Information, Interaction, and Creative Production: The effects of three forms of Internet use on youth democratic engagement

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## Sample

Two adolescent cohorts were included in the present study: junior high school students (aged 13-14) and senior high school students (aged 16-17), with an average age of 15.0 (SD = 1.72) at the first wave of measurement. The target sample comprised all students in these age groups at 13 different schools in the region (10 out of a total of 19 junior high schools and three out of seven senior high schools). Approximately 50% of all the students in the region were included in the target sample. Data from N = 1,520 individuals were included in both waves

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Other

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

Media impact on engagement

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

This study examines the effects of informational, interactional, and creative forms of Internet use on behavioral and cognitive indicators of youth democratic engagement. Data from an extensive two-wave panel survey of Swedish adolescents ( N = 1,520) were examined. Results show that the effects of informational and interactional Internet use on political participation are indirect, with online political interactions acting as an intervening variable. In addition, creative production was found to be a direct positive predictor of online and offline political participation but negatively related to political knowledge. The effects were statistically significant even when accounting for self-selection and previous levels of democratic engagement. Taken together, these findings contribute novel theoretical insights into the mechanisms by which Internet use may encourage or hinder youths’ democratic engagement.

# Outcome

"...offline news use was a positive predictor of political knowledge, but informational Internet use (including news) was not.... Three main implications are particularly worth highlighting. First, the findings reproduce key elements of the citizen-communication model (Shah et al., 2005) according to which online news use (and other forms of informational media use) indirectly influences political participation through its positive effects on political discussion, both face-to-face and online. Also, in line with previous findings among adolescents within this framework (Lee, Shah McLeod, 2013), the results suggest that the “online path” from informational media use to political participation is stronger than its offline counterpart....informational Internet use seems to promote online political participation via online political interaction.... The second contribution of the study is the evidence suggesting that informational Internet use is not the only form of adolescents’ engagement with online digital media that promotes political participation. Specifically, the results demonstrated positive effects of interactional and creative forms of Internet use on online political interactions.... As the third main contribution of the study, the findings establish a strong direct relationship between creative forms of Internet use and political participation.... Unexpectedly, we failed to demonstrate a positive relationship between informational Internet use and change in political knowledge." (Authors, 807, 811-813)