that boast the strongest foothold in social media. The Tea Party, for instance, has more Fans on Facebook than the Democratic and Republican parties combined. Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin and former Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul – considered two of the de facto leaders of the Tea Party movement – boast some of the largest followings on Facebook and (in Palin's case) Twitter in the entire political arena. Then again, "The Coffee Party," a 501(c)4 organization created in response to the Tea Party largely via social media, also claims more Facebook Fans than either of the established political parties.

Other Figures	Facebook	Twitter	Total
Barack Obama	13,659,123	5,467,267	19,126,390
Stephen Colbert	1,245,753	1,755,901	3,001,654
Sarah Palin	2,239,190	257,535	2,496,725
Rachel Maddow	245,130	1,687,465	1,932,595
Glenn Beck	1,464,889	292,238	1,757,127
Jon Stewart	1,493,824	31,388	1,525,212
Michael Moore	311,098	691,704	1,002,802
Rush Limbaugh	568,089	66,192	634,281
Sean Hannity	546,546	76,715	623,261
Bill Maher	370,501	236,866	607,367
Tea Party	461,325	6,232	467,557
The Coffee Party	291,799	7,028	298,827
Ron Paul	256,964	12,795	269,759
Republican Party	179,795	18,067	197,862
Democratic Party	122,688	11,778	134,466
Libertarian Party	104,600	7,875	112,475

Source: HeadCount.org, Facebook and Twitter



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## Pop Culture Still Rules Social Media

While social media has been widely hailed as an effective political organizing tool, no political figure other than Obama and Palin are remotely as relevant as entertainment and music figures. As one comparison, HeadCount measured the Facebook presence of 25 of the musicians that have hosted our volunteer voter registration teams at their concerts. All had more Fans than any Senatorial candidate other than McCain. Kings of Leon, Jay-Z and Jack Johnson all have more Facebook Fans than Sarah Palin.

Artist	Facebook Fans	Artist	Facebook Fans
Kings Of Leon	4,929,011	Neil Young	598,208
Jay-Z	3,507,209	Passion Pit	339,110
Jack Johnson	2,554,460	O.A.R.	318,977
John Mayer	2,361,466	Phish	309,857
Pearl Jam	2,331,461	Tom Petty	301,095
Maroon 5	1,560,026	Wilco	277,377
Dave Matthews Band	1,479,471	The Decemberists	180,610
MGMT	1,451,390	The Roots	161,161
The Fray	1,128,050	Thievery Corporation	160,214
Death Cab For Cutie	983,909	Grizzly Bear	153,877
Nine Inch Nails	747,530	She & Him	136,926
Vampire Weekend	649,592	Guster	127,020
Ben Harper	600,196		

Source: HeadCount.org, Facebook and Twitter

This chart includes only musicians that have partnered with HeadCount to host voter registration drives at their concerts or appeared in public service announcements. Other notable musicians have even larger followings on Facebook, including: Lady Gaga, 18.4 million; Eminem, 13.8 million; Metallica, 9 million; The Beatles 7.9 million; and Drake, 6.4 million





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### Interesting and Unique Ways Senatorial Candidates Are Utilizing Social Media.

It would be a fallacy to say that Republicans have - across the board - shown more skill or creativity with their use of social media. Instead, their great popularity is more likely a reflection of grassroots support and enthusiasm within their core base. An examination of each candidate's Facebook and Twitter activity found that members of both parties have found original uses and that no single pattern emerges. Here is a list of some of the more notable elements by particular candidates.

#### **California - Carly Fiorina - Republican - 14,150 Facebook, 298,428 Twitter**

The former Hewlett Packard CEO, Fiorina's Twitter page focuses mainly on photos from the campaign trail, appeals to her Followers to add a "Twibbon" to their Twitter avatars to show their support, as well as various statements regarding her opponent Barbara Boxer. Fiorina adeptly personally interacts with some of her Twitter Followers, replying to their Tweets and maintaining a dialogue with her supporters. Fiorina's Facebook page opens up to a solicitation for donations. The most recent posts on Fiorina's Facebook Wall are shots at her opponent Barbara Boxer.

#### **California - Barbara Boxer - Democrat (Incumbent) - 35,309 Facebook, 22,688 Twitter**

Senator Boxer's Facebook page initially directs users to a tab entitled "Act Now". On this tab, Facebook users can donate, subscribe to e-mail blasts, share the Facebook page with their friends, sign up to volunteer, and visit the Barbara Boxer Campaign store. Her Twitter account contains statements regarding issue stance differences with her opponent, solicitations for donations, and links to news sources regarding the Senator and her recent activities.

#### **Delaware - Christine O'Donnell - Republican - 18,409 Facebook, 6,399 Twitter**

O'Donnell, the Tea Party Republican candidate in the Delaware race, uses Twitter and Facebook to highlight Tea Party Conservative issues. Implicitly addressing her critics, O'Donnell tweets statements such as "We're passionate, not wing nuts", as well as repeatedly referring in a general way to the "issues that matter to Delaware voters." As one of the most visible campaigns to the media and the American people, O'Donnell's Facebook status updates tend to attract hundreds of comments. She nearly doubles her opponent's (Christopher Coons) online supporters.

#### **Florida - Marco Rubio - Republican - 122,848 Facebook, 15,888 Twitter**

Rubio has a particularly strong Facebook presence, and on his Wall he emphasizes that he is running a "positive, ideas-based campaign." He also utilizes his status updates to call Floridians to action, seeking volunteers to make phone calls to undecided Florida voters and to perform other campaign assistance as well as by soliciting donations. Rubio also embraces other platforms via Facebook, by providing a sign up page for his e-mail blasts, as well as a text message based campaign update system. Rubio's Twitter updates are presented in a conversational and friendly manner, mainly addressing his day to day campaign activities as well as notable news articles and video links.

#### **Florida - Kendrick Meek - Democrat - 20,876 Facebook, 4,812 Twitter**

Meek's Twitter feed is available in Spanish as well as English.

#### **Florida - Charlie Crist - Independent - 28,098 Facebook, 6,940 Twitter**

Crist uses Facebook and Twitter to specifically acknowledge Floridians he has met with during the campaign, as well as general pro-Florida messages, such as references to Florida's NFL teams.



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### **Illinois - Alexi Giannoulias - Democrat - 13,444 Facebook, 2,564 Twitter**

Giannoulias' Facebook page is mainly focused on negative publicity regarding his opponent Mark Kirk, as well as appeals to Illinois Democrats to join his campaign. Giannoulias also directly engages his Fans on his Facebook page, with a post on September 5th encouraging Fans to post memories of their first time voting, in an effort to inspire first time voters in Illinois to get to the polls in November.

### **Kentucky - Rand Paul - Republican - 76,235 Facebook, 7,391 Twitter**

The page's profile photo contains a message challenging supporters to help Paul achieve over 100,000 Facebook supporters. Paul utilizes the first person voice on his Facebook wall, constantly using words like "I" and "my" that convey the distinct impression that the candidate himself, as opposed to an aide, is making the updates. Paul's posts generate fairly significant conversation, as most of his status updates are followed by hundreds of comments by Facebook users. His Twitter page mainly mirrors the content of his Facebook.

### **Missouri - Robin Carnahan - Democrat - 13,499 Facebook, 2151 Twitter**

Carnahan's Facebook page contains a tab entitled "Stop the Bull", which contains a large graphic of the candidate with a few cows above the caption "Help Stop the Washington Bull." On the same page is an embedded campaign ad video as well as a field that users can fill in to subscribe to e-mail updates. Carnahan engages her supporters directly by utilizing the Facebook Notes tab, wherein she composes e-mail messages to Missouri voters and allows the voters to reply and engage each other in the Comments section below each note.

### **Nevada - Sharron Angle - Republican - 70,131 Facebook, 5,648 Twitter**

Angle's Facebook Wall and Twitter updates are very focused on removing Reid from office, with messages such as "14.4% unemployment in Nevada and what's Harry doing? Pushing for amnesty for illegal aliens" and "just passed over \$900,000 in our September to Remember fundraising goal. Help retire Harry Reid!" Angle's Facebook page also contains a Video tab with a number of television campaign commercials with negative portrayals of the incumbent Senator.

### **Nevada - Harry Reid - Democrat (Incumbent) - 12,350 Facebook, 5,888 Twitter**

Reid uses his Twitter to specifically counter negative messages offered by Sharron Angle, with posts such as "Angle's extreme rhetoric surfaces again, says she wants to 'take out' Harry Reid." Reid's Facebook page contains a "Donate" tab that allows users to make a credit card contribution to his campaign without being redirected off of the Facebook page. The Donate tab also allows users to see how many other people have donated online, which PAC they donated through, and how much each individual PAC has raised for the candidate.

### **New York - Kirsten Gillibrand - Democrat (Incumbent) - 11,483 Facebook, 6,041 Twitter**

Gillibrand is reaching out to young liberal voters and is working with popular celebrities on particular issues. Her Twitter page contains a recent tweet thanking Lady Gaga for her advocacy in attempting to convince Congress to repeal "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policies.





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### **Ohio - Rob Portman - Republican - 20,641 Facebook, 2,666 Twitter**

Rob Portman's Facebook photo contains text beneath the candidate's image encouraging users to send a text message to a five digit number in order to register for campaign updates via text message. Portman also pops up in some of the comment threads below his status updates. Unlike other candidates, Portman (or a staff member) appears to be monitoring the threads and fielding supporters' questions.

### **South Carolina - Jim DeMint - Republican (Incumbent) - 95,723 Facebook, 52,419 Twitter**

Senator DeMint has a particularly strong online presence. His Facebook page proudly touts him as "America's Most Conservative United States Senator." As DeMint is fairly certain to win in November (the New York Times election site has his chances of victory at 100%), his Facebook page is nearly entirely devoted to issues and to endorsing Conservative candidates in other elections. Recent Tweets include endorsements of the Republican candidate in New Hampshire as well as Delaware's Tea Party Republican Christine O'Donnell. DeMint makes extensive use of the Notes tab on Facebook, with lengthy messages on conservative issues addressed to his Fans, who tend to enthusiastically comment in the threads below the notes.

### **Washington - Dino Rossi - Republican - 42,402 Facebook, 1,916 Twitter**

There is a "Share Your Thoughts" tab where Rossi asks his followers to provide their input and concerns regarding Democratic Health Care reform. Rossi also uses his Facebook to ask supporters to submit photos from the campaign trail, and plans on launching a "Best Photo" contest once enough submissions are received. Rossi's Twitter is filled with messages supporting Washington state professional and college sports teams.

## About HeadCount

HeadCount is a nonpartisan, 501(c)3 organization that harnesses the power of music to promote participation in democracy and social action. We work with musicians to engage their fans in the political process, pointing young people to the polls and encouraging them to be informed, active citizens. The organization was founded in 2004 by a collective of musicians, fans and music industry professionals committed to ensuring that the music community was well represented at the polls. Since then, the organization has registered over 150,000 voters and grown into the leading grassroots organizing entity in live music.

This report was written and researched by Andy Bernstein, Jennifer Suh, Sebastian Freed and Sy Sommer.