

Role of social media in GE2015

The use of social media was high in GE2015, but it had less of an influence on the way Singaporeans voted, according to an Institute of Policy Studies online survey of 2,000 voters conducted by YouGov Asia Pacific. Rachel Au-Yong reports on the key findings.

99%

Mainstream media played a bigger role in the election

Almost 99 per cent of social media users also relied on traditional media, such as TV, newspapers and websites of Singapore's mainstream media. They trusted mainstream media sources more than non-users.

7 in 10

Seven in 10 users found local newspapers and their websites moderately to very trustworthy, compared with six in 10 non-users.

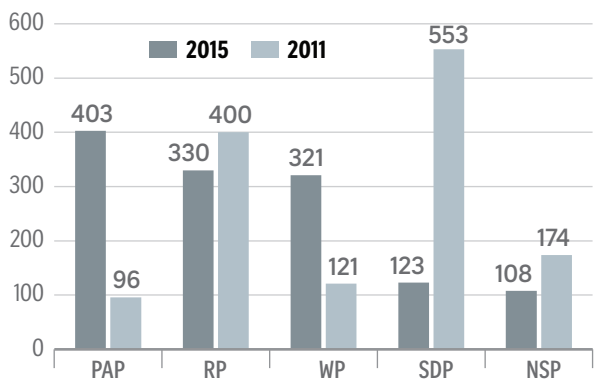
PAP dominated social media in GE2015

PAP bounced back from a relatively inactive presence on Facebook in GE2011, to become the most active in GE2015. Its contents, with videos and other visuals, show its grasp of how to use Facebook effectively.

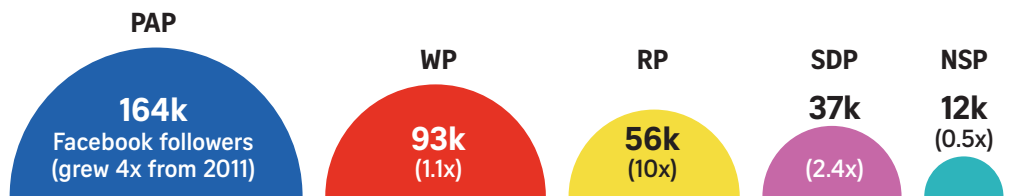
Parties' Facebook followers

Since 2011, PAP's Facebook followers have grown four times to 164,000. WP comes in at a distant second, with 93,000 followers. "Liking" a Facebook page can show how engaging a party is in social media and, by extension, convincing, said IPS research fellow Tan Tarn How.

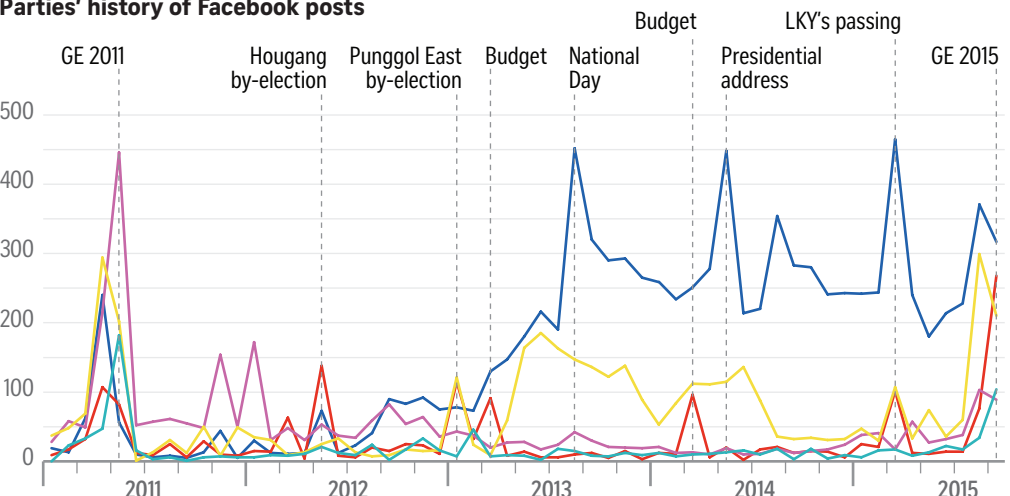
Facebook posts, 2015 vs 2011



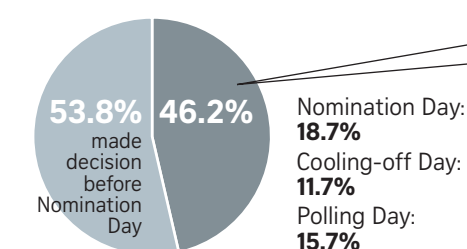
Survey period: Aug 26 to Sept 9, 2015; April 20 to May 5, 2011



Parties' history of Facebook posts



PAP's use of social media shot up after the Punggol East by-election in January 2013. It consistently posted between 200 and 450 times a month on its Facebook page. The WP rarely hit 100 posts a month in the same period.



Late decision makers

Almost half the voters – 46.2 per cent – made their decision on whom to vote for between Nomination Day and Polling Day. National University of Singapore researcher Zhang Weiyu said they were more susceptible to peer pressure from both incumbent and opposition supporters, as well as campaign influence.

*Note: Results were based on 1,757 voters. Those who could not recall when they made their decision or refused to answer were excluded.